

DOMINION DIVING BUYS VERSATILE BOAT

Amanda Fraser

Dominion Diving is bringing the Swiss Army knife of marine vessels into **Nova Scotia**, after four years of searching.~



The **Dartmouth** marine service company has acquired a multicat workboat - a high-powered, shallow draft cargo tug that's expected to arrive in **Halifax** on Saturday.

Dominion CEO **Robin**

Lohnes says while the vessels are a common sight in **Europe**, it's the first of its kind in **North America**.

"There was a demand for it, and our fleet is aging," said Lohnes, who flew to **Guinea** in **West Africa** to inspect and analyze the ship to ensure it met Canadian compliance rules. It's on board the heavy lift ship **Stellaprima** for its voyage to Nova Scotia.

"We kept coming across the requirements of a vessel that wasn't available in Canada or North America," he said in an interview Monday.

Dubbed the **Dominion Warrior 2209 Multi Cat**, the 1,200-horsepower vessel is unique because its 50-tonne deck winch, 30-tonne deck crane and bow roller combination give it the capability to lift items over 100 tonnes from the seabed. It also has 100 square metres of deck space, allowing it to carry cargo.

It can operate in less than three metres of water, making it ideal for near-shore work - a significant component of the company's workload.

Lohnes says to date, the company would often use a combination of small tugs and large barges to carry out scientific work and pipeline work.

After a lot of homework, they made their move on the vessel built by **Rotterdam**-based **Acta Marine**. Acta has also operated the ship for the last 10 years.

"This 20-metre boat takes the place of a tug, a barge and a crane. It's at once vessel that has all of these, and it's got more lifting capacity than our land-based crane that we used to put on a barge," he said.

"It can operate in extremely adverse conditions, such as the **Bay of Fundy**, where you've got high current, drastically changing water depths, unique weather patterns that combined with the current, give you a lot of challenges that are difficult for normal vessels to deal with," he said.

Lohnes foresees the ship working for tidal operators, science research-focused clients such as the **Bedford Institute of Oceanography** and Dartmouth's **Geospectrum Technologies** to deploy and retrieve equipment, as well as cruise ships and other operators who need supplies and cargo delivered and removed.

Dominion Diving employs 40 people between its base in Dartmouth and **St. John's**, where it's doing project management for **White Rose** offshore oil project operator **Husky Energy**.

Dominion has eight vessels in its fleet, most of which are 45-foot tugboats and one 90-foot tug research vessel. The company, which has provided ROV services to ExxonMobil Canada's Sable Offshore Energy project since it's start in 1999, also has six ROVs (remotely operated underwater vehicles).

Lohnes and his brother **Matthew**, Dominion's president, have been running the company since the mid-2000s.

It was founded by their father, **Barry Lohnes**, and **Jim Ritcy** in 1969.