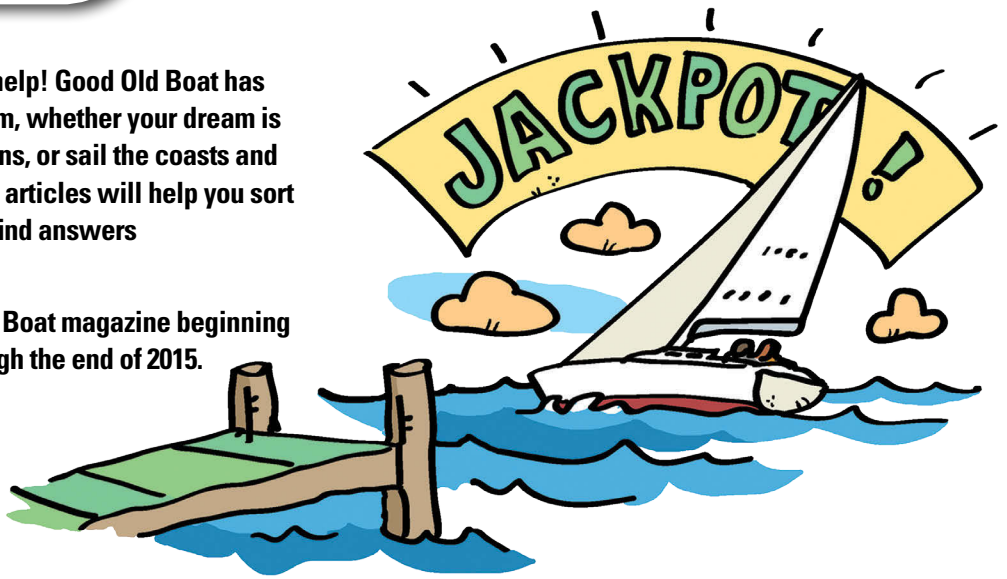
GOOD OLD BOAT™

Archive eXtractions

BOAT BUYER'S COLLECTION

In the market for a sailboat? We can help! Good Old Boat has always focused on the affordable dream, whether your dream is to trailer sail the continent, cross oceans, or sail the coasts and lakes near your home. This collection of articles will help you sort through your options and find answers

All articles were published in Good Old Boat magazine beginning with our first issue in 1998 through the end of 2015.



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You'll see them at boat shows, in marinas, and in the boating section of the neighborhood bookstore. They're a bit starry-eyed, focused as they are on somewhere and someday.

Some are just getting started as sailors. Some are returning to an activity they enjoyed back before there were kids to raise and mortgages to pay. They're all on the same mission, even if the goals are widely varied: it's time to buy a boat. If you're one of them, you'll know.

Some are looking for a trailerable that they can take anywhere. Some are looking for a world cruiser that can take them anywhere. Some are looking for a coastal cruiser for weekends on the coast or a nearby lake. There's a sailboat that's right for every dream. And there will be more dollars left over for that dream if the sailboat they choose is a good old boat. At Good Old Boat magazine, we speak often of the "affordable dream."

Our magazine focuses on the projects sailors do to make their (new-to-them) sailboats comfortable and seaworthy. Some used boats need a little work. Some need a lot. In either case, an investment of your own time is paid back many times over due to the familiarity you gain with your sailboat's systems and construction.

This collection of articles published by Good Old Boat from our beginnings in 1998 through the end of 2015 will help you sort through the decisions involved in buying your dream boat. It will also review a few alternatives for stretching your dollars: boat partnerships and other ways to share vessels. For spice, we've added a bit about surveyors and brokers, delivery by land or sea, and even a couple of articles about preparing your boat for sale.

We hope you'll subscribe. It is our goal to help you as an owner and caretaker of your good old boat over the years to come. Welcome aboard! There are so many dreams. What's yours?

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Buying an older boat: *The complete guide*

Gently used, previously owned … call good old boats what you will. When we're in the market to buy one of these used gems, there are a couple of hurdles to jump simply because they are old boats. In this collection of articles on the financial side of old boat ownership, Art Saluk talks about the process of buying an older boat including survey, sea trial, and haulout; Jim Plummer reviews the realities of financing an older vessel; Geoff Parkins discusses issues involved when insuring your good old boat; and Jerry Powlas reminds readers that upgrades should be tailored to the boat's use. On a high note, Bob Wood discusses tax deductions that apply equally to any boat whether a good old one or a new one at five times the price. All of the shortcomings are surmountable and the advantages worthwhile. Read on …

Before you buy ...

by Art Saluk

You drive by her each morning and evening, and your heart starts to flutter. Her graceful lines and the shimmering water make the world beautiful. As she bobs on her mooring, all seems perfect in the universe. One day you drive by and notice the FOR SALE *sign hanging on the lifelines and you know you must own this boat.*

Before you rush out with your checkbook in hand to buy your dreamboat, there are several things you must know: how to assess the condition of the boat, how to value the boat, how to prepare an offer, and how to enact the transaction. Each of these steps contains potential pitfalls that can be quite costly if not properly addressed. Obvious as it may seem, it's easy to forget that time invested properly in your purchase can save you thousands of dollars down the road. A boatless sailor with a pocketful of cash, and a graceful yacht in need of a new owner, are the ingredients for a poor decision.

There have been many articles written on how to assess the condition of an older boat. (See Bill Sandifer's article on Page 38 in the September issue of *Good Old Boat*.) These articles focus on how to look inside lockers, under cushions, behind the stove, behind drawers, and in every nook and cranny where you can fit a flashlight for signs that the boat has been well maintained all along and not just cleaned up for sale. Determining for yourself that the boat appears to be in good condition prior to making any offers, hiring a surveyor, and paying for a haulout can save you hundreds of dollars.

Several sources can help you determine a fair price for your future boat. The primary sources of data used by many lending institutions and brokers are the *BUC Used Boat Price Guide* and NADA's *Used Boat Prices*. These books offer a good guideline as to the value of a particular model of boat. The Internet, classified sections in sailing magazines, and brokers' ads will also give you an indication of the range in asking prices. Combining data from these sources will give you a sense of the market value.

Most likely you will notice a difference between the published values and the advertised asking prices. Many factors contribute to this difference. An owner's overestimation of his boat's value and a built-in "negotiation factor" are the two largest factors. A high asking price may be justified due to recent upgrades such as new sails, a new paint job, a new engine, or an exceptionally well-maintained boat. Once you have determined a fair and realistic value of your prospective purchase, the time has arrived to make an offer and arrange for a survey and sea trial.

All offers should be made subject to a survey and a sea trial. This is the time for your surveyor to determine the condition of all aspects of the boat and associated equipment. The sea trial not only gives the surveyor an opportunity to inspect the boat while under way, it gives you the opportunity to find out whether you feel comfortable with the way the boat performs and to decide if it meets your expectations.

The sea trial will also give you an opportunity to see how the owner handles the boat while under way and at the docks. This will give you a little insight into how the owner has treated your prospective new purchase. Before the survey and sea trial take place, however, the seller will want a deposit.

At this point you should put all of the details of your offer in writing.

Your offer should include the following:

- Amount of the offer.
- Amount of the deposit.
- Terms of the offer (how long is the offer good for, list of equipment that is included, etc.).
- Conditions of offer (survey, sea trial).
- Dates for each event to take place (acceptance of offer, sea trial, closing, etc.).
- Responsibilities (who is responsible for costs of survey, sea trial, etc.).

While this may seem to be a lot of trouble, it will make clear all of the implied conditions of your contract and prevent difficulties and misunderstandings if there are unexpected problems on the sea trial or afterward. Remember that you are involved in a transaction that involves thousands of dollars.

Typically a 10 percent deposit will be required to accompany the offer. Be certain that the seller has agreed to let an escrow agent hold the deposit for you. If you give it directly to the seller, and the boat is subsequently not purchased (say the sea trial performance was disappointing), there is always the possibility of the seller's not being as cooperative as he was when accepting the deposit.

USCG Documentation Center
National Vessel Documentation Office
2039 Stonewall Jackson Drive
Falling Waters, WV 25419-9502
304-271-2415 fax
800-799-8362 office

There is only one remaining thing to do prior to laying out hundreds of dollars for the survey, sea trial, and haulout: find out if there are any liens on the boat. The responsibility for the lien will go with the boat and her new owners. There are unfortunate sailors out there who have bought their boats twice. If the boat is documented, write the U.S. Coast Guard Documentation Center and ask for a title abstract. It will cost you $25, and they will fax you the abstract within a couple of days. You only need to provide them with the official number and name of the boat. Many smaller older boats have not been documented but instead are state registered. If this is the case, you should have a copy of the title with no liens recorded.

Now you are ready to hire a surveyor. Make certain that you hire a reputable surveyor who is a member of a recognized association such as NAMS or SAMS. The survey should include going up the mast to inspect the rig and going out on the sea trial. Be certain to ask the surveyor for several references of boats that he has recently surveyed. His report is the last thing standing between you and ownership of your new boat.

The surveyor's report will certainly contain dozens of recommendations. Be certain to review them carefully so you understand the magnitude of each and how they may affect the seaworthiness of the vessel. You should view most of them as a project list for the boat. If there is a major problem, however, now is the time to review it with the seller.

Make a fair estimate of the costs to make the proper repairs, and ask the seller to reduce the agreed-upon price by that amount. You are better off taking a monetary settlement and then making the repairs yourself than having the seller do the repairs for you. The older boat will have many small things that need tending to, and it is my belief that the survey should not be used as a document to "nickel and dime" the seller into a lower price.

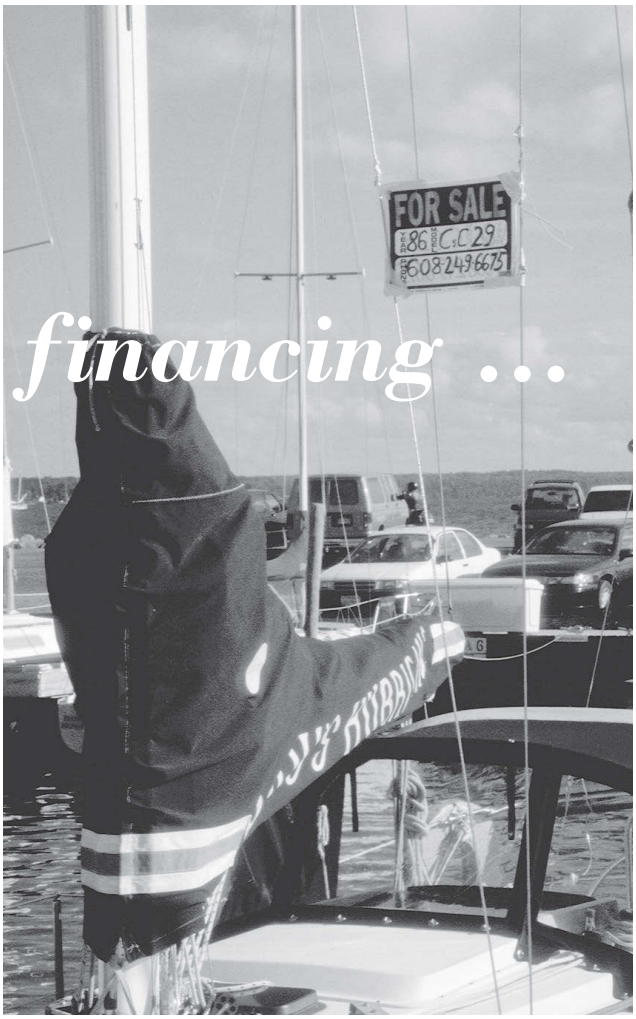
Now you are ready to buy your dream. Have the seller prepare two original bills of sale for you. You will need them later if you decide to document your boat. Have both bills of sale signed and notarized by the seller. If the boat is documented, be certain to get a copy of the original document. You will need this if you are going to re-document the vessel. If the boat is state registered, then have the original title signed over to you. I always recommend that you have proper insurance coverage take effect the day you take possession of the boat.

SAMS
Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors
4162 Oxford Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32210-4425
800-344-9077
<http://www.marinesurvey.org>

NAMS
National Association of Marine Surveyors
P.O. Box 9306
Chesapeake, VA 23321-9306
800-822-6267
<http://wwwnamsurveyors.org>

Be absolutely certain the beautiful boat that has caused your heart to flutter will not later cause it to ache. Take the time to have a proper survey and establish ownership with clear title. The devil always seems to lie in the details. Working with a yacht broker will free you from tending to these details. The broker will be able to establish market values, obtain a title abstract, coordinate the survey, and prepare the paperwork. The critical issue is not whether or not you work directly with the seller or with a broker, but that you ensure you have performed all the tasks to protect your new purchase.

When you need financing ...



by Jim Plummer

Any discussion of marine financing can be as nebulous as a discussion of which is the best boat. We all know no one boat can be best for all sailors or in all situations. Similarly, no one loan or marine finance specialist can be best for all our financial needs. Marine financing is a large, diverse industry with many specialized lenders. Local banks, although they may make loans to purchase boats, generally are not specialists. While doing research on this subject, I found that one of the best sources for names of marine lenders is the ads in *Soundings*.

Because of the diversity of lenders, you must first determine what you need and then start looking for the lender who comes closest to fulfilling that need. You might even think before looking very deeply into this specialized field that you surely will need squeaky clean credit, but that's not always true. Some lenders can even customize loans to fit the needs of the "marginal borrower."

Of course we all think about financing when we are looking for a new boat, but do we start looking soon enough? The acceptance criteria for the marine specialty finance companies vary enough that you should start to arrange for financing even before you start wandering through boatyards or contacting brokers. My own research could not turn up any difference in the credit-granting guidelines of marine finance companies, but their loan criteria showed vast differences. Some of the companies had no minimum loan amount, while others had a minimum amount, usually in the $15,000 to $20,000 range.

Some of the firms also had a maximum age of boats they would finance, although they suggested that each loan is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. A surprising number of the finance companies queried do not make a survey of the boat to be financed a prerequisite for granting the loan. However it should be noted that the loan will require the boat to be covered by insurance with the finance company shown as a loss-payee. The insurance company will require a survey in order to issue coverage.

Wisdom dictates getting a survey if for no other reason than having a disassociated professional check out your decision and point out any problems you may have overlooked or been unable to determine.

The rates and terms of the companies — the items most advertised — are not going to vary much. Banks and finance companies get their money from the same sources and will have to pay about the same amount, so they will charge similar rates. It is wise, therefore, to shop for other criteria, because that is where the differences show up. A boat can meet the IRS criteria for a second home and therefore the interest on a loan secured by the boat may be tax deductible. For this reason, it might be wise to finance your next boat even if you have the funds to pay for it outright. But check with your accountant and refer to Bob Wood's article on the subject on Page 20.

If you're selling a boat, rather than buying one, you would be just as wise to look into financing. When you find a person who wants to buy

your boat, you want the sale to go as smoothly as possible. Can you think of anything more discouraging than having a potential buyer go to a marine finance company and learn from them that your boat doesn't fit the loan criteria for that bank? A big red flag was just hung on your boat. Or worse yet, your buyer goes to his local bank, and they quote terms and rates that are overly stringent and, in doing so, crush the deal.

If you are prepared ahead of time to guide your prospect to the financing firms that can supply funds to buy your boat, you will make it easy to buy from you. It would also be wise, if you are selling your boat, to get a survey done by a certified surveyor. This will prepare you for any shortcomings your boat might have so you can correct them or be prepared to deal with them before they become a negative in the eyes of the potential buyer. It's better to know the faults and be prepared to deal with them than to conceal them and risk losing the sale.

Not buying or selling? There's one more reason you might want to look into marine financing. You may want to upgrade the boat you have. Depending upon the project and the amount of money involved, you might be a candidate for marine financing. Not all marine lenders do refit or boat improvement loans, but some have programs set up specifically for such activities. In most cases, the lenders who have rehab programs require that the work financed be done by an outside contractor. But if you're a do-it-yourselfer, this shouldn't discourage you completely.

Maybe you can separate your refit into a number of specific projects and hire professionals to do the more complex of these. You could do the tasks you feel the most comfortable with and finance the work done by the professionals.

Or perhaps if the project cannot be separated into smaller chunks, you could convince the contractor to allow you to do the parts you are qualified to complete as a subcontractor and give you credit against the down payment. Since rehab loans are not that common, you'll need to do your homework before you get too far down the line with project planning or commitments on a job of this nature.

In the end, your work will be rewarded with financing for your specific needs.

Editor's note: *If you've had a good experience getting a loan for an older boat, please send us names and contact information to share.*

If you're buying a boat:

- Start looking for financing sources as soon as you begin looking for a boat.
- Learn what amount the financial sources will let you borrow, based on a down-payment and terms which you can be comfortable with.
- Start looking for a certified surveyor.

If you're selling your boat:

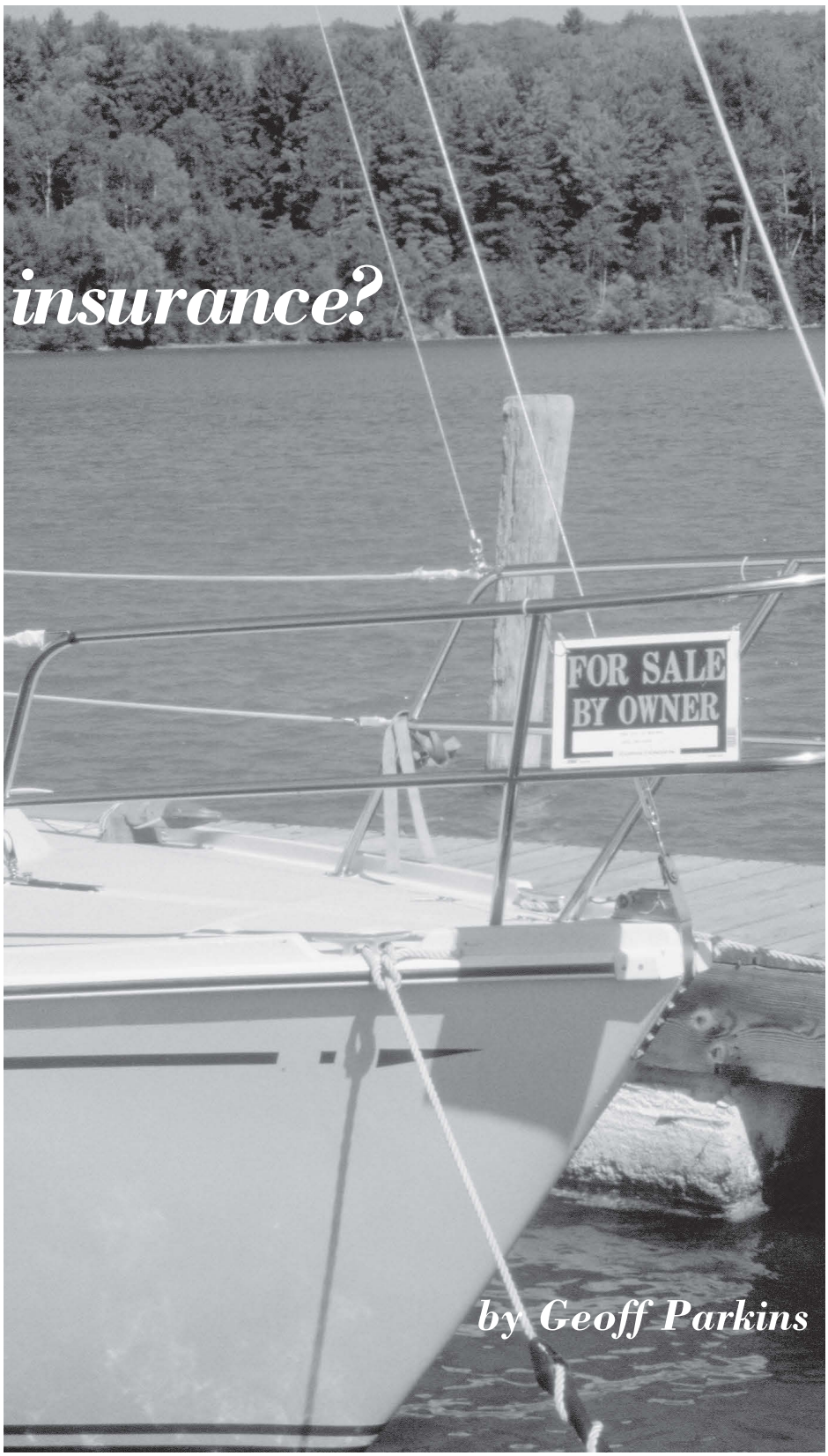
- Start looking for financing sources for boats like yours.
- Get rates, terms, down-payment requirements, and even loan application forms from these sources so you can help your prospect become a buyer.
- Get a certified surveyor to do a full survey of your boat.

If you just want to upgrade your boat:

- Find out which finance companies offer refit loans.
- Get estimates from reliable contractors for the work you want to do.
- Find out if you can serve as a subcontractor to hold down the cost or to get credit for partial payment.

Editor's note: *Jim told us that one constant in his research on financing older boats was the refrain, "No wooden boats." We asked Carl Cramer, editor and publisher of* WoodenBoat *to tell us about this situation. His response was that most of the national marine financial companies do finance wooden boats, although they may not admit it immediately. He added, "If one buys a used boat through a broker, typically that broker has local recommendations" and noted that the two primary items necessary to secure financing in his opinion are a successful survey and good credit. After that, he says, "All else becomes secondary, including the hull material."*

What about insurance?



by Geoff Parkins

Picture a scene from a really bad nightmare. You're on the maiden voyage of the newly restored nautical fantasy you've just spent three years sweating, spending, and bleeding into. It's a perfect day for sailing, with your destination 15 miles north of you and the wind out of the west at 10-15 knots. The skies are clear, and beers are chilling in the icebox. Myron, your old high school buddy, is feeding the fish over the leeward rail, giving you a nice chuckle at someone else's expense. Here's where it turns bad: instead of keeping an eagle eye forward as assigned, Myron is paying for his double chili omelet breakfast croissant. Instead of keeping your own fool eyes open, you're watching Myron. Pity you don't see the 120-foot gin palace you're about to T-bone.

The screeching, rending, tearing crash you hear is nothing compared to what's about to happen. It seems you've hit Johnny Cochran's new flagship, *Litigious*, in the one spot that would sink her on the spot. Meanwhile, Myron flew forward and knocked himself silly (thin skulls run in his family). Unbeknownst to you, the force of the impact tore your engine loose from its bed, and the fall split the oil pan open, dumping five quarts of black oil into your bilge. The good news is that your automatic bilge pump switch performs flawlessly. Too bad there's more bad news: you just pumped all of that nasty oil straight into Lake Pristine (home of the EPA, Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and The Fund for Animals). Bummer.

Coolly, almost casually, you reach into the sodden folder containing all of your ship's documents and extract … a yellow sticky note reminding yourself to:

"Look into insurance of some kind." Gasp. Choke. Sport, your nightmare is just beginning. You've just lost the boat, your house, your business, the '78 Monza you traded down to in order to buy the boat, and great Aunt Fannie's old brooch. On top of that, your picture will be on every environmental activist's bumper sticker from Prince William Sound to the Love Canal.

You wake up sweating and with an irresistible urge to run down to the marina and pet your boat. First thing in the morning, you resolve to get boat insurance. Where do you begin? What do you need to know?

Owners of good old boats should know that insurance companies are going to focus on the second, rather than the first, word that describes your diamond in the rough. Get rid of the fantasy that you can call up your local car insurance guy, tell him your 20-year-old 26-foot *Sinkmenot* is worth $110,000 and be set.

First and foremost, you need liability insurance that covers damage you do to another boat, damage you do to a marina, damage you do to your guests, and damage you do to the environment. Most likely, your marina won't let you tie up until you have proof of insurance. Common sense says you should buy insurance as soon as possible. Don't fool around with this. A lawsuit or two could put you out of business. Worse, you could have to explain to Aunt Fannie what happened to the brooch she gave you.

Beyond liability insurance, it's a tough call on whether you get comprehensive coverage or not. If you bought the boat with a secured loan, you'll have to carry comprehensive insurance. You won't be required to carry comprehensive if you have clear title to your boat. Personally, if I don't owe the bank, I don't want to throw money at an insurance company. I need my folding dough for bait and beer. I trust my own skills, judgment, and mechanical abilities. Besides, the risk and exposure makes me that much more careful. Make up your own mind.

You will need to provide the insurance company with a résumé of your boating experience. Some companies offer a discount for completion of a United States Power Squadron or Coast Guard Auxiliary safe boating class. Some will flatly deny coverage due to insufficient experience. It's almost a certainty that whatever insurance company you deal with will want an insurance survey less than one month old before they bind you with a policy.

An insurance survey is less thorough than a full C&V (condition and valuation) survey. Primarily, the surveyor will be looking for problems that will cause the boat to burn, break, or sink. As a buyer, you will probably want a C&V survey to make sure you aren't buying a pig in a poke. Insurance companies will accept this to begin coverage, and a good C&V survey gives you an excellent starting point for a repair list. (A C&V survey generally runs $10 to $15 per foot.) Some insurance companies maintain a list of surveyors that they regularly use. It's a good place to start looking, as is NAMS (National Association of Marine Surveyors). *(Address and telephone numbers on Page 12.)*

Obviously, if the oil pump outlet discharges directly overboard and the propane tanks are located next to the engine along with the briquettes and starter fluid, there are some things you will need to fix. An insurance company will sometimes offer to carry you as a "port risk," meaning you can stay at the boatyard, but you can't put the boat into the water and use it.

Understandably, most yards are unwilling to accept "port risk" boats anywhere except the farthest reaches of the back of the yard. As soon as you send the insurance company satisfactory proof of repairs, you're on your way to watching Myron yack over the side on a spanking reach across Lake Pristine. Satisfactory proof of repairs can mean anything from Polaroid photos and a photocopy of a receipt, to a signed statement from a marine contractor. It depends on the company insuring you.

You will also want to negotiate coverage amounts and deductibles with your insurance company. Most marinas will tell you how much liability insurance they would like you to carry. Find out how much that would cost, and compare that to the cost of the next step up.

If you can afford it, go one step higher. If you can get a discount by restricting your insured cruising area to your home waters, go for it. Be realistic: don't buy insurance for the whole East Coast if you'll never leave Long Island Sound.

Depending upon where you live, you might be able to save some money if you move your boat north for hurricane season. Also, some insurance companies offer towing services as well as other benefits at a discounted rate. Take a look at a few quotes before you settle on one company. Be sure and ask about the claims process. Make sure you understand how to get in touch with a representative and what you should or shouldn't do in case of an accident.

The bottom line is that you don't want to get caught unprotected. If you don't carry liability insurance, get it. If you're looking at buying a used (good old) boat, budget for insurance premiums and a survey every couple of years. You'll have a lot more fun with your boat that way, and you won't have nightmares about T-boning the M/V *Litigious*.

Prioritize your upgrades

by Jerry Powlas

At *Good Old Boat*, we recently received an email letter asking us to list some good old boats and put a price on what it should cost to upgrade them. While it would be nice to develop a simple rule of thumb, we were at a loss. However, it got us to thinking about upgrades. What follows could save you some money.

Odds are you've heard *that* promise before, and you're skeptical because what usually follows is an invitation to spend some money now to avoid spending more later. Worse, the money spent now is very tangible while the avoided expenses are usually a little fuzzy. At ease. This is not one of those.

Picture in your mind's eye a beautiful good old boat sailing in a beautiful place in the same year she was built and commissioned. The crew members are all smiling. They are competent recreational sailors thoroughly enjoying themselves. It is a lovely snapshot in time. What is missing in the picture? Be historically accurate now. Got it yet? When that boat was built, many of the upgrades we might hang on it today didn't even exist. Many of the ones that did exist were not common. What you're conjuring up is a fairly simple good old boat, one which is making the crew happy and working well without most of today's upgrades.

Let's start with that reference point instead of the one we commonly carry around in our heads in which there are so many things "you gotta have" on your boat. The implication is that if the boat was a good design to begin with, if it has been well maintained, and is being used as the designer intended, it may not need any upgrades. This is a radical departure from the advertising copy you may be accustomed to, so let's go step by step.

Rule Number One: Maintaining and upgrading are different activities. Good maintenance does not require adding new gear.

Rule Number Two: The "best boat" must be understood in the context of the best boat for a particular owner and crew. They must be able to afford, understand, and work it. It should be well-suited to the ways they use it in the area where they use it. Using a bluewater voyager for day sailing and coastal cruising is an expensive equipment mismatch, unless that bluewater boat really will be heading out to sea in the foreseeable future.

Rule Number Three: The "necessary upgrades" for a boat should be determined by the locale and the use.

Rule Number Four: The "optional upgrades" should be understood to be just that.

Rule Number Five: Upgrading one kind of boat until it is another kind of boat is an expensive plan that rarely produces a fine boat. Daysailers, weekenders, coastal cruisers, bluewater voyagers, and racing boats are all designed with their primary function enhanced at the expense of their secondary functions. All design is a compromise.

Most new boat advertising tries to make you believe this is not true. Manufacturers and distributors often paint a picture of a boat that maximizes interior space and convenience. It has accommodations for a large crew and is extremely fast, seaworthy, comfortable, and safe. It is solidly built but wins races and can be sailed short-handed by a couple. In short, it exceeds in all areas.

Sorry, all design is a compromise, and the best boat designers were the ones who made the best compromises. Even the term "best compromises" must take the intended use into account. If your boat's essence and spirit are in the lightness and quickness of her design, adding tons of gear to make her a voyager will prove disappointing. Tread lightly.

Rule Number Six: Speaking of lightly, upgrades not only cost heavy money, but they also add weight. Regardless of the type of boat you have, add weight sparingly. Too much gear can crush the spirit of a club racer and compromise the properties of a voyager. If you sail in an area where an all-chain anchor rode is not needed, use rope. It is much lighter and easier on you and your boat. The same is true of anchors. Heavy ground tackle will often require a heavy windlass. This is going to be up in the bow remember, not in the keel. Think twice before upgrading all that ground tackle to the point where you can't lift it without an expensive, heavy windlass mounted high and forward.

Those are the concepts. Now let's apply them. First, just so you understand what's at stake, make a list of all the upgrades you can think of that you might want on your boat. Then get out a catalog and add up the cost in dollars, hours of installation and modification, and pounds of added gear. Don't be surprised if the costs are a significant percentage of what you paid for your boat. Even the weight may be a significant percentage of the boat's weight. Be careful to look for the domino effect, in which the increased electrical usage requires a generally upgraded system, and the improved anchor gear requires a windlass. Last, look where the weight will go. Lower is better than higher. Too much weight in the ends is not good either. New toys on the mast take away stiffness. The higher they are, the worse they affect the properties of the boat.

With the list prepared, determine the purpose of each upgrade. Common purposes may be:

- Replacing weak, worn, or obsolete and defective equipment.
- Enhanced safety.
- Improved navigation.
- Improved communications.
- Improved speed.
- Improved comfort.
- Improved convenience
- Adding to or changing the "mission" of the boat.
- Just plain novelty.

Make your own list of purposes, but be honest about why you would want a particular upgrade and what you hope it will do for you. Note here not what the ad copy says it will do for everybody, rather what you hope it will do for you.

Next, list how you use your boat. Include all the types of uses the boat has been put to in the last few years and will be put to in the next few years. These might be:

- Daysailing.
- Weekend sailing.
- Coastal cruising.
- Long-distance voyaging.
- Racing (perhaps even list the types of racing).

Again, make your own list. Try to avoid the "I-think-I-might-want-to-sail-around-the-world-someday" type of thinking. Be realistic. Now apply Rule Number One: Forget about upgrades until all the maintenance is done and done well. If you buy some new gear in the process of making things work, that's fine. For example, it may not be cost-effective to repair a 1966 depth sounder. Replace it. That's not really an upgrade in the sense we're talking about here, even though the new instrument may have more features than the old one. New sails, standing rigging, and the like are not really upgrades for the same reason. They're maintenance.

To apply Rule Number Two, look at your boat and how you use it. Only when comparing your boat and crew to the intended uses can you determine what reasonable upgrades may be needed, which are optional but will enhance some important aspect of your sailing experience, and which are expensive mismatches.

For example, if you really only daysail in very familiar waters with a very shallow-draft boat, the only instrument you may need is your weather radio at home. You will probably want a compass and depth sounder if you have a vessel with a deeper fixed draft and you could get caught in situations which you can't navigate "by eye."

Rule Number Three should help you remember to review how and where the boat is used. Go ahead and pick some upgrades. Now look at each one in terms of its cost, weight, and the possible domino effect. Because you have made a list of the intended enhancements that these upgrades would provide and what they will do for you — not in general terms but in specific terms considering you, your boat, and how you use it — you can ask the next question. It is: Given that I will spend that much

money and add that much weight, is this the best way or are there better ways to get the enhancement I want?

Will you, for example, sleep better at night with a plow anchor and 300 pounds of all-chain rode or with two smaller, lighter anchors set Bermuda-style on nylon rode? The smaller anchors and rodes may cost the same or less, and you can lift them without a windlass. Identify the enhancement, then find the most cost- and weight-effective way to get it. Don't go for gear, go for what it does for you and choose from alternatives.

Rule Number Four helps you know when you're considering optional upgrades, as opposed to necessary upgrades. There are gray areas here, but think of it this way: all the gear that goes in the category of "that would be nice (or even really, really nice), but I don't need it today," is optional. Optional upgrades are OK to have on a boat but not until the necessary upgrades are in and done. In the list above, for example, replacing weak and worn or obsolete and defective equipment, enhancing safety, improving navigation, (and maybe) improving communications might be the necessary upgrades for your boat. However improving speed, comfort, and convenience; adding to or changing the "mission" of the boat; or adding novelty items would fall in the optional upgrades category. Mark your own list to help you remember when you're considering something optional.

Rule Number Five is the one that has to do with changing the mission of the boat. Many good old boats were designed as dual-purpose club racers. By appealing to one of several rating or handicapping systems, it was hoped that a family coastal cruiser could be a competitive racer as well. To some degree this worked, and a lot of sailors got a chance to try racing as well as cruising without having to support two boats.

You may well be the owner of a racehorse that has been put out to pasture, and you probably want to go cruising with it. In the case of these dual-purpose boats, this works fairly well, provided you keep some things in mind. Every boat has a spirit or personality which is the sum of what the designer put into her lines and specifications and what the builder put into her construction.

This gets a little gray, too, but hang in there, it's an important point. There will be some things that the boat does very well. These will be the things you enjoy doing most with that boat. Be very careful not to harm the best characteristics of your boat in an effort to change the mission capabilities of the boat. Adding a large three-bladed prop to a fast light fin-keel boat is an example of this. It is possible to modify a boat until it doesn't do anything well. It is difficult to enjoy a boat like that.

Club racers can take on some weight before they become overweight, slow, and sluggish. A rough estimate would be to weigh the intended racing crew (say four or five deck gorillas) and consider the ones you will not carry when cruising as the weight you can add without too much harm to the properties of the boat. If you cruise with two, you can add three-gorillas-worth of gear, and she will still float on her lines. The added gear will not immediately jump to the high side in a tack, so she will not be as fast as she was in racing trim, but she will be good enough for cruising.

Heavier boats, boats with long overhangs, and those that never made any pretensions about being dual-purpose club racers can usually take on more weight gracefully. It is important to recognize however, that you can add enough weight to ruin the properties of any boat. As you consider your upgrades, think about what they weigh. Remember that if you want to cruise, you will take on heavy stores. Leave room for them in your weight budget.

There are some upgrades that are definitely worthwhile. Good life jackets you are willing to wear are worthwhile, as are good foul weather gear, sea boots, and deck shoes that will grip a wet deck. The newer man-overboard recovery equipment is also worth the investment. Every boat with an inboard engine should have a minimum of two fuel filters also. If you have a reliable, but aging, Atomic 4 in your boat, take care of it, and don't change a thing except maintenance items. If it does not always start and run the way you want it to, there are upgrades for it that are worth the cost.

Some upgrades seem to offer little bang for your buck. Electronic wind speed and direction repeaters cost hundreds of dollars and are almost as good as an experienced sailor looking at a dinghy sparfly or a tuft of yarn. These electronics seem to have a high failure rate, probably because in many cases they are working year-round.

There are many advances in navigation and communications that have taken place since the majority of good old boats were built. If you need it, GPS costs very little and provides a valuable margin of safety. Like everything else on a boat, it will eventually fail, so you need to know how to navigate without it. Learn to do that, and practice doing it regularly so you have the equipment and skills ready when that little gem takes a timeout.

That's it. What's good is only what's good for you. Evaluate your boat, crew, and usage, and upgrade accordingly. Experienced sailors respect seamanship, not equipment lists. Perhaps this kind of thinking will save you some money and help you fit your boat out in a way that is right for you.

Consider your tax breaks

by Bob Wood

Our lives are rich with opposing forces, dilemmas we continually face and cope with. One of the most onerous examples is the need to earn wages and pay taxes in order to enjoy that life's-blood we call boating. This grubbing for shekels is hopelessly intertwined with the replenishment of our souls. Can it be made less painful? Yes. In fact, I'll show you an extra $10,000 or $15,000 that you may have for your project. Read on, fellow sufferer.

Let's talk about ways to make sure you pay no more than your fair share when the tax man cometh … ways you may not have realized were there … ways you may have thought were available exclusively to land-lubbers. We'll talk only about Uncle Sam and his merry band of IRS elves. But each state also has tax laws that must be considered on their individual merits. In addition, you have to be able to itemize your deductions; if you're claiming the standard deduction, these savings won't apply.

We will discuss three aspects of federal income tax law that can save you hundreds or thousands of dollars each year. No "creative" schemes, no shaving the facts, no innovative (and untested) approaches. Just solid U.S. tax code.

Savings Number One — Your Boat is a Second Home

Your boat is considered a second home by the IRS for tax purposes. Their sole stipulation is that it must have a sleeping facility (berths), kitchen facility (galley), and bathroom facility (head). There is no minimum time that you have to spend on board each year nor even a requirement that the boat be in the water. It just has to have those facilities. As a second home, the boat mortgage or boat loan interest is deductible from your taxable income. If you secure a loan to rebuild an older boat using the boat as collateral, that is equivalent to a mortgage, and the interest on that is deductible above and beyond the primary boat loan used for purchasing it.

As an example, with a $40,000 secured boat loan on a qualified boat, you would be paying approximately $4,000 per year in interest at 10 percent. If your income is in the 28 percent tax bracket, your savings would amount to 28 percent of that $4,000 or $1,120 per year. Congratulations! Uncle Sam just bought you a VHF and a GPS and filled the cooler with refreshments. Next year you can let him buy you new lines or cushions with your savings. Additionally, any personal property tax that your state may impose on your "second home" is deductible.

An alternative savings can be realized if you have purchased real estate with a dock for your boat. The same rules apply: purchase payment interest is deductible on the real estate, IF the property is used to secure the loan and IF the real estate has the qualifying facilities. Your real estate needs to have sleeping, eating, and bathroom accommodations to qualify as a second home. Also, any improvements that you make to your property (i.e., build a dock, run utilities to the boat, build a sidewalk or driveway, etc.) will have deductible interest if you get a second mortgage on the property to secure the loan. And like your boat or primary home, any general real estate taxes are deductible also. Please note that special assessment taxes are generally not deductible.

Note the word "alternative" in the above paragraph. The IRS says you may only take the income tax deductions from two homes: your primary residence and one other. The only way you could take the deductions from financing a boat and some accompanying real estate would be if the deductible mortgage were against one or the other … and as long as it has the qualifying facilities.

As a different option, you may choose to simplify your life by taking out a second mortgage (home

equity loan) on your primary residence and using the money to buy a boat, waterfront property, new sails, or anything else. And the interest on the loan will be tax deductible, if you are itemizing deductions.

Concerns with this approach are first that you may not have enough equity in your home to borrow all the money you need, second that an additional mortgage secured by your primary home will make it too easy to overlook some important items on your new purchase — such as titles, recordings, surveys, and insurance — and third that your home and boat are inextricably linked for the length of the mortgage.

Specifically, if assets have to be divided due to divorce, death, or disaster, the simplifying and expedient feature of a single property carrying the mortgages may become a liability instead. In some situations, it can be an advantage for each component of your life to carry its own financing without obligating or risking your primary residence.

Savings Number Two — Use for Business Purposes

If you are in a marine-related occupation and if you use your boat in conducting business, you can offset your income from that business by the operating expenses for the boat prorated for the amount of time it is used for business vs. the amount of time it's used for pleasure.

Wait! Don't groan and turn the page, it's not hard at all! Document the usage with your ship's log. You do keep a ship's log, don't you? Record the business activity conducted (demonstrated new high-tech marine widgets, showed prospective customers waterfront property for sale, etc). Record the persons/clients/customers who were on board. Divide each day used for business by the total number of days the boat is used for the percentage of operating expenses you may claim.

Example:

Boat is used for business 49 days in 1998.

Boat is used, in total, 153 days in 1998.

49 days divided by 153 days equals .32 or 32 percent.

If your boat operating expenses for 1998 were $8,200, then business operation equals 32 percent of the total $8,200 expenses ($2,624), if the business conducted, in part, by boat operation put you in the 28 percent bracket, then you just saved 28 percent of $2,624 or $735. The savings probably just filled your diesel tank and chart locker.

Examples of operating expenses that can be prorated between your personal and business uses are:

- Slip/marina fees.
- Slip utility bills (water, electricity, phone, garbage collection, etc.).

- Repairs to boat and/or slip.
- Boat insurance.
- Fuel/propane supplies.
- Security system/service costs.
- Annual licenses, fees, stamps, inspections.
- Operating supplies (flares, life vests, charts, tide tables, etc.).
- Depreciation.

Some words of caution:
The business conducted should be marine-related. If you are a chef and consummating a contract for fresh produce, don't meet on board your boat and call it business. The IRS makes it quite clear that you cannot deduct the cost of using a boat, plane, or flying saucer for entertainment. Business, yes; entertainment, no.

Along the same lines, deduction of food and beverages as operating expenses can be justified under some circumstances, but I wouldn't go there.

Savings Number Three — Limited Rental Income
Uncle Sam has blessed us with this last generosity: if you rent or charter your boat or boat/property for two weeks or less per year, the income is not taxable. This is considered casual rental by the elves and does not have to be reported. For example, if your floating palace chartered for two weeks at $1,000 per week, your income would be $2,000. If you are in the 28 percent bracket, you just saved a nifty $560. This will buy you breakfast for two at the Beverly Hilton or onboard groceries for a month … two months for me.

As with all tax issues, the secret to staying out of hot water is to carefully document, log, record, and itemize, and to save the information to substantiate the claimed deductions for at least seven years. Since you should be saving most of this information, anyhow, it's a small effort for big returns. There are many more tax issues, especially for business purposes, that are beyond the scope of this article. Some, like depreciation methods, offer significant savings and deserve their own article.

When deducting interest paid on a boat mortgage, a boat second mortgage, a slip condo or real estate mortgage, a condo/real estate second mortgage, or a primary residence mortgage, use Schedule A, Itemized Deductions. If your lending institution doesn't supply you with a standard mortgage Form 1098 for your boat interest (and most won't), you will need to supply the bank's name and identification number on your return if claiming that deduction.

When claiming business expenses as self-employed, use Schedule C. When claiming business expenses as an employee, use Form 2106.

It seems that there is always a "bottom line" to financial pieces. For me, the term often carries with it the connotation of wretched news for the reader. Preferably, articles with good news should contain a "top line." Similarly, explanations of stupefying accounting methods should have a "numb line." Instead, this article has been all good news.

How does a story on saving a lot of dollars have anything to do with mariners focused on maintaining and restoring older boats? It means fewer corners to cut. Or maybe that extra teak grating is now within reach. Upgrading your tankage became doable. If you want to get serious, an annual $1,800 savings would equate to $150 per month which could be leveraged to finance about $14,000 in needed improvements using an equity loan, of course, for more savings. Money makes an excellent restoration tool.

We do need to pay our taxes to pay for the country's infrastructure. But we don't have an obligation to pay more than our fair share. So don't. If you have some moral objection to getting back your rightful dollars, send them to the Old Sailors' Home in Seattle. My friends, this is a tax story with a good ending: a top line. Smooth journeys and a happy gurgling wake.

Savings	Details	Savings/year
Savings Number One		
Loan to purchase boat	$40,000 @ 10%	$1,120
Secured loan for improvements or Loan to purchase dockage	$12,000 @ 12% or $65,000 @ 8%	$403 or $1,456
Secured loan for improvements	$ 9,000 @ 12%	$302
Property taxes	$1,400	$392
Savings Number Two		
Business use for 32 percent of operation	$8,200 annual operating costs	$735
Savings Number Three		
Casual rental for 2 weeks	$ 2,000 total income	$560

(Assuming an income in the 28 percent tax bracket)

Diamond-in-the-rough, perhaps, but *how* rough?

What to look for when buying your Dream Boat

by Bill Sandifer

In the nautical lexicon, it seems these three words — good old boats — always go together. Some of the most aesthetically pleasing designs from the boards of America's greatest naval architects — Alden, Alberg, Gilmer, Herreshoff, Rhodes, Sparkman and Stephens and many others are now well along in age and, like old debutantes, in need of a face and structural lift.

When, in our wanderings, we find an older boat, a fiberglass boat which appeals to our hearts, our spirits soar, and a smile lights our faces … and then fades. It fades when we consider the work and cost associated with the required plastic surgery. But need it fade?

Let's assess our new love and evaluate the potential under the layers of grime.

The earliest fiberglass sailboats were built from designs originally intended for wood construction. The beam was narrow and the overhang long … the waterline short and the interior small … but the beauty is there.

A Herreshoff H-28 is still a Herreshoff, in wood or glass. A Hinckley Pilot is still a Stephens' design, Seawind a Gilmer, Cape Dory an Alberg, Bounty a Rhodes, and a Pearson Countess an Alden.

Start with the basics

To evaluate our find, let's start with the basics.

The earliest fiberglass hulls were thick and sturdy, approaching the originally designed wood thickness. The resins, until 1972, were of a formulation that resisted blistering. So the hull, barring physical damage, should be sound.

This is not necessarily so with the decks and cabinhouse. Take off your shoes and walk on every horizontal surface; dig your toes in as you walk. If there is a soft spot or delamination, you'll feel or hear it. A crackling sound or a soft feeling will tell you of a problem. Don't panic. Make a note of the location and keep looking.

If the boat is out of the water, next check the underwater gear. The older hulls — Triton, Ariel, Reliant — all had wood rudders with bronze shafts and strapping. Age, electrolysis, and marine life may have eaten holes in the wood or bronze. It can be fixed. Keep going.

Check mast, rigging, sails

The mast and rigging are next. The spars were usually wood or heavy-walled aluminum. Unless rotted, the wood can be reglued and the aluminum painted. The problem with the rig will be the standing rigging.

Most standing rigging will be stranded stainless steel wire with swaged fittings. There is no reliable way to evaluate the condition of rigging wire until it starts to break. To check for breaks, put on leather gloves and wipe all wire rigging with a paper towel. The paper will catch on the broken strands (called "fish hooks" for a good reason) and flag the break. This sure beats using your ungloved hand and marking the break in blood.

If you can't be sure the wire is in good condition and has been replaced within the last 10 years, plan on replacing all standing rigging. Check each swage fitting by cleaning with metal polish and using a magnifying glass. Check for cracks or corrosion.

Just one fitting failure can bring your rig down. The cheapest way to replace standing rigging is with new wire and swages. The more expensive alternative is to use new wire and reusable Norseman or Sta-Lok fittings. Consult your budget and make notes.

Running rigging, sails, and all canvaswork can be evaluated visually. Raise all sails and check their shape. Are they baggy or stretched, do they set poorly under wind pressure? Try the poke test. Ask the owner for permission to hold a small section of the sailcloth in one hand and see if you can push your finger through it. If it gives, or if you make a hole, the cloth is deteriorated. This is probably due to ultra-violet rays from long exposure in use or just from being uncovered on the boom.

Sails will last a long time if properly cared for. They can be re-cut for better shape a whole lot cheaper than they can be replaced. Used sails can be bought from any number of sail brokers or lofts. *(See article on Page 44.)* Sometimes new sails are available at 50 percent of the original cost, if they were ordered and not picked up. Check your budget and your intended use. I'm not a racing sailor, so my old sails are fine for cruising use. The added speed from new sails is not worth the cost for me.

What about woodwork?

With one exception, the ondeck woodwork can be replaced or sanded down and refinished. The 37-year-old teak on my Ariel is still serviceable. The former owners never cleaned it, so they did not wear away the soft wood between the grain as happens when harsh chemicals and hard scrubbing are used to clean the wood.

The exception on deck wood is teak decks. The usual method of fastening teak to a fiberglass deck is to screw the teak directly to the fiberglass below. The teak is ⅜ to ½ inch thick and more of a veneer for looks than for a structural deck. The soft wood between the grain is worn away by the elements, people's feet, washing, gear dropping on the deck, and other impacts. Over time, the deck gets so thin that the bungs covering the fasteners fall out, and the fasteners begin to work loose.

If the decks are very worn, and the bungs covering the screws are popping off, you will most likely find delamination underneath and a very large job ahead. Think about whether you're willing to tear it all up and fill all those holes or just take a chance. Either way, it will be expensive in the long run.

Let's go below

Open up all the hatches, cupboards, and drawers. Use a flashlight and a fine ice pick. Poke any discolored areas for rot. Check the area where bulkheads are bonded to the hull. Has the fiberglass tape pulled away from the wood? Has the mast step sunk into the keel? How about the keelbolts? Most, but not all of the earlier fiberglass boats, had encapsulated ballast. Some had lead or iron exterior keels. Check the bolts for corrosion. They will all look rusty, but determine if they have lost material. Are the nuts octagonal or rounded off? Hit the nuts gently with a small metal hammer. If you get a clear "ring," they are salvageable. A dull sound means deterioration. Check the "floors" or supporting beam around the keelbolts. Are they discolored or soft? That fix is expensive.

Operate all the seacocks. They should open and close and be a nice bronze color. Yellow is brass. Pink/purple is bronze from which electrolysis has leached the zinc. In either case — yellow or pink — replace them.

Shine a light at as much of the hull-to-deck joint as you can to check the seam. See if there are any signs of leaks. Did water get in around the bolted fittings? Look for water stains. Investigate all deck hardware from underneath. Is it adequately bolted with a backing plate? A wood or fiberglass plate is nice, an aluminum plate is better, and a large stainless steel plate is tops. Carbon steel is OK, but it must be coated to resist rust. Carbon steel was seldom used in fiberglass yachts.

Check ports and hatches for operation and leaks. The aluminum port light on my Ariel fell apart in my hand when I tried to fix a leak.

Evaluate the systems

Finally, check the electrical, mechanical, and piping systems. The electrical system may need breakers to replace old fuses or new wire and/or fixtures. Are the running lights legal? The rules have changed over time.

The engine is a whole subject unto itself. If it runs, it is a plus. If it does not, a replacement may cost more than the boat is worth. Price replacement engines before making a decision.

Check the shaft and cutless bearing for wear. If it moves up and down, replace the bearing. This is a big job, but not an expensive one, with the boat out of water.

An old Atomic 4 can be rebuilt and serve for years. These engines are simple and can be made reliable with

upgrading. You are safe if care was taken to keep the fuel system in tight shape and you use your nose to check the bilge before each start. Blowers are required, but the nose is infallible. Diesel engines are really nice, but they're expensive as a new or replacement system.

Check all tanks. Fuel tanks can leak and be almost unremovable. Water tanks, if fiberglass, can encourage the growth of various things and cause the water to taste terrible. Tanks can be cleaned out and repaired, but it is a labor-intensive job. As an example, you may have to remove the engine to replace the fuel tank or remove the cabin sole or V-berth to replace the water tank. Unless you are independently wealthy, you really don't want to ask a boatyard to do the work.

Take a final look all around. I hope you've been taking lots of notes. Find a quiet place to review your findings and decide if the boat of your dreams can become your *Dream Boat*.

Common-sense boat buying

by Bill Sandifer

As a young adult with a wife and one child, I wanted a sailboat in the worst way. As with everyone at that stage of life, money was a problem. But I took my last $1,500 and made an offer on a used wood catboat "subject to survey."

I'd owned boats all my life and had actually built several. Still, I was not trusting in my own abilities and felt I was doing "the prudent thing" in engaging a professional marine surveyor to protect my investment.

The surveyor inspected the boat, noted nothing wrong except, "the cockpit flooring will probably leak, ought to cover it with plywood," and picked up his fee. Blinded by the "professional report," I bought the boat.

It was only on a hard beat in the middle of Long Beach Sound that the knots began to fall out of the "knotty pine" wood planking. Using the anchor rope to plug up the holes, I was able to reach shore with my wife and young daughter.

I never could find the surveyor to ask him about the problem. It was probably just as well, as I had visions of sending him to sea in the very same vessel he had pronounced "seaworthy."

The moral of the story? I ignored my own capabilities and common-sense judgments in favor of a "professional opinion." If I would have taken the trouble to carefully inspect the hull myself, I would have seen the knotty planking, rejected the boat and been saved from a potentially life-threatening situation.

Any person who wants to buy a boat must like the water, have seen other boats, and have a good idea what type of boat is best for him. If a person takes his abilities to think, talk, observe, and reason and couples those abilities with common sense, that person can assess a boat's condition on his own.

Basic common-sense questions should be considered: Is the boat clean? Does it look good? Does it do what it should do? For example, does the engine start easily and run well? Do the sails look good without wear? Do they raise and lower smoothly? Finally, is the owner/broker being honest? We all can sense when we are being conned or "sold a bill of goods."

Three old clichés come to mind. "Handsome is as handsome does." "If it looks right, it probably is right." And, finally, "Buyer beware." All three can be applied to any boat and will go a long way to assure the prospective buyer a successful purchase.

Having said all of the above, does this mean that a person should not hire a marine surveyor? Certainly not! Once a prospective buyer has applied his own common sense to inspect the vessel in question and decided in favor of the boat, then a surveyor should be called in to apply his detailed knowledge of marine design and construction to assess specific details about the boat.

As a person employs an accountant to do his taxes, a doctor to tend to his ills, and a mechanic to repair his car; a surveyor should be hired to assess and value the potential purchase. But only after the buyer's common sense tells him or her, "It's just what I want and in the condition I want it."

A surveyor provides verification of the judgment already arrived at by the purchaser and simply points out the more technical points that need attention and are beyond the purchaser's own knowledge.

In selecting a surveyor, use common sense, ask for references, ask to see reports on previous surveys, and, finally, don't abdicate your responsibility in favor of the surveyor. Use common sense.

One boat partnership: a *(mostly)* true

by Susan Peterson Gateley

The partnership materialized after three beer-budget boaters — Bill, Bob, and Ann — decided to purchase a yacht. One summer day Bill called Ann up. "Hey, let's go look at a Grampian 26 that's for sale on Sodus Bay," he said. Against her better judgment, she agreed to go. And even though she wasn't really boat shopping, for some odd reason she just happened to remember hearing of another good old boat for sale parked in somebody's yard down a little side road in the country.

I think it's a 35-footer," she told Bill, "and I heard the seller was down to $12,000."

"Sure let's go see it," said Bill, and they rattled off down Lake Road in his battered half-ton Ford to check out the mid-summer yachting bargains.

Each vessel they examined looked perfectly serviceable to Ann, though Bill wasn't satisfied with any of them. But when they pulled up to the last bargain, the 35-footer, his eyes lit up. "It's way too big," said Ann. "Bigger's better," responded Bill who swarmed up the ladder to check out the yacht. "Now this is more like it," he said gazing about at the teak woodwork and bronze hardware.

To Ann, the yacht looked shabby and neglected. A divorce and general lack of interest on the part of the new blended family had apparently resulted in the vessel being trucked to its owner's large country yard and deposited next to the flower garden several years ago. The boat's varnished wood trim was now weathered and gray, and several marginally usefully items, such as the forward hatch and VHF radio, were missing. Down below a distinctive pungence suggested that the sanitary facilities were due an overhaul.

"It's perfect," enthused Bill as he opened locker doors and peered into the dank mysteries of the engine compartment. "It's a mess," observed Ann who, after seeing the effect of a winter freeze on the not-empty holding tank and the apparent origin of the smell, went back up on deck to sit in the cockpit.

While Bill poked around below, Ann watched a large colony of paper wasps bustling industriously on their nest just inside the yacht's companionway and studied the view of gently rolling bean fields to the west. She gazed out over the yacht's deck forward. To her the bow appeared a half mile distant. "This thing is **way** too big," she thought. "I'll stick to my daysailer."

After 15 minutes or so Bill emerged saying, "Let's buy it. Let's offer him $8,000." "Have **you** got $8,000?" Ann asked pointedly. Bill didn't, so they climbed down the ladder and into the truck to search for smaller prey. As they drove away, Ann looked back one last time at the yacht. It was a peculiar sight, looking a bit like a beached whale among the farm sheds and flower beds. Despite her inappropriate and unlikely setting, the old yacht sat upon her cradle with an undeniable, if perhaps slightly worn and weary, dignity. "She surely is a pretty boat," thought Ann as they drove off.

The next morning Ann awoke as the summer sun streamed into her bedroom. In her mind lingered a picture of a graceful boat beside the dahlias waiting patiently to someday spread its white wings again on the wide lake. "I want that boat," Ann said to herself. Then she thought, "That's absurd, I can't afford a big boat, and I can't afford a dock for it either. At that point, she recalls, a voice spoke to her from the great unknown: "Then form that co-op boat partnership."

After breakfast she called Bill up. "Do you still want to go partners on a boat?" she asked. "Sure let's do it," he answered. Ann hung up, poured a second cup of coffee and plotted. She said to herself, "Bill's lots of fun but with his work schedule, he won't be able to do anything to the boat in the spring. But Bob could."

Bob was a casual boating friend. "Bob knows how to fix boats," thought Ann. "He can fix up that big boat; no problem." She also reflected that, unlike impulsive, fast-talking Bill, Bob was calm, careful, and (she thought) level-headed. "He's got lots of common sense. He'll keep everybody in line." She decided to call Bob even though she figured he was far too smart to get involved with a partnership when he didn't even know one owner. "He'll probably say no," she thought.

He didn't. So on a summer evening all three would-be yachters drove back out into the country to see the boat again. At Ann's suggestion, they took Bill's truck as it was the rattiest looking vehicle. That way, she reasoned, they'd look like proper shoestring yachters.

They offered the big boat's owner $8,000 dollars cash. He accepted. Afterward Ann tried to figure out what made her change her mind about getting a good old boat. "I think the boat just wanted to get out of that yard really badly, so it spoke to me," she decided.

After a week of work to get their boat functional — which included a fair amount of Bill's time spent in close communion with the three-cylinder long-dormant diesel — launch day arrived, and the three partners motored their new yacht to its slip. Then a day later they went sailing.

The first sail was a revelation to Ann. To her surprise the yacht that seemed so huge and unwieldy at the dock proved surprisingly responsive under sail. She reached along in 10 knots with as light a helm as Ann's little daysailer. She tacked and jibed easily and even maneuvered in and out of the dock quite readily. Ann, who had been intimidated by the yacht's size, began thinking big boats are fun.

The partnership had been launched in late August, and the three owners soon fell into a pattern. On his rare day off, Bill took his wife and kids out into the bay. There he dropped anchor and everyone went swimming. Bob and Ann, who were both single (and considerably keener on sailing),

story with a *(mostly)* happy ending

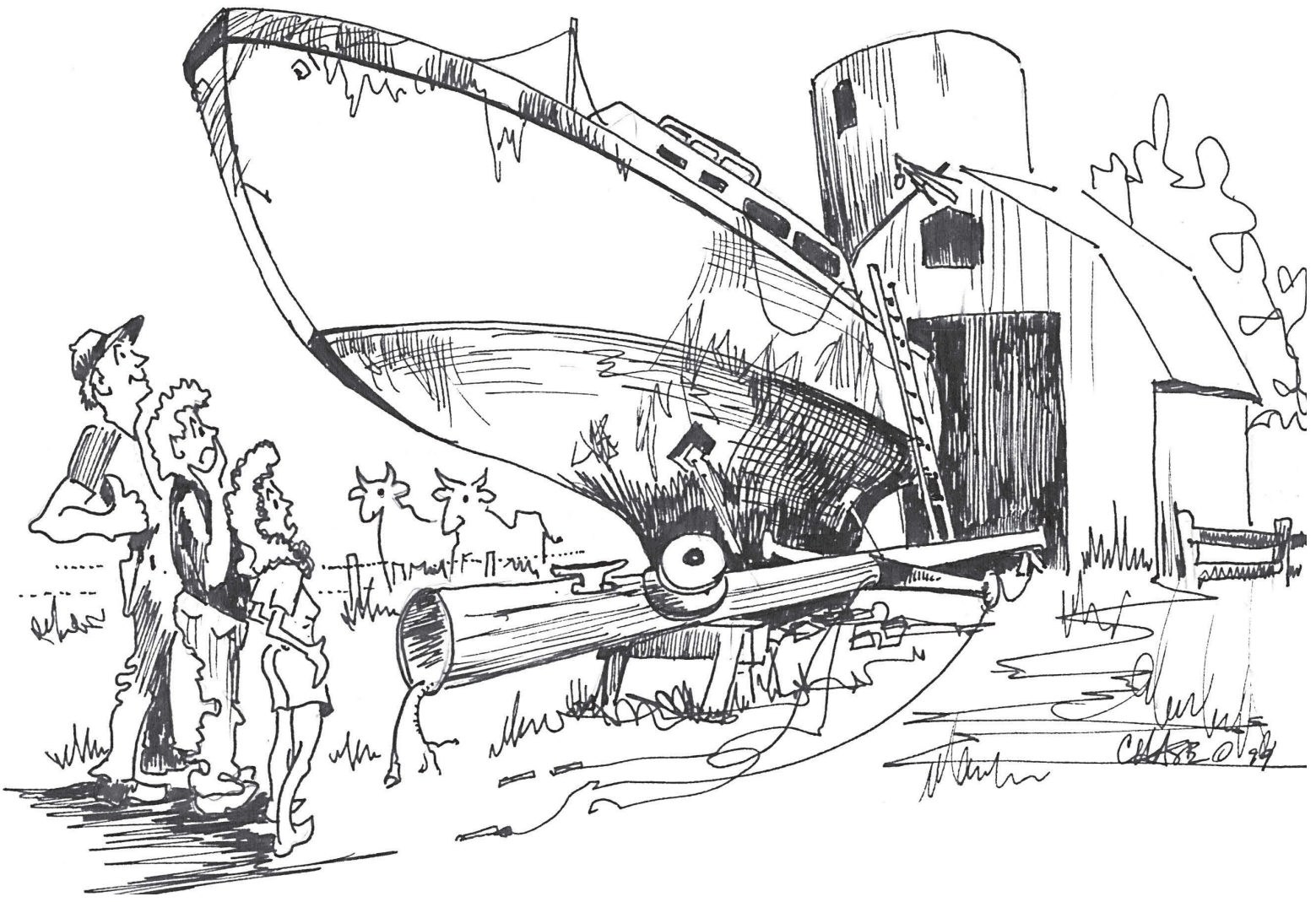
employed each other as crew while their daysailers languished neglected at the dock. The three partners split up the month according to usage and after less than three months had logged over 500 miles with their new boat. At least 400 of those miles had been with Bob or Ann in command.

After about six weeks of sailing together, a strange thing happened. It may have been the Friday evening TGIFs that did it: those evenings on Lake Ontario when, with a good sweet west wind the *PartnerShip* reached 10 miles offshore at 6 knots, swinging strong and free over four-foot swells while a hot red sun dipped below the horizon and one by one the stars turned on overhead before she tacked and headed back to her home port in the gathering dusk. Or perhaps it was that brisk Saturday morning in September when with the whole lake to herself, the *PartnerShip* put her rail down and sang a lake serenade with her bow wave lifting and diving into the waves joyous and free.

Anyway, however it happened, it's an old story, as old as mankind itself, though played out in endlessly new variations through the millennia. Bob and Ann, sitting on their boat one fall evening after such a sunset sail, looked at each other and fell in love.

The following spring the three partners launched their big boat. (Or more accurately Bob and Ann did, as Bill was back to 80-hour work weeks.) Bob and Ann took a cruise and did some daysailing and talked about taking their fine new boat south that fall. Then along about July, Bill showed up with his family to use the boat. He had called to notify the couple, so they were prepared. They packed up their bedding, cleared out the icebox, and gave Bill the key. "We want her back Sunday afternoon, so we can get out for a little while," Ann said.

At 4 p.m. Bob and Ann arrived at the dock eagerly anticipating an evening sail. To their chagrin, Bill's family, several friends, and a dog were still lounging about the boat. The mainsail hung unfurled, the genoa was



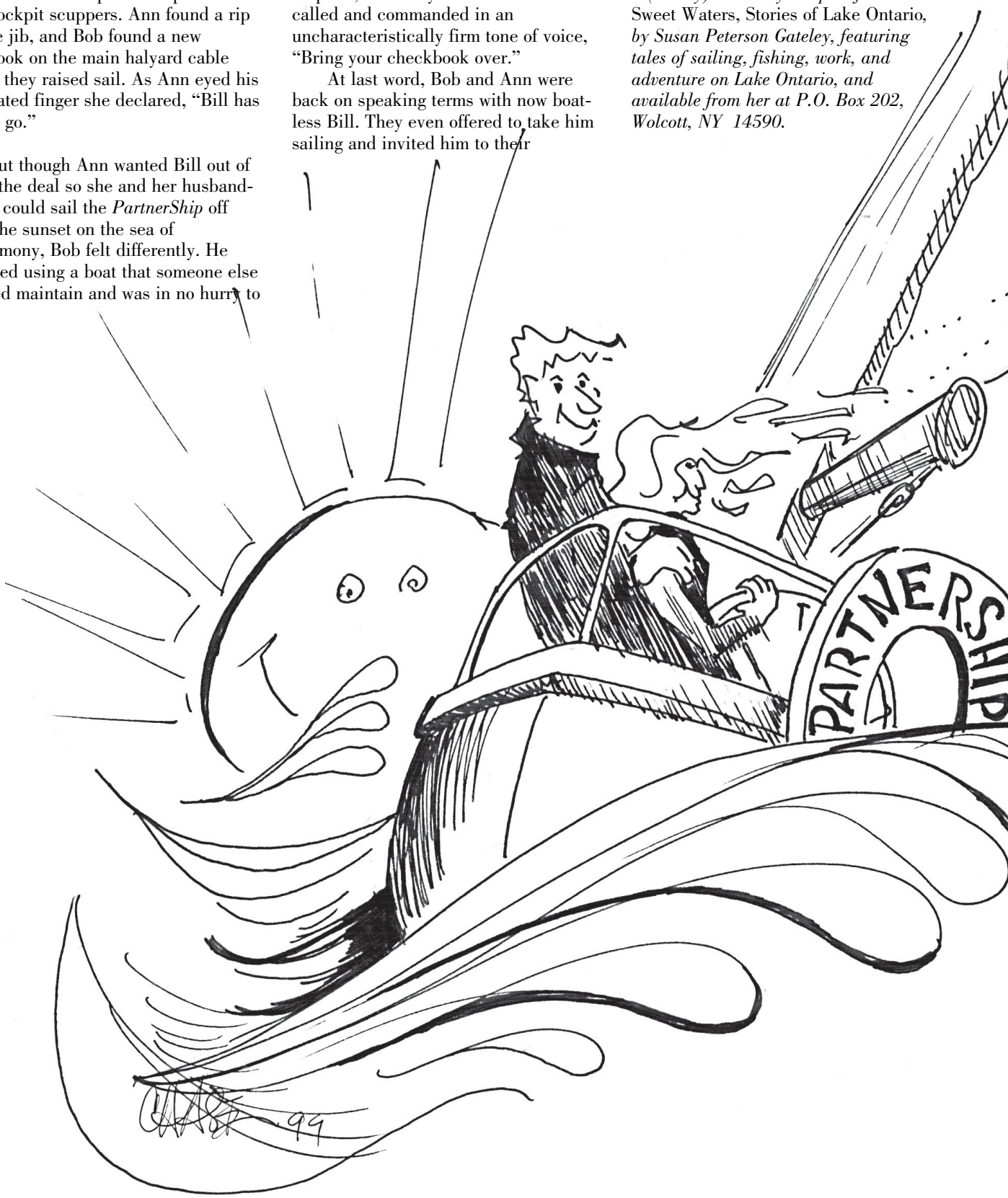
splotched with mud, and there were paw prints all over the cabintop. As Bill and company slowly bestirred themselves under Ann's baleful gaze, the wind began to die.

An hour later, Bob was still smoothing Ann's ruffled feathers as she picked soggy dog food from the bilge and cleared potato chips out of the cockpit scuppers. Ann found a rip in the jib, and Bob found a new fishhook on the main halyard cable when they raised sail. As Ann eyed his lacerated finger she declared, "Bill has gotta' go."

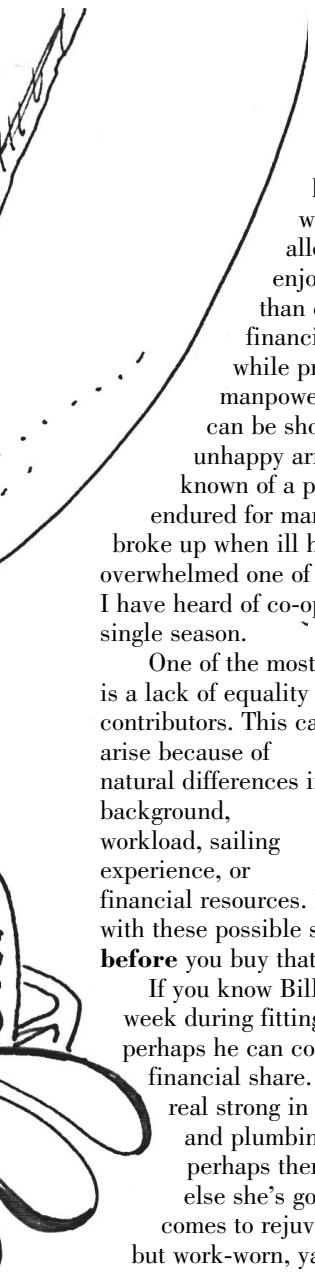
But though Ann wanted Bill out of the deal so she and her husband-to-be could sail the *PartnerShip* off into the sunset on the sea of matrimony, Bob felt differently. He enjoyed using a boat that someone else helped maintain and was in no hurry to dissolve the partnership. One morning in late August, Bob and Ann arrived to install a new anchor roller on the boat only to discover an empty slip. Bill had gone off on an overnighter without warning them. After considerable prodding, Bob agreed to propose a buyout to Bill and much to the couple's surprise, a few days later Bill's wife called and commanded in an uncharacteristically firm tone of voice, "Bring your checkbook over."

At last word, Bob and Ann were back on speaking terms with now boat-less Bill. They even offered to take him sailing and invited him to their wedding. They also agreed as they all drank champagne toasts after the ceremony that boats and wide water can be a potent combination with strange and unpredictable powers over those who are bold enough to go a-voyaging.

A (mostly) true story adapted from Sweet Waters, Stories of Lake Ontario, *by Susan Peterson Gateley, featuring tales of sailing, fishing, work, and adventure on Lake Ontario, and available from her at P.O. Box 202, Wolcott, NY 14590.*



Work out partnership details first, then go sailing



by Susan Peterson Gateley

Yacht co-ops, like other human associations, can but often don't work. At best they allow the partners to enjoy far more boat than either party could financially manage alone, while providing built-in manpower. At worst, they can be short lived and unhappy arrangements. I have known of a partnership that endured for many years and only broke up when ill health and old age overwhelmed one of the partners. And I have heard of co-ops that lasted but a single season.

One of the most common problems is a lack of equality between contributors. This can arise because of natural differences in background, workload, sailing experience, or financial resources. Explore and deal with these possible sources of inequity **before** you buy that dream boat.

If you know Bill works an 80-hour week during fitting-out season, then perhaps he can contribute a greater financial share. Or if Sally isn't real strong in the marine wiring and plumbing department, perhaps there is something else she's good at when it comes to rejuvenating a sound, but work-worn, yacht or keeping up your co-op dream boat. (In our three-way partnership on a 32-footer, I told the two men, both of whom were far better mechanics than I was, that my main contribution to the arrangement would be enthusiasm.)

You should also consider such legal and logistical details as under whose name will you register the boat: one or all of you? What will you do about insurance? Will one of you act as a contact person for the marina? (In our case, we had the boatyard secretary totally confused as she put one person's name with another's address and phone number. Some of this arose because she received checks from three different accounts. We eventually appointed a "treasurer" to pay the boat bills and be our liaison with the yard.)

Money seems to torpedo a lot of partnerships. You should agree (perhaps in writing) how costs will be shared. Also work out how to deal with upgrades and unexpected scenarios such as a major engine repair or a catastrophic sail blowout. Are you all liquid enough to deal with such contingencies? Or should you perhaps establish a boat fund in advance of the "emergency?"

Be sure, too, especially if partners are on an unequal financial footing, that you have "escape clauses" worked out ahead of time. What happens if one of the partners gets a transfer, is divorced, loses a job, or suffers a major crop failure? Can the rest of you carry the yacht's expenses and also, if need be, afford to purchase the failing partner's share if he has to bail out? Keep in mind a forced sale made in haste is apt to yield a significant loss to everyone.

Differences in personal wealth can lead to resentment or tension as one partner opts for better quality gear or extras while the tightwads dig in their heels and insist, "We don't need that!" If this is the case, perhaps the group can agree in advance that the wealthier partner may add his or her toys with the clear understanding that they are (or are not) common property.

Differing experience levels can also lead to tensions and dissatisfactions in a partnership. And if this is the case, can the less-experienced person team up for some confidence-building practice in boathandling with a more experienced partner? This may well build confidence on both sides, as the experienced partner observes the junior co-op member's growing skills.

Arrangements for scheduling the use of the boat seem to vary widely among partners. Some draw up a calendar and mark off days or weeks for the full season, as we did. Then if you want to use the boat on Bill's day, you call and ask whether he's planning to go out. In our case, unless I actually spoke with this partner, I assumed the boat was off-limits on his days. A word of warning: it's easy to get slack about checking. In our second season, one of the partners used the boat rarely or never for the better part of two months. The other two partners developed a bad habit of "assuming" it was OK to use the boat on his days. This wasn't particularly wise or fair. So whatever timesharing arrangement you work out, stick to it and communicate clearly about any changes. Successful partnerships take a certain amount of discipline, responsibility, and communication.

One of the advantages of co-ops is that the partners can crew for each other. All too often I have observed a sizable boat sitting around the marina with a single sailor onboard on a splendid summer afternoon because that person has no desire to singlehand. For this type of person, a co-op can be a boon. Last fall I met a woman sadly selling her 26-footer because her husband didn't like sailing, and she didn't like singlehanding. For people like this, a partnership might be ideal.

How each yacht co-op will play out cannot be predicted in advance. It's probably a bit like marriage. But if the partners treat each other with respect and act responsibly and fairly most of the time, stay flexible, and retain a sense of humor, cooperative boat ownership arrangements can work very well indeed.

Stick with the basics

The simplicity of good old boats meant there was little to go wrong… the price was right, too …

by Ted Brewer

I am often asked how to reduce the cost of buying a new boat. Like other costs, boat prices have risen much faster in the last 20 years than the average person's income. Today a new Nimble 30 yawl costs more than $85,000. I bought one in 1986 for less than $40,000. Likewise, in 1964, a spanking new Luders 33 cost $15,000.

If we compare today's boat prices to those of years past, it is easy to see that a large chunk of the price increase is due to inflation. In the 1960s, boatyard rates were $10 to $12 per hour; today a boatbuilder charges four times that rate. This holds true for sailmakers, riggers, mechanics, painters, and all the other craftsmen involved in building a good sailboat. The people who make boat hardware also earn more, but they also pay more for the bronze, stainless steel, and aluminum that go into their products.

Ted's former Nimble, purchased when prices were right. (She was so new, in fact, that he hadn't gotten around to sewing snaps on the mizzen for the ensign, as he discusses in the January issue.)

Raw material prices have skyrocketed as well. The price of resin for fiberglass boats took a huge jump during the 1970s oil crisis and never returned to its pre-crisis level. The price of teak has quintupled, and other materials have risen similarly It is no wonder that new boats cost so much.

Still, in my opinion, a major factor in the increased cost of a new boat has come with improved technology: we demand more in our modern boats in the way of comfort, convenience, performance, and amenities.

A similar trend exists with our automobiles. In 1964 1 bought a four-wheel drive International Scout for $2,250; 30 years later I priced a fully outfitted Ford Explorer at $25,000. That is a 1,100-percent price increase! But the newer machine had a four-speed automatic transmission, AM/FM cassette radio, air conditioning, electric window defogger, power disk brakes, power steering, reclining seats, intermittent wipers, and more gauges than a Boeing 747. It also got 40 percent better fuel economy, cruised comfortably at speeds the old Scout could only achieve if you drove it off a cliff, and was running like new at 75,000 miles. The Scout was a rusted skeleton when the odometer hit that mileage figure.

A moderate-sized sailboat today has many items of gear aboard that simply were not considered 35 years ago. Indeed, much of what we consider essential today had not been invented back then, and much of what had been invented was for larger, more luxurious boats. In 1960 the typical 25- to 35-footer had no pressure-water system, hot-water heater, shower, or marine head with holding tank and pumpout access. Nor did it have lifelines; pulpits; self-tailing winches; roller bow chocks or travelers; masthead, nav, and strobe lights; roller furling jibs and mainsail; wheel steering; or folding or feathering prop. There was no diesel engine, generator set, dual-battery system, shore-power hookup, electric refrigeration, or propane stove with oven. And no electronic luxuries such as depthsounder, log, knotmeter, VHF, SSB, wind speed/direction indicator, autopilot, GPS, Loran, SatNav, radar, or weatherfax. Air conditioning, water makers, bow thrusters, power windlasses, and the onboard computer did not exist.

In the late '50s and '60s, the typical 30-foot cruiser was powered with an outboard or, at best, a small gasoline auxiliary — the 30-hp Universal Atomic 4 or 12-hp Bluejacket Twin being the most popular. The electrical system consisted of one 6-volt battery. There was no battery charger. The battery was taken home if it needed charging. There also was no shorepower system. There was little point in having a shorepower plug in any case because there were few marinas, and the few that did exist rarely provided power outlets at the slips. Most boats hung on a mooring, and the owner rowed out with his dinghy loaded with duffel and stores when he was going off for a cruise.

The stove was a one- or two-burner pressurized alcohol unit that flared up regularly, or a Sterno gizmo that took a half hour to boil water. There was no hot-water heater, and you pumped the fresh water up from the tank by hand. There was an icebox, of course, either built-in or portable. The icebox wasn't electric because the 6-volt battery would have collapsed instantly under the load. Quite a few

boats had sinks, but many other small cruisers had only a basin that you emptied through the companionway hatch. Woe to the cook who emptied it to windward!

The boats had either a bucket or a marine head, but no holding tank, Y-valve, or pumpout access. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was still a dream in ecologists' minds. Showers were definitely limited to large "yachts," so on longer cruises sailors took sponge baths or saltwater showers on deck.

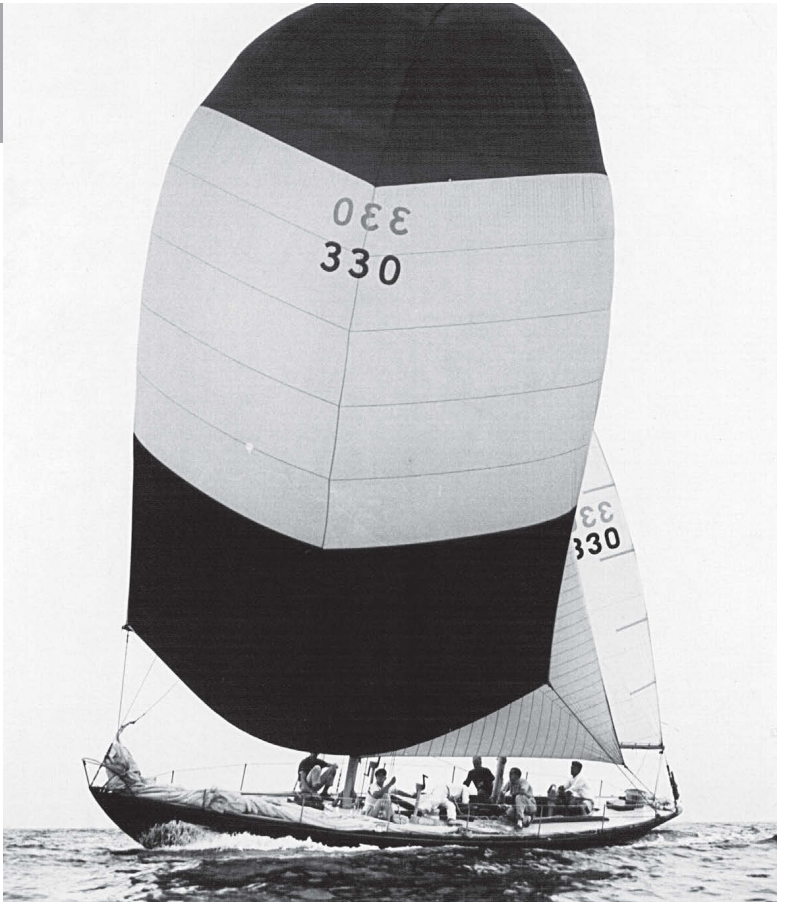
Winches often were not geared, and selftailers were non-existent. Getting in the #1 genoa on a big boat was an exercise in agility and muscle. *Storm*, the Luders 40-footer that I raced on for years, didn't even have a spinnaker halyard winch. That led to some exciting moments when the sail filled before we got it all the way up, but we always succeeded. Although other 40-footers sported them, *Storm* had no spinnaker pole track either; a couple of padeyes on the mast did the job, and I can't say that we ever missed the finer adjustment of a track. It is not that we weren't keen competitors — *Storm* was one of the top boats in her class on Long Island Sound and, with her designer/builder Bill Luders as skipper, won more than her share of both distance and day races — rather, Bill believed in simplicity. In truth things rarely went wrong on *Storm* because there was little that could go wrong.

Navigational equipment consisted of a compass; wind direction was determined by tying a short length of nylon stocking to the shrouds. Somehow we dithered our way through fog without benefit of radar, and we always managed to find the turning mark even at night without benefit of Loran. We seemed to know the direction of the wind well enough to stay ahead of the competition, too. And although we had no windspeed indicator, we always managed to shorten sail about the time that the lee rail went under. When green water rolled onto the deck, we figured out, without the aid of a computer, that we were carrying too much canvas.

The compass light was the only electric light aboard; kerosene was used for running lights, so we rarely had problems running short of battery power, and because the diesel started with a hand crank, it didn't matter too much if the battery did go flat. *Storm's* galley consisted of a one-burner gimbaled Sterno stove and a plastic basin we emptied overboard, yet our crew of six hearties never went hungry, and we never had a plugged sink drain.

When it came to safety equipment, *Storm* had no radio, depthsounder (well, we did have a lead line), safety harnesses, life raft, or EPIRB; no jacklines, man-overboard pole, strobes, or high-capacity electric bilge pump. In one respect she was better off than the eight-meter sloop *Vision* that I first started racing seriously aboard in 1957. *Storm*, at least, had a bow pulpit and life rails! On *Vision* it was definitely one hand for yourself and one for the ship. Granted, at night in a stiff breeze, "the one hand for the ship" was often a death grip.

I'm not proposing that we give up safety gear or modern conveniences, but judicious selection can save substantial money. On my last boat, the hot and cold pressure-water system with shower cost $1,000. Because I sail and anchor out whenever I can, I rarely had hot water in the tank. And because I would rather pay 50 cents for a shower in a marina than wipe up the head after the shower has soaked everything, the shower was still virginal when I sold the boat. I could have saved $1,000 and never missed it. The oven on the alcohol stove was a $750 extra and that probably represented about $150 for each time I used it in the five years I owned the boat. I also could have easily lived without shorepower, which set me back another $400. I only used it during the winter to keep a couple of lights burning to dry the boat a bit. A $10 extension cord would have served just as well.



Peter Barlow

Bill Luders' 40-foot* Storm, *a simple boat, an excellent racing machine, and a dream to steer.

Switching to a 2-cylinder diesel instead of the standard 1-cylinder unit cost another $1,500. Then there were the other extras: custom upholstery, varnished interior, special Formica, and a $700 diesel cabin heater. In short, for me there was almost a 25 percent increase in the base cost simply for "I can't live without it" doodads that really added little to the pleasure of sailing or cruising. As on *Storm*, I managed without rollerfurling gear, Loran, SatNav, radar, and wind speed/direction indicator.

I am not suggesting that you put on a hair shirt and live like a hermit, but if the budget for that next boat is tight, analyze your needs. Then put your money into the essentials like hull, rig, and sails, and learn to live without some of the little luxuries. Any money you save can be set aside to help pay for that long cruise, and you will be the better for it. If you do have a few shekels left over, the best extra you can buy for the boat and yourself is a copy of L. Francis Herreshoff's *The Compleat Cruiser*. That famous little book is still the Bible for "keeping it simple" and getting the best out of cruising.

First published in Cruising World, *October 1995.*

Blue water without red ink: One couple's *Priority* approach

Finding the right (and affordable) boat could be a matter of initiative, perseverance and mathematics

I had our opening statement memorized. "We're looking for an offshore capable boat for under $25,000." After saying this, I always felt a little silly. What sounded good at home, seemed naïve as Jan and I sat in yacht brokers' offices. Each had his or her own reaction to our request, and some even took us seriously. In this way, we spent a wonderful and, at times frustrating, 18 months investigating potential boats by telephone, mail, and numerous trips throughout the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Coast. Some brokers were surprised by our systematic analysis of what they considered to be the low end of the used boat market. A few agreed with our system and became our allies.

We started by considering a potential boat's designer, builder and basic structural condition. To us, these three components formed the sides of an equilateral triangle. Just as a triangle needs equal strength in each side, we reasoned that no boat could be considered a good choice if any of these three issues was weak. Since this was the first step, we relied on our own observations regarding condition and the opinions of authors — such as Dan Spurr, editor of *Practical Sailor* and author of *Upgrading the Cruising Sailboat*, and Don Casey, author of *This Old Boat* and other books — regarding designers and builders.

Next we compared the boat in question with a list of desirable features that we developed from our previous cruising and racing experience. We had definite likes and dislikes and were not hesitant to debate them at length with each other. This list included:

1. Quality fiberglass construction.
2. Draft 5 feet 6 inches or less (for use in the ICW, Florida, and Bahamas).
3. Good sailing performance; Jan was adamant about this.
4. Reliable engine — gasoline or diesel.
5. Two good sea berths — useable on either tack.
6. Strong rig with double lower shrouds
7. Companionway with bridge deck and sea hood.
8. Storage and more storage.
9. Headroom.
10. Good ventilation — even with the hatches closed.
11. Workable galley.
12. Bulkhead folding table in salon (a real space saver).
13. Room to carry a dinghy on deck **(no towing)**.

If boats passed these first two steps in our screening process, we attempted to "test sail" each by calculating four ratios or indexes. We used the displacement-to-length and sail-area-to-displacement ratios along with the comfort and capsize screening indexes. These formulas gave us a chance to compare four important aspects of any boat. *(See formulas on Page 38.)*

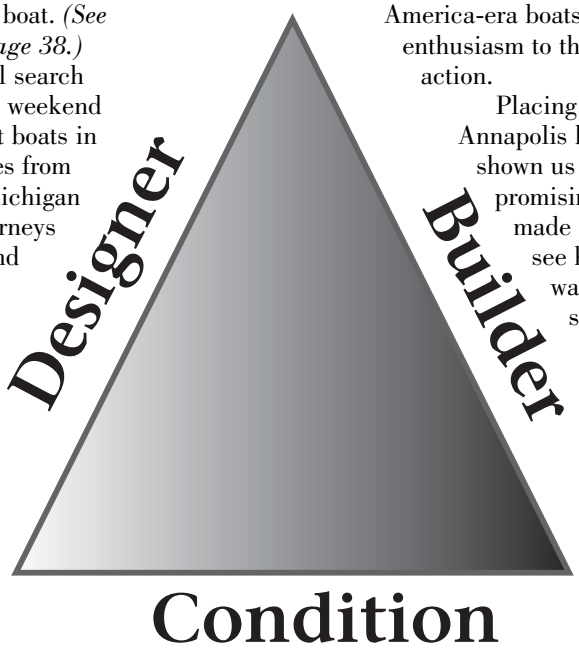
The actual search involved many weekend trips to inspect boats in the Great Lakes from our home in Michigan and longer journeys to Maryland and Connecticut. After the frustration of four rejected purchase agreements due to survey problems, we decided to concentrate on the Annapolis area. Brokers there, it seemed, were able to show us better quality boats within our budget.

We had been shown three 1970-vintage Tartan 34Cs, but I had been put off by their single lower shrouds and the fact that the price was above our limit. Coincidentally, I saw an ad for a company that offered support for classic Tartans. Picking up the phone, I found myself talking to Joe Palmer of Classic Sailboats. After a short description of our search, I plunged ahead: "Do you think that a Tartan 34C would be suitable for offshore sailing?"

I could almost hear the humor in his voice when Joe came back with, "That's what Sparkman & Stephens designed her for." I began to feel a rush of excitement as he detailed how a babystay or inner forestay with runners could be used to improve the rig.

Memories of other Cruising Club of America-era boats brought our enthusiasm to the point of action.

Placing a call to the Annapolis broker who had shown us the most promising Tartan, I made arrangements to see her. Since it was February, she sat in her slip surrounded by small fragments of ice. My excitement grew as I sensed that a great sailboat was hiding under

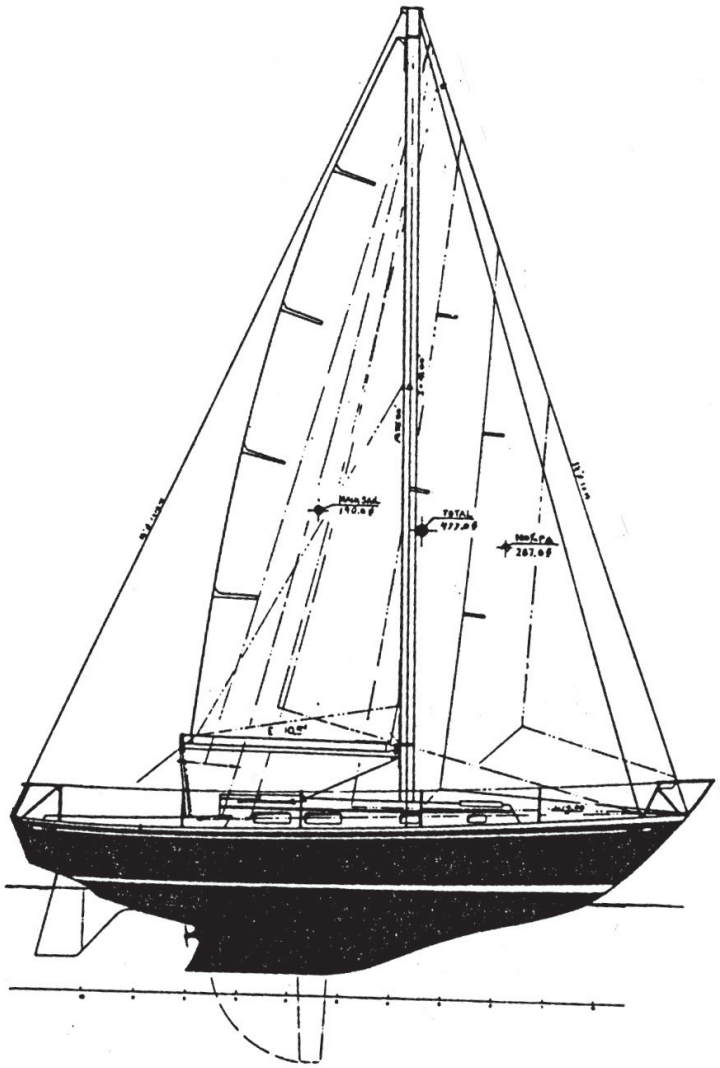


a layer of dirt, oxidation, and splotchy gray teak. Back in the broker's office, I called Jan at work and said that this could be our boat. She remembered seeing this Tartan the previous summer and suggested that we make an offer.

By the end of March she was ours, but the road had not been smooth. A survey revealed blister problems that carried a $5,000 price tag to solve properly. Due to the extent of the problem, we did not feel qualified to tackle this job ourselves. The consensus was that the bottom needed to be stripped of gelcoat and the first layer of mat. Then after a new layer of mat was laminated in place, 10 coats of vinylester would be applied before finishing. We made a final offer that would allow us to have the bottom work done professionally and stay close to our budget. We prepared ourselves for rejection. But a very gracious owner agreed, and during Easter vacation of 1995, we moved her to a yard on Maryland's Eastern Shore to begin outfitting.

Now almost 5,000 miles later, we continue to be very pleased with her. *Priority's* cutaway forefoot, skeg-hung rudder, and four-foot (centerboard up) draft provide excellent handling with the extra bonus of access to thinner water anchorages. As for performance, our first Gulf Stream crossing from Miami to West End (85 miles in less than 11 hours) demonstrated her ability as a comfortable and swift sea boat. "Petey," our autopilot, handled this broad reach in five- to seven-foot seas with no problem.

After a period of working out the gremlins and converting to freshwater cooling, the direct-drive Atomic 4 engine provides reasonable performance under power. We accept the need for constant vigilance along with reduced range when compared to a diesel. The smooth, quiet operation of the Atomic 4 pleases us, and we reason that we can buy quite a bit of gasoline for the cost of a diesel conversion. Besides, we prefer to **sail**!



by David R. Chase

Except for the cumbersome, folding chart table, our Tartan's standard interior works well for us over extended periods of time. Sure, I wish we had more counter area in the galley, but we enjoy extra room in the saloon by folding up the table after use and love the roomy forward cabin with its drawers, bins, shelves, and hanging locker. This forward cabin was not a big issue when we bought the boat, but with the addition of Jan's custom-made bedding, pillows, and shams, we have an attractive area that can remain "made up" at all times. Food and supplies for more than four months fit easily into the numerous storage areas in her midsection. Additionally, the interior can be dismantled for access to the hull and deck.

We are very concerned about what constitutes an offshore companionway. Our Tartan's narrow vertical opening with parallel sides, wide bridgedeck, sturdy sliding hatch, and seahood inspire confidence. Even with the hatches closed, she is well ventilated through her twin Dorade boxes and foredeck cowl. This is essential for tropical rainstorms.

On deck, our Avon dinghy rests diagonally between the forward end of the dodger and the mast. Also, our 3.5-hp outboard stows readily in the large cockpit locker. The dodger gives the helm a bit of protection since it is located forward in the cockpit. Wide sidedecks allow easy movement between cockpit and foredeck. The Lofrans manual windlass and bow anchor mount, that we added early in the outfitting process, handle our 35-pound Delta anchor with ease. Incidentally, this anchor and our standard deck fittings withstood the fury of tropical storm Josephine in a less-than-perfect anchorage. In short, our Tartan meets almost all of our desired features.

To date we have seen nothing that compares to *Priority* for the money we had available. The frustrations of the long search have been more than compensated for by the pleasures that she brings us. She certainly is a good old boat!

Sailing *Priority* on paper

The following formulas were helpful to us as we attempted to compare boats during our search. We used an inexpensive scientific calculator (Texas Instruments TI-30) and the specifications provided by the builders. Our goal was to find rough indicators of performance rather than absolute values.

Displacement-to-waterline-length

$$\frac{\text{disp. in tons}}{(.01 \times \text{LWL})^3}$$

(tons may be calculated by dividing displacement in pounds by 2,240)

This ratio will yield a quick idea of whether the boat in question is a light, medium, or heavy displacement vessel. Dan Spurr notes in *Upgrading the Cruising Sailboat* that CCA rule boats will have artificially high displacement/waterline length ratios due to their long overhangs. *Priority* fell into this category with a score of about 320. We recognized that this number would not be indicative of her performance and moved on. The more modern boats that we considered had scores of 190 to 270.

Sail-area-to-displacement

$$\frac{\text{sail area}}{\left(\frac{\text{disp. lbs.}}{64}\right)^{.67}}$$

We considered this to be our indicator of horsepower. *Priority* scored 15, compared to 13.2 to 16.8 for other boats. As indicated by this ratio, she carries her sail area well in a breeze.

Capsize screening index

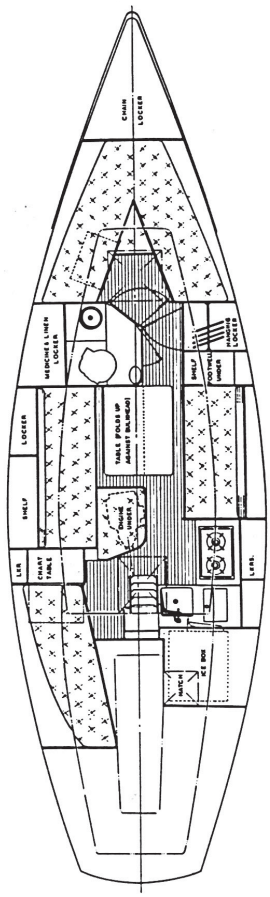
$$\frac{\text{max. beam}}{\left(\frac{\text{disp. lbs.}}{64}\right)^{.33}}$$

Dan Spurr again provides a good explanation of this index in *Upgrading the Cruising Sailboat*. Since our goal was an offshore-capable vessel, we wanted an index of less than 2.0. Calculation yielded 1.84 as compared to 1.74 to 2.08 for others.

Comfort index

$$\frac{\text{disp. lbs.}}{.65(.7\ \text{lwl} + .3\ \text{loa})\ \text{x}\ \text{beam}^{1.33}}$$

We first encountered this delightful formula in *Compute Your Boat's Comfort Ratio* by Ted Brewer (*Cruising World*, Nov. 1980). Since that time, we have used it to compare the level of comfort of various boats that we have owned, raced on, or considered purchasing. *Priority* scored well at 28.8. Among the boats that we compared, the range for this index was 19.6 to 28.8.



Yacht delivery by sea: Does it pay?

by Lin Pardey

Maybe you've found the exact boat you want and have the money to pay for it, but you don't have the free time to bring it home. Maybe you dream of cruising far from your home port, but you have only a month's vacation and don't want to spend it all at sea. Or an inviting rally/race coincides with your three-week holiday but getting the boat home means a windward slog. A perfect cruise would be ruined by setting off into foul weather to cover the 1,000 miles home.

Each of these scenarios leads to considering yacht delivery by sea, truck, or ship. Sea delivery usually costs the least, but there can be hidden expenses and potential pitfalls as you search for the right skipper and create a good contract to cover both of you.

Then there is the opposite side of the coin. You dream of skippering a yacht beyond the waters you know. You love a fine passage and being at sea but are without a boat or the funds to pay for your habit. You have cut the ties with life ashore and are out cruising but find your funds running low when someone offers you a chance to deliver his boat back to the mainland. (This happened to us 31 years ago.) How do you handle this opportunity so it leads to becoming a successful delivery skipper? The first step, as the owner of the boat should know, is to accept that delivery jobs are business deals, and every business deal has two sides.

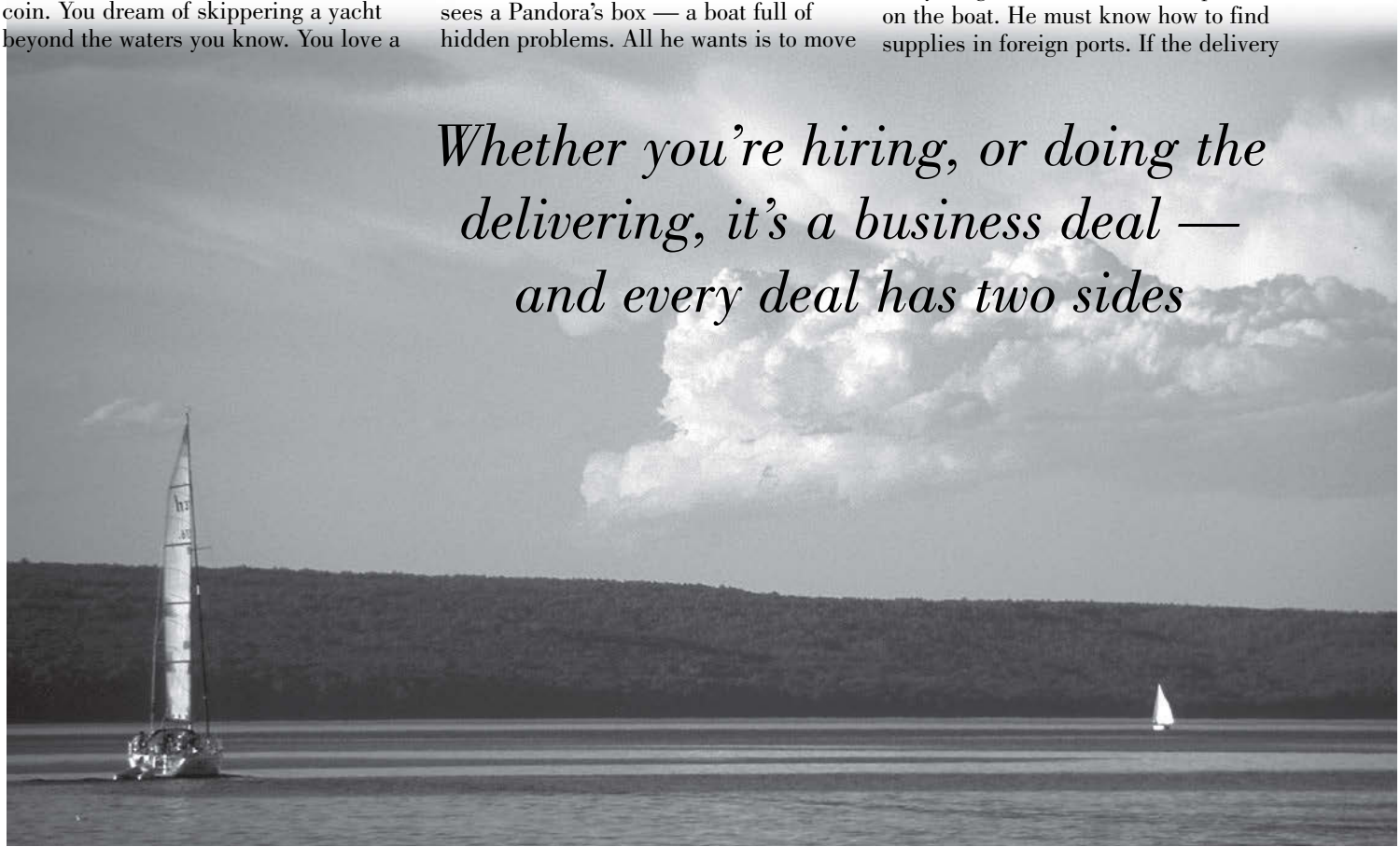
Simply put, the owner of the boat will be handing his yacht, which is almost as dear to him as his 15-year-old daughter, to a complete stranger who will take it on a journey full of potential dangers. The owner wants his boat to arrive in the same condition in which it left, as soon as possible, for the most affordable rate.

The yacht deliverer, on the other hand, sees a Pandora's box — a boat full of hidden problems. All he wants is to move it from point A to point B as quickly as possible with no breakdowns or delays so he can collect his fee and get on with his own plans.

In few business relationships do employee and employer have less personal contact. That is why special thought should be given to the delivery contract. The owner should know what he is asking for and whom he is hiring. The deliverer must consider the responsibility he is assuming.

The owner

Deliveries cost money, and there are few bargains. When you hire someone to sail your $50,000 to $400,000 yacht across an ocean, you need a skilled person who will maintain your investment while it is underway. The person you hire must know not only how to navigate, sail, handle a crew, and operate engines and generators, but also how to repair almost everything on board with what spares are on the boat. He must know how to find supplies in foreign ports. If the delivery



Whether you're hiring, or doing the delivering, it's a business deal — and every deal has two sides

is not across an ocean, but along the Intracoastal Waterway or other inshore route, he must be able to cope ably with anchoring and mooring situations and maneuvering in close quarters. And he must know how to maintain, varnish, and keep your boat interior and exterior clean. This adds up to a very skilled person. Remember that your delivery captain is involved 24 hours a day from the moment he steps aboard, and you'll understand why delivery fees look high at first glance.

At present, a contract delivery will cost you $1.75 to $2.50 a nautical mile, based on the normal sailing route for any particular voyage, plus fuel and airfare for the captain and a reasonable number of crew. Tradewind passages would be quoted on a great-circle route, allowing for the extra miles required to get down to the fair winds, not on a rhumb line between two destinations.

Some teams also charge for food and airport-to-boat taxi costs. Or you can hire a delivery captain on a daily basis for between $150 and $225 daily plus all expenses including crew costs, food, fuel, and airfares. With a good delivery team, the final fee will come out about the same whether you figure it on a contract or a daily basis.

The alternative

What is the alternative? You can move your yacht by truck for continental deliveries or by ship for transoceanic journeys. If your boat is less than 30 feet and the distance involved is more than 500 miles, the cost by truck will usually be less. But once you reach 36 feet in length or a 10-foot beam, you'll most often pay more for trucking. Moving your boat as cargo on a ship will always be higher than delivery on its own bottom for any boat more than 36 feet in length. This is because the rate must include unstepping the mast, building the cradle, paying agents, relaunching and restepping the mast, and then transporting the boat from a big ship's harbor to a marina. The actual shipping fee is based on the cubic area that the boat and its mast will take up. Figures vary greatly depending on port of embarkation and debarkation but two examples will give you some idea to go on.

The owners of a custom-finished Bristol Channel Cutter decided to ship their 28-footer with a reputable company for $10,000 total cost, including insurance, from Auckland, New Zealand, to San Francisco, Calif. A delivery fee for this job would have been between $11,000 and $13,000. To sail it home themselves would have taken two to four months and entailed some windward passagemaking.

"At present, a contract delivery will cost you $1.75 to $2.50 a nautical mile based on the normal sailing route for any particular voyage, plus fuel and airfare for the captain and a reasonable number of crew."

Because it was being shipped, they were also able to pack many of their household belongings inside the boat. Unfortunately, the boat was offloaded at a port 40 miles from the originally scheduled docks and, during trans-shipment by truck, a careless driver hit a bridge, damaging the mast and cabin severely. Insurance claims took almost six months to be settled.

Saved wear and tear

In contrast, another friend shipped his 47-foot gold-plater from Denmark to New York at a total cost of $18,000. A sea delivery would have cost about $11,000 to $12,000. But the owner saved 6,000 miles of wear and tear on the boat and its gear. His yacht did receive some superficial damage: a scarred toerail and a dented boom.

Good professional deliverers are expensive, shipping is expensive, but bargain deliveries can cost you even more. Frank couldn't afford a regular delivery team and gladly accepted when a friend of his said, "I've got two months off. I'll take your ketch back to England for you. Just pay for my food and airfare." Frank had cruised locally for a few weeks with this fellow and knew that his friend's longest passage offshore had been 200 miles, but the man loved Frank's boat.

Two months later Frank received a message. The boat had been abandoned in a tiny port 200 miles from its starting point. Its gear had been stripped off by locals. The friend had been scared to leave port after a two-day blow outside Cape Town. His crew had jumped ship. The engine had quit. In the end, it cost Frank his boat. He couldn't leave his job in England to go repair the damages. No delivery team would go for the boat after hearing a report of its condition. So Frank ended up selling his dream boat for the price of its lead ballast keel.

Delivering a boat is not fun; it is work. Asking amateurs to do it is asking for trouble. We can cite stories of cut-rate deliveries that took two months to move a boat 800 miles, of boats abandoned during storms, of boats confiscated when non-professionals who had no reputations to protect used them for smuggling drugs. Remember, a person who is not worried about protecting his professional reputation will think first about himself and second about your boat.

References

To protect yourself and your investment, don't hire anyone to move your yacht, by land or by sea, unless you get the names and addresses of at least two or three people whose boats he has delivered. Call these people. Ask them what condition the boat was in when it arrived. If the owner tells you his boat arrived in reasonable time and in good shape, you've probably found a good deliverer.

If you are arranging a delivery through an agency, insist upon knowing the exact person who will be in charge of your yacht. Call that person and get the names of people whose boats he or she has delivered. If an agency is very busy, they might let relatively inexperienced people handle jobs that seem simple. Several years ago we delivered two yachts from Miami to Puerto Rico. The

first time we arrived in San Juan we noticed a beat-up 35-foot charter boat laid up at the dock, its transom black with soot, its diesel out of commission. Three weeks later we again arrived to see a second boat, identical to the first, its transom and engine in the same sad state. Both boats were part of a large contract handled by a firm with an excellent reputation. In each case the deliveries had been turned over to sailors on their first professional jobs, since the distance involved was only about 700 miles. No matter what reputation the agency has, check the references of the person who will be in charge on your boat.

Not so inexpensive

Don't be swayed by smooth talk from a sailor walking down the dock. Check him out. The owner of a 50-foot South African yacht came by one day to tell us he'd found a very inexpensive captain, the crewman from a local charter boat who told excellent sea stories. It was only after the boat was at sea that the owner took a look at the boat owned by the man he hired. It was in terrible condition, secured on a mooring in the most exposed part of the harbor. As the owner said, "If he takes care of his own boat that way, what will mine look like in two months?"

Once you've located the person you will hire, tell him all the problems he may encounter on your boat so plans can be made accordingly. If there is no reliable self-steering, tell him so he can arrange sufficient crew. Tell him the state of your engine, its fuel consumption, your ground tackle, all electronics, and sails. Give the captain a frank idea, or he may fly thousands of miles and find he didn't bring along the right gear or spares. Then he'll have to spend your money and his time getting ready to set off.

An owner got a transatlantic call from his delivery skipper: "Sorry, I can't take your ketch across the Atlantic until it has new standing rigging." The owner replied, "I crossed the Atlantic with it two years ago. It's good enough. Ignore the rust."

The well-respected delivery captain then refused the job, the owner lost the cost of two airline tickets. A second deliverer came and said the same thing. So the rigging was replaced. If you have hired a good person, trust his or her judgment. He is the one who is risking his life and reputation when he sets off across an ocean.

Remove treasures

The delivery crew will be living on your boat for several weeks, possibly in rough conditions at sea. So if you have any treasures, either take them off the boat or store them carefully away and warn the crew. There is bound to be some wear and tear during any passage, and you must expect to lose a glass or two or have some chafed lines.

If this is a windward delivery, expect some wear and tear on your engine. Most delivery skippers must meet a schedule, so they will motorsail when they can't lay their course. In the case of racing boats, this may actually be cheaper — a savings on the lives of your sails will more than make up for the added engine hours.

"The owner of the boat will be handing his yacht, which is almost as dear to him as his 15-year-old daughter, to a complete stranger, who will take it on a journey full of potential dangers."

Most professional delivery skippers do not want to take owners along on the trip. Owners want to cruise, learn about navigating, and enjoy the trip. Skippers want to move the boat fast and have a crew who will take orders and do the menial work. It's difficult to tell an owner to scrub the bilge or clean out the head. It's harder yet to say, "We're setting sail today," if the owner wants a few more days in port. Taking owners on deliveries is a conflict of interest.

Be sure to inform your insurance company before the delivery captain actually takes charge of your boat. In most cases, insurers will be more impressed with good references than with professional papers or skippers' licenses.

Finally, as in all business deals, get a contract. Make sure it gives an estimated delivery time. It should also include the expected route and number of crew the delivery captain will take, plus what expenses he will cover, and what you, as the owner, must pay for.

The deliverer

Delivery work looks like a great idea: 150 bucks a day just to enjoy yourself and go sailing. But, few delivery jobs turn out to be fun. Job equals work. People aren't going to pay you to take a well-outfitted, fine sailing yacht on a downwind, perfect-season cruise. Boats are almost always delivered to windward. Old or neglected boats are delivered. Brand-new boats fresh from the factory full of bugs and untried systems are delivered. And whatever the conditions, the owner usually wants the boat as soon as possible. In most cases, delivery services figure on one day for every 100 miles, plus pre-departure preparation time. That doesn't allow you much cruising time. On one of our typical long deliveries, 5,800 miles from Spain to the U.S., we spent 10 days preparing the boat, 50 days at sea, and 11 days in four ports for a total of 71 days. Two days in each port we devoted to renewing stores, going over engines, and maintaining the sails and varnish. That left us three days for relaxing in two months, or less than a day per port.

One boat we took down to Mexico a few years ago shows the general average times for a shorter delivery. We spent three days getting the boat ready for sea, eight days at sea, and one-and-a-half days in Cabo San Lucas waiting for the owner to arrange to rendezvous and accept his boat on the mainland. That worked out at 13 days for a 1,200-mile delivery.

Most delivery captains combine their work with another profession unless they are at the top of the list with a busy delivery service. Otherwise, they will have a hard time earning enough money moving yachts to support a home and family. But for cruising people like ourselves, delivering is good experience

and a fine way to earn a lump sum of money because it's hard to spend much at sea.

Great responsibility

Delivering someone else's dream boat is a large responsibility. Instead of taking six months or a year to get to know the boat, you have to step on board, survey and assess boat and gear, outfit, provision, and get under way in a week or less. Once on board, you have to be jack-of-all-trades. You must be able to jury-rig, haywire, and maintain a boat you don't know well, using the minimum of spares. The owner is turning the job over to you so he won't be bothered. The last thing he wants is to be called from each port with, "the generator isn't working" or "the pump just gave out."

"Few delivery jobs turn out to be fun. Job equals work. People aren't going to pay you to take a well-outfitted, fine sailing yacht on a downwind, perfect-season cruise. Boats are almost always delivered to windward."

The people who make the best delivery captains are good mechanics and riggers first and sailors and navigators second.

An owner is influenced by first impressions as much as anyone. If the yacht arrives with fresh-looking varnish, scrubbed decks, and the interior in immaculate condition, he will overlook most small mechanical problems. It pays to roll up and store away carpets and curtains. In a factory-fresh boat, avoid using any facilities you can, so the owner has the thrill of stepping into a new boat when it arrives. This could earn you not only a good reference but a satisfying tip or dinner on the town.

Whatever you do, write a contract, then get a one-third to one-half deposit before you leave to pick up a yacht. Make sure your contract states the currency and method of final payment. Include an allowance for expenses during breakdowns. For example, "The deliverer will allow three days for breakdowns due to faulty or worn equipment during the course of the delivery. After three days, the owner must pay an additional $100 per day to cover costs of maintaining crew and boat during time taken to repair breakdowns." If the delivery is based on a daily fee, this is not necessary.

Ask for cash

It is safest to ask for the final payment in cash before turning over the boat or its documents to the owner. We have never had any problem with payment but have heard of those who did. To protect yourself in distant ports, carry a document notarized with the owner's signature making you captain of the yacht with full responsibility (other than transfer of ownership) during a specified time in specified waters. It may come in handy, especially in third-world countries. Keep a log for legal purposes and also to give the owner information about his yacht, the engine usage times, maintenance you did, spares you used and gear that needs attention.

Transoceanic yacht deliveries on boats 40 feet and larger are the most sought-after by skippers, but make up probably less than 10 percent of the work available. Much more common are coastal passages such as from New York to Maine, or channel crossings from Europe to England and Ireland, or inter-island transits through the Caribbean. These will often involve smaller boats and smaller sums of money. But they must be handled with the same forethought as a 6,000 mile delivery whether you are the yacht owner or delivery skipper. If you do this, a yacht delivery, just like any good business deal, can come off with both parties satisfied and ready to do business again.

Lin and husband, Larry, have been cruising since 1965. They have made an entire library of books and videos on sailing and have won several notable awards.

Crossing

Some people spend their entire lives in one zip code. Others, through career pressures, family location, health concerns, or good old-fashioned wanderlust are moving from one place to another with varying frequency. Let's assume that you don't fit into the one-zip-code category, and the call to relocate comes in not long after you've either lovingly restored the floating apple of your eye or found your heart's desire.

Maybe you live in New Bern, North Carolina, and your situation change puts you in a new office overlooking Puget Sound. For the purposes of this article, I'm going to assume that you don't have time for a leisurely cruise through the ICW, the Caribbean, the Panama Canal, and the Pacific coast of Central and North America. If you're moving and you already have a boat, you can sell it and buy a new one when you get to your new home, you can have it delivered by a professional crew, or you can take it down Route 66. Unless your boat is vastly different from most older boats or you're moving because you just bought another boatyard, you will probably not recover the money you spent doing restoration work. A sea delivery from one coast to another is extremely expensive and not without risk. The over-the-road option might be the most cost-effective.

Selection

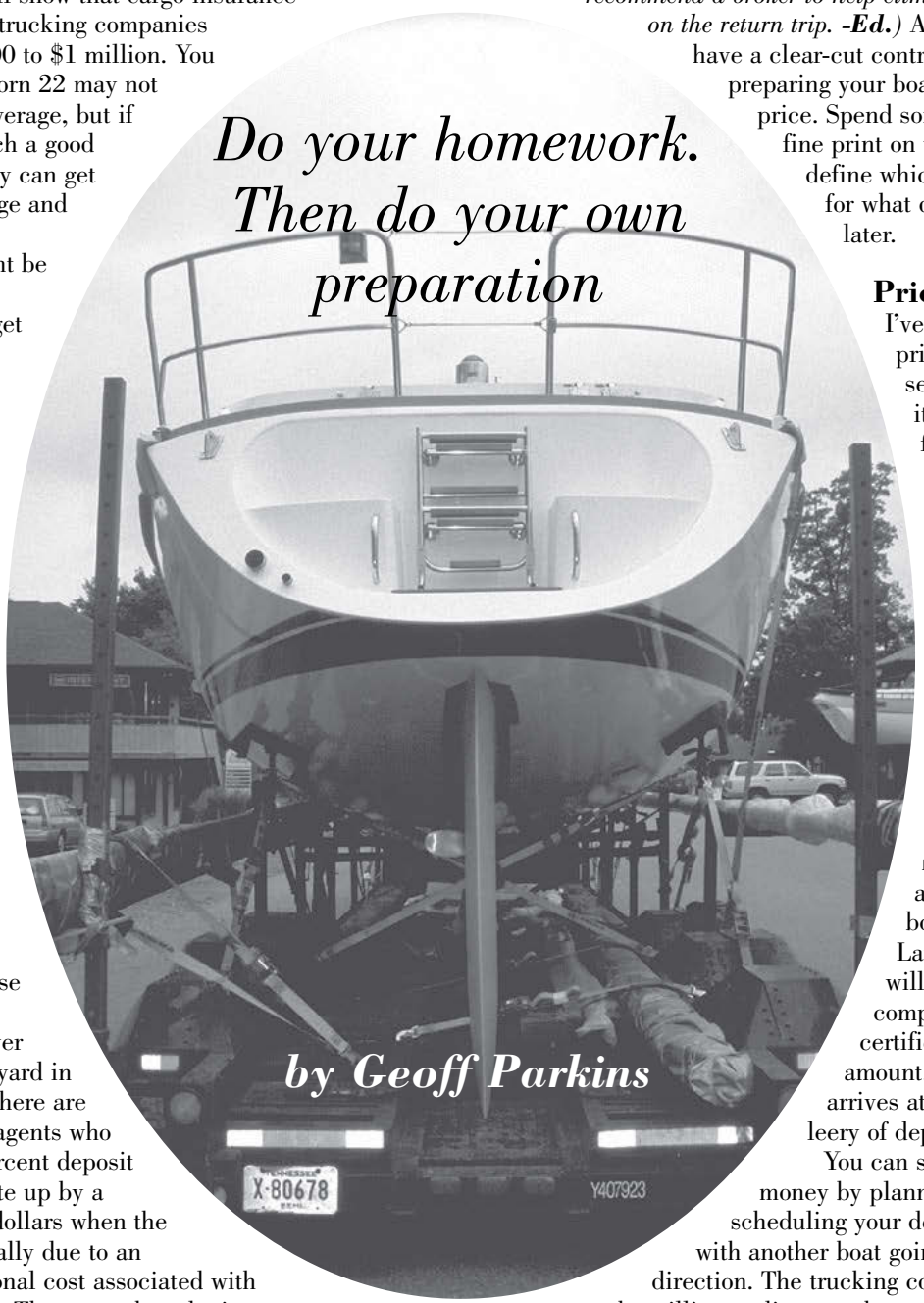
Your first step is selecting a trucking company. Find a company you're comfortable with. You will entrust valuable property and a significant emotional investment to someone who is getting paid to get your boat to its destination as quickly as possible. If you feel that the main office of the company is abrupt and uncommunicative, try imagining what their drivers must be like. A good trucking company will know the difference between a hatch cover and a furler extrusion and will spend some time making sure you are comfortable with their level of expertise.

the asphalt ocean

Find a company that specializes in yacht hauling. Joe's Storm Door and Trucking Company would no doubt love the contract, but can they take a look at a boat and see whether or not it will fly apart at 70 mph? A quick search of the Internet will return a handful of companies that specialize in yacht hauling (see list of resources).

A deeper look will show that cargo insurance coverage carried by trucking companies ranges from $100,000 to $1 million. You and your 1939 Popcorn 22 may not need gold-plated coverage, but if the company has such a good track record that they can get $1 million in coverage and not go broke paying premiums, they might be worth a longer look. Most yacht haulers get their business from referrals, so hang around a busy yard when you see a boat come in on a trailer, and ask the owner or yard manager what they've observed about the way XYZ Trucking handles their cargo. Chat up the travel lift operator; he's seen it all . . . twice.

Chris Bunch of Deep Water Transport in Washington, N.C., has a particularly strong caveat for those looking to ship their boat over land: "Never pay a broker or boatyard in advance." He feels there are some unscrupulous agents who will request a 50-percent deposit and then jack the rate up by a couple of thousand dollars when the truck shows up (usually due to an "unforeseen" additional cost associated with your particular boat). The agent then denies your request for a refund of deposit and a different carrier, claiming the expense already incurred in getting the truck to your boat's location. It becomes a "put up and shut up" situation where your checkbook is the loser. Chris recommends that anyone considering hauling a boat on a truck should contract directly with the carrier, with no middleman. *(Other satisfied clients recommend a broker to help eliminate an empty truck on the return trip.* ***-Ed.****)* A reputable carrier will have a clear-cut contract, guidelines for preparing your boat, and a firm fixed price. Spend some time reading the fine print on the contract, as it will define which party is responsible for what damage. More on that later.



Do your homework. Then do your own preparation

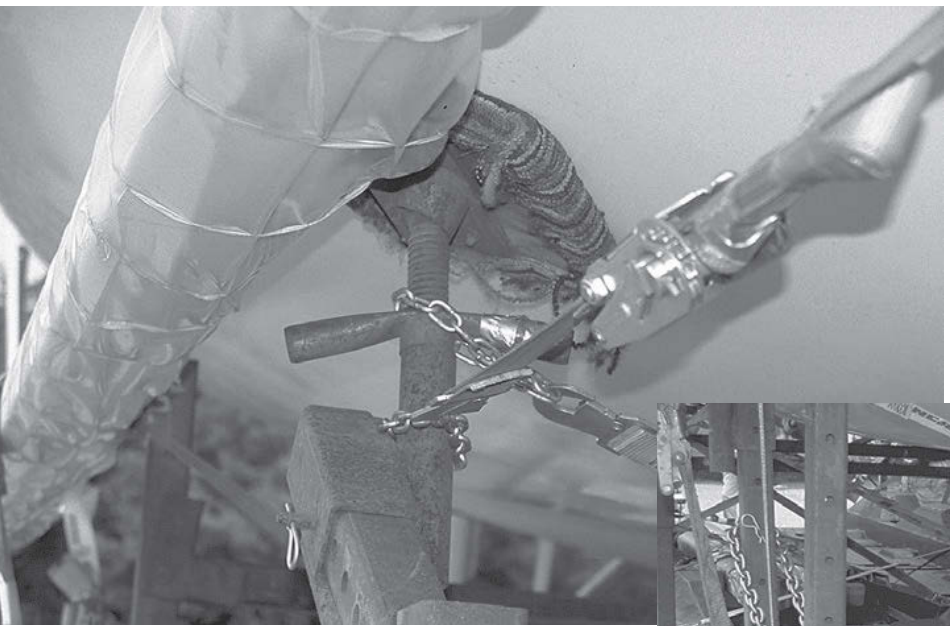
by Geoff Parkins

Pricing

I've deliberately left pricing until late in the selection game, as I feel it's more important to find a carrier that has an excellent reputation and a good presentation during your initial contact. Costs will be all over the map, based on schedule, season, boat size, destination, and "backhaul" or "deadhead" miles involved. Typically, you will see prices in the $1.65 to $2.15 per mile range (for an average 30-foot sailboat, as of June 2000). Larger boats, obviously, will cost more. Most companies will want a certified check for the full amount, due when the boat arrives at its destination. Be leery of deposit requests.

You can save quite a bit of money by planning ahead and scheduling your delivery to coincide with another boat going in the opposite direction. The trucking company is more likely to be willing to discount the rates if he doesn't have

Moving your boat



This mast is padded, although this may not be a good idea due to chafe on attached lines or furler extrusions. Standing rigging is coiled, taped, and padded. It is stowed in the box at lower right of the photo at right. Good keel support is important.

to drive cross-country with an empty trailer. Your biggest savings, however, will come from preparing the boat for shipment yourself.

As with just about everything related to work on boats, the more you do yourself, the more money you will have left at the end of a job to convince your chandler that you're the next Rockefeller. Another benefit of doing the prep work yourself is that it cuts out a significant layer of finger-pointing if there's damage at the end of the trip. You're going to want to blame the trucking company for damage during transit, and they're going to claim that the boat wasn't prepared properly. A word of warning here: most damage occurs as a result of poor preparation. If you let your yard prepare the boat, you won't know for sure whether the rig was prepared properly or not. That's where the finger pointing begins, and you are usually the loser in that game. Consider these three areas for preparation: the rig, the outside, and the inside.

The rig– This is where the most damage occurs. Prepping the rig for shipment is, without a doubt, a pain in the neck at both ends of the journey. However, good prep work is cheaper than a new rig. Start by having your yard pull the rig and set it on sawhorses in a work area. Remove all shrouds and stays. Coil the wire rope and secure the coils with a combination of nylon wire ties and filament tape. Stow the toggles and clevis pins. Label them accordingly. Label each piece of wire as you take it off, to facilitate reassembly. Stow the standing rigging below, and make sure it won't chafe anything when the boat moves.

If you have roller furling, leave the drum and extrusion in place, but secure it to the mast on 18-inch intervals. Secure it twice as strongly as you think you'll need, and then add 20 percent. Put a piece of 2x4 or 4x4 in the bottom of the mast to act as an extension that you can use to support the furling drum. Next, remove the spreaders, and stow them inside the boat.

If you have radar, remove the radome and either ship it to your new address or stow it carefully below. Remove and stow all antennas and navigation lights. Make sure you tag the wires in a way that makes it easy for you to reassemble at the distant end. Running rigging, winches, and cleats can be left on the rig. Running rigging should be secured as well as the furler extrusion. A driver will simply cut a piece of rope if it's dragging on the ground. You might consider wrapping winches, rope clutches, and other gear with moving parts in plastic to protect the equipment from water and road grit.

Although you might think about padding the mast with bubble wrap, it is not recommended, because the loaders cannot see what they're resting the spar on, and it's too easy to set the mast on the cradle with a rope or furler extrusion between the spar and the cradle. Three thousand miles of chafe will cause all manner of damage to the mast and the sandwiched part. Leave the mast open, and wash it thoroughly when the boat gets where it's going. Similar treatment should be given to the boom. Depending on the size, the boom can be secured on deck, as long as the lashings are extra-strong and you have ample padding between the boom and the deck. More words of advice from Chris Bunch: "Boatowners should be aware that they will be subjecting their boat to hurricane-force winds for several days and should secure gear accordingly." With that in mind, add another lashing here and there, just to make sure. The trucking company will supply padding to go between the mast and the cradle.

The outside– Moving to the deck of your boat, remove all loose gear. Stow or ship your anchor. Remove all exterior canvas, and stow it below. Take off the Bimini frame and stow

or ship it. Take off instrument covers and stow them. If practical, remove cockpit-mounted electronics and ship them separately. Remove and stow genoa cars and other loose deck hardware. Stow your cockpit table. If you can, stow or ship dinghy davits. Make sure that your cockpit locker lids have sturdy hasps, and padlock them shut. Seal the gaps around the lids with tape to keep the wind from lifting them open. Use a strong tape, like filament or duct tape, to secure hatches, opening ports, and your companionway. After roller furling equipment, the most common damage occurs when an inside hatch lock fails, and the hatch cover is torn off at 70 mph. Use adhesive remover to clean off tape residue when you put your boat back together. Take another look around, and if you have any questions, remove the gear and ship or stow it.

The inside– Down below, take off anything of obvious value and ship it separately. Make sure everything below can stand several days of lurching and jerking around. Secure dishes, stemware, and drawers. Remove the television and the lovely brass kerosene lantern. Tie or tape lockers closed. Think hurricane. Another nugget from Chris: "Don't count on drivers to spot problems with preparation. Often, they're not thoroughly trained, and they rarely know about boats." Use your seaman's eye to spot potential problems. Keep in mind that any damage incurred as a result of improper preparation is the responsibility of the owner, not the trucking company.

Boat transport resources

A&B Marine Trucking
92 Gibralter Ave.
Annapolis, MD 21401
800-843-5265

Associated Boat Transport, Inc.
13930 NE 190th St.
Woodinville, WA 98072
800-247-1198
<http://www.associatedboat.com>

Boats Express, Inc.
2451 McNullen Booth Rd. #310
Clearwater, FL 33759
727-791-1649
<http://www.boatsexpress.com>

Can-Am Marine Transit
S 2669 CTH-V
Hillsboro, WI 54634
800-392-6660
<http.www.can-ammtransit.com>

Cross Country Boat Transport
11661 Lockridge Ave. S
Hastings, MN 55033
651-437-2454

Deep Water Transport
6610 Clarks Neck Rd.
Washington, NC 27889
800-382-2628
<http://www.deepwatertransport.net>

Dudley Boat Transportation
5303 Pacific Highway E #142
Fife, WA 98424-2601
800-426-8120
(Northwest Coast region only)

Hight Marine Transport, Inc.
759 West Austin
Giddings, TX 78942
800-519-2248
<http://www.boat-transportation.com>

Jowi Sailboat Yacht Transport
6177 N. Highland Blvd.
Grifton, NC 28530
252-524-5790
<http://www.jowi.com>

Nationwide Boat Transport
5005 U.S. Highway 41 N
Palmetto, FL 34221
877-818-2628
<http://www.boatmove.com>

Transport broker

Overland, Inc.
118 Kuethe Dr.
Annapolis, MD 21403
800-447-0258

A new Sabre 4.5 arrives at her new home port in Annapolis, Md. Also pictured on Pages 19 and 20.

Moving your boat

Timing

The trucking company will be very happy (read: it's cheaper for you) if they can simply drop the boat on the trailer and drive off into the sunset. Haul the boat several days before your ship date to give yourself plenty of time to secure everything and to get accurate measurements of your boat to the trucking company.

Schedule your ship date for a Monday or Tuesday, if possible. Three times this year at my home marina, I have seen drivers show up Thursday afternoon, expecting a quick load and an easy getaway. The boat gets loaded well enough, but then the measuring happens, and the boat is over the legal height. The stanchions have to come off, as does the boom gallows. The owner's nowhere to be found, and the yard already has other work scheduled. The gallows doesn't come off until Friday afternoon, and there's no one available to remove the stanchions until Monday morning. Guess who pays for the driver to enjoy a nice three-day weekend in Annapolis?

Give yourself the extra time to make sure all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed. Finally, take a hard look at your marina lot. Make sure there are no overhead obstructions like tree limbs or power lines to interfere with the truck. Look for at least 14 feet of vertical clearance. If you don't have clearance, pick another marina to ship from. Do the same at the destination marina. Most trucking companies will not accept responsibility for damage incurred by vertical clearance obstructions at either marina. *(Caution: While this is a good number for rough figuring, remember that Interstate highway bridges are only required to have 13 feet 8 inches of clearance.* ***-Ed.****)*

Responsibilities

As noted, any damage resulting from failure to prepare the boat properly is the responsibility of the owner. If your yard does the prep work poorly, you will need to go after them for reimbursement. Any damage that occurs outside of either marina and is not caused by a failure to prepare the boat correctly is the responsibility of the trucking company. In any case, all of the responsibilities of both parties should be spelled out in the contract. Review it carefully and ask questions. If you're unhappy about the wording of the contract, discuss it with the trucking company prior to contracting with them.

Finally, check with your own insurance company to see what coverage is extended to boat hauling. See if they have any caveats or exclusions that could leave your wallet exposed in the event that something goes wrong. I did some work on a boat that was trucked to Annapolis from Chicago. The driver ignored a low overpass warning and sheared off all of the stanchions and peeled off a goodly thickness of the coachroof. Make sure you understand liability and coverage before you sign anything.

It's essential to have good mast support.

That's the scary stuff. I see boats coming and going via trailer every day: shiny new Clorox bottles from Beneteau and Hunter, salty-looking old Cape Dorys, and high-tech Grand Prix racers. Most of them arrive at their destination without a scratch. The guy who owns the trucking company wants to stay in business, and he wants you as a good reference.

Geoff is a good old boater based in Annapolis, Md. He runs a marine electronics business and lives aboard a 15-year-old Ted Brewer-designed pilothouse cutter named Ocean Tiger *with his wife, Lori, and a menagerie of pets.*

Size restrictions for shipping a boat over the road

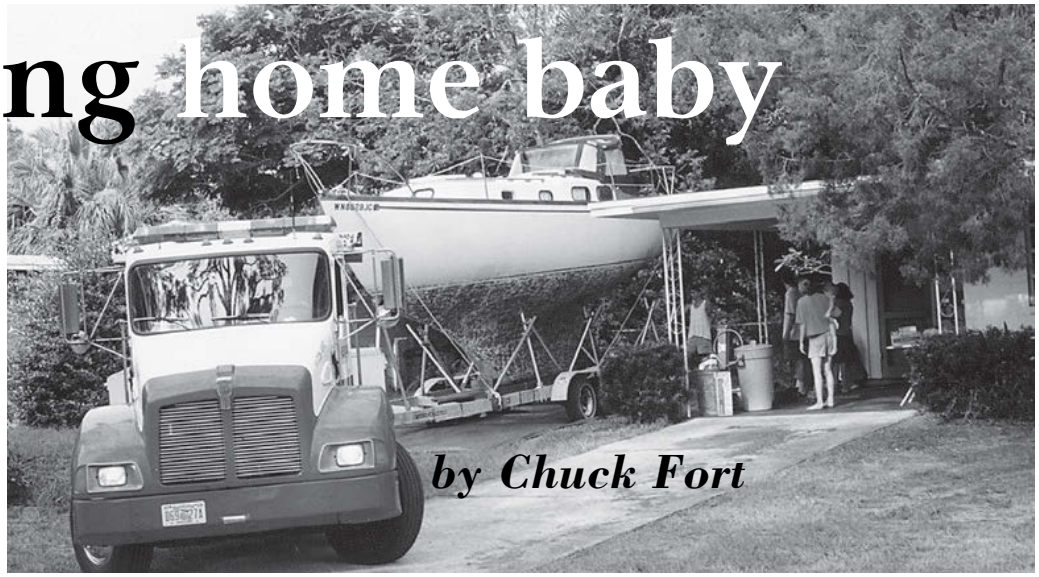
There are certain recommended "Do not exceed" sizes for trucking a boat. In some cases these limits can be exceeded, but only at horrendous expense, say $15,000 for a trip from Texas to San Diego.

The maximum legal height of a load without the need for special permits and routing is 13 feet 8 inches. The maximum load length without the need for special permits is 53 feet. The maximum width without the need for special permits is 8 feet 6 inches. And the maximum total weight of a hauling rig is 80,000 pounds. Most companies set weight limits for the boats they haul at 36,000 to 38,000 pounds. Check with your transport company about measurements and fees for exceeding maximum dimensions.

Maximum figures can be exceeded, but now you're paying for a wide load and warning vehicles in front and behind the truck. That involves the cost of three drivers and state-by-state permits, fees, and routing requirements. These loads are not permitted to move at night, on Sundays and holidays, or during bad weather.

If you're close to the height limit, think about removing stanchions, lifelines, and pulpits. You get a wonderful chance to rebed your deck hardware, and you won't get billed for inadvertently removing graffiti from freeway overpasses.

Bringing home baby



by Chuck Fort

Modify a trailer for your boat, and do your boatwork at home

Lindsay Christine sits next to the carport, miles from the ocean, longing for a stiff breeze and an empty horizon. We are happy to have our trusty Mercator Offshore 30 sloop so close. She's undergoing a refit, and having her here is wonderful.

Older boats eventually need substantial maintenance or a complete refit. A trailer makes it convenient to have your boat at home to do the work as well as for off-season storage.

There are several advantages to buying or modifying a trailer on which to transport your boat to a convenient location. Yard bills come monthly and don't stop when you take time off from your project. After the initial expense of buying, building, or modifying a trailer, storage at your home is free. As you can see from the chart on Page 25, a trailer can pay for itself in a year.

The convenience of having your boat at your house cannot be overestimated. Marinas are never as close as your backyard. Tools, power, water, and materials are all in the same place. Projects can be left where they are, rather than having to be put away every day. No time is wasted commuting to the yard, looking for power outlets, or returning home for a forgotten tool. More importantly, after work it is much easier to walk out the back door and get to work on the boat than it is to load up and drive to the yard. It's also hard to ignore the boat waiting for your attention. Finally, your pride and joy is probably safer in your yard than the marina's.

If your boat is not too large (more than 35 feet can get expensive and complicated), and a trailer is right for your situation, how do you go about getting one you can afford? If you're lucky, you may know of someone with a suitable trailer for sale. Ask around at marinas and yacht clubs. Chances are you'll have to modify it in some way to fit your baby. New sailboat trailers are typically semi-custom and very expensive, ranging from about $5,000 to $10,000 for a 30-foot boat. Unless you plan to transport your boat yourself over a long distance, this option is not an efficient way to spend your refit budget.

Do it yourself

When the time came for us to bring *Lindsay Christine* home, we researched the alternatives and, as you can see from the chart on Page 25, the trailer option made sense in our case. In Florida, where we live, there are lots of boats and boat trailers. Surprisingly, after several weeks of searching, we could not find a purpose-built sailboat trailer at a reasonable price. However, Florida is home to a huge number of powerboats, so powerboat trailers are much more common and cheaper. We focused on altering one of these.

Having done it ourselves, we can say that modifying a powerboat trailer to fit a sailboat is not particularly difficult. We spent about $800 for the conversion, though it can be done for less if the trailer is not designed to be fully adjustable for any sailboat. We were able to modify ours without any welding, though if welding is a skill you possess, it may be easier and cheaper than the bolt-on system we used. We chose to bolt ours together for three reasons, keeping in mind that we would eventually sell the trailer when we were finished with our refit. First, a bolt-on system is completely adjustable — the supports can be moved anywhere. That makes it easier to ensure a proper fit to your boat or any other boat and makes it more valuable for resale. Second, if necessary we could dismantle our modifications and resell it as a powerboat trailer if we could find no sailboat buyers. Third, welding would have damaged the galvanizing.

Where to find them

Besides local newspapers, check the local *Boat Trader* publication for your area. Local marinas and powerboat dealers may have used trailers for sale. We found our triple-axle trailer lying in the weeds at an Orlando Bayliner dealership.

How much to pay

In the Central Florida area, a used triple-axle powerboat trailer in reasonable condition with a 10,000- to 12,000-pound capacity averages about $1,500 . . . less than half that of a purpose-built sailboat trailer. The trailer we bought had no brakes but otherwise was in good condition. The dealer was happy to get $600 to be rid of it.

Moving your boat

What to look for

Gross vehicle weight rating is the first criterion. If the trailer can't handle the weight, the rest in unimportant. Trailers are supposed to have a GVWR tag attached so you can see what the manufacturer designed it for. A 30-foot boat will almost certainly need three axles. Typically, each axle can support 3,500 pounds (including the trailer) and is constrained by the tires' capacities. Trailers with higher capacities usually have larger axles that support 5,000 pounds or more, though they may only have larger tires. For very short distances you may be able to simply increase the tire rating if your trailer's capacity falls short.

Look at the crossbeams on the trailer. The more the better, and they should be fairly evenly spaced. Ideally, these beams should mount on the top of the sideframes, though this will raise the overall height of boat and trailer. Crossbeams that are welded flush to the sideframes are acceptable if the welds are good and rustfree. Open beams will prevent rust better than box-framed beams. Next, look at the axles and suspension. These are typically unpainted and the first parts to rust. Incidentally, some powerboat trailers have their axles too far back to make a good conversion. This is especially true for trailers for cigarette-type boats. Look for trailers designed for cabin cruiser-type boats.

For longevity, aluminum or galvanized trailers are a better choice than painted steel. Our galvanized trailer is nearly 20 years old and has no rust. Many larger powerboat trailers are never submerged; the boats are often transported to a marina, and a lift is used to launch them. In fact, many powerboat trailers are hardly used at all; owners find it difficult to transport a large boat.

Measure and sketch some candidates and compare them with a profile drawing of your boat. You'll want the center of gravity just forward of the axles in order to have 8 to 10 percent of the total weight on the tongue. Some trailers have axles that allow adjustment fore and aft, making weight distribution easy. And, while the stern can extend several feet off the back of the trailer, you'll want the bow to extend no farther than the point where the tongue and frame come together or the tow vehicle may interfere with the bow. Our trailer is 27 feet LOA, and *Lindsay Christine's* stern hangs out 7 feet.

Most trailers are built 8 to 8.5 feet wide and no wider, in order to be road legal in most states. Your boat may be substantially wider than the trailer, but this poses no problems in fitting the trailer to the boat.

How to modify

Once you have your trailer and are ready to modify, get out your trailer sketch and profile drawings again. Your job will be easier if they are to the same scale. Superimpose the boat drawing on the trailer sketch to get an idea of the boat's placement and where the supports will need to go. You'll need the keel roughly centered fore and aft over the axles. You may need to put some stout timbers on the crossbeams for the keel to rest on. These should be firmly attached to the crossbeams and very strong; nearly the entire weight of your boat will be resting on them. We used two sets of double 2x6s bolted together.

Next comes the transformation from a powerboat to a sailboat trailer: the supports. Ideally, these supports should be at the bulkheads. You'll probably want three screw jack supports on each side plus one for the bow. With luck, you'll be able to mount the supports along the sidebeam in order to get them as far outboard as possible. In our case, some of the supports had to be mounted on a cross beam which brought them in 4-5 inches.

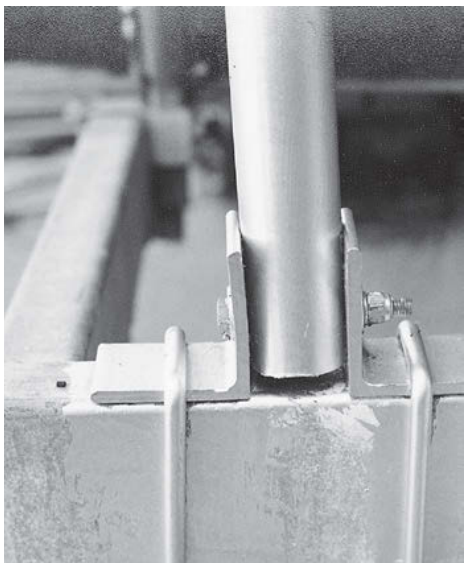
In order to make the supports adjustable fore and aft and in and out, we chose to mount them on hinges made from angle-iron strapped down by U-bolts. These can be customized inexpensively at a truck suspension service facility. We chose Grade 8 bolts for the support pivots, since they may take lot of force during transport. The supports can be made out of 1 1/2-inch (inside diameter) round steel tubing or black pipe available at about a dollar per foot. The screw jacks that slide inside the pipe are 1 7/16 inches in diameter and are specifically designed to fit 1 1/2-inch ID pipe. They are available from Brownell Boat Stands Inc., <http://www.boatstands.com>, 1-800-533-8433, and can be shipped by UPS.

These are the same heavy-duty screw jacks (minus the tripod supports) that marinas use and, with luck, you may be able to find used ones since the tripods

Lindsay Christine ***is loaded on her trailer, far left. Detail of the screw jack and scaffold swivels used to get a snug fit, at left.***

	Yard	At home	
		By truck	By trailer
Mast removal	$0	$250 in and out	$250 in and out
Boat stands	$0	$80x7= $560	$0
Trailer	$0	$0	$2000
Moving expense	$0	$900 round trip	$200 round trip
Travel lift	$240 round trip	$240 round trip	$240 round trip
Monthly expense	$175x12=$2100	$0	$0
Total cost for 1 year	$2340	$1950	$2690
Assets after 1 year	$0	-$400 (stand value)	-$2000 (trailer)
Actual cost for 1 year	$2340	$1550	$690
Actual cost for 2 years	$4680	$1550	$690

Yard costs are for marinas in the central Florida area. Truck transport costs are the average of three companies. Trailer cost is an estimate after modifications have been done based on prices in central Florida. Actual trailer value after modifications may be higher. Round trip costs used in order to compare accurately with yard storage.



Detail of the hinge mount.

usually rust out while the jacks remain sound. Cut the tubing supports short enough for a range of adjustment (the screw jacks have about 27 inches of adjustment) but not so short that the screw jack doesn't have good support. When *Lindsay Christine* was loaded on the trailer, two of the black pipe supports proved to be slightly too long, which necessitated sawing off a couple of inches. If we or someone else ever loads a boat with a shallower draft on the trailer, cutting the pipe will enable the proper range of adjustment. Be sure to prime and paint your black pipe.

The item that made our project fully adjustable is a swivel scaffold mount by Safway Scaffold <http://www.safway scaffold.com>. This device, used for building scaffolds, allows the tripod support to move athwartships as a unit, allowing each support to be custom fitted to any shape. Somewhat expensive, these greatly simplify building and adjusting the supports. Take careful measurements of your boat and try to adjust the supports as close as you can in order to lessen the time needed to load.

Load 'em up

If you were accurate, loading will be smooth and considerably faster than setting up tripod supports in the marina yard, despite what the yard manager may say. We were warned of expensive lift time in the event extra time was need to load the boat, but it was loaded and adjusted in 20 minutes. Be sure you're happy with the boat's position on the trailer. Once the lift is gone, you won't be able to move the boat.

How to transport

Unless you run a heavy equipment company, you'll find it advantageous to hire a local company to transport your boat. While your boat/trailer combo may look intimidating to you, it's just another job (albeit an interesting one) to a tow-truck service. During our last cruise, I worked a short stint as a tow-truck driver, and I can assure you that after pulling semis from rivers and working multicar pileups, pulling a trailer to your house is a breeze. Also, due to the assistance they provide at traffic accidents, tow-truck companies typically have good relationships with law enforcement officers. Pulling an oversize load a short distance with emergency beacons flashing is usually tolerated. If your boat has to travel on an interstate or other major highways, ask the company for advice.

Because tow trucks were designed to tow large uncooperative vehicles, trailer brakes are probably not necessary. The truck that towed our boat was rated to tow 50,000 pounds, and the driver remarked that he couldn't tell the 12,000-pound load was behind him. Expect to pay $75 to $100 plus $1 to $2 per mile, though you may be able to negotiate a better price. Trucks with wheel lifts are able to mount the towing ball on the lift which is adjustable fore and aft as well as up and down, making custom height adjustment simple. Speaking of heights, make sure you measure the maximum height of the boat on the trailer (usually at the bow pulpit) and verify that there are no low bridges, power lines or trees along your route home. Our neighbors peered out of windows and shook their heads (again) as I walked down the street holding a 15-foot tall pole, checking for obstructions. *Lindsay Christine's* height of 14 feet 3 inches was not a problem for the 5-mile trip home. *(Interstate highway bridges are only required to have 13 feet 8 inches of clearance.* ***-Ed.****)*

Once your baby is home, level and shore up the trailer with timbers. It's a good idea to put a tarp down first if your boat will be on the grass. It's tough to mow under a trailer, and the tarp will catch dropped tools and spills.

Bringing home baby on a trailer for an extended stay may be the most cost-effective way of doing that refit. She will stare you in the face after work every day, and you'll also have the satisfaction of paying for a valuable trailer with the money you saved on yard bills.

The master contemplates his canvas. An escaped corporate executive, Chuck "sold out" to go cruising with his family. Now 10,000 miles and nine countries later, he is refitting their sloop for the next adventure. He holds a USCG Master License.

9 steps to boat ownership

Make your game plan to avoid the obstacles

A year ago, I bought my first sailboat. In the months preceding the purchase, I was filled with countless questions about the process of achieving this dream. I didn't know how much boat I could afford. I didn't fully understand the role of the yacht broker. I had no idea what a boat surveyor does for a living. In short, I went into the acquisition process ignorant of the procedure that would allow me to realize my dream.

It's not that I didn't attempt to educate myself. I researched the boating magazines, talked to my friends, and purchased a few books. These sources offered plenty of suggestions on what to look for in a boat, but none of them outlined the buying process and the roles of marine finance companies, yacht brokers, surveyors, and insurance companies. If you finance your boat, you'll be dealing with all these people and organizations. *If you know exactly which boat you want, are paying cash to the seller, and don't need marine insurance, you can skip most of the steps.* Here's what I discovered:

STEP 1 Find out how much boat you can afford.

Walking down the docks looking at beautiful yachts and picturing yourself at the helm can be a heartbreaking endeavor. Sailboats can be expensive. My troubles began when I ogled a 103-foot floating mansion docked in Ft. Lauderdale. Then I leaned the owner pays more than $100,000 a year in slip fees. I continued my search.

Fortunately, countless sailing magazines offer boats for sale. Pick up a few and thumb through the classified sections. You'll quickly get a sense for the type of boats in your price range. Look specifically for *Soundings* magazine and the local *Boat Trader* publication, and search for listings on the Internet. The *Good Old Boat* classified ad page, <http://www.goodoldboat.com/classifieds.html>, is a good place to start, since it lists many sources of boats for sale on the Internet. Regional magazines typically contain black-and-white pictures of hundreds of boats, along with asking prices from individual sellers and brokers.

Once you have some idea of how much your dream will cost, contact a marine finance company. These organizations are similar to home mortgage companies, but they deal specifically in financing boat purchases. They often advertise in sailing magazines. Most of them have an Internet presence; just type in "marine finance" on any search engine.

Your goal should be to find out if you qualify for a loan matching the asking price of the boats you've seen advertised. The first thing they'll want is a financial statement that lists your income, debts, and tax returns for the past two years. It will speed up the process if you have this information prepared beforehand.

In my experience, the finance companies needed to know exactly which boat I planned to purchase in order to run my application through their systems. Since I had no idea which boat I would eventually choose, I asked them to "make up" a boat for me that perfectly matched my target spending cap. Not all finance companies will do this, so it pays to shop around. The CIT Group was especially helpful and willing to play this game with me, and I learned in a half-hour that I would qualify for a loan. The type of boat didn't really matter . . . now I had a pre-qualified loan and could begin shopping for my dream boat.

STEP 2 Contact several brokers.

Now that you have a spending cap, it's time to start contacting brokers. The role of yacht brokers is very much like that of real estate agents. They serve as the intermediary between the seller and buyer. Many states require them to carry a special license. Like finance companies, yacht brokers advertise in boating magazines, on the Internet, and in the Yellow Pages. Find one who's interested in spending time listening to your boating requirements and in helping you find what you're looking for.

Some brokers will want to know if you've been pre-qualified for a loan. It's their way of determining how much time they should spend with you. They are busy people. If you can't afford the boats they want to show, why should they waste their time? I did most of my broker searching through the Internet; <http://www.yachtworld.com> is a great place to start. In general, their Web pages show pictures of the boats being offered, asking prices, and the boats' locations. I sent email messages to brokers who seemed to deal in the type of boat I was looking for. In the messages I described my spending range, desired amenities (watermaker, electrical generator, air conditioning, and so on), my plans for the boat, and the dates I would be available to visit them. It didn't take long to get appointments with several brokers in my area.

STEP 3 Visit a lot of boats.

The broker's job is to show you several boats with the hope that you will be

by Robert Doty

hooked on a particular vessel. First you'll meet in the broker's office. You'll be offered coffee and exchange pleasantries. He or she will ask questions about the type of sailboat you're interested in buying, how much you want to spend, and so forth. Then you'll be loaded into a car and driven to various marinas to see four or five boats.

When you go aboard these vessels, don't hesitate to look in every nook and cranny. Lift the floorboards to see if there's a lot of water in the bilge (if there is, ask why). Check the hoses — if they're as hard as rocks, they'll need to be replaced soon. Flush the head. Turn on every light to make sure they work (don't forget the spreader lights on the mast, the anchor light, and navigation lights). There should be an electric bilge pump — turn it on to make sure it operates.

If there are electrical outlets, plug something in and turn it on. Turn on the refrigerator to make sure it's operating. Open and close every hatch to make sure that the seals are tight and the hinges work properly. Turn on every faucet. Turn on the shower. Ask the broker to run the engine for a few minutes. Lie down in the berths to make sure they have enough room for you to get a good night's sleep. If you have a significant other, make sure there's enough room for both of you. Test the depth sounder, radar, Loran, GPS, and wind indicator.

Ask lots of questions about the boat. The most important things to know are the length overall, displacement, draft, age of the vessel, number and types of sails on board, and price. Also be sure to ask if there's any equipment that is presently on the boat that will be removed by the owner prior to the sale. Some owners will remove electronics such as televisions, GPS systems, and even radios. I spent approximately 90 minutes aboard the boats that interested me. Do not be afraid to spend as much time as you like aboard any boat you're visiting. You aren't wasting the broker's time … this is part of the job.

The more boats you see, the harder it will be to remember the particulars of each, so bring a video camera with you to record your visits. It is important to record the broker's "sales pitch" while he is explaining the various features of the boat. The camera will help keep him honest, and it will help you remember the various features you'll see.

STEP 4 Make an offer.

Once you've seen a lot of boats you'll know which one is right for you. It's like falling in love … you'll simply "know," through some primordial sixth sense, which boat is the perfect match for you. For me, this happened as soon as I set foot on *Prairie Dream*, now *Candide*, a 38-foot Hans Christian. What sexy lines she has! A hull so sleek and firm she made my knees weak. When I saw her interior and gazed into all that polished brass, I knew I was hopelessly lost.

The next step is to make an offer. In my situation, the asking price was about 30 percent more than I had been approved for. So I made a call to the finance company and asked for a larger loan. In a half-hour, I was approved for the extra amount.

Now comes the bargaining stage. Call the broker and say you've narrowed your decision down to three boats (perhaps this is a white lie — welcome to the bargaining table). Give some details about the other two boats, and what a great deal the other brokers have already made. Explain that you really like this particular boat but that you're concerned about her price. At this point, you'll most likely be asked to make a formal offer. Remember that the price of the boat is simply "made up" by the seller, usually with some help from the broker. Everything is negotiable. Offer 80 percent of the original asking price.

Most likely, there will not be a reaction from the broker. It's not for brokers to accept or reject your offers. It's their job to tell the seller that an offer has been made. The broker will ask for a check for 10 percent of this amount, which will be kept in an escrow account. Now it's time for you to "put up or shut up." You should have at least 10 percent of the asking price in your bank account. You're about to launch a huge process, and the people involved (including the seller, broker, and financial institution) want to make sure that you're not pulling their legs. Write the check and have it wired to the broker's account. Don't worry, the money still belongs to you, and it is fairly easy to get back if the deal falls through.

You may consider hiring a lawyer to review the documents that you'll be asked to sign when making the offer and submitting the check. My lawyer included a clause that provided for a penalty of $500 per day if, for any reason, the money in the escrow account was not returned to me if the deal was not completed by a certain date.

Once the broker has received your check and signed the contract (a Purchase and Sale Agreement), your offer will be relayed to the owner, who will have a screaming fit. Fortunately, you won't have to listen to this. By this time, the broker will have figured out a few things. He or she will tell the seller, "Gee, I think we can get 95 percent out of this buyer." The seller will say, "Make it so."

The broker will call you back and relay the message. My suggestion is to counter-offer with 85 percent of the original asking price. The broker will call the seller, and this process will ping-pong back and forth until agreement is reached. How did I do? Well, I managed to work the seller to 93 percent of the original asking price. Not necessarily a fantastic deal, but this is only the first round of negotiations! Read on …

STEP 5 Choose a surveyor.

Before representatives of any financial institution will write a check to the seller, they will demand that a certified marine surveyor inspect the boat from stem to stern. Do not let the broker choose the surveyor. It is in your best interests to find one on your own. Locating a surveyor should not be too difficult. Find a brokerage firm that sells ridiculously expensive luxury yachts. Call them up, be polite, and explain that you're looking for a reputable surveyor in the area. They'll give you a list of names.

Contact the surveyors and explain your situation. Ask how much they charge (typically, they'll charge by the length of the boat). Ask if they'll climb the mast (an important part of the process that many surveyors won't do). Have them send you a sample survey report that they've prepared for

another buyer. You probably shouldn't hire an illiterate surveyor. The report will be extremely important to your finance company and insurer. The broker, surveyor, and you will agree to a certain date on which the boat will be taken out to sea. The seller will most likely not be present.

STEP 6 Take the boat for a sail.

You'll meet early in the morning, and the boat will be hauled out of the water for inspection. The surveyor will use a rubber mallet to tap along the hull, checking for weak spots under the waterline and noting any significant blistering. When the surveyor is finished banging on the hull, the boat will be launched, and the fun begins. The broker will sail the boat. You should be below with the surveyor, watching every move and paying attention to every comment. The surveyor will remove every cushion, open every drawer and floor plate, examine every wire and hose, and check every seam between the bulkheads and hull. He or she will also go above deck to examine the sails, rudder, GPS, radar, and every other part of the boat. A good surveyor will spend at least an hour with the engine — verifying the propeller-shaft speed, checking the temperature of different engine components, and examining the wires to make sure they're in good shape. The water systems, holding tanks, and fuel tanks will also be checked.

Basically, the surveyor will go over every square inch of the boat, and you should be right there to watch. Offer to take notes or to move those floor plates and hold the flashlight. It's in your best interests to make sure of the most thorough job possible.

When you return to port, and while the broker is not around, ask the surveyor for an honest opinion about the condition of the boat. Don't hesitate to tell how much you've offered to pay for the vessel. The surveyor's on your side, and you'll get an honest appraisal.

STEP 7 Renegotiate the price.

Within a few days, the surveyor should send you a typewritten report that describes all the things that need to be fixed on the vessel. You may be surprised at the number of things that were found to be objectionable. In my case, the surveyor returned a 15-page document that listed everything from blisters below the waterline to wiring that was too close to the propeller shaft.

I decided to concentrate on the two or three things that seemed particularly significant. I called the surveyor and asked how much it would cost to fix these problems, and he guessed at a price of a few thousand dollars. This was enough information to return to the broker and renegotiate the price of the vessel. I explained to him that I was very serious about proceeding with the purchase of the boat, but I hadn't budgeted for these unexpected repairs. Would the seller be willing to make these corrections or lower the price so I could pay for these repairs myself? An hour later, the broker had contacted the seller, who agreed to meet me halfway on the repairs and reduced the price by $2,000. Over the phone, we agreed that I would purchase the vessel. My dream was quickly becoming a reality.

STEP 8 Find insurance.

Even though the boat isn't officially yours, you will be required to purchase insurance for it immediately after final price negotiations. This is for your lending institution. Most finance companies won't write a check to the seller until the buyer can show proof of insurance.

I suggest that you first check with your homeowner and automobile insurance companies to see if they insure boats. Many insurance companies will give discounts if you already have a policy with them. Your yacht broker may also be helpful in identifying insurers. Ask him for a list of marine insurance brokers for you to contact, and start making telephone calls.

The insurance people will want to know what kind of boat you've purchased, how much you've paid for it, how much sailing experience you have, and whether you've taken any official sailing certification classes. All of these things will affect the premiums you'll pay. If you've only purchased automobile or homeowner's insurance in the past, you'll most likely be displeased at how marine insurance companies operate. They will most likely require the entire year's premium up front. Be prepared to write a very large check.

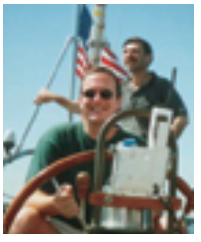
STEP 9 Sign the documents.

Finally, the boat is nearly yours. All you have to do now is sign the agreements. I was truly amazed at the contract I received from the finance company. In all, it contained about 40 pages that described my obligations. They included not being able to sail the boat out of the country with no intention of returning, having to pay for insurance up-front for the entire year, no chartering of the boat, and so forth. Each page had to be initialed by me, and there were 11 places that had to be notarized.

You may also want to have the vessel documented by the U.S. Coast Guard. The finance company can arrange this, but be prepared to fork out $500 or so for the paperwork. For more information, see the U.S. Coast Guard Web site: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g%2Dm/vdoc/faq.htm#01>.

Lastly, be prepared to pay sales tax on your purchase. You will pay taxes either in the state where the purchase was made, or you'll pay them in your home state. There is no lawful way around this obligation. The good news is that most finance companies will allow you to borrow the taxes on top of the boat's price.

When you've returned the documents, the finance company will write a check to the previous owner, and the dreamboat will (at last!) be yours.



Robert Doty lives and works aboard Candide, *his 38-foot Hans Christian in Jacksonville, Fla. He's an avid traveler and dreams of making a circumnavigation before his 40th birthday. Single, he's always on the lookout for potential sailing partners. He maintains a Website dedicated to the liveaboard lifestyle at <http://www.SleepingWithOars.com>.*

Budget boating

Here's the five-year plan that rescued a $1,200 boat

by Bill Sandifer

Not so long ago I did not have a cruising boat, but I wanted one badly. My wife understood and said, "Take the $2,500 we've put away, and buy a boat." You may not believe that $2,500 will buy a cruising boat, but it did. I got a great boat plus money.

How is this possible? I began with a search for all of the cheap boats in the newspapers and looked at every one. It was discouraging. I contacted a local yacht broker, who said, "What do you want for $2,500? I told him I wanted a Pearson Ariel. He said he might have one for sale and to call him the next day. When I called, he offered to show me the boat. He said it had been raced hard and was not in good shape, but "What do you expect for $2,500?"

When I saw the boat it had a frozen Atomic 4 engine, loads of sails, deteriorated deck and maststep, and what felt like a shark-bitten rudder, but it was an Ariel, and it was floating. I bought it for $1,200 "as is, where is."

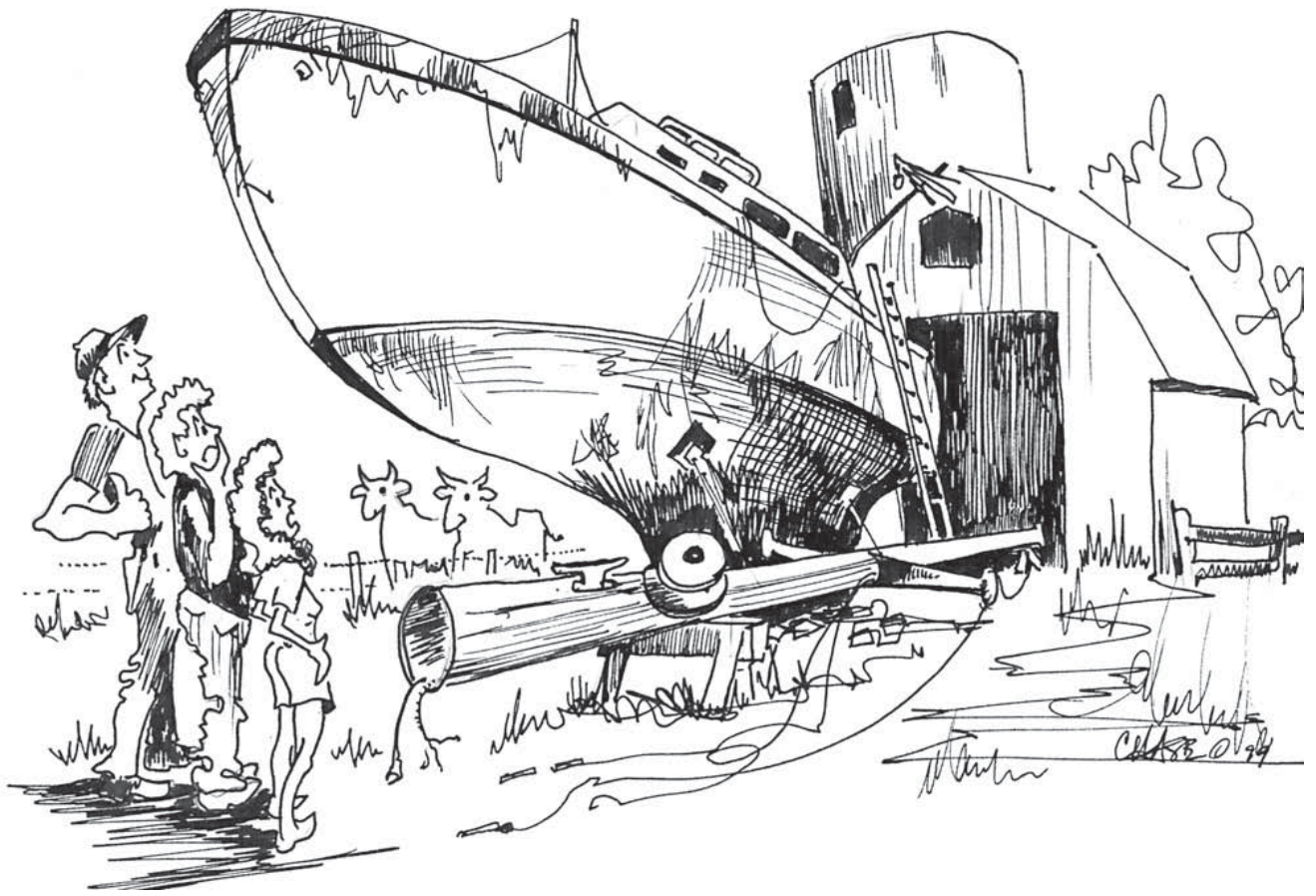
But I had to move it within 48 hours to clear the slip. I removed the plugs, filled the cylinders with Marvel Mystery Oil and waited 24 hours. I then bought a new battery and returned to the boat with a mechanic. He was not very optimistic but was willing to try to start the engine. When we spun it over without plugs in the cylinder, it sprayed Mystery Oil all over the engine room, but it was freely rotating.

"It doesn't take long to make most boats weathertight and to get them floating. Pretty and glossy no, but usable yes."

A new electric fuel pump, a little carburetor cleaning, and the engine came to life. I backed out of the slip and motored home towing a dink with a dependable outboard "just in case." It was never needed. Once we were home I developed a five-year plan for the boat resurrection. Notice I did not say *restoration.* That is too ambitious. It was a *resurrection.*

Surprise profit

First, to raise money for the boat, I sold most of the sails through a used-sail broker. I received $1,500 for them, which surprised me. Now I had a profit of $300 on the purchase price. Of course I promptly spent



that, plus $500, on a bottom job. I dropped the rudder by digging a hole in the yard and took it home for epoxy repair.

The five-year plan starts with finding the boat. Vessels like this are usually shunted to the back of the yard and neglected. You have to find the owner and make a deal with him and also with the yard owner to obtain free and clear title to the vessel. This will not be easy. The boat owner will see a way to make some money and rid himself of a liability, and the yard owner will want payment as he has been "storing the yacht" for a long period of time. Your job will be to make a deal with the yard man to move the boat once you have title free and clear of any and all boatyard liens. Next you've got to convince the owner to give you title to the vessel for something like $1,500. This can be done, but it requires great diplomacy.

There is no question of making an offer subject to survey. In a case like this, you have to be your own surveyor. The owner of the boatyard will probably not, for safety and liability reasons, let anyone board the boat, so you will have to survey her with your eyes and fingertips.

One potential problem is ice. If the boat has lived through winter weather on the hard, water will have gotten inside. There must be an open hull drain or through-hull to let the water out, but some probably remained and froze. Make sure it did not split the hull somewhere. Through careful observation of the outside of the hull, including the bottom of the keel, you should be able to tell if there is a problem or not. If it froze and split the hull, the boat will not sail again without a lot of help. This should affect your future plans for the boat and the amount you are willing to pay for her. Enough said.

First year

Many people start out these resurrections with lots of enthusiasm and little money. They decide to "do it right," and try to make the boat "like new." After a time, money runs out, the enthusiasm wanes, and the boat is once again a derelict. With good planning and a little patience this does not have to happen. What is needed is a five-year plan with definite, practical goals for each year.

"By the time you are at year five of a five-year plan you should have had a lot of fun already. We used the boat every year and did not notice that we were lacking for anything."

It doesn't take long to make most boats weathertight and to get them floating. Pretty and glossy no, but usable yes. The object is to have a useable boat to enjoy, not one sitting in a yard to be worked on *ad infinitum*. The boat may only need a coat of bottom paint, a good cleaning, and a motor to be able to be used as a power launch. The professional mechanic and a battery for my motor cost $300. Old but good, these Atomic 4s. In the first year I had a boat good for picnics, beach runs, and quiet times on the water. Get the boat back in the water and enjoy it. Don't try to accomplish too much at the expense of no fun for the first year.

One of the first things you must do is be sure the boat is watertight and safe to operate while it is still out of the water, assuming you bought her in the yard. All below-the-waterline valves should be operated, greased, and tested. One way to test the valves "in the yard and on the hard" is to disconnect the old hoses attached to the inside of each through-hull fitting.

Attach a 54-inch-long hose (one foot longer than her potential draft in cruising trim) on the inside of the valve. Suspend the open end of the hose vertically and tie it off so it stays put. Fill the hose with water and go around to the outside of the hull and observe the through-hull. If water is seeping out, the valve leaks and needs to be adjusted or replaced. If there are no leaks, go back inside and slowly open the valve. The water should run out. Close the valve, dry the outside of the through-hull, and try again. If it is still dry on the outside, chances are the valve is good. Move on to the next one. Once you have checked all of the seacocks, replace the old hoses with new ones, and you should be ready to go. Since my boat was purchased in the water, I left all of the above until I hauled her out in the yard.

Good cleaning

Once the valves have been checked or replaced, it's time to move inside. First in importance is a good cleaning, followed by removal of all old, nonworking, or broken items. This includes the old direct discharge head and all of its hoses and fittings. It is no longer legal anyway, and you really do not want to pollute. The valves should have been tested previously, so all you need to do is close and cap them off on the inside. I have found that PVC pipe caps from the local hardware store plus some Teflon tape works well. Replace the head with a Porta Potti or similar. Even if only temporary, this will work fine for limited use.

The other thing to check is the rudder tube and the top bearing. Check the bottom bearing for excess movement and play. If necessary, drop the rudder heel shoe and insert a bushing to take up the space and restore the smooth movement of the rudder. If there is no top bearing, consider adding an Edson rudder stuffing box to the top of the glassed-in rudder tube. It is well worth the little effort and moderate cost involved. I installed mine in one easy day of work.

Before you start to use the boat, you need to register it and get good life jackets, anchor and rode, and other U.S. Coast Guard-required equipment. All except the registration can be purchased inexpensively at a marine discount store. A Danforth-type anchor has worked for me and is not overly expensive. The idea is to get the boat in use again, not to make it perfect. In most states, the department of licensing oversees the titling and registration process. You can register at your local county auditor's office or at subagency branches of the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The cabin trunk windows may leak, and you will probably have to redo the entire interior, but for this year the boat is ready to provide on-the-water enjoyment as a power boat. Your family will really enjoy the boat and think you're wonderful for finding this great boat.

Second year

What you do and when you do it needs to be determined by you and your pocketbook, but for year two and beyond a practical plan would be to check all of her blocks and deck fittings. Check the deck hardware, cleats, chocks, blocks, and the rest. Check the maststep and chainplates. Verify that the standing rigging is good, grease the turnbuckles, and check out the mast, particularly the mast base. I had to support the mast (it was stepped) with a jack and a 4 x 4 just to keep it upright so I could power the boat home.

Older boats usually have oversized (by today's standards) bronze turnbuckles and through-bolted chainplates. The chainplates need to be unbolted and pulled for inspection, but they are probably fine if they're bronze. If they're stainless steel, give them a really good inspection. Use new bolts to reset them and caulk under the chainplate covers with a removable caulking.

The masts and booms of this era are oversized by today's standards, too, and probably need only to be cleaned. Be sure to clean and lubricate the sail track before you step the mast. A product called Fast Track works well. I almost replaced my old mast track with one of the newer slide-in tracks before I tried Fast Track. I learned to grease the luff groove twice a year, and the main went up and down easily. Remove the spreaders, inspect each end and replace if necessary. Rebolt them if that is the way they were attached. The cast-aluminum spreader bases are not of the same high quality as the mast, and they may crack over time. Try cleaning them up really well to be sure they don't have a crack in them. There is a product on the market called Dye Check. You can find it in welding supply houses. This is good for checking spreader bases, swage fittings on standing rigging, and the stemhead fitting.

Lots of sails

It will not be a problem to find good used sails for her if you need them. Used-sail brokers and your local loft will have lots of listings. Allow about $900 for a good used main and jib. This is for a 26-foot, sloop-rigged boat. Even if it exists, the old running rigging will be useless. Plan on about $250 for new halyards and running rigging. For the Ariel, we chose ⅜-inch low-stretch Dacron for all uses. Anything smaller, while strong enough, is too small for my hands. The mainsheet and jibsheet can be similarly sized.

"In a case like this you have to be your own surveyor . . . you will have to survey her with your eyes and your fingertips."

Our Ariel had winches, which only need to be cleaned and greased, but the operations that sell used sails generally sell used winches also. Size l0 self-tailing would be nice, but you can use size l0 non-self-tailing if the budget demands it. You don't even need winches if you are willing to luff up into the wind, set the sheets, cleat them, and then fall off. You can live that way for a while in order to use limited resources for other priorities.

Since I am taking the liberty of listing my priorities, the rest of them would go something like this:

First, the ability to power away with a clean boat.

Second, the ability to sail.

By the third year add the ability to picnic aboard, which calls for an ice chest and a Porta Potti.

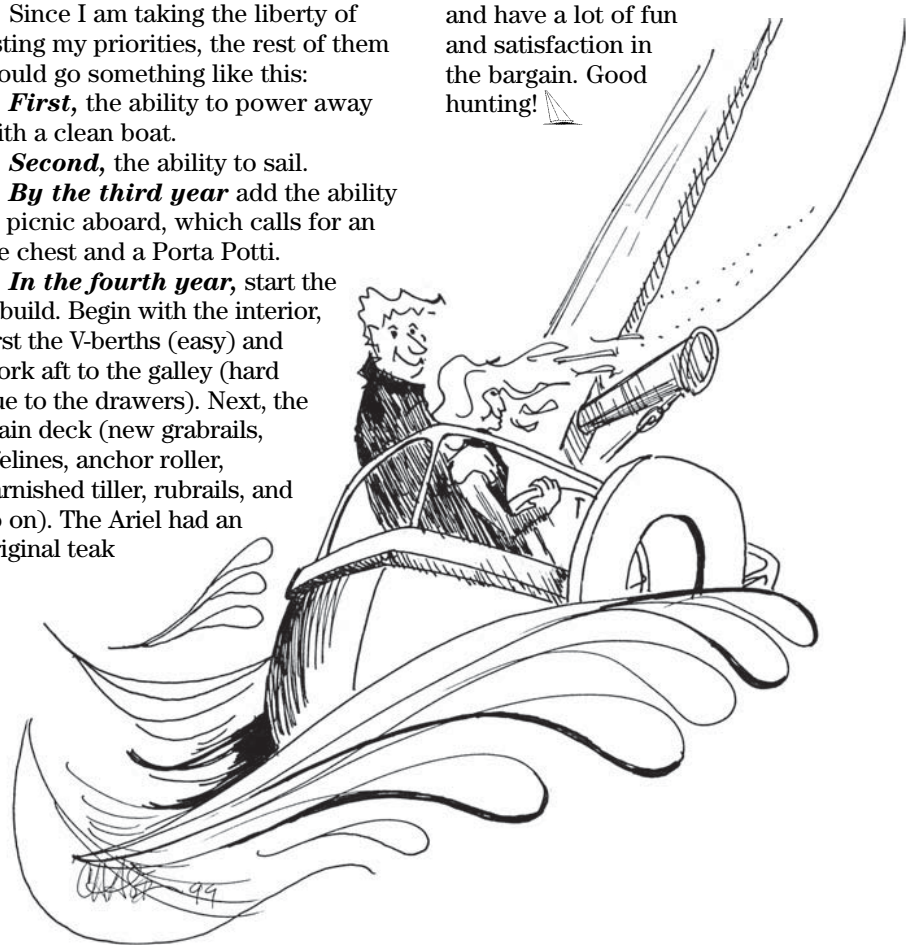
In the fourth year, start the rebuild. Begin with the interior, first the V-berths (easy) and work aft to the galley (hard due to the drawers). Next, the main deck (new grabrails, lifelines, anchor roller, varnished tiller, rubrails, and so on). The Ariel had an original teak tiller that might have cleaned up enough to be varnished, but it was easier to replace it with one from a marine discounter. Finally, replace the old Plexiglas in the portlights if it's crazed or frosted.

In the fifth year you're ready to outfit for cruising (sun awning, lights, water tank, sun shower, and so on).

By the time you are at year five of a five-year plan you should have had a lot of fun already. We used the boat every year and did not notice that we were lacking for anything. I accepted the boat's limitations and worked to improve her slowly as money and time allowed. What was important was the fun we had, the peace of a quiet sail, and the thrill of a brisk reach.

When five years had come and gone, the Ariel was once again a boat to be proud of. More than anything I was proud of myself for finding a derelict and recreating the swan hidden under the dirt all these years. There is no better satisfaction than saving a wonderful sailboat to sail another day, month, and year. It is worth doing, and the boat will return the favor with safety, peace, and tranquility.

You *can* afford a small cruising boat on a small budget and have a lot of fun and satisfaction in the bargain. Good hunting!



Prepping your boat for sale

Little things make a big difference when selling a boat. Here's how to ensure a quick sale and a good price.

By Simon Hill

ASK ANY BROKER HOW MUCH TIME a boat has to catch a buyer's interest and you'll get the same answer: "Not long." Most serious buyers make a decision within the first minute or two of stepping aboard. After that, they look for confirmation (or rationalization) of their initial decision. It's good to remember this if the day ever comes when you want to sell your beloved boat.

According to John Bassingthwaighte, a Vancouver-area yachtbroker, an all-too-common problem is that most people put their boat up for sale when they're no longer using it, so the boat can appear to be unused and neglected. The buyer wants something with appeal, yet for the seller the appeal has already worn off, whether it's because they've drifted away from boating or because they got "two-footitis" and bought a bigger boat. "They're approaching it from opposite directions," John says, "so the buyers feel they can't find a decent boat." How do you make sure that yours is one of the decent ones? By approaching it with fresh eyes and a willingness to put in a little elbow grease.

A clean machine

Cleanliness is the single most important factor in how well a boat shows. If your boat has varnished brightwork, the varnish should be in good condition. If you have unvarnished teak, make sure that it's freshly cleaned. Above decks, the hull, decks, and cockpit should be spotlessly clean. Polish and wax the hull and those portions of the decks that don't have non-skid. Be sure to remove any muck from around the waterline. If the bottom has more than a thin layer of slime, arrange to have it cleaned and, if necessary, painted.

Below decks, go through your entire boat and remove all clutter and personal gear, partly because if everything is chock-a-block with your gear it will be hard for the buyer to judge the real size of the boat's lockers, and partly because an uncluttered boat allows buyers to visualize it as their space.

The only things you should leave aboard are items that will be sold with the boat and things needed to take the boat out — life jackets, wet-weather gear, tools, charts, and equipment.

After you've cleared out the excess stuff, clean the boat completely, especially the head and galley. While cleaning, focus on removing not just dirt and grime, but also any musty smells. Head odors are often due to hoses that need replacing, and if this is the case, spend the time and money to do it now, before it ruins a sale. As John explains, "I've seen more than one buyer take two steps down the companionway then turn around and leave after smelling the cabin." If there are mildew or musty odors in the lockers, clean them with a commercial mildew remover, spray them with a disinfectant spray, and leave them open overnight to dry. Put a few drops of pine oil or bath oil down drains to help prevent the sewer odor that unused drains can take on. And don't forget to clean and deodorize iceboxes, refrigerators, and bait tanks. After cleaning the icebox or refrigerator, place an open container of baking soda inside to keep things smelling fresh.

If the engine is oily or grimy, give it a cleaning. Chandlers or automotive stores carry various spray-on foam cleaners, and these work well in the confines of a boat's engine compartment. The bilges should also be pumped dry and then cleaned. Bilges are often a source of odor. You know the buyer is going to look there, so why not make sure the bilge sparkles?

Written records

After cleaning the boat, turn your attention toward the paperwork. Gather all the documentation for the boat and the installed gear in one place. Don't forget documents that you might have filed at home. Buyers appreciate having owner's manuals, maintenance records, and the like available — it contributes to the impression that the boat has been properly looked after, and this translates into a better selling price.

It's a good idea to prepare a list of all equipment that is included with the boat. This not only helps avoid misunderstandings, but can be a useful sales tool for you or your broker. Make sure that all the equipment on the list is actually present on the boat (with the exception of hard dinghies which may be stored elsewhere).

Finally, using the boat's documentation and your list of equipment, prepare a one-page brochure describing the boat's basic features and equipment (make, model, and year of the boat, propulsion system, overall length, waterline length, beam, draft, included equipment). Include its key features (family cruiser, fast racer, large galley, new engine, or whatever). This will help you or your broker understand what you are really selling, and it will provide potential buyers with something to take home.

If the information you have on the boat is from word-of-mouth or passed down from previous owners, take the time to do some fact checking. John tells of one unlucky seller who thought he had a boat from the board of a famous designer until he went to sell it. A potential buyer phoned the designer, who denied having anything to do with the boat. "Even if it's an honest mistake," John says, "the buyer is left thinking 'what else isn't true?'" Some quick research on the Internet, a call to the designer or builder, or a chat with a previous owner can ensure that you have your facts straight.

Keep the faith

As you wait for your boat to sell, take it out and use it occasionally. This will keep the boat from looking or smelling neglected, it will ensure that everything is working, and it will ensure that you remember how to operate it properly when the day comes to take a buyer out for sea trials. And you never know, with the boat shining like the jewel that it can be, you might just fall back in love and decide to keep it.

Timing the market

LIKE WITH THE STOCK MARKET, YOU CAN GO CRAZY TRYING TO time the boat market. But in deciding when to sell, here are a couple points to keep in mind.

Spring and summer are usually good times to sell. People are looking, and it's generally easy to demonstrate the joys of your boat when the weather is fine. But fall can also be a good time to sell. Many buyers come out in the fall seeking a good deal. If you price the boat right you can often make a quick sale that works out in everyone's favor — the buyer gets a good price, and you save the costs associated with winter moorage and maintenance.

Whether selling privately or through a broker, remember to account for the lead time required to get advertising created and published. If you don't have a good photograph of your boat, you or the broker will have to arrange to take one. The whole process can take a month or more, so get started with the sales process early enough to avoid missing the boat, so to speak.

Both sides *of* chartering

Do your homework before you put your boat in charter

by Dee Lawton Smith

Finding a reputable company to charter from can make the difference between a great sailing experience and an unfortunate one, says Jay Kraft, co-owner of Bay Breeze Yacht Charters.

THE PULL TO OWN A SAILBOAT CAN BE understandably strong. So when the temptation looms to save expenses by putting it in charter, examine the plusses and minuses of charter ownership and your personal situation thoroughly.

The charterboat industry surged in the 1980s as the result of attractive tax benefits for boatowners. Jay Kraft, co-owner of Bay Breeze Yacht Charters of Traverse City, Michigan — the state's largest and oldest charter company — says he seized an opportunity when another operation shut down. "The remaining yachts formed the starting point for Bay Breeze when we identified the need and desire for charterboat sailing in the region and recognized the business opportunity," says Jay.

> *"If the idea of someone else using your stuff is upsetting, it may be difficult to put your boat in charter."*

The charterboat business took off when President Reagan signed legislation in 1981 allowing tax credits to buy, depreciate, and write off purchases such as boats and other luxury goods. Skip Van Horn, for 20 years the dockmaster at Bay Breeze, remembers those days well. "People would come in with their W-4s in hand. We'd see what they needed to spend and match them with a boat of comparable value," recalls Skip.

Some of the tax advantages of the '80s have since disappeared, but would-be boatowners can still make a case for choosing charter ownership. Seek advice from the experts — an accountant, financial planner, or other reliable source. The basic premise is that you own the boat, and you can sail it. In some arrangements, all the maintenance is taken care of for you, usually for a contract period of five years. Costs for dockage, insurance, launch, haulout, storage, and annual inspections are paid by the owner. All marketing, promotion, literature, and personnel costs are assumed by the charter company.

Skip Van Horn, dockmaster for Bay Breeze Yacht Charters, readies a 44-foot Beneteau for a week-long charter on Lake Michigan.

Splitting revenue

In the case of Bay Breeze, the company and owner split user revenue 50/50, often creating enough income to cover the annual expenses of ownership. "Basically, there are none of the headaches for charterboat owners," says Jay. "There is the assurance that it's well cared for with a strict maintenance schedule that we adhere to and share with our owners." It's not Jay's favorite part of the job, but he frequently stands in line in the office of the secretary of state, awaiting licensing papers and tabs and saving boatowners the trouble.

Many charter companies will let boatowners assume some of the main-

tenance on their boats. Engine tuning and repairs may not be encouraged, however.

What are the downsides of charter ownership? If the idea of someone else using your stuff is upsetting, it may be difficult to put your boat in charter. Wear and tear on the boat can be expected, and there is the very real chance that when you want to use it, your boat will be booked by someone else . . . making money but unavailable to you.

"Chartering is not for the person who wants to use a boat as a cottage every weekend, and it's definitely not for the controlling, Type-A personality," says Jay when describing potential charter owners. Since many charter owners are professionals, aged 45 and up, a common complaint is that they are unable to use their boats on the weekends designated for their use, due to career demands and family events. A bargain is only a good deal if you use it.

Another issue is the resale of a boat that goes out of charter. Resale is rarely a problem, according to Bay Breeze, if the company is reputable, carefully screens its charterers, and maintains the boats in the charter fleet regularly and well.

Heavy usage and occasional damage can be a factor, but the more likely problem in the outright purchase of a charter boat could be in winding up with an improperly outfitted boat ill-suited for your needs and therefore in need of expensive upgrades or modifications. In addition, boats used extensively in salt water may be prone to corrosion of fittings and engine parts.

"Some of the tax advantages of the '80s have since disappeared, but would-be boatowners can still make a case for choosing charter ownership."

Reputable firm

Putting your boat in charter can be a smart move if you plan to use it regularly but not constantly, and if distance or commitments don't prohibit you from enjoying your investment. The first step is to find a reputable firm. Check references, look for active marketing programs and boat-show representation, visit the company, and get to know the staff and their level of commitment.

"Some question what the company does for their 50-percent split and feel the boatowner is the one bearing all the costs," says Skip. "But that's simply not true. The business relationship starts with trust and seeing firsthand the care and maintenance provided by the charter company. You get what you pay for, and the outcome is far better."

Consider management companies that also operate well-run sailing schools. It is just one more assurance that all questions are being asked, potential charterers of your boat are well trained, and that answers and help are readily available.

On the other hand

Perhaps all the paperwork, down payments, time commitments, and uncertain economy have you wondering if charterboat ownership is right for you. The perfect solution for some is chartering someone else's boat. You choose your chartering company, the vessel, when you want to sail, and where. You book it, pay for it, enjoy it, and leave the details of ownership behind. Many use chartering as a way to explore other parts of the world by sail. It makes sense and enhances their own boat appreciation and expectations.

Skip thinks chartering is the way to go. "Personally, that is what I would do," he says. "You can spend two grand or less with two couples, have a great time, and just walk away." In the northern climes of the Great Lakes, the short 15-week season is a consideration for winter charters farther south.

Whether it's your boat in charter management or a week-long bareboat charter, look for reputable companies in order to avoid disappointment. A successful arrangement can make the difference between an unfortunate investment and many wonderful hours of exhilarating sailing . . . on your boat or a charter of your choice.

As Jay says, "How do you put a value on that kind of fun?"

Resources

Bay Breeze Yacht Charters
<http://www.bbyc.com>
877-941-0535

Bay Breeze Yacht Charters has access to the northern Great Lakes from its base on West Grand Traverse Bay and from Drummond Island in the North Channel of Lake Huron.

A charter group, below, sets off for a two-week excursion on Lake Michigan, visiting interesting harbors and quaint small towns along the coast.

by Roberto Picciotto

Roberto's 1971 Nicholson 38, *Lady Anwyn,* is his idea of a good old boat. But the concept of what is "the right boat" varies with the sailor.

What makes an old boat good?

First, you have to know what you want her for

THE MOST OBVIOUS CHARACTERISTIC shared by most good old boats is that the folks who own them are generally not millionaires. Beyond this simple fact, they're as varied as watercraft can be. Some are large, some small. Some have the latest gadgets and gizmos, and some are simple and Spartan. Some are set up for lazy coastwise cruising with the kids, and others are capable of crossing oceans. Nonetheless, in my opinion, not all old boats owned by people of average means qualify as good old boats.

I know I'm treading on dangerous ground here. The bond between a sailor and his or her boat is the closest thing to a love affair I can imagine. It elicits powerful emotions. Woe betide anyone who dares to say that the object of someone's affection is or is not suitable for a long-term relationship and that it will or will not give the pleasure, comfort, and security we associate with the words "good old boat." Nonetheless, it happens that some love affairs are doomed from the word go, and though words of friendly advice are mostly unheeded on those occasions when eyes glaze over with desire, they come back to mind when lovers part or when boats are put up for sale.

I have a friend who, after years of longing, finally managed to buy the boat of his dreams, a Westsail 32. The Westsail is a superb sea boat and may be among the best if you're planning a long voyage during which you will come across a fair number of gales. My friend, however, sailed only on weekends and during the summer months, when breezes are light. As a result, he did a lot of motoring, standing up at the tiller because when he sat down he could not see ahead.

When he arrived at an anchorage, dead tired and aching for a drink in the cockpit, he was forced to sit bolt upright because the small footwell — a most desirable safety feature if you are about to be pooped by a breaking wave — offered him no back support. The outcome could have been foreseen: at the end of its second season the Westsail was on the market again. Though it might have then become someone's good old boat, it never was for my friend.

Another boat

Fortunately, my friend is a resilient man, and after a couple of boatless years he settled on another vessel, one that perhaps did not resonate with his fantasies as powerfully as the Westsail, but one that was in much greater harmony with the reality of his cruising life. She was light, with a tall stick, and had wheel steering. She was perfect to ghost under drifter into his favorite anchorage when the afternoon breeze died down. Her large cockpit was comfortable at anchor and allowed him to sleep under the stars. Even if at first his new old boat did not correspond to his fantasized ideal of a go-anywhere world cruiser, after many seasons of happy sailing he would have found it difficult to part with her. She had become his good old boat

The moral is simple. There are no

***Lady Anwyn's* cabin, at top, works for Roberto; the cockpit, at right below, can be enclosed to form a pilothouse; but the head in the aft cabin is too cramped.**

boats for all uses. If you are looking for a candidate to become the good old boat that you will keep year after year, be clear and honest about how and where you are going to sail. If you are going to poke among sandbars and shoals, stay away from deep draft. Don't buy an offshore heavy-displacement vessel if what you will encounter most of the time will be light breezes. Remember that the large open cockpit that would be a liability in towering following seas is a delight when you are grilling hamburgers at anchor in a sheltered cove.

> *"... just as there is no perfect mate, there is no perfect boat, just boats that are not as imperfect as others for their intended use."*

Like love, sailing is so bound up with dreams and fantasies that remaining in touch with reality is easier said than done. This is complicated by the fact that — just as there is no perfect mate — there is no perfect boat, just boats that are not as imperfect as others for their intended use. There are, however, some principles that all boatless sailors should heed when springtime arrives and their pulse begins to race at the thought of being on the water.

Never make it

There are many boats around, some at good prices, that by their very nature will never become good old boats, such as those that have been designed to take advantage of a quirk in a rating rule. Some Quarter-Tonners of the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, have not aged very gracefully, and have become as dated as all exaggerated fashions from the past. They look like flying saucers and become unbalanced when the boat heels, putting enormous pressure on the helm. Their steering is skittish, requiring intense concentration at all times, they need big overlapping genoas to make them go, and their high-aspect-ratio mains make it almost impossible to sail downwind without a spinnaker. Way past their prime as racers, they're not good at much else.

It is not for nothing that some boats are considered classics, and the more you hear this term applied to the product of one or another manufacturer, the greater the chances that it will continue to age with dignity and provide you with years of well-found cruising. If you can, choose a boat that has elegant, sea-proven lines and a reputation for sturdiness and longevity. It sometimes happens that an older boat will be offered at the same price or higher than a newer one of the same size, condition, and equipment by a different builder. Don't let age be the determining factor in your purchase. Not all boats sail alike. More important perhaps, not all boats are built alike and therefore don't have the same life expectancy. You can get a very good idea of which boats have passed the tests of time in the pages of this magazine.

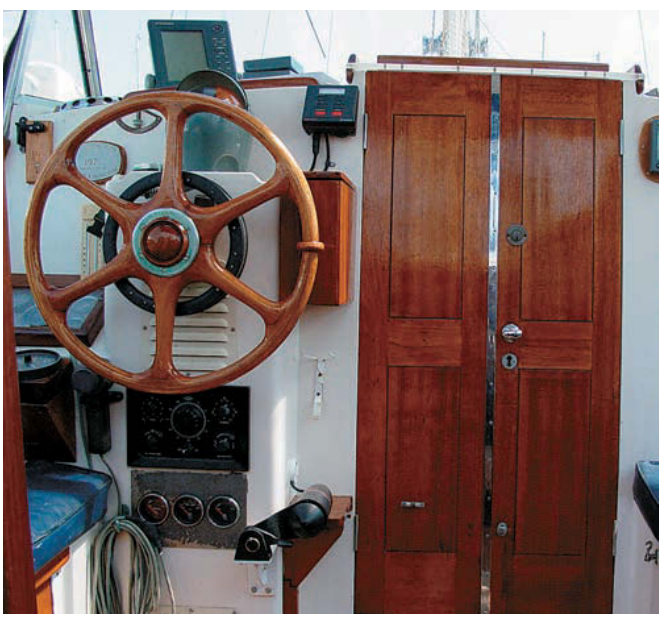
There is another factor to keep in mind if you want your relationship with your boat to be long-lasting and pleasurable. Just as you must temper your dreams about the boat you are going to buy with the reality of where, when, and in what conditions you are going to sail it, you must also be realistic about your finances, your ability to do whatever work the boat needs, and the time you have available for this task.

In a way, these three parameters are closely related. If you have a bottomless purse, the other two are moot, since all you have to do is take the boat to a good yard and tell the manager what you want done. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case. Usually, some of the work will be done by the owner and some by a yard. Some owners will do most, if not all, of the work themselves.

Dazzled by charms

We can be overly optimistic about the elasticity of our budget, we may overestimate our abilities, or we may be dazzled by the charms of a given boat believing that we'll be able to invest more time than reality allows. Then, the boat sits on the hard for months or years, while we eke out whatever free minutes we have to work on it.

I remember a past life in which I spent sweltering weekends toward the end of August on my knees recaulking the deck of what I had hoped would become my good old boat. Every time I lifted my head to mop my brow, I watched with envy the multicolored spinnakers billowing on the bay. Nor was I able to sail the following season because I had to do a job of repowering and rewiring, for which I had to learn the necessary skills as I went along.



There are folks who perhaps enjoy working on a boat even more than sailing and who spend years, sometimes decades, before their vessels are ever afloat. I'm assuming that these are in the minority, and that even though we might find pleasure in upgrading and caring for our boats, most of us own a boat because we want to be on the water, make sail, and anchor at some destination. It is essential, therefore, not to let your ambitions outstrip your pocketbook or your abilities. It's far better to own a smaller boat that bobs at a mooring and on which you can take off for a cruise with your family than to have a far larger boat sitting ashore because you don't have the means, the time, or the skills to make her seaworthy.

A long-term relationship between a sailor and his or her boat does not just happen. Like all relationships, it is the result of forethought and work. This does not mean there's a unique way of looking at things. A boat that might not be suitable for one sailor might be suitable for somebody else, and mistakes are inevitable. What distinguishes an experienced from an inexperienced sailor is that he has made more mistakes. Heaven knows I've done my share.

"So if you are looking for . . . the good old boat that you will keep year after year, be clear and honest about how and where you are going to sail."

Quality construction

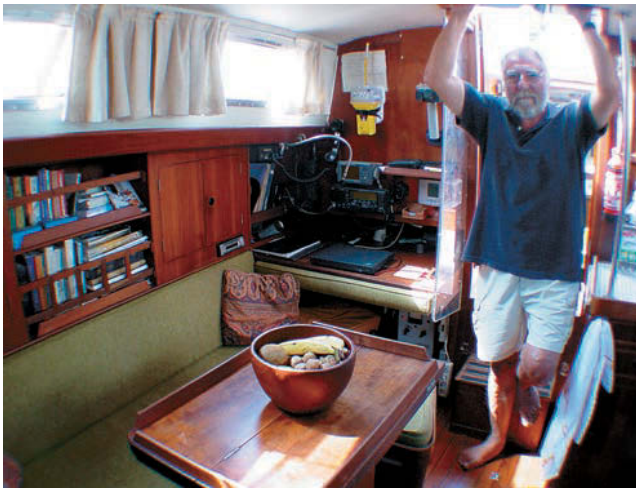
My good old boat, *Lady Anwyn*, is a Nicholson 38 built in 1971. Important among the reasons why I chose her was the quality of her construction and her finish. I knew about the Nicholson yard by hearsay before I had seen the boat, and as soon as I went aboard her for the first time I saw that everything about her — from her hull, to her fittings, to the cabinetry and cabin — more than justified their fine reputation. That her lines had originally been drawn by John Alden, with a long keel and a protected rudder, added to her appeal. But this pedigree was by no means the only, or even the deciding, factor in my decision to buy her.

I had had more than my share of spending nights at the helm with little shelter from the elements, and her snug center cockpit that could be fully enclosed with canvas to form a pilothouse was almost enough to make me take out my checkbook. Almost enough, but not quite. My wife and I discussed the purchase at length, visited her many times, and many other virtues had to be added to the list before we signed on the dotted line.

We were going to use her for long shorthanded passages a great deal of the time, so ease of sail handling was essential. The owner's manual suggested that in winds of more than 30 knots the best strategy was to drop the main altogether and sail under working jib and mizzen. Since I intended to put the genoa on a furler and to let the main drop into lazy-jacks, this operation could be managed from the cockpit, which suited me just fine. In addition, her water tankage was well above average, and she carried enough fuel to keep the Perkins diesel chugging for more than 600 miles at six and a half knots.

Minuscule head

This is not to say that we found no defects once we bought her. The head in the aft cabin is so tiny that it is almost impossible for a normal-sized person to use when at anchor and wholly impossible to do so in a seaway. It has been designated as an official storage area. The same goes for the starboard quarterberth. These faults are minor. You can only use one head at a time, and there are sufficient berths for us and two guests . . . the maximum number of people I would want aboard for anything but a day-sail, in any event. As for her one other sin — her stubborn refusal to behave decently when backing under power — she unfortunately shares this characteristic with all full-keeled boats of her generation. The judicious use of power by the skipper can still make her turn in very little more than her own length.



Over the years I have had the gelcoat removed and an epoxy barrier coat applied. I have replaced the deck. I have rerigged her. I have bought her new sails. I have installed sailing instruments, GPS, radar, and a single-sideband radio. With each improvement she has become more my own. Although once all is totaled, it adds up to a handsome sum, it is still a small fraction of what she would have cost me if I had bought an equivalent new boat. This is certainly important to me, but it is much more important that the end result has been a good old boat of great character that has taken me in comfort and safety wherever I have wanted to go and that will go on doing so as long as I keep taking care of her.

The author, at top, enjoys the cruising life aboard the boat that's right for him. Everything about this boat, from the hull to the fittings to the cabinetry and the cabin suited the cruising needs of Roberto, his wife, Michele, and their boatdog, Charlotte, at right.

Choosing a trailerable

Making that seemingly impossible choice

by Gregg Nestor

So, you're in the market for a trailerable sailboat. Great! There are more than 50 new trailerables currently in production, ranging in size from 14 to 32 feet. The number of models on the used-sailboat market is probably double that.

So how do you choose? You'll need to define your requirements, expectations, and likes to narrow the field down to just a handful of candidates. One way is to ask yourself the following How, Where, When, and Why questions. Answer them — in as much detail as possible — *before* you open your checkbook. After having done this, you'll have a clearer picture of what that "right" trailerable sailboat might be.

How will you use your boat?
Are you new to sailing and want to learn to sail? Or are you a novice sailor who wants to build a solid foundation of sailing skills for racing? Maybe you're interested in the close-consider a dinghy, boardboat, or even a small multihull. These boats afford a close "cause and effect" relationship with wind and water, which is an ideal platform for learning how to sail or for building solid sailing skills for racing. These boats are usually simple to rig, launch and retrieve, and easiest on the pocketbook.

If you want a drier boat that will accommodate you and two or three others, plus some gear for a day's sail, consider the bigger, more stable "daysailer." These boats traditionally have large cockpits with little or no cabin space. If there is a small cabin or cuddy, it is useful for storing sails, extra gear, and that picnic lunch. Daysailers are perfect for taking the family out for a day's cruise or honing your sailing skills. Daysailers include both centerboarders and keelboats. While launching and retrieval are relatively easy, rigging can range from the simple to the more complex, with cost directly related to size and complexity.

If your goal is to spend weekends or vacations aboard, you'll need berths, a galley, a head, and somewhere to eat. To accomplish this adequately, you'll want a "pocket cruiser," starting around 22 feet in length. These boats may have fixed keels, swing keels, or centerboards.

> *"If your goal is to spend weekends or vacations aboard, you'll need berths, a galley, a head, and somewhere to eat."*

This type of craft will enable you to daysail, affords liveaboard "creature comforts," and also allows you to entertain at your dock. You'll spend more time rigging and at the launch ramp with this type of boat. As is the case with daysailers, the amount of money you'll spend is a direct reflection of the boat's size and complexity.

The O'Day 19, above, is a stable daysailer. The Rinkercraft, the pocket cruiser at right, offers some liveaboard creature com-

Dinghy-type daysailers, like the O'Day 12, at left, and the Jester, at right, are drier than their boardboat cousins and will accommodate a crew of two or three. If you're interested in a close-to-the-water experience or the simplicity of off-the-beach sailing, a boardboat like the AMF Minifish, below, may be the boat for you.

Or perhaps you have your eye on that Wednesday-night race trophy, but your family has other ideas. They want to cruise the coast during next year's summer vacation. Don't worry, a performance cruiser may be just what you need. Several pocket cruisers have been designed for this dual role. They may carry a generous amount of sail, sport more aggressive keels, have a longer waterline, and exhibit less wetted surface. While they offer many of the amenities of the pocket cruiser, be prepared to make some sacrifices in comfort (headroom for one). Since this can be considered a variation of the pocket cruiser, your outlay of time and money spent will be similar.

With racing in your blood, speed will be your highest priority. Since speed comes in different sizes, check with your local sailing clubs to determine if there are any one-design fleets or what type of boats are being raced locally. Consider matching a boat type with that of the majority of local racers. You want a boat that fits into a class so you'll have someone to race against. If you're really serious, look at the one-designs that can lead to national competitions. As a dedicated racer, prepare to spend time and money tuning and tricking out your boat.

Where will you sail?

Should your sailing grounds be the Great Lakes or coastal areas where sailing conditions are challenging, boat construction quality and size will be of great importance. Boardboats and daysailers are only acceptable close to shore. Larger boats will be more comfortable farther from shore. However, the vast majority of even the largest trailerables are not bluewater boats. Regardless of boat size, pay close attention to the weather and water conditions. Make sure that your sails can be reefed. Also, prepare your craft with a greater level of safety equipment. Backups for VHF and GPS are a good idea. Having charts and knowing how to use them is essential.

"Should your sailing grounds be the Great Lakes or coastal areas where sailing conditions are challenging, boat construction quality and size will be of great importance."

Many sailors sail only on a specific inland lake. In relatively protected bodies of water such as these, almost any trailerable sailboat will work fine. Knowing the water depth, the shoreline configuration, and the facilities available will aid you in your selection process. Since you may be tacking more often, consider a smaller boat which will require less effort. Bear in mind that small lakes frequently exhibit changing winds, caused by trees and other shoreline obstructions. This makes these bodies of water great places on which to learn.

If you're a purist and want to be a true "trailersailor," make sure that the boat you select is easily launched, retrieved, and trailered. Consider a boat of around 22 feet as being the maximum for these conditions. Also, the type of keel will play a big role here.

Stay away from deep, fixed keels. Swing keels, shoal drafts (with or without centerboards), and centerboard boats go a long way in making launching and retrieval easier. They also offer the best versatility when it comes to thin-water sailing, beaching, and contending with underwater obstructions. How much time you're willing to spend on rigging is something you'll also want to address before you buy. If you're not quite sure what to do, you may want to select a boat based on the body of water you will sail on most, while keeping in mind some of the other sailing destinations you're interested in.

When will you sail?

One of the main reasons to own a trailerable sailboat is the ability to experience a variety of sailing destinations with relative ease. If you intend to sail on differ-

ent lakes for days or a week at a time, rigging time may be less important than the size of the boat and the creature comforts it has to offer. On the other hand, if your plans are to daysail different lakes, the amount of time spent rigging should be kept to a minimum. Also, you may want to consider a small boat that will allow you access to shallower bodies of water.

Many trailerable sailboats are trailered only twice a year, once to the mooring or slip and once back for storage. If this is your plan, rigging may be the least of your concerns. You may want to move up to the maximum-sized trailerable.

Why do you want a trailerable sailboat?

The previous three questions deal specifically with the more tangible aspects of how you plan to use a trailerable sailboat. This last question addresses choices that are common but more subjective.

If not wanting to pay slip or mooring fees is your motivation, look for a boat that is quickly rigged, launched, and retrieved. If it isn't, you won't use the boat as often, and it will become an expensive liability rather than an enjoyable asset.

"Swing keels, shoal drafts (with or without centerboards), and centerboard boats go a long way in making launching and retrieval easier."

Perhaps you want to save on storage costs. True, a trailerable can be stored on its trailer. However, do you have the space to keep boat and trailer at your home? If not, will you need to rent space at a boatyard or self-storage facility?

Yes, you can trailer your boat almost everywhere. But do you have a tow vehicle capable of pulling a large heavy boat? If not, you'll need to either get a larger tow vehicle or set your sights on a smaller trailerable sailboat.

If you think trailerables are less expensive than non-trailerables, think again. A sailboat is a sailboat, regardless of whether or not it's trailerable, and new ones are more expensive than older ones.

So it's all been decided?

You've answered the questions, there's storage space next to the garage, your SUV can pull a Sherman tank, and you and your family have mapped out sailing destinations for the next two years. Sounds like a plan. But before you start touring the boatyards and visiting dealers with checkbook in hand, you might want to give a little thought to a few personal preferences such as: new boat vs. used; wood vs. fiberglass; sloop vs. cutter vs. catboat vs. yawl; masthead vs. fractional rig; motor vs. no motor; 2-cycle vs. 4-cycle vs. diesel; lots of brightwork vs. minimal brightwork; traditional vs. leading edge . . . ah, decisions, decisions. So many boats and so little time!

Facing page from top: Shark, a performance-oriented pocket cruiser; Chrysler 22, a pocket cruiser meant for cruising rather than racing; Flying Scot, a popular one-design racer with a strong national racing organization; and Pearson 23, another performance-oriented pocket cruiser.
Above from top: Lightning, another popular one-design racer; O'Day 222, a performance-oriented pocket cruiser; and Sunfire 17, a stable daysailer perfect for taking the family out for a day's picnic cruise.

Finding the right trailer

Check these valuable tips before buying a used sailboat trailer

by Gregg Nestor

For the most part, sailboat trailers are semi-custom, owing to the fact that each must be designed and built to accommodate a specific sailboat model's hull and keel configuration. This factor alone makes them very expensive. For example, a new trailer capable of hauling, launching, and retrieving a typical 25-foot trailersailer with a shoal-draft keel and centerboard and weighing around 5,000 pounds can range in price from $4,500 to $8,000. A comparable used trailer, on the other hand, may cost from 10 to 90 percent less than a new one. This significant variation in price has to do with the trailer's age, model, and, most of all, condition.

To find the right used trailer for your trailersailer, become an educated consumer. The first step is contacting the sailboat's manufacturer and asking for recommendations. After all, who else would better know the sailboat's underwater configuration? If the manufacturer is no longer in business, check out the owners' association. One way to find sailboat owners' associations is on the *Good Old Boat* website <http://www.goodoldboat.com>.

Query several members and ask them what make and type trailers they use. Also talk with other sailors who have the same or similar boats. Boat-trailer manufacturers are another source of specifications. Armed with this newly acquired information, you're ready to search the used trailer market.

Where to look

Unfortunately, I know of no "Used Sailboat Trailer Store." You'll need to get creative in your search. The classified section of your local newspaper will probably be the best source of leads. Other places to look for used sailboat trailers include your local *Boat Trader* publication if there is one, marinas, boat dealers and brokers, local chandlery bulletin boards, and the Internet. Don't despair. While used powerboat trailers are more common and cheaper, sailboat trailers are not as rare as hen's teeth.

If powerboat trailers are common, you may consider obtaining a powerboat trailer and modifying it. While this may sound simple, it isn't. Most powerboat trailers have their axles located too far back to make for a good conversion. Furthermore, the rated capacity of the powerboat trailer will probably be too low since powerboats don't have a weighted keel like sailboats do. And finally, in order to make a safe conversion you'll need significant mechanical and engineering skills and possibly access to specialized tools and equipment. However, if you are not yet dissuaded, check out Chuck Fort's article in the September 2000 issue of *Good Old Boat*, "Bringing Baby Home."

> *"As it is with sailboats, so is it with sailboat trailers . . . some things are givens, some are negotiable, and others fall into the category of personal preference."*

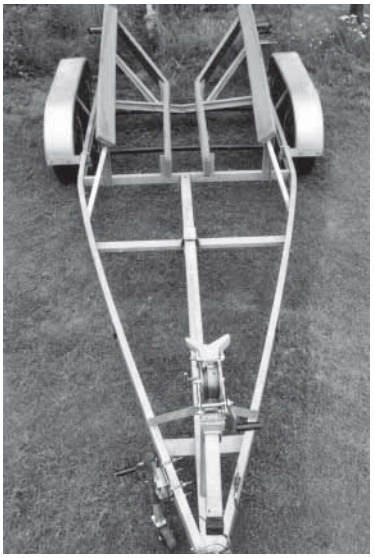
What to look for

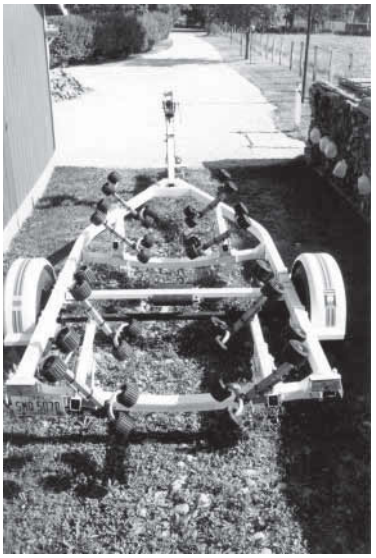
When checking out a used sailboat trailer, the first item to note is its rated capacity. This information is listed on the manufacturer's identification plate, which is located on the trailer's tongue. Remember that the capacity is not just the base weight of your boat but also the combined weight of the boat, motor, fuel, water, provisions, and anchor tackle, along with all accessories and personal gear you have or might have aboard. Adding all these together — plus a safety factor of perhaps 10 percent— yields a "trailer weight capacity." Make sure the trailer you're considering has that capacity or a bit more. Don't skimp or go borderline. On the other side of the coin, it is not necessary to get way more capacity than you need. The stiff ride resulting from the heavier suspension could damage your sailboat's hull.

In addition to being able to bear the load of boat, motor, gear, and so on, the trailer should conform to the shape of your sailboat's hull. While most trailers have multiple adjust-

ment points, not even the most adjustable trailer can be properly fitted for every sailboat. In determining whether or not a trailer will fit your sailboat, the most important area is the support system. The supports should be located at reinforced or structural areas of your boat, such as the bulkheads and the keel.

There should be enough supports on both sides, beneath the hull, and at the bow to distribute the weight. The support arrangement should avoid excessive pressure at any one point and inhibit lateral and forward movement of the craft during transport. The supports also should be situated so the boat is carried as low as possible. This keeps the center of gravity close to the road and makes for easier ramp launching and retrieval. If the supports are properly arranged, during launch and retrieval the boat's hull will be constantly centered on the trailer and will not scrape along any unpadded parts of the trailer.





This galvanized, tandem-axle, bunk-type trailer, above left, is pricey, whether used or new. Its welded A-frame construction can handle heavy loads. The painted, single-axle, roller-type trailer, at right, is 14 years old. With routine maintenance it continues to provide satisfactory service. Its pole-tongue construction is bolted together and affords multiple adjustment points.

Personal preferences

As it is with sailboats, so is it with sailboat trailers . . . some things are givens, some are negotiable, and others fall into the category of personal preference. With trailer weight capacity and the matching of its supports to the sailboat's hull being givens and nonnegotiable, such things as bunks vs. rollers, painted frame vs. galvanized, and single-axle vs. tandem fall into the latter categories.

Bunk-type trailers have carpeted rails, or "bunks," from which shallow-draft boats are floated on and off and deeper-draft boats are slid on and off. They are designed for relatively steep and deep launching ramps where the trailer is immersed over the top of its fenders. The principal advantage of bunk-type trailers is that, with proper adjustment, there is continuous fore-and-aft hull support, which equates to minimum risk of damage to the hull from jolts and bounces when being transported. Also, bunk-type trailers can be as much as 25-percent cheaper than roller-type trailers.

"If you're sailing in salt water, a galvanized trailer is superior to one that is painted. It will also be more expensive."

Roller-type trailers employ low-friction rubber or synthetic rollers mounted on adjustable brackets to make launching and retrieval easier. Since bunk-type trailers do not allow boats to slide on and off without some difficulty, roller-type trailers can be used on launching ramps with a more gradual incline. On steep ramps, it is easier to winch a heavier boat onto a roller-type trailer than it is to skid it onto a bunk-type trailer. The extra hardware involved on a roller-type trailer justifies its higher cost.

If you're sailing in salt water, a galvanized trailer is superior to one that is painted. It will also be more expensive. Painted trailers will stand up to many years of saltwater service if they are judiciously rinsed with fresh water after each and every immersion in salt water and if care is taken to touch up any nicks with rust-preventive paint.

A tandem-axle trailer (two or three axles) generally can carry more load than a single-axle trailer, simply because the load is dispersed over more tires, springs, and so on. Compared to single-axle trailers, tandem-axle trailers give a smoother ride. However, maneuverability is impaired because of a tandem-axle trailer's tendency to track in a straight line. Should you get a blowout with a tandem-axle trailer, you might be able to limp along on three or more tires. With a single-axle trailer, you'd best have a spare, a jack, and the tools to make the change.

Check the condition

With the trailer's capacity and support configuration properly matched to your sailboat, attention should be directed toward the trailer's condition. Condition easily equates to money saved or spent and/or negotiating room.

Tires: After years of occasional use, the tread of trailer tires may still be adequate. However, long-term exposure to the sun's UV rays may have resulted in the deterioration of the sidewalls, characterized by numerous small cracks. If this is the case, the tires will need to be replaced no matter what the tread looks like.

If the tires appear to be in good shape, confirm that they are of the proper capacity. The capacity is listed on the tire's sidewall and must be equal to or greater than the load being carried divided by the number of tires on the trailer. This includes the weight of the boat and the trailer. If the load being carried is 3,600 pounds, each tire on a single-axle trailer must be rated to be at least 1,800 pounds capacity.

Also, do not mix bias and radial tires; they must be of the same size and one type or the other. The construction and performance characteristics of radial and bias tires are significantly different; mixing them can result in severe trailering difficulties.

Wheel bearings: The most critical areas on a boat trailer are the wheel bearings. When the trailer is immersed in water, rapid cooling takes place, causing the grease and

any trapped air in the wheel hubs to shrink. The resulting vacuum draws water into the hubs and can cause corrosion and bearing failure. Check the condition of the bearings, even if they have bearing protectors installed. Make certain that the bearings are in good condition and that the hubs are filled with grease.

Suspension: Inspect the springs to make sure they have the same number of leaves and no broken leaves. Since the springs are usually unpainted, don't be too concerned about surface rust. However, if the rusting appears to be excessive, a closer look is warranted, especially if the trailer has seen saltwater service.

Leaf springs are generally attached to the trailer frame by means of shackles held in place by bolts. Over time and use, these bolts wear to the point that they need to be replaced. A visual inspection will generally reveal what, if anything, needs to be done.

Lights: Make sure the trailer lights work. Water and electricity do not mix well. When warm bulbs hit cold water at the launch ramp, the bulbs often break. Check them. Also, light sockets can corrode, making for a poor electrical connection. More often than not, a poor ground is the culprit when lights don't work. The ground wire is usually white. If the lights are still not functioning properly, suspect a short, an open circuit, or a poor connection. You now have a bit of negotiating room in your purchase.

Brakes: If the trailer is equipped with brakes, inspect them when you are checking out the condition of the wheel bearings. Excessive corrosion of the braking components may indicate that the brakes are seized. In addition to corrosion, note the thickness of the pads or shoes. If possible, activate the brakes slowly and determine if they work. With surge brakes, this can be done by applying reverse pressure on the hitch, which in turn activates the master cylinder. If the brakes are electric, lightly press the lever on the actuator.

"Since bunk-type trailers do not allow boats to slide on and off without some difficulty, roller-type trailers can be used on launching ramps with a more gradual incline."

Rust: Technically speaking, rust results from the oxidation of iron. It occurs when steel comes in contact with water. If salt is present, the process is accelerated. On a boat trailer, unchecked corrosion can eat away exposed steel surfaces. This can result in a gradual thinning and eventually failure of a trailer's frame component. A good visual inspection, along with a bit of hammer tapping and screwdriver poking and scraping will tell you a lot.

Structural integrity: This is not difficult and can even be fun. Look at the frame components carefully. Make sure they are not bent. Wiggle everything and test each bolt and nut for tightness. Check welds or bends for cracks and crevice corrosion. When in doubt, give the questionable area a love tap with a handy 3-pound sledge hammer. If the noise produced is not a "clang" but rather a dull "thunk," some repair work may be needed.

More tests

If all has gone well so far, examine the winch and make sure it is not rusted to the point of being inoperable. Test the brake-and-locking mechanism. Confirm that it works in both directions. This small device prevents the crank from spinning out of control. Winch line is usually galvanized or made of stainless steel, but it can be synthetic web strapping or even rope. Cable may rust or its strands may break over time, causing weakness and ultimately resulting in failure. Synthetics will deteriorate more rapidly due to UV degradation. Pay out the entire line and examine it closely.

Inspect the hitch and work the locking mechanism to determine that it is operable. This latch or screw-type mechanism will keep the coupled trailer and tow vehicle from coming apart. Safety chains should be present and permanently attached to the trailer's tongue.

With roller-type trailers, make sure that all of the rollers are present and that they turn freely. Broken or severely cracked rollers must be replaced. Rock all roller assemblies back and forth and side to side, confirming that their pivot points move easily.

Check the undersides of the carpeted rails on bunk-type trailers. Broken, badly cracked, or rotten wooden rails need to be replaced. Slide your hands over the carpeted areas. Make sure that none of the fasteners holding the carpeting down are protruding. These can gouge or even puncture the sailboat's hull.

Final thoughts

While searching for a suitable used sailboat trailer may appear to an overwhelming undertaking, keep in mind that trailersailing has never looked better. Slip rentals and winter storage fees continue to go up at an alarming rate, and mooring space is virtually nonexistent in many areas. These are inconveniences that do not plague the trailer sailor. Depending upon your home port, you could experience the thrill of a freshwater regatta today and enjoy saltwater cruising tomorrow. Unlike its waterbound cousins, the trailersailer is not limited by range.

The bunks of the single-axle trailer, at left, provide for continuous fore-and-aft hull support. Tandem-axle trailers, at right, generally can carry more load than a single-axle trailer, simply because the weight is dispersed over more tires and springs.

Finding the right family cruiser

Give in and go with it when you're chosen by a boat

by Chuck Fort

IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY IMPORTANT EVENT in my life starts with a phone call: jobs, births, deaths, want ads. This time it was long distance to Seattle.

Me: "Um, hi, I'm calling about your boat for sale."

Seattle: "OK."

Me: "What can you tell me about it?"

Seattle: (short pause) "Anything."

Me: "Well, is she in good shape?"

Seattle: "Yes."

Me: (*Hmmm, man of few words.*) "It says in the ad you've had her for 24 years. Where was she built?"

Seattle: "My house."

Me: "OK, uh, how does she sail?"

Seattle: "Good."

The conversation was fairly one-sided — something like a 20-to-1 word ratio, my favor — but gradually the boat took shape in my mind. Being pretty good at reading between the lines (even short ones), I discovered a man who had built his dream during his prime, only to see his wife lose interest. *He* never did though. I think that's why he was reluctant to speak about his lost dream to a stranger over the phone.

The boat was in good shape: well made and seaworthy (I learned later that this man, perhaps harking back to his no-nonsense Finnish heritage, grossly understated most things about his boat). I asked every question I could think of and received mostly short, but accurate, answers. ("4,200 pounds of poured lead. Because I poured it.")

After a series of quick terse answers, I began to feel — as a potential buyer — that I deserved a little more excitement on his part…perhaps even some multi-word sentences. I wanted him to extol the virtues of his boat to me. Maybe this one wasn't such a good idea after all. But somehow I liked talking to this man — he certainly didn't behave like a broker. And I felt sorry for him once I imagined him enduring phone calls from half-interested buyers, tire kickers, and dreamers.

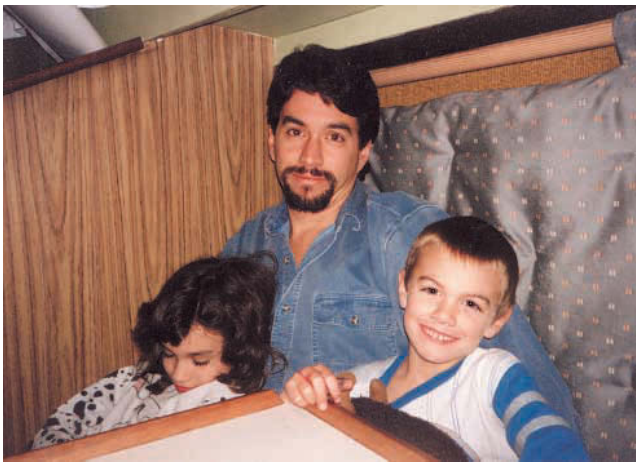
I told him we'd like to see it (I think I de-emphasized the "we") and after he paused (judging for worthiness?), I set up a time to drive the 150 miles across

Continued on Page 62

***Lindsay Christine*, a Mercator Offshore 30, above, and the reasons Chuck left the corporate life at right: Alex and Amie, in more recent years.**

the Cascade Mountains to see it. After I got off the phone, I told my wife, Theresa, that maybe we could take a drive to Seattle next Saturday and maybe take a ferry ride and ohyeahandseeaboat. To my surprise, she said — after looking over the notes I had made while I was talking to the seller — that *she* sounded nice.

She? Ever since we'd been looking at boats (just for fun, of course), Theresa had never called one a "she." I hope there are other men who have a wife like mine — not so set in her ways that she can't still surprise you. I sensed something in her that felt encouraging. Maybe my (dare I say our?) nebulous dream of seeing new places by sailboat could someday become a reality.



Contentedly aboard, Chuck cuddles with young Amie and Alex.

Corporate ladder

I had been climbing the corporate ladder and had reached a point at which there weren't many rungs left. To me at the time, it looked like a pretty long way down. Mid-life crisis? I don't think so. I was only 34, and everything was going great for me. But something was missing…my family. I was spending nine or 10 or 12 hours a day away from my 9-year-old daughter and 6-year-old son.

Maybe I was jealous that, as a homeschooler, my wife got to enjoy 24/7 with them (at the time she might not have been in total agreement). What would the cruising life be like, I wondered? Waking up in the morning and not having to leave home? Or leaving together in our home when the whim took us? I extended the dream to include being away from mortgage payments, advertising, peer pressure, *The Simpsons*. A small sailboat could do it. Just us, distilled down to a real family, traveling where we wanted, bringing our home with us, taking a bite out of life, with four mouths.

It was raining as we drove into Everett, just north of Seattle. Still early spring, this was not surprising. It was also cold and windy as we drove up to the yacht club parking lot to meet the owner. We found his truck, and introductions were made. He was short and trim, late 60s. He had eyes that seemed to have taken over emotion-central, since his mouth was not allowed to express strong emotions. When he saw the kids, his eyes gleamed, even sparkled. His kids, he said, were grown now, but they used to like to sail in Puget Sound. On his boat. His eyes sighed.

We followed him to the marina and began walking down the wet dock into a spitting cold rain. At each slip, I wondered if he was going to stop and say, "This is the boat," or more likely for him, "Here." Most of the boats we passed were average, some rougher. I hoped he would keep walking. Suddenly he turned and walked down a finger pier. On one side was an ugly sky-scraper powerboat and on the other — her. Her clean ivory hull had classic lines. Her rig looked capable and reassuring. The freshly painted cockpit was comforting. I swear she tugged at her docklines as we approached.

We were selected

"So you're going to be the new owners, eh?" she seemed to say. "Where shall we go first?" She was partially covered by a tarp to keep the rain out of the cockpit, so it was difficult to see anything of her deck except that she was well taken care of. He stepped aboard and motioned us to follow. As I stepped aboard, she bowed to me. After he unlocked the companionway, I followed him in and waited for the rest of the family — I wanted to see their expressions when they first saw the inside. The kids were smiling and instantly picked out their own quarter berths and giggled inside their "caves."

When Theresa stepped in, she looked around and got a strange look in her eye…like the one she gets after one of the kids gives her a flower. She later said that it felt as if she were home. This was surprising, given that the boat was decked out in 1970s burnt orange carpeting — something that normally would have caused an exit stampede.

I expected a cold wood-and-fiberglass vessel, but in contrast to the laconic nature of her builder, she seemed to speak to me. On opening a drawer or locker, I could hear her whisper, "Yes, the silverware goes here. Tools here. I've a place for everything you need. If there is no place, you don't need it!"

Her whole inside seemed to be just waiting. The cushions were stacked neatly to avoid mildew, all of the locker doors were open, and a small dehumidifier purred on the floor. It was as though she had been put away in 1971 and was patiently waiting for the right circumstance to release her. I got the feeling that she thought we were it.

The negotiations were short (as I'm sure she knew they would be), and our dream became a reality perhaps as much because of *Lindsay Christine* as ourselves. She was the catalyst, the spark that ignited the fuse of the dream and propelled it to reality.

In search of comfortable cruising

Pumpkin, a Viksund MS-33, was soon renamed *Magnus* and outfitted to explore the East Coast from Nova Scotia to the Bahamas.

A boating author falls in love with "an exceedingly odd boat"

by Silver Donald Cameron

Publishers are puppeteers. Writers are marionettes. On a summer day in 2001, I had a call from Doug Gibson, of McClelland and Stewart, who modestly style themselves "The Canadian Publishers."

"What are you writing?" he asked.

"A novel."

"Admirable," said Doug. "But what about non-fiction?"

"Nothing."

"But surely you have a book you'd like to write."

"Nope," I said.

"Come, come," said Doug. "You must have something in the back of your mind."

"Well," I allowed, "I've just put an engine in our boat, and it has occurred to me to sail her to the Bahamas via the Intracoastal Waterway and write a book about that."

"Sailing Away from Winter!" cried Doug. "Great! Who's publishing this book?"

"It's not a book," I protested. "It's just a foggy fantasy."

"I'm going to make you an offer you can't refuse," he declared, and he did. If you're getting paid for sailing, resistance is futile. I agreed to cast off in July 2003 and submit a manuscript the following spring.

An alarmed wife

My wife, Marjorie, evinced some alarm.

"Beloved, *Silversark* is wonderful," she said sweetly, "but she is, um, very small. She has 5-foot 1-inch headroom and 20 square feet of living space. It would be like spending a year in a piano box."

Darn. Our beloved 27-foot cutter was designed for crossing oceans, but not for living aboard. She does have a reliable engine, a double berth, good social space, a well-planned galley, a comfortable cockpit, shallow draft, and two tables, so two writers could set up their laptops separately. But she lacks headroom, a shower, refrigeration, and such electronic niceties as radar and autopilot.

Furthermore, I have long believed that an intelligent sailor in Nova Scotia's climate would have an enclosed steering station and a furnace. Only people who go to sea for pleasure would insist on a helm drenched by the cold, wind-driven rain, and spray. Only a chowderhead would cruise Nova Scotia without heat, as I did for 17 years. That's why yachts haul out in October, while our fishermen sail all winter.

I checked the web. Yachtworld.com listed 51,580 yachts offered for sale

by 1,499 brokers — and just 130 were pilothouse sailboats between 32 and 38 feet. Almost all were too big, too small, too awkward, or too expensive. They were located in Greece, Slovenia, Norway, and Thailand. A few were in New England and Ontario. One looked perfect — a 34-foot Westerly Vulcan, located in Newfoundland. Alas, she was apparently the only Vulcan in North America, and another Nova Scotian had already bought her.

In desperate shape

After a few weeks, I discovered British Columbia. Happily, British Columbia was in desperate shape. Fishing, lumbering, and mining had all tanked at once. A new government was slashing jobs and services. British Columbians were not dreaming of buying yachts. They dreamed of avoiding bankruptcy.

The web described several affordable pilothouse vessels in B.C., including a beautifully finished 35-foot Endurance cutter named *Yucatan*. B.C. sailors would call her "skookum" — strongly built, powerful, substantial. She had all the features we wanted. A salty B.C. friend scrutinized her and loved her. The broker answered endless questions satisfactorily. The shipping cost would be daunting, but we factored it into our offer. The owner accepted. Our credit union authorized a truly skookum loan. In late April we flew west.

Yucatan was splendid, even better than we had hoped. But she had an astounding, utterly unexpected flaw. From the inside helm, the helmsman could see the bow of the boat and little else.

"Well, you can't see out of most pilothouses," shrugged the surveyor. But what's the point of "inside steering" if you can't actually steer from inside? We withdrew our offer.

A good sailor always has a Plan B. There were hundreds of boats for sale in B.C. For 2 weeks we prowled the coast from Anacortes, Washington, to Halfmoon Bay, British Columbia.

We did find vessels with usable pilothouses. But the enchanting Pacific Pilot was no larger than *Silversark*. The pilothouse of the New Bombay Clipper 31 seemed flimsy, and the interior was inflexible. The elegant Truant 37 was too expensive. The North Sea 34 was a workmanlike boat, plain, spacious, and simple. But her interior was

Vision from the helmstation was nearly impossible on the Endurance cutter.

The New Bombay had a flimsy pilothouse and inflexible interior.

The North Sea 34 was full of "mouse fur" and had suspicious exhaust.

The Warrior 35 proved to be profoundly tired.

finished with gray fuzzy stuff called "mouse fur," and enormous clouds of smoke billowed from her exhaust.

A new focus

We moved our focus to center-cockpit yachts with fixed dodgers and aft staterooms. The Warrior 35 was profoundly tired. The Pacific Seabird 37 had an ungainly forward cabin. The Finnsailor 29 was small, well-designed, impeccably maintained. But with her stubby rig and shallow keel, she would sail like a 45-gallon drum.

We located a center-cockpit Buccaneer 320 up the coast, built by Bayliner, the powerboat manufacturers. Not an inspiring pedigree. Her name was *Morning Wind*. Think about that. The Melancholy Slav who owned her would not fax us the particulars. We approached her with low expectations.

"This ees a trragedy," declared the Melancholy Slav, unlocking her. "My vife cannot sail, and I have injured my back. So my future ees not on the ocean. But I luff thees bot."

Small wonder. She was designed by the brilliant William Garden, and she had a more ingenious, livable interior than one would think possible in 32 feet. A private stateroom forward was followed by a lounge stretching right across the boat. To starboard, beside the companionway, was a full-sized head and shower. To port a passageway led to an aft cabin with a full-sized double berth and a second head. The passageway contained the galley and also gave generous access to the diesel. She was well-priced and well-equipped.

True, she was high-sided and boxy. *Practical Sailor* once cruelly commented that these boats look like layer cakes on the water, and they are only *tolerable* sailers. But her insurmountable problem was the Melancholy Slav himself. He had two surveys, and he would not permit another. Nor would he arrange a sea trial.

Protecting her name

"I have to save the name of my boat from smear," he explained in an email. "Evil rumors will go around the coast if the boat keeps going up and down the ways without selling or out to sea for trials and don't sell."

"You see what's happening?" said Marjorie. "He *luffs* this boat. He doesn't vant to sell it. He'll put up one

Greg Silver

obstacle after another until we quit. So let's quit now."

We flew home to Nova Scotia.

"Morning wind and mouse fur," said Marjorie. "It's been an education."

We had intended to spend the summer of 2002 in shakedown cruising aboard our new boat. Instead we continued to trawl the web and prowl the boatyards. The LM-32 was lovely, but pricey. The Colvic Victor was sold. The Gulfstar 36 and the steel-built Fisher knock-off both had clumsy interiors. An acquaintance suggested I call King Nener, a retired airline pilot with a 34-foot Dutch-built Rogger motorsailer. Nener's health problems had kept *Seeboll* on the beach for 3 years, but he utterly refused to sell.

"I don't need the money," he said. "I'd only lose it on the stock market. Also, I subscribe to the belief that he who has the most toys when he dies, wins!"

But he applauded my impulse. *Seeboll*, he said, was seakindly and easy to handle. With a fair wind, the big roller-furling genny shoves her along at 6 knots. And otherwise?

"Forget about going to windward," Nener smiled. "There's an old saying: 'Gentlemen do not beat to windward. That's what Mr. Perkins is for!'"

A motorsailer, it appears, is an elderly gentleman's easygoing boat. Did it follow that I was morphing into an elderly gentleman? Oh, all right, it did. But where would I find an elderly gentleman's boat?

Only a few imported

During the heyday of fiberglass boatbuilding, motorsailers were built mainly in Europe and on the West Coast, for sailors in cold, blustery waters like the North Sea, the Baltic, and Alaska. Only a few were imported into eastern Canada. Which brings us to an idiosyncratic German we'll call Horst.

Horst imported *Seeboll* when he immigrated to Nova Scotia in the 1970s. (The Old German name means "lumpfish." Horst had the soul of a poet.) In 1984, he sold *Seeboll* to King Nener and bought *Seeboll II* — the very same Westerly Vulcan that captivated me months before. Neither *Seeboll* was for sale, and Horst bought no more motorsailers. Eventually he gave up sailing altogether, says King Nener, and bought "floating streetcars with huge engines."

We found a Finnish-built Nauticat 33 lying neglected on Nova Scotia's South Shore, but — like *Morning Wind* — *Moomintroll* was only nominally for sale. Her owner, Chops Viger, cheerfully conceded that he was poorly motivated. He had set his price. If I wanted to pay it, fine. If not, not. Good-bye.

There's a pattern here. Motorsailer owners hate to sell. And there's a certain poignancy in this. Motorsailer owners are independent spirits — pilots, professionals, entrepreneurs. They march to their own drummers. They don't care if the high-testosterone crowd at the yacht club bar scorns their boats as "not real sailboats," and they're not saving for the future. This *is* their future. They can generally afford to leave their boats on the beach for years, if need be. They love sailing, and they don't want trawlers, but they *do* want more comfort than a traditional open-cockpit sailboat provides. So they buy motorsailers — and when they can't sail anymore, they just furl the sails and motor.

They're realists. They know their motorsailers are their last boats. Selling will mark the end of one of the great joys of their lives. Their heads say "sell," but their hearts rebel.

"Never heard of a Viksund? Neither had I. But mid-September found me standing on a wharf near Detroit, cell phone to my ear."

***Pinta*, a Pacific Seabird 37, had an ungainly forward cabin.**

The Bayliner Buccaneer 320, *Morning Wind*, was for sale but not for sale.

Sydney Dumaresq

The Nauticat 33, *Moomintroll*, was only nominally for sale.

Pain of leaving

What I see here — and honor — is the love of boats and the sea, and the pain of leaving it behind. Wind in your face, the roar of the bow wave, a hammered silver sea. If you don't have to kiss it good-bye, why should you? I will be exactly the same when my turn comes.

But it wasn't my turn yet. And I still wanted a motorsailer.

In September, a curious boat named *Pumpkin* surfaced on the web, a Viksund MS-33 built in Norway in 1973. Never heard of a Viksund? Neither had I. But mid-September found me standing on a wharf near Detroit, cell phone to my ear.

"She's an exceedingly odd boat," I said.

"So she's off the list?" Marjorie asked glumly.

"Not yet," I said. "We'll talk again after I sail her tomorrow."

Pumpkin had all the essentials, and what she lacked could easily be added. She was heavily built, with deeply molded non-skid, a hefty rubber rubrail, a stout canvas dodger, handrails everywhere. Her mizzen mast was mounted on the aft cockpit bulkhead, and her wheel on the for-

ward one, leaving the spacious center cockpit clear and open. Like other Scandinavian boats, she had a canoe stern. Her two short masts carried a low-aspect ketch rig. Her only exterior wood was the bowsprit, the cabin doors, and the flagstaff.

But she was an exceedingly odd boat.

Her inside steering was far up at the front of her house, behind a car-type windshield complete with wipers. Her working jib hung inside a canvas sausage, while a strangely-shaped sailbag in the rigging contained the genoa. Her trapezoidal portlights may once have been thought stylish. Her cockpit boasted two bar stools and a picnic table. Her afterdeck was crammed with anchors, fenders, fishing-rod holders, man-overboard gear, and unused pinrails.

Phlegmatically handsome

She looked stubby, functional, and seakindly. Handsome, even, in a phlegmatic manner. Still, if your taste in vessels was formed by the lean, feather-lovely lines of Nova Scotia schooners, *Pumpkin* would take some getting used to.

But then, the next morning, I went aboard with the owner.

I was stunned by her huge, airy interior. Two sets of upper and lower berths forward, and then a saloon with well over 6 feet of headroom — plus a big galley with fridge and freezer, a spacious convertible dinette, a sizable head and hanging locker, and excellent visibility from her inside helm. People could dance in the cockpit. Beneath it was a cavernous engine room with a little-used 35-hp Yanmar. Her roomy aft cabin provided a double berth and excellent access to her skookum steering gear. She was the only boat I had ever seen that seemed bigger inside than outside.

The more I looked at her, the more she looked like intelligence cast in fiberglass.

The Yanmar purred as we motored into Lake St. Clair. The wind whistled, and the racing sailboats were reefed and heeling. With all sails set, *Pumpkin* surged out into the lake — rolling some, but scarcely heeling at all. She was more stately than sprightly, and in light winds she would be underpowered. But in a lusty breeze she sailed very acceptably. She was not at all what I had in mind, but she was perfect for us — and affordable. Back on the dock, I called home.

"Marjorie," I said, "we've found our boat."

Pumpkin arrived in Nova Scotia in early November — by truck. Two weeks later, Doug Gibson visited us to discuss the possibility that a book about the Gulf of St. Lawrence would precede *Sailing Away from Winter*, sending us north, not south, in 2003.

I led Doug to the boat shop. Climbing aboard, he sat at the wheel and gazed through the windshield.

"Ahhh!" he said, smiling. It was all his fault, and he felt not a shred of remorse.

Silver Donald Cameron soon renamed his new boat something more befitting: Magnus. *He and Marjorie are enjoying their new boat in their home cruising grounds of Nova Scotia. There are many more books yet to be written by this talented author. The next will, no doubt, feature* Magnus *in a leading role.* ***–Ed.***

Chasing dreams

by Jeremy Keene

I REMEMBER EXACTLY WHEN IT ALL started. I was standing on a dock in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, looking at a lonely sailboat. A light breeze tapped the halyards against the mast and gently rocked her in her slip. My 2-year-old daughter toddled precariously over the water while my wife held the hood of her sweatshirt like a lifeline.

It was a cool May morning. Low clouds hung over the lake waiting for the sun. It was a strange place to find a sailboat, landlocked at the foot of the Bitterroot Mountains on this beautiful, calm lake. But why not? I looked at the long, graceful lines of the boat. I imagined the sound of the sails filling with air, the winches grinding, the boat beginning to heel, the waves slapping the bow. The dream began quietly.

One and a half years later, we were in Port Ludlow, Washington, chasing dreams. We were aboard a dirty, neglected little sloop with drooping lifelines and tired sails. Mussel shells littered the deck. The docklines were nearly chafed through. The mainsheet was sun-bleached and brittle. A winch was missing from the cabintop with only a broken chunk of plastic remaining. Barnacles hung from the rudder. The brightwork was awash in peeling varnish. I didn't even know where to begin. This boat hadn't left the dock in years.

"It looked a lot cleaner in the pictures," my wife said, inspecting the thick green slime clogging the cockpit drains.

I had my clipboard, my flashlight, and my screwdriver. I had Don Casey's book, *Inspecting the Aging Sailboat*. I had my checklist. I had no idea what I was doing. It was like trying to inspect the *Titanic* after it had already gone down.

Forgotten dream

This boat was too much like the others — another forgotten dream, left to rot at the dock. We were disappointed. I was beginning to wonder if this was a good idea, buying a boat. So far it looked more like a project than a pastime.

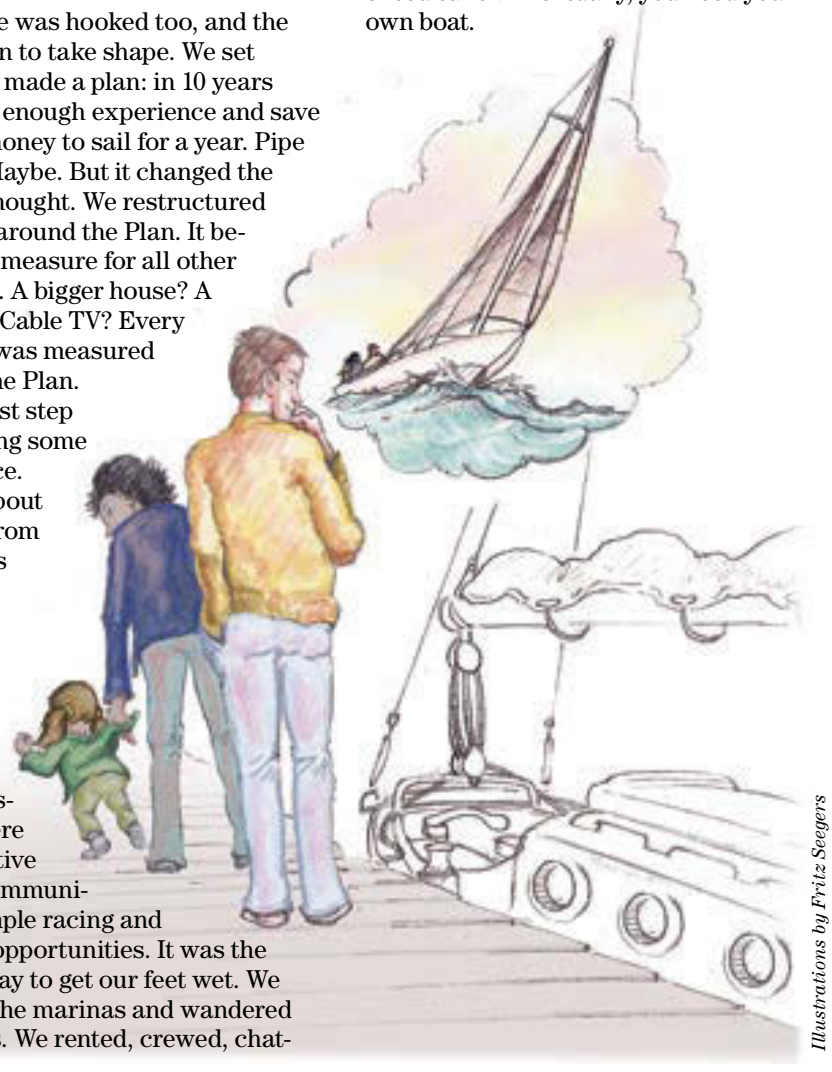
But the seed that was planted at that dock in Coeur d'Alene was nourished by sailing magazines and trips to the lake. The idea was still vague, though. It was like trying to make out a distant object in the fog. Then I picked up a copy of *Cruising in Seraffyn*, by Lin and Larry Pardey, and read it in one day. I told my wife, "If you don't want to buy a sailboat after you read this book, I'll never mention it again."

> *"We set goals. We made a plan: in 10 years we'd gain enough experience and save enough money to sail for a year."*

But she was hooked too, and the idea began to take shape. We set goals. We made a plan: in 10 years we'd gain enough experience and save enough money to sail for a year. Pipe dream? Maybe. But it changed the way we thought. We restructured our lives around the Plan. It became the measure for all other decisions. A bigger house? A new car? Cable TV? Every decision was measured against the Plan.

The first step was getting some experience. We live about an hour from Montana's Flathead Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi. There are an active sailing community and ample racing and cruising opportunities. It was the perfect way to get our feet wet. We haunted the marinas and wandered the docks. We rented, crewed, chatted, and hitched rides. We took notes, made lists, and compared opinions. We read books, studied magazines, and surfed the Internet.

Learning on someone else's boat is valuable experience. But eventually the need to call for that critical sail change, make that key tack, choose to lay anchor, or just decide to go home overpowers the need to learn under the steady hand of an experienced sailor. Eventually, you need your own boat.



Illustrations by Fritz Seegers

Intimidating task

Buying a boat is wildly intimidating — there are hundreds of used fiberglass sailboats to choose from. We wanted the perfect boat: something well built and seaworthy, comfortable but still respectable around the buoys, safe for a small child, manageable on a trailer, something we could afford. Throw in a thousand different opinions, brokers, delamination, dry rot, blisters, bottom paint, cored hulls, engines, and trailers, and the task becomes a considerable challenge.

First of all, there is no perfect boat. It's more like the perfect compromise. My wife swooned over spacious cabins while I pointed out dumpy lines. I drooled over swept-back racing rigs while my wife pointed out the lack of a head. Slowly, as we refined our expectations — compromising speed for amenity, age for affordability — one boat emerged as the right boat for us.

And she happened to be for sale! She had a nice roomy cockpit, good lines, a workable sail plan, a comfortable cabin, a head, a small galley, and a trailer. But there were problems, too. She had an older inboard gas saildrive — which ran fine, as long as you cleaned the soot off the spark plugs, according to the owner — but there was no alternator to charge the battery.

The price seemed high, but it was August, and the owner was making payments on a new, larger boat. If she was still for sale come Labor Day, he'd be motivated, and we'd be ready to make an offer.

Too late

A week before Labor Day he sold the boat. I kicked myself for not pulling the trigger. I felt like we'd missed a good opportunity. But my wife reminded me that I'd be glad I didn't have that old two-stroke stinking up my cabin.

We expanded our search, and on a cool October morning, we set off for Seattle, nearly 600 miles from home. The boats we saw resembled the dream in form, but failed to deliver in person. The brokers were excited to sell us a sailboat, but not about the idea of sailing. One told us he didn't even own a boat anymore — he was going into telecommunications just as soon as he could clear out his inventory. Another asked us confidently, "How much would you like to offer?" after

"My wife swooned over spacious cabins while I pointed out dumpy lines. I drooled over swept-back racing rigs while my wife pointed out the lack of a head."

she wouldn't let us raise the sails or start the motor on the rough-looking boat at her dock.

(A word to brokers: buying a sailboat is about passion. No one *needs* a sailboat. I'm not buying a car. *Humor me.* Feed the dream. I want to see myself cutting across the bay on a setting sun. If the dream is gone for you, I don't want to know about it.)

The last boat on our list was in Port Townsend, on the tip of the Olympic Peninsula. We crossed the Tacoma Narrows bridge and headed north through a light rain. The freeway dwindled to a two-lane road, and we passed through farm fields with signs for pumpkins and "u-pick-em" corn.

Try back later

An hour outside Port Townsend, I called ahead to the broker's office.

"Did Ray know you were coming?" the guy in the office asked.

"Yes, I talked to him a few days ago. He said he'd be around."

"He's off launching a boat," he said. "Should be back soon. Why don't you try back in an hour."

"Who's this?"

"Tim."

"We drove all the way from Montana to see this boat, Tim."

"Right. That's a long way."

"Maybe you could show us the boat?" I asked.

"Ray usually handles the boats."

An hour later, there was still no sign of the broker. We found Tim outside the office feeding a sandwich to the gulls. I asked him again to show us the boat. We had to head home the next day. It seemed a shame to come all this way and not to see the boat. Tim finally admitted that he didn't actually know where the boat was, but he did offer to call the owner.

After another hour, all he'd managed was a slip number: C58.

"Which marina?" I asked.

"Don't know, just said Port Ludlow."

Called again

It was getting late, so we found a place to stay and would try the broker in the morning. We opted for a nice meal and $10 campsite over an $85 hotel room. In the morning, I called the office again. It was Sunday, and now nobody was answering the phone. I left a message for Ray. I told him I had a pocketful of money and was hot to buy a boat, but if I didn't hear from him by the time I finished breakfast, I was going back to Montana forever.

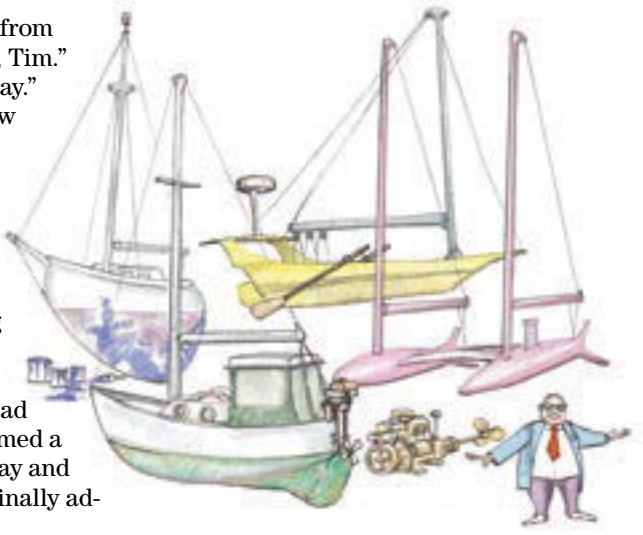
We finished breakfast and headed for Kingston to get the ferry. I was angry at being stood up by the broker, and I was angry that none of the boats we'd seen warranted an offer. It would be a long drive home.

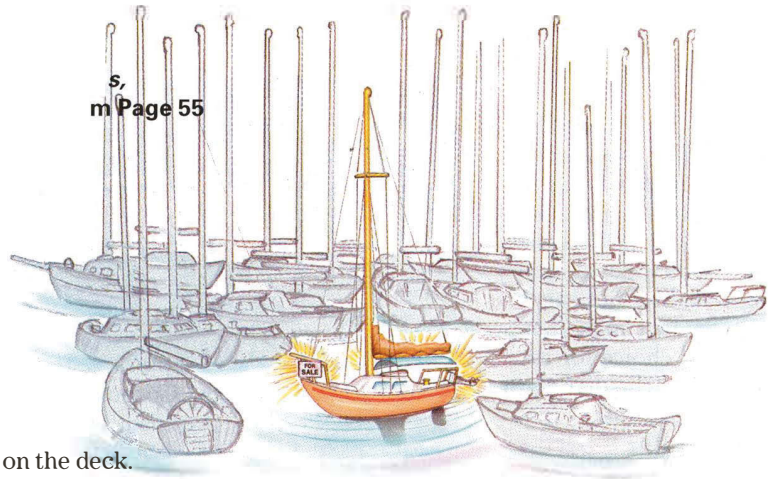
"There's Port Ludlow," my wife stated matter-of-factly as we passed a road sign pointing left.

"Should we try it?" I asked. "Maybe we can find the boat."

I turned around and drove back to the turnoff. Port Ludlow is a tidy little resort community tucked into the trees. A sign proclaims: "The Village in the Woods by the Bay." The only commercial activity, aside from a gas station, is a large new marina.

We found our way on to the dock and walked out to C58. The boat was there, with a blue Bluewater Marine sign and a fresh coating of bird drop-





pings on the deck.

We went through the motions, filling out my checklist, inspecting every part of the boat, hoping that if the price were low enough, this could somehow be a good deal. But it was not. I could feel it right in the bottom of my stomach: that nebulous void that takes the things you love and makes you hate them. I could see the black hole near the bilge that would swallow years of my life and piles of my money.

End of a dream

This boat was where dreams end, where the money ran out, the marriage broke up, or the tumor became malignant. It made me sad, because somewhere, sometime, this boat was loved. It represented the same hopes and dreams we were having…the same dreams that seem so fresh and alive. Dreams of a simpler, less ordinary kind of life, measured in quality instead of quantity.

I wondered if this boat had any of the dream left in it.

We started back to the car. My eyes scanned the rows of boats — other people's dreams — lined up in their slips. My eyes rested on a tidy sloop with beige topsides and a maroon stripe. It was the same kind of boat we were looking for.

I stopped.

There she was.

It was like walking into a wall. Her deck was clean. She had crisp, tan sailcovers and tidy new docklines. A four-stroke outboard hung neatly from her stern. Her hull was sleek. The rigging was fresh. The lifelines were stout. Bright new halyards ran down the mast, and a little red "For Sale" sign was wired to the bow pulpit.

"Should I call?" my wife said.

"Yes, call," I replied and realized my throat was dry.

Five minutes later we were aboard with the owner. We sat in the cockpit and talked like friends. For the next hour, he patiently answered our questions and shared his stories of 12 good years with the boat. She warmed as he talked, the teak glowed, the lines were supple and clean.

All the gear

She had new sails, an autopilot, a Bimini, cockpit cushions, a cockpit table, a wind chute for the forward hatch, an extension to make the double bed a little wider, and a custom icebox built for the Sea of Cortez.

"You had her on the Sea of Cortez?"

"Three times."

A friend had told me, "You'll know when you find the right boat."

This was the one.

The only thing we hadn't discussed was price. I was afraid to ask. She would be out of our range — she had to be. She was too clean, too well maintained. The sails were too new. There were too many extras. There was no way we could afford her.

I asked, braced for disappointment, "What are you asking for her?"

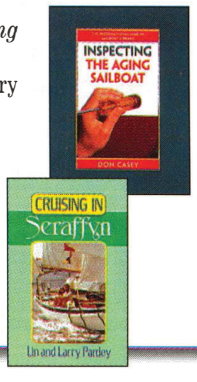
He answered without hesitation. The other shoe never dropped. His price was fair.

I met my wife's eyes. We tried not to smile, but inside we were jumping up and down. He sensed it, I think, because he asked, "Do you have time for a sail?"

There is always time for a sail.

For further reading…

Don Casey's *Inspecting the Aging Sailboat* (1996) and Lin & Larry Pardey's *Cruising in Seraffyn* (1992) can both be found at <http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html> or by calling 763-420-8923.



Choosing the right boat

Try this logical, six-step method to eliminate impulse purchases

by Ray Rippel

Is choosing the boat that's right for you like selecting an appliance or more like falling in love? Is it a matter of the head or the heart? When my wife, Kathleen, and I decided to begin our search for the boat we would eventually live aboard and sail, we were determined to attend to the wishes of both the head and the heart. We haven't found her yet, but what we have found is a process to satisfy our practical sides and to make our hearts beat faster.

"This process has six steps. It begins with something as ambiguous as your 'sailing vision' and ends with selecting a specific boat . . . "

For some, what I am about to propose is abhorrent — like making your intended sign a pre-nuptial agreement. If you are the type who goes through life making decisions strictly on gut instinct and first impressions, turn the page quickly, before we get to the really ghastly stuff, like capsize formulas. On the other hand, if you tend to approach things a bit more methodically, you'll find that the system we describe will increase the likelihood that the boat you buy will be the boat of your dreams.

This process has six steps. It begins with something as ambiguous as your "sailing vision" and ends with selecting a specific boat from a list that you have developed. Think of it as a process that narrows the field from tens of thousands to just one. Take these steps, and your final selection will be made with confidence.

Don't hurry, especially with Steps 1 and 2. This is a little like dead reckoning: an error of just a few degrees at the beginning of your journey can result in a big mistake after a few hundred miles. Getting a good start is the best way to ensure a good finish.

Ray and Kathleen's list of attributes

	Seaworthiness	Comfort	Simplicity	Pride of ownership
Required	• capsize formula result less than 2 • D/L ratio over 280 • overbuilt rigging • solid deck-to-hull fastening system	• ability to install sun protection in cockpit • comfortable sleeping berth • comfort index over 30 • 6' 3" headroom in in galley		
Highly-desirable		• ample ventilation • sumptuous interior • cockpit seats big enough to sleep on • comfortable settee • shower	• sloop or cutter	• classic appearance
Nice-to-have		• room for six at dinner • 6' 3" headroom in saloon	• tiller steering	• bowsprit • tumblehome
Prohibited	• spade rudder • fin keel • overlarge port or deadlights		• greater than 40 feet on deck • teak decks • two heads	

STEP 1

Your sailing vision

This first step is the most important; it will form the foundation upon which everything else is built. Think of it as painting a picture of the who, what, when, where, and how of your sailing future. Are you looking to cruise for years, cruise for weeks, daysail, race, or something else? Will your boat be a place to live in, a boat for recreation, a boat to race, or a museum piece? Perhaps you want your boat to be a multi-use vessel. In most cases that's possible. What isn't possible is to do a good job of choosing a boat without knowing exactly what you expect from it.

If this is going to be "our" boat — not just "your" boat — you must include all the people that make up the "our." Kathleen and I had many conversations describing, not what kind of boat we would have, but what we would do with it. The more we talked, the clearer the picture became: we wanted a vessel that two could live aboard comfortably, that was sufficiently seaworthy to make an offshore passage, that could be handled by two, and that was small and simple enough

that maintaining her would be a hobby rather than a full-time job. Equally important, we wanted a boat we could be proud of. (Our current boat is a Pacific Seacraft Flicka, and we have grown accustomed to turning heads. We like that.)

Comfort, seaworthiness, pride of ownership and simplicity of systems doesn't seem all that specific, but these concepts have specific meanings to us. Moving from a sailing vision to a specific list of attributes is what Step 2 is all about.

STEP 2

Step 2: Developing your lists

Using the word picture that you developed in Step 1, compose a short list of items that will be required, highly desired, nice-to-have, and prohibited on your boat. See the table on Page 9 for our list.

You'll notice that some of these attributes are quite specific. Our boat will not have a displacement-to-waterline-length (D/L) ratio of less than 280, for example. Others may appear to be ambiguous, but aren't. Our definition of a comfortable settee is one where people can sit and read without back or neck strain, preferably with their feet up. The sumptuous interior may not mean much to you, but to us it means feeling like we're in our home, not our campsite. The "classic appearance" is probably most difficult to pin down, but in the words of former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, "I know it when I see it."

Two more quick points: first, you'll note that there are no items on the list that could be purchased later. Our boat must have a life raft, an oven, a dinghy, and many other things, but they can be added without major construction. What you see in our list are permanent characteristics. We'll develop a list of accessories later, in Step 4.

Second, we have not tried to make this overly comprehensive (and therefore overly complex). Our boat will have an engine, a head, a mast, a boom, an icebox, a water tank and a sink. Almost all cruising boats do. What we have concentrated on are the differences among the boats under consideration, not what they have in common. When you make your list, look for discriminators.

STEP 3

Go model shopping

Now that you know the critical elements of your ideal boat, it's time to start looking — not for a specific boat but for different models that meet the requirements you established in Step 2. Don't limit yourself to a couple of models you know you like. You will be amazed at how many hulls, some from manufacturers you may have never heard of, can meet your needs. Some may even satisfy your list of attributes better than the models you have thus far considered.

Where do you find good candidates? One of the best sources is the magazine you're holding right now, as well as other sailing publications. Don't just look at the boat reviews, though. Also examine the other articles, photos, classified ads, and corporate advertisements. If the publication doesn't have enough information on a particular model, go to the Internet.

When you're looking for information on a specific boat, try a top-notch search engine like Google <http://www.google.com>. There are tons of owners' associations and other sites

Bayfield 32

Score: 248 **Price: $35,000**

Model specifications

Rig:	cutter
Length overall:	32
Length on deck:	30
Length waterline:	23.25
Beam:	10.5
Draft:	3.75
Displacement:	9,600
Capsize formula:	1.98
D/L ratio:	341
Comfort index:	25

Required items (0 - 30 pts.)

Ability to install sun protection	20
Comfortable berth	10
Comfortable settee	20
Displace over 280	12
Headroom for Ray in galley	15
Overbuilt rigging	20
Capsize formula < = 2	1
Solid hull-to-deck fastening	20
Comfort index	25

Highly desirable items (0 - 15 pts.)

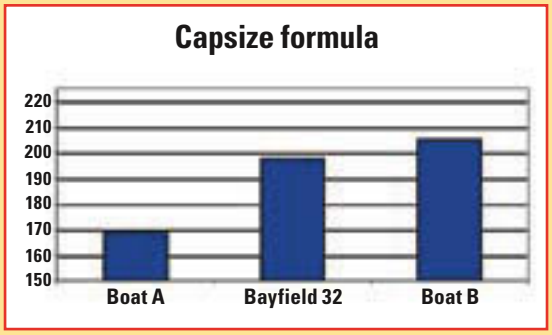
Ample ventilation	10
Classic appearance	15
Cockpit seats to sleep on	15
Headroom for Ray in saloon	10
Seating for dinner	15
Shower	5
Sumptuous interior	15

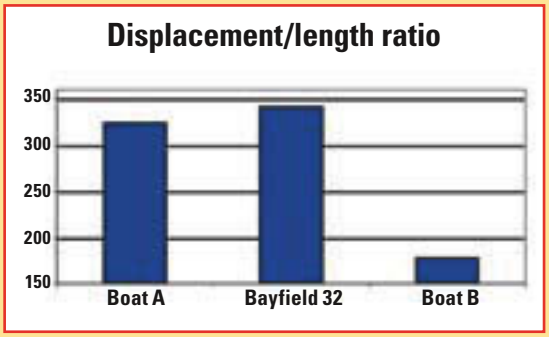
Nice-to-have items (0 - 10 pts.)

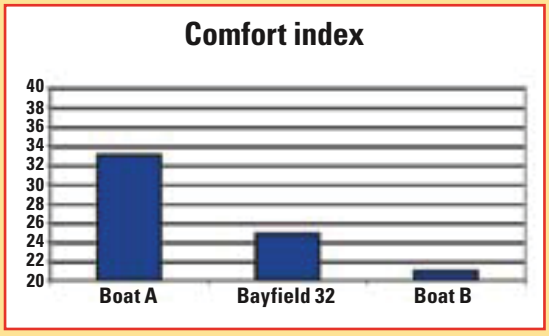
Ventilation in galley	10
Wheel steering	10

Prohibited items (0 - minus 20 pts.)

Greater than 40 feet LOA	0
Spade rudder	0
Teak deck	0
Two heads	0







that can tell you almost all you need to know, and any good search engine will lead you to them, as will a check of the *Good Old Boat* website <http://www.goodoldboat.com>.

> *"...you run the risk of being blinded by the bells and whistles, while neglecting what's really important."*

But don't stop there. You can also use the Internet to find additional models. Sites like Boats.com <http://www.boats.com> and Yachtworld <http://www.yachtworld.com> have extensive listings, almost all with photos and specifications. (One word of caution: don't assume that the specifications are always accurate; we've found several errors during our research.)

Don't be overly inflexible when you are accepting or rejecting models, especially if you are having trouble finding models that meet every requirement or if you find ones that excel in most areas but are deficient in just one or two. For example, the Spencer 35 (which, after all, was good enough for Hal and Margaret Roth) scored very high with us except for headroom in the galley. We discovered, however, that one determined first mate had come up with an ingenious seat in the galley, so that the captain (who is 6 feet 3 inches tall) could do his fair share of the dishwashing. We scored it slightly lower, but it still made our list.

Occasionally, you may be unable to determine if a particular model meets a certain requirement. In our search, if we couldn't find line drawings, then we couldn't tell if the berth would be comfortable for a couple. Leave the question unanswered, and leave the model on your list until it proves itself one way or the other.

STEP 4

Go boat shopping

Now that you have your list of models, start looking for specific boats. You know better than I the best local sources, but don't ignore publications such as *Good Old Boat* (especially the website), *Soundings*, *Yacht Finder*, *Latitude 38*, *48° North*, *SpinSheet*, *Northern Breezes*, and *South Winds*. And, of course, don't neglect the Internet.

Step 4 is also when you develop that list of "must-have accessories" that I mentioned in Step 2. When I say must-have, I mean anything that you would be forced to add before you put your boat to the intended use you described in Step 1. This list should not include any item that you do not feel is absolutely necessary. A good example, for us, is a watermaker. Watermakers are a handy item on a cruising boat (if you have the power to run them), but we would not feel the need to add one immediately. Therefore, it doesn't make our list of accessories.

Remember, the purpose of this process is to help you choose the right boat. If you include accessories that aren't essential to your vision, you run the risk of being blinded by the bells and whistles, while neglecting what's really important. If it's truly essential, put it on the list; otherwise, leave it off. You'll see the importance of this

Bristol 35
Score: 230 **Price: $26,500**

Model specifications

Rig:	sloop
Length overall:	34.66
Length on deck:	34.66
Length waterline:	23.75
Beam:	10
Draft:	5
Displacement:	12,500
Capsize formula:	1.72
D/L ratio:	417
Comfort index:	33

Required items (0 - 30 pts.)

Ability to install sun protection	12
Comfortable berth	20
Comfortable settee	10
Displace over 280	27
Headroom for Ray in galley	20
Overbuilt rigging	5
Capsize formula < = 2	14
Solid hull-to-deck fastening	10
Comfort index	20

Highly desirable items (0 - 15 pts.)

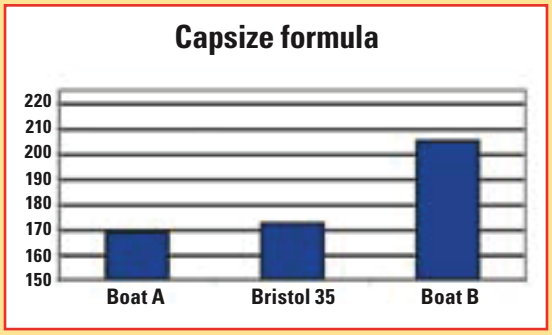
Ample ventilation	12
Classic appearance	15
Cockpit seats to sleep on	15
Headroom for Ray in saloon	10
Seating for dinner	15
Shower	15
Sumptuous interior	10

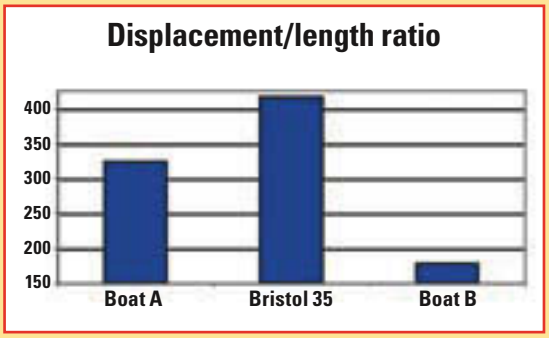
Nice-to-have items (0 - 10 pts.)

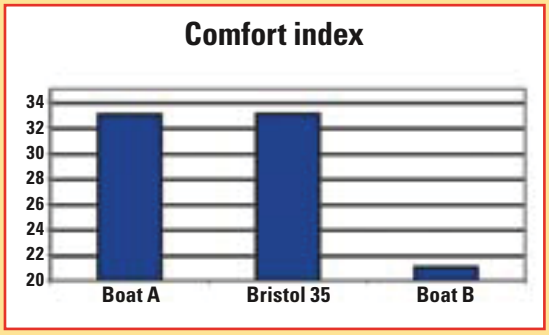
Ventilation in galley	0
Wheel steering	10

Prohibited items (0 - minus 20 pts.)

Greater than 40 feet LOA	0
Spade rudder	0
Teak deck	0
Two heads	0







during Step 5, when we calculate the adjusted price of your boat. Once you've identified specific vessels that are for sale, perform an initial inspection in order to accomplish two things: to validate the information you've already collected during your model analysis, and to compare what's actually on the boat with your list of accessories. Arrange to spend some time at the boat, and come prepared to do a quality inspection.

We've discovered some useful tools. Since we both are fairly computer literate, we developed a form (actually an Excel spreadsheet) based on our Step 2 list. It calculates the capsize formula, the D/L ratio, and the comfort index automatically. It also gives a graphic comparison in those three areas to two other boats, one that we consider to be a very seaworthy boat (Boat A on the form), and another we consider to be less so (Boat B). There are blocks on the form to score the boat on each of the Step 2 attributes (more on scoring later, and you can download an example of our form at the *Good Old Boat* website by following the link on the home page). That form goes on a clipboard, which we carry along with a tape measure, a digital camera, and a flashlight.

As soon as we arrive at the boat we swing into action. I stand in the galley (important to me) and Kathleen tests out the berth (important to her). We scrutinize the rigging, especially the chainplates, and use the flashlight to determine how the builders attached the deck to the hull. Each item on our Step 2 list gets a score.

Our scoring system is an attempt to impose a little objectivity on what is inherently a very subjective process. Each of our required items gets scores from 0 to 30 points; highly desired items score between 0 and 15 points; nice-to-have items score 0 to 10 points; and prohibited items get a negative score of 0 to -20.

Any galley that I can stand up in automatically gets a 20. We gave the Spencer (with the galley seat installed) a 12. Room for four, instead of the six we'd like, around the saloon table earns 5. We use the same technique for prohibited items. A full teak deck drops the score 20 points. A fiberglass deck with a teak cockpit (we saw an Islander like this) loses 10 points.

> *"Our scoring system is an attempt to impose a little objectivity on what is inherently a very subjective process."*

Once we've scored the boat in each area, and if we haven't discovered anything that out-and-out disqualifies this hull (such as many high-cost, mandatory repairs), we compare our inventory of must-have accessories to what comes with the boat, noting the deficiencies.

Lastly, we interview the owner or broker to determine if there are any big-ticket repair or replacement items that require immediate attention. Do all the sails need to be replaced? The head re-plumbed? New cushions throughout? How about new standing rigging? We also ask ourselves if we can live with the general state of maintenance. Or are we going to have to repaint, re-

Orion 27

Score: 230 **Price: $46,000**

Model specifications

Rig:	sloop
Length overall:	31.92
Length on deck:	27
Length waterline:	22.17
Beam:	9.25
Draft:	4
Displacement:	10,000
Capsize formula:	1.72
D/L ratio:	410
Comfort index:	32

Required items (0 - 30 pts.)

Ability to install sun protection	12
Comfortable berth	10
Comfortable settee	15
Displace over 280	26
Headroom for Ray in galley	10
Overbuilt rigging	20
Capsize formula < = 2	14
Solid hull-to-deck fastening	20
Comfort index	30

Highly desirable items (0 - 15 pts.)

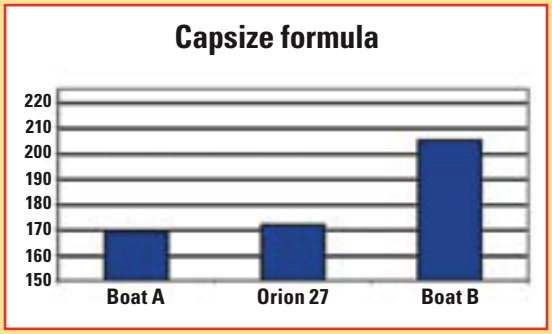
Ample ventilation	10
Classic appearance	15
Cockpit seats to sleep on	0
Headroom for Ray in saloon	10
Seating for dinner	8
Shower	5
Sumptuous interior	15

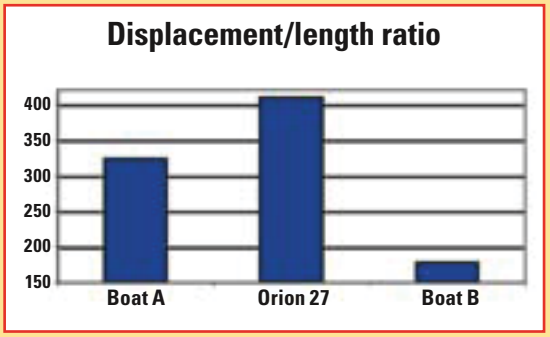
Nice-to-have items (0 - 10 pts.)

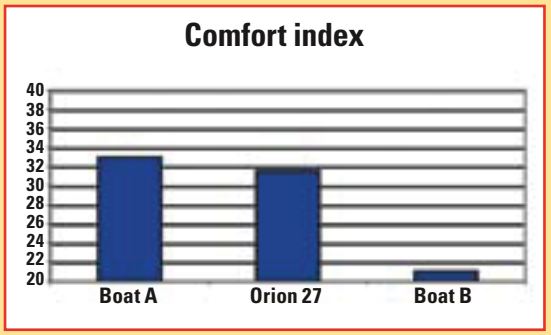
Ventilation in galley	0
Wheel steering	10

Prohibited items (0 - minus 20 pts.)

Greater than 40 feet LOA	0
Spade rudder	0
Teak deck	0
Two heads	0







varnish, and renew the boat?

We've done so many of these inspections that we rarely spend more than an hour for a first look. The next step takes even less time — usually about the time it takes to drive home.

STEP 5

Calculate adjusted price

Calculating the adjusted price of the boat requires four numbers: the lowest amount you believe the owner will accept, the cost of any accessories you'll need to add, the cost of any major repairs or renovations, and the cost of transporting the boat to where you need it. Add those four numbers together and you'll get the adjusted price, which is a far more valuable figure than the asking price. For example, a $25,000 boat that needs a life raft ($8,000), a dinghy ($1,200), new rigging ($3,000), and is floating nearby produces an adjusted price of $37,200.

Using the adjusted price will quickly reveal that a lower-priced boat, without a suit of sails, or requiring $15,000 of work in the boatyard (about a week's worth, in my experience), is not necessarily the best buy. A boat that's 1,000 or 10,000 miles away, but also thousands of dollars less expensive, may be more competitive than you think (see the sidebar on transporting your newly purchased boat on Page 14). The use of an adjusted price allows you to do a proper comparison.

STEP 6

Make an offer

This is where all the work you've done pays off. After a few weeks or months, depending on how much time you have to devote to your search, you should have accumulated many score sheets, each representing a boat you have inspected. When reviewing the score sheets look at two things: first, how high did the boat score, and second, what's the adjusted price? Once you've completed that review, there are several routes you can take.

One approach is to rank all the boats you've inspected, using each boat's total score, and draw a line just below the boat with the lowest score that still meets your needs sufficiently. Then make an offer on the one (above the line) with the lowest adjusted price.

Let's assume that you have looked at 25 boats. You rank them based on their score and decide that you could be happy with any of the top seven. You then review those seven and make an offer on the one with the lowest adjusted price.

A second technique might be to rank the boats and draw your line as you did before, and then concentrate on the boat that is most ready to sail away or best matches your budget.

If you are particularly passionate about a specific boat, your ranking will allow you to see where it stands against the others. Your score sheets will tell you exactly what you're giving up (either in attributes, accessories, or money) to satisfy your passion. Perhaps the same boat that makes your heart beat faster also scored the highest.

Remain flexible even after you've made your offer. Two situations could send you back to your list of boats and their scores (Step 6). First, the price that you thought the owner would accept might be overly optimistic. If that happens, however, you are well prepared to respond, because you know how high you're willing to go. If the counter-offer is $8,000 more, but you have another boat on your list for only $4,000 more, you may want to consider ignoring the counter-offer, and making

Spencer 35
Score: 229 **Price: $34,900**

Model specifications

Rig:	sloop
Length overall:	34.25
Length on deck:	34.25
Length waterline:	25
Beam:	9.5
Draft:	5.25
Displacement:	12,000
Capsize formula:	1.66
D/L ratio:	343
Comfort index:	33

Required items (0 - 30 pts.)

Ability to install sun protection	15
Comfortable berth	15
Comfortable settee	15
Displace over 280	13
Headroom for Ray in galley	10
Overbuilt rigging	15
Capsize formula < = 2	17
Solid hull-to-deck fastening	15
Comfort index	20

Highly desirable items (0 - 15 pts.)

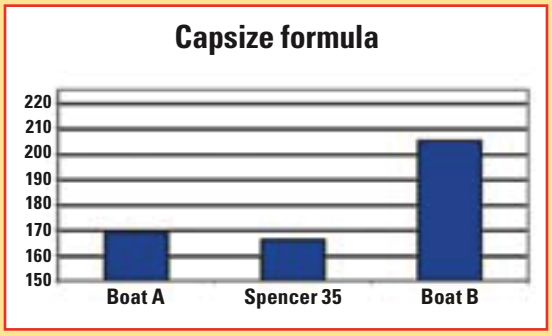
Ample ventilation	10
Classic appearance	10
Cockpit seats to sleep on	15
Headroom for Ray in saloon	12
Seating for dinner	15
Shower	0
Sumptuous interior	12

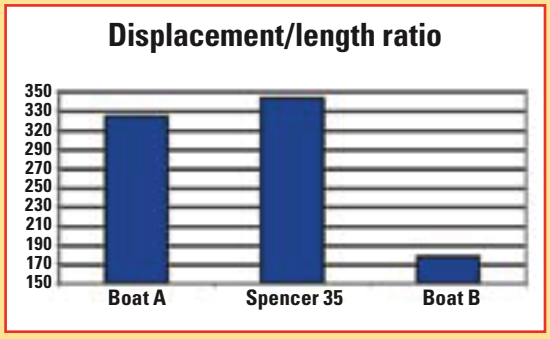
Nice-to-have items (0 - 10 pts.)

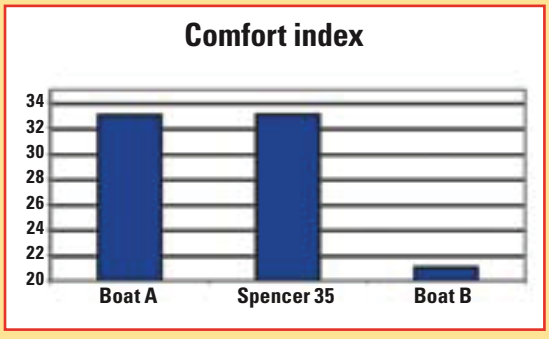
Ventilation in galley	10
Wheel steering	10

Prohibited items (0 - minus 20 pts.)

Greater than 40 feet LOA	0
Spade rudder	0
Teak deck	0
Two heads	0







an offer on a different boat.

The second reason you may want to return to Step 6 is that the results of the survey may significantly change your adjusted price. We are strong believers in obtaining a complete survey, even though they can be costly. It can be discouraging to watch a portion of the funds you've set aside for this purchase dwindle as you survey more than one boat, but nowhere near as disturbing as finding out that the boat you just purchased needs tens of thousands of dollars worth of repairs.

Thanks to the market (the stock market, not the boat market), Kathleen and I suspended our search in the middle of Step 4. We are ready at any time, however, to re-start, thanks to the preparations we've made.

When we do take the plunge (perhaps an unfortunate metaphor, considering the subject), we're confident that our new home will be, in every way that is important to us, the boat of our dreams!

Tayana 37

Score: 254 **Price: $75,000**

Model specifications

Rig:	cutter
Length overall:	42
Length on deck:	36.666
Length waterline:	31
Beam:	11.5
Draft:	5.666
Displacement:	22,500
Capsize formula:	1.63
D/L ratio:	337
Comfort index:	39

Required items (0 - 30 pts.)

Ability to install sun protection	15
Comfortable berth	20
Comfortable settee	20
Displace over 280	11
Headroom for Ray in galley	20
Overbuilt rigging	20
Capsize formula < = 2	19
Solid hull-to-deck fastening	20
Comfort index	20

Highly desirable items (0 - 15 pts.)

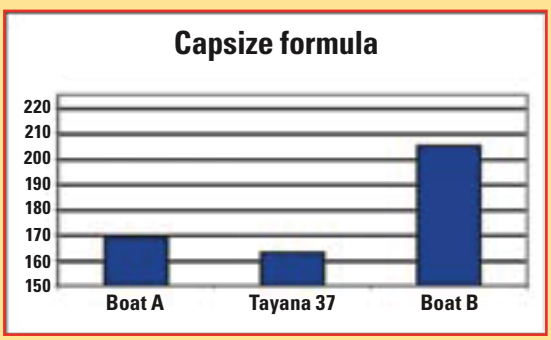
Ample ventilation	12
Classic appearance	15
Cockpit seats to sleep on	0
Headroom for Ray in saloon	12
Seating for dinner	15
Shower	15
Sumptuous interior	15

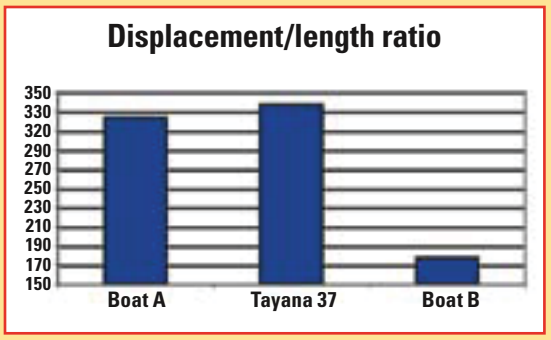
Nice-to-have items (0 - 10 pts.)

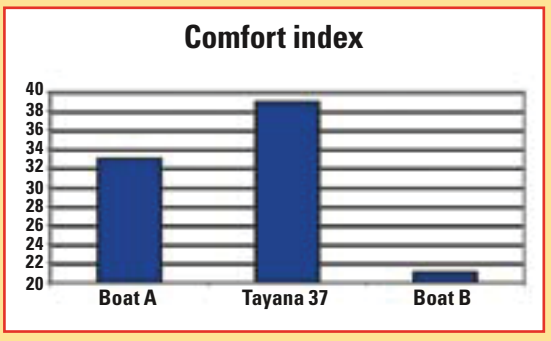
Ventilation in galley	0
Wheel steering	10

Prohibited items (0 - minus 20 pts.)

Greater than 40 feet LOA	0
Spade rudder	0
Teak deck	–5
Two heads	0







Getting her home

When you live in Hawaii, as Kathleen and I do, you're constantly analyzing shipping costs. Is it better to buy that book on the Internet for $15, plus $6 shipping and handling, or to go to the book store and pay $22? More to the point, our search for boats necessarily includes much of the western United States (and occasionally even more distant marinas), so we had to explore just how much it would cost to move a boat to Hawaii, as well as the advantages and disadvantages. Here's what we found for a 30- to 40-foot vessel.

Mode: Truck
Cost: $6,000 to $10,000 (including assembly, disassembly, transport, materials used to prepare the boat, and the cost of getting you to the point of embarkation, assuming a 2,000 mile trip)
Advantages: Speed (when was the last time you were close-hauled at 50 knots?); no need for your boat to be completely seaworthy; no need for good weather; reputable transporters have good insurance.
Disadvantages: Some size and weight limitations; lots of disassembly and assembly (exterior must be stripped to prevent pilferage).

Mode: Delivery captain
Cost: $4,000 to $6,000 (including captain and crew salary, food, and airline tickets, assuming a five-day sail).
Advantages: No disassembly or assembly; boat arrives seaworthy.
Disadvantages: Boat must be seaworthy before departure; weather-dependent.

Mode: Container ship
Cost: $10,000 to $15,000 (including cradle, disassembly, and assembly).
Advantages: Speed (container ships don't care which way the wind is blowing).
Disadvantages: Lots of disassembly and assembly (exterior must be stripped to prevent pilferage); if crossing international borders, tons of paperwork.
***Note**: The prices listed here are estimates based on averages; use them to assist your decision-making, but if two boats are within a few thousand dollars of each other, get some quotes to refine your data.*

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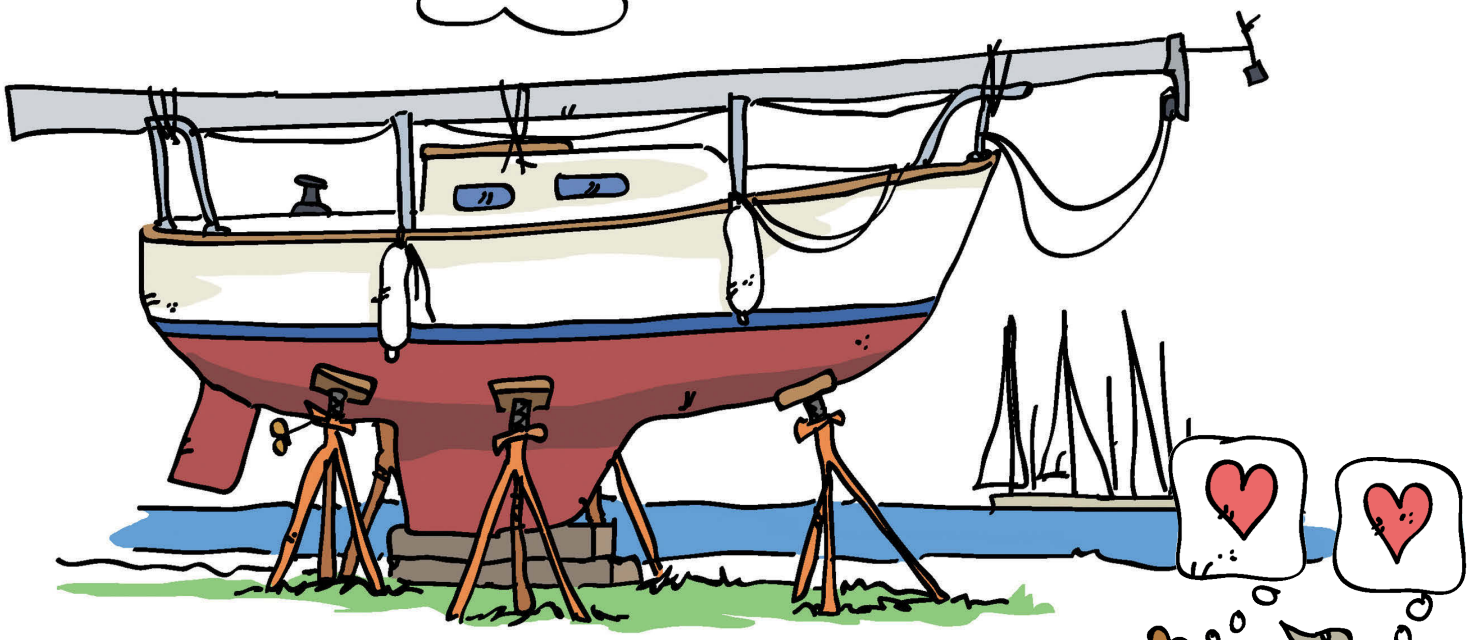

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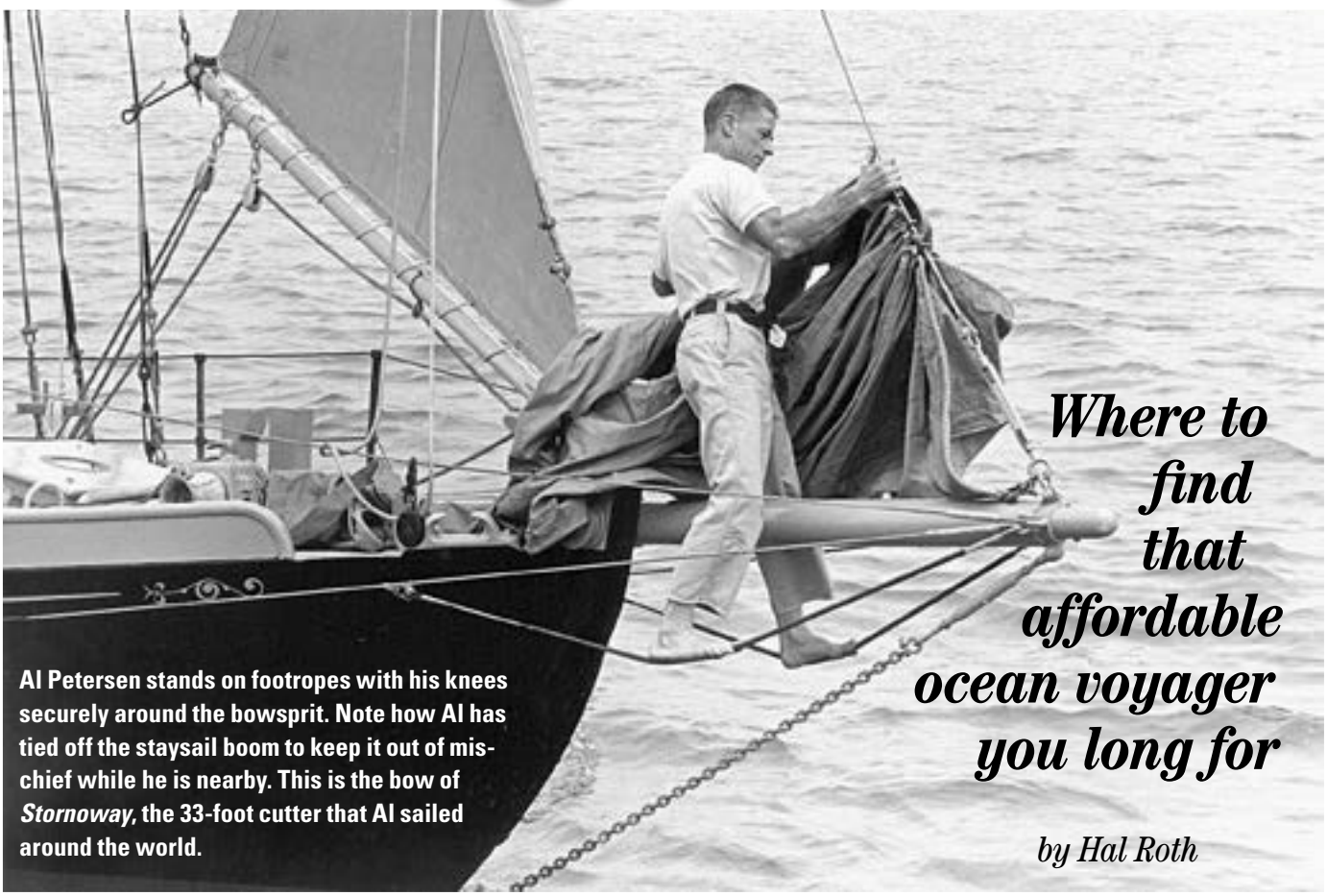


Al Petersen stands on footropes with his knees securely around the bowsprit. Note how Al has tied off the staysail boom to keep it out of mischief while he is nearby. This is the bow of *Stornoway,* the 33-foot cutter that Al sailed around the world.

Where to find that affordable ocean voyager you long for

by Hal Roth

THERE ARE THREE SOURCES OF MODerately priced cruising yachts: ex-racing boats, ex-charter boats, and secondhand cruising yachts.

The first category is yacht racing, the game of trying to outsail a group of similar vessels around a set of buoys or competing with other boats from one point on a coastline to another, usually for an afternoon or for a day or two. Yacht racing is responsible for enormous improvements in sails, winches, foul-weather clothing, and the general streamlining of boats above and below the water. Yet I don't believe the artificial standards of racing yachts are a logical way to find the best vessels for the sea.

Racing-boat designs have long been based on faddish racing rules that produce groups of similar yachts designed to compete with one another like horses on a track or greyhounds on a racing oval. The important things for racing boats are speed and a low rating. If it's a one-design class, the emphasis is on sailing tactics and yacht gear. Hovering on the edges of all this are the naval architects and boatbuilders, who have a direct financial stake in winning yachts. A winner sells best.

"The hull, deck structure, keel, rudder, and rig will last for decades — unless they're terribly abused and neglected."

Racing criteria

What have been the guidelines of racing in past years?

When the racing criterion was waterline length, the bow and stern overhangs became excessively long and unseaworthy. The overhangs meant that when the yacht was heeled in a breeze, her immersed waterline was longer and she sailed faster. Yet her rating was based on her waterline length when measured sitting upright at a dock.

When the racing criterion was fixed sail area, the naval architects drew plans for high and efficient sailing rigs on light hulls with heavy keels to give stability to the tall rigs. Since the sail area was critical, the designers read the rules with the intensity of Supreme Court justices and took advantage of every loophole in the rules, particularly with regard to unmeasured sail area.

When the racing criterion was displacement, the builders produced lightweight, fragile hulls that would go fast in light to medium air. In strong winds the yachts stayed home. If they attempted heavier weather, they sailed at risk and broke apart, as have recent entries in the America's Cup competition.

When the racing criterion is based on overall length, the designs feature ugly-looking plumb bows and sterns to maximize waterline length. When this is combined with no restrictions on

come true

beam and only lip service to self-righting regulations, the results seem good at first but end up being dreadful. The current yachts in the Around Alone and Vendée Globe singlehanded races are extremely beamy and use the weight of water ballast tanks, canting ballast keels, or both to balance an enormous amount of sail that powers the boats to incredible speeds.

Stable upside down

Unfortunately, these ocean racers are not self-righting and float nicely upside down, a deplorable trend that's caused half a dozen widely publicized sailing disasters. Personally, I think the designers and race organizers should be put in jail. It seems to me that the first responsibility of a naval architect and a race sponsor is to get the crew home alive.

The result of all this competitive sailing is that yacht brokers have plenty of ex-racing boats that have been outmaneuvered by the rules. Yet these boats are available and perfectly good for less intensive, non-rule-oriented sailing. And they're much cheaper than a new yacht that's specially designed and built for long-distance voyaging.

An aging thoroughbred can still make reasonable time around a track, but just as a veterinarian checks a horse, a tough surveyor should evaluate a used yacht, no matter what her history and her seller's claims.

Unlike a used car, the mechanical aspects of a yacht account for only a small part of its value. The hull, deck structure, keel, rudder, and rig will last for decades — unless they're terribly abused and neglected — particularly since 90 percent of present-day boats are constructed of fiberglass and have aluminum spars. The engine, sails, head, and electronics may need attention, but these things can function at three-quarters throttle for years. If the electric wind-direction indicator doesn't work, it's not the end of the world. Like me, you can always put a meter-long red ribbon on a pivot at the top of the VHF antenna at the masthead.

Racing yachts tend to be lightly built, and the cockpits — sized for a big crew — may be large and able to hold too great a weight of water for ideal safety at sea. The accommodations, galleys, and chart tables of racing boats are often poor to marginal in order to save weight. Because of minimal joinerwork, the stowage spaces are undeveloped for all the supplies and spare parts that cruising vessels carry. You may need to build in drawers, cupboards, and lockers, but these can be added gradually.

Since a used racing boat represents a smaller amount of material and labor and was built under rules that may be going out of style, her price is lower. In August 2003, I could buy a 5-year-old 35-foot fiberglass racing yacht for $99,000 (new cost: $150,000 to $160,000). If I chose a 1985 model — 18 years old — I could spend as little as $55,000, according to one magazine.

"Personally, I think the designers and race organizers should be put in jail. It seems to me that the first responsibility of a naval architect and a race sponsor is to get the crew home alive."

Charter boats and wrecks

A second source for a less expensive cruising yacht is a charter company. Old charter boats are cheaper because they've been heavily used by a succession of short-time customers who hired the yacht for one or two weeks at a time. Charter boats come from the factory generally lightly equipped except for upgrades in anchor windlasses, increased freshwater tank capacity, engine-driven refrigeration systems with stainless steel holding plates, and more durable cabin soles and companionway steps to take the wear and tear of many people.

In a single year the engine, sails, winches, head, galley stove, and seat cushions get plenty of use. Often a charter company serves as the agent for a private party who owns the yacht and leases it back to the charter company, which pays the owner a negotiated fee based on usage. The charter company takes care of all maintenance and berthing and makes the vessel available to the owner for 5 to 6 weeks a year (sometimes up to 14 weeks).

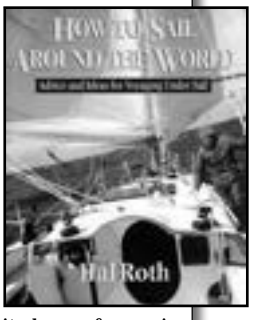
A typical bareboat yacht is chartered for 27 to 30 weeks a year for 5½ years, after which she is sold. During much of this time the charterers push the vessel hard because they want to go to as many places as possible. Perhaps some 600 people will have lived on the yacht for short periods. It's just the opposite with private owners, who use a vessel much less intensely.

After a few seasons of chartering, the boat tends to lose her luster; the gelcoat on the hull becomes chipped from banging into docks and other yachts. The paint and varnish look grungy; the white sails become gray and baggy. Compare a taxicab with your own automobile. Which would you rather own?

Certainly an ex-charter yacht needs to be surveyed. If the inspector finds a problem, it may be smart to get another opinion from a second surveyor or a boatyard manager. The hull should be checked at close range, from a distance, and from all angles. A 4-foot flexible batten can be run up and down the outside of the hull to spot old wounds. There's nothing wrong with a repaired hull if the problem has been dealt with properly. However, hull repairs should be thoroughly looked at inside and out — even if the surveyor has to take some ceiling or joinerwork apart.

What's available? Start telephoning the charter companies. Check their websites. Be prepared to fly out at once to inspect their offerings. If you're

For further reading...



This article was excerpted from Hal Roth's newest book: *How to Sail Around the World: Advice and Ideas for Voyaging Under Sail*, published by International Marine in 2004. A three-time circumnavigator, Hal speaks with the authority born of experience. This book is available at <http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html> or by calling 763-420-8923.

handy with tools and a paintbrush, the prices of retired charter boats can be attractive because used boats change hands for about half the new price.

Discount 30 percent

A new 35-foot Beneteau, with tax and a few extras, costs about $130,000. The price of a five- to six-year-old Beneteau from a private owner on the open market is about $95,000. However, you can purchase a five- to six-year-old Beneteau from a charter company for $65,000. This is $30,000 — or roughly 30 percent — down from the open market and a 50 percent discount from the new cost.

If you find something you like, fly in your own surveyor (not the charter company's). Often when a company decides to sell, they want to do it quickly and without fuss. Time and cash offers are generally the buzzwords, and you'll have to take her away from the company dock in a few days. This works against many purchasers, who like to poke around and think about a purchase for months and are not used to flying to distant locations and doing business quickly and for cash.

The buyer of a small charter boat should put aside $13,500 for the following:

- survey ($500)
- engine overhaul ($2,000)
- new galley stove ($1,000)
- replacing some or all of the standing rigging ($3,000)
- new sails ($5,000)
- painting and miscellaneous ($1,000)
- haulout and bottom painting ($1,000)

"I would have no hesitation about offering the owners a nice lunch or the payment of $75 or $100 for them to take me out for a couple of hours, particularly if I do all the string pulling."

Insurance write-offs

Yachts that are damaged by hurricanes or other causes and sold by insurance companies are in the same category. Often an underwriter will sell a severely damaged vessel cheaply because of the cost of getting her to a boatyard and making difficult repairs that an owner may challenge. Such sales are usually on an "as is, where is" basis.

Sometimes this gives a person who is a hard driver an opportunity.

Some years back, the renowned sailor and author, Don Street, anchored his 44-foot wooden yawl, *Iolaire*, in Lindbergh Bay on the south shore of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. Don thought the bay was sheltered, but a 30-knot weather system blew up from the east. An associated southeast swell hooked around nearby Water Island and swept into the bay.

Don learned that his vessel had been driven ashore. He rushed to the bay and found *Iolaire* on her side near the beach in three feet of water. Initially she was OK, but attempts to pull her into deeper water failed. She was soon holed and filled with water.

Iolaire's port side was a mess; there was a hole large enough to crawl through that measured 8 feet long and 3 feet from top to bottom. Attempts to jack her upright would have destroyed the hull. A simple grounding had turned into a disaster.

The insurance adjuster took one look and declared the yacht a total loss. At the same time the manager of the hotel in Lindbergh Bay demanded that the wreck be removed from the beach at once. The insurance company wanted closure, so Don bought the vessel "as is, where is" for $100, with the responsibility for her removal.

Stripped interior

Don borrowed two ship jacks from a boatyard and rounded up a collection of wooden blocks and short 2 x 4s and 4 x 4s, plus a number of large wooden wedges. Then, together with friends, he stripped out the interior joinery of the yacht and quickly knocked together several stout athwartship X-frames in the interior to keep the hull from collapsing. Using wooden supports, jacks, and wedges (driven with a 10-pound sledge), and pushing against the outside planking where it was supported by the X-frames, Don and his helpers gradually raised the hull from 50 degrees to a vertical position. For-

A broken spade rudder on an Islander 37, at left. This rudder came with a new yacht made by a supposedly reputable company. In spite of naval architect Bill Tripp's careful drawings that showed a heavy-walled stainless-steel pipe the full length of the rudder, the builder substituted an appalling iron weldment. Externally, the rudder looked perfect, with the required rudderstock disappearing into a carefully streamlined fiberglass-covered foam section. Just below the surface, however, there was no strength at all against the stresses of sailing, and the first time owner John Warren took his new yacht, *Beyond,* into the ocean, the rudder folded up like a piece of cardboard.

tunately, the weather remained calm.

To patch the hole, the men used ordinary 3-inch-wide, ⅜-inch-thick tongue-and-groove boards placed horizontally. The workers painted the edges of the hole with roofing tar, slapped on a tongue-and-groove board, and nailed it in place. As each new board was added, the edges were smeared with roofing tar. After the hole was closed, Don covered the patched area with canvas soaked in tar.

"The hull was weak in the area of the patch," Don recalled when I interviewed him. "However, there was little load on it because of the X-frames we'd put in place in the interior. The yacht was not sailing, so there were no rigging loads on the hull. The only function of the patch was to keep the water out."

Meanwhile Don hired a big crane from the West India Company for one day ($425). In a series of lifts, the crane maneuvered the yacht into deeper water. The temporary patch held nicely, and the wooden yawl was whisked off to a nearby boatyard. Three carpenters plus their helpers put in 11 new planks, 22 frames, a stout bilge stringer, plus a rudder and a new interior.

Outwitted them all

Iolaire was soon sailing again. With grit, determination, round-the-clock vigilance to deter looters, and a little luck, Don had outwitted both the insurance company and the chorus of doomsayers on the beach.

I saw the same trick pulled off in 1970 in Monterey, California. A sailor and his crew left San Francisco and headed south in a new Porpoise, a 42-foot Bill Garden design. She was a pretty Bermudian ketch built of wood, with a bowsprit and an exquisite sheerline. Once clear of the Golden Gate, the captain headed south along the coast.

Unfortunately, fog rolled in from the west. Suddenly the yacht was enveloped in a thick, blinding blanket of white. The crew was inexperienced. Instead of following a strict compass course and heading a little offshore — the captain had the entire Pacific Ocean to starboard — he steered toward a fog signal that he heard off to port. It wasn't long before he piled up on the rocks beneath the Monterey lighthouse. The yacht was holed and suddenly full of cold water. The people on board, who had lost all interest in further sailing, hurried ashore and turned the ship over to the insurance company, which declared the yacht a total loss.

"A Hinckley or a Swan is a deluxe, premium-priced vessel and will cost perhaps twice as much as a Catalina or a Jeanneau. Nevertheless, all four will take you across the Atlantic."

A local man — let's call him Mr. Smith — now appeared on the scene and bought the wreck from the insurance company, which was glad to sell it before the Coast Guard labeled the boat a menace to navigation and demanded removal. Smith immediately hired a local contractor, who trucked a heavy Caterpillar tractor to the nearest beach. While the Caterpillar tractor was coming, Smith and a couple of helpers emptied the water tanks and removed as much weight from the boat as possible. Since the wreck lay over on her side, he took out both masts by disconnecting the rigging and running lines ashore. When the Caterpillar tractor arrived, it pulled the masts from the inclined wreck and dragged them up on the beach. The weather remained calm.

Two days' work

Smith ringed the hull with stout ropes and ran the lines to the beach. The big Caterpillar began to inch the wreck toward the shore. It took two days of maneuvering, rock moving, line adjusting, skid placing, and great effort, but by noon of the second day, the battered wreck was on the beach. Smith hired a crane to lift the yacht onto a big flatbed truck. The dripping, angled load was then taken to a local boatyard, where she was blocked up and began to look like a proper vessel again. The waterlogged engine was lifted out for overhaul. The wooden masts were put alongside on sawhorses.

The costs to Smith? He bought the wreck cheaply. The costs for the tractor, crane, and flatbed truck were reckoned in hundreds of dollars, as were the charges for the heavy, long ropes and the hired laborers. The engine overhaul and the repairs to the hull and the wet interior were a few thousand dollars. The yacht was valued at $40,000. All these figures are from 1970 and should be multiplied by five or so in the year 2004, but you get the idea.

I have noted these two salvage incidents to illustrate what a determined person can do. Both stories are true and show that it's possible to acquire a valuable yacht for a small sum. But in each case the chances of failure were considerable. The purchase of an old charter boat, a wreck from an insurance company, or a seized drug boat may sound romantic and exciting, but for most people it's too risky and difficult. I don't recommend it.

Banks and loan companies often finance yacht purchases. Occasionally the owner defaults on his note and the yacht is seized and sold. Usually the bank officers know little about the vessel they suddenly own except that they want to collect on the outstanding note and end a problem loan. This means you can make small cash offers (you can always go up, but not down). Try 10 cents on the dollar and see what happens. The trick is finding out about the default in time to make an offer.

Used cruisers

The third category for a less expensive yacht is a used cruising boat. A yacht just back from a long voyage. One owned by someone who is too busy to use his boat. The spouse may have grown tired of sailing. Or you'll hear the eternal refrain: "I want something bigger."

The August 2003 issue of *Soundings* magazine listed 81 35-foot sailing yachts for sale. The average price was $80,841. The average age of the listed boats was 18 years. Since actual selling prices are usually a little lower, this suggests that you can buy a 35-footer that's 18 to 20 years old for $70,000 to $75,000, depending on her pedigree and equipment. A Hinckley or a Swan is a deluxe, premium-priced vessel and will cost perhaps twice as much as a Catalina or a Jeanneau. Nevertheless, all four will take you across the Atlantic, just as you can drive an economy Ford ($14,000) or a new Lexus ($34,000) from New York to San Francisco.

Before you head off to Hawaii, however, the used yacht will need a careful survey. The odds are that the engine of a 1985 yacht will have had far more attention than her standing rigging. This is why you need a surveyor to inspect all the 1 x 19 wire fittings

I believe the smallest size yacht that's practical for long-distance sailing is this snappy-looking Vertue-class pocket cruiser. She's a heavy-displacement (9,447 lb) 25½-foot sloop designed by Laurent Giles. American sailor Ed Boden is about to leave Avatiu Harbour on the north shore of Rarotonga in the Cook Islands in the South Pacific. "Making this trip was the greatest adventure of my life," Ed said.

with dye penetrant and a high-powered eyeglass. The inspector should unroll each sail and comment on its condition. He should check the compression of each engine cylinder. If the underwater part of the hull is plagued with blisters, there's a potential for a big repair charge. Fortunately, experts can do quite a bit of work on the bottom for $4,000 or so, which should go into your cost considerations.

Here's a ragtag budget for a 1985 yacht, initially costing $59,000, and preparing it for ocean sailing:

• survey	$500
• engine overhaul	$2,000
• new galley stove	$1,000
• new standing rigging	$3,000
• new sails	$5,000
• painting, etc.	$1,000
• haulout, osmosis	$4,000
• Total	$16,500

We have established that you can buy a 1985 middle-of-the-road yacht for about $75,000. My estimate for repairs and upgrades is $12,500 plus an allowance of $4,000 for bottom work. This totals $91,500.

From the same used-boat list mentioned above, you could choose a 1995 Freedom ($149,000), a 1998 Tartan ($162,000), or a 1975 Halberg-Rassy ($51,000).

Look at a lot

The only way that I know how to find a suitable yacht is to inspect lots of them. Walk up and down the marina docks. Climb in a dinghy and row past the moorings in the summer. Look around the freezing boat sheds during the winter. Try to size up all the yachts that appeal to you. Fat ones, skinny ones, beat-up old woodies, steel streaked with rust. Cast-off aluminum racers. Tired-looking fiberglass boats. The lot. Take a couple of photographs of each one you like. Talk to the owners. Find out where the boats have been.

Some of the yachts will appeal to you aesthetically and grab your heart. Perhaps it's the canoe stern, a yawl rig, or the angle of a jaunty coachroof. Maybe it's the way the early sunlight falls across the mast and boom. Perhaps it's all these things . . . or none of them.

If you're a serious looker, buy yourself a bound notebook and use two facing pages to keep a record of each yacht you inspect. When you're comfortably seated aboard the boat, start writing. Begin with the date and location. Then the yacht's name. Her overall length, waterline length, beam, and draft. (If you need a measurement, you can whip out your tape measure.)

Note the rig. The age of the boat. Hull material. Mast material. Sails (number and type). Radios. Engine (how many hours?). Steering vane or autopilot? Boarding ladder? Dinghy? Is there a place to stow the dinghy on board? Is the price open to negotiation or a trade? How long has the vessel been on the market? Is the owner anxious? Look over the yacht for her general condition, and grade her on a scale of 1 (a wreck) to 10 (too good to believe).

Make lots of notes

Write down your contact. Is there a "For Sale" sign on board? If you're there because of an advertisement, jot down the owner's name and telephone number. If you saw the boat with a broker, note his name and number.

Look at the condition of the berth and seat cushions (check underneath for dampness and mildew). Stretch out on the bunks and see whether they're comfortable and OK for your body size. Try to visualize sailing in the vessel. Does she seem pleasant or is she too far gone? How many anchors does the boat have? What sizes? Is there an anchor windlass? Does it work, or have rust and corrosion sealed it forever? Write down both the good and the bad. Be specific. If you have questions (Capacity of the water tanks? Number of hours on the engine? Extra mainsail?), list them in your notebook. Take a couple of color photographs of the yacht. These don't have to be artistic wonders, just something to help you recall the yacht. When you get the prints, staple them to the appropriate page.

What often happens is that after a few weeks of looking, you try to recall a certain yacht. But was it in Mattapoisett or Marion? Portland or Bass Harbor? Annapolis or Oxford? When we hear a lot of numbers, we tend to mix up prices, ages, and yacht names. Sometimes after a few days, you want to take a second look. Just where did you see that Cal 40?

After you look at 20 or 30 different boats, you'll find that you like a certain design. Or maybe two kinds. If you're unsure about making an offer, try to arrange a sail. I would have no hesitation about offering the owners a nice lunch or the payment of $75 or $100 for them to take me out for a couple of hours, particularly if I do all the string pulling. This little fee may put you next to information (good or bad) that you never thought about. For example: can one person sail the yacht or does the distance from behind the wheel to the sheet winches mean that you need two people in the cockpit? Must you walk up to the mast to adjust the topping lift? The reefing arrangements for the mainsail may seem impossibly complicated. And what about that terrible vibration when the owner put the engine in gear?

Buying brand new

So far we've considered ex-racing boats, ex-charter boats, and ordinary used boats. Each category has good and bad points. What about buying a new yacht?

A deluxe new 35-foot yacht designed specially for cruising may cost $200,000 or more. But she's all new

and pristine. No nicks in the gelcoat. No grubby spots or tears on the cushions. A brand-new engine with a warranty. Gloriously white sails. A new mast and rigging. Wow! It's convenient and tempting to buy various factory options for special equipment, but the costs are high because you pay the full ticket for the item and its custom installation. The blandishments of the dealer may be hard to withstand. Also, some of the goodies (suede fabric for cushions, a two-color deck, a larger engine) may be of doubtful value. In any case, together with taxes, preparation, commissioning, and delivery, the tab can easily climb another 20 percent. With storm sails, a spinnaker, a dinghy, mast steps, extra anchors and warps, and an anchor windlass, a new, high-line 35-foot production yacht can easily cost $237,500 or more.

The gloomy reality is that if you get tangled up with installment payments and finance charges, you may never get away. This means that from a dollar-and-cents point of view, buying a used yacht may allow you to go sailing years earlier.

Summarized prices

To summarize my investigation of yacht prices in the 35-foot range, the figures look like this:

1. An ex-racing boat from 1998 (5 years old) will cost $99,000. A 1985 (19-year-old) model will cost $55,000. She will sail particularly well and have many sails but may not be entirely suitable because she is set up for a large crew. Her interior will be rudimentary. If you add joinerwork and cruising equipment (water tanks, anchors, chain, extra sails, etc.) you will increase her displacement and degrade her performance. Vessels of her type tend to lose value faster because of obsolescence. Her price may be open to negotiation. Offer half and see what happens.
2. An ex-charter yacht 5 to 6 years old will cost $65,000, perhaps less depending on her condition. Typically she will need $13,500 worth of equipment renewal, painting, and sails. Charter yachts tend to be of average quality. If you're after a deluxe yacht (Alden or Cherubini), you'll have to look in the used market.
3. A used cruising boat 5 to 6 years old will cost from $99,000 to $185,000, depending on the original price. A 1985 yacht will cost about $59,000. I estimate repairs, equipment, and sails will be $16,500, which will bring the total to $75,500. A Hinckley, Crealock, or Tartan is more expensive than a Catalina, Beneteau, or Jeanneau, mainly because of more deluxe equipment and better finishing details. Are the more costly boats safer? Do they sail better? Not necessarily. Remember, most of the designs are roughly similar. You will probably be replacing the sails, so they become a standard item. Many of the masts and rigging come from the same sources.

Try to satisfy yourself that the hull, deck, rig, rudder, and steering are well built and have worked for others. You don't need such things as television viewing centers, complex electrical systems, satellite radios, watermakers, fancy metalwork, turbocharged engines, exterior varnished trim, and so on aboard a small cruising sailboat. I've found that my life is simpler, more satisfying, and easier without these things.

What fun to see this delightful carving going to sea. Some anonymous woodworker with the soul of an artist has turned the forward end of this taffrail into a thing of pleasure and beauty. Any clod could have screwed a piece of wood between the upper and lower rails, but only an inspired artist could have fashioned this frolicking figure for all the world to see and admire.

Selecting a surveyor

A short lesson on surveying the surveyors

by Susan Peterson Gateley

You usually get a sailboat surveyed because someone, most likely an insurance or finance company, has told you to or because, as a potential buyer, you want one to establish her value. Surveys do not come cheap, $14 to $15 a foot is the going rate for a survey in the upstate New York area where I cruise.

Assuming you really do have to get a survey, you want it to meet your needs. This is not a given. There are competent and not-so-competent practicing surveyors, all of whom willingly accept your hard-earned dollars, so the whole process is a bit of a crapshoot. However, you can tilt the odds in your favor with a little preparation and a few questions before the survey takes place.

"The quality of a survey depends largely on the experience and background of the person doing it."

The quality of a survey depends largely on the experience and background of the person doing it. Some surveyors are accredited by groups, such as SAMS (Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors) and NAMS (National Association of Marine Surveyors) who may nevertheless overlook glaring faults and deficiencies during your boat's checkup. And there are experienced and knowledgeable old salts with nary an initial appended to their names who can give you a thorough and completely adequate assessment of the vessel in question. Be forewarned however: some insurance companies require the surveyor to belong to one of the professional accreditation agencies. Others say that as long as they receive a written report including the surveyor's actual "narrative description" of what they inspected on the boat (not just a standard checklist form) and accompanying photos, they'll accept it. If you are getting the survey for insurance purposes, check the company's requirements first.

Part-time businesses

I've paid for two insurance surveys. Both men doing them had worked beside experienced surveyors for a number of years before starting their own part-time businesses dealing mostly with fiberglass yachts. Both had extensive boating experience, and one had done a number of boat restorations. One was affiliated with SAMS, the other was not. Both men generated reports consisting of checklists, a market value based on data from the Internet and other sources, and several paragraphs of narrative description.

The professional surveyor organizations have attempted to impose standards on the essentially unregulated business by requiring that an accredited surveyor have a certain amount of actual field experience and follow guidelines of the Coast Guard, the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC), and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for construction equipment and other safety-related matters on board the boat.

The SAMS group also requires its members to take an exam and to submit examples of past surveys for review. It allows less-experienced surveyors to join as associates and affiliates. By working with experienced surveyors, they can then upgrade their skills over time to become full-fledged surveyors. These associations also have different areas of surveyor specialization for various commercial craft or yachts. Both SAMS and NAMS require their members to attend meetings and programs to keep them up-to-date on regulation changes, marine industry problems, marine insurance, and other pertinent information.

Geographical listings

These two organizations maintain websites with geographical listings of members so you can find a surveyor near you. SAMS is the larger of the two associations and, because of its lower entry barriers and graduated levels of affiliation, you're probably more likely to find a SAMS-accredited surveyor in an area where marine activity is pursued for pleasure.

There are two categories of survey, the pre-purchase evaluation of a boat being sold and the so-called insurance or condition-and-value survey, done at the request of a bank or insurance company. Both are intended to establish the value of your boat. They may differ some in what they include.

The condition-and-value survey tends to be a bit more standardized, thanks to the requirements of the financial institutions requiring it for an appraisal. It consists of an out-of-the-water survey, where the boat's overall

"There are competent and not-so-competent practicing surveyors, all of whom willingly accept your hard-earned dollars, so the whole process is a bit of a crapshoot."

condition and its accompanying equipment are evaluated and appraised. A lot of it consists of compiling and describing inventories. It rarely involves a sea trial. The surveyor should find and note any conditions considered hazardous or a safety threat.

As part of the process, at least for insurance surveys, the surveyor may also survey the boatowner. Insurance companies want to know how the boat will be used, if she is appropriate for the waters she operates on, and whether the operator has had any safety courses or other documented education or proficiency, such as a certificate from the U.S. Power Squadron or a Coast Guard captain's license.

Sea trial and haulout

Pre-purchase surveys done for buyers will include the appraisal and inventory information and may also involve a sea trial and/or a haulout as well. In both types, the surveyor will be seeking flaws and potential problems or safety issues. How many he or she finds will depend in part on the level of experience with other boats similar to the one you have. So before you hire surveyors ask about their past surveying experience, areas of expertise, and what types of boats they're most familiar with. Also ask them for a sample of their work on a past survey. Most reputable surveyors will provide an example with the client-identifying information blacked out.

You won't have much problem finding surveyors with experience in evaluating fiberglass hulls, but if you have a wooden or steel-hulled boat and live in an area of limited commercial marine activity, it may be harder to find a competent surveyor. Evaluating steel hulls requires special gear such as steel-thickness meters, pricey pieces of equipment not owned by many part-time surveyors.

Wooden hulls are an art unto themselves, and I'll say no more about them except that if you have owned a wooden boat in a region where most people sail fiberglass boats, and if you've pulled your share of garboard fasteners and dug away at the rot pockets for a few years, you'll probably be better able to evaluate one than most of the local surveyors. If you are not an experienced wooden-boat owner and are thinking of buying a woodie in an area where they are few and far between, you might do better to try to find a knowledgeable owner and/or boat-repairer to look her over with you, rather than hiring a surveyor.

Avoiding a survey

You might be able to avoid the expense of a pre-purchase survey if you pay cash (or use a credit card) to buy your boat and if you can insure her through your homeowner's policy. Sometimes boats under 26 feet can be added to homeowners' policies, and you may be able to get at least liability insurance on a bigger older boat as part of an "umbrella policy."

A pre-purchase survey can turn out to be a good investment for a buyer, however, providing him or her with useful bargaining chips with which to drive the price down. If the surveyor uncovers a serious defect, such as an area of bad deck core, you may be able to renegotiate the price down several times over the cost of the survey. And even if you've owned your boat for a while and think you know her well, getting her re-surveyed because of insurance requirements can be an interesting experience. Old problems you'd ignored or perhaps a new one or two you weren't aware of may come to your attention as a result. You may be glad you got a checkup for her.

One surveyor I spoke to told of a pre-purchase survey he'd done on a powerboat. In the dark bowels of the yacht in a small inaccessible area forward of the cockpit, he found a plugged hose attached to a through-hull. The hose, possibly once connected to a bait well and subject to years of vibration, had a deep crack around much of the base where it was bent over sharply. "It was a 1¾ inch hose, and if that had let go, it would have caused all kinds of commotion," the surveyor told me.

Do it yourself

If you've been using and fixing boats for a while, and you aren't required to get a survey for financing or insurance on a boat you want to buy, you might be able to do a pre-purchase survey yourself. If you find something you aren't sure of, some surveyors will come in and do a little consulting at a per-hour cost considerably less than a full-blown survey. Be clear on what you want; don't ask them for or expect a full survey or written report. Limit your questions to a specific area or two. Because a surveyor could also be held liable by insurance companies for

During an out-of-the-water survey, the surveyor is able to check the hull for blisters and moisture content. In these photos Bruce Sodervick is sounding the hull and checking a moisture meter as part of a condition-and-value survey for a boatowner.

an overlooked safety issue, some may refuse to do a partial survey.

A typical condition-and-value survey on a fiberglass boat hauled out will probably take three to five hours depending on her size and how many complicated systems are on the boat. It consists of an examination of the hull, decks, shaft, prop, and rudder. The surveyor will look for blistering below the waterline and soggy core in the decks. He or she will probably use a moisture meter to detect and measure the water content of the laminate. The surveyor will also probably sound the hull, tapping on it at various points above and under the water as meters may be unreliable on wet and painted surfaces. Bruce Sodervick, a surveyor in upstate New York, believes extra time spent on hull soundings on the outside of the boat saves time on the inside, as these tappings provide information on the key structural elements of the boat.

"Sounding the hull will tell you how far inside the glass laminate the bracing and inside stringers are. You'll hear bulkheads, attachments, patches…you'll already know a lot about the boat before you look inside her," he says. Moisture meters used in conjunction with sounding and visual inspection of the hull and decks can provide a quick check on how serious a possible flaw, such as a stress crack, may be.

"A pre-purchase survey can turn out to be a good investment for a buyer, however, providing him or her with useful bargaining chips with which to drive the price down…you may be able to renegotiate the price down several times over the cost of the survey."

Problem areas

On older sailboats, spade rudders and their associated attachments are a common problem area as are worn Cutless bearings. After checking out the hull and keel, the surveyor will probably climb aboard and check over the deck using a moisture meter and visual observation to find stress cracks, delamination, soft spots, and squishy areas. Deck cores around bolted through-fittings, chainplates, mast steps, and other stress points are suspect. Soggy deck cores can be repaired, but it's usually a nasty, time-consuming job. Therefore, mushy decks can lower the price of a prospective boat by several thousand dollars. Other details on deck of interest to the surveyor will be things like hatch construction, hinges and latches, and handholds. The rig, if on deck, will be studied for condition of the spreaders, stained or cracked swages, and other signs of corrosion. If the mast is standing you may have to negotiate with the surveyor on this item. He may not want to go aloft to look things over without additional compensation. The mast step should also be examined closely.

The surveyor will undoubtedly spend a fair amount of time below-decks on your boat's fuel and exhaust system, as well as on the installation and location of the bilge pump or pumps. More time will be spent on the engine itself and its ventilation and required safety gear such as flame arresters on the carburetor for gas engines. Fuel systems, fuel tanks, and their installation, and the condition and installation of the exhaust system, risers, and mufflers should be evaluated and described on the survey along with the type and condition of all seacocks, hoses, and connecting lines. During my boat's survey, the surveyor explained that he liked to see deckfills

Titania gets a physical

In the spring of 2004, a change of insurance policies prompted a survey of our 1968 32-foot Chris-Craft sloop. As it turned out, she fared better on her physical than I did. *Titania* had been surveyed several years earlier for a different underwriter. Comparing the reports of the two physicals was interesting. Both experts reached the same conclusion: that *Titania*, now age 36, was essentially in good health with no glaring safety defects (which was more than could be said for one of her owners who needs to eat less butter). Each survey did find different things for us to fix on her though.

One report noted a lack of latches on a cockpit locker that opened directly into the bilge. The other cited a lack of a GFI in the shorepower circuit. One surveyor found stainless keel bolts (they're galvanized). The other overlooked a water tank (probably because of the six cubic yards of clutter reposing atop it). One survey described the whisker pole as aluminum (it's a homemade varnished wooden pole) and omitted a written description of a pesky deck leak that the surveyor spent some time detailing a fix for verbally when he did the exam. The leak was fixed and when pointed out during the second survey and checked with the moisture meter, the laminate showed lingering moisture several years after being sealed. Here are a few suggestions for getting a good physical for your boat:

- Look around the waterfront for someone who has had a recent survey and ask what they thought of their surveyor. Also check with the friendly boatyard manager, if you have one.
- Ask the surveyor for a sample past report. Does it show some analysis and comprehension or is it just a checklist? And does it cite NFPA, ABYC, and Coast Guard standards?
- Ask brokers, but be a bit wary of their referrals if you are a potential buyer. Find out about the surveyor's past experience, length of experience, and types of boats he has used and/or repaired.
- Make sure the survey will be acceptable to your insurance or finance company.
- Bruce Sodervick suggests hiring a small surveyor (or at least a thin one) who can crawl into all the tight spots. Flexible joints help too.
- Surveys should never be done at temperatures below 32°F, as frozen cores and wet spots will appear solid.
- Clear out the clutter as much as possible.

clearly labeled, citing a recent incident near my homeport where a powerboat took on 200 gallons of fuel through the pumpout fitting. Battery installations not up to ABYC standard are another fairly common area of deficiency.

A second look

Obviously an out-of-water survey and one done afloat cover different aspects of the boat. You can't easily check a stuffing box or run the engine if the boat is laid up. So if the survey involves both a haulout and a sea trial, the surveyor may have to return to areas previously reviewed for a second look.

The whole process of giving a sailboat a physical is a bit of a Sherlock Holmes exercise. Often when the surveyor follows up on one area, he'll spot several other potential problems. Bruce recalls tracing an electrical circuit through the bilge when he noticed the bilge water was flowing. He discovered, in short order, a poorly bedded seacock and a defective bilge pump. He concluded, "This boat is going down. I wonder how fast I can finish this survey." Needless to say, he made a couple of quick phone calls before that boat's physical was completed.

Bruce, like many surveyors, looks for clues, starting with obvious maintenance and upkeep. If he sees a lot of clutter and dirt, he immediately wonders about deferred maintenance and neglect. As your surveyor follows the trail, crawling hither and yon throughout your boat, he may be distracted and knocked off the scent by a multitude of questions. Some surveyors prefer to work without someone hanging over their shoulders with a constant stream of questions. Show up on time, unlock things, then stay with the surveyor for a little bit to see that he really knows what he's doing. Then leave the surveyor alone.

Others, however like to show and explain things verbally to the client. If in doubt, ask your surveyor whether he or she would prefer to be alone or to have you there.

Thorough inspection

Your surveyor will need to get into lockers, corners, and odd places in your boat. He'll need to check each seacock and its hose below the waterline, and he'll want to examine water tanks, holding tanks, and bulkhead attachments. Gear must be cleared out of the way if this is to happen. Although this seems fairly obvious, many potential buyers and owners leave lockers and cabins full of clutter. On the outside, the surveyor needs a good eye as he scrutinizes the exterior of the hull for fairness and suggestions of bulkhead shifting or past patches and repairs. Adequate lighting inside the boat and outside, if she's in a building, is crucial.

The two surveyors I consulted, both experienced surveyors familiar with older fiberglass sailboats, were generally complimentary to the 1960s and '70s yachts with solid fiberglass hulls. Many older boats were holding up remarkably well to the relentless stresses of use, they said. After the mid-1970s some builders started to cut corners, perhaps spot-glassing bulkheads in or skimping on the hull-to-deck joint (an area Bruce says is one place where you'll find the "real identity" of the boat). Cored hulls presented new challenges to graceful aging, they noted.

Good surveyors need to be people of strong moral fiber. They are apt to be pressured by opposing interests and perhaps be urged to be less than frank by a seller who may suggest, "Why don't we just skip through this part of the boat?" or by a broker who has been giving them referrals. One surveyor told me a boat seller tried to sue him after he valued the boat far below the asking price. Unfortunately yacht buying and selling usually involves large sums of money. And money, especially big chunks of it, can provoke strong emotions and lead to tense situations and rancor. Be respectful of your prospective surveyor's integrity and competence until proven otherwise. But ask him some questions, too, before you give him the job.

The boat being surveyed has a leaking keel-to-keel-sump joint. This and other maintenance or repair issues will appear in the surveyor's written report.

For further reading...

Surveying Fiberglass Sailboats, by Henry Mustin, and *Inspecting the Aging Sailboat*, by Don Casey, will be useful tools before you hire a marine surveyor. These and other books can be found at <http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html> or by calling 763-420-8923.

Resources

SAMS
<http://www.marinesurvey.org>
NAMS
<http://www.nams-cms.org>

Deciphering an HIN

How to read your boat's "birth certificate"

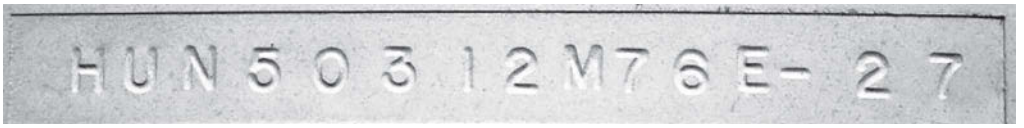
by Don Launer

UNLESS YOU HAVE A *REALLY* OLD boat, you probably have a set of 12 characters embedded on the upper starboard side of your boat's transom. This is your boat's birth certificate, the Hull Identification Number (HIN). It shows the parentage and date of birth of your vessel. This identification is similar to the 17-character automobile identification number that's on the lower left side of any auto dashboard close to the windshield — the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). All boats that were either manufactured or imported after November 1, 1972, are required by law to have an HIN and — just as you would have a duplicate of your own birth certificate — it's a good idea to record your HIN or a rubbing of it in your records.

The HIN on my schooner, *Delphinus*. THB represents the builder, Ted Hermann Boats. It is hull #31, and uses the pre-1984 straight-year format, with 08 representing August and 80 for 1980.

In addition to manufactured boats, this regulation also applies to backyard boatbuilders. Even though an individual plans to build a boat for his own use, he must obtain the 12-character HIN number from his state's boating agency. In the case of a home-built boat, the first three characters in the HIN, which are the Manufacturer's Identification Code, are composed of the 2-char-

acter state identification followed by "Z" — indicating a home-built boat. Thus, for a home-built boat in Minnesota, the first three characters in the HIN would be "MNZ."



This Hunter sailboat shows the manufacturer's code, HUN, and since the hull is pre-1984, the model-year format was selected. Many manufacturers add additional, optional information to the goverment'mandated HIN. In this case, the -27 included after the 12-character HIN shows that this boat is their 27-foot model.

The 12-character HIN bears no relationship to your state boat registration number, the number you apply to the port and starboard sides of your bow (unless your boat is documented). Instead, the HIN is federally mandated. In spite of the fact that it is a federal number, it must be shown on the state boat-registration certificate.

To read your boat's birth certificate, you have to be able to decipher the format of those 12 characters on the stern. There have been several formats for the HIN over the years, and it's probable that new formats will emerge in the future. From its inception on November 1, 1972, the HIN was designated by one of two formats.

HIN formats

The manufacturer had a choice of using either the model-year format or the straight-year format, both of which identified the month and year of production.

- Characters 1, 2, and 3 of the HIN are the Manufacturer's Identification Code, and are assigned by the federal government.
- Characters 4 through 8 are the alpha-numeric serial number, which is assigned at the discretion of the manufacturer (I, O, or Q cannot be used in this serial number).
- In the model-year format, the 9th character will always be M, indicating the manufacturer is using the model year format. Then characters 10 and 11 indicate the year, and character 12 is a letter indicating a month, starting with August. Thus, if characters 9 through 12 of the HIN were "M80B," the boat was built in September of 1980. Why the lettering of the months in the model year system began with August is incomprehensible.
- In the numerical straight-year format, characters 9 through 12 are simply the month and year of production. Thus, 0879 would indicate August 1979.

New format

Optional, as of January 1, 1984, was a new-format version, simply called new format. This format became mandatory August 1, 1984, replacing the two previous formats.

- In the new format, characters 1, 2, and 3 of the HIN are still the Manufacturer's Identification Code. Sometimes the letters of this manufacturer's code easily identify the manufacturer. In other cases they bear no relationship to the manufacturer's name.
- Characters 4 through 8 are still the alpha-numeric serial number assigned at the discretion of the manufacturer. Some of these manufacturer-assigned characters are laid out very logically, and some defy logic. On a 37-footer, which is hull #51, the number might be 37051; but it also might be a set of characters that only makes sense to the builder.
- Character 9 indicates the month of manufacture or certification. A designates January, B February, and so on through December (a big improvement over the original lettering system that started in August).
- Character 10 is a numeral that indicates the last digit of the year of manufacture or certification.
- Characters 11 and 12 indicate the model year. Thus, 82 would indicate the boat's model year was 1982.
- Some manufacturers also add additional information after the HIN, such as -27, which might indicate that this is their 27-foot model.

After August 1, 1984, boat manufacturers were required to display two identical Hull Identification Numbers, one on the outside starboard side of the transom, within two inches of the top of the transom, gunwale, or hull-to-deck joint, whichever is lowest. On boats where this is impossible, such as double-enders, the HIN must be on the starboard side of the hull, within one foot of the stern and within two inches from the top of the hull, gunwale, or deck joint.

The second HIN must be inside the hull in an unexposed location or beneath a fitting or item of hardware.

The HIN characters, both inside and outside the hull, must be no smaller than ¼-inch high, but many manufacturers make them much larger. It is illegal for anyone to alter or remove one of these numbers without written permission of the Commandant of the Coast Guard.

Glitches

Although the HIN provides a great birth certificate for your boat, there are a few hitches in the system:

- One problem is that foreign manufacturers might use a Manufacturer's Code that is not listed in the United States or might use the same letters as an unrelated U.S. manufacturer. Some United States builders have taken it on their own to add "US" to their HIN to establish the country of origin and solve this problem.
- The present 12-character HIN is becoming obsolete and outdated in today's global marketplace. For years the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators has been recommending that the HIN be increased to 17 characters — the same number of characters as your automobile's VIN. This expanded HIN would allow additional important information, such as the country of origin, type of vessel, hull material, length of vessel, propulsion, and fuel type.

For now, the 12-character HIN system will serve you as you trace the lineage of the boat you own or the boat you plan to buy … until the next format change comes along, of course.

Confessions of a bottom feeder

How to fix bargain boats and make a modest fortune

by Bob Brintnall

"I KNOW ABOUT GUYS LIKE YOU," THE old yard worker said as we strolled the back fence. "You're a bottom feeder. You look for old hulks that nobody wants anymore, make a few insulting offers, and if nobody bites, you move on to the next yard 'cuz eventually somebody will."

I tried to laugh him off. "Got anything with deck rot?" I gibed. The truth is, he was right. I am the poster child of bottom feeders. It started in college. I bought three small boats from a YMCA camp for $50 and made two sailable vessels from the three hulls. I sold one for $275 and the other for $500 and almost dropped out of school. Fortunately, my next boat — a soggy wooden Lightning that I ended up scrapping — convinced me to finish college.

Once I started teaching, I realized the *only* way I was ever going to afford cruising on such a salary was to bottom feed. I've made some money, but mostly I've stayed in boats and thus made the most of my profession's three great perks: June, July, and August.

I had a couple of advantages going into bottom feeding. I grew up in my dad's body shop and had access to some tools and equipment that most would not. However, the best thing I obtained from my father's shop was a bit of experience and confidence in doing work requiring epoxies, sanding, priming, and painting. I found boats much easier to work on than cars.

The greatest advantage I had was a mentor, an older brother-in-law who became a big brother/second father and got me into sailing as a teenager. If I became the poster child of bottom feeders, it is only because I trained under a Zen Master.

First weekender

My first boat big enough to weekend on was a 1970s-era Hunter 25 that had sagged on a wooden cradle for years. When we went aboard with the owner, she held more than a foot of water. My mentor assured me that a boat full of water on a cradle will likely float.

I stepped to the settee, as the ladder was missing, but as I shifted my weight my foot crashed through the soft wood to the hull. We bought this boat in the fall for $400, were sailing her by the next spring, and sold her three seasons later for $4,000.

My current boat, a 30-foot Catalina, was purchased at an auction for $6,000. In between, I bought and sold more than a dozen boats in the 22- to 27-foot range. During the same time, I watched my mentor buy 35- to 40-foot boats that were under water with only masts sticking up to show what was there, find divorce specials with prices teetering on the verge of piracy and, in general, make my bottom-feeding accomplishments seem pretty modest by comparison.

I don't think just anyone can become a Master like my old mentor, but I do think anybody with modest skills like mine can keep themselves in cruising boats with minimal financial investment. All that's really needed are some basic repair skills, determination, courage, and sound advice.

Basic principles

Do your homework – When the boat is an oddity at an estate auction, it will draw a lot of attention. You see the questions in their eyes. What does it *cost* to move a boat like that? What would it take to get it in the water? Is it all *there*? What is a boat like that *worth*? If you know the answer to those questions before the bidding

Daryl, Bob's Zen Master, works to scrap a Hunter 34, above. After salvaging the parts, he disposed of the hull by cutting it up with a chain saw and putting the sections in a rented dumpster. Bob purchased the Hunter 25, on facing page, for $400 and sold it for $4,000.

starts, you are halfway there. More than 50 people toured the Catalina 30 I bought at an auction where everything from law books to kitchen appliances and even the property was for sale. I was the only one to put up a bid on the sailboat and got it at reserve (the lowest acceptable amount set by the buyer). I knew it was all there, I had a boat mover bid in my pocket, I was pretty sure I could have her sailing by the next season, and I knew I could

get between $12,000 and $17,000 once she was clean and running sweetly. Do your homework; let the others watch with wonder in their eyes.

Be patient – Plan that only one or two deals out of 10 are actually worth taking. Remember that there are always more deals out there, and don't let your hunger for a boat cloud your judgment. It is always better to pass on a deal than to get burned by one.

Have a money plan ready – When the ridiculous deal finally comes along, there's seldom time to apply for a loan. The first money usually gets the boat. Savings, a home equity line, an empty credit card . . . you need some way to lay down the cash in a hurry.

Have a boatwork schedule – Lack of time to spend on the boat waylays most potential bottom feeders. The boat will take some work. If you don't have some off-season Saturdays scheduled into your calendar and a place to work on the boat, you shouldn't try bottom feeding. Working on a boat is what keeps me sane through the winter. The off-season Saturday is always "boat day," whether updating the current boat, prepping the next, or putting together a nice little trailersailer to sell.

Hunting grounds

Publications are where many people start sniffing for boats. Therefore, they are pretty well sniffed over. Also, people who have bothered to write and pay for an ad usually have some idea of what their boat is worth. A bottom feeder can't buy a boat for what it's worth. He has to sell at that price.

Since publications are an easy place to look, many people look there. When a ridiculous price appears in print, you have to move fast. Call as soon as you see it. Don't think about it for a day before checking it out. Most of the time it really *is* too good to be true. But when the true deal does show up, it won't last long, and the person who gets it simply got there first.

Auctions are better hunting grounds than publications. There are two types to consider: the boat-place auction and the general auction that happens to have a boat.

The problem with boat auctions is all the bottom feeders will be there, lurking around with notepads, inching across decks, turning shafts, picking at chainplates, licking their lips. I've often done well, but never great, at these auctions. Homework is the key here. The more you know about your target boat the better. Don't trust what the auctioneers tell you or put much stock in listing specs or outdated surveys. Your best tactic is to find errors in these documents in your favor.

My mentor once bought a 32-foot Ericson that had a survey indicating a bent shaft. We tested the shaft on land with calipers and couldn't find the problem. In the water, the shaft thumped horribly. But in reverse the folding prop unstuck, and the boat purred along nicely ever after. That boat was bought for $8,000 and sold within two months for $16,000.

Thumping heart

The general auction that happens to have a boat is what makes my heart thump like that stuck prop. These are hard to find. You want to get on the mailing lists for auctioneers in sailing areas, and not just your home port. It helps to have friends and relatives who know your bottom-feeding lust and will pass along tips when they find them. Even then, you may go a year without coming across one that's worthwhile. And there is always the chance of not being the only bottom feeder there. But *if* you are, have done your homework, have a plan, and have some cash, *then* you may well find yourself in bottom-feeding nirvana.

The Internet auction is the new playing field for bottom feeders, and I've had to enter this realm without my mentor's guidance, as his ashes now bless the Caribbean. The Internet is a new venue, but the old rules still apply. Do your homework, have a plan, and be patient. Do not bid on a boat you haven't inspected.

Sounds obvious, but the last boat I sold on eBay went to a "blind bidder." Also, my experience suggests that most lower-end boats don't make reserve, but still get sold to the best offer or some negotiated price in-between. Don't give up if you don't make reserve, or even if you're not the top bidder. The owner may well end up talking to the top two or three bidders. And, of course, by the time the owner seeks the third bidder, the price should have taken three steps down.

"Walkabout, talkabout" is a proactive approach. The old yard worker calling me out as a bottom feeder was a memorable moment, but the truth is I've not had the success in this area

Bob's personal chandlery is impressive. No wonder he likes to stroll about with a cup of coffee re-acquainting himself with the available gear.

that others have. The idea is to find the boat before it's for sale. Learn about the boats in the back of the yard that haven't seen the sea in years. Who owns them? Why aren't they being used? What's wrong with the boat? What's going on with the owner? Are there delinquent yard fees? Is the owner ill or destitute?

Sniff the garbage

You may have to sniff through a lot of garbage, but sometimes you can find truly remarkable deals. Try to get the owner to the boat before you make an offer. Chances are they remember the neglected hulk far more favorably than its actual state. Make sure you explain that you will fix the old girl up and get her back in the water, as she should be. And before you make your insulting offer, try to soften the impact by going over how much time and effort you will have to spend to get her sailing again, how the market for used boats isn't so hot, and so on.

> **"Taking what was once neglected and befouled and getting her into the water with wind in her sails…produces a great feeling of satisfaction."**

Take the price you might get if the boat was clean and sailing, subtract any obvious major expenses you see, like a bad motor or trashed sails. Then cut that number in half…more if you dare. Most owners will be annoyed, some will show it, but the old yard worker was right, eventually someone will bite.

Pitching the low price is never enjoyable to me, I don't like seeing the disappointment in an owner's eyes or hearing the hint of injury in their voice. Making the kill, the thrill of getting much for little, may warm the bottom feeder's pirate blood. But for every person getting a super deal, there's usually another getting shafted. Playing pirate isn't always playing nice.

If there is one redeeming element to the bottom-feeder's game it is restoration. For me, this is the most rewarding part, and always the most challenging. Taking what was once neglected and befouled and getting her into the water with wind in her sails, adding another mast to the harbor view, produces a great feeling of satisfaction.

Getting from the great sale to the great sail is a battle of skill, wits, and luck. While there might be a Zen to the art of bottom buying, Nietzsche provided a philosophy more appropriate to sailboat restoration: "That which does not kill us makes us stronger."

Repair philosophy

Tips for fixing old boats could fill an article, a book, even a magazine's entire scope. So instead of going into repair details, here are some general guidelines.

Get dirty – Put down your books and magazines, except this one, and go get your hands dirty. You can get good ideas and motivation from written sources, but you'll learn more by doing. Not ready to rip out your decks and re-glass them? Then be the first on your block with a fiberglass mailbox and work your way up. It's OK to screw things up the first time and even the second. As long as you don't give up, you'll get better.

Don't over-restore – The very term "restoration" highlights the problem, as it conjures up visions of museum-quality reconstructions and trophies at an auto show. Bottom feeding is a game scored in dollars and cents and common sense. When you're done, you'll have a nice older boat that is still worth considerably less than a nice newer boat. Keep a realistic price for what the end product is worth, but don't keep too close an eye on the hours spent. Kid yourself that lying on your back in the void around a rudder post to apply epoxy and cloth over your head is fun and all part of the joy of your hobby.

Be a pack rat – Never, never, ever throw away anything sailboat-related. Ever. This may *not* be a good formula for marital bliss, but having my own private chandlery of spare parts, old hardware, new parts, and lots of etcetera has saved my bottom-feeding bottom many times. Bottom boats are almost always gorged with miscellaneous gear, spare parts, and odds-and-ends. Sell the boats with a couple of fenders and lines, and you'll start building stock.

I've made my best boat-parts hauls at yard and boat-store liquidation auctions where shelves of new hardware were being auctioned as lots. But in sailing ports you may often find yard sales with boating gear. It's also worth peeking at online offerings. I keep my gear at home displayed on shelves like a little store; sometimes in the winter I like to just walk the aisles with a cup

of coffee and dust things off and move them around. It's much cheaper than therapy.

Be resourceful and creative – Creativity and resourcefulness counts with every dollar spent. Even though paints, primers, and epoxies are things you just can't avoid paying for, there are always things you can do to save. Mat and roving, for instance, are cheap in bulk. The little bag of it at the boat store is about a 1,000-percent markup from what it costs by the roll. For an even better deal, find people who have recently completed a major rebuild or a build-from-the-kit boat; they're sure to have leftovers. Don't be afraid to search aggressively.

My mentor once found a factory making pallets for the military to drop equipment out of airplanes. They used a lot of balsa, and he bought their scrap for a song. When body shops in sailing ports go out of business, their liquidation auctions are a must. RV supply sources should also be checked; a stainless-steel sink in a RV catalogue can be up to 50 percent less than the same sink in the boat-supply catalogue. Many freshwater plumbing components are also interchangeable and much cheaper through an RV supply.

Consider your comfort zone – When you buy, remember your repair capabilities, but don't be afraid to push the envelope a little. All boats at the bottom of the market have problems. Look for the types of problems *you* can repair efficiently. Your list of comfort-zone problems will differ from mine. I'm not sure I could rebuild a diesel… even with Nigel Calder's help. I have "sewing issues" as well. Someone who could machine a diesel block or make settee cushions may look for such problems, even though I might look away.

Here's what I look for:

Filth – The dirtier, the better. Nothing lowers the price more, yet is easier to fix than just being really dirty.

Soft decks – Soft decks are not fun to fix, but they're not expensive. Major glass work is my zone. The bottom feeder's dance is toe-to-toe, creep a few inches at a time, eyes straight down, jostle the weight a bit, and look for movement. Check very carefully around deck fittings and stanchion plates, as the plate may lend false strength to the area. Dance carefully so you find all of it. Then add 20 percent to any area you discover, as it always goes a bit farther than you think. Make sure the owner sees every spot you find. The ghastly look on his or her face is hundreds of dollars coming off the price.

Interior work – Plumbing, wiring, and bad settee wood are all bottom-feeder pluses in my book. When my foot dropped through the settee wood on that Hunter 25, I could feel the price dropping as well. However, the surface-wood panels were made of better material and were solid, though they had a cheap fake-wood finish that discolored a bit underwater. Replacing the bad wood under the settees was easy. A couple spray cans of automotive vinyl/leather paint made all the fake wood look better. Bottom feeders are seldom called upon to repair the fine joinery of a Cabo Rico, but the higher end the boat, the more you need to attend to the quality of the interior. I wouldn't dress up the insides of an Alberg with vinyl paint, nor would I build hardwood cabinetry for an old Hunter or Buccaneer.

Rigging, stanchions, hardware – If I didn't have my own little one-customer chandlery I would look at

***Windancer*, Bob's Catalina 30, home from an auction sale, below, and underway later, at bottom. The auction price was $6,000.**

Bob considers this deal — a 27-foot US Yacht purchased for $6,000 and sold for $9,000 — to be "a good deal but not a *great* one."

hardware issues with much more skepticism. Buying new turnbuckles, winches, blocks, and travelers will eat up a refit budget. But when the boatyard goes to auction, I am there. Almost every boat I've bought and sold had some extra hardware lying around in it that went into my chandlery. I expect to replace some rigging on any boat I buy, but 80 percent of my rigging and hardware problems are solved by my private boat store.

What I don't want to fix (again):
Keel bulge – Moisture that leaks down a keel bolt freezes in the winter and expands, making a cavity. The next year that cavity holds more water and freezes and expands again, making a bigger cavity that lets more moisture in next year, and so on. The boat I bought had a softball growing out of its keel. I kick myself to this day for not being more careful and noticing how bad it was. I drilled two small holes into the cavity, dried everything thoroughly with compressed air, injected a slow-set epoxy, then sledgehammered it flush.

My hope was the epoxy would seal small spaces around the keel bolt seat and prevent more moisture from coming in. The pilot holes closed in the lead after 15 sweaty minutes of swinging the sledge with full force. I glassed it all over anyway. Taking the rusty keel nuts off after the repair was stressful. Would the bolt move? It took both legs pushing a 3-foot pipe on my 1-inch breaker bar, but they all came free without moving the keel bolts in their seats. Five years later, the boat showed no signs of re-bulge. I lucked out that time and learned my lesson. I now inspect any northern boat's keel much more carefully.

Shaft-strut leakage – Clean off the bottom paint, if they'll let you, and look for faint lines around where the strut is glassed into the hull. Then look for indications of leakage from the inside. Strange-colored epoxies stuck here and there like gum under a school desk show that something was not right. Look carefully around the place where the strut comes through the hull or at the edge of a glass panel. If you can't see everywhere, look for signs of things like the gas, water, or waste tanks having been removed and replaced. Do this especially if the tank looks original, as that most likely means it was removed just to get underneath it.

Reseating a glassed-in shaft strut to make a desperately leaking cruiser a dry bilger was a personal triumph for me. But the procedure is too involved to explain in a paragraph. Suffice to say, it can be done, and my material investment was only about $75. However, this is major glasswork where strength and quality can't be left to chance and shouldn't be attempted without some experience in the area. I would do it again if I had to, but I would prefer not to.

Severe cradle sag – Ask yourself, "How bad is it and how cheap is the boat?" The Hunter 25 had it, but for a $400 pocket cruiser I took the gamble. With propping that took the cradle pressure off the sag, we used strips of marine plywood at the interior zenith of the problem area and pushed out slowly with a 4-ton Porta Power. By "slowly," I mean a couple pumps each day for a week. Once it was back to its correct position, we glassed in the strips of plywood we had pushed against and added glass-tube rib support to the entire area, letting the repair cure for two days before releasing the Porta Power.

Freeing the hydraulic pressure on the jack was the moment of truth, but the hull held its contour. I always joked that if I ever hit a reef or got rammed, I hoped it would be in that repair quarter as it was the strongest part of the hull by far. Our technique was successful, and the material cost of the repair was minimal. But that boat was only about 4,500 pounds. If I had pushed a jack foot through the hull I could probably still have gotten enough salvage out of the boat to cover my investment. I would prefer not to try it again on a larger, more valuable, boat. But if the boat were cheap enough, I'd try most anything.

The launch

Launch day is the re-birth of what was once neglected and condemned. But let's face it, birth is not an aesthetically attractive event. Launching the project boat for the first time takes thick skin and broad shoulders. Remember that giving the rest of the marina something to watch and talk about over cocktails in their cockpits is a noble gesture. It's all part of boating.

Personally, I find the tension thrilling and enthralling. You've tested the seacocks with pressurized water, but will they leak in the bay? What about the keel bolts? Will the engine run under load as well as it did on the cradle? Are the chainplates as good as they look? Will a halyard break or a top mast pulley give? You bring everything you can imagine you might need to fix anything you can imagine might go wrong. But don't let your imagination overwhelm you. You're doing what few would dare, saving a hull from some yard's death row, and having fun too.

Never-ending quest

I may never have the perfect gelcoat, the completely dry cabin, a spotless engine room, or a fantastic console of matching instruments. But I can improve my teak this year and fix that bigger gelcoat gouge above the rubrail. I can re-oil the cabin wood, re-seat that leaky head window, fix that anchor locker latch, and probably use something from the chandlery to make a better cover for the rode locker . . . all without serious expense.

My quest is not to have the perfect boat, but to make every boat I have better with the passage of every year, no matter where I may start. The most important part of TLC is L. Anyone who has fixed up and sailed a bottom-feeder boat knows this satisfaction.

Smart boat-buying

Don't forget — the advantage always goes to the buyer

by Kim Efishoff

It was in 1995 that I started looking for my first big sailboat. I had previously owned a 14-foot Flying Junior and a 20-foot O'Day pocket cruiser, but this would be my first real "bay boat."

As I was somewhat naive about the boat-buying process, I jumped at the chance when a friend, familiar with the art of buying and selling boats, volunteered to help. My first lesson under his tutelage was one that has served me well ever since.

One of the first boats we looked at was a 1980 Hunter 30. The boat had been well used and had received little in the way of maintenance or care. In a word, it was "trashed." While it appeared structurally sound, it needed a lot of cosmetic work that I was willing to do if the price was right. The asking price of $20,000 was average for the market at that time.

We asked the broker for a private moment while we discussed the possible purchase of the boat. Though this was one of the first boats we had seen, I had boat-buying fever and was chomping at the bit to make the purchase. "Slow down, slow down," my friend counseled. "There are a million boats out there, and we've just *started* to look." My friend was a little amused by my over-anxious attitude and said, "Let me handle this. Don't say anything. Just listen. We'll have some fun with this."

Low-ball offer

When the broker returned, my friend looked him straight in the eye and said, "We've estimated what it will take to get this boat back in shape. We figure it will cost around $13,000. We'd like to offer $7,000 for the boat. The offer is good for 24 hours. After that, we'll be moving on to bigger and better things and will no longer be interested."

I thought to myself, "$7,000? Is this guy *nuts?* And why give him a 24-hour deadline?" The broker said he would take the offer to the owner but wasn't optimistic. I handed over a good-faith check for $500, and we left.

I was pretty disappointed. I wanted the boat and figured there was no way I would get it, considering the way my

> **“Used boats cost less to buy, …have all the seaworthiness of a new boat, and come with loads of equipment…”**

friend had handled the deal. However, bright and early the next morning, I received a call from the broker. The owner had accepted the offer. The 24-hour time constraint had intimidated him out of even coming back with a counter-offer.

In spite of this, I didn't buy the Hunter. My friend wisely insisted I keep looking until I'd had a chance to see more boats. I told the broker I had changed my mind, and he destroyed my check for $500. A good faith deposit is generally required with any offer, but one should always get a confirmation from the broker that the check will be returned or destroyed if the offer falls through.

No reputable broker would keep a good faith deposit, regardless of the reason for not consummating an offer by buying the boat. There is no legal obligation to buy a boat once an offer has been made and accepted. There are simply too many contingencies in the contract one signs when an offer is made, the most outstanding being the results of the survey.

I eventually bought a 1990 Ericson 32 and was grateful that my friend had reined me in. The Ericson was a great boat, was more seaworthy than the Hunter, and needed little work. The icing on the cake was that three years later I sold the Ericson for $10,000 more than I had originally paid.

Lessons learned

Making a profit on a used boat is not the norm. However, I had purchased my boat at a good price and in the process had learned a couple of very valuable lessons from my friend.

First, I learned to take my time and look at many boats before making a purchase. In this way, I was able to learn what was available, what the market was like, what I liked, and what truly suited my needs, rather than letting the excitement of fulfilling my dream cause me to act hastily.

Second, I began to realize that there were a whole lot more boats out there for sale than there were buyers; and that in the world of used-boat buying, the advantage always goes to the buyer.

Buyer's market

We often hear the terms “buyer's market” and “seller's market.” It's a seller's market when there are fewer boats available on the market for sale than there are buyers, requiring buyers to compete. It's a buyer's market when there are more boats available for sale than there are buyers, in which case buyers can expect the advantage.

It's always a buyer's market in the used-boat world, regardless of what the broker may tell you.

Used vs. new

If you think a new boat is the way to go, consider this: a new boat loses 30 percent of its value in the first year of ownership. Sales tax and annual property taxes can be double (and even triple) the costs compared with buying an older used boat, and new boats require wheelbarrows full of money to outfit them with required electronics and safety gear.

Used boats cost less to buy, have higher resale value (the resale value for a 20-year-old boat is pretty much constant from year to year), have all the seaworthiness of a new boat, and generally come with loads of equipment, like extra sails, electronics, tools, tenders and life rafts, life jackets, and so on.

Of course, a used boat may require some work. A familiar bit of wisdom recited in the boating industry says, “There is nothing that time and money cannot fix.” This is true. If an owner is willing to do most of this work, however, his time will require no capital outlay. Most of the skills required to do what needs to be done on a used boat are well within the ability of most boatowners. The rest can be learned by actually performing the work.

What a boat should cost

The average sale price for a boat manufactured 20 or more years ago has pretty much stabilized. A boat's fair market value is available to boat buyers from several sources. One source is the BUC book, which is like a boat bluebook. The pricing information found in the BUC book is provided by boat brokers nationwide and reflects retail, or broker-listed, prices. In this sense, the brokers somewhat artificially set the prices found in the BUC book. Several Internet sources are available that can help determine used boat pricing. Some of these include Yacht World, NADA Appraisal Guides, and the BoatU.S. Boat Value Check.

The offer

Before an offer is made, review one or more of these sources to determine the current fair market value for the boat under consideration. On a first offer, prior to completion of a survey by a professional surveyor, the general rule of thumb is to offer two-thirds of the boat's fair market value. Of course, this will depend on the condition of the boat and what you, as the buyer, are willing to pay.

But don't hesitate to make what might be considered a “ridiculous offer.” An offer of this type is never ridiculous to the buyer who gets the boat at his price. It's all a matter of perspective.

A buyer should never feel intimidated (particularly by the broker whose job is to talk a buyer into paying more) for making an offer

Secrets for used boat buyers

- Know the fair market value of your purchase.
- Before making an offer, carefully analyze what repairs and improvements are required to make the boat meet your needs.
- Avoid exceeding fair market value with the combined cost of the boat and the needed repairs and improvements.
- Invest your labor freely and enjoy the sense of pride and accomplishment you experience as a consequence.
- Slow down, take your time. Remember not to rush, because there are a million boats out there and the advantage always goes to the buyer.

> **“Of course, it isn’t necessary to restore a used boat to Bristol condition to sail her and enjoy her.”**

that is “too low.” No offer is too low.

Don’t let the broker (or owner/seller) see that you have any doubts about your offer. If you don’t believe your offer, no one else will. Be firm and confident. You can always change your number after hearing the counter-offer. There is no loss-of-face in raising your offer after the counter-offer is made (and there’s also no disrespect associated with sticking to your guns — remember, there are a million boats out there for sale).

Surveys, loans, insurance

If you plan to borrow money to purchase a boat, your lending bank will require a survey by a licensed surveyor before lending money. An insurance provider will also require a survey to establish a baseline for the boat’s worth and condition and to verify that it is a seaworthy craft.

When a bank grants you a mortgage loan on a boat, the bank will require that you purchase insurance for the boat in order to protect the bank’s investment from loss. If you do not obtain insurance when the purchase is made, the bank will buy insurance through its own provider and bill you. It is for this reason and, more importantly, to protect you, as the buyer, from the possibility of loss, that insurance should be lined up and ready at the time of purchase.

Even if you pay cash for a boat, liability is still an issue. Most marinas require proof of liability insurance coverage (a minimum of $300,000), with the marina named as “additional insured” before allowing your boat to stay in a slip there. A better idea is to protect your investment by purchasing comprehensive coverage for your boat, unless you can afford to bear the financial burden of a total loss.

After the survey has been completed, it’s time to revise your offer… down. No surveyor worth his fee has ever performed a survey on a used boat without finding something that needed repair or replacement.

This occurs for three reasons: first, the surveyor wants to maintain his professional credibility (and job security). Second, the surveyor is likely to be an honest, competent individual who wants to give customers the best possible service (the surveyor’s next job may depend on it). Third, finding a used boat that does not require at least some small amount of repair is highly unlikely.

The net result is that your final offer is generally less than the first offer due to the cost of needed repairs discovered by the surveyor. This happens in 99 percent of used boat purchases. The broker presents the buyer’s final offer to the seller. The seller either accepts this offer, or negotiations continue until an agreement is reached.

Upgrades, improvements

If a seller has added lots of expensive gadgets and “go-fast rigging,” these upgrades do not necessarily increase the value of the boat. (From an owner’s perspective, the general rule of thumb is that total investment should not exceed fair market value). This does not mean that you should not consider investing your own labor into the repair and renovation of a used boat. This work is, after all, a labor of love.

The bottom line is that you can purchase an older boat, enjoy it for many years, treat the work that goes into maintaining and improving your boat as an avocation or hobby, and resell it without taking a beating. However, expecting to make a profit from your labor is not realistic in the world of used boats.

Consider my most recent project as an example. I have more than 2,000 hours of my own labor invested into the restoration of my 1977 Hans Christian 38T. Boatyards charge $50 to $70 an hour for labor. Therefore, the labor I have performed on my boat would cost at least $100,000 if done by a boatyard. At the time of this writing, the fair market value for a 1977 HC38T in excellent condition was around $100,000. If I had paid fair market value for my boat and had then hired a boatyard to make the repairs and upgrades, my total cost would have been $200,000. This is double what I can realize from the sale of my boat.

However, I didn’t pay fair market value for my boat. I purchased my boat at two-thirds its fair market value, or $65,000. This allowed me to plow another $35,000 hard cash into this project without losing money. Performing my own labor allowed me to use the money saved for the purchase of hardware and equipment. How else could an average guy like me get the equivalent of a brand-new boat (costing $200,000 to $300,000) finished and ready to sail anywhere in the world for $100,000?

The added benefit is that I have had the opportunity to get to know my boat and its systems inside and out. In the process, I’ve gained the confidence and knowledge needed to perform my own repairs. I have educated myself through firsthand experience gained by working on my boat.

Bottom line

Of course, it isn’t necessary to restore a used boat to Bristol condition to sail her and enjoy her. Boatowners are at liberty to put more or less effort into their projects, depending on their desire, expectation, and ability.

I required a sailboat that was structurally superior, safe, seaworthy, and capable of open-ocean passagemaking. I chose a cost and labor effort that matched my resources and abilities. Someone else with different needs and abilities might choose to pay a great deal less for a good used boat, add a few hundred dollars in repairs and amenities, and have many years of boating pleasure.

Resources

BUC books

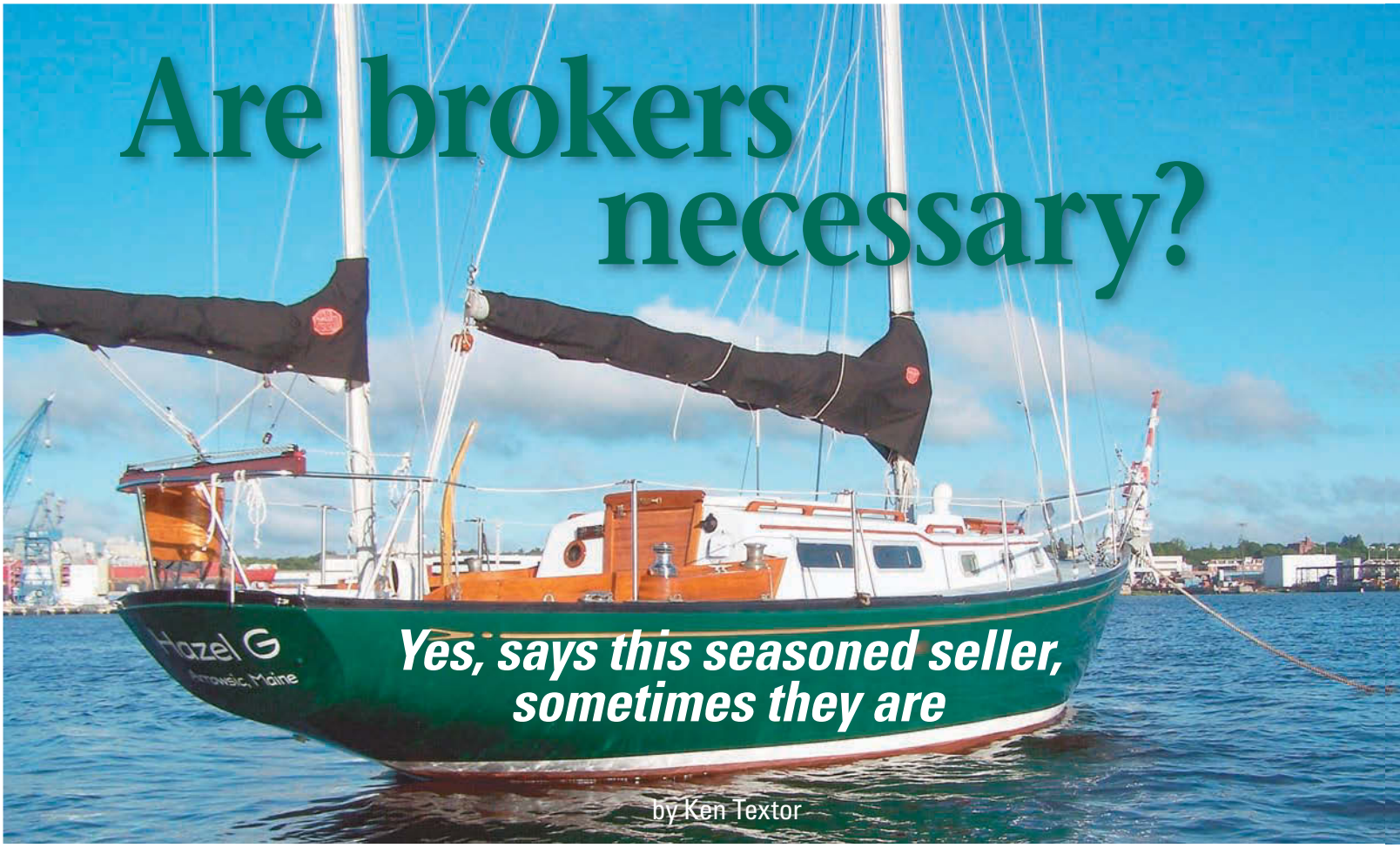
BUC International Corp.
1314 NE 17 Court
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305
<http://www.buc.com>

Internet sources

These are just a few of the many online sources:

- **Yacht World**
  <http://www.yachtworld.com>
- **NADA Appraisal Guides**
  <http://www.nadaguides.com>
- **Boat Value Check**
  <http://www.boatus.com/buyer/valueform.htm>

Are brokers necessary?



Yes, says this seasoned seller, sometimes they are

by Ken Textor

As a lifelong do-it-yourselfer, I've generally agreed with those who say, "Selling a boat isn't on a par with diesel-injector engineering. Anybody can do it."

"Why," most of us ask, "should I pay someone 10 percent of the selling price when I can keep all that big-time loot in my pocket with just a little extra work?"

For the last 30 or so years, that selling philosophy has served me well — mostly. In unloading nearly a dozen boats, big and small, wooden and fiberglass, I've always completed the task on my own. Sometimes it has taken a little longer than I thought it would. Make that a lot longer. There were times of frustration and annoyance and there were some unnecessary expenses. But in the end, I eventually got my asking price — or very nearly so.

Selling *Hazel G*, however, was a different project entirely. With this boat, I was definitely in Yacht Territory, not just Used Boat Land. Offering a 1967 35-foot Allied Seabreeze in superb shape meant that I had to wade far into the Sea of Five Figures, rather than just take my usual dip in the deep end of the Pond of Four Digits. Still, with an asking price just this side of $40,000, I didn't foresee any big problems with *Hazel*. After all, some SUVs cost that much and more and they're a lot less fun to own or use.

I briefly considered involving a yacht broker. Then I remembered those bad experiences with brokers when I, or a friend, was on the other side of the equation as a buyer. Although they rarely admit it, many brokers are enthusiastic sales agents until you mention the size and/or price range in which you're looking to buy. If it's under 30 feet or less than $20,000, I've found it gets increasingly difficult to get them to answer specific questions, return phone calls, and even honor appointments to show a boat. This seems to be a matter of economics. A 10 percent commission on $10,000 or maybe even $40,000 evidently doesn't warrant as much effort as a 10 percent commission on $100,000. I thought *Hazel* deserved better than that and first tried selling her on my own.

> **"When the ads began appearing, I smiled in anticipation. And then there was silence. June passed with nary a phone call."**

Tried advertising

At the outset, I signed up for a few months of classified advertisements in a big-circulation boating magazine that's well known for its extensive classified ads. I also tried some ads in my local newspaper and a Maine-based flea market weekly. (Don't laugh. Boats with $20,000 price tags have been sold in *Uncle Henry's Swap or Sell It Guide*.) Feeling pretty frisky about my computer skills, I also tried a couple of online sell-by-owner websites. All this advertising set me back more than $700. But since it was the middle of the boating season, I figured midsummer buyers would be active and enthusiastic, and *Hazel* would go pretty quickly, particularly since she was in the water,

***Hazel G,* Ken's 35-foot Allied Seabreeze, was a project boat for five years. He restored her beautifully and simply before deciding that a smaller boat would be a better fit for his lifestyle.**

on a mooring, in pristine condition, and ready to be sailed away.

When the ads began appearing I smiled in anticipation. And then there was silence. June passed with nary a phone call. Ditto July. I called the phone company to complain. They laughed and told me my phone line was fine. In August, a couple of people finally called. Both tried to talk the price down over the phone, sight unseen. My smile began fading. Another guy called late one evening to rhapsodize on the old boat he had just sold. He was nearly in tears over his loss when he remembered he was supposed to be asking questions about my boat, which was possibly his next boat.

He asked something about the rig, which prompted me to remind him that *Hazel* is a yawl. "A yawl?" he said. "Oh, I don't want a yawl." After he had hung up, I wondered about his sobriety. One caller actually knew all about the Seabreeze design, its enthusiastic fans, and legendary sailing capabilities. He asked for a full listing of her specifications and equipment that I had made up, complete with pictures and specs similar to a high-end yacht brokerage's presentation. I sent the package via Priority Mail and never heard from him again.

Low-ball bidder

Word of mouth then smoked out a gentleman who actually wanted to see the boat. After driving five hours up the coast, he spent the entire day aboard *Hazel*, examining this, harrumphing over that, poking and prodding everything in sight as well as some things that were pretty much out of sight. He asked for a sea trial under power, which I promptly conducted. Then he began hinting that a further sea trial under sail might also be necessary. I drew the line on that one and he said he understood. The next day, however, he called back with an offer 25 percent below the asking price. He explained that he'd need a lot of money left over to make the changes and upgrades he wanted. Drawing again on my seriously depleted well of diplomacy, I suggested he might want to continue looking for a boat more suited to his numerous requirements. I had some more colorful things to say after I hung up.

In early September, when renewal notices for the advertisements started coming in, I began wondering whether I should continue. Then Old Neptune himself stepped in and decided the matter for me. On a whim one afternoon, I went down to our community dock and immediately noticed that *Hazel* seemed to have sustained a change of address. As the first whispers of the afternoon sea breeze were blowing gently, *Hazel* appeared to be executing a neat little do-si-do amid the other moored boats. With the remnants of her failed mooring, she was heading up the Kennebec River toward a low-slung iron bridge. My eyes popped. With a pounding heart, I finally caught up with her in my skiff, averting disaster. But there I was, without a mooring and two months still to go in the boating season. Finding my two-year-old mooring in the murky waters of the Kennebec was a dicey proposition at best. And spending some $1,000 on a new mooring for a boat that might be sold in a couple of weeks seemed dopey. So I dropped an anchor and sat down to consider my options. Then the lightbulb went on.

A feasible option

I picked up the phone, dialed, and asked, "Dave, did you once tell me you've sold a couple of Seabreeze sloops?" While anchored in the river, I decided the yacht broker option might not be so bad after all. Dave

Beware of the scams

Selling a boat on your own, particularly through the Internet, can bring out the scam artists. To avoid falling into the clutches of a flimflam man (or woman), it's important to recognize how they like to work.

"It's a common trick," yacht broker Dave Perry said when describing one notorious con game involving one of his clients.

The client had an open listing with Dave, who is based at Robinhood Marine Center in Georgetown, Maine. An open listing means that although Dave was representing the boat, the owner also could sell the boat on his own. And that's where the trouble began.

The owner was contacted by a prospective buyer who wanted to buy the boat, sight unseen. The buyer seemed well-informed and certain it was the right boat for him. He even offered to send a bank cashier's check to put a down payment on the boat. After they agreed on the deposit amount, the buyer said he had to send a check somewhat over the agreed-upon amount. The seller could then send back the difference and they'd proceed with a survey and closing from there.

"He came to me because it didn't sound quite right to him," Dave said of his client. And sure enough, when the cashier's check arrived, it turned out to be bogus. Had the seller not checked with Dave and simply sent back the difference, he would have lost that money and never heard again from the so-called buyer.

The story brings into focus the first rule of avoiding boat-selling swindles: never deal with a buyer who wants to buy your boat outright, sight unseen. Even if he suggests using an escrow account pending survey and closing, those too can be phonied up.

Another tipoff is a buyer who wants to deal only in the wire transfer of money or a buyer drawing funds on a small foreign bank. Nigerian bank transactions should be treated with particular suspicion.

When using any type of Internet money service, always type in the website address yourself, rather than clicking on a link. Otherwise, your computer may be accessed directly by the site operators.

For more tips on Internet sales scams, visit the Internet Crime Complaint Center at <http://www.ic3.gov>. The site is a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National White Collar Crime Center.

> **"And surprisingly, by the end of January prospective buyers were making the trek to Maine to see *Hazel*."**

Perry worked at nearby Robinhood Marine Center, a full-service boatyard in Georgetown, Maine. I'd known Dave for a few years. I'd seen him at local boat shows and delivered a few boats for some of his clients through my part-time boat delivery service.

He said he had indeed sold a few Seabreezes in the 20 years he'd been in the business. "Would you like to try to sell the yawl version?" I asked. Having never seen the boat, he cautiously said he'd be interested. Then, with hope springing eternal inside me, I played my self-serving trump card. "We could even put it on one of your moorings and you'd have it right there for any walk-in traffic you get on weekends," I suggested.

Dave thought that was a fine idea and became even more enthusiastic after he went aboard *Hazel* and had a look around. "You've really done a nice job on her," he said. "I don't think we'll have any trouble finding someone interested in her."

And so began my first relationship with a yacht broker. As it turned out, Dave isn't a yacht broker like those I had dealt with in the tony harbor towns of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and other suspect territories south of Maine. He knew something about a wide variety of boats and, more importantly, a wide variety of boatbuyers.

"I won't show your boat to just anybody," Dave said as we signed the listing papers in his office overlooking Knubble Bay. "Every boat has a certain appeal, and you have to match the right people with the right boat."

Classic looks

In the case of *Hazel G*, that meant finding someone who appreciated the classic looks of the Seabreeze design as well as my five-year rehabilitation of the vessel. That rehab effort was guided by my determination to keep the systems and the sailing of a boat simple. I didn't gum things up with complicated hot and cold pressurized water systems, sub-Arctic refrigeration and freezer options, loads of Star Trek electronic gear, or complex sail furling, battens, and reefing stuff. If you want all the comforts of home, I reasoned, why leave home?

The listing agreement I signed gave Dave six months to sell the boat, after which I could choose to continue to use him as the broker, revert to myself as "broker," or do something else entirely. Since it was late September, I figured I didn't want to be advertising the boat through the long, cold Maine winter — a seemingly unlikely time for boatbuyers to be lurking amid the snowdrifts.

As the boating season wound down, potential buyers did indeed become scarce. Although Dave assured me late autumn is a prime season for boats to be bought and sold, only three potential buyers took the time to look at *Hazel*. But I was impressed with the questions they asked through Dave. All of them clearly knew the Seabreeze pedigree. They asked telltale questions about the centerboard (bronze or aluminum?), the mizzen (useful or spurious appendage?), and the tiller (heavy weather helm or balanced?).

When I finally hauled the boat for the season and put it in our boat barn, Dave became even more optimistic. "Having it stored inside will really show a buyer that you take good care of the boat," he explained. "That's important to a smart buyer."

Selling in winter

And surprisingly, by the end of January prospective buyers were making the trek to Maine to see *Hazel*. "Do you actually sell some boats in the middle of winter?" I asked Dave.

"I've got mortgage payments all year round, so yes, I have to sell boats in the winter too," he replied.

"Good answer," I thought. "Here's a broker who really treats the process as a job."

By spring launching time, out of perhaps another half-dozen serious, financially qualified lookers, we actually had a legitimate offer. Prior to the legitimate offer, the illegitimate offers were more amusing than offensive. For instance, there was a request to rent the boat temporarily to the prospective buyer, who was going through a divorce and needed a place to live for a few months. That optimistic buyer said the sale would be completed when the divorce was finalized. Another offer was so low that Dave exhaled loudly and expressed relief when I said I wouldn't even consider responding to it. "I was hoping you'd say that," he said.

After I accepted the legitimate offer, Dave definitely earned his 10 percent commission. Although the offer was very near the asking price, it was made "subject to survey." Past experience, both my own and that of others, has

taught me that many buyers use a surveyor's report to whittle down the final selling price. If the surveyor didn't like the condition of the paint job, the buyer may try to reduce the final selling price by an amount that will pay for new paint. Surveyors can and do find many legitimate problems with older boats. But they also note a lot of tricky-track stuff that has little to do with the boat's seaworthiness. (Are all your oil-spillage placards in place?)

List of problems

At any rate, the buyers of *Hazel* did indeed come up with a list of small problems, many of which Dave talked them out of attempting to apply to the final sales price. He pointed out that most of the problems had nothing to do with the boat's seaworthiness and therefore did not reduce the boat's value. Some above-the-waterline problems did have a minor impact on *Hazel's* seaworthiness, and I corrected them myself.

Below the waterline, there was one problem with the centerboard cable and Dave stepped in on that one. Since the new owners wanted Robinhood Marine Service to perform some drydock upgrades to *Hazel* anyway, Dave volunteered the yard's help to address, at no charge to me, a cracked swage fitting the surveyor found. In the end, the offer stayed intact until the sale was completed. It took about two weeks between the signing of the purchase and sales agreement and the closing.

Would I use a broker again? If it was Dave Perry, absolutely. Other brokers, though, need to be vetted, especially for boats selling for less than $20,000. That seems to be the point at which many yacht brokers think the 10 percent commission isn't worth much effort.

So if you are selling a sailboat for which you'd rather not take late-night phone calls from slightly intoxicated sailing romantics, check out your potential broker's recent history of sales in your price category. Even better, ask if he (or she) has sold a boat like yours before. Then chat at length about your boat's pluses and minuses. At some point, you'll know if the broker is for you. Like any do-it-yourself project, the more time and effort you put into working with a broker, the better it turns out.

A bluewater-capable yacht

Jim and Sue Corenman completed a circumnavigation on their Carl Schumacher-designed, custom Concordia 50, *Heart of Gold*.

JIM CORENMAN

Narrowing the field

by Beth Leonard

This excerpt from Beth Leonard's new book, The Voyager's Handbook, *second edition, is the first of a three-part series on selecting the right sailboat for extensive passagemaking. Adapted with permission from International Marine.*

PART ONE

Marine books and magazines devote thousands of pages and millions of words to describing the "perfect" offshore yacht. Yet very few of us can afford the new boats reviewed in the pages of the marine magazines. Those of us with finite resources and a desire to do more than dream have all had to compromise to find a capable, seaworthy boat that fits our budget. As much as most cruisers love their boats, we've never met a crew who claimed their boat was perfect.

When it comes to boats, the opinions of experienced bluewater voyagers are often difficult to reconcile and sometimes even completely contradictory. Should you buy a 30-foot, heavy-displacement, full-keel design like Lin and Larry Pardey's *Taleisin*; a 78-foot, light-displacement, fin-keel design like Linda and Steve Dashew's *Beowulf*; or one of the thousands of designs in between? Or should you consider one of the many production cruising multihulls now on the market? Where do you start when figuring out what boat will be right for you?

The first and most important step is determining how much boat you can afford. The amount you can spend will reduce the galaxy of available boats to a mere solar system.

You will be able to narrow the options even further when you decide what type and size of boat best suits your needs and what age of boat best fits your budget. From there, it's a matter of legwork and perseverance. You'll need to evaluate individual boats against the requirements for a competent offshore voyager until you find the right boat for you — one you can afford that not only meets your requirements for comfort and safety but also touches your heart and captures your imagination.

Go to a place like Papeete in Tahiti or Las Palmas in the Canaries at the height of the cruising season, and you will find every conceivable combination of design, hull material, keel configuration, rig, age, and size. Older, smaller, less expensive boats allow people without much money to live their dreams and keep company with those who can afford the newest, biggest, and most modern bluewater voyagers.

What type of boat do you want?

Even a cursory look at the variety of "expert" opinions out there makes it clear that reasonable people can come to very different conclusions when picking a boat for cruising. One key to finding a boat you will be happy with, one you will trust and enjoy living aboard, is understanding how your needs match up against the strengths and weaknesses of the various types of cruising boats. Offshore monohull design has produced four major cruising boat types; the three most popular are shown in the table on Page 29. Each new type has incorporated proven innovations in design and materials from offshore racing yachts into offshore cruising boats. These types are not discrete — they lie along a continuum, and many boats straddle the borders between them. But they differ markedly along all the major design parameters and make different trade-offs between comfort and speed.

Over the last century, production yachts designed for offshore sailing and bluewater cruising have become lighter, more powerful, and more manageable. Boats at the

Lin and Larry Pardey's *Taleisin*, at left, has circled the globe and doubled the Horn. Scott and Kitty Kuhner's Valiant 40, *Tamure*, below, has sailed more than 100,000 nautical miles, completing a circumnavigation and competing in numerous demanding offshore races.

cutting edge have always pushed the limits of durability and comfort, and sometimes of safety. Each stage of yacht design includes seaworthy, livable vessels that can make excellent long-term bluewater voyagers as well as boats that lack the stability or durability to live up to the sea's exacting standards.

Traditional voyagers – Early offshore cruising boats were made from wood and incorporated the knowledge gained over generations to create strong, safe, seaworthy boats. The lines were taken from small vessels meant to brave the meanest of seas, such as coastal trading and fishing boats, whaleboats, and Scandinavian double-enders originally designed as pilot boats and rescue craft. Spars were constructed from wood; sails were made from canvas; line was made from hemp. These materials limited design innovation. The traditional voyager that resulted had been taken to the highest level of design possible, given the strengths and weaknesses of the materials available.

When fiberglass began to replace wood as the material of choice for boatbuilding in the late 1950s and early 1960s, many boatbuilders took proven wooden designs and built them in the new material. Thus, most of the earliest traditional voyagers have long full keels, often with transom-hung rudders; most are relatively shallow for their length, and many are double-enders. Examples include the Bristol Channel Cutters, the Colin Archer designs, and the Westsail 32. These are the types of boats that sailing authors Lin and Larry Pardey advocate for offshore cruising. A few production boatbuilders — such as Cape George and until recently Sam L. Morse — produce such boats. Other builders — such as Pacific Seacraft, Cabo Rico, and Malö — build modified fin-keel boats with skeg-hung rudders whose ratios put them in the traditional voyager category. Sailing author Nigel Calder prefers these boats, which combine some elements of modern design with the strength and comfort of traditional voyagers.

As the table shows, traditional voyagers can be characterized as slow but safe and comfortable. By modern standards, they displace a lot and don't carry much sail area for their displacement. They will rarely reach hull speed and will exceed it only if caught by a 40-knot squall while running downwind under full sail. The large keel area and heavy displacement damp motion in a seaway, allowing the crew to move around safely and sleep comfortably.

Traditional voyagers take care of their crews and are comfortable even in a blow. They are easy to heave-to and to control when running off in anything but extreme breaking seas, and they can manage just about any conditions as long as they have sea room. But their shallow keels and low ballast ratios make for disappointing performance to windward. They are sluggish under power, difficult to maneuver in a marina, and all but impossible to back up in a straight line. They'll get even inexperienced crews safely to port, but they may take a few days longer to do it than more modern designs.

Performance cruisers – In 1973, Bob Perry drew the lines for the Valiant 40, which married a skeg-hung rudder and a modified fin keel to the balsa-cored fiberglass decks and larger rig becoming prevalent in the offshore racing fleets. With a displacement to length ratio (DLR) around 250 and a sail area to displacement (SA/D) ratio around 17, the Valiant 40 had more in common with the racy Cal 40 than the offshore cruising boats of the time. The term "performance cruiser" was coined to describe this groundbreaking example of a new genre of bluewater cruising boats.

Over the last three decades, dozens of production boats have been built incorporating many of the elements of the Valiant design philosophy. A number of these are still being manufactured today and are considered by many to represent the perfect marriage between performance and comfort. These include the current range of Hallberg-Rassys, all but the newest Swan and Oyster designs, Calibers, Passports, Shannons, Tayanas, Taswells, and, of course, the Valiants, to name just a few. Some older designs with modern underbodies originally intended for coastal cruising or offshore racing — such as the Ericson, Cal, Tartan, and International Offshore Rule (IOR) One-Ton designs — have also joined the ranks of offshore voyagers.

When we began our first circumnavigation in 1992, most new charter and coastal boats carried fin keels and spade rudders, but these had been incorporated into only a few offshore production cruising boats. By the time we left on our second voyage in 1999, more than a quarter of the production boats being built for offshore cruising had fin keels and spade rudders. Today it's hard to find a newly introduced bluewater design with a full skeg or relatively

BILLY BLACK

long keel. In practice, this means that new boats maneuver much more easily under power, but it also means the occasional rudder failure as new materials such as carbon fiber are adapted to this high-load purpose.

The vast majority of cruising boats sailing the world's oceans fall within the performance cruiser category. They run the gamut from the Island Packets with their cutaway full keels to middle-aged Swans with their fin keels and spade rudders. Over the course of three decades, new materials such as foam cores, S glass, and more recently Kevlar and carbon fiber have been incorporated into the next-generation hulls. Each time lessons have had to be learned about the shortcomings and limitations of the new materials, and some production designs suffered from osmotic blistering, core failures, and delamination. Over time, boatbuilders have learned how to address these issues to create lighter, stronger boats.

A number of well-known sailing writers have made voyages in boats whose ratios put them into the performance cruiser category, including Liza Copeland, John Neal and Amanda Swan-Neal, Webb Chiles, and John Gore-Grimes. Both of our boats have been performance cruisers, though at opposite ends of the spectrum. Our Shannon 37, *Silk*, fell near the border with traditional voyagers, while our Van de Stadt 47, *Hawk*, lies near the border with racer/cruisers. Their quite distinct sailing characteristics help clarify the differences between the various categories.

As the table below shows, although the performance cruisers are still heavy enough to carry cruising loads without sacrificing performance, they are large enough, light enough, and have enough sail area to average an extra 10 to 15 miles per day on long passages. Their moderate keel areas and displacements keep motion comfortable even in large seas, while more efficient ballasting provides greater stability (and therefore sail-carrying ability) than many traditional designs. Depending on keel configuration, these boats range from easy to all-but-impossible to heave-to, but their greater stability means they need to heave-to infrequently, if at all, in trade wind conditions. Most run off very well, although those capable of surfing may require some active manage-

Different monohull design types

	Traditional voyagers	Performance cruisers	Racer/cruisers
	 full keel	 modified fin keel	 fin keel, round sections
Examples	Bermuda 40, Bowman 36, Westsail 32, Mason 43, Nicholson 40, Trintella 45	Valiant 40, Swan 46, Oyster 43, Island Packet 38, Baltic 38, Norseman 447	X-402, Swan 45, J/160, Beneteau 50
Ratios:			
Displacement to length ratio (DLR)[1]	>300	200-300	100-200
Sail area to wetted surface area ratio (SA/WSA)[1]	2.3-2.5	2.3-2.6	2.6-2.9
Sail area to displacement ratio (SA/D)[1]	15-17	17-19	23-26
Length to beam ratio (L/B)[1]	2.8-3	3-3.2	3.3-4.0
Ballast ratio[2]	33-35%	36-39%	38-42%
Motion comfort ratio	35-45	25-35	20-25
Rated speed to theoretical hull speed[1]	67-72%	70-74%	73-78%
Profile of an "average" boat:			
Length overall (LOA) (ft)	40	40	44
IMS displacement (lb)	24,300	21,650	20,425
Length at waterline (LWL) (ft)	31	33.5	38.4
Beam (ft)	11.6	12.5	13
Draft (ft)	5.5	6.4	7.7
Wetted surface area (sq ft)	350	350	380
Working sail area (sq ft)	850	858	1,100
Estimate of average miles per day on passage	120-125	130-135	140-145

[1]Calculated using data from USSA's *Performance Characteristics Profile of the North American IMS Fleet* (2004 edition).
[2]Manufacturer's ballast/displacement in IMS trim. IMS = International Measurement System.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRITZ SEEGERS

Janet and Ken Slagle have cruised aboard their Santa Cruz 52, *Aquila*, for seven years and 30,000 miles.

ment (such as trailing a drogue) to remain in control. Performance cruisers sail much better to windward than traditional voyagers and are reasonably agile under power.

The performance cruisers also have more interior volume than traditional voyagers and are almost as comfortable and as hard to get into trouble with. In the most extreme conditions, however, they are slightly less forgiving and demand slightly more from their crews.

Racer/cruisers – New, lighter, stronger materials — including carbon fiber for hulls and spars, Kevlar for hulls and line, and Spectra for line and sails — have been developed for use on sailboats. In some cases they failed initially, but eventually they proved their usefulness aboard round-the-world racing boats. These materials, along with aspects of high-performance boat design, have slowly been adapted to offshore cruising boats.

When the materials became light and strong enough to build a durable, offshore-capable boat with a DLR of less than 200, the bluewater racer/cruiser was born. Many of these, such as the J/40 and J/120, were intended for racing first and foremost; others, like many of the Beneteaus and Jeanneaus, were designed for the burgeoning charter market. As these designs have grown dated, boats like the Beneteau First 40.7 and the larger Js have found their way into the offshore cruising fleet. Others, such as the J/160 and Farr Pilot House designs, were introduced as high-performance offshore cruising boats capable of sailing 200-mile days.

Like the boats at the performance end of the performance cruiser spectrum, racer/cruisers all have fin keels and spade rudders. But their keels and rudders tend to be deeper, and their hulls have flatter sections, have finer entries, and carry their beam farther aft. Keel and rudder foils have improved in both hydrodynamic efficiency and balance. Ballast is often concentrated in a bulb end plate attached to the bottom of the keel, which increases the righting moment created by a given weight of ballast. Their lighter displacements allow them to carry less sail area than a similarly sized traditional or performance cruiser design, easing sail handling for a shorthanded crew. In International Measurement System (IMS) trim, these boats sail faster on every point of sail, point higher, and surf far more easily than performance cruisers.

However, the current racer/cruisers have some drawbacks as long-distance offshore voyagers when compared with their heavier counterparts. Their flatter, fatter hull shapes surf well and create spacious accommodations, but their shallow bilges offer little in the way of stowage and don't keep bilge water confined to the sump. To maintain their performance edge, these boats need to be kept reasonably light, which means they can't carry the same payload as heavier boats. While modern sail-handling techniques have made large sail plans manageable for a shorthanded crew, racer/cruisers can be unforgiving if caught with too much sail up in a 40-knot squall. The speeds these boats are capable of reaching can lead to pounding in big seas. Many crews we've met on racer/cruisers slow the boats down in stronger winds to improve the motion, which reduces their performance advantage.

Running downwind in heavy weather and large waves, these boats will surf at exhilarating speeds even under bare poles. Although most remain under control if hand steered, some will not look after themselves under self-steering unless slowed down. The forces generated when a boat falls off a wave at 15 or 18 knots instead of 6 or 7 puts huge shock loads on sails, rig, rudder, and hull; as a result, these boats need to be significantly stronger than heavier boats, in large part because they can sail faster. At the same time, some extra material here and there to add strength makes little difference in a heavy boat, but a light boat has to be engineered and built exceptionally well to stand up to more than a few years of offshore cruising.

The difficulties of building strong, lightweight production boats have led to a number of problems, including broken rigs and rudders, bulkheads separating from hulls, keels cracking, keel bolts breaking, and hulls flexing and sagging. Boats marketed as offshore cruisers from their inception are more likely to stand up to the rigors of long-distance bluewater cruising than those originally designed and built for racing and chartering.

As the table shows, racer/cruisers deliver, on average, 10 to 15 miles more each day than performance cruisers and 20-plus miles more than traditional voyagers. To realize that potential, however, a boat must be kept light, which normally means not taking along many gadgets and goodies. It also means not carrying as much in the way of stores, fuel, or water, which translates into less self-sufficiency and a more limited cruising range. And although passages may be faster, they're likely to be more uncomfortable in boisterous conditions. The boat will need to be actively managed instead of left to her own devices running before strong winds and big seas.

On the other hand, even when slowed down, these boats can easily and comfortably average 6 knots over the course of a long offshore passage, more than respectable for any cruising boat. Racer/cruisers sail extremely well on any point of sail, so they will be able to sail themselves out of just about any situation. They are agile and efficient under power and easy to maneuver in a marina. These boats need an experienced crew to keep them out of trouble, but they'll often be the first boats into port, and their crews will be relaxing on deck drinking margaritas when the rest of the fleet makes its way in.

Cruising sleds – In the last decade, materials and building techniques have improved to the point that the fastest monohulls in the world now have DLRs of less than 100 and SA/D ratios well over 30. Sometimes called ultralight-displacement boats (ULDBs), these include maxi racers such

as *Skandia*, the 2004 winner of the Sydney-to-Hobart race, and the Open 60s used in the Vendée Globe nonstop, round-the-world race. It was only a matter of time before someone translated this thinking to production cruising boats, and today there are a few examples of what have been dubbed "cruising sleds," most notably the Santa Cruz 52.

All the attributes of racer/cruisers apply even more so to cruising sleds. The boats can be very fast, and they do manage 200-mile days, but they must be kept very light. Hal Roth completed two BOC races in his Santa Cruz 50, *American Flag*, which proves that at least some of these boats can withstand Southern Ocean-style punishment. However, production cruising sleds are too new to have a proven cruising track record, so their long-term durability remains to be demonstrated.

Many design innovations are occurring in this category as naval architects try to adapt aspects of the maxi, Vendée Globe, and Volvo raceboats to cruising boats. Designers have been experimenting with ways to reduce keel depth, and the current approach uses hydraulically lifting keels. These are complex and take up a lot of space in the interior, but several newer cruising boat designs have incorporated them. Other innovations from racing boats, such as water ballast to make a boat sail flatter and faster and twin rudders to prevent rudder stalling and cavitation, have made their way into some of these cruising designs.

Whether racer/cruisers and cruising sleds ever come to dominate offshore cruising as performance cruisers have done in the last two decades will depend upon how durable and comfortable they prove to be. No matter what the majority decides, there will always be people willing to sacrifice comfort and cruising luxuries for sailing performance, just as there will always be people willing to sacrifice sailing performance for comfort and manageability.

Cruising multihulls – Monohulls still make up the vast majority of the offshore cruising fleet, but multihulls, particularly catamarans, represent a small but growing percentage. In 2003, 9 percent of the boats participating in the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) were multihulls, and that percentage is likely to continue to increase.

Most of the performance ratios used to evaluate monohulls cannot be applied to multihulls, nor do multihulls sort themselves into convenient groupings that can then be compared. But multihulls sail and cruise differently from monohulls. To decide if a multihull makes sense for you, you'll need to weigh the advantages against the disadvantages, just as when trying to choose among different types of monohulls.

We have met dozens of crews cruising in multihulls, and we interviewed a half dozen of those who have cruised catamarans for a long period of time and through a wide variety of conditions. We have never met anyone living aboard and cruising a trimaran. Even 50-foot trimarans are too limited in space and weight-carrying ability to function as comfortable, long-term homes. The following comments, therefore, focus on modern cruising catamarans.

When most sailors think of catamarans they think of speed, but speed is not one of the first advantages cited by most experienced catamaran cruisers. Other things — such as space, shoal draft, and sailing flat — usually get mentioned first. When the discussion turns to speed and

Steve and Dorothy Darden's 52-foot Morrelli & Melvin-designed catamaran, *Adagio*, averaged 190 to 200 miles per day while crossing the Pacific the "wrong way."

sailing performance, many of the comments mirror what we hear from those aboard racer/cruisers or cruising sleds.

If kept light, multihulls surf much more easily than any monohull. But in practice, very few of those we know aboard cruising catamarans under 45 feet in length manage to keep them light. Weight in the bows can be a particular problem, as the bows will bury going downwind, limiting the cat's ability to surf. On average, over long passages, an overweight cruising cat won't outperform a monohull with a similar waterline length, and we've met many cruisers who have been disappointed with their cat's performance in the real world.

On the other hand, like Steve Dashew's hybrids, bigger cats with enough waterline to absorb some payload do manage to sail significantly faster than monohulls with similar waterline lengths. Steve and Dorothy Darden on *Adagio*, a 52-foot Morrelli & Melvin-designed catamaran, have averaged between 190 and 200 miles per day on a half dozen passages, including the slantwise run from New Zealand to Alaska across all the weather zones of the Pacific. The fastest cruising cat we've encountered was a 55-footer designed in Australia. The first 12 feet of each bow consisted of sealed, watertight buoyancy compartments. This greatly reduced interior space but kept the boat light and the bows from burying in waves. The family of four still had more room aboard than most cruisers have on a 60-foot monohull, and they averaged 190 to 200 miles per day.

But large cruising cats, like large cruising sleds, are often not sailed to their full potential. Under certain conditions, most catamarans will suffer *wing slams*, waves that come up under the bottom of the boat and crash into the bridge deck or into one of the hulls. The two conditions that cause this, either alone or in combination, are sailing at high speeds, when the bow waves interfere with one another, and sailing in confused seas. If this "thunder down under" gets too violent, the crew will often slow the cat down. Extra bridge deck clearance helps reduce slamming, but at the expense of increased windage. Multihulls have the advantage over similar-sized monohulls only when sailing off the wind in light to moderate air, when their speed helps bring the apparent wind forward and their limited underbody profile minimizes drag.

So although speed may play a part in the choice of a catamaran, in all but the biggest cats it often turns out to be less important in practice than in theory. Most multihull cruisers we've interviewed rate space as the number one advantage

> **“Sailing flat comes as a revelation to anyone who has always sailed on a slant. You can leave the dock without stowing the tomatoes…”**

of catamarans over monohulls. When cruising with children or guests, the separate hulls offer a degree of privacy virtually unobtainable in a monohull less than 60 feet long. Mechanical and electrical equipment can be completely isolated from living areas, eliminating noise, vibration, and unpleasant odors. Most catamarans 40 feet and over have plenty of room for a dedicated workshop or a dedicated office, and often for both.

Shoal draft probably ranks second among the considerations for picking a catamaran. Even relatively heavy cats in the 50- to 60-foot range will have a draft of only 4½ or 5 feet, a foot or more less than fixed-keel monohulls of similar size. If the hull is designed properly, a cat can be safely beached in order to paint the bottom or repair damage.

Several other advantages become clear only after you've spent some time aboard. The first time we entered *Adagio's* main saloon, Steve Darden greeted us with, “Catamaran advantage number one — visibility.” We were treated to a 360-degree view of the cliffs of 4,000-foot-high Mount Wellington towering over the city of Hobart in Tasmania. In addition to its aesthetic advantages, 360-degree visibility from a dry watchkeeping station increases safety on passage.

Many experienced sailors value the redundancy a catamaran provides. Dual rudders, dual autopilots, dual engines, and dual tankage offer an added margin of safety when things go wrong. The twin engines make a catamaran significantly more maneuverable than a monohull without a bow thruster. They also provide redundancy in power generation. Having two engines makes catamarans excellent “powerboats,” especially if the engine rooms are isolated from the living quarters. Of course, all that redundancy also translates into higher costs and more maintenance — nothing comes for free!

Sailing flat comes as a revelation to anyone who has always sailed on a slant. You can leave the dock without stowing the tomatoes sitting on the counter or the computer on the nav table. You can head off on passage without putting up leecloths and move around the boat without having a hand firmly on a handhold. When other boats are rolling gunwale to gunwale in an anchorage, a catamaran will do little more than sway a bit from side to side.

Catamarans do have their disadvantages, but these are not as obvious as they might appear. The motion, which most people see as an advantage, can be a problem for some. When the U.S. Navy was testing hull forms for use on troop ships, the multihull form proved to be more fatiguing than comparable monoholls. Anybody who has sailed a monohull knows that the body learns to anticipate what will happen next and compensate for it. But the two hulls on a multihull often move to two different waves, with no discernible pattern. When conditions really deteriorate, some crewmembers may feel “like a golf ball teed off in a bathroom,” as one experienced offshore multihull sailor put it.

If you're like most sailors, you know how you react to the motion from strong winds and big waves on a monohull but have never experienced such conditions on a multihull. If you're considering purchasing a multihull and have never sailed one, charter a catamaran with your crew for a few weeks and make sure to take it out in some moderate waves to see how everybody reacts.

Many people are put off by the fact that, with a catamaran, what goes down doesn't necessarily come back up. Monohulls depend upon weight in the keel for stability; catamarans depend on their beam and overall size to stay upright. If a well-designed monohull capsizes, its keel will help bring it back upright. But when a catamaran capsizes, it won't right itself. On the other hand, monohulls sink, which properly designed catamarans shouldn't do. In the end, a large, well-built multihull is about as likely to capsize as a large, well-built monohull is likely to sink. Both events are rare. In our decade of offshore voyaging, we know firsthand of one case of a monohull sinking and none of multihulls capsizing.

One serious disadvantage of a multihull can be finding a place to “park.” In some cruising areas, few marinas have slips large enough to accommodate the beam of a catamaran over 40 feet in length. Where space is available, marinas may charge for two slips or by the square meter, doubling marina costs. On the plus side, a cat can easily carry a large dinghy with outboard motor on davits, making anchoring and dinghying to town more convenient than on many monohulls. Still, finding places to take on fuel and water can be problematic in parts of the North Atlantic, South Africa, Japan, and South America, where marinas were built to cater to 35-foot monohulls. Like racer/cruisers and cruising sleds, cats need to be built strong enough to withstand the forces they generate. When a monohull heels, it dissipates much of the force of the wind in the sails. Multihulls don't heel, so their rigging and sails must be significantly stronger than on a similar-sized monohull.

As with racer/cruisers and cruising sleds, building a strong, light, durable boat is much more difficult and expensive than building a strong, heavy one. Cruising cat design is still in its early stages compared with monohull design. Catamarans now 15 to 20 years old were built very early in the design evolution, when many structural issues had yet to be resolved. Rudder loads can be quite high on a catamaran, and this is a common area of failure in older cats. This is where duality makes a big difference — a cat that has lost one rudder can still be steered with little difficulty until the rudder can be fixed.

Ten years ago, new catamarans could easily be double the price of a new monohull of similar overall

Catamaran prices[1]

Age	35-39 feet	40-44 feet	45-50 feet	50-54 feet
>20 years	$100,000	N/A[2]	N/A	N/A
10-20 years	$150,000	$185,000	$265,000	$420,000
<10 years	$190,000	$290,000	$410,000	$550,000

[1]Average prices for a random sample of 81 name-brand offshore catamarans by age and size (U.S. dollars). Average price is 90 percent of asking price.
[2]Too few boats available in size/age range to allow a meaningful average.

length. Very few of the catamarans available are more than 15 years old, which means there aren't many inexpensive ones around. Prices are slowly coming more in line with monohulls and are now almost comparable in the 40- to 50-foot range for 10- to 20-year-old cats. Given that a 40-foot catamaran has at least as much space as a 45- to 50-foot monohull, it can be argued that catamarans cost less than comparable monohulls. The table on the facing page summarizes average prices for 81 offshore catamarans listed in national sailing magazines in the same month.

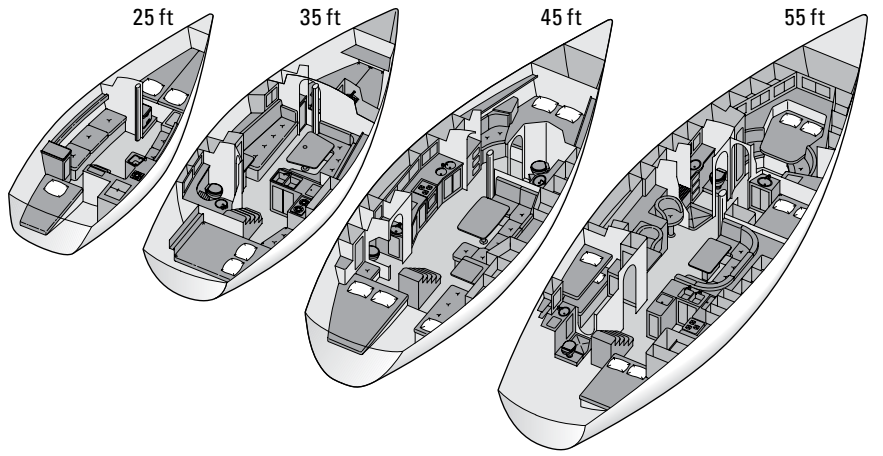
Many of these catamarans have worked the charter trade; these will have many hours of use on mechanical equipment and may have suffered groundings. After five years in charter, many cats will have 3,000 hours or more on their engines. Engines, transmission, refrigeration, and charging systems may all need to be replaced. Bottom repairs will be the most difficult to spot, since they are often covered well with fiberglass and bottom-paint. Yet there are more good-quality catamarans available now than ever before, and prices should continue to come down as more cats leave charter fleets and find homes with voyaging crews.

As with the different types of monohulls, catamarans suit the needs of a specific set of sailors. If your plans call for a large crew (four or more), a catamaran will be the least expensive way to get a boat with comfortable accommodation for everyone. If you plan to sail in areas with light winds, shallow waters, and good anchorages, a catamaran will offer significant advantages over most monohulls. But you'll need to buy a strong, structurally sound catamaran, and you may need to reinforce key structural areas like the rudders and the rigging.

What size boat?

An overly large boat can ruin a voyage. For each 10-foot increase in boat length, the hours spent on maintenance double and boat-related costs triple. Unless you can afford full-time crew, cruising a monohull over 55 feet or a catamaran over 50 feet will likely force you to pick up extra crew for passagemaking. In many places, a large boat will limit the choice of marinas and make it harder to get fuel and water.

Production offshore boat size and cost



Boat length	25.0 ft	35.0 ft	45.0 ft	55.0 ft
LWL at 0.8 LOA	20.0 ft	28.0 ft	36.0 ft	44.0 ft
Beam	8.5 ft	11.5 ft	14.0 ft	15.5 ft
Displacement[1]	5,400 lb	12,000 lb	24,000 lb	42,000 lb
Length/beam ratio	2.94	3.04	3.21	3.55
Displacement/length ratio	301	244	230	220
Cabin area[2]	120 sq ft	240 sq ft	360 sq ft	480 sq ft
Stowage volume[3]	120 cu ft	360 cu ft	720 cu ft	1,200 cu ft
Berths (singles, doubles)	3, 1	2, 2	2, 2	2, 3
Heads, separate shower	1, 0	1, 0	2, 0	2, 1
Tankage (fuel, water)	20, 40 gal	40, 80 gal	150, 100 gal	200, 200 gal
Engine size[4]	14 hp	30 hp	60 hp	105 hp
House battery bank	100 Ah[8]	200 Ah	400 Ah	800 Ah
Sail area/displacement ratio	17.15	18.31	19.23	19.86
Sail area (main and 130% genoa)	330 sq ft	600 sq ft	1,000 sq ft	1,500 sq ft
Mainsail area	132 sq ft	240 sq ft	400 sq ft	600 sq ft
Genoa area	198 sq ft	360 sq ft	600 sq ft	900 sq ft
Primary winch rating	16	40	53	66
Acquisition price for boat without additional equipment:				
Price (15-year-old used boat)[5]	$25,000	$90,000	$230,000	$365,000
Minimum refit costs[6]	$3,750	$13,500	$34,500	$54,750
Sail costs (main and genoa)	$2,000	$5,000	$8,000	$12,000
	$30,750	$108,500	$272,500	$431,750
Estimated annual boat expenses:				
Insurance	$308	$1,085	$2,725	$4,318
Annual maintenance[7]	$1,538	$5,425	$13,625	$21,588
	$1,845	$6,510	$16,350	$25,905

[1]Averages of published values for stock cruising boats.
[2]Cabin area varies in proportion to length × beam.
[3]Space available for stowage and optional systems; actual values depend upon hull shape and can be significantly lower than shown.
[4]Sized at 2.5 hp per 1,000-pound displacement.
[5]Average prices for quality offshore production boats.
[6]Costs to upgrade basic boat structure for offshore, estimated at 15 percent of purchase price.
[7]Average annual expenditure for voyage of five years calculated at 5 percent of boat value per year.
[8]Ah = amp-hours.
Illustration courtesy *SAIL* magazine and Kim Downing.

The larger the boat, the more likely it is to sit for long periods of time once it has arrived somewhere. Very few people take a boat over 55 feet out for a daysail. All of that means more work and less pleasure.

But an overly small boat can cause just as many problems. A boat under 30 feet will be uncomfortable and wet in anything but idyllic conditions. Limited space makes it difficult to have friends aboard for more than a day or so, or to take along the personal items and the comforts and conveniences the crew might want. The lack of stowage space can result in a monotonous diet, and the boat won't be able to carry much in the way of water, tools, or spares. Self-sufficiency and cruising range will be more limited than on a larger boat. The lack of privacy can turn minor annoyances into irreconcilable differences.

Everything aboard a cruising boat is a trade-off, and size is no exception. During our circumnavigation aboard 37-foot *Silk*, she was about average in size for an offshore cruising boat. At that time, the conventional wisdom was to buy the biggest boat you could afford, and almost everyone we met wanted a bigger boat. Those we know who went cruising a second time all went up 10 feet in length, from an average of 33 feet to an average of 43 feet. We wanted a boat around 42 feet, but we couldn't find one that met our requirements and included a well-integrated hard dodger. At 47 feet, *Hawk* is just a bit above the average among today's offshore boats. Now most of the long-term cruisers we meet do not want a boat larger than the one they are on. Instead of the biggest boat you can afford, I would say that you should buy the smallest boat on which you can live comfortably.

Advantages of a larger boat

Our experiences in moving from *Silk* to *Hawk* help clarify the trade-offs between different sizes. By going up 10 feet in boat size, we have gained stability, speed, and space, but the benefits of these gains, while real, have not always been exactly what we expected.

Stability – Size does matter when it comes to stability, but smaller boats can be perfectly safe as long as their limits are respected. In conditions where *Hawk* will happily keep sailing, we would have hove-to on *Silk*. We might not have been making miles toward our destination, but we would still have been perfectly safe. *Hawk's* stability and her ability to sail well to windward keep us sailing in a lot of conditions where she's far happier than we are. But we have depended upon that stability to keep us upright several times in our five years of high-latitude cruising, particularly on the 9,000-nautical-mile Southern Ocean passage eastabout from Cape Horn to Fremantle, Australia.

Speed – We've averaged 148 nautical miles per day on *Hawk* compared with 117 on *Silk*, with part of that increase coming from *Hawk's* stability; that is, her ability to keep going in heavy weather instead of heaving-to. Yet what does that speed really buy us? On a 1,500-nautical-mile passage it means we spend 10 days at sea instead of 13. That may sound like a lot, but after the first week, once we get into the rhythm of a passage, a few days doesn't make any real difference to us. We still cannot outrun fast-moving low-pressure systems.

Our increased hull speed benefits us most where we least expected it, by extending our coastal cruising range during daylight hours. We can now sail some 30 percent farther between ports during the day, which has greatly reduced the need to sail at night in reef-, rock-, or iceberg-infested waters.

Space – Most of *Hawk's* 10 feet of extra length have been devoted to watertight compartments in the bow and stern and a large sail locker forward. As a result, we don't have much more usable interior length than we did on *Silk*, but we do have much more space. *Hawk's* 3 feet of extra beam translate into a tremendous amount of interior volume (see the table on Page 33). Most of that space is devoted to stowage: twice as much water and fuel tankage as *Silk* carried, three times as much clothing storage, twice as many large compartments dedicated to food, four times as many bookshelves, and five times as many toolboxes. This, in turn, translates into much greater self-sufficiency. Our extended cruising range has allowed us to spend up to three months in isoluated and uninhabited areas like the Chilean channels.

Disadvantages of a larger boat

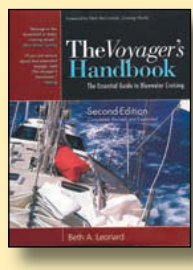
We knew there would be downsides to a larger boat, though for our higher-latitude, liveaboard agenda, we didn't think they would begin to outweigh the benefits, and indeed they have not. None of what follows should have surprised us, but as with the advantages we envisioned, the reality hasn't always matched the theory.

Cost – Costs to maintain a boat at least triple with every 10-foot increase in size. We averaged about $5,000 per year in boat-related expenses for *Silk*, but we've averaged over $15,000 per year for *Hawk*. Both numbers are pretty typical for moderately complex boats of their respective sizes insured at least part of the time. The initial expenditure to buy and outfit the boat also tends to triple with a 10-foot increase in boat length.

Seamanship – Though *Hawk* is much more stable than *Silk* and therefore much "safer" in extreme conditions, *Silk* was much more forgiving. If we misjudged a squall and didn't get the chute off in time, we could wrestle the sock down over it and manhandle it to the deck. If we wrapped the jib during a jibe, we could unwrap it by hand in light air and with a winch in windy conditions. But brute force gets us nowhere aboard *Hawk*. She requires much greater forethought, because the

For further reading . . .

The Voyager's Handbook: The Essential Guide to Bluewater Cruising, second edition, by Beth Leonard, is one of the best resources available for those contemplating bluewater passages. This excerpt is a small part of a thorough reference tool. If you want more, the book is available at <http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html> or by calling 701-952-9433.



forces she generates quickly become unmanageable and dangerous. *Silk* offered the perfect learning environment while we made every mistake in the book; *Hawk* demands all the skills we've acquired to sail safely.

Fitness – Before we started sailing *Hawk*, I'd been of the "bigger boat, bigger winches, no problem" school. But we quickly discovered that bigger winches won't wrestle a weightier anchor out of a locker, won't flake and tie down an ill-mannered mainsail, and won't claw down and secure a furling sail if the furler breaks. Only after we moved up to *Hawk* did I start to notice the direct correlation between the waterline length of racing boats and the size of the crews' necks and biceps — and those boats have *big* winches!

Reliance on mechanical aids – No matter how fit we are, we still have to rely on mechanical aids to handle the forces generated by *Hawk's* sails and anchors. Some sort of mechanical device needs to be between those forces and us at all times: a self-tailing winch, rope clutch, furler, or windlass. We need additional leverage from some sort of mechanical advantage to adjust our checkstays, vangs, and most of our halyards. We find ourselves constantly walking a fine line between controlling the forces on *Hawk* and becoming dependent on mechanical aids. Adding in-mast or in-boom furling would greatly facilitate handling our mainsail but would leave us with few options if it broke.

Scale – On a bigger boat, everything is bigger. When coiling lines, your hands need to be larger to hold the loops. You need to be taller to reach the top of the boom to put sail ties over the sail or to attach the halyard to the headboard of the mainsail. You need to be stronger to wrestle an anchor off the bow or out of a locker. A bigger boat may mean that smaller crewmembers can't manage simple things like putting the sail cover on by themselves.

Our conclusions

In considering the pros and cons of moving up 10 feet, we've come to four conclusions. First, it would have been a mistake for us to have started out on *Hawk*. Given our almost total lack of offshore sailing experience, we needed a boat that would help us get out of trouble, not one that would help us get into it.

Second, somewhere around 40 feet seems to be the optimal length for a "first" offshore boat. This is large enough to stow the basics and some luxuries, such as spare light-air sails and extra fuel and water; to carry a generator and a watermaker without making major compromises in other areas; and to offer guests some measure of privacy without using the main saloon as a sleeping area.

Third, it will be fairly obvious if you really need a boat larger than that. If you have children, intend to have visitors or crew aboard more than a third of the time, plan on "expedition sailing" to remote places for extended periods, or want to pursue some activity, like scuba diving, that requires a great deal of space, a larger boat may well make sense — but only if you're certain you can afford it.

Fourth, boat size needs to be limited by the fitness and strength of the regular crew. If a furler breaks, the crew must be able to drop a jib in gale conditions and gather it on deck. If the electric windlass fails, the crew still has to be able to retrieve a storm anchor. Otherwise, overall safety actually decreases in a larger boat. Most experienced couples who don't want to depend upon crew feel comfortable with a maximum length somewhere around 50 feet.

Next issue, in the second part of this series, Beth will discuss screening criteria, such as stability and durability.

PART TWO

Jim and Sue Corenman completed a circumnavigation on their Carl Schumacher-designed, custom Concordia 50, *Heart of Gold*.

JIM CORENMAN

A bluewater-capable yacht

Evaluating individual boats

by Beth Leonard

This excerpt from Beth Leonard's new book, *The Voyager's Handbook*, second edition, is the second of a three-part series with a focus on selecting the right sailboat for extensive passagemaking. The first part focused on the available designs and choosing the right boat for your purposes.

Boats of almost every conceivable type, keel configuration, rig, hull material, and length make successful voyages. While these characteristics can help define the boat that best suits you, they don't matter much in determining the general success or failure of a specific boat brand for offshore sailing and liveaboard cruising. The things that really *do* matter are less straightforward and harder to quantify than the depth of the keel or the number of masts. They include the boat's stability, durability, design and layout, and sailing ability.

Screening criteria

In an ideal world, you would do nothing over the course of the next year but look at boats in order to figure out what you really want. You would spend several days going over every detail of each candidate's construction and then take each one on a passage and evaluate its sailing performance and layout in everything from calms to gales. But in the real world, you'll be lucky if you thoroughly inspect a dozen boats sitting on the hard and get out sailing for a couple of hours on the boat you end up buying.

That means making sure the few boats you do examine and the one or two boats you sail are the right boats. A set of screening criteria can help identify boats of interest and eliminate others.

Your budget and the age range of the boats you have decided to consider will also be used to screen out boats, as will any special requirements related to where you intend to cruise or how you intend to use the boat.

Something far less tangible but at least as important is seaworthiness. This concept includes *stability* (the ability to stay upright when the sea would have it otherwise) and *durability* (the ability to take the constant punishment the sea delivers). Though both are difficult to evaluate, there are some objective measurements for each.

Taken together, the screening criteria should help you narrow your search to a couple dozen specific boat brands that meet all your requirements. If you have access to the Internet, you can reach this list without leaving your desk. Many brokerage sites provide most of the information you need to work through your screening criteria, including walk-through photo tours that let you evaluate a boat's layout against your needs.

But most people prefer to get a feel for boats in person. They start their search by opening the net wide and learning everything they can about as many different boats as possible. They go to boat shows. They order brochures for dozens of new boats and spend hours comparing ratios and specifications. They read all the boat reviews in sailing magazines and surf the Internet looking for owner's groups, sailing bulletin boards, and searchable databases of brokerage listings. They compile exhaustive lists of everything the boat must have, then scratch out the entries and start again after talking to another expert or reading another book. If all this sounds familiar, then you're already well launched into your search.

Make as much use as possible of the wealth of information within the cruising community. Most sailors love to talk about their boats and are flattered to be asked. If you see a boat with

scuffed topsides and a battered dinghy, ask the people aboard where they've been, and the conversation will almost certainly take off from there. You won't fully appreciate the willingness of cruisers to help those who'd like to join their ranks until you experience it for yourself. And you'll remember it when you get out on your own boat and someone stops by and shyly asks how it has performed for you.

Even if you've already decided you want a name-brand fiberglass performance cruiser built for offshore sailing between 40 and 43 feet long and less than 15 years old with shoal draft and a two-cabin layout, you still have a vast array of cruising boats to choose from. At first, it can seem impossible to sort out opinion from fact, entrenched dogma from valuable experience. But the more boats you see — and the more you actually manage to sail — the clearer the picture of your ideal boat will become. Eventually you'll be ready to look seriously at a short list of boats.

Stability

Stability — a boat's ability to stay upright despite a sudden squall or large seas combined with its willingness to come back upright if knocked down — is the ultimate measure of seaworthiness. Almost as much has been written about stability as about boats in general, and even less of it is helpful in picking one boat over another.

An incredible variety of boats have successfully completed long voyages; many of these craft would barely be considered seaworthy by most cruisers today. In our travels, we have met sailors who have crossed oceans in open boats, some little more than dugout canoes; in 20-foot catamarans affording only a bit more shelter than a beachcat or Hobie Cat; in converted lifeboats less than 20 feet long; and in a huge variety of small, homemade boats under 25 feet long, some of which weighed little more than a couple of tons. A few minutes spent considering any of these boats keeps me from getting dogmatic about that elusive quality called "seaworthiness." They remind me that just about any boat can successfully sail offshore, as long as its crew respects its limits and sails it wisely.

That's not to negate the seriousness of the question of picking a boat to which you will entrust your life. As poorly understood as it is, stability represents one of the only measures of how well a boat will stand up to extreme conditions. Coastal sailors encounter stability issues when they don't put enough weight on the rail during a heavy-weather race or when they broach while carrying a chute. Inshore, such events are exciting; offshore, they are terrifying and potentially life-threatening.

An offshore boat needs to stay upright. If it is rolled by an exceptionally large wave, a monohull needs to come back upright within less than 2 minutes, the length of time most of us can hold our breath. In theory, a boat's stability is determined by her size, hull shape, center of gravity, buoyancy, and a host of other factors. In practice, many dynamic factors affect stability, including the shape and speed of the waves and the inertia created by the mast and keel in a roll.

Designers use various measures to describe a boat's stability. The righting moment or stability curve shows how much additional force is necessary to heel the boat through each degree of a 180-degree roll (see graphs on this page and top of the facing page). The amount of force required to make it heel the first degree is called its *initial stability*. Each additional degree of heel requires more force, so the curve slopes steeply upward for the first 50 or 60 degrees of heel.

The curve levels off where the greatest force is required to roll the boat one more degree. This is called the boat's *angle of maximum stability* — just under 70 degrees for the Malö 45 below. After that, it takes less and less force to make the boat heel another degree. As the boat continues rolling, it reaches a point where it will continue over rather than come back upright, even if no more force is applied. This occurs where the curve crosses the X-axis and is called the *limit of positive stability* (LPS) or the *angle of vanishing stability* (AVS), about 132 degrees for the Malö 45.

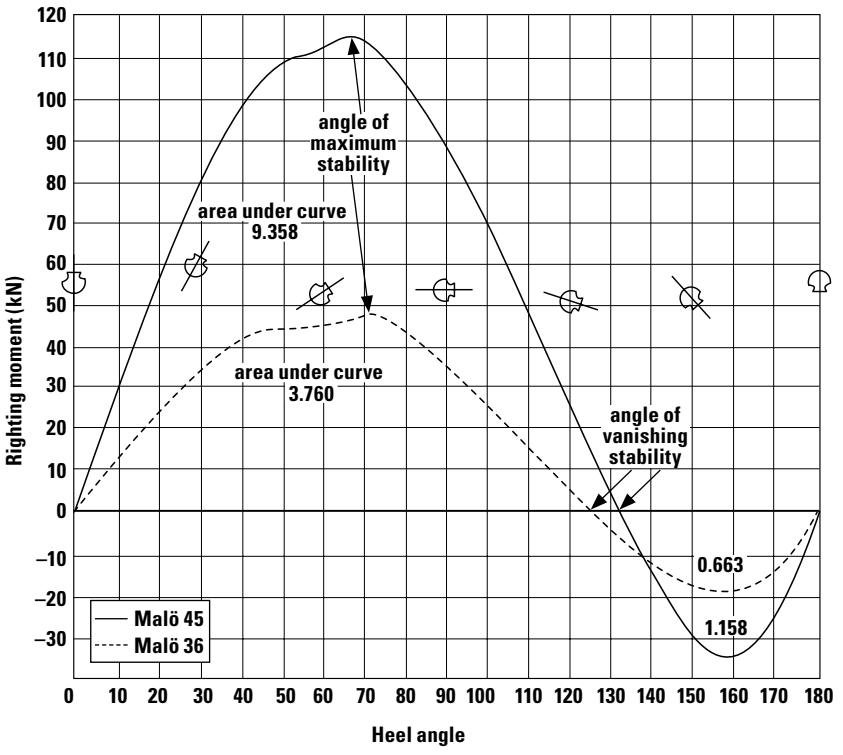
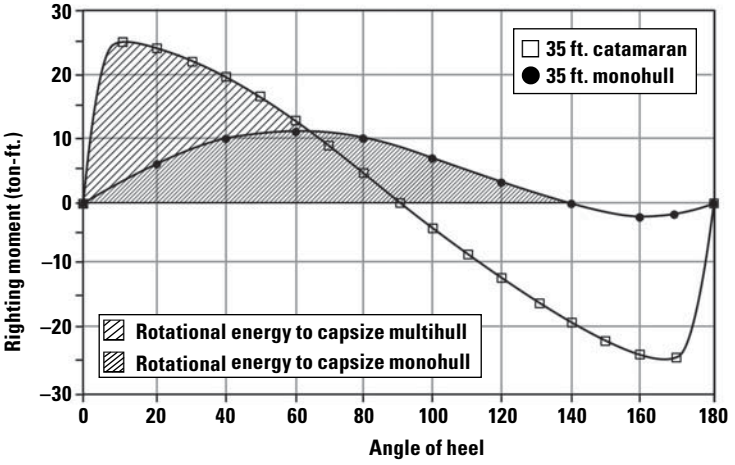


ILLUSTRATION BY FRITZ SEEGERS

Note how much difference size makes in the graph at left and the table at the bottom of the facing page. On average, the absolute force required to heel a boat 1 degree and keep heeling it through each additional degree doubles with each 5-foot increase in length for boats with similar displacement/length ratios (DLRs). The same is true for catamarans, which explains why cruising boats of any type over 50 feet so rarely get capsized or knocked down beyond the horizontal.

Also note how



much more force it takes to capsize a modern catamaran versus a modern monohull of the same overall length in the graph at right. Catamarans are inherently much more stable than monohulls — whether right side up or upside down.

The governing bodies of offshore racing agree that a 40-foot monohull should have an LPS of at least 120 degrees, meaning that it can withstand a knockdown 30 degrees beyond the horizontal without capsizing. This number is considered the minimum because, if inverted, such a boat will right itself in less than 2 minutes, before any crew trapped under the boat can drown. For offshore sailing, smaller boats require a higher limit because their lighter displacement means the absolute magnitude of the forces necessary to capsize them are lower. The minimum recommended LPS for traditional designs under 40 feet can be approximated by 160 degrees minus the waterline length of the boat in feet.

Once a boat is completely upside down, at 180 degrees, it is again stable. What matters at that point is how much force is required to bring it back upright. A catamaran is at least as stable upside down as right side up; while it takes more to capsize it initially, once capsized it's going to stay that way. A cruising monohull is designed to be unstable upside down; a small amount of force will get it to return to its proper orientation. In righting itself from 180 degrees, it needs only to reach its LPS before the forces will carry it back around. In a good design, the weight of the keel acts like a pendulum when the boat's inverted. If a wave rolls the boat just a little bit, the keel helps carry the boat through the LPS and back upright.

The *stability ratio* measures how easily the boat will come back upright once it has reached an inverted position. It is calculated by dividing the area of positive stability (the area under the curve and above the X-axis) by the area of negative stability (the area over the curve and below the X-axis). The higher the number, the faster the boat will return upright once rolled to 180 degrees. On well-designed monohulls, the area under the curve is much larger than the area over the curve. Monohull stability ratios range from just over 1 to as high as 10 and vary a great deal even among boats of similar DLRs. In the graph on the opposite page, the ratio for the Malö 36 comes out to 5.7 (3.76 ÷ 0.663); for the Malö 45, it's over 8 (9.358 ÷ 1.158). An offshore boat should have a ratio over 2.

Stability curves contain a wealth of information and would be exceptionally useful in evaluating offshore boats if they were readily available and if the way the measurements and calculations were performed could be standardized. Since no one actually rolls their boats through 180 degrees to measure the forces required (except participants in some single-handed offshore races), the curve comes from a few objective measurements and a lot of theoretical calculations. Very few manufacturers put together stability curves for their boats, and when they do the calculation methodologies vary widely, making them almost impossible to compare. There have been moves to create a uniform standard for generating stability curves, and in Europe the International Standards Organization (ISO) has been working on a sophisticated stability index they've dubbed STIX. The process is highly political. It will be many years before the industry comes to agreement and comparable curves become available for all new production boats. Even then, reliable, standardized data will continue to be difficult to obtain for used boats.

Given this lack of data, how do you go about determining whether a boat you're interested in has sufficient stability to be trusted offshore?

The easiest way is to find out how sister ships have actually performed. The manufacturer, owners' groups, Internet cruising websites, and boat show seminars all offer opportunities to meet and "chat" with people who have cruised aboard the make and model of boat you are considering. A dozen or so sister ships that have successfully circumnavigated or completed long voyages does not certify that model as Southern Ocean-capable, but it almost certainly indicates the vessel has sufficient stability for offshore sailing. If you're considering a multihull, this will be about the best information you can get in conjunction with any stability curves the manufacturer has created, but if you're considering a monohull there are other ways to assess stability.

The second easiest way to determine monohull stability is to calculate the boat's *capsize screening value* (CSV). This ratio was created following the disastrous 1979 Fastnet Race, when a Force 10 gale went through a fleet of 303 boats, sinking 5, rolling 18, and killing 15 sailors. In the race's aftermath, the United States Yacht Racing Union (now the U.S. Sailing Association — USSA) and the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers developed the capsize screening value to quantify the "risk of being unduly easily capsized and the risk of sticking in the inverted position for an extended period of time." The CSV is calculated by dividing the cube root of the boat's displacement volume (in cubic feet) into its maximum beam: CSV = MB ÷ $(D \div 64)^{0.33}$. The lower the value, the less likely it is that the boat will be prone to capsize,

Comparison of stability measures[1]

Boat	DLR[2]	Initial stability	Stability ratio
Contessa 35	238	881 foot-pounds	4.2
Valiant 40	253	1,382 foot-pounds	3.0
Stevens 47	250	2,831 foot-pounds	2.6

[1]From USSA's *Performance Characteristics Profile of the North American IMS Fleet* (2004 edition); averages for all measured boats of that type.
[2]Displacement/length ratio

with 2 considered a maximum value for an offshore boat.

This formula offers a quick and easy way to get some feel for a boat's stability; however, the ratio does not take into account the distribution of weight in a boat, and it penalizes beam quite heavily. It will give two boats of the same beam and displacement the same rating even if, on one boat, the weight is all in the hull and, in another boat, half the weight is in a bulb at the bottom of a 10-foot keel. As a result, the CSV should not be considered a definitive measure, especially with respect to more modern, beamier hull types like racer/cruisers and cruising sleds.

Beyond this, the only source of consistent, useful stability data for used boats is fleet data from rating agencies such as the U.S. Sailing Association and the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC). If the boat you are considering or a sister ship has ever been measured for racing by one of these organizations, you can purchase a rating certificate that will include basic stability information.

To examine the stability characteristics of a wide variety of boats in order to narrow your choices, purchase USSA's *Sailmakers' Listing of IMS Yachts*. While the calculation methodologies can always be debated, fleet statistics offer comparable data for evaluating many boats on consistent though static measurements. As USSA itself cautions, "No account is made for any of the dynamic factors which accompany capsizes."

Based on all these data, we should be able to identify specific design features that increase stability. But characteristics that increase stability are complex and not always consistent. A deep hull increases the angle of maximum stability but decreases the amount of force the boat can withstand at that angle. A wide beam increases initial stability but makes the boat less likely to right itself after a capsize. Lowering the center of gravity by putting much of the ballast at the bottom of the keel would seem an obvious way to increase stability, yet some researchers claim that this can create a flywheel effect that carries the boat past its limit of positive stability and contributes to capsize.

Potential long-distance cruisers end up with few clear rules to follow when selecting a boat. Only size seems to correlate consistently with stability, as the earlier righting moment curves demonstrated. This is not surprising given that the kinetic energy to capsize a boat will vary as the fourth power of boat length. That means that a 60-foot sailboat can absorb 16 times as much kinetic energy from a wave crest without capsizing as a 30-foot boat. The exact relationship between size and stability has been demonstrated for monohulls using tank testing.

But small boats can meet minimum stability requirements given adequate displacement. The table below shows the stability characteristics of two groups of boats, the first around 35 feet long and the second around 50 feet long. Boats within the shaded areas do not meet some or all the recommended stability criteria for offshore sailing. As this table illustrates, traditional boats (with DLRs over 300) under 35 feet are more likely to meet the criteria than those with lower DLRs. Fifty-foot boats can rely on length to give them adequate stability even with DLRs less than 100. Very few cruising boats with waterlines of 50 feet or more fail to meet the minimal requirements shown in the table. Stability is probably the single biggest reason why the ULDBs now starting to infiltrate the cruising ranks tend to be at least 50 feet long.

Thus, length and displacement seem to be the only two design factors that correlate unequivocally with stability, and it is possible to make up for a lack of one with the other. Heavy, small boats and light, large boats can both be stable enough to weather extreme conditions offshore. Many boats that do not meet the stability criteria shown in the table have successfully completed long voyages. On an average trade wind circumnavigation timed to avoid both tropical cyclones and winter gales, only a handful of people will be unlucky enough to test their boat's

Comparison of stability measures for similar-sized boats

Boat	DLR[1]	Righting moment at 1 degree of heel[1]	IMS stability index[2]	Stability ratio[1]	CSV[3]
Recommended value			> 120˚	> 2	< 2
Around 34 feet:					
Crealock 34	344	707	128.5˚	4.0	1.68
Tartan 34	332	641	120.9˚	2.5	1.77
Bristol 35.5	326	792	126.7˚	3.3	1.76
Catalina 34	252	885	113.9˚	2.1	1.95
Contessa 35	238	881	127.5˚	4.2	1.87
Hunter 34	236	822	117.0˚	2.4	1.97
Baltic 35	211	737	110.3˚	1.8	2.07
J/34	210	588	106.7˚	2.0	2.29
Around 50 feet:					
Hood 50	320	2,197	131.7˚	3.1	1.63
Beneteau 51	210	2,997	126.9˚	3.2	1.86
J/160	130	3,355	124.9˚	2.6	1.78
Santa Cruz 50	82	1,500	124.1˚	2.6	1.84

[1]Displacement/length ratio from USSA's *Performance Characteristics Profile of the North American IMS Fleet* (2004 edition); averages for all measured boats of that type.
[2]IMS (International Measurement System) limit of positive stability, adjusted for the boat's size and beaminess relative to displacement.
[3]Capsize screening value.

limits. This is not true in the high latitudes. Of the 18 boats we know that completed Southern Ocean passages, more than half were knocked down past the horizontal at least once during their voyage. Given the consequences of not staying upright, most cruisers will want to add these basic stability guidelines to their search criteria. For a high-latitude voyage, stability should be close to the top of the list.

Durability

An offshore boat needs to be rugged enough to stand up to the constant punishment of sailing 5,000 to 12,000 miles per year, year after year. Even boats with good track records designed and built for offshore sailing require constant maintenance and attention to keep them up to the task. Taking a production offshore boat, no matter how well built, voyaging is like taking a stock Jeep in the Paris-to-Dakar rally. Taking a coastal boat is like trying to do the rally in an economy car.

A well-built offshore boat should get you through a circumnavigation without needing serious structural work halfway around the globe. What you want to avoid are major failures that require you to remove half the interior or to sit on the hard for six months or more — bulkheads pulling away from the hull, compression around the mast step, a failed hull-to-deck joint, extensive delamination, large-scale osmotic blistering, and so on. These are the kinds of things that can easily ruin a voyage or end it altogether when the money runs out.

The best way to avoid these problems is to invest in a good marine surveyor who can evaluate the boat's suitability for the voyage you plan to take. Even if you are buying a new boat, hire a surveyor to inspect it before it leaves the factory. We have seen brand-new boats in which a mast was off-center by almost 4 inches, an improperly wired electrical system caused a fire within a few months of purchase, and missing structural stringers around a keel caused leaking through the keel bolts on the first offshore passage.

If you're buying a wooden or metal boat, hire a surveyor who specializes in these materials. For any boat, check references and ask around to be sure you're getting someone competent. Your friendly neighborhood boatyard manager will probably have opinions on local surveyors. Ask surveyors about their past experience, areas of expertise, and what boat brands they are most familiar with. Also ask them for a sample of a past survey (with the owner's information blacked out) so you can evaluate their professionalism and thoroughness. A good survey costs from $12 to $15 per foot in the United States. Most of us can only afford to survey the boat we really believe we're going to buy, which means we hope to have eliminated any boats with major problems before a surveyor ever sees them. Information from others having experience with the model of boat under consideration is the best way to do this.

As with stability, a half-dozen boats of a specific model that have completed long offshore voyages can be taken as necessary — but not sufficient — proof of the boat's durability. Here's where it really pays to get on the Internet and track down other owners. Just "eavesdropping" on an owner's group will offer a wealth of information on how many boats have actually done extensive offshore voyaging and the problems they encountered. It will also put you way ahead on figuring out what you'll need to do after you buy the boat by giving you firsthand knowledge of how other people have refitted the same model for offshore, what kind of work other owners have needed to do after two or three years of voyaging, and typical structural problems among older boats and how to fix them.

Yachting magazines, including *Cruising World* and *Yachting Monthly*, offer services to put you in touch with owners willing to talk about their experiences. (***Note:*** *See the* Good Old Boat *association pages online also.* ***–Eds.***) Contact the manufacturer as well — if a sister ship has completed a circumnavigation, the manufacturer will probably be using that fact in its advertising. See if the company will give you contact information for people who have done major voyages on the boat model you're considering. When you find anyone who has cruised the boat for several years, ask the owners the following questions:

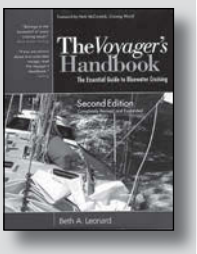
- How old was the boat when they bought it? What did they do to refit it before they left?
- Did they do a refit while cruising? What did they do?
- If they were to refit the boat for another long voyage now, what would they do?
- Did they have any problems with osmotic blistering? Delamination? Galvanic corrosion? Rust? Electrolysis? Leaking through the toerail or hull-to-deck joint? Compression under the mast? Keel attachment? Rig failure?

Finally, before you start looking at individual boats, consider the most common upgrades that need to be made to older boats. Bear in mind that no boat is ever trouble-free; every boat has minor issues you will need to address during the refit. The goal is to find any major structural problems that would undermine durability. But also, you want to know about any specific weaknesses you'll have to deal with on that boat, to weigh those against the weaknesses of other boats you're considering, and, if you buy that boat, to learn ways to reinforce and upgrade these areas before you head offshore.

Next issue, in the third part of this series, Beth will discuss design considerations including deck layout, accommodations, and equipment.

Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger circumnavigated from 1992 to 1995. They spent three years ashore rebuilding their cruising kitty and building a boat capable of sailing in higher latitudes. In May 1998 they left aboard Hawk. *Their itinerary consists of a list of places they'd like to visit.*

For further reading . . .



The Voyager's Handbook: The Essential Guide to Bluewater Cruising, second edition, by Beth Leonard is one of the best resources available for those contemplating bluewater passages. This excerpt is a small part of a very thorough reference tool. If you want more, it is available at <http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html> or by calling 701-952-9433.

A bluewater-capable

Design considerations

by Beth Leonard

This excerpt from Beth Leonard's new book, The Voyager's Handbook, *second edition, is the last of a three-part series with a focus on selecting the right sailboat for extensive passage-making. The first parts focused on the available designs, choosing the right-sized boat for your purposes, and stability and durability issues.*

Once you narrow the field to specific boats, you will want to do your own inspection of the boat to see how it matches up to your expectations. There are critical differences between a successful offshore voyager and a coastal cruiser. These details make for a safe, workable, comfortable cruising home; most apply to any monohull or multihull from less than 30 feet to more than 60 feet long.

The survey that follows will not help you assess the construction quality of a boat or allow you to identify potential defects. That needs to be left to a qualified surveyor performing a professional structural and mechanical survey after you've decided to make an offer. But it will help you evaluate how the boat will meet the demands of offshore voyaging and liveaboard cruising.

Whenever you look at a boat, ask for the owner's manual, all maintenance records, and the most recent survey available. The existence of an owner's manual and maintenance records suggests that the owner cares about the boat. The condition of the maintenance records and their content will give you a good feel for how well the boat has been cared for over the course of its life. If nothing else, it should tell you how many hours are on the engine and how well it has been serviced, at least by the current owner.

Although you cannot implicitly trust a survey that a buyer has in hand, its age and the comments in it can give you some useful information. If the survey is more than five years old, you should probably discount it completely except to see if the surveyor's recommendations, if any, were carried out by the owner. Any survey for offshore insurance purposes that is less than two years old will provide useful information.

Given a seaworthy, structurally sound hull capable of accommodating you and your proposed crew, almost everything else can be upgraded, changed, or fixed. But if the boat lacks most of the items in the bluewater survey that follows, the cost to make it offshore capable may prove prohibitive.

Sea-safe deck layout

The boat's decks become your entire world at sea. They must offer a safe, comfortable environment even when chaos reigns. Each area needs to be well designed to meet its function: the cockpit must keep crewmembers secure and comfortable, the sidedecks must allow free movement forward and aft, and the bow platform must facilitate anchoring.

The cockpit on this Cal 39 is properly sized for offshore work yet large enough for entertaining.

Secure cockpit. The cockpit gets used constantly at sea and in port. In port you might like to have a comfortable cockpit that holds a small crowd. But at sea, you must have a small cockpit that drains quickly. With a boat between 35 and 40 feet, a properly sized cockpit seats up to seven people comfortably without using the coamings or coachroof as auxiliary seating.

A good offshore cockpit on a monohull, as shown in the photo below, has a bridge deck or high sill to prevent a boarding wave from going below. The first or second hatchboard should come level with the top of the coamings to prevent downflooding into the interior, and you should be able to enter the cabin without removing those boards.

Cockpit drainage matters on every boat, but it matters most on smaller monohulls with poorly protected cockpits. Larger boats have enough buoyancy to support the weight of water their cockpits can hold, but smaller boats lose responsiveness and buoyancy if their cockpits are filled with water and may end up being rolled or flooded by a subsequent wave. Cockpit drains need to be large enough to empty the cockpit in 2 minutes or less after it has been filled to the level of the coamings by a large wave.

If there's a wheel, there should be at least 18 inches of standing room behind it and a way to brace your feet when the boat is heeled. On a catamaran, the helm should be positioned so the helmsman can see the bows and side of the boat for ease of docking. There should be a seat for the helmsman as well as comfortable watch positions under the dodger. On a monohull, the cockpit seats should be long enough to allow an adult to lie down on them and close enough together to brace your feet against one when sitting on the other. That means the seats should be about 6 feet long and a bit over 2 feet apart.

On most boats, the single biggest openings through the deck are for the cockpit lockers. Locker hatches should

JIM CORENMAN

Jim and Sue Corenman completed a circumnavigation on their Carl Schumacher-designed, custom Concordia 50, *Heart of Gold*.

be watertight, reasonably sized, well secured, and fully protected by the coamings. Ideally, the lockers should not communicate directly with spaces below and should drain overboard. Otherwise, a lost locker hatch could lead to a sinking in heavy weather.

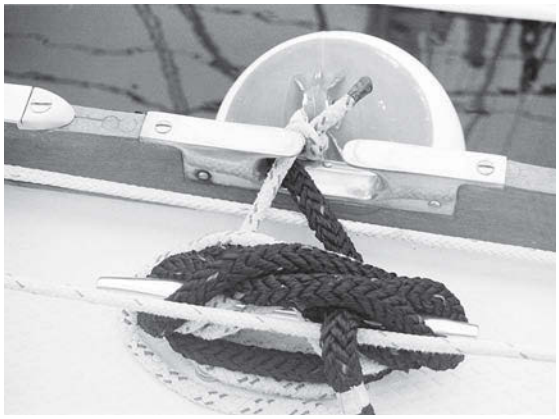
On a daytime watch in the tropics, your primary concern will be shade. Many voyagers' second offshore boats include a well-ventilated hard dodger or pilothouse. Short of a permanent structure, the cockpit must include some provision for rigging a canvas shade that can be securely stowed in storm conditions.

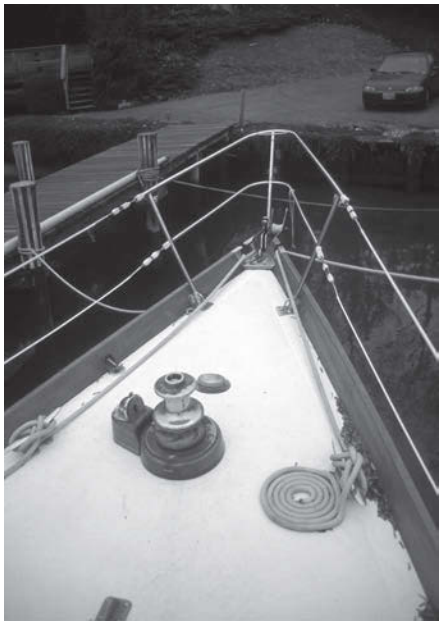
Safe decks. A safe deck is one that keeps crew from going overboard in any ordinary circumstances at sea. The single most important element in helping crew stay on deck is not lifelines, stanchions, handholds, or footholds — since none of these will help a crewmember who loses his or her footing — but non-skid. A good non-skid pattern molded into the deck of the boat is ideal.

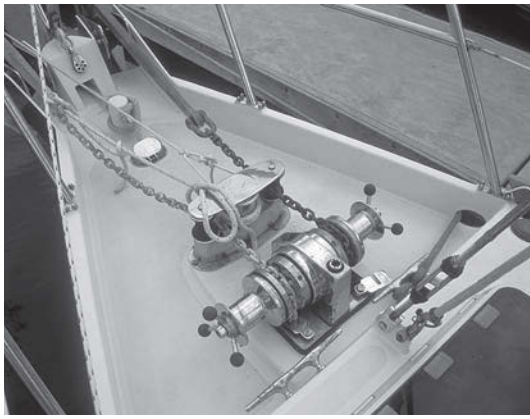
After good non-skid, deck safety depends upon a design that will keep crew aboard at sea, as shown in the photos below. Both of these sidedecks include all of the following:

- **Wide, unobstructed deck from bow to stern.** A good offshore side deck measures at least 18 inches wide and is unobstructed from bow to stern. Boats with high coachroofs and steep cabin sides will need even wider decks to allow a person to pass along them when the boat is heeled. To test the sidedecks, try walking the length of the lee sidedeck with the boat heeled 20 to 30 degrees.
- **Strong handholds always within reach.** A person should be able to reach a handhold strong enough to take his or her entire weight from any position on the deck. Acceptable handholds include dedicated handgrips along the coachroof, stays, stainless-steel bars near the mast, or stainless-steel cages over Dorade vents (which also keep sheets from fouling the cowl). Lifelines should never be used as handholds because of the chance of their breaking. Walk around the boat and consider the common problem areas: stepping onto the sidedeck over the coaming, between the coachroof and the staysail stay, and at the mast.
- **High toerail or bulwark that does not trap water.** When a monohull is heeled, footholds become as necessary as handholds. That means a toerail or bulwark at least 4 inches high and strong enough to support several hundred pounds of weight. To keep the toerail from trapping

***Silk's* sidedeck, at right. *Hawk's* sidedeck, far right.**







***Silk's* spring cleat, at left, can hold two oversized lines in proper figure eights and has a solid chock that leads lines fair from any angle. Anchoring platform on a Hood 50, above, a 50-foot fiberglass boat used for coastal sailing and racing. Anchoring platform on a Waterline 48, at right, a 48-foot steel boat that has completed two Pacific circles.**

water and increasing the likelihood of leaks aboard, an open toerail with holes every few inches (as on *Hawk*) works best. If the toerail or bulwark is solid, as on *Silk*, the sidedeck should have several scuppers to drain water off the deck.

- **High lifelines with strong stanchions.** Lifelines provide the last defense against going overboard, not the first. When the full weight of a person hits wires and stanchions, they all too often fail. However, they can serve to help you regain your balance if you still have one good handhold or foothold to support most of your weight. To be of any use, lifelines should be at least 28 inches high, well above knee level. Otherwise, they're more likely to assist a fall overboard than to prevent it. Stanchions should be strong enough that they won't bend if hit by the full weight of a person.

All too often, designers seem to treat mid-deck springline cleats as an afterthought. On many boats, they prove too small to be of any use with no way to make a line lead fair to them without chafing on the toerail. Or they get left off entirely. Given that, when in use, spring cleats hold two lines while other cleats hold one, they should be just as big as, if not bigger than, the bow and stern cleats — a minimum of 8 inches long. Twelve inches is not excessive on a 45-foot boat (all *Hawk's* cleats are 16 inches). Chocks or hawseholes in the bulwarks need to be oriented to allow lines to reach spring cleats from almost any angle, as shown in the photo above at left.

Well-designed anchoring platform. One of the easiest ways to distinguish a real cruising boat from its coastal counterpart is to look at the anchoring arrangements, as shown in the photos above center and right. Coastal and racing boats spend most of their time tied up in marinas, and their crews rarely, if ever, actually set an anchor. Cruising boats spend most of their time at anchor, and their crews deploy and retrieve heavy anchors and hundreds of feet of chain on a daily basis. A properly constructed, well-thought-out anchoring platform makes handling that equipment straightforward.

To be fully functional an anchoring platform must be set up to allow two large anchors to be deployed or retrieved and should include all of the following:

- **Two large, properly designed anchor mounts.** On monohulls, the anchor mounts should be far enough forward of the stem of the boat so that anchors cannot swing into the topsides. A boat with a plumb bow will require a bowsprit. Bow rollers should be at least 3 inches wide, turn easily under pressure, fit snugly in the anchor mount without binding, and be strong enough not to compress or deform under large loads. The cheeks on either side of the roller should be well rounded and flared outward to prevent chafe when the rode is at an angle to the boat. Welded pipe makes excellent, chafe-free cheek plates. To keep the rode from jumping out of the mount, the cheeks need to be at least 2 inches higher than the top of the bow roller, and there must be provision to secure the rode or anchor in the mount.
- **Two or more big, stout cleats with proper fairleads.** Cleats should be large enough to hold at least two docklines cleated in proper figure eights. A line or rode passing over the bow rollers should lead fair to the bow cleats. A chock through the toerail or a hawsehole through the bulwark, as shown above, should be designed to create a chafe-free lead to each cleat for docklines. Cleats should be strong enough to hold up to two-thirds the displacement of the boat, as they may be called upon to do just that if the boat ever lies to a parachute in a storm.
- **Large windlass with both rope and chain gypsies.** Boats more than 35 feet long should be equipped with a windlass, which should have rope and chain gypsies so it can be used to retrieve a mixed rode as well as to take someone up the mast. Powered windlasses must be equipped with a manual override system that generates sufficient power to retrieve the boat's normal ground tackle.
- **Solid bow pulpit.** The bow pulpit is used as a platform for trying to read coral waters and as a ladder to reach the jib. It should be strong enough to take the weight of a large adult without flexing.

In comparison, on the coastal boat, as shown in the photo above center, the stemhead fitting contains a single anchor mount for a 45-pound anchor with a small bow roller and no cheek plates. The cleats are small and not adequately secured to the deck, and the toerail lacks chocks for docklines. The decades-old windlass does not have a

manual override and lacks the power to lift a big anchor and all-chain rode.

On many modern production boats, the windlass is installed in a recessed deck locker and the chain falls into a small, self-draining chain locker below. This creates far more problems than it solves. Such lockers are too small to hold adequate chain for an offshore boat. They are situated high in the front of the boat, the worst possible place to store heavy chain. But worse, when a bow wave rises up around the bow, the waterline rises as well, submerging the drain on many of these boats and causing water to flow into the locker to the level of the waterline when underway. This additional weight in the bow — along with the weight of the chain itself — will make the boat pitch much more than it should, slowing progress to windward.

In addition, a recessed windlass placement makes it virtually impossible to use for the second anchor, for taking someone up the mast, or for winching the boat into a dock using a bowline. The location of the cleats almost always means that the snubber runs across the locker, blocking the doors, and the small drain holes in the locker often get clogged with seaweed or mud, leaving the windlass submerged. Try to avoid buying a boat with this arrangement or look for ways to reconfigure the bow platform to overcome some of these deficiencies.

Seaworthy interior

All interiors that are safe and comfortable offshore share certain attributes. These include a well-laid-out seagoing galley, enough seaworthy bunks, and adequate handholds and footholds. We also prefer a light, bright interior to keep things from getting gloomy when sitting out a gale.

Seagoing galley. The photos at the bottom of this page show three galleys on boats ranging from 34 to 52 feet long. All three possess the essential attributes to make them usable and safe at sea. Unless you are planning to remodel the galley entirely, make sure you buy a boat with a layout that meets these basic parameters. Galley design is much less critical on a multihull, so most of what follows will not apply.

- **U -, G- or aisleway galley layout.** Almost every task in the galley requires two hands, which means the combination of body bracing and footholds must be enough to hold the cook in position even when the boat is heeled to 30 degrees or rolling hard from side to side. A U- or G-shaped galley layout gives the cook plenty of options for wedging in securely while doing normal galley tasks. Such a galley can be fitted even on very small boats, though there will only be one position for the cook to work in. On larger boats, a galley that lies along either side of the passage leading to the aft cabin creates much more workspace, allowing more than one person to work in the galley at a time.
- **Gimbaled propane stove that can be locked in place.** A proper liveaboard stove should have three or four burners, should have an oven large enough to roast a holiday turkey, and should run on propane. A proper seagoing stove on a monohull should be gimbaled and able to swing freely to a 30-degree angle in either direction. It should also be fitted with a stout lock to secure it in rolly conditions in port or at sea. A crash bar should be mounted across the front of the stove to provide a strong point for the cook to lean against when working over the stovetop and to help prevent anyone from being thrown into an open flame.
- **Deep double sinks as close to the centerline as possible.** For offshore work on a monohull, the sinks need to be a minimum of 8 inches deep so you can keep enough water in them to wash dishes when heeled over. They should be located as close to the centerline as possible to ensure that they will drain and not backfill at any angle of heel. The sinks will provide one of your few secure places to put dishes, bowls, and ingredients when cooking at sea. Two are much better than one, though on a boat under 35 feet it may be difficult to find the room without sacrificing all counter space.
- **Adequate footholds and bracing.** When working in the galley, there's no way to adhere to the old adage, "One hand for the boat, one hand for yourself." Picture yourself getting something out of the hot oven while it swings in a rolly sea. You'll be crouched in front of the stove, making a safety belt useless, with both hands poised to catch whatever delicacy you've managed to create. To remain in position, you'll need solid footholds or something to brace your back against. The cabin sole needs to have a good non-skid surface — olive oil spilled on a varnished

Cal 39 galley, at left. Tartan 34 galley, center. Custom 52-foot catamaran galley, at right.

> **"Boat manufacturers tout how many people their boats can sleep, but they're only talking about sleeping when the boat is at rest."**

sole can turn a galley into a skating rink.

- **Accessible lockers with high fiddles.** From the safety-belted position in front of the stove, the cook should be able to reach the back of every galley locker and the far corners of the icebox. Lockers located behind the gimbaled stove should not jeopardize important parts of the cook's anatomy, especially when the burners are lit. Lockers need high fiddles to prevent everything from falling out when opened. Sliding doors are preferable to hinged ones, as they will allow you to retrieve frequently used items without spilling the lot. Positive latches on all doors will keep them secure during gales.

Seaworthy bunks. No boat can become a permanent home without good, comfortable sleeping areas for use in port and on passage. To sleep well, you need to be able to stretch out completely. All berths should be at least 6 feet long and, ideally, 4 inches longer than the tallest person. Single berths for use in port should be a minimum of 24 inches wide; sea berths should be narrower to prevent the sleeper from being thrown around in rolly conditions — a minimum of 20 inches to a maximum of 24 inches. To comfortably sleep two, double berths need to be at least 4½ to 5 feet wide at the shoulders and 2½ feet wide at the foot.

Boat manufacturers tout how many people their boats can sleep, but they're only talking about sleeping when the boat is at rest. All too often, they overlook the need for berths that are usable when a boat is running downwind in a trade-wind sea or close-reaching in heavy weather. Many large, modern boats with designer interiors — curved settees and separate seating nooks in the saloon and a walkaround double bed in the forward or aft cabin — have no workable sea berths at all. Sea berths are vital equipment: they determine how well you sleep at sea, which influences your level of alertness and ultimately your safety.

While "hot bunking" — sharing a berth with another crewmember on a different watch — works fine on racing boats for short periods of time, it leaves crewmembers without any personal space and is not a viable solution for longer passages. Further, when becalmed, hove to waiting to enter a remote port, or in the most severe weather, all crewmembers are likely to be below and in sea berths at least part of the time. Therefore, each regular crewmember needs a good sea berth, and if you ever intend to take on extra crew, you will need enough sea berths to accommodate them as well.

The forepeak berth cannot be considered a usable sea berth on most monohulls. Trying to sleep forward of the mast on any boat under 60 feet or so in trade-wind conditions will mean spending half your time in the air — not an arrangement you'll want to live with for the long term.

To minimize motion at sea, good sea berths are parallel with the boat's centerline and as close to amidships as possible. On many boats, the settee seating doubles as sea berths with the addition of a leecloth. Curved settee seats do not work as sea berths; the settees need to be straight and long enough to accommodate a tall crewmember. Although the settee location may be the most comfortable, this puts the off-watch right in the middle of any on-watch activity and limits the usefulness of the saloon for other crewmembers.

On monohulls, pilot berths — berths located above and outboard of settee seating, against the hull sides — provide a private space out of the main traffic flow. They allow the main saloon to be used for its primary purpose, rather than becoming a tent camp during a passage, and they make excellent sea berths on any boat that's large enough not to require that space for stowage.

Larger boats will generally have an aft cabin with a single or double berth, and many smaller boats will have a small quarter berth. While the motion aft is a bit more pronounced than in the middle of the boat, the aft cabin or quarter berth solution gives the off-watch real privacy and takes up less prime stowage area than pilot berths.

Adequate handholds and footholds. Non-skid, handholds, and footholds are just as critical to safety below as they are on deck. The cabin sole needs to be made from a good non-skid material like teak and holly or cork, or it needs to be finished with a non-skid coating. You should be able to reach a good handhold from any point in the interior even when the boat is heeled over. A good handgrip provides a full-fisted grip, not a finger hold. Short crewmembers may have difficulty reaching handgrips mounted overhead when the boat is heeled over. Vertical posts at counter or table corners make much better all-weather grips. Handholds and footholds are inexpensive and easy to install.

Many catamarans lack handholds completely, and this is a mistake. Although you won't use them while coastal cruising or in calm offshore conditions, when things start to get boisterous they become just as essential as on a monohull.

Many traditional, all-wood interiors are so dark they can be claustrophobic. A white roof liner of molded plastic, or white paint on the cabin trunk, can change the entire feel of a boat. Beyond that, every area needs good lights for reading and working.

Design and construction

A boat can get the layout above and below right and still be wrong for offshore voyaging. To make sure a boat will prove to be a comfortable and practical long-distance voyager, you need to look also at design and construction details hidden inside lockers and behind ceilings. These include adequate stowage, accessible spaces, a high-qual-

Ideal ventilation by area for the tropics

Location	Hatches	Portlights	Dorades
Main living area	2 to 4 large, adjustable	2 to 4 on each side of boat	4
Galley	1	1	1
Heads	At least 2 of any type plus louvered door		
Sleeping cabins	At least 2 of any type plus louvered door		

ity engine installation, weatherproof ventilation, and watertight design and construction.

Adequate stowage. Most offshore boats carry an average of 2,000 pounds of personal belongings, food, fuel, water, and other things per crewmember. For that reason, an offshore boat needs much more of its interior volume devoted to stowage than a coastal cruiser of similar size.

To be most useful, that stowage should be divided into small compartments. Locker doors and drawers must all lock securely so they don't spill their contents at sea. Drawers should be notched on the bottom of the front edge so they must be lifted up before they will open. They should have a small block on the bottom of the back edge that will stop the drawer from pulling out entirely. When comparing boats, take a good look at the amount, location, and accessibility of stowage.

Accessible spaces. To fix anything, you first have to be able to get to it. Down below, that means complete access to the engine, every part of the bilge, every tank, every deck fitting, and every piece of equipment.

Good engine access means you can easily reach the oil dipstick; fuel and oil filters; air filter; water, fuel, and oil pumps; injectors; starter motor; and gear box. Good plumbing access means you can reach every tank, through-hull, and seacock. Good electrical access means you can find and inspect every bus bar, terminal, and switch. At some point you will also need to reach the steering system, autopilot ram, and windlass motor. Good access to mechanical equipment is near the top of the list for experienced voyagers buying second boats.

Bilge access is almost as critical. Can you access the entire bilge from bow to stern? Pull up floorboards and open the chain locker and the area under the forepeak bunk and uncover as much of the bilge as possible. You should be able to access every area of the bilge along the centerline of the boat — if not with your hand, then with a short length of wire rod. You should be able to reach all seacocks within a minute.

In addition to being accessible, a well-constructed bilge channels water to a deep sump and keeps it there until it is pumped overboard. Many flatter-bottom modern designs have small sumps, and water tends to overflow into the rest of the bilge and onto the cabin sole.

Limber holes should be drilled in all structural members that might otherwise trap water, and you need to be able to inspect those limber holes and clear them of trapped silt and sand. If the head has its own shower pan and a separate drain overboard, you still need to be able to access the bilge underneath. If not, you will have to find another way to clear the limber holes under the head pan liner.

The bilge needs to drain from bow to stern without trapping water anywhere along the way. Take several buckets or a hose and pour water down the hawsepipe. Start from the chain locker and work back to the sump, tracing the path the water takes and noting where it pools and sits. Mold and mildew will grow in any area that traps water, eventually resulting in rot and unpleasant odors.

Bilge drainage has to work when the boat is at an angle, not just when it is flat. When you take a boat sailing, turn the bilge pump off and fill the sump. While beating on either tack, go below and figure out where the water has gone. It won't be in the sump! On most boats, water will pool amidships under settee berths or aft under the galley stove or nav station. Don't worry if a small amount of water is involved and returns to the sump quickly when you come back upright. But if more than a few gallons finds its way out of the sump and doesn't return when the boat comes upright, you will have to locate and drain the area that is retaining the water as part of your refit.

Dirty tanks are an occupational hazard of offshore voyaging. Often, you cannot be certain of the quality of water and fuel. Some minerals cause scaling and, on older boats, the tanks will probably need to be cleaned as part of a refit. Removable hatches allow tank access for inspection and cleaning; these hatches should be accessible without dismantling the interior.

Deck fittings should be easily accessible from below so that they can be rebedded. If fittings are not accessible, you may have to add access panels

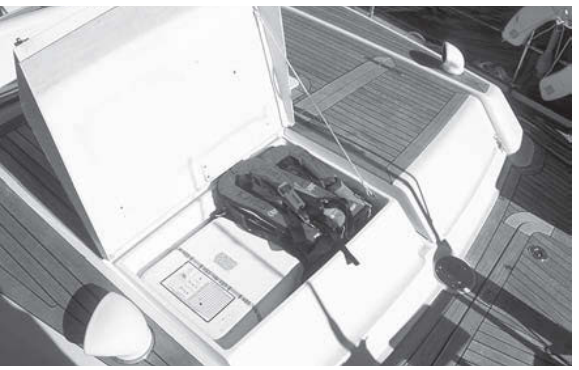
Hawk's **wavebreaks, top. Sea hood with drainage channels protecting the hatch, above.**

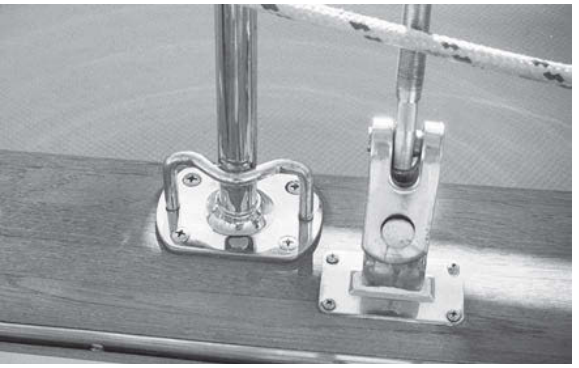
through bulkheads, ceiling liners, or locker trim pieces. Boats with no interior trim or moldings will be simpler to work on, but they may not be as aesthetically appealing. You will need to find a balance between appearance and convenience that works for you.

High-quality engine installation. Proper engine installation and diesel tank construction will save untold heartaches down the line. To keep oil and diesel out of the bilge, the engine should be mounted over a solid fiberglass or metal engine pan. It should be bolted to mounts, which are bolted and glassed to structural frames. In the event of a capsize, there must be no chance of the engine breaking loose.

Contaminated fuel causes most engine problems. The diesel tank needs to have a sump — an indentation in the bottom of the tank where the dirt and water that settle out of the fuel can pool. The outflow from the diesel tank should be located above this level. This sump must be drainable, even at sea.

Weatherproof ventilation. Many production boats lack sufficient ventilation for the heat and humidity of the trop-





Strong, positively locking cockpit locker with drainage channels, top. Stanchion bases mounted on the toerail, above.

ics. Poor ventilation contributes to the growth of mold and mildew and makes for damp, uncomfortable berths at sea. In high latitudes, it leads to condensation. Offshore boats need large opening hatches, ideally one for each major living space aboard (see the table at the bottom of Page 24). High-quality opening ports should be located throughout the boat, but at a minimum in the head and galley. Catamarans with large saloon windows should have louvers or mesh screens fitted to keep the area from becoming a sauna in the tropics.

Ports and hatches cannot be used for ventilation on monohulls in boisterous conditions at sea. On most boats, Dorade vents are the only source of ventilation in heavy weather. Four large Dorades should be considered the minimum on a 35-foot boat. All ventilation, including Dorades, must be watertight in extreme conditions. Crews on boats with all the ventilation options shown in the table will never have difficulty keeping cool whether hove to in a gale at sea or tied up in a windless marina. Most production boats will need to have their ventilation upgraded to be comfortable in the tropics.

Watertight construction. A watertight boat starts with a strong, rigid, well-built hull that isn't prone to flexing and working. Older teak decks can be a major source of leaks, and replacing or removing them will involve a significant investment. On many newer boats, teak decks are vacuum-bagged in place without mechanical fastenings, making them much less prone to leaks. However, teak is heavy, hot in the tropics, expensive, environmentally unfriendly, increasingly difficult to obtain, and works no better as non-skid than various types of paint. Unless your taste runs to classic boats, you'll be better off avoiding teak decks altogether if you have the choice.

Beyond that, the following construction details all contribute to a dry boat:

- Strong, commercial, ocean-rated hatches with structural crosspieces supporting the Lexan or acrylic and either set on plinths above deck level or protected by wavebreaks (see photo at the top of Page 25).
- Ocean-rated opening portlights installed so they drain onto sidedecks instead of pooling water at the bottom of the port.
- A properly constructed companionway, which on monohulls includes a watertight sea hood surrounded by drainage channels (see photo on Page 25).
- A fully weatherproof door or strong, easy-to-use hatchboards that can be fixed in place at sea.
- Strong, positively locking hatches for all deck and cockpit lockers with channels around them to drain sea water, as shown above in the top photo.
- A hull-to-deck joint built with overlapping flanges or completely glassed over with several layers of fiberglass.
- Stanchion bases mounted on a solid toerail or on solid fiberglass pads raised above deck level to keep them out of water pooling on the deck, as shown in the second photo above.
- Solid stainless-steel backing plates installed wherever bolts go through the deck.
- A watertight way to seal the hawsehole at sea.
- Ultra-high-molecular-weight polyethylene (UHMWPE) rudder bearings.
- Dripless stuffing box.
- High-quality bronze (Marelon for metal boats) seacocks.
- Double stainless-steel hose clamps on all drainage, engine, and plumbing hoses.

Finally, make sure that diesel tank and water tank breathers are protected from flooding to prevent siphoning salt water into your tanks. The diesel tank breather on *Silk* was located in the cockpit, below the level of the cockpit seats. On one occasion, a breaking wave filled the cockpit, and salt water siphoned through the breather into the diesel tank. It took us half a day in rolly seas to pump out the diesel tank sump and bleed the engine.

Very few boats will have all of these construction details, and some boats that have successfully completed long voyages haven't had most of them. But the more of these items you can check off for the boat you eventually buy, the drier and safer it will be.

Smell offers the very best proof of a dry boat. Any hint of mildew or dampness in the air when you first open the boat up should make you dig deeper. But if it smells fresh and sweet after being shut up for several days or weeks, you can be almost sure that it will be watertight.

"Unless your taste runs to classic boats, you'll be better off avoiding teak decks…"

Satisfying aesthetics

No matter what this material suggests, acquiring a boat is not a linear process. You bring to it all sorts of preconceptions, experiences, prejudices, and knowledge. It often begins before the idea of going cruising has even been voiced aloud. At some point while walking along a dock in some marina, a boat caught your eye, and for an instant you could picture yourself at her helm approaching a distant

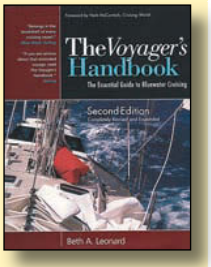
landfall with her sails bellied out by trade-wind breezes. That moment will come back to mind when you make the decision to go cruising and begin actively searching for the right boat. Whatever boat you eventually decide upon should touch you in just that way.

Feeling good about your boat and finding it pleasing to the eye *do* matter. When asked about choosing a boat for offshore cruising, many experienced voyagers put aesthetics at the top of the list. That's because loving your boat will help you overlook her faults, and every boat has faults. If you get a thrill motoring up to your boat in the dinghy and think she's the best-looking yacht in a crowded tropical anchorage, you'll resent it less when the head clogs or the generator breaks down.

Some old salt likened finding the right boat to finding the right spouse: no matter how rational you try to be about it, at some point you may just fall head over heels in love. I hope it will be with a sturdy, seaworthy, well-built boat, and that the rest of your crew will feel the same way.

Beth Leonard and Evans Starzinger circumnavigated from 1992 to 1995. They spent three years ashore rebuilding their cruising kitty and building a boat capable of sailing in higher latitudes. In May 1998 they left aboard Hawk. *Their itinerary consists simply of a list of places they'd like to visit.*

For further reading . . .



The Voyager's Handbook: The Essential Guide to Bluewater Cruising, second edition, by Beth Leonard, is one of the best resources available for those contemplating bluewater passages. This excerpt is a small part of a thorough reference tool. If you want more, the book is available at <http://www.goodoldboat.com/bookshelf.html> or by calling 701-952-9433.

From Iraq with love

Desert soldier buys Internet boat 7,000 miles away

by Gary Lindsay

Gary gazes over the compound where he was stationed in western Iraq, probably thinking about home and the pleasures of a good sail. Since writing this story, he returned to Alabama, where his wife, Sheryl, and *Serenade*, his new Bayfield 32, shown on facing page, were waiting. Their home waters are the Gulf Coast of Alabama and Northwest Florida.

In the military you rarely do anything without first conducting a risk assessment that consists of a matrix listing possible hazards and mitigating factors. Despite being stationed in western Iraq with the U.S. military, I embarked on one of my boldest adventures without one.

Spellbound by visions of sparkling waves and billowing sails, I threw caution to the wind and purchased a used 32-foot cruising sailboat sight unseen through the Internet. The purchase was further complicated by the fact that the boat was nearly 500 miles away from my home on the Alabama Gulf Coast, and I, even farther — some 7,000 miles — separated by lots of blue water and nine time zones.

I have been obsessed with sailing since I was 13 and first daysailed in a 16-foot Flying Fish. Girls rated only slightly higher on my list of obsessions. Heaven was the two together.

I had sold my previous boat, an older 25-foot Hunter sloop, a few months before deploying to western Iraq in July 2006. During deployment I sought refuge from the daily grind by perusing the online boat listing services whenever I was able … dreaming about the next boat I was going to buy.

My wife, Sheryl, and I share the dream of many weekend sailors around the world: to purchase a sturdy sailing vessel capable of bluewater passages and to experience cruising to the horizon of our desires. Before I left the States, we had talked about waiting several years before we purchased our dream boat. Our children are in college and we both lead busy lives. But the dream buoyed me, and I thought, "It doesn't hurt to look."

So I set out on the Internet, during my downtime in Iraq, to find the best boat to fulfill our desires. As additional references I had packed along books by Lin and Larry Pardey and other sailors. The mail brought a bimonthly fix of *Good Old Boat* magazines to feed my thirst for sailing knowledge and escape.

Nothing's perfect

What I found through an exhaustive analysis of boat listings, esteemed opinions of the world's greatest sailors, and my own preferences is this: there is no perfect boat. Some are better suited than others to cruising. Some are better built. But most boats can be turned into bluewater cruisers of a sort with enough effort and money. At this stage of our lives, Sheryl and I could not afford something in the 36- to 42-foot range offered by one of the respected builders of proven cruisers. But with money I was saving, we could afford something smaller yet capable of open-water passages.

"To heck with delayed gratification," I thought. Life is short. It could end tomorrow, as I had too often been grimly reminded during wartime service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Part of my desire was purely selfish: I wanted a boat waiting for me when I got home. Other soldiers buy a Harley as their reward when they return from deployment. I would buy a chariot of the seas.

Lin and Larry Pardey helped me decide. Their mantra is that a smaller boat is easier to handle, less expensive to buy and maintain, and can equal or surpass the seaworthiness of larger vessels. At the urging of these and other advocates of the "go smaller, go now" sailing set, I was ready to find our *Seraffyn*.

Sheryl and I had debated and pretty much arrived at shared conclusions about the type of boat we wanted. We favored more traditional looks and designs found on such hallmarks as the Cabo Ricos, Island Packets, and Cape Dorys. I preferred a shallow-draft, full-keel boat because of the thin waters of our home cruising grounds and future plans to visit the Bahamas and other shallow-water Caribbean haunts.

The cutter rig appealed to me partly because of its dashing looks and partly because it offered more sail combinations. We both thought having more than one head was a waste of space and potential maintenance trouble. On deck, we wanted bulwarks, wide sidedecks, a wheel, and seats you could sleep on in the cockpit. That's a lot to require of just one boat. And as a further challenge, the price had to be $50,000 or less.

> "I thought, 'It doesn't hurt to look.' So I set out on the Internet, during my downtime in Iraq, to find the best boat to fulfill our desires."

Came to conclusions

After hours of browsing the Internet brokerage sites (Yachtworld.com is the best) and reading reviews and owners' websites, I came to some conclusions. I initially liked the Pearson 365 because it has great accommodations and seemed well-built, but I was troubled by the V-drive from the engine to the propeller shaft and reported problems with tanks in the keel sumps. I loved the Shannon 28 with its classic charm and sterling reputation, but my wife thought it too small. I briefly toyed with the idea of a Gulf 32, a full-keel, pilothouse cutter still in production, but didn't like the cockpit and the sliding hatch on the almost flush foredeck.

Finally, the lines of a Bayfield 32 caught my eye like the fetching smile of woman. The clipper bow and bold bowsprit spoke of oceans to conquer. Her cutter rig was versatile and a sight to behold under sail. A large foredeck, wide sidedecks, and an ample, well-drained, but not overly large, cockpit fit my criteria. The boat has a lot of brightwork, but despite the prospect of a lot of sanding and varnishing in our future, I liked the look. It even has a beautiful teak taffrail at the stern, which doubles as the base of the mainsheet traveler; a nice touch, I thought.

Bayfield, a Canadian manufacturer, had a reputation for sturdy, well-built boats. Ted Gozzard designed the 32 and other Bayfield boats before he went on to found Gozzard Yachts. The Bayfield company is no longer in business, having built its last boats in 1989 (see profile of Ted Gozzard, November 1999).

The Bayfield 32 appeared capable of offshore cruising and adequate as a liveaboard platform for a couple. And the price range was in our ballpark. As my interest in Bayfield 32s grew, I spent considerable time studying the offerings of this model on the Internet. I found two or three in Florida, not too far from home, that had been tricked out for extended cruising with every conceivable piece of equipment needed. But I wanted to outfit my own boat.

Bare minimum

A modestly priced offering in Charleston caught my eye. It was a 1987 model with the bare minimum of equipment and electronics: a VHF, depth sounder, wind meter, and handheld GPS. But it appeared to be well cared for and had an ivory hull with beautiful lines. It also had a 27-hp Yanmar, while most Bayfield 32s came equipped with a 15- or 20-hp motor. A photo of the boat under full sail imprinted itself upon my mind's dream screen. She was named *Pleiades*, a constellation of stars I could see in Iraq's night sky.

Through Peter Dodds, the broker at Charleston Yacht Sales, I found out more about the vessel. She had been stored on shore for nine months following the owners' purchase of a new Island Packet. The seller was eager, if not downright anxious. I entertained thoughts of sailing her back to the Orange Beach/Pensacola area when I returned to the U.S. in late summer. As an alternative, I could have the boat hauled home by truck. Peter provided me with what turned out to be very accurate estimates of transport and preparation costs.

Ultimately, I made an offer that would allow me to spend the considerable sums it would take to transport the boat and still not exceed the boat's retail value. The offer was accepted, so I discarded the idea of trying to deliver her to our home waters myself. I wasn't yet familiar with the boat; I didn't have time to prepare; and the prospect of a 1,200-mile voyage during hurricane season was fairly daunting.

I researched yacht surveyors in the Charleston area and sought estimates. The quotes varied by as much as $6 a boat foot. I looked at websites and studied the answers I received when I explained my situation. I had tapped my brother, Phil, who lives in Georgia to conduct the sea trial for me. I settled on David Hill of Carolina Yacht Services as my surveyor. His fees were reasonable, he expressed himself well during our email communications, and he was willing to work with my situation. He also had the proper certifications necessary for insurance and loan acceptance.

Minor problems

David found the boat to be structurally sound with only a few minor problems that needed to be corrected. I finalized the deal, and we closed through the mail. I began making plans to get the boat home.

The broker's estimate of $3.50 a mile for transport was pretty darned close. One company submitted a bid almost $500 less than the others. That made me wary. I checked out all the companies

through the Better Business Bureau site and found the lowest bidder had at least two recent complaints that were never resolved. So I chose a firm out of Pensacola and emailed them about our plans. They happened to have a hauler delivering a boat to Connecticut in just a few days that would be empty coming back. He could swing by and pick ours up two days after we completed the purchase. The cost would be nearly $200 less since I would catch the truck on the "backhaul," and we quickly agreed on the deal.

On a Thursday, I hastily emailed Tim Recks, manager of Charleston Boatworks, where the *Pleaides* was being stored. The pickup was scheduled for the following Friday. Despite the short notice and an upcoming race week, Tim said he would have the boat ready for transport when the truck arrived.

I had also solicited bids from marinas in my home area for estimated costs to re-step the mast, re-rig the boat, and paint the bottom. I learned that de-rigging the boat, preparing it for travel, and then re-rigging her would cost as much or more than the transport itself. I could have mitigated those costs somewhat if I had been available to assist in this process, which can be labor-intensive.

I narrowed down my list of boatyards by turning to the Better Business Bureau once again. Troendle Marine, located at the Pensacola Shipyard Marine Complex, was listed as a BBB member with a good record. The marine complex is also listed as a Florida Clean Boatyard. Prompt and accurate replies to my email inquiries scored points with me.

Troendle Marine co-owner Barbara Troendle won my heart when she emailed me a little note with the quote. "Will you be here when your new baby arrives?" she asked. After a brief moment of panic, wondering whether my wife had kept something secret from me during our last phone conversation, I realized she was talking about my new old boat.

Took photos

The transport of the *Pleiades* from Charleston to Pensacola was uneventful. Bill Troendle supervised the unloading and Barbara took photos to send to me. I was able to call from Iraq and catch Sheryl as she was climbing aboard the boat for the first time.

"It's beautiful!" she gushed on the cell phone. The layout down below pleased her. "You did well with this one." Sheryl has definite ideas about what she does and does not want belowdecks. An adequate galley and comfortable sleeping space are high on her list. She was satisfied and noted that the boat had been well kept.

Through a detailed work order supplied by Barbara, we agreed upon the work to be performed on the boat. Troendle would re-step the keel-stepped mast, tune the rigging, paint the bottom, and install a new mast boot to stop a persistent leak.

One of the most symbolically important tasks we decided to have them complete while the boat was in the yard was removal of the old name and installation of the new. Sheryl and I had chosen the name for our next boat awhile ago. We even bought wine glasses etched with the new name. These were waiting for a home.

Our new boat was to be known as *Serenade*, literally described as a song of love. To me, sailing is a musical experience.

The boat was ready for launching in a few days. There was just one problem we had not solved: getting the boat from the boatyard to our home marina a few miles away. My wife was not confident enough to handle the helm herself. Our salvation came in the form of fellow sailor Gene Reddick, a stranger who volunteered to pilot the boat to its new home when he heard of our predicament.

As I write this in Iraq, the boat is ready and waiting, Sheryl teases that I probably look forward more to seeing the boat than her when I get home. It's not true, but I do long for them both.

A warm wind blows off the desert and ruffles the fronds of the few coconut palms scattered around the dusty base I inhabit here. A helicopter clatters noisily overhead. I close my eyes and envision standing at the wheel a few months hence in the cockpit of *Serenade* with my wife and lover, breathing in the salty air and thrilling to the pure, sweet music of a righteous sail. A redemption sail for my soul.

Gary Lindsay and his wife, Sheryl, have sailed together with (and without) children for most of their 23-year marriage. Gary is Master Sergeant with the Army National Guard and returned home last August. He and Sheryl hope to sail north on the ICW and down to the Bahamas and Caribbean in a few years.

Gary mans the wheel as he and Sheryl head out for an afternoon sail on a balmy February afternoon. The beads around his neck were acquired earlier in the day during a Mardi Gras parade.

Think big, buy small

Review your expectations

by Dave Martin

Chris and Holly Martin, ages 4 and 3, in 1995 on board the family's 25-foot Cal, *Direction*.

What is the ideal boat size? Should I buy the biggest boat I can afford or the smallest boat I can possibly squeeze my family into? For most of us, the two ideas overlap. We all want the most boat for our money. The question remains: how "big" is big?

Expectations concerning comfort and boat speed have risen dramatically over the past three decades. It used to be that boats in the 27- to 32-foot range were acceptable dream machines. Today, if you believe the ads in sailing magazines, 40 feet is the benchmark that establishes minimal speed and comfort. Why the shift? Is it really necessary to spend upward of a half million dollars to "live the dream"?

There have always been megayachts and people to buy them. Nothing new there. But even mainstream cruising has become a high-budget affair as manufacturers have continued hunting for deeper pockets. Boatbuilders can make healthier sales by producing large, high-end boats that ultimately target a market having more disposable income. The hefty sticker prices generate enough cash to support sophisticated advertising and marketing strategies. Subsequently, most of the glossy ads and boat reviews tout the glossy boats.

One improvement

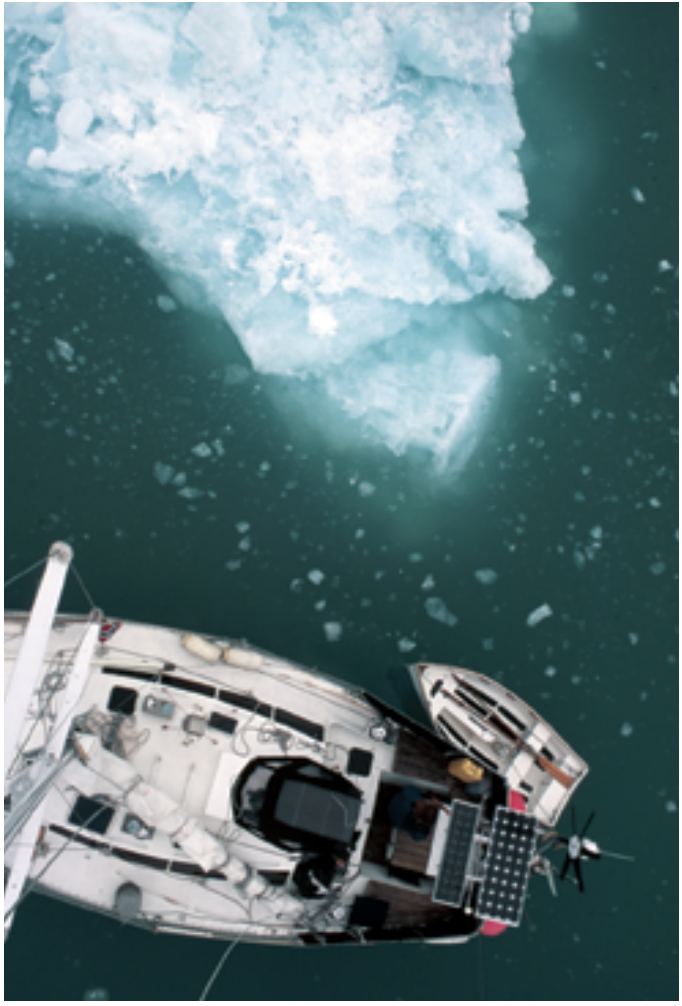
Technology has made it possible for a small crew to run a large boat safely and competently. Elaborate roller-furling systems and automated winches make it feasible to handle enormous sail plans — even for those who are less physically active. GPS and integrated chart plotters have made navigation safer and more easily understood. Prior to GPS, sailing out of sight of land, or even making long coastal passages, was not for the faint-hearted. Weather-receiving technology and forecasting have also improved dramatically. Onboard computers and email capabilities provide a reliable shoreside link for those who want to go cruising but are fearful of being out of contact with children or aging parents.

All these technological advances taken together create an electronic and mechanical fortress. The guesswork, tension, and perceived risk are greatly reduced. Assuming that nothing breaks down, a captain can now effortlessly handle a large expensive boat. Power to the people.

> **"Technology has made it possible for a small crew to run a large boat safely and competently."**

But for some cruisers, this kind of luxury dampens the magic of cruising, not to mention the possibility that owning a boat at all is out of reach. The "romance of cruising under sail" began as a way to simplify life, embrace hardship, and step out of predictable shoreside roles. Modern boats are becoming floating extensions of the living room where creature comforts are clung to like chintz life preservers.

I read the 2008 sailboat review in a leading sailing magazine that exempli-



fied this shift in boat length, comfort, and price. In the review, a 40-foot sailboat was touted as "mid-sized" while a $300,000 35-footer was reported to be a "small" cruiser . . . Huh?

Although these delineations are marketing verbiage, the message is disturbing. Newcomers to the sport with salaries like mine are going to conclude that boating is out of reach. They should not lose heart! Low-budget cruising still exists. It takes a hearty soul to turn a deaf ear to the tantalizing ad ploys and decide to buy a cheap, used, 30-foot boat to go cruising. But remember, the purpose of an ad campaign is to shift a buyer's perception from what's needed to what's wanted. It works.

Buying frenzy

For example, there seems to be a frenzy these days over expensive, HD flat-screen TV with HDVD capabilities and surround sound. "Bigger is better. A sharper image, better sound." I don't own a TV, but if I ever wanted to start watching TV again, I could probably pick up an inexpensive used digital set. When a consumer allots big dollars for a "perfect" picture, that's a result of priorities.

Boats are nothing but priorities. When Jaja and I sailed our 25-footer, *Direction*, around the world, we saw the same sunsets and walked on the same beaches as the folks on the big boats. We had a galley, a head, a double bed, and the ability to cross oceans, raise children, and see the world. When we set off to go cruising in our 20s, we didn't want to pay for anything bigger than 25 feet. We wanted to sail rather than work until we were able to afford a "proper sized boat" (which has been getting more expensive each year). We set off with what we had and witnessed firsthand what was possible on a small boat and slim budget.

In 1996 we bought our 33-foot, steel-hulled sloop, *Driver*. This purchase followed a lengthy search for a 40-footer. We couldn't afford even a used 40-foot boat, but we were hoping to find a deal. How we planned to maintain, store, and repair a boat we couldn't afford to buy was a hushed topic. We were convinced we needed a 40-foot boat. Had to have it.

At one point, we even considered borrowing money to purchase our 40-footer. We figured we'd stay ashore and work a few extra years to pay off the loan. It would be worth it. With visions of living in a "comfortable" space while sailing "comfortably" over lumpy seas, we blocked out the possibility of a smaller boat. We had boat buyers' fever, a condition that did not match our financial wherewithal. We were on the threshold of going into debt and getting sucked into the very system we wanted to escape. We had lost sight of the entire project. Luckily, we didn't run into any smooth-talking brokers.

Our Icelandic sailing plans were beginning to spiral out of reach. Then one day we drove through a boatyard looking at "For Sale" signs and found the boat that would change our lives and the lives of our kids. She was 21 years old, a borderline derelict, and only 33 feet long. But *Driver* represented *Going* — the most crucial step in getting underway.

Back to reality

We boarded *Driver* skeptically. There was something about her rugged demeanor that appealed to us. Within five minutes we had one of those *Moments*. Everything came into sharp focus. The boat was overpriced but negotiable (we haggled and got a good price). Suddenly, the reality of a departure date was in our grasp. There would be plenty of room on the boat once we made some necessary modifi-

***Driver*, summer 2000, on Magdalene Fjord in Spitsbergen, Norway, near 80 degrees north latitude, above. The Martin family on the beach in Spitsbergen, Norway, summer 2000, at right. The Magdalene glacier is in the distance. One of the methods for anchoring in ice-strewn waters is to anchor in the shallowest water possible so that icebergs will run aground before they hit the boat.**

> **“We were on the threshold of going into debt and getting sucked into the very system we wanted to escape.”**

cations. Any boat, regardless of price or age, needs modifications.

Sitting in the cockpit, we realized that 33 feet of boat for our growing family of five was big enough for the voyage we were contemplating. *Driver* was cruise-ready two years later. By then we had sold, given away, or thrown out anything that didn't fit on the boat. When we finally set off, we had no house, car, cell phone, or insurance policy of any kind. Priorities.

Looking back, it's hard to believe how carried away we became when shopping for a boat. We had just finished a circumnavigation aboard *Direction*, so anything larger than 25 feet should have looked good. Where had our large-boat fixation come from? Was it overcompensation? Or did we feel we deserved it? Perhaps it was due to cruising in the company of so many bigger boats during our circumnavigation. A 40-foot boat feels like a house compared to a 25-footer. It is all comparative, of course. If you own a 40-footer you envy the 50-foot crowd. (We actually did have friends who envied our 25-footer but they were sailing a 19-foot converted lifeboat.)

Comfort zone

Is a 25-foot boat as comfortable as a 33-footer? No. Is a 33-foot boat as comfortable as a 50-footer? No way. Am I less likely to get seasick on a bigger boat? Not necessarily. I found the snappy motion of our 25-footer much more agreeable than the rolling gait of the bigger boats I've sailed over the years.

The real stumbling block when going aboard a boat that is 30 feet or smaller is the initial shock regarding lack of interior volume. The truth is that when I get used to a boat, and especially if I'm living on it full time, the walls disappear.

The boat becomes an extension of my psyche, which is otherwise limited to the space between my ears. Buying *Driver* and then sailing her to the Arctic and back on a five-year voyage proved to us, once again, that a strong boat is imperative, but length, gadgets, and interior volume are arbitrary.

During the summer of 2007, we sailed *Driver* to southern Newfoundland with an 11-year-old and two teenagers. Their kid-sized bunks (originally fitted when they were 2, 5, and 7) were a tight squeeze, but the five of us never felt that the boat was too small. What we enjoyed was being away from home for seven weeks . . . away from jobs and school and off on an adventure. We all had a place to sit, a place to sleep, and a place for our stuff.

For us, the real reason for any voyage — or a daysail — is to be outdoors, see new sights, feel the wind, and escape routine. Any boat, regardless of size and price, will satisfy these prerequisites. It does not matter to us how large or how small the cockpit is, how cramped the head, or how much counter space is available for preparing food. The world outside is limitless.

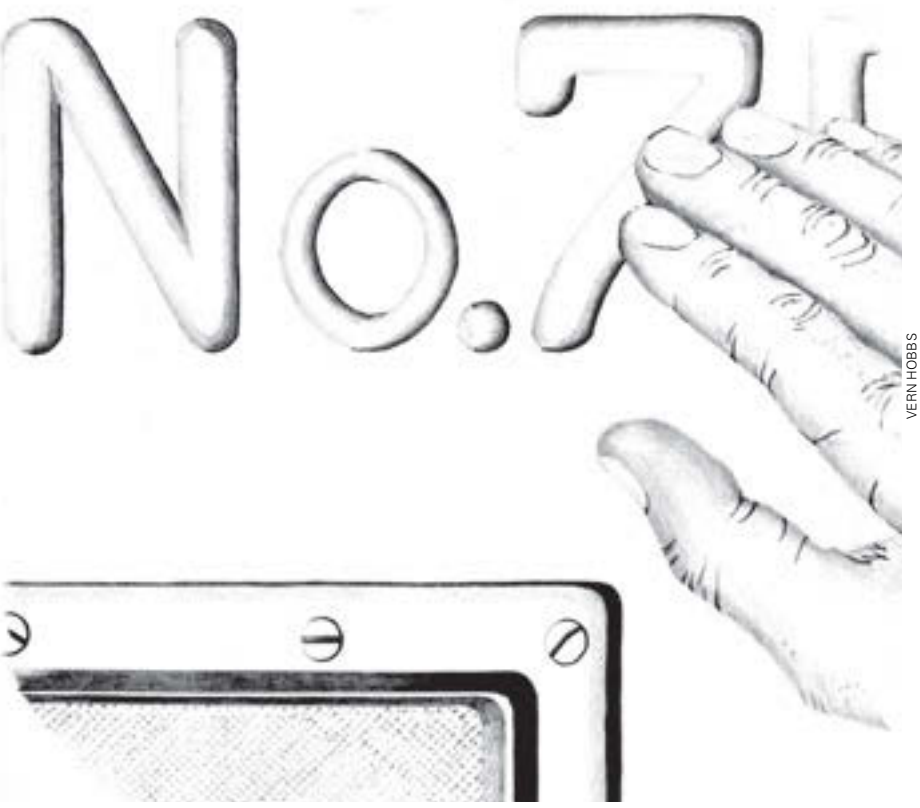
Dave Martin is a contributing editor with Good Old Boat. *Between 1988 and 1995, Dave and his family circumnavigated aboard their Cal 25,* Direction. *Between 1998 and 2002, they voyaged to the Arctic aboard their 33-footer,* Driver. *They are now living in Maine.*

Chris and Holly in Maine in 2004, above. The Martins' mast was a vertical playground. The family on the beach at Port Mouton, Nova Scotia, August 2007, at left. *Driver* is in the background. In Maine, just 150 miles to the south of this beach, the harbors were clogged with boats, but Nova Scotia was a different world. While Port Mouton may have white sand beaches, the water temperature is 45 degrees . . .

Vessel documentation

All you need to know about U.S. Coast Guard registration

by Vern Hobbs



VERN HOBBS

Vern's vessel documentation number is chiseled onto an overhead beam and indicates that his boat is a piece of the United States, no matter how far from home *St. Pauli Girl* roams.

"What do these numbers mean?" our guest asked while stowing her gear in the forward berth.

"That's the vessel documentation number." I answered. Her perplexed expression told me further elaboration was in order. I considered how best to summarize the meaning of the eight-character encryption chiseled into the overhead beam, and settled on the one that was first offered to me many years ago: "Those letters and numbers mean that this boat, wherever she might sail, is a little piece of the United States."

This simple explanation satisfied her curiosity, and impressed upon her the gravity of this time-honored system of ships' registry. "Wow!" she said in a voice barely above a whisper, as she ran her fingers over the deeply carved inscription.

Cataloging vessels by name, homeport, and nationality is a practice known commonly as vessel documentation, and is centuries old. Our own national program was established by the 11th Act of the First United States Congress, making it one of the oldest federal laws on the books.

Simply put, vessel documentation is a form of federal boat and ship registration. It provides conclusive evidence of ownership; an unbroken, chronological history of previous ownership; and establishes the nationality of the vessel's owners. Vessel documentation is practiced by most, if not all, seafaring nations and is therefore recognized and respected by judicial bodies of other countries.

The United States Vessel Documentation Program is administered by the Coast Guard through the National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC), in Falling Waters, West Virginia. All matters pertaining to the issuance, renewal, and verification of vessel documentation, as well as related questions, should be directed to the center. The center offers an informative and easy-to-use website and can be contacted by writing or calling a toll-free number (see page 76).

Four categories

There are four categories of vessel documentation: Fishery, Coastwise Trade, Registry, and Recreational. Fishery documentation applies to boats engaged in commercial fishing within U.S. territorial waters and certain other areas designated as Exclusive Economic Zones. Coastwise Trade refers to the carriage of passengers and goods between U.S. ports, while Registry documentation is intended for vessels conducting international trade. Recreational documentation covers all pleasure craft, and has recently been expanded to include vessels used for bareboat chartering. Documentation is mandatory for vessels falling into the first three categories, but optional for recreational boats.

Why document a vessel if it isn't required? The value and importance of a system of federal registry is obvious for commercial vessels, but owners of recreational boats will also realize three significant advantages to participating in the documentation program.

The first advantage is simplified and expedited entry into foreign ports. Customs inspectors, immigration officers, and port captains may find state registration and proof of ownership certificates confusing and even suspicious. Conversely, national documenta-

tion is standardized and readily recognized the world over.

The second advantage is legal recognition in foreign and international waters. Property rights to the vessel itself, as well as to property carried aboard, are more clearly defined when the vessel is documented. Disputes arising from accidents are more likely to reach a fair settlement, and accusations of unlawful activity are more easily contested in cases involving documented boats.

Third, documentation represents a great advantage when buying, selling, or financing a boat.

Lenders prefer, and in some cases require, documentation because it provides an unbroken chain of ownership throughout the vessel's life — clear title, as it is often called. This history of ownership allows the issuance of a Preferred Mortgage. This is a document that holds status as a maritime lien, allowing lenders to legally pursue a financially delinquent mortgagee, even in foreign countries.

Simple and affordable

How do I document my vessel?

Establishing recreational documentation is fairly simple and affordable. The first step is to determine that the boat and owners are eligible to participate in the program. The second step is to complete the application and to submit it, along with the correct supporting documents and fees, to the NVDC.

A vessel must measure 5 net tons or more to be eligible for documentation. This value may be established by referencing the builders' specifications or by working the volumetric formula available from the NVDC by mail or through its website. Typically, sailboats 26 feet or more in length meet this requirement.

Next, it must be proven that the boat is legally the property of its owners. A builders' certification form (CG Form 1261) establishes this in the case of a new boat. A certificate of title issued by a state or foreign government is required if the boat was previously owned but not previously documented. If the boat was previously documented, a Coast Guard bill of sale (CG Form 1340) serves as proof of ownership.

Owners must verify that they are U.S. citizens by providing Social Security numbers or other accepted proof of citizenship as established by the NVDC. Partnerships and corporations are considered to be "citizens" if they are registered within the U.S. or if the chief executive and board chair are citizens. Multiple owners must specify a managing owner. This person becomes the point of contact with the NVDC for all matters regarding the vessel.

Application for documentation is made on CG Form 1258. The form, and instructions for completing it, may be obtained by written request from the NVDC or by downloading it from their website. Specific instructions for completing the application vary depending on whether it is intended for first-time documentation, transfer of documentation from a previous owner, or return to documentation from an expired status. It is also important to note that the NVDC will not accept application forms and documents printed on facsimile paper.

"Cataloging vessels by name, homeport, and nationality is a practice known commonly as vessel documentation, and is centuries old."

Various fees

What does it cost?

Fees vary depending upon the type of application. The fee for first-time documentation is $133, while transfers and re-documentation cost $84. Handling fees for documents accompanying the application, such as bills of sale, are currently set at an additional $8 per side of paper, so it would cost $16 for a document printed on both sides. Mortgages are handled for $4 per side. Additional fees, known as endorsements, are required for applications in the fisheries, coastwise, and registry categories, but not for recreational vessels. A schedule of current fees may be viewed on the NVDC website.

Should government red tape be something you choose to avoid, numerous private agencies are ready to handle the documentation process for you. A brief Internet search produced the names of nine such providers, including BoatU.S. All promised quick and easy service, several with online processing options. Fees ranged from $375 to $530 per application.

She's documented — now what?

Once established, vessel documentation must be renewed annually. Presently,

> **“The boat’s name and hailing port become part of its internationally recognized identity and must therefore be appropriately displayed.”**

there is no charge for renewal unless it involves a change of name or hailing port. Renewal forms are automatically mailed to the owner or managing owner as the expiration date nears.

Documented vessels must be marked in accordance with Coast-Guard regulations. The boat’s name and hailing port become part of its internationally recognized identity and must therefore be appropriately displayed. The Coast Guard sets a 33-character limit on names and prohibits the use of words and phrases it deems to be obscene, profane, racially, or ethnically offensive. Also, words and phrases commonly associated with distress situations, such as “Mayday,” are prohibited. Both the vessel’s name and hailing port must be clearly visible on the exterior of the hull, in letters of Latin, Arabic, or Roman style, at least 4 inches in height, and in a color that contrasts with that of the hull color. The hailing port must be spelled out in all capital letters and include the state or territory in which it is located. Abbreviations of the state or territory are acceptable.

Permanently fixed

A documentation number will also be issued. This number must be clearly displayed in characters not less than 3 inches high and permanently affixed to a structural part of the vessel in a manner that would render its alteration or removal apparent. Usually, this identifying mark is engraved into a structural member such as a permanent bulkhead, deck support beam, or the hull itself.

No more state registration fees?
Well, not so fast …

Documentation does not necessarily relieve boatowners of the requirements of state registration. Most states require documented vessels that are home-ported, or “residing” within their borders for specified periods of time, to also carry state registration. The state may mandate the display of a decal, but may not require permanently affixed numbers or letters. Similarly, foreign governments often require vessels transiting or residing in their waters to obtain cruising permits, or other temporary registration instruments, and to display associated decals.

To document, or not to document?
Should your future sailing plans not include international waters or foreign ports of call, and you love your boat so much you could never even imagine selling her, documentation may represent a redundant and unnecessary expense. On the other hand, if those future sailing plans might involve landfalls beyond our borders or perhaps an eager buyer accompanied by a mortgage broker, current vessel documentation papers should be considered desirable equipment.

Vern Hobbs and his wife, Sally, sail St. Pauli Girl, *their 1974 35-foot Bristol cutter, along Florida’s Atlantic coast and the Intracoastal Waterway. Their day jobs pay the rent, but Vern’s work as a local artist specializing in maritime subjects finances the boat projects.*

Resources

NVDC
United States Coast Guard
National Vessel Documentation Center
792 T.J. Jackson Drive
Falling Waters, WV 25419
800-799-8362
<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/nvdc/default.asp>

Going, Going . . .

Holding clipboards, auctioneers Cheryl Tucker, Watergate Yachting Center's general manager, and Tony Buchanan, harbormaster, encourage bidding on a 1983 S2 7.3, above. Chuck Vastine enjoys a few moments aboard his new boat, below. His winning bid for the S2 was $1,500, the top price paid for a sailboat at the auction.

Marina auctions offer good old bargains aplenty . . . but caveat sailor!

by John Ira Petty

Auctions of abandoned boats are potentially an excellent source for sailors looking for smaller and inexpensive good old sailboats, the kind that are perfect candidates for restoration. Often, these forlorn boats bear proud names, and they've all seen better times. Some of them will see good times again and make their new owners happy people.

Occasionally, boatowners, for whatever reason, stop paying slip fees, and their boats become liabilities for the marinas where they are berthed. They occupy slips, produce no revenue for the marinas, and often become eyesores. To dispose of them, many marinas, after going through the necessary legal steps, hold periodic auctions. Their purpose is more to clear the slips than to make money.

At a recent auction at Watergate Yachting Center in Texas, 15 boats were offered, all but one of them sailboats. The marina, the largest in the state, has more than 1,100 wet slips and is situated on Clear Lake, off Galveston Bay between Houston and Galveston.

Ten of the boats in that auction were sold. Prices paid for the sailboats ranged from $1,500 for a 24-foot, 1983 S2 7.3 to $50 each for a 1983 cat-rigged

Pearson 23, a 1985 Starwind 22, and a 1965 Columbia 24. The remaining five boats attracted no bids and later were broken up for parts and scrap. One man, who'd come to the marina to go sailing and stopped by the auction out of curiosity, wound up buying five boats.

Lots of red tape

"It's a lengthy process to get to the auctions," says Wendy Larimer, legislative coordinator for the Association of Marina Industries. "There's a lot of red tape proving they've done everything possible to find the legal owner and get payment from him." Once that has been done, the marina has to go through more legal steps before it can auction off such boats.

In the case of the Watergate auction, some of the boats belonged to the marina. "People have actually given us the title to a couple of them," Pauline Mahoney of Watergate Yachting Center told me, "because they didn't want to deal with them anymore."

"Unfortunately," Wendy says, "auctions generally do not bring in enough money to compensate the marina for what it has lost in slip fees. Often, the boats are in such bad shape that salvaging them isn't even an option, so the marina owner has to pay to have the boat removed and destroyed."

When a boat is sold at auction, the marina collects its fees from the proceeds. Lien holders are next in line and any money left goes to the former owner, if he or she has been located.

Buyer's risk

Such auctions are very much buyer-beware events. The Watergate auction is perhaps typical. Boats are sold "as is, where is, no warranty, no guarantee." All sales are final.

Bidders register at the marina office shortly before the start of the auction. Prospective buyers can look at the boats in their slips in the days before the auction, but they cannot go aboard because most boats remain private property until the auction occurs. Would-be bidders can look inside boats of interest immediately before the auction.

> "It's anybody's guess how many marinas around the country hold boat auctions and how frequently."

The auctioneer sets a minimum bid on each boat. There is some flexibility — that amount can be, and frequently is, reduced for the less-attractive boats. The marina itself reserves the right to bid on any of the boats.

Each winning bidder has to put down a $500 deposit (or the full price of less-expensive boats) in cash, certified check, or money order at the time of the sale. The balance is due the afternoon of auction day. Since such auctions generally are held on a Saturday, getting the cash can take some planning or cause some last-minute scrambling. A high bidder who can't come up with the balance forfeits the deposit.

It's anybody's guess how many marinas around the country hold boat auctions and how frequently. How do you find out about them? Generally, they're advertised in the legal section of at least one of the area's newspapers. Some marinas maintain mailing lists to notify individuals of upcoming auctions. Sometimes, area newspapers — those

Brothers George, left, and Ed Holmes congratulate one another on their purchase of this 1982 Sovereign 24. Their winning bid was $150.

The day of the auction was a dark one for this 1972 Cal 27. It attracted no bids and was later broken up.

that have sailing or boating writers — publish advance stories on auctions and report on them afterward.

Perhaps the easiest way to learn about them is to call one of the marinas in your area and ask. If that marina doesn't do auctions itself or doesn't have one scheduled in the near future, the staff might know of another marina that does have an auction scheduled.

A boat for $150

At the Watergate auction, brothers George and Ed Holmes, who live near one another in the Clear Lake area, acquired a 1982 Sovereign 24 for $150. It was the second boat they'd bought at auction with a view to restoring it.

"As if three boats weren't enough, he bought a 1978 San Juan 24 for $200 for his 25-year-old daughter."

The year before, they'd found a boat trailer sporting a "For Sale" sign. It also had an older Hunter 25 on it. They tried to buy just the trailer, to no avail. But after some negotiation, the owner offered them the boat and the trailer at a price they were prepared to pay for just the trailer.

Ed, an office-machine service technician, says he didn't believe the Sovereign they bought this time had been out of the water since before its last registration renewal in 2000. "It had an inch-thick beard below the waterline and its own little ecosystem," he says.

"With advances in design, materials, and engineering since these boats were built, you can sometimes make them better than they've ever been," Ed notes. "It's a great pleasure to see them return to new or better-than-new condition."

Two bargain boats

Another buyer that day was Chuck Vastine, a shipping foreman who works in Galveston. He bought the S2 for $1,500 and a Pearson for $50. He sold the Pearson a week or so after the auction. The S2 was his restoration project. It came with an outboard and was in remarkably good condition for an auction boat, though it was in need of cosmetic work. Chuck says he'll sail it during and after the project and then perhaps offer it for sale.

Johnny Nimmons, a technical research associate at a Shell Oil Company facility in west Houston, bought the only powerboat in the auction, a 28-foot 1980 Wellcraft, as well as four sailboats. He bought the Wellcraft, at $2,000, for his wife, Elizabeth, to ensure domestic tranquility. For himself, he bought a 1982 US 30 for $1,000. It has a rough interior that he'll restore. He also purchased, for $300, a 1968 Westerly 30 which, after spending some time and money on it, he later sold.

As if three boats weren't enough, he also bought a 1978 San Juan 24 for $200 for his 25-year-old daughter who was just getting into sailing and, for $100, a 1968 Coronado 25 that he planned to use to entertain members and families of the Houston law firm where his wife works.

Johnny had sailed as a young man but had been away from it for many years. His family lives at a residential airport, and his avocation has been flying antique aircraft.

"The marina, after all these years, is a nice change of pace," he says. The US 30 "is like having a little condo on the water. The whole family has been excited. We had a great time. It was a fantastic week for us."

But, as much as he'd been looking forward to being back on the water that day, Johnny never did get to go sailing on that auction Saturday.

John Ira Petty worked for almost 30 years at metropolitan newspapers and for 15 of them wrote a weekly sailing column. He holds a 100-ton master's license with sail endorsement.

Johnny and Elizabeth Nimmons are happy about their just-purchased 1982 US 30, a $1,000 investment. They'd come to the marina that Saturday to go sailing. Unsuspecting, and out of curiosity, they stopped to watch the auction and wound up buying five boats.

Seeking the

Boat number one, the Cabo Rico 38, at left, required so much work Susan and Hale never did get to take her cruising. They did sail their second boat, the Pacific Seacraft 32, to the Bahamas, but she proved to be too small, opposite page.

Sitting in the oyster bar in Key West, four wannabes and an old salt debated the merits of sailboats for cruising: "You *must* have a heavy displacement hull" . . . "I won't go back out until I have *two* hulls under me" . . . "You *need* a performance boat so you can outrun the weather."

Hale and I planned to become full-time sailors and we were working through our list of preparations. This step was our liveaboard bluewater-sailing course. Our fellow students, Mark and Brad, already owned boats; our instructor, Jeff, had been cruising for years.

Since the only boats we had ever owned were sea kayaks, Hale and I regarded the other three as oracles and we soaked up all they said. We also read all the books and magazine articles, studied the reviews, and looked at our savings. We determined the size and quality of the boat we thought would suit us best and the budget needed to acquire and equip it. Those factors dictated the year and condition of the sailboat we would buy. We were both in our early 30s and anxious to get "out there." The sensible option — buying a starter boat for coastal cruising — did not appeal to us and, in our antsy state of mind, chartering different boats to get a feel for options felt like a waste of money.

Armed with a book on evaluating used boats, and with more enthusiasm than turned out to be good for us, we set out to buy our dream boat. While oblivious to the fact that we knew nothing about boats, fiberglass, or leaks beyond what we'd gleaned from typed words, we were confident in our ability to find a good deal. Cabo Rico 38s, with their pretty clipper bows and stunning teak interiors, felt salty and right to us. We looked at only two and chose what we were sure was the better one. Despite our distrust of the broker, our dislike of the seller, and the warnings of "a lot of hard work" from the surveyor, we signed on the dotted line and she was ours. Who were we to be afraid of a labor of love?

Flaws revealed

On the trip home, her batteries leaked noxious fumes and liquid, her leaks appeared with a vengeance, and her engine showed its reluctance to give even one more hour of service. Determined, we set to work on her at the dock and later in a boatyard. A year and a half later, the most endearing part of the experience was my undying adoration for the boatyard Rottweiler. We had found holes drilled through the holding tank, soggy cabin sides and deck, and countless problems too embarrassing to list. We'd learned an amazing amount about ripping up teak decks and soles, cutting up fiberglass, and re-coring with foam.

We'd discovered that the true love of Florida lovebugs is not other lovebugs but uncured epoxy, into which they would joyously dive. We'd ground, sanded, and primed every exterior inch of the hull and topsides. We'd bought more power tools than a carpenter. We'd realized that we were not experts at setting up watertight canopies or really at anything that had to do with restoring a boat. We'd stripped half her bottom to gelcoat in preparation for a new primer coat using a bit of each method suggested by every one of the 100 or so boatyard experts who had stopped by with words of

> **"We felt torn and unable to make a decision, so we continued rebuilding — long weekend by long weekend."**

wisdom. And we'd done all of this on weekends and vacations while traveling the world working our 70-hours-a-week information-technology jobs.

One rainy day, sitting in the boatyard, Hale wrote down everything that remained for us to do for the boat to be ready to sail. He divided that into out-of-the-water jobs and once-launched jobs. The hours and costs involved were daunting and, given our high-pressure careers, did not make sense.

A demoralizing prospect

By this time, even with the southwest-Florida humidity, the no-see-um bites, and the steps backward, I had developed a bond with this boat that was just as strong as the looming work was intimidating. Looking at our options was demoralizing. To continue with the work might break us financially and psychologically. If we sold her at this point, we would incur a huge financial loss because we were determined to be brutally honest with prospective buyers. We would also face

perfect compromise

Their third boat met their elusive ideal

by Susan Merriman

an emotional loss. I have never been a quitter, and that prospect was an even bigger obstacle for me than the finances. Keeping her would sit better with my spirit but would be a commitment to the boat over ourselves. We felt torn and unable to make a decision, so we continued rebuilding — long weekend by long weekend.

Around that time, our neighbors, with whom we had shared dreams of the cruising life, returned after six weeks into what was to have been an indefinite stint in the islands. They immediately put their boat on the market. They had quickly learned that living aboard not only didn't make them happy, it made them *unhappy*.

This was the impetus that forced us to face reality. We were looking at another five years of working every weekend and vacation before we could even launch our boat. This might have been acceptable if we had known we would love the reward. But what if we didn't? As much as it pained my soul to give up, we did just that. But we were giving up on this particular boat so as *not* to give up our cruising dreams. That conclusion allowed us to sell her. Tears streamed down my face as we passed the papers to a couple even younger than we were and wished them well.

Smaller, newer, and ready for sea

We now knew what we needed: a boat built solid enough to take whatever the ocean threw at us but newer and in pristine condition. This meant a much smaller boat, of course, since our budget had hardly grown during the financial bath we took on our first try.

We found her: a beautiful Pacific Seacraft 32 for sale by an immediately trustworthy man who owned her, a flats boat, and a Hatteras sportfisher. Did I mention the employee who did nothing but look after his boats? *Far Tortuga* was truly a creampuff and we were suddenly the type of people we'd always secretly hated: those who came into the boatyard on a Friday and left the next Monday.

After a three-month trial cruise in the Florida Keys and the Bahamas, we were hooked. Cruising was definitely in our blood. We knew we wanted to make this lifestyle ours for as long as possible. About two months into the cruise, however, we admitted to each other that we had overstepped in our reaction to the first boat experience. *Far Tortuga* was perfect for this type of cruise but too small for the two of us and all the stuff we felt necessary for life aboard once we sold our home.

Certainly this was a personal determination. Many couples live happily in much smaller boats, but we acknowledged that we are not the type to minimize on spares, books, or provisions. Again we fell into tormented questioning. Would we ever be satisfied with a boat? Were we being too picky? Was something holding us back from fully embracing the cruising life? We decided it was none of those things. We simply still did not have the right boat.

Another quest

We were back at square one but, finally, with the experience we needed. We knew all about good old boats, a little about sailing full time, and a lot more about ourselves. With *Far Tortuga* on the market and a summer stretching ahead of us, we got down to work. Hadn't I been an excellent manager of data in my career? Couldn't I apply the same decision-making processes here? My Finding the Perfect Boat spreadsheet had 65 columns, 170 rows, and 22 formulas. In truth, this did nothing to relieve the stress of buying a boat, but it did open our eyes to possibilities we had not considered and it prevented us from ignoring facts when our heartstrings tugged.

Somewhere in the middle of hurricane season, we sold *Far Tortuga* to a meticulous doctor who would care for her as we had. Another goodbye tore at my heart as Hale set off with the new owner on the week-long delivery trip. Now, we were free to concentrate on our search.

We put more than 7,000 miles on our car as we criss-crossed the country examining boats. We saw dream boats and boats of wrecked dreams. We met helpful brokers and

dishonest brokers. We encountered owners desperate to sell and owners blind to reality. We had several close calls and quite a few calamities. Eventually we found her on landlocked, man-made Lake Lanier in Georgia. As karma would have it, this was the same lake on which we had taken our first sailing lessons, belonged to our first sailing club, and woven our dream as we floated aimlessly on windless days.

Bigger, older, and experienced

Our Kelly-Peterson 44 was similar in many ways to our first boat: heavy fiberglass construction, built in 1979, susceptible to wet decks, and with an aura of faraway places. But now we knew the difference between *good* old boat and simply *old* boat. She'd been sailed hard and put away wet by her first owner, but her second owner had devoted four years to bringing her back to her original glory. He'd addressed the known issues, re-cored the deck, and updated the systems. A lightning strike had helped by ensuring new wiring and electronics throughout the boat. The sparkling paint, brand-new tanks, and shining brightwork had more in common with our creampuff than our boatyard boat. Finally, we had realized the perfect marriage of quality, care, and cost.

We made an offer within a day of seeing her, slept on her that night, and owned her just a week later.

The Kelly-Peterson 44 was created by racing designer Doug Peterson and broker Jack Kelly and combines the qualities of a performance design with the comforts of a roomy liveaboard. Her 30,000-pound displacement in 38.8 feet of waterline makes her a moderate-displacement sailer, and she has a sail-area-to-displacement ratio of 16.5. A long fin keel and cutaway forefoot reduce wetted surface to gain speed but the husky skeg-hung rudder and completely protected propeller keep us from feeling too exposed on the underside. Our particular boat has a removable inner forestay that we fitted with a small staysail for heavy-weather sailing. We

A third search for the "perfect boat" turned up a Kelly-Peterson 44. In an onboard ceremony, Susan and Hale christened her *Cayuga*, facing page. This boat has taken them to destinations they had long dreamed of, at right.

find we use it just as often for assistance in pointing upwind.

The Kelly-Peterson has a well-balanced rig, sails well on virtually every point of sail, and is capable of 8.3 knots hull speed. Its cockpit is comfortable for life at anchor and also provides secure corners when we're under way — and the aft deck is perfect for fishing. The roomy interior has dual staterooms and plenty of ventilation while the teak and Taiwanese craftsmanship give our boat the ambiance of a classic yacht.

Of course we had work to do. We outfitted her with solar and wind generators to be ready for the alternative energy lifestyle to which we aspired. We built a new dodger/Bimini and added a staysail. We supplemented gear to upgrade her from lake boat to ocean-cruising boat. And we changed her name to reflect our first sailing experience together on Cayuga Lake in upstate New York. The two Native American meanings of *Cayuga* were perfect in their representation of our boating journey. "From the land of swampy waters" and "starting place" fit our horizons both behind and ahead.

Cruising at last

We are now in our third year of sailing the islands aboard *Cayuga* and every day we are grateful for this boat. She carries us through storms that shake our confidence in ourselves but not in her, she is a warm and welcoming home each evening, she earns accolades from those we meet, and we still had the funds after purchasing her to be out here living our dream life. The lessons we learned in our boat-buying process help us every day. We tackle fiberglass jobs with little more thought than that required when putting on a coat of wax. We quickly made alterations to add conveniences that we enjoyed on our modern boat. We know how to find leaks. We know how to make things fit into small spaces. And we certainly know the truth of the overused statement that all boats are compromises.

When a Cabo Rico or Pacific Seacraft floats next to us in a tropical anchorage, my heart fills with mixed emotions. The owners of those boats must wonder why my eyes are unnaturally bright when I dinghy over to say, "Beautiful boat. We used to own one." Our journey to our ideal boat has left me with great appreciation for the unique rightness of each boat to its individual cruising owner.

Susan Merriman has been cruising full time with her partner, Hale Bartholomew, since leaving her career in information technology education. Aboard Cayuga, *their Kelly-Peterson 44, Susan and Hale have traveled the Bahamas, the U.S. Eastern Seaboard from the Florida Keys to Maine, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the eastern and southern Caribbean. Susan is temporarily back on land in the U.S. while she works to refill the cruising kitty.*

Just plain too big?

Cutting your dreamboat down to size

by Eric Holohan

Many of us fall victim to the allure of the big boat at the end of the dock. A tear wells up as we sight along the acres of the teak decking that must be 6 inches thick. As we stare at our bewildered reflection in the 76 coats of exotic varnish on her rail, we're drawn in . . . into the dream. The wow factor of the 2-ton stainless-steel anchor is lost in the tinted glass and satellite communications antennas. It's a wonderful dream: having friends or family aboard for the never-ending trip of a lifetime. Just be careful what you wish for; the cost of some dream ships can be the dream itself.

I found myself in this situation a few years ago while cruising along the Mediterranean coast of Spain. I had read all the right books, made all the right choices of boat and equipment, and followed the prescribed course to a cruising life afloat but, somehow, when in 2001 I made the decision to buy a boat, up sticks, and give the cruising life a try, I had become a victim of the great cruising lie.

As a child, I had pored through boat magazines and sailing books, envisioning the life to be had on various boats of merit. By the time I was 12, I had decided the right boat for me would be a 65-foot steel North Sea trawler, as many were available in the United Kingdom and Ireland due to the decline of the fishery there. I could have a huge saloon in the converted hold, a skipper's bunk in the wheelhouse, and how very nice she would be.

As I matured to, oh, 14 or so, I added a ketch rig, bilge keels, and proper swing-out davits for the launch. My school notebooks looked more like boat-builder's sketchpads than the academic masterpieces my parents had hoped for. Images of good times aboard my ship and how it would feel, smell, and taste filled my head and decorated countless math workbooks.

In common with most cruising folk, I felt a need to control an entire floating world, a ship of life that — with planning, skill, hard work, and understanding — could withstand anything the charts or Mother Nature could throw at her. With this in mind, the next stage of the right-boat quest began. Only after I found it did the great cruising myths reveal their true selves.

MYTH #1 **You will be inundated with guests to fill all those permanent berths, regardless of your personal popularity.**

We waterborne souls make some basic assumptions that lead us inexorably astray. The first of these is that very few people would not pay handsomely for a week or two under billowing canvas on a gently rolling ocean. With this in

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM PAYNE

mind, the boat I bought for my odyssey was a full-bodied, long-keeled, 40-foot, aft-cabin, Colin Archer double-ender. Her huge saloon could seat 12 with ease, I know because it did so — once. At the risk of sounding like an antisocial loner, the fact is that, in more than a year spent cruising, I sailed solo for all but 10 weeks. The largest number of guests aboard at one time was three.

MYTH #2 **Everything on a boat will break as soon as you head to sea.**

A prudent sailor carries whatever he might need to cope with any event that may befall himself and his ship. This is excellent advice and holds as true today as in the days before steam. I would never ever advise against this dictum if you are heading offshore or to remote areas of the globe. But most of us are unaware of how little the sailors of old actually had, and so how few spares they needed to carry.

Being of the belt-and-suspenders type, I carried a huge store of every conceivable spare part and hardware for every imaginable repair. If there was not a second system aboard, there was a full replacement for the broken part. In that year spent cruising, my boat suffered a ruptured water tank (bladder type) and was cursed with the self-blocking head from hell. Both "emergencies" required spares or replacement but, apart from the occasional fuse and anode that needed replacing, that was it.

The best way to carry spares is to prepare the boat ahead of the cruise by making sure every system is perfect and every part exhibiting even the slightest corrosion or weakness is replaced. After that, stick to a short list and your own good sense.

Carrying, in little plastic packets, all the filters and seals — complete with part numbers and bar codes —that might ever be needed to keep the iron topsail happily growling in its cave must, I am sure, make the old-timers wince. I remember sailing on a converted seine netter out of Howth, Ireland, as a kid. The skipper had a canvas bucket with all the spares the old wooden boat needed: a couple of galvanized shackles, a pot of Stockholm tar, seizing twine, and a can of EZE start, used to fire up the diesel drip stove. Not a bad return for effort.

MYTH #3 **Your course will be beset by storms.**

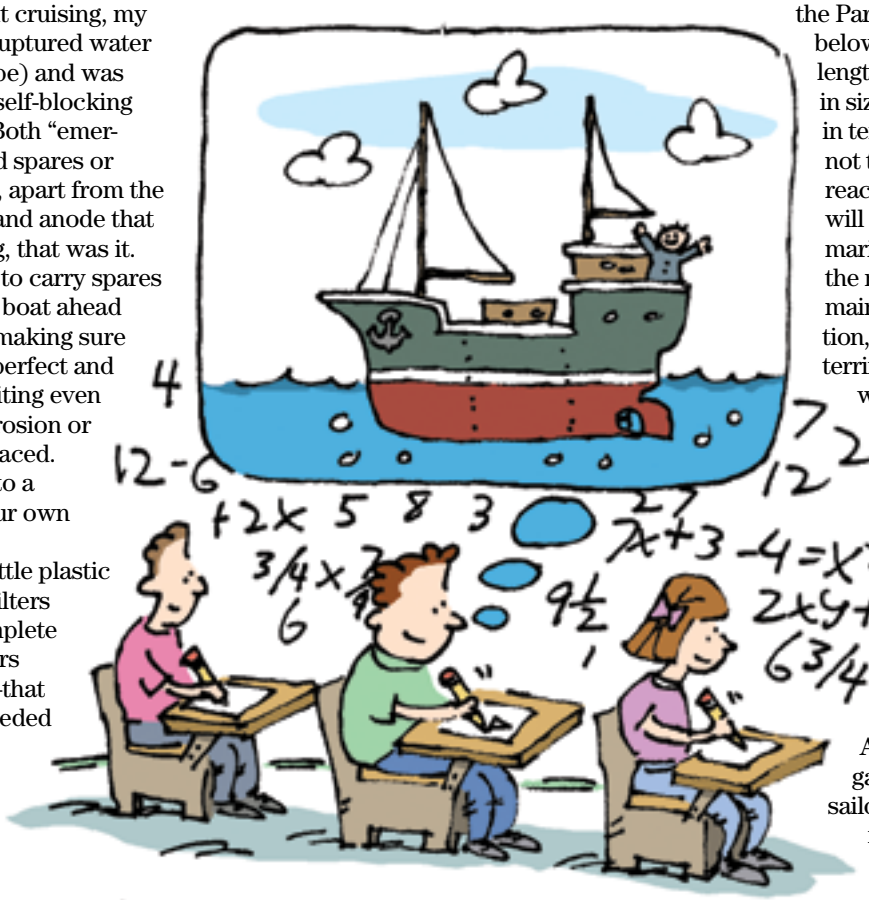
Our library feeds the worst typhoons of our imagination; in all probability we will never meet extreme weather.

If we go to sea often enough with no regard for weather forecasts, we will eventually find our personal perfect storm. If, like me, you delve into the worst wind-driven maritime-nightmare texts, you undoubtedly will purchase a sea anchor and drogue, a storm jib and trysail in air-sea-rescue orange, and an obscene length of 1-inch high-visibility nylon rode. Your boat will be of ½-inch steel designed by the creator of Norwegian sailing lifeboats. It will carry an offshore life raft, EPIRB, DSC, satellite phone, 40 pounds of pyrotechnics guaranteed to be seen from space, and three years' worth of survival supplies with a swimming pool's worth of dehydrated water tablets.

Guilty as charged on almost all counts, except the water tablets. Yet the worst weather I was ever caught in was on an inland lake on a hired cruiser. We had 60 to 70 knots of wind and the beer spilled. By comparison, 25-foot waves in the Atlantic are well spaced and much less threatening than 10-footers on Long Island Sound driven by a Nor'easter. In my defense, however, the Bay of Biscay is a hurdle to be crossed before getting to the sunny cruising grounds of the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. That piece of water is never to be taken lightly and I was glad to have my 12-ton gaff cutter for that leg. For ordinary cruising, and even pretty substantial offshore work, though, most well-found production boats are up to the task, with most of the older well-proven designs scoring higher than wide-sterned modern boats for seakindliness and the ability to handle a blow without trauma.

MYTH #4 **You can never have too much boat.**

It is for good reason that the Pardeys' two boats have been below 30 feet LOD. There is a length of boat after which the gain in size and space costs too much in terms of work and handling, not to mention finances. After it reaches a certain size, the boat will spend more time in the marina than out sailing, due to the need for crew or increased maintenance. By way of illustration, I found something uniquely terrifying about a 20-foot-long wooden gaff swinging wildly in 30 knots of wind with its steel fitting almost wiping my nose with each supersonic pass as I tried to get the gasket to hold it into the gallows. So, regardless of the romance or the superior balance of the reefed gaff rig, next time it will be Marconi or Bermudan rig for me. As with most hardships, the gaff rig made me a better sailor: I generally leave oodles of room for any sail-handling or anchoring procedure.



MYTH #5 **A boat need not perform to windward to be a worthwhile cruiser.**

That safety trumps speed is a long-standing and misguided argument. All well-designed boats should be safe and capable of making good progress on all points of sail. We have been sold on the idea that a super-safe boat, a capable and seaworthy yacht, will have to yield some speed to weight so she will be heavy enough to handle bad conditions at sea. To some extent, this is true. However, any cruising boat *must* be able to sail well to windward.

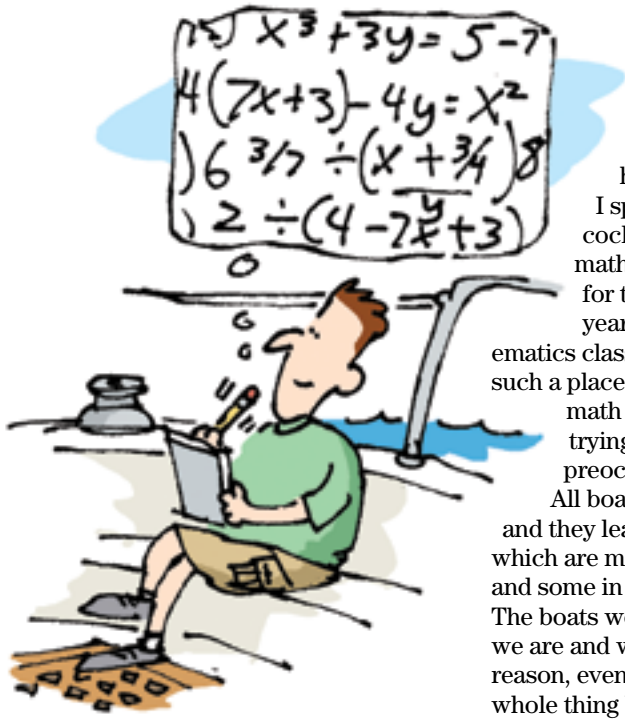
Having bashed and crunched my way for 600 miles into the Portuguese Nortada (northerly wind) that, just for my benefit, blew directly from the south, I can say it is imperative that the boat is capable of pointing higher than 55 degrees off the wind.

So what is the truth?

The question remains: which boat is the right boat? As everyone reading this will have a different answer, I will not propose a brand or design. But certain truths are self-evident. You can have too much boat. You can be unrealistic in the probable extent of your cruising, leading you to plan and equip for eventualities that are not going to happen (there's no need to cruise an icebreaker in the tropics). A sailboat must be able to sail well and be handled by the minimum number of crew you can absolutely depend upon, and that number ultimately will be one. You don't need to over-equip; two radar sets are too many for a cruising yacht.

Think about your own experiences and the experience of your crew and gear up for sailing, not maintenance. Maintain your boat very well and carry only the spares you need to perform normal service and emergency repairs. There is much to be said for navigation by compass, chart, and star but the simplest GPS gives accurate, reliable, and easy plots. So, after your manual navigation gear is aboard, a GPS is a good addition. If you cruise in sight of the shore, an engine is a must. That being the case, you may as well have electric light (a by-product of the engine). Even with power available, the venerable oil lamp has a special charm.

I offer this cautionary tale with a fine and happy outcome. I eventually



tired of the work involved in sailing in the Mediterranean and decided to winter over in Cartagena, Spain. While there, I was accepted into the naval architecture program at SUNY (State University of New York) Maritime. The irony has not been lost on me.

I spent days sitting in the cockpit of my dreamboat doing mathematics as a preparation for the studies ahead while, years before, I sat in mathematics class dreaming about sitting in such a place on such a boat while the math teacher pulled his hair out trying to drive algebra into my preoccupied head.

All boats have a certain magic and they lead us on journeys, some of which are measured in miles or years and some in our own development. The boats we choose play into who we are and what we need for whatever reason, even if, like me, we get the whole thing bass ackwards.

Eric Holohan is a Westlawn graduate, naval architect, yacht designer, Lloyds-accredited marine surveyor, and ABYC master technician. You can contact him at <www.holohanmarine.com>.

Partners in sailing

Joint ownership provided a path to the water

by Steve Gibb

Picnicking one day in a park in Oxford, Maryland, on Chesapeake Bay, we watched sailboats glide into a wooded anchorage. That did it.

I had moved to the Washington, D.C., area to be closer to my then girlfriend, but the possibility of our joining the world of big sailboats seemed remote, especially on the joint salaries of a journalist and public health worker. And although I had sailed and raced small boats in my native Michigan, I was intimidated by the responsibility of handling and caring for a large boat. We were surprised, too, at how many sailboats we saw that seemed to have fallen into disuse and wondered how their owners could pass up the ability, that we so envied, to be on the water.

Years later, a journalist colleague took me out sailing on a 1976 Hunter 25, *Rhode Keel*, that he and three others owned in partnership. Terry, another co-owner of the boat, was also on board. We left their slip on the Rhode River on a beam reach and it wasn't long before the sunlight scalloping the waves was making me think about finding a way to have a boat of my own. When they gave me the tiller, I fixed on a landmark and, sheltered in the shadow of the mainsail, we sailed home from Thomas Point Lighthouse under cobalt skies.

Seeing the quality of the light that afternoon and feeling the movement of the boat convinced me that if ever an opening in the partnership arose, I would be interested in filling it. I knew enough to sense they were solid sailors but, more important, they were excellent company and relaxed about teaching me things. I hoped I had made a good first impression by docking well, pulling into the last slip to starboard and stopping on cue. This is particularly tricky in that marina as maneuvering room is limited by a shallow marine railway nearby.

An opening

Then my reporter colleague accepted an offer in Geneva and asked if I would be interested in taking over his share of the boat. I leapt at the chance to join the partnership that shared *Rhode Keel*. Not only was this an economical way to access sailing on the bay, I also liked the idea of learning from and sharing the experience with others while keeping a sailboat in active use. Having sailing partners meant not having to play "host" every time we sailed with non-sailing guests and provided me with a new circle of developing friendships.

Within our partnership, Terry had the most big-boat sailing and racing experience and was generous with his knowledge, time, and sense of adventure. An old family friend and a business colleague of his rounded out the foursome, which had originally been formed in 1993. Over the years, this group has involved eight different configurations of owners. The marina managers, who also work as watermen on the bay, say it is the longest running sailing partnership they've ever seen.

The group has a few basic rules. If someone fell behind on his monthly payments of $130 — which are paid into a kitty to cover all maintenance, slip fees, insurance, and upgrades — he had to take over organizing the financial management of the boat, such as year-end settle-up, which was normally Terry's arena. Everyone lends a hand in maintaining the boat as well as commissioning and decommissioning her in spring and fall. Haulouts are supervised by whomever is available. In any given month, we each had a week, starting on a Friday, for our own use, and we often allowed other partners to share our sailing times when our schedules permitted. Over time, we fell into the rhythm of sailing together on weekends.

The Chesapeake is a forgiving teacher, with muddy bottoms that prevent damage during groundings, waves that hardly ever grow more than a foot or two (unless a southeaster is blowing), and multiple safe harbors if thunderstorms kick up. With the help of my sailing mentors and the practice

Ken Cunningham, Natalie Cunningham, and Steve Gibb sing the praises of the partnership through which they share the joys and responsibilities of owning a sailboat, at left, and their boat, *Que Sera*, opposite page.

that comes of sailing often, I quickly got the hang of winches and anchors and handling the outboard.

A bigger, newer boat

A year after I joined the partnership, it became increasingly clear to us that, despite her dry bilge and handy roller furler, *Rhode Keel* was growing old. Just down the road from our marina we found a boat brokerage with a 1983 Endeavour 32 for sale.

Buying a boat as a group is a bit like buying a house together: everyone has one thing he can't live without and other things he may have to accept as compromises. Our joint list included a Bimini, roller furling, and an autopilot. My requirement was a long berth, as I stand 6-feet 4-inches in my socks. *Que Sera* met all our requirements and was in excellent shape. The 24-hp Universal diesel needed routine maintenance but it ran, and the sails were pretty much blown out but serviceable. We could postpone costly upgrades. We read up on her sailing qualities and learned she'd be steady in heavy winds. Deciding to go ahead, we sold *Rhode Keel* to a friend. The transfer coincided with a partnership transition, so the former set of partners split the proceeds from the sale of *Rhode Keel*. We then made a "capital call" so the new partners could buy into our new boat.

That was when my education began in earnest: varnishing trim and coamings, handling water pumps and depth sounders, managing communications with our marine mechanic — a retired anthropology professor — and taking care of our gorgeous wood-paneled interior. These were all new tasks we never had to contend with on the Hunter.

I've taken on much of the maintenance out of a desire to learn and to be useful. I've picked up valuable tips from our mechanic and through trial and error. Because *Que Sera* is sailed by several skippers, I made start-up and shut-down checklists and plasticized them. These reminders help us safeguard the engine and electrics, ensure that springlines are set to cope with tides, and ensure that we knot the jibsheets so the jib won't unfurl in a storm when she's untended in her berth.

My real sailing lessons have come from Terry, who taught me to sit to leeward when I have the helm so I'll be able to see the jib telltales as well as the crab pots that can foul propellers (as I discovered one howlingly chilly day on *Rhode Keel*). Terry also urges me to avoid pinching, or sailing too close to the wind. I've gotten the hang of falling off a few degrees, noting the corresponding surge in boat speed.

He's detailed the finer points of how to use the traveler to flatten the main and improve her progress to windward. I can assist Terry with setting the spinnaker — he's really the first among equals under sail — but I have yet to try it when he's not aboard. Early on, I came up with the idea of maneuvering *Que Sera* manually out of the slip with the help of boathooks until we're clear of the finger piers because of her excessive prop walk. I also learned to maintain just enough speed for steerageway as we approach the dock.

Our partnership was reduced to just three members when one member's family moved to California. Despite some early efforts to locate a replacement, we've put recruitment on hold as we're enjoying our greater access to the boat.

My then-girlfriend had become my wife, and our kids, now 10 and 6, are building a bank of positive experiences on gentle-wind days when we swim off the boat. And, for years now, I've taken my father and a friend on three-day weekends in the fall to Maryland's Eastern Shore.

When the partners and friends sail her together, we always learn something. We enjoy holding long electronics-free conversations and playing hand drums and flutes on cool autumn evenings huddled next to the warm engine compartment. We also hold an occasional informal "book group," with everyone agreeing to read the same book before we embark.

As partners, we share costs and maintenance for *Que Sera* but, more important, we sail together a lot, which strengthens our bonds. What's sad to us is seeing the number of boats at our marina and elsewhere that have fallen into disuse. *Que Sera* is sailed all spring, summer, and fall by a partnership based on the bonds of friendship. What else are good old boats for?

Steve Gibb *lives with his wife, Carolyn, and two children in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he works in environmental communications. He has been a member of the sailing partnership for three years. The consortium sails* Que Sera *out of Edgewater, Maryland, on the Chesapeake Bay.*

Go cheap and go in comfort

The case for good old offshore-cruising boats

by Todd Duff

The best used-boat bargains of all time are out there right now. Despite the cutbacks in new-yacht production, more boats are for sale today than ever before, and although the economic slowdown is a factor, the numbers are due mainly to the longevity of fiberglass construction. A good yacht broker or marine surveyor can advise on what to look for and what to avoid, but here are some guidelines and suggestions for anyone on the lookout for a sound cruising sailboat.

If you're going cruising, you're likely to be concerned about value. A good place to start shopping for a boat is with the well-made fiberglass production designs of the mid-1960s to mid-1980s. What I often refer to as the golden age of fiberglass boatbuilding began in the early 1970s. During this decade, along with a general awakening to the need for a clean environment and a popular movement toward simplifying life and getting back to nature, the production of small to medium-sized sailboats exploded all over America and Europe. Many builders turned out racing boats that proved to be excellent offshore cruisers. Swan 40s and 43s and their American counterparts — such as the Tartan series or some of Pearson's designs — have all proven themselves on countless passages and long-term cruises. Boats like the Westsail 32, the Crealock 37, and Cabo Ricos spawned a profusion of clones and copies, many of which are still sailing the world's oceans today.

In the 1980s, boats became lighter and larger belowdecks for their waterline length. Many experienced offshore cruisers think that by the late '80s most of the moderately priced models being mass-produced were no longer as seaworthy or seakindly as their earlier cousins. Later raceboat designs that exploited the International Offshore Rule (IOR) were not as well suited for cruising as earlier IOR-influenced designs. It appeared to many that boardrooms and committees — concerned more with how a boat would look at a boat-show dock than how it would stand a blow far offshore — began to dictate boatbuilding practices. Today, with a new 35- to 40-foot boat costing in the range of $250,000 or more, many people are looking into older well-made vessels that can be purchased at a fraction of that cost and refitted to serve their purposes.

Conflicting design goals

Although there have been many so-called advances in yacht design in recent years, you can't cheat the sea. Our forefathers knew the sea well and, through hundreds of years of refinement, developed specialized hull forms for a variety of purposes. A large number of cruising-boat hulls have been based on these hulls, but many attributes of buoy racers have unfortunately found their way into cruising designs and, more recently, interior layouts built for a life at dockside appear to have dictated the shapes of the hulls that carry them.

Most of the arguments for building lighter-displacement, lower-wetted-surface boats have been based on supposed performance advantages, and yet a Westsail 32, one of the most traditional cruising designs out there, has proven itself in many recent ocean races, challenging the myth that weight prohibits speed. In ideal conditions, a modern lightweight hull form is potentially much faster than a traditional heavy hull, but in a real seaway all bets are off. In many cases, the traditional heavy boat designed and developed to sail in real ocean conditions is superior to and safer than a modern design and more likely to deliver its crew comfortably to the next port.

In a recent offshore race, a Westsail 32 placed second behind an ultra-light-displacement all-out raceboat. It might have won had a gear failure not occurred. In the 1996 Annapolis-to-Bermuda Race, a friend of mine sailed to a win in his division with a Westsail 32, fully loaded down for cruising with a big dinghy on deck, a wind generator and solar panels out in the breeze, and a windvane dragging off the stern. His boat arrived only hours behind some of the all-out racers whose crews sat on the windward rail the whole way. He out-sailed stripped-out boats with cushions and doors removed to save weight! Veteran cruisers Lin and Larry Pardey have been saying for

Additional resources

Sorting through the hundreds of boats produced in the golden years has occupied many a sailor with cruising experience or aspirations. James Baldwin, another experienced circumnavigator and sailboat expert, is one. He has created his own list of 71 small voyaging sailboats (between 20 and 32 feet) that will take you to the ends of the earth even if your pocketbook is light.
http://atomvoyages.com/planning/good-old-boats-list

We also recommend:
Twenty Small Sailboats to Take You Anywhere by John Vigor

Twenty Affordable Sailboats to Take You Anywhere by Gregg Nestor

–Editors

decades that if you own a traditional heavy-displacement boat, keep the bottom clean and use big light-air sails when they're called for.

False comparisons

Entirely too much space in books and magazines is devoted to comparing keel and rudder shapes and over-simplifying the analysis of yacht designs, as if looking at the side view of a hull might tell you how a boat will handle. The hull form is much more important. For example, subtle differences in the hull forms of canoes and kayaks can yield very different handling characteristics. Lake canoes will track straight all day long and yet are difficult to turn quickly, whereas whitewater canoes can spin on a dime but are challenging to paddle in a straight line.

Statements like "Full keels track better but are poor upwind performers" or "Fin keels sail upwind better and are more maneuverable" are overly simplistic. The main factors that make a rudder more or less effective are how large and how far aft it is and what the hull form in front of it is like, not whether it is attached to a keel or a skeg or is a separate spade. In many cases, the increased lateral plane of a full- or long-keeled boat actually makes it easier to back up than a fin-keel boat with a flat bottom that prefers to walk sideways until way is on. A skeg- or keel-hung rudder is also much less likely to stall at high angles of attack. Evidence of this can be found in the photos and descriptions of spade-rudder boats that have broached in big sea conditions when a helmsman overcorrected, causing the rudder to stall, or simply lost control while surfing down a wave. Airplane wings are able to maintain lift at slow speeds because of the laminar flow created by flaps extending off the main wing surface. Imagine this when looking at a rudder attached to a skeg or a full keel. A spade rudder will stall at low speed just like an airplane wing does when its flaps are not deployed.

Seakindly and seaworthy

When was the last time you saw the term "seakindly" used in a new-boat advertisement? Many traditional types of boats have fairly complex wineglass-type hull forms, very difficult to design and very comfortable at sea as they do not present large flat surfaces to the waves in any one orientation. Some so-called traditional designs have simplistically designed round or bowl-shaped hulls that roll and pound just like their lightweight fin-keeled sisters.

> **"How strong is strong enough when you're in storm conditions?"**

The strength issue is rarely argued and even among modern light-displacement proponents you'll hear a consensus that heavy boats are stronger. I've heard many sailors on newer lightweight boats say their boats are "strong enough." How strong is strong enough when you're in storm conditions, or if you hit an unlit steel buoy, a partially submerged container, or a whale while traveling at 8 knots on a pitch-black night? Steel is generally more robust than even the stoutest of fiberglass boats, but an older heavily built fiberglass hull in good condition can withstand incredible punishment. I have yet to hear a long-distance cruising sailor tell me he wished his boat had a thinner hull and was less sturdy.

We've all heard the urban legend that older fiberglass boats were built heavily because the designers and builders didn't know how strong the material was and so were reluctant to "lighten up" the scantlings. This is not entirely accurate. Most designers and many builders were also engineers who certainly knew the structural

Bargain boats

Grouped below by price are suggestions for some of the best bets where investing time and money could be rewarded with a strong handsome cruising sailboat at a very good value. The price ranges are for boats in good condition that are fully equipped with recent gear and modern electronics. Boats without these significant upgrades should sell for as much as 50 to 75 percent less.

$10,000 to $25,000

Finding a well-equipped cruiser in this price range is tough because investments — such as a watermaker, solar panels, and electronics — can sometimes add up to more money than the boat's purchase price. As long as you don't get too carried away, however, you should be able to sail away on one of these:

post-1976 Bristol 24
1970s Pacific Seacraft Flicka
Eastward Ho 24
Pearson Triton or Vanguard
Allied Seawind 30 • Contessa 26
Folkboat • Alberg 30 • Tartan 27
and dozens of others

$25,000 to $45,000

As long as you don't mind going with a somewhat older model, you should be able to find one of these in ready-to-go condition:

Pearson Alberg 35
Bristol 32
Nor'Sea 27
Westsail 28
Alberg 37
Allied Seawind II or Seabreeze
Shannon 28
Pacific Seacraft Orion or Mariah
and similar

ILLUSTRATIONS By pi ERRE HERVÉ

characteristics of the materials they were using. However, most of the early designs were simply fiberglass reproductions of popular wooden types and had to weigh as much as their wooden cousins or they would not have floated on their lines. Also, when fiberglass was first introduced to boatbuilding, many sailors mistrusted it but were reassured by the heavy construction. To many experienced sailors it appears that — because of budget constraints and marketing decisions made in boardrooms — modern boats have become lighter and flimsier and advertising departments have sought to convince us that this is to enhance performance and livability. As anyone who owns a classic boat knows, aesthetics are a big part of a sailor's enjoyment. When other sailors photograph your boat, it boosts the pride of ownership that makes some of the aspects of keeping an older boat in great shape a little easier.

Good qualities endure

Aesthetics, seakindliness, performance, value, and strength are all great reasons to own an older quality boat. Longevity is in your favor and there is little doubt that some of the purpose-built hefty cruising boats from the 1960s through the '80s will be around well into the end of the 21st century. Our grandchildren's children may well own a 100-year-old 1965 full-keel cruiser on its fourth engine and sixth suit of sails.

Every type of boat, of course, has its shortcomings. Heavy-displacement boats need much bigger hardware, sails, ground tackle, and rigging, all of which cost more for overall length than they would for a lighter boat. The Westsail 32, for example, has a rig as big as many 38-footers and the ground tackle you might expect to find on a modern 42-foot boat.

When you go looking for an older boat to buy, keep in mind that upgrading or replacing engines, rigs, sails, and electronics, in addition to rebuilding interiors or rewiring, can drive the investment up well beyond the original purchase price. Even then, with careful shopping you might end up with a much better, stronger, and more comfortable boat than you could have purchased new for perhaps multiples of the amount of your investment. Shop carefully and have fun!

Todd Duff, a writer/photographer and marine surveyor, has owned 50 sailboats. He and his partner, photographer and professional captain Gayle Suhich, have logged close to 150,000 miles under all types of rigs, including a brigantine. They are full-time cruisers and have recently refitted Westsail 42 hull #1 for more sailing adventures.

$45,000 to $75,000

In this price range there are a lot of good boats to choose from:

Westsail 32
Alajuela 38
Ingrid 38
Bristol Channel Cutter
Vancouver 36
Allied Princess or Mistress
Cape Dory 36
and many others

$75,000 to $120,000

Find a totally equipped and world-cruise-ready boat from this list:

Westsail 42 or 43
Peterson 44
Whitby 42
Crealock 34 or 37
Cabo Rico 38
and others including:
Rivals
Camper & Nicholsons
and many others

Cruise the Internet, talk to a good broker, and find a surveyor with extensive offshore experience who can give you sound advice. Experts like Robert Perry, John Neal, and others are available on a consultation basis as well, and they will often supply you with a list of their own favorites as you go searching for your own good old boat.

There are many great older boats out there. Begin with how you want your boat to be equipped, then work backward from the price of your complete cruiser and you should be able to make a logical purchase. Get out there cruising sooner! You might be happier, will certainly be wealthier, and could wind up owning a better boat than if you had purchased new.

Rescuing boats

Finding homes for boatyard orphans

by Mary Broderick

I was the kid on the block who rescued strays. My mother once remarked that I was a magnet for every homeless mutt in the neighborhood. They followed me home, tails wagging hopefully, and Mom always fed them while grumbling about muddy paws on her clean kitchen floor. As a grownup, I continued to rescue strays with the help of my husband, Steve. Without Mom around to set limits or complain about muddy paws, the strays we took in usually became part of our family.

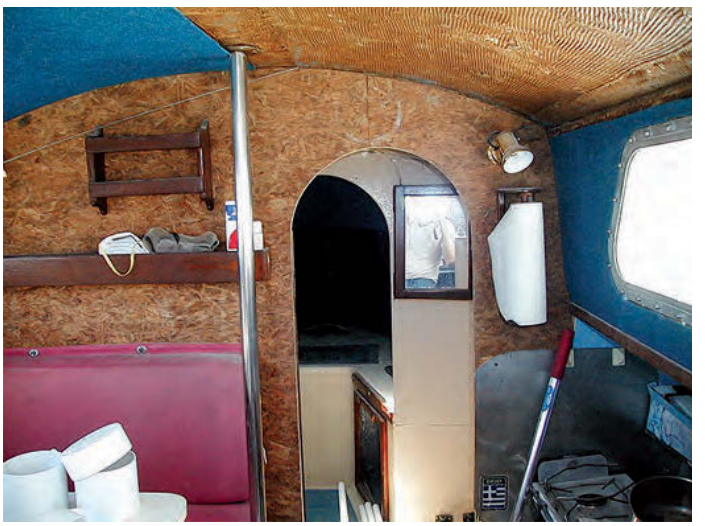
Several years ago, Steve and I began noticing boats in need of rescue. It all started at the boatyard where we have wintered our own sailboats for nearly 20 years. Located on the scenic Hudson River, this small, family-owned yard is filled with an eclectic group of sailboats whose designs span a half-century. Steve and I spent so many spring and fall weekends there working on our boat projects it felt like a second home, one with friendly neighbors where help and advice flowed freely. During coffee breaks, we never tired of wandering through the yard, admiring our favorites, and chatting with their owners.

But in the midst of all this activity, it was obvious that some boats were suffering from long-term neglect.

This daysailer, at left, had been left with its companionway hatch open, as if in mid-project. The Tanzer 28, bottom left, eventually found a taker, as did the Westerly Centaur, bottom right, that had apparently been under renovation when it was abandoned.

They had not seen the water for many seasons. Some slumbered beneath frayed tarps that flapped against their hulls; others lacked even a cover, their gelcoat faded and chalky from continuous exposure to the elements. Scattered across the boatyard, they seemed to be waiting patiently for someone to notice and awaken them.

We learned that since the recession had begun, more boats were being abandoned and the boatyard now held title to a growing number of sailboats that were taking up valuable storage space. They needed new homes or would be chopped up eventually and hauled away in a dumpster. They were all dirty and some needed major repairs, but we believed these boats deserved a second chance. Our "family" already included three sailboats, so taking on any of these projects ourselves (although tempting) was out of the question. The challenge was to find the right sailors for these boats. We knew that making a match of this kind could be a time-consuming project for the



A J/24 sat on her trailer, ready to roll, at left, and a Pearson 23 had what looked like a fairly new outboard motor, bottom of page.

busy family that ran the boatyard, so Steve and I volunteered to help.

A motley assortment

The abandoned vessels ranged from trailersailers to coastal and offshore cruisers. One lovely full-keel daysailer of unknown vintage had been left by a previous owner with her cuddy cabin open to the weather. A more modern design, a Columbia 22 with a bright red hull and no visible damage, sat on a newer trailer, practically ready to launch. At the boatyard entrance stood a pretty little full-keel pocket cruiser. She was a 1970s-era Bristol 24 Corsair that had broken loose from her mooring one stormy night and gone on the rocks, damaging her hull-to-deck joint.

Farther down the row of boats stood a Westerly Centaur 26, a twin-keeled British cruiser designed by Laurent Giles. She was a project boat and her restoration, which included a new diesel engine, was far from complete. The Centaur was a popular design in its day; more than 2,400 had been built and at least one was reported to have completed a circumnavigation. I wondered if some intrepid soul had sailed her "across the pond" from the U.K. Although she was unlikely to win any races, she seemed to be an ideal pocket cruiser, capable of standing up to a blow yet able to wend her way up narrow creeks and into small harbors inaccessible to deeper-draft vessels.

There was also a 1970s-era Tanzer 28 raised-deck sloop that promised plenty of interior space for her size. She was a capable coastal cruiser, structurally sound and, once repaired, would be perfect for a family on a budget.

I could already imagine her with new owners: a young couple with kids and maybe a dog, finally cruising in their own boat and having the time of their lives.

One of my favorites was a Mariner 28, a moderate design with a fin keel from the early 1980s. She must have once been someone's pride and joy; now her teak interior was ruined, and whenever I entered her cabin to check her bilges I stepped carefully to avoid putting a foot through her rotting cabin sole. Brass dividers lay forlornly on her navigation table. Water stains rising several feet above her cabin sole revealed that she had once been submerged. I wondered if she had sunk at the dock or at sea during a storm. Were her owners aboard when it happened?

These boats were alive to me, even though they had sailing histories I would never know. I could put my hand on the hull of any of them and imagine how they must have been … once. Inside their silent musty cabins, the faded charts on their navigation tables, the mildewed books on shelves, and the odd personal item left on a bunk provided glimpses of former owners and their past cruising lives.

Why were these boats abandoned? Most were casualties of the financial storms weathered by their owners. As the recession dragged on, resulting in pay cuts, job insecurity, unemployment, or relocation, owning a boat became a luxury they could no longer afford. Age and health issues had forced the abandonment of at least one restoration project; loss of a job caused another. But on the lighter side, one owner gave his racing sloop to the boatyard in order to teach his kids a lesson when he discovered that, despite their promises, they had been neglecting his boat.

A campaign commences

Steve prefers working on sailboats to working on computers, so I volunteered to post ads for the boats online and answer the initial queries. Most of these boats would be free; a few in better condition would be listed at bargain prices in hopes of a quick sale. Since Steve spends most days at the yard working on our projects, he could show the boats to anyone who was interested. With his background in marine surveying, he would be able to explain what was needed to make them seaworthy again. One chilly spring morning, armed with my digital camera and laptop, I snapped photos of each boat and began posting advertisements online.

The enthusiastic responses to our ads seemed to indicate that the sailing dream is alive and well in the United States and beyond. My inbox was flooded with inquiries and we received calls almost daily. We had expected the appeal of these boats to be limited to local sailors so we were unprepared for the number of long-distance inquiries. Calls came in from across the country and as far away as Sweden. The Swedish caller, a fisherman who was looking for a project boat to restore with his son, explained that the cost of a comparable boat in

his country was so much higher that he hoped to find a boat in the U.S. and ship it home by cargo carrier.

The majority of the inquiries came from people who were eager to own a sailboat but couldn't afford the sticker prices on the new boats they'd seen advertised in the glossy brochures. We received many calls from young women and men who dreamed of going to sea in their own vessels. They had big hearts and big plans and wanted to sail offshore to exotic faraway destinations they had read about in sailing books and magazines. "I've never been out of sight of land," confided one during a phone conversation, "but I know I can do this. I want to sail her to St. Croix and I'll work on the repairs along the way."

We were surprised by the number of inquiries from non-sailors who were willing to take a risk and invest their time and money to save one of these boats. "I don't know how to sail yet," wrote one, "but it's always been a dream of mine." This sentiment was echoed by others. Young and old, college students, employed or retired, they shared the same dream, cruising on a sailboat of their own. Steve gave all who were unfamiliar with boat ownership a crash course in the costs: summer mooring or slip, winter storage if they didn't have a trailer or backyard, insurance, maintenance, and so on. For some, the costs of ownership exceeded their limited resources and we could sense their disappointment as they saw the dream slipping out of their grasp.

Although we hoped the descriptions and the pictures in the ads made it clear that these were project boats, there were some folks who thought a basic cleanup was all that was necessary. But it would take more than elbow grease and optimism to get most of these boats sailing again. I opened my email one evening to find an inquiry about the Tanzer. "Is she seaworthy now?" the email began. I read it aloud to Steve. "We want to take her down the Intracoastal Waterway then over to Texas. Once we reach Texas we're planning to have her shipped to California, then we'll tackle the major repairs." I thought about the long-neglected Tanzer embarking on such a trip and looked at Steve doubtfully. He said, "Tell them they'll need to spend at least a week here before they go anywhere — assuming the engine doesn't need major work since it hasn't been started for years. And no, they can't live on the boat while they're working on it unless they plan to sleep out on deck. The interior is filthy and the bulkheads need major work."

> **"... it would take more than elbow grease and optimism to get most of these boats sailing again."**

Steve did his best to inject the dreamers with a dose of healthy reality. Once, after listening to him on a call, I commented, "You really shouldn't be so negative; you're going to scare everybody away!" I mimicked him, "This boat is a disaster! The interior is a mess!" We laughed together for a moment then he got serious and said, "I just don't want someone to take one of these boats unless they're really prepared for what they're getting into. Otherwise, they'll get discouraged and give up, then the boat will just end up abandoned somewhere else." He was right, of course, and I realized we both felt a sense of responsibility. Beyond finding new homes for these boats, we wanted to find the right homes, "forever" homes. We wanted them to inspire their new owners and fulfill their sailing dreams, however big or small they were.

Faith redeemed

As time went by, a pattern emerged: after posting the ads, weeding out the obvious scammers (yes, even "free" boats attracted Internet con artists), and speaking to dozens of hopefuls, I watched as the list of potential takers slowly evaporated. Every week, I renewed the ads on Craigslist, hoping it would be for the last time. The following week, with no sure prospects for most of the boats, the ads would be relisted. Weeks turned to months, spring to summer, and the abandoned boats remained.

Finding the right sailors for these boats was proving elusive; they needed dreamers with their feet firmly planted on the ground, sailors whose optimism

Despite her potential as a pocket cruiser, the Bristol 24 Corsair, at left, remained for a long time with nobody willing to step up and claim her. She would require work, but she had a good pedigree and, treated to enough love and labor, her cabin, at right, could become cosy again.

was matched by their skills and determination. These boats might be free, but they came with a price. For would-be boat owners on a tight budget, the right boat would be like a magic carpet, but the wrong boat could consume their meager resources, break their hearts, and end those dreams forever.

As discouraging as it was at times, there were some victories that kept us going. The Mariner, the Columbia, and the Tanzer were the first to find new owners and leave the yard. As the leaves began to turn and summer slipped into fall, the Westerly went to a sailor from Maine who had begged and borrowed a trailer built for a bilge-keeler, a truck capable of towing it, and an agreeable friend to help him bring it home. At the end of December, when the yard was quiet and we were certain nobody would be seriously looking at project boats in the northeast, the racing sloop went to a new home in South Carolina.

Steve and I wondered who would eventually rescue the Bristol 24. She had several suitors now: a young man planning a visit from Kentucky, a boatbuilder on Long Island, and an airline pilot who wanted to restore her and take his son sailing. The Bristol was another of our favorites and we occasionally discussed how, if she were ours, we would fix her up and sail her . . . down the Hudson and around the tip of Manhattan to Long Island Sound, perhaps even to Narragansett Bay and Block Island during summer vacations. She would be an ideal pocket cruiser, we agreed, and we marveled that she hadn't been snapped up by someone. She probably received more inquiries than any of the other boats, but so far nobody had stepped forward and made the commitment.

Then one day it happened. After an exchange of emails and phone calls, someone new asked to come and take a look at her. Steve gave him a tour of the boat and they discussed the repairs needed in great detail. The visitor liked what he saw and almost before we knew it, had agreed that she would be his. We were thrilled. Not only had the Bristol been saved from almost certain destruction, she would remain at the boatyard while John, her new owner, repaired her and prepped her for cruising. John was inexperienced, but we were confident that, with Steve's guidance, he would be able to handle the Bristol's repairs.

In the following weeks, we got to know John better as he began working on his boat. One day I saw a woman aboard the Bristol with a bucket and scrub brush. She introduced herself as John's mother who had come to help him. I asked her if she liked to sail. "I don't know how to sail," she responded with a smile, "but I *do* know how to clean!" John was busy with a full-time job and graduate school, but he was full of enthusiasm for his new boat. One day he told me how grateful he was for all of the opportunities this boat represented. If he ever parted with her, he planned to give her to someone who, like him, dreamed of sailing but thought he would never be able to afford his own boat.

A new candidate

Another year has passed. It is now late June at the boatyard and most of the sailboats have been launched. A few project boats are scattered about the yard and the abandoned boats that remain continue their slumber. A small sloop nearby is beginning to show the telltale signs of neglect. Her faded green tarp has worn through in places, her cockpit is filthy and filled with dead leaves, her varnish long gone, and her owner, an elderly gentleman, has not been seen around the boatyard lately.

But beneath the grime I see a small gem: a flush deck, full-keel double-ender and suddenly I remember her sailing on the river from seasons past. Steve notices my interest and says she is a Chuck Paine design, a Morris Frances 26. I rest my hand on her hull and for a moment I imagine her on the river again, heeling proudly under a press of full sail.

Mary Broderick holds a USCG Masters license and has been sailing coastal New England waters for more than 20 years with her husband, Steve Perry. Together, they are restoring their Nicholson 35, Levity, *and planning an extended cruise with their cat, Rocky, as crew.*

Signs of neglect indicate this Morris Frances 26 might soon join the list of sailboats looking for new homes.

Getting

Five stages from taking

1 The beginning

It might have been *Swallows and Amazons* . . . or the thought of small animals in a beautiful pea-green boat . . . or two sawcuts making a pointy end in a short board . . . or watching Bing Crosby capture Grace Kelly's heart as he sailed the *True Love* on an MGM backlot. But even as illusions fade and disappear, overrun by life's practical matters, some few lodge in our hearts and become dreams — some half-cocked, some full-fledged to be carried for the rest of our lives. Unless something triggers a lurch into reality. Something like . . .

2 A boat

Suddenly, there she is with a "For Sale" sign swinging below the boom. It's love at first sight, for better or for worse. A quick telephone call and the owner appears. You climb aboard and slide open the hatch to an unfamiliar bouquet of stale air, mildew, and damp cushions. A barrage of blarney from the seller goes largely unheard. You're wallowing now in the second stage of a growing addiction. You feel like Michelangelo staring at a stone, unable to chisel fast enough to get at the fine art inside.

She's a beauty. Shiny and white with a handsome blue stripe running just along that pretty sheer. You have a picnic in the cockpit and watch the kids exploring nooks and crannies. Sailing her will come sooner or later, but the important thing is that she's yours! Well, almost. Getting to *feel* that she's really yours will take a little longer.

3 Getting to know her

There's a steep learning curve in the third stage, so steep that most dreamers slide off somewhere along

the way. Patience and resolve will be tested as knuckles are bloodied and credit cards swiped at much the same rate. You learn to call parts by their real names — nautical alternatives for "front end," "left" and "right," and "the hole in the bottom with all the water in it." There are ropes to learn, to be held in place by square knots, half hitches, stoppers, and maybe a bowline or two. There's a knack to keeping her in one place with bow lines, stern lines, and springs. You learn to back away from the dock, hoist the main, and get her to go where you want to go — more or less — when the wind's blowing from the wrong place, too much, or not at all.

There's water to be boiled and beer to be kept cold and you struggle to start an unfamiliar, mulish, and sometimes dangerous engine. You learn to step lightly — one hand for yourself and the other for what has to be done — and there's always something to be done. You live with a combination of anxiety, halting indecision, and regular frustration punctuated alternately by bliss and not a little fear until . . .

hooked on sailing

the bait to being truly boated

BY RICHARD SMITH

4 The Dream takes over

This is the point at which it's not what *you* want but what the *boat* wants that matters. Time and money are spent as needed. In the eyes of the unacquainted, you're acting unpredictably and recklessly. You subscribe to one or two sailing magazines (if you're reading this, you're well on the way to being hooked).

You get to know her dings and dents, stress cracks in gelcoat, and the disheartening sight of bubbled varnish or blisters just above the keel. But you take pleasure in setting it all to rights (more or less) while learning to be patient with yourself and internalizing the art of compromise.

You spend hours and days looking for just the right fabric for those cushions and finding just the right picture to hang in just the right spot. You peruse the secondhand boat-gear shops looking for just the right cabin stove, not only as to type and cost but also with an eye to how it will look in your increasingly comfortable — and personalized — saloon. You learn to drill holes in plastic and how to fill them . . . and how to live with your mistakes. There are occasions of believing a boat 2 feet longer will be a universal cure to all problems, real or imagined, afloat or ashore. These spells persist until you become . . .

5 Well and truly hooked

The mature addiction takes many and diverse forms. Some sailors see their boats as others do their gardens: asleep in the winter but blooming in the spring, not with apple blossoms and buttercups but rather with fresh coats of bottom paint, a more or less dry bilge, and a spanking new impeller blade. Work is never finished, but the reward is a satisfaction that cannot be bought or easily gotten. Some may feel compelled to build a dinghy in the spirit of the mother ship, to make something with their own hands to pay back the joy over many years.

The truly hooked think about boats almost as much as they think about anything . . . or ever have. They read cruising narratives, novels of the sea, and the history of yachting for the sheer pleasure of it. They work Joshua Slocum, Donald Crowhurst, and John Guzzwell into conversations with non-sailors. Many are as happy at anchor on a rainy day as they are under a full press of sail.

Boats help addicted skippers make sense of the summer and the great outdoors. They are reminders of a more natural world. They keep us from being preoccupied with the routine and necessary pleasures of life ashore and of the constant struggle to obtain them. Those of us who are well and truly hooked on boats are incomplete without them.

Richard Smith, a contributing editor with Good Old Boat, *is an architect. He specializes in designing and building very small houses and has built, restored, and maintained a wide variety of boats. He and his wife, Beth, sail their Ericson Cruising 31,* Kuma, *on the reaches of Puget Sound.*

Cross-country

Highway hauling takes preparation and patience

Sometimes good old boats need to be moved overland. Many were not designed for that and present a challenge that may seem overwhelming, leading owners to hire professionals whose fees can be more than the boat is worth.

After searching three years for a boat with specific characteristics, I found her in a Maine barn, 2,000 miles from my home in Arkansas. Sitting on blocks just above ground level and supported by five boat stands, she was a Nantucket Clipper. She measured 31 feet 8 inches LOA with a 9-foot beam. She sat on a solid keel with 4-foot 2-inch draft and weighed 8,500 pounds. The weight could be moved easily, but a sailboat must be moved carefully if it is not to end up as shredded fiberglass strewn along a highway.

I addressed the matter with caution. My first idea was to hire a professional. The only quote returned was for $7,200, *if* she was accessible in a direct line from 200 feet and *if* she was sitting at least 18 inches above the ground. She was neither.

Do-it-yourself transport of a large boat is not for everybody. I am a professional at "making do" and have years of experience moving large objects: farm animals and equipment, research equipment, even a 1,000-pound meteorite no professional would touch fearing the liability of breaking a priceless object. Moving a sailboat is dangerous and must be done carefully. If you follow my example, get someone to check your rig and watch for anything that looks questionable. Have redundant safety braces and tie off the hull at multiple points. If at all possible, never work alone.

The boat's previous owner let me leave my new obsession in her barn in Maine until the spring thaw, giving me time to prepare for the move.

Merrill, the caretaker of the property where Walter found his Nantucket Clipper, bids adieu, top of page. Walter found a truck and trailer, at left, and modified the trailer to carry the boat and its cradle. After 10 years, the Clipper emerged from her barn on the cradle Walter made from parts of the trailer, at right.

clipper

BY WALTER GRAUPNER

Those six months would see me sell my beloved 1969 Ford Bronco, buy an affordable (cheap) one-ton truck and properly rated trailer, and drive halfway across the country to drag my dream boat out of her barn, up on my rig, and home to Arkansas for a rebuild.

The highway rig

In Texas, I found a 1994 long-wheelbase F-350 diesel truck with a beefed-up suspension and gooseneck hitch. Down the road from the truck sat a 45-foot-long bumper-hitch, steel-bed trailer with axles that could handle a 14,000-pound load. The trailer came with a gooseneck frame to replace the bumper hitch and unusual vertical tubing that formed a frame along the front and both sides but was open on top.

I cut the back 12 feet off the bed, yielding L-shaped structures for a cradle that would fit perfectly inside the remaining trailer bed. Connecting the horizontal portion of the L-sections with pipe that slid inside the tubing gave me a frame that just needed a strong center beam to support the keel and pad arms to maintain balance. The remaining side rails on the trailer were perfect for additional vertical supports.

After a couple of months' work on the truck and trailer, I ended up with a good-running truck, a 32-foot gooseneck trailer, and a transportable sailboat cradle that could be assembled around the keel then slid out of the barn and onto the trailer. I even had enough money left from the sale of the Bronco to pay for diesel fuel for most of the move. The final fit of the cradle to the hull would be done on site, so I collected a variety of materials that would fit in the vertical tubes and hold the hull. The clipper's gelcoat had been removed below the waterline so I didn't worry too much about protecting the finish. I built up steel pads and covered them with industrial-grade carpet to soften the contact points.

A maze of permits

Highway regulations require all loads wider than 8 feet 6 inches to have an oversized-load permit for each state where the vehicle will operate. The specifications for permits vary from state to state, so data such as weight, length, height, width, overhangs, axle weights, tongue weights, distances between axles, ground clearance, and drivers' ancestral blood type may be required. States may have different requirements for liability insurance. My insurance company wrote a million-dollar policy for me and allowed me to keep it in effect while I was en route and then cancel it at my destination. This made the necessary insurance affordable.

As soon as I had confirmed dates for travel, I submitted oversized-load permit-request forms to each state along the way. The first problem was getting a permit to cross Missouri, the last state before I would get home and the easiest route to get into the Ozarks where I live. Missouri required a type of insurance that's only available to trucking companies with DOT numbers. Even though my insurance exceeded the requirements, they would not accept it. The underwriter from my insurance company called the Missouri permit office and could not find a way to work with them. I took the long and inconvenient way home, bypassing Missouri.

If money is not a concern, it's easier to secure permits through a trucking permit company. I was driving across 11 states, for which the highest bid quoted was $1,200. Price was a concern in my case, so I did it myself and saved $700. It forced me to take detours to a downtown Nashville office, along a beautiful 30-mile narrow side road through some nice Pennsylvania countryside, and later plead with New York DOT workers to issue a permit via fax to a truck-stop drivers' lounge at the very last minute. I do not know if a permit office could have secured a Missouri permit for me. If so, that would have been a big benefit.

Extracting the boat

With a vehicle, insurance documents, folder of permits, trailer, and cradle secured, it can still be tricky for a do-it-yourselfer to access the boat and get it loaded. My boat had been settling in for 10 years on the dirt floor of her cozy barn.

My rig fit well around her keel as I jockeyed boat stands in and out until I had the frame set in position. Then I ooched up 20-ton bottle jacks to lift her, still supported by boat stands, off the ground, adjusting the stands as she rose until I could secure the cradle in position. Tubular-steel horizontal braces

Walter had to cut the lintel over the barn door before hauling the boat out of the barn, and then had to coax her, cradle and all, onto the trailer.

The boat is at last out of the barn and secured on the trailer, and Walter takes a final look at the rig to make sure it's ready for the road, at left. Five days of driving, 2,000 miles, and 11 states later, truck, trailer, and Nantucket Clipper are at last in Walter's driveway in Arkansas, at right.

let me slide the cradle into a position where the pads would support the hull where it was reinforced: under the bow, along the stringers and the engine beds, and at the tabernacle bulkhead.

I fitted the cradle pads on site by connecting them to the curved limbs of a bois d'arc tree from my home property. I would not do this with any other kind of wood. Also known as Osage orange, it is as strong as steel and more dense than old-growth teak. The curved limbs, fitted with curved plate-steel carpeted pads, matched the shape of the boat. The majority of the weight rested on the 2 x 12 plank keel support. For reinforcement, I strapped the cradle corners together with four webbed ratchet straps rated at 3,333 pounds each. Once the boat was set into the cradle and the two strapped together with four more straps, it made a very stable platform.

To move the cradled boat from the barn, I parked my trailer, still attached to the truck, in line with the keel and winched the cradle little by little along planks. At first I measured the movement at ¼ inch every five minutes. The winches I used to drag the boat from the barn were rated at 8,000 pounds. Before the cradle reached the barn door, the first winch was destroyed and my arm was sore. I had a spare winch and, after the pulleys separated in the first one, I became more careful when setting the rollers for every move.

With 3½-inch round tubing underneath the cradle, the boat moved easily. The strength of the cradle was tested when — while I was resetting the cradle on a roller — the balance shifted and the whole rig moved on its own. A pebble brought one side to an abrupt stop, while the other side fell 4 inches off the roller next to me. It happened so fast I couldn't react to get out from under it. Luckily my welds held and securing ropes pulled the weight away from where I sat working the jack. I realized I had come close to being flattened. After that, I was more careful to have back-up supports and plan my escape route, just in case.

One full day of winching got the boat into the clear. A second day was needed to ramp the boat and cradle onto the trailer. Merrill, the property's caretaker, saved the day by locating timbers for solid ramps. I used a third day to pack incidentals and secure for the road before I was ready to leave, just one day before my permit deadline in Connecticut.

Transportation costs

The expense of moving a sailboat with a 9-foot beam from Lubec, Maine, to West Fork, Arkansas, is not insignificant.

Best quote from a professional boat mover:	$7,200
Lowest permit quote from a professional permit office:	$700
Actual DIY cost:	
Permits from all state DOT offices:	$302
Fuel costs over 4,180 miles:	$1,273
Truck, trailer, cradle, and repairs:	$4,900
Insurance ($1,000,000 liability coverage):	$130
Total:	**$6,605**

On the road

Permit offices determine the roads that oversized loads can travel. My predetermined route led down a road badly damaged from winter freezing. The pavement would fade into dirt with no warning. This turned out to be a good way to check that the load was secure. I aligned a spot on my side mirror with a point on the boat and kept a constant measure to see if anything shifted. One abrupt bounce, when the road disappeared into a pothole when I was driving too fast, put my heart in my throat. Then I looked over to see the spot in the same place. Lesson learned: slow down.

Speed is determined by road conditions minus 10 mph. I learned to take my time and enjoy the scenery while constantly scanning the boat's position and keeping a watch out for vehicles pulling out in front of me. I developed a method of checking gauges. I kept a close eye on my exhaust-gas temperature more than anything else. Turbo boost was also important but more for telling me when to downshift. The main lesson of the speedometer was when to turn on my emergency flashers. That was whenever a hill dropped my speed below 45 mph for an extended period.

Sleeping in a truck cab is not ideal. At 5 feet 7 inches, I found no way to get comfortable. I had traded the rear seat of my truck for a futon mattress. I piled in all the pillows I could find and left a space for a small ice chest. I parked wherever large trucks gathered to bed down — rest areas or lots behind truck stops. Any time I stopped at gas stations or rest areas, I met people interested in the boat who asked questions about traveling with such a rig. It made a great

conversation starter and even though many people probably thought I was crazy, many more were encouraged to approach me and learn about the boat and why I would be driving through the middle of the country where it would be so out of place. Every state border crossed received a honk of my horn. Crossing the Mississippi River gave me a fantastic feeling of joy. Getting into my home state gave me a great sense of accomplishment.

Oversize-permit pains include having to stop at night and holidays. Some states do not allow moving oversized loads on weekends. An Arkansas state trooper stopped me at sunset 100 miles from home. He checked my permit and found that the copy I had received from the permit office had lost a page in the fax transmission. It had looked good to me and I hadn't noticed the skip in the page numbers. I sat on the side of the road with flashing blue lights in my mirror until the sun was all the way down. Then the officer told me to get off at the next exit and stay put until sunrise. After four days of driving, I was looking forward to getting home to sleep in my own bed and wanted to go on. I asked the trooper what the fine would be if I chose to drive after dark. He said, "It won't cost much, but your load will probably be confiscated." I spent another night in the cab wishing my boat had been just 6 inches narrower.

I toasted a long trip with my last Yuengling from Pennsylvania. Although we weren't home yet, we were close, and it felt like I had accomplished my journey.

The next morning, I finished the trip. My truck made it over the steep pass into the Ozarks and the Nantucket Clipper found her new temporary home with the promise that she would be returned to the sea. Her next launch will be 70 miles away in the fresh brown water of the Arkansas River. She will see the same shores that were traveled by Native Americans, explorers, and the many immigrants who settled our country. She is already much closer to being back on blue water than she ever was in the 10 years she spent just a half mile from the ocean on the farthest eastern shore.

The Nantucket Clipper sits next to Walter's Flying Scot under the partially erected frame for a cover.

Walter Graupner is rebuilding the Nantucket Clipper in Arkansas while continuing to sail his Flying Scot on the Arkansas River. Known as "a MacGyver" in the research labs he manages, Walter has been a farmer, chef, toxicology researcher, avionics tech, poultry computer specialist, and developer of space simulations. He tries to convince all his students to focus on ways they can *do something instead of getting hung up on reasons they* can't.

OK, now what?

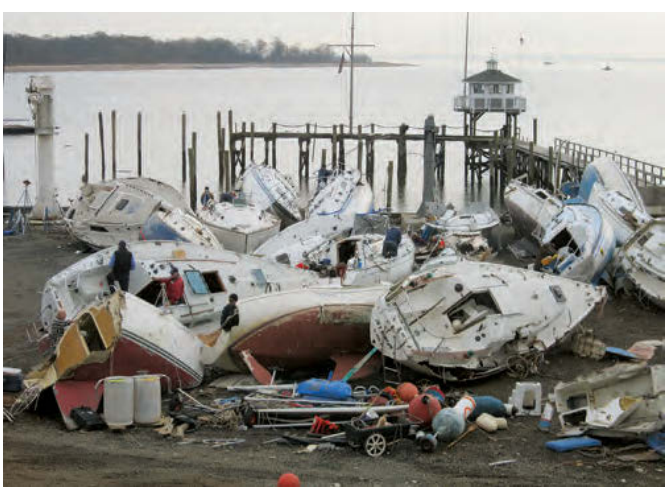
After the storm, it's decision time

BY GARY MILLER

For some sailors, after a storm or hurricane comes relief. The mooring held. The neighboring steel boat didn't break loose during the night and wreak havoc. The docklines held up. Others are not so fortunate. The storm surge has lifted boats up like twigs and deposited them in front yards half a mile away. Or the docks rose above the pilings and hundreds of boats were set free to crash on shore. Or, what seems like the ultimate insult, the boats just sank.

Sailors preparing for Hurricane Sandy last fall took some solace when it was downgraded to "merely" a tropical storm. But the respite was short-lived. Thanks to a funnel-shaped and steep shoreline, a full moon, a higher-than-normal tide, and a slower-than-predicted forward movement, Sandy stunned stormwatchers and left a horrifying trail of death and destruction. Huge Staten Island ferries snapped their hawsers and had to be held in place by their masters, probably eternally grateful for engines at bow and stern. Low-lying communities were inundated by a surge of salt water combined with high winds and an extraordinary amount of rain. One hundred sixty people died, thousands were injured, and untold households had to make do without electricity well into the frigid winter.

For sailors, the huge (940-mile-diameter) storm caused an unprecedented amount of damage. Marinas disappeared. Boats either sank or were hurled onto the surrounding shores. Yacht clubs were under water. The HMS *Bounty* replica sank with the loss of two, including the captain.



When he first saw her after Hurricane Sandy had passed, Alan Vieiro's Watkins 27, *Jolly Blue*, at top, was wedged between others at the boatyard. He said, "She appears to be OK with her mast and rigging still in one piece, her rudder whole and not bent, and no significant hull damage. She is a sturdy, well-built boat and I am hopeful that, once back up on stands, she will be OK." Vadym Telpis found only the keel and parts of the deck of his boat among the piles of boats and pieces at The Raritan Yacht Club, above.

BoatU.S. spokesman Scott Croft said, "In terms of boat damage, this will surpass all other storms. We've never seen anything like it." BoatU.S. estimated that more than 65,000 recreational boats were damaged or lost as a result of Hurricane Sandy. The company estimated that dollar damage to all recreational boats was more than $650 million, making the late October storm the single-largest industry loss since the association began keeping track in 1966. To put that

Paul Athens sent this photo of a Cal 9.9 that broke away from its mooring in Hurricane Sandy and wound up quite literally in the graveyard, top right. By the next day all that was left was the mast and keel. Paul's own boat, *White Pants*, a 1982 Catalina 30, was declared a total loss, center right. The cost to straighten the keel, replace the bowsprit, and re-rig her exceeded 75 percent of her insured value and the yard bought her for salvage and resale (and, we hope, re-sail). One year later, she has been restored and is waiting for her next owner. Stewart Wickstein sent photos of damage at the Raritan Yacht Club in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Founded in 1865, it is one of the oldest yacht clubs in the USA, bottom right.

number in perspective, it's about the same as hurricanes Wilma and Katrina combined.

Picking up the pieces

When the skies cleared, many boat owners faced the question, "Now what do I do?" For some, immediate action was paramount. Their boats were blocking roads or railway lines or were leaning against high-voltage wires. Workers and machines toiled 24/7 to deal with the most pressing cases.

For many, their boats were the last thing on their minds. Houses were gone. There was no heat or electricity. Food was scarce. Relief organizations, schools, churches, and other groups banded together in unprecedented numbers to provide help. Tales of heroism were told nightly on the television news.

On top of the other problems brought on by the storm, boat owners had decisions to make and work to do. All over the New York tri-state area (that includes New Jersey and Connecticut), marinas had disappeared, yacht clubs were destroyed, and shore facilities had been disabled. The only silver lining was the date: October 29. By late October, a good percentage of boats were already hauled for the season and on jack stands. This worked against some, as it made it easier for the surge to lift and deposit boats farther inland. One NPR listener called in and pleaded, "Help! What do I do? There's a 35-foot sailboat in my front yard!"

At what was left of Nichols Great Kills Park Marina on Staten Island, New York, manager Eddie Tominack surveyed the unbelievable damage. Three hundred fifty slips were literally gone. Worse, the National Park Service announced that, after 37 years, it would not renew the franchise to maintain the marina, which is located in Great Kills National Recreation area and is the largest on Staten Island. A two-year study had already been under way to determine how to best develop the 350-acre park when Sandy hit.

"Boat owners who did elect to receive a replacement check," Eddie told me, "can't buy another boat because they have nowhere to dock it. Then you have the people whose boats were worth between $5,000 and $10,000. Most of those don't have insurance at all. They're really out of luck. And this is the kind of marina where most people do their own work."

Several months later, Eddie and boat owners received better news. A grass-roots effort assisted by Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Representative Michael Grimm (R-Staten Island/Brooklyn) resulted in a last-minute victory and an announcement from the National Park Service that it had agreed to renew the lease for three years.

Stories like Eddie's were repeated endlessly in the 15 states hit by Sandy. Sailors soon reached the next level of response as they faced whether their boats were salvageable or a total loss.

Salvage or abandon?

Yacht salvage is something most sailors never think about. It conjures up boats being raised from the briny deep, dripping with seaweed and headed for the junk pile. But fiberglass boats don't disappear easily. They don't decompose in a landfill. You can't chop

Stewart Wickstein's insurance company sent him a check for the insured value less 5 percent of his Comfortina 32, *Thalassa*, above and detail, and a friend is repairing her. This year he is enjoying life aboard once more on a 1990 Beneteau 32s5.

them up and burn them. Maybe, just maybe, they can be salvaged.

I was introduced to the word "salvage" not too long ago. A stately 32-foot Cheoy Lee double-headsail ketch we owned was dismasted halfway between Block Island and Greenport, New York. The damage was extensive and repairs were expensive, especially on paper in the surveyor's report. New mast, rigging, sails, lifelines, and so on added up to more than the boat was worth. BoatU.S., our insurer, wanted to write a check for the replacement value. To make a long story short, we took it. However, a local sailor purchased the boat from the salvage company and, with a little cash and a lot of ingenuity and hard work, had himself a beautiful boat that, as they say, "turned heads."

The majority of Sandy's victims were not so easy to categorize. For example, if there was a 6-foot gash in the hull,

Finding a suitable salvage

There's a big difference between salvaging your own boat and salvaging someone else's. By someone else, I don't mean your sailing buddy on the next mooring who was going to upgrade to a Xanadu 46, so his Xanadu 26 that was trashed by a storm is a well-known commodity.

I'm talking about slapping down your hard-earned cash for an unknown boat that has been salvaged by an insurance or salvage company or by a marina that has invested time and money in bringing it back to life. The results? As they say, your mileage can vary.

Many have walked away from project boats, disappointed and with no recourse. On the flip side of the coin was a sailor who proudly admitted, "My $200 initial investment plus the $2,200 I have in her yielded me a boat valued at approximately $11,000."

How to decide? How to proceed? Start out by buying from a reputable salvage company. Every sailing center in the U.S. has salvage companies that have been around for 10 or 20 years. As Bob Adriance of BoatU.S. says, "This isn't the time to hire someone cruising the beach in a tow truck. Ask them how long they have been doing business. Ask for references — and call those references."

Many of those boats that have been sitting in the corner of the boatyard for years are there because the yard owner can't establish legal ownership title. Obtaining legal ownership is a big hurdle in buying a salvaged yacht. As veteran sailors know, more than one boat has been impounded by the U.S. Coast Guard and returned to its rightful owner because ownership hadn't been properly and legally transferred. The salvage company is usually the one responsible for this, but you should ask up front to make sure there is no confusion. If a yacht is documented, that usually helps establish legal ownership.

YachtSalvage.com's Bob Costa cautions a would-be buyer to look at the boat very carefully before bidding. That means hiring a qualified and certified surveyor who has been in business for at least a few years and can provide solid references. You need a detailed, professionally prepared, written report from someone whose reputation is on the line.

Search the web and you will find countless stories of people who got burned from buying yachts sight unseen. You laugh, but it happens every day. Some people get lucky. They buy through eBay and pay with PayPal or another solid payment system that tracks every move and eventually their claim gets straightened out. But do you really want to spend time, money, and frustration with banks, lawyers, the owner, et al., just because you didn't want to carefully look at the boat (or more properly, have a professional look at it) before buying it?

Buying from a marina that you know probably combines the best of all worlds. The marina owner, in most cases, is not going to risk ruining his reputation by selling you a pig in a poke. He'll probably be honest about the condition and history of the boat.

Admittedly, the price has a lot to do with how much money you should invest in a survey. The "dock committee" of neighbors in your marina can probably help you examine a Rhodes 19 washed up on the beach with broken rigging and you will not fall into a financial hole. As the price of the boat goes up, however, so does the logic for getting a thorough survey.

With survey in hand, market conditions in the back of your head, and a realistic set of expectations on the horizon, you might be able to buy a storm-damaged boat from the salvage company and find the silver lining in that devastating storm.

Fair winds.

Cliff Moore photographed the scenes of destruction at Morgan Marina, at right, in Sayreville, on the New Jersey shore of Raritan Bay, which is off New York's Lower Bay. As for his own boat, *Pelorus*, a Paceship PY26, below right, he reported, "My boat was right where I left her, but a flatbed truck parked 5 or 6 feet away had been shoved into her side and abraded five holes in the side, some the size of my hand. Something hit the stern pulpit and damaged the ladder mounting bracket. There was water inside but not up to the cushions. I was very, very lucky."

would you attempt to buy the boat back and make the repairs? Yourself? Or if the boat sat at the bottom of New York Harbor for six weeks, would you — and, more important, *could* you — tear down the engine as part of your salvage effort?

As viewers of Good Old Boat's Fixer-Upper Sailboats web page know, there's an abundance of cheap or free boats to be had. Most can scratch the itch to rebuild an old beauty by acquiring one from the yacht graveyard. So why even think of salvaging your own?

The most common reason is you know the boat. The fact that it is yours, of course, means your emotions cloud the waters a little. But let's say, for the sake of argument, that your old Pearson has sunk in a storm. You know the old 1-cylinder Yanmar was on its last legs, the wiring was a hodgepodge that more often than not had you hanging upside down in the bilge like a tree lemur, and the sails had what we might kindly call "a cruising shape" to them. You call your insurance agent, who asks if you would like to salvage your boat. The company will even write you a check to cover the cost of repairs after you buy the boat back from the salvage company. What to do?

If you have the time, money, and ingenuity you might salvage your boat. The key part is ingenuity. Maybe you don't know how to strip down a diesel and rebuild it, but you know someone in your yard who is upgrading and has a perfectly usable 1GM for sale. Cheap. In fact, if you help him remove it from his boat and help him install his beautiful new 3GM, he'll give it to you. The boat's wiring? That had to be upgraded anyway, so write it down in the budget.

Most sailors would not try to repair a 6-foot gash in the hull. But they can find someone who can. And if the hull needed repainting anyway, the numbers might add up.

The same goes for sails and rigging. Does the bottom line justify the time and effort required to put your baby back on her mooring? For some, the answer is a resounding yes!

Getting competent salvage and repair help for a damaged boat after a hurricane is difficult. Some insurance programs will arrange for and pay to have their clients' boats salvaged; others will at least provide some assistance. But boat owners without insurance don't have anyone to lean on. For those going it alone, BoatU.S. offers a wealth of detailed information, including organizations, resources, and just plain good advice. Search for "salvage" on the BoatU.S. website.

No one makes a killing salvaging boats. Mike Costa of YachtSalvage.com says that, not surprisingly, the salvage boat inventory was high following Hurricane Sandy. But there were also plenty of buyers, especially from Europe. "They buy them sight unseen," he says.

If you have a surveyor carefully look the boat over and go in with your own eyes wide open, you can get a good deal. And you could have fun bringing that good old boat back to life.

Gary Miller is a photographer, writer, and good old boater whose last ride was a beautifully restored Pearson 35 sloop, Viridian. *Instead of sailing, he spent the past spring and summer hoofing it . . . northbound on the Appalachian Trail.*

Resources

***Southwinds* magazine**
This Gulf Coast regional sailing magazine has many links and a lot of information available regarding hurricane preparedness and lessons learned.
www.southwindsmagazine.com/hurricane-information-for-boaters.php

BoatU.S. Hurricane Resource Center
BoatU.S. offers many free online resources and preparation worksheets.
www.boatus.com/hurricanes
BoatU.S. also has advice on inspecting a used boat to determine if it might have been salvaged.
www.boatus.com/pressroom/release.asp?id=936

Where to find damaged boats:

Cooper Capital Specialty Salvage
www.cooperss.com
Certified Sales and Yacht Salvage
(two divisions of the same company)
www.certifiedsales.com
www.yachtsalvage.com
USAuctions.com
www.usauctions.com
Good Old Boat's Fixer-Upper Sailboats page
www.goodoldboat.com/resources_for_sailors/fixer-upper_sailboats.php
See also:
"Preparing for the Big Blow" by Don Launer, *Good Old Boat*, May 2002

FIX IT OR NIX IT?

The cost to repair vs. the cost to replace

BY CARL HUNT

Let's say your 30-foot good old boat needs $25,000 worth of repairs and she's only worth $20,000. Should you make the repairs? Many dockside wags would say no. Not long ago, I noticed an article in a well-regarded sailing magazine that said if the repairs cost more than the boat is worth, you shouldn't do it. I suppose the implication is that you should sell the boat or let it deteriorate. What's a sailor to do? After all, we *have* to have boats, don't we?

Owning a boat is not a particularly rational financial decision to begin with. It's not going to add to your retirement fund. In fact, it will probably reduce your 401K even though it will enrich your life. But once you've committed to boat ownership, however irrational financially, it's still possible to use some financial tools to guide your decisions thereafter.

One of the problems with examining whether or not to put a lot of money into an older boat is that the exercise is a lot less fun than sailing. However, spending a little time examining the best financial course can help improve your sailing experience.

This boat or that boat?

Let's start with the proposition that, as a sailor, if you sell one boat, you'll buy another. Therein lies the rub. Will it make more financial sense to keep your current GOB 30 and make the expensive repairs or to buy a new or newer boat, as many wags state? The answer lies in the data.

Because you're going to own a boat, you can begin with the concept of "opportunity cost." That's the cost of an activity measured against the next best alternative not chosen. In the case of repairing your GOB 30, the next best alternative would be to buy a new Shiny 30 or a used Almost-shiny 30. By comparing the expense of owning another boat to that of owning and repairing your GOB 30, you can determine if it makes financial sense to make the repairs on the GOB 30.

For the purposes of this illustration, I'll make the following assumptions:

You will keep your GOB 30, the alternative Shiny 30, or the Almost-shiny 30 for 10 years.

You will borrow money for the repairs to your GOB 30 or borrow to buy an alternative boat.

You will be able to sell your GOB 30 for $20,000 today or for $20,000 in 10 years.

A Shiny 30 or Almost-shiny 30 will depreciate at a rate of 5 percent per year.

You have good credit and can borrow at a rate of 4 percent.

Maintenance and upgrades on your GOB 30 will be $3,500 per year.

Maintenance and upgrades on a Shiny 30 will be $2,000 per year.

Maintenance and upgrades on an Almost-shiny 30 will be $3,000 per year.

Using this information, you can determine whether it makes financial sense to hang on to your GOB 30, buy a new Shiny 30, or look instead for a 10-year-old Almost-shiny 30. I also included in the calculations a 20-year-old Not-so-shiny 30 in case your pockets are not deep enough to handle the more expensive boats.

Good old inexpensive

As you can see from the table, the most financially responsible choice is to repair and keep your GOB 30. (I could have imagined a different outcome that would favor a new or newer boat by changing some of the assumptions and data. But I didn't, because then there wouldn't have been an article.)

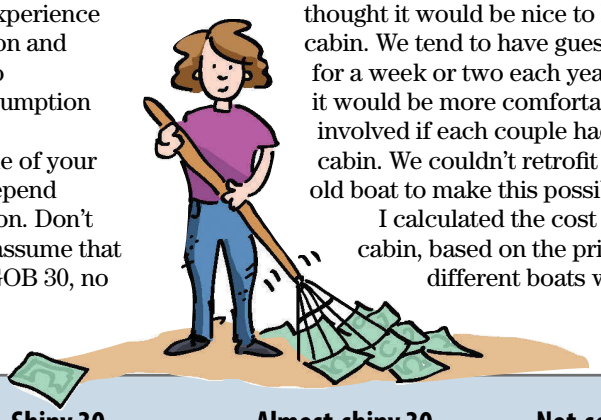
Note that the table doesn't include the total cost of boat ownership. Its focus is only on major differences in expenses. Many of the costs, such as moorage, will be the same for all options. Besides, including the total cost of boat ownership might cause you to experience some depression and perhaps lead to increased consumption of spirits.

The outcome of your analysis will depend on your situation. Don't automatically assume that keeping your GOB 30, no matter how emotionally satisfying, is the most financially appropriate option. Use the data as a guide and make it specific to your particular circumstances. Fortunately, calculators and computer programs make it easy to crunch the numbers. You don't have to know the specific equations or do the math yourself, unless you are so inclined. After all, some people like to varnish teak.

The upgrade analogy

The same analysis can help with other aspects of boat ownership. To use a personal example, some years ago we thought it would be nice to have an aft cabin. We tend to have guests aboard for a week or two each year. We felt it would be more comfortable for all involved if each couple had a private cabin. We couldn't retrofit our good old boat to make this possible.

I calculated the cost of an aft cabin, based on the prices of different boats with the



Ownership costs compared

	GOB 30	Shiny 30	Almost-shiny 30	Not-so-shiny 30
Maintenance and upgrades	$35,000	$20,000	$30,000	$35,000
Loan payment	$30,373	$145,792	$110,650	$48,598
Depreciation	$0	$58,926	$35,777	$19,642
Total cost	$65,373	$224,718	$176,427	$103,240
Less selling price	$20,000	$91,074	$55,297	$30,358
Net cost	$45,373	$133,644	$121,130	$72,882

characteristics we wanted. I determined that an aft cabin would cost us between $50,000 and $100,000. For this price, we determined that we could happily continue converting the main saloon settee to a double berth. If we needed more privacy and we were sailing in an area with hotels, it would be much cheaper to rent a hotel room. If we were in the wilderness and really needed more privacy, someone could sleep on the beach. Even chartering a boat for a week or two a year would be a better financial option.

Emotion sometimes wins

On the other hand (a well-worn economics term), you have to keep in mind that there is an emotional aspect to boat ownership. I once had a boat neighbor who owned a Hinckley Bermuda 40. He put three times as much money into that boat as he would ever get out of it. He loved that boat and so did I.

As this example illustrates, financial calculations do not have to be the determining factor in your whether-to-sell-or-maintain decision-making process. After all, at $200,000 a pop, how many of us would choose to have children if we based our decision solely on the cost of raising them?

Instead, the finances should be only one aspect, albeit a grounding one, for your decisions. Emotion can and does sometimes trump the bottom line. I'm guilty of succumbing. Now that I've moved into my seventh decade, we're thinking about replacing our good old boat with one that's easier to sail and has more creature comforts. The cost of this change is going to be nearly as expensive as putting our kids through college . . . but the ability to sail for another 10 to 15 years? Priceless.

Carl Hunt is a semi-retired economist living in Colorado. He has sailed for more than 30 years and has cruised his boats from British Columbia to Mexico. He has also chartered and cruised other people's boats throughout the eastern United States and the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and other parts of the world.

Caveat vendor

BY BEN THORSSON

A boat-selling ad was bait for a phish

During the winter, when temperatures were well below zero, we decided to sell our modest 27-foot sailboat in hopes of upgrading to something with a bit more room. I have little respect for boat brokers, whose slick hard-sell attitudes are akin to nautical used-car salesmen. Although there may be exceptions out there, I have yet to meet any of the good ones. So off we went on our own . . . and boy did we receive a lot of interest.

Selling a boat — especially one that has taken such good care of us over the years, one on which I have spilled blood, bruised knuckles and, during the course of maintenance, contorted my body into extreme-yoga positions — is a highly emotional experience. The problem of setting a price was easily overcome by consulting dear friends and crewmates. Their interest extended only as far as the next racing season; for them, the thought of crewing a bigger boat served as encouragement.

So with crew-provided pricing suggestions in hand, a bunch of photos, and a finely formatted listing, we posted to our four favorite free sites: Craigslist, SailingTexas, a Yahoo forum for the boat model, and *Good Old Boat*. (*Good Old Boat* classified ads are free if you're a current subscriber. Really, are there any sailors who work on their own boats who aren't reading *Good Old Boat*?)

Rapid response

As a cyber-security professional, Internet scams are to me what Legos are to my grandchildren: a chance at hours of fun and creativity. So when we received our first email from John H. within 24 hours of posting, I knew the next few months were going to be filled with boatloads of entertainment, pun intended.

Our first response was short. Sent as a Craigslist reply to our posting, John H. wrote, "Mail JohnHxxxx(at)gmail.com with your price."

John H. gets an A-plus for brevity. Our first interested party . . . within a day, no less! Although the price was clearly listed in the posting, one cannot overlook potential buyers simply because they miss a few key points in the advertisement. After all, we fully expected the boat to be on the market well into the spring, so this was unexpectedly incredible! Excited at the prospect of kicking off this post-sailing "sale-ing" season so quickly, I replied to John H. at 6:07 a.m.

The pop-up window on my laptop read, "New Message, 6:14 a.m. from sale.craigslist.org."

Although he is prompt, it appears that John H. is unable to read my replies through the Craigslist system and would like me to email him at JohnHxxxx "at gmail dot com." No problemo, John H! I applaud your cyber-security prowess, the way you typed out your email address in the body with "dot com" so it can't be harvested by search engines, even though you are sending it directly to me and not posting it anywhere.

I copied and pasted my previous message into a new email to John H. at his gmail account and hit send at 7:41 a.m. This boat sale thing was way easier and more fun than I had anticipated!

"New Message, 7:47 a.m. from JohnHxxxx@gmail.com!" John must be *really* interested in our little boat. His average

response time for the two email messages is 6.5 minutes and it sounds like he is ready to purchase sight unseen!

"Hello," John H. politely replied. "Thanks for the message,Can you assure me the item is in good condition that i will not be disappointed? I'm willing to pay your asking price, I want to buy it for my Brother..I am currently Offshore, I am not able to make phone calls...But I squeezed out time to check this advert and send you an email regarding it but my quickest payment option is PayPal as i can send money via PayPal anytime.. Since I'm requesting this transaction to be done via PayPal, i will be responsible for all the pay pal fee/ charges on this transaction and if you don't have an account with paypal, it is pretty easy, safe and secured to open one... Just log on to www.paypal.com. I hope we can complete the transaction as soon as possible? I have a pick up Agent that will be coming for the pick up once payment clears.... I will like to see more pictures as I look forward to read from you soonest...

"Below are the details needed for PayPal Transfer
Your PayPal e-Mail Address:
Full name:
Firm Price:
Cell number:
"Thanks."

Too many clues

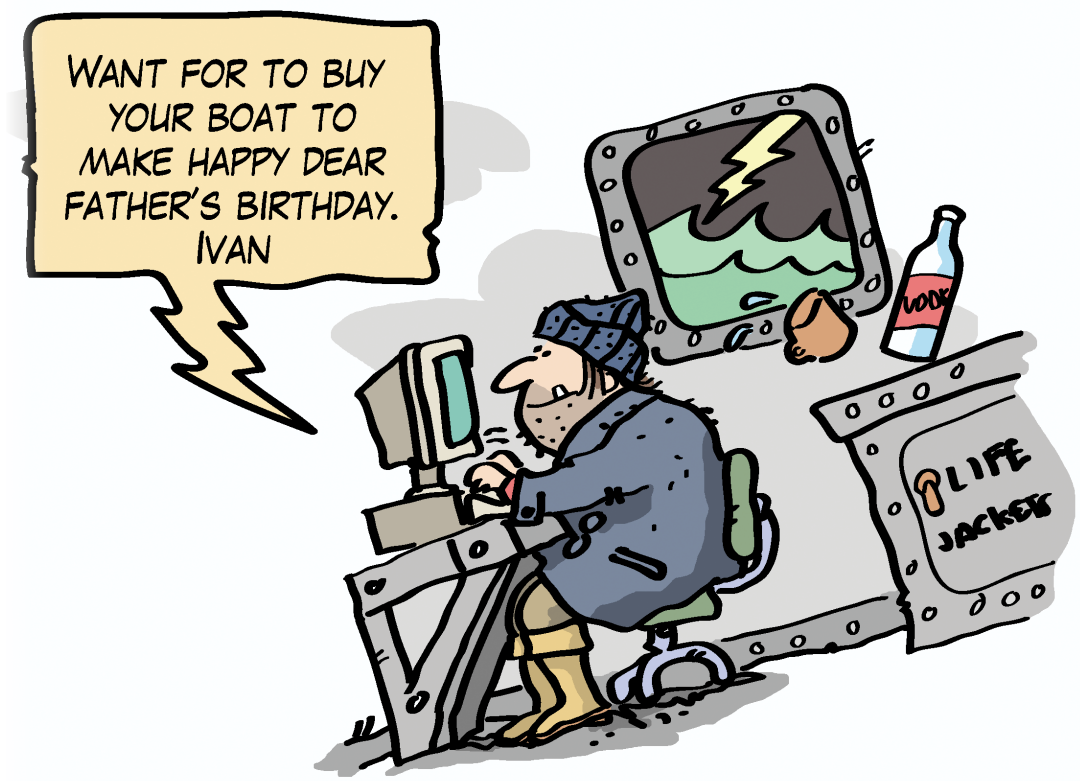
A quick Internet search for "PayPal scams" or "Craigslist PayPal scams" yields more than 809,000 results, some with links to Craigslist and PayPal describing various nefarious fraud schemes and others offering helpful advice for identifying and avoiding the pitfalls of Internet sales. Some common tactics involve PayPal overpayments that require sending the additional amount through Western Union to a "shipping company," fraudulent or spoofed email payment confirmations that appear to come from PayPal, and emails that contain links to sites that look like PayPal but are designed to steal your login credentials. In any case, there is a sufficient amount of information on the Internet about these techniques and how to avoid them. But I was in this for the fun as much as the sale.

John H.'s offer was enticing, as were the email messages we received from Susan A., Collins M., Alonge C., and Ivan, all willing to pay my asking price! Susan A. said she saw the advertisement on one of the other sites and has an interested colleague who will send me a "certified cashier's check/money order" as soon as I provide my full name, address, telephone number, price, email, and item name."

Collins M. emailed me on the eve of leaving town for the holiday season, apparently in such a rush he misspelled his own name; however, he did have an assistant who happened to be "an avid fisherman and knows a thing or two about boats" and could facilitate the exchange and arrange for shipment.

Alonge C. asked not only if he could pay full price, but wanted to know if his "pick-up agent" could come to my house for the "pick up" because, as he put it, "I don't want you to worry yourself about the shipment." Ivan was also a marine engineer on a ship and wanted to buy our boat as a surprise birthday gift for his father but had limited access to communications, noting, "phone calls making and visiting of website are limited," and was currently in the midst of a terrible storm that knocked their "satellite server" down.

We received many more email messages from people interested in the boat. Most of the scam emails we received were willing to pay our asking price, so long as we could use PayPal or send our bank account information and confirm that they wouldn't be disappointed with the boat. Yes, their grammar was a little choppy and their emails were riddled



with formatting errors, but anyone who has ever typed anything on a boat bobbing around "offshore" knows that a few extra periods and the occasionally mis-capitalized word are par for the course.

A flesh-and-blood buyer

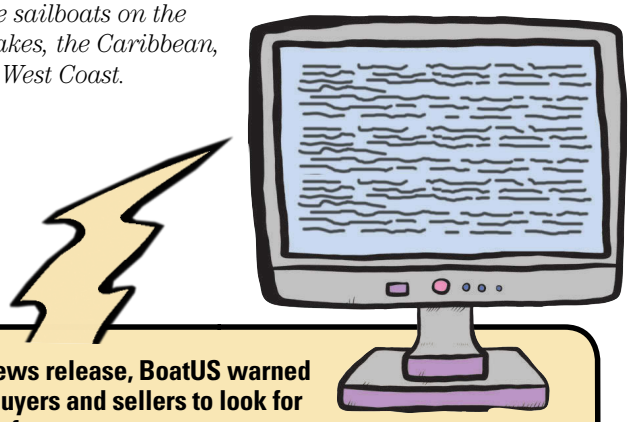
In the end, we decided not to sell to John H., Susan A., Collins M., Alonge C., Ivan, or any of the other offshore, on-holiday, interested parties. I appreciated their interest and willingness to pay the asking price as well as their tenacity. After all, how many people would take the time to surf the 'net at sea — violent storms raging all about them, broken satellite servers, pending holidays with screaming kids and demanding spouses — all so they could give the gift of sailing to a father or brother? Plus, they all had PayPal accounts that would have made for a quick and easy sale. But I have no experience working with a "pick-up agent," which sounds a lot like dealing with a used-car salesman to me.

The boat eventually sold. The guy who bought her emailed, called, and came to look at her. She was delivered to her new home and will become a liveaboard home for someone who will care for her as much as she will care for him.

With the prospect of being boatless, we started our search. I crafted my pre-visit questions. I decided to omit from my email messages the part about being offshore in the middle of a storm with limited Internet access and a PayPal account full of money.

I have disguised the names and email addresses to protect people with the same or similar identities or those potentially unwitting and unaware victims of identity theft. Although some of the names of interested parties seemed quite unique, why take the chance that there is actually a person with a Franco-Russian name living on the high seas whose sole purpose in life is finding just the right small sailboat for his elderly, yet apparently quite capable, father to sail around the world?

Ben Thorsson is a cyber-security analyst and sailor with 10 years' experience cruising, racing, crewing, and skippering a variety of small to mid-size sailboats on the Great Lakes, the Caribbean, and the West Coast.



In a news release, BoatUS warned boat buyers and sellers to look for signs of scams:

- The buyer offers a cashier's check or money for more than the asking price.
- A similar arrangement using PayPal followed by fake messages from PayPal threatening to close your account if you don't transfer the money as per your "agreement."
- An escrow service scam in which a bogus seller advertises a boat with a very low price on a website. A potential buyer is advised to transfer money to a fictitious escrow service, such as GoogleMoney.com, that may sound legitimate.
- Email red flags include: very poor grammar, spelling, and language use; no phone number is given; generic references to "the merchandise" being sold do not refer to it as a boat or type of boat; the buyer doesn't care what the price is or have any interest in inspecting it prior to purchase; and the buyer doesn't care about titles or verifying the hull identification number (HIN).

BoatUS has more advice about buying and selling boats at www.BoatUS.com/consumer.

What's

Registries can reveal a lot

BY MICHAEL ROBERTSON

To search PSIX data via the USCG website, go to:
https://cgmix.uscg.mil/psix
Click on "vessel search."

NMFS website:
www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/coast-guard-vessel-search/index

We're all curious about the good old boats out there. You've probably learned to recognize some boats by their sail insignias, cove stripes, the shapes of their hulls, and other identifying features like portlights. The next time you're stumped, check to see if there's a state registration number on the bow. If not, the boat is probably documented with the United States Coast Guard (USCG). In that case, just the name and hailing port is all you need to look up a wealth of information about that boat — more than many owners probably realize.

For example, anyone walking our docks can see the name and hailing port of our documented boat, *Del Viento*, Washington, D.C. With just this information and a smartphone, they can access the USCG Port State Information Exchange (PSIX) system and begin a process that will reveal the complete documentation details for our boat.

The USCG website describes the PSIX system as a "weekly snapshot of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) data on U.S.-flagged vessels, foreign vessels operating in U.S. waters, and Coast Guard contacts with those vessels." Anyone can access and search PSIX data from either a USGC website or a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) website. The two sites allow different search criteria and display different types of information.

It's generally best to begin a search on the USCG PSIX site. This will provide the vessel identification number (VIN). Entering this number on the NMFS "vessel search" page will reveal that *Del Viento* is a 1978 model built by Fuji Yacht Builders. The listing will also show my name and address, the name of the previous owner, the two previous names of our boat, our call sign, our boat's dimensions and tonnage, and that she's built of fiberglass. It will also display our documentation number and the date it expires.

Used together with the NMFS system, the PSIX system can do more than identify a particular boat type — or satisfy my curiosity over who owns *Loose Change*, the 82-foot Hatteras in the transient slip. For example, before committing to a particular name for my next cruising boat, I can use the PSIX system to see if any other documented boat has that name.

If I want to reach out to owners of C&C 30s, for example, I can look them up. By searching on the first few hull identification number (HIN) characters common to all C&C 30s — ZCC30 — and using "%" as a wildcard, I found that 109 of them are documented with the USCG. (The HIN is the number stamped or molded into the transom of a boat built after 1972.)

Are you curious about the fate of the beloved documented boat you sold 20 years ago? Well, let's hope someone didn't go and rename it *Wet Dream*.

When cruising a marina and a boat catches your eye, you can learn a lot about it if it is documented. Numbers on the bow indicate a state registration, at left, and you might not be able to access the database. A documented vessel, at right, can be found by searching federal websites.

in a boat's name?

Naming criteria

When it's time to name your boat, get creative. You can name your documented boat anything you like as long as you heed four rules:

- The entire name, no matter how many words, cannot be more than 33 characters long.
- All the characters in a name must be from the Latin alphabet or be Roman or Arabic numerals.
- A name may not be identical, actually or phonetically, to any word or words used to solicit assistance at sea.
- A name may not contain or be phonetically identical to obscene, indecent, or profane language, or to racial or ethnic epithets.

Any number of boats can have the same name, but every boat will have a unique vessel identification number (VIN) — which is different from the hull number (HIN) assigned by the manufacturer. And even if you change the name (through the USCG) or ownership of your documented vessel, the official documentation number (the VIN) assigned to your vessel will never change.

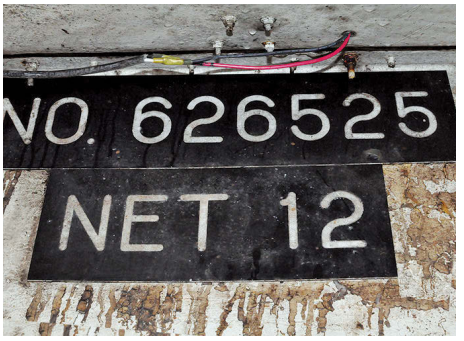
Marking your vessel

The Coast Guard is clear about how documented vessels are to be marked. It wants the name, hailing port, and documentation number clearly visible.

For recreational vessels, the name and hailing port can be anyplace on the outside of the hull, so long as they are clearly visible and clearly legible. The letters and numbers can be applied using any means or materials but they have to be "durable markings" and at least 4 inches tall. The hailing port in particular must be comprised of two elements: a place (a town or city, for example) and a state, territory, or possession of the United States.

For all documented vessels, the official, assigned VIN must be marked on a clearly visible interior structural part of the hull. The number must be "permanently affixed so that alteration, removal, or replacement would be obvious and cause some scarring or damage to the surrounding hull area." The number must be marked in numerals at least 3 inches high preceded by the abbreviation "NO."

Michael Robertson and his wife, Windy, bought a cruising sailboat in Mexico, sold their Washington, D.C., home, and dropped out of their high-pressure lives in 2011 to voyage with their two daughters, Eleanor (10) and Frances (7). They're currently aboard their Fuji 40, Del Viento, *in Mexico's Sea of Cortez. You can catch up with them at www.logofdelviento.blogspot.com.*



***Del Viento*, a U.S. documented vessel, upper right, has her official number secured to the interior structure, at right. A similar requirement applies to a Canadian vessel, at left.**

Canadian registration

In Canada, vessel registrations are handled by Transport Canada, a large department of the federal government that seems to manage all aspects of transportation, be it air, water, road, or rail. Its Vessel Registration Query System (VRQS) is like the USCG's PSIX system, a searchable database that returns the same kind of vessel and ownership information. The big difference between the Canadian and U.S. systems is that the VRQS system allows for much more comprehensive searches.

In Canada, unlike the U.S., a boat name has to be unique to be registered. Consequently, in Canada you'll see a huge number of boats with Roman numerals after their names. In the U.S., an owner would use IV to show that this is his or her fourth boat of the same name. But in Canada, it typically means that this was the fourth person to register a boat with that name.

You can search on vessel name, number, and owner or do an "advanced search" using more specific terms: http://wwwapps.tc.gc.ca/Saf-Sec-Sur/4/vrqs-srib/eng/vessel-registrations.

Identifying boats by builder

A cove stripe design is often unique to a manufacturer and can help you identify the type of boat that has captured your interest. *Good Old Boat* has been collecting photographs of cove stripes for several years. They are posted on our website at: www.goodoldboat.com/resources_for_sailors/boat_identifiers.

If the boat of interest is out there sailing and it's too far away for you to see the cove stripe, it might have a logo or insignia on the sail. This identifier plays a big role in the "What's that sailboat?" game. Download a free PDF file with many of these insignia in a handy look-'em-up format. Go to www.audioseastories.com and click on Free for Sailors.

Another place to see sailboat logos and insignia is in the Good Old Boat Owners' Association pages: www.goodoldboat.com/resources_for_sailors/owners_associations.php.

10 ways

Only buy new if you can't make do

BY JOHN BROOKS

John keeps *Good News*, a 1967 Alberg 30, in a slip off the York River in Gloucester Point, Virginia.

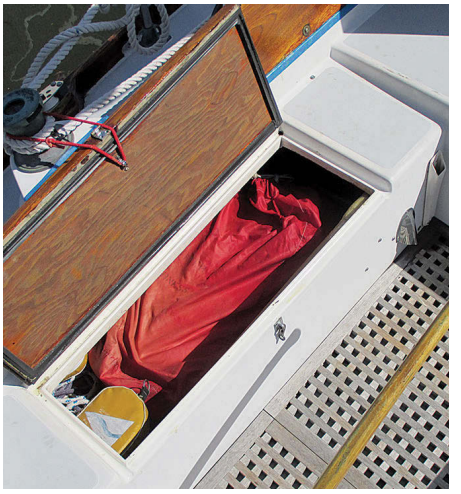
I have owned my 1967 Alberg 30, *Good News*, for more than 22 years. While maintenance is always needed on a good old boat — mine is now 46 years young! — I've saved a ton of money and time by *not* doing some common upgrades. I don't race my boat, so that has had a major impact on my decisions.

This is not to disparage "museum-quality specimens" or those that are fully tricked out for optimum performance. I absolutely enjoy seeing a classic that has been lovingly restored to "much better than new" condition, whether at the docks, out sailing, or in the pages of *Good Old Boat*. I wish I had more time and money. Lacking either in sufficient quantity, I have made choices. Here are some "roads not taken" that have allowed me to afford to own and sail a really great good old boat on a modest budget.

1. Don't convert the headsail to roller furling

A 30-footer, especially a CCA design with a small foretriangle (a short "J" measurement) doesn't have huge headsails. My #1 genoa (170 percent LP) and working jib are original sails. The #2 is about 25 years old. I can handle them easily. I like having help when folding them, but I can do it myself if it's not too windy on the dock. They're always carefully folded and stored in a cockpit locker, so I don't have sailbags on the bunks in the cabin. I have a loose-luffed drifter for light-air days.

John, or in this case his brother Charlie, folds jibs on the dock if it isn't too windy, above.



All three folded jibs fit in the port sail locker, at left, along with sheets, guys, and so on. The winches and deck layout are original and work fine for cruising purposes. John installed turning blocks with the intention of adding new self-tailing primary winches, but then backed off due to sticker shock.

2. Original topsides gelcoat

Good News has her original white topsides with dark blue cove and boot stripes. Each spring, I clean the hull, use FSR on any stains, and wax and polish the topsides. I do not buff with abrasives, so the gelcoat has lasted. Whitby Boat Works did a good job when they built the boat as there is little, if any, checking or crazing in the surface. I do paint the stripes with enamel paint and get two years out of the "stripe job." I paint the boot top and cove stripe in alternate years so there's

to save sailing dollars

The original 1967 white topsides gelcoat is hand buffed and still shines, above, even if it is no longer a mirror finish.

The name and home port on the transom are stick-on graphics, above, done quickly to get John through his first season with the boat until he could get them painted on. That was 22 years ago! Wax has kept them looking good.

always a shiny new stripe. From 10 feet away, no one can believe the topsides are original 46-year-old gelcoat! I did have the deck painted about 18 years ago and it's due for a repaint, but I will keep the topsides gelcoat as long as I can. Of course, a colored gelcoat will not last as long, but that was in my mind when I bought a white boat.

3

The depth sounder and compass are mounted on the cockpit bulkhead, above. The VHF is down below. John uses a hand-held GPS. Another compass fits on centerline in a bracket installed in the bridge deck.

3. No fancy electronics

I have a VHF, depth sounder, and hand-held GPS. I do not have wind instruments, a knotmeter, radar, or an integrated navigation system. I bought the GPS when the Coast Guard shut down Loran C. *Good News* came equipped with a very serviceable Loran unit that lasted as long as the Loran system did!

4. No changes to the deck layout

I still use the original Merriman primary winches. They're bronze, have few moving parts, and will outlast me. I have smaller Merrimans on the mast for the jib and main halyards. I can easily trim the genoa jibs (the smaller CCA fore-triangle helps), even though self-tailers would be nice. For backup, I found spare winch handles at consignment shops, but fortunately I haven't (yet!) lost a handle over the side. The boat tracks and handles so well that it is easy — even when singlehanding — to handle the halyards at the mast. I see no need to bring the halyards aft to the cabintop so I can reach them from the cockpit. My traveler does not have a rolling block adjuster, but it's not hard to move the thumbscrew stops. I did convert the roller-reefing main to jiffy reefing, so the boom hardware and reefing lines are new. I also upgraded all the running rigging over the years to new lower-stretch double braid.

4

5. Don't paint the mast

Some don't like the look of an unpainted aluminum mast, especially one that long ago lost its anodizing (if it ever had any). This look works for Nautor's Swans, however, and it works for me. I noticed that many painted masts have significant paint-bubbling "issues" due to dissimilar metals where hardware is attached. A lot of effort is required to prep and paint the spars and maintain the paint thereafter.

5

The mast is gray and unpainted. The anodizing was lost many years ago. John says he could polish it or paint it but that would require more time each year to maintain.

6

John chooses the simplicity of a tiller, at left, (here in his brother Charlie's hand) over the complexity of wheel steering. John generally sails alone or with one other so the tiller presents no problems as it might with a larger crew. At anchor, the tiller is stored vertically so it is completely out of the way.

6. Tiller steering is fine

I have seen several sister ships that have been converted to pedestal wheel steering. This opens up cockpit legroom, but at a high price in cost and complexity. When I needed to replace the tiller, a stock Catalina 27 tiller was a perfect fit. What's more, it's cheaper and easier to put an inexpensive autopilot on a tiller. One came with the boat and lasted me close to 20 years. I'll get another when the budget allows.

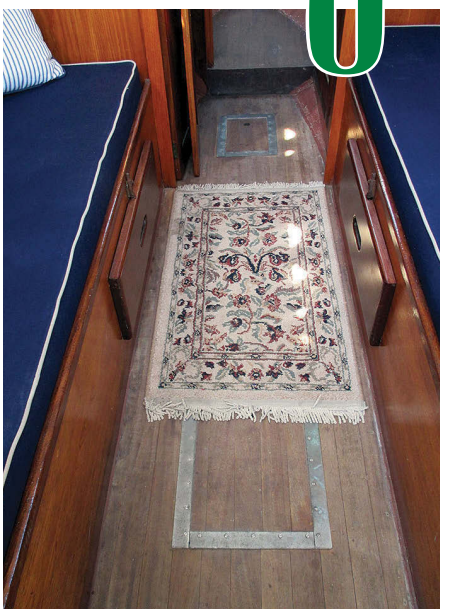
7

7. The interior layout is OK the way it is

As a tall guy (6 feet 2 inches), I appreciate the standing headroom and bunk length on the Alberg 30. Other than replacing the icebox (the new one has a chart table on top) and adding a removable insert between the V-berths in the forward cabin, there has been no drastic interior carpentry surgery. I'm not handy enough to do yacht-quality carpentry, so I focus my interior efforts on varnish, new cushions and curtains, and other details to make the saloon and cabin feel like home.

The standard Alberg 30 layout has four real bunks with a head and hanging locker between the two cabins, at left. John calls it "1950s CCA Mk I." The main saloon berths are the sea berths and have stowable lee cloths for sleeping under way when heeled.

8



The cabin sole is solid teak planks over plywood, above. John leaves it unvarnished for ease of maintenance. The oriental rug is nice for bare feet.

8. Don't dress up the cabin sole with varnish

The cabin sole on *Good News* is solid teak (no holly) planked over 1-inch marine plywood. While I scrub the sole and keep it clean, I have not been tempted to varnish or replace it with a new teak-and-holly sole. All the other teak (on deck and below) is

varnished and that's enough varnish. An unvarnished sole has better footing (remember that we usually sail at a good angle of heel) and isn't going to get messed up by sandy shoes, the occasional dropped tool, or water getting under the varnish. A little oriental rug adds a touch of class for cocktails. With a fire going in the fireplace and oil lamps for light, no one can see the sole well anyway!

9. A propane stove isn't the only way to cook

My boat came with a two-burner Origo non-pressurized alcohol stove that replaced the original Kenyon pressurized stove. I have had a lot of experience with Origo stoves and love them for their ease of use. To convert to propane requires finding a location for the tank (on deck or in a vented locker), hoses, solenoid, and sensors. The stove itself would cost at least 15 percent of the value of my boat. No thanks.

The galley is split aft with the icebox under a chart table. John modified the original icebox to add the chart table. The two-burner Origo stove is outboard of the sink on the starboard side.

When it was time to replace the Atomic 4, John chose the 2-cylinder Beta 16 since it has a great Kubota block and is set up for ease of maintenance. Everything he needs access to is on the front of the engine.

10. Replace the Atomic 4 only when necessary

The trusty original auxiliary that came with Good News — a Universal Atomic 4 — gave me three seasons of trouble-free motoring.

When an overhaul was eventually required, I found a good used Atomic 4 for $300. Installing it was cheaper than overhauling the original engine would have been. That replacement engine gave me another 15 trouble-free seasons.

Having saved up a little coin for the inevitable re-powering, and not wanting to push it any longer, I purchased a Beta Marine16 diesel (Atomic 4 replacement) and had it installed. I gave the old engine and all my spares and parts to the yard that did the job. The Beta 16 is the perfect engine for an Alberg 30. I couldn't be happier with the change, and I did it when I could afford it.

When he switched from the gas engine to diesel, John had to replace the propeller. This one is now in its fifth season, and John likes to give it a good polish in preparation for the annual war on barnacles.

Simply does it

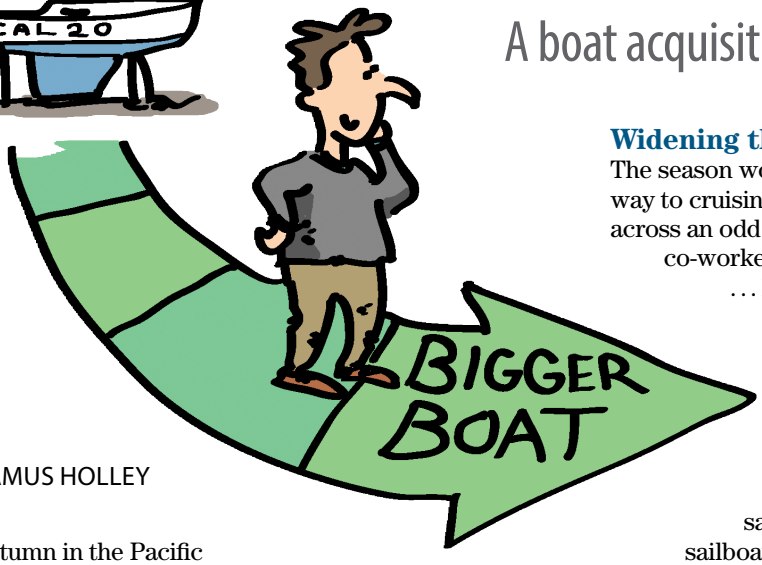
We sailors are not under the impression that our boats are financial investments. What kind of investment could it be if it requires an annual cash infusion of 30 percent of its value? That being said, part of the love affair with old boats is that they bring a quality of sailing and boat ownership experience within a realistic budget that those of us with moderate means can afford. The choices we make reflect the sailing we do and plan to do as well as our priorities for our boats.

Other sailors might come up with a slightly different list of ways to save money, but the concept would be the same. Admirers of good old boats don't need to own a fancy or expensive boat to enjoy the sailing life, nor do we need all the latest in technology, sails, and equipment. There will always be plenty of projects to keep us busy!

John Brooks has been sailing for more than 40 years and currently sails his 1967 Whitby Alberg 30 sloop, Good News, *on the lower Chesapeake Bay. He's the veteran of 18 Bermuda Races. A retired U.S. Coast Guard officer, he was at one time director of the Sailing and Seamanship Branch at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.*

Finding Heidi

A boat acquisition unfolds like a board game



BY SEAMUS HOLLEY

Autumn in the Pacific Northwest brings fickle sailing weather, and given that our Cal 20 needed a keel-off refit anyway, we pulled her out to do the deed. This meant we had no boat in the water. As the season began to settle in and the Cal slowly came back together, I started dreaming of a bigger boat.

My wife was warm to the idea. I was burning hot. In my "spare" time, I cruised the want ads, walked the docks, and racked my brain for ways to find more time and money to make this puzzle work out. We looked at a few boats: a Contessa 26 for $6,000, a Tartan 10 for $10,000, a Contest 30 for $7,000. We knew roughly what we wanted and thought we could afford. The money was never an issue in my mind, if I could just find the right boat.

The Contessa had nice teak decks and a pretty sheer, but no motor and a totally dilapidated interior. The Tartan was interesting: flush deck, full racing setup, good motor and sails, but very little headroom and no head. The Contest was the closest. It had a small center cockpit, a well-kept interior, and a head, bunk, and galley.

I was working in a boatyard and this one came in to be cleaned up for sale.

I dragged my boss, Steve, down to the boat to have a look. He gave me two pieces of advice. "Number one, you want to be able to stand in the galley. Number two, you want everyone to have somewhere to sit." The cockpit had almost nowhere for a party to sit. Back to daydreaming.

Widening the search

The season wore on and rain settled in. Dockwalking gave way to cruising the Internet. One Sunday morning I came across an odd listing. The year before, my buddy and co-worker Rick had bought a Cascade 29 with a trailer . . . his dream boat. I was envious and inspired to give some priority to searches for Cascades in our price range. Mostly, I found half-finished boats with no interior, no motor, or in such disrepair that the only real fix was a chainsaw and a dumpster.

But this time my search for "Cascade sailboat" brought up a listing for a "lot sale" that grouped three motorhomes and one sailboat. The RVs and the sailboat were being sold as a unit: $21,000 for the lot of four.

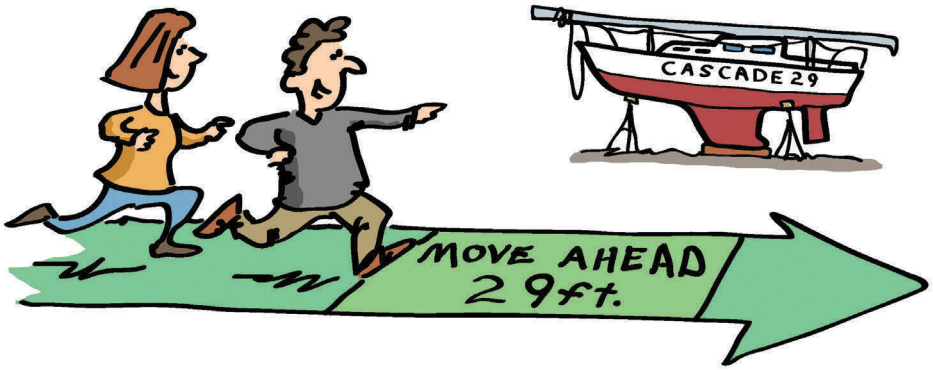
I immediately fired off an email asking, "How much for just the boat?" Within 10 minutes I had a reply: "Just the boat, $3,500."

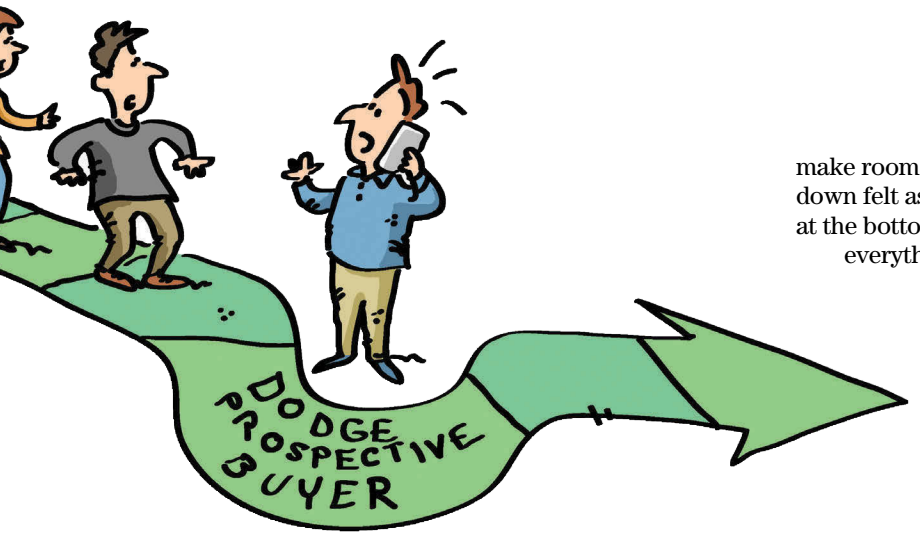
"Where can I see it?" Another 10 minutes passed by: "Boatyard on 42nd and Columbia. Give me a call before you go." He left his number. I figured it was time to get my "first and last mate" involved.

"Barbara, will you look at something with me?" I punched up the ad and the email chatter and asked, "Can we afford to do this right now?" (As in, *at once!*)

Her response was something like, "I don't think we can afford *not* to look at that."

I called immediately. His name was Don. He said the boat was in the "old Cascade yard" and some people were already on their way to look at it. He said the boom and some other parts were in his garage and that he really wanted to sell everything at once. But for the agreed price, he would peel off the boat as a separate sale.





ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM PAYNE

Entering a time warp

From then on, and I guess even until now, time became completely elastic. The time that it took Barbara to get dressed to go see the boat was an eternity. The time to drive to the boatyard was as if teleportation were real.

At midmorning on that late October Sunday, Barbara and I found ourselves in a place where history was made: the Yacht Constructors yard where Cascade yachts had been built. When I returned to this site in March 2014, the yard was empty. History, sadly, had moved on. (*Note: See "Yacht Constructors: Pioneers in Glass," by Ed Lawrence, and the companion piece about the founders by Marili Green Reilly, "There Have Always Been Boats," January 2004. –Eds.*)

But this was 2008 and a Cascade 29 named *Heidi* was precariously parked stern-in against a metal building. She sat on four stands with no chains and a single keel block, surrounded by a tent city of variously staged boats. When we arrived, a few prospective owners were stomping around. One guy was giving descriptions to someone on a phone.

I stood back to give her a good long look. Her mast was tangled and rigging draped through the cockpit with a PFD as a cushion to prevent it from driving through the cabintop. A plastic dinghy was on the foredeck together with several severely decayed cardboard boxes that leaked various items. Her fin had a rust bloom that made it look as though the bulb might fall off. And she was filthy.

Once everyone else had gotten their fill, I scrambled up the ladder, did a little yoga to get around the shrouds, and stepped on deck. I held the ladder while Barbara climbed aboard, and helped her navigate the spaghetti. A thrill ran up my spine. Stopping at the companionway, I poked my nose into the cabin ahead of me and gave a whiff. It smelled musty, but not rotten. Stuff was strewn about everywhere inside. The cushions were on edge, filling the passageway. Sails were crumpled up in the V-berth. A fair bit of the trim was off and scattered about. Newer-looking electrical wires dangled from every corner and overhead.

Competition

Meanwhile, the guy on the phone decided to take another look. As he stepped aboard, we stepped below to make room for him. Everywhere my hands fell as I climbed down felt as if they were meant to be there. The turned post at the bottom of three steps, the overhead handholds . . . everything felt right as I stood tall in the galley. Barbara plopped down behind me on the forward settee and watched as I removed the companionway steps, mostly to expose the motor but also, subconsciously perhaps, to keep phone-call-guy at bay while I did my own private inspection.

The engine was a huge rusting green hulk of a diesel twin with oil everywhere and parts literally falling off. I muttered aloud, "Boy, you sure have to wonder about that!" Phone-call-guy, now off the phone, looked down and asked, "What?"

"Well, I'm no expert," I replied, "but I bet this motor is a big part of why the boat is still here." You only had to look to know it would never run without a massive overhaul.

He introduced himself as Matt, explaining that he and his father were buying the RVs and he was there to look at the boat, given Don's all-or-nothing pitch. He looked less interested by the second, and I couldn't help but encourage his doubts by pointing out the array of boat bits cluttering every surface and punctuating my observations a few more times with a "Sure makes you wonder" about this and that. Barbara choked hard and muffled a fake sneeze, trying not to laugh her face off at my shameless display.

Dismay

We reluctantly crawled back down the ladder and walked far enough away that we could not be heard. I called Don and, with a nod from Barbara, said, "I'll give you $3,500 cash right now for that boat."

There was a pause on the line, then, "I think I just sold it. There's a guy looking to buy the whole lot. Sorry." Damn it, Matt and his dad had aced me!

"Well, OK. A deal is a deal. If that changes, give me a call." Driving away from *our* boat, I was glum. I should have offered him more! We were both silent, stunned perhaps. But less than a mile later my phone rang.

"It's *him*! Barbara, answer quick!" I pulled over immediately.

"Do you still want to buy the boat?" he asked.

"Yes."

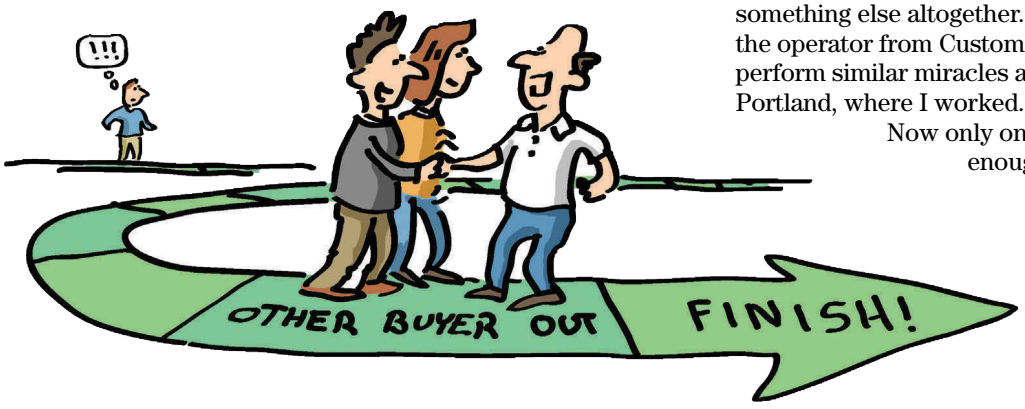
"At the same price?"

"Yes."

"You've got a deal."

We made arrangements to meet the next day.

Don had bought this boat as a father-and-son project with his son Joel. Evidently she had been purchased from another party by one of the Cascade founders, Hans Geerling, who was at that time the owner of the "old" Cascade yard.



He resold her to Don and Joel. Don paid all the bills. Joel was a master electrician who did much of the work. Don added his talents as a high-level hobbyist woodworker and semiretired engineer. They seemed the perfect team to tackle rewiring, replumbing, repowering, refitting, and rigging a medium-sized sailboat, but Joel fell in love with a girl from "back East" and, when he moved there, *Heidi*'s story was reset.

Elation

The next week of our lives was a warp-speed vortex. We were the proud new owners of a 1973 Cascade 29 sloop, a dinghy, and an ungodly amount of brand-new electrical widgets, yacht fittings, and sundry accoutrements.

The full package included enough parts and equipment to completely refit four similarly sized boats. All I had to do was figure out how to get her out of that yard and back to the water. I called Rick as soon as the deed was done.

"Rick! I bought a boat! A Cascade 29!"

Rick sounded miserable. "Well at least one of us has a boat," he said. Rick is a good sailor, but even the best of us have awful days and his had been truly rotten. He'd gone out for a solo that Sunday. Coming back under motor, he had lost a sheet to the prop and, with no time to get the sails reset, found himself sideways in the current. Anyone who has ever sailed the Columbia River knows it's deadly swift at times. Worse yet, he was drifting fast toward an unfinished dock that jutted out in his hopeless path. Not even concrete yet, it was a mass of pilings and sharp unfinished steel beams. He hit broadside, pulverizing the starboard sheer clamp at the chainplate. He managed to jump off and tie up after first bashing down the inside between the rocky shore and the positively lethal obstacle course that made up the unfinished dock. It was probably not the best time to ask him about borrowing his trailer.

The next day after work, I spotted for him while he dove to cut away the fouled sheet and limped back to port. Somewhere in the mix, we agreed to share the cost of a new set of tires for his trailer, since we both needed it. Now we had a way to move *Heidi* overland, but the problem of airspace still loomed. To move a 10,000-pound object with wheels underneath is one thing. To move it up, over, and around the surrounding obstacles and back down is something else altogether. Luckily, I had gotten to know the operator from Custom Crane Works after watching him perform similar miracles at Schooner Creek Boat Works in Portland, where I worked. For $300 he would do it.

Now only one thing was missing: a truck big enough to move our boat. Enter Daryl Dinwiddie, boatyard mechanic and truck fanatic who owned one monstrous Ford diesel dragster and loved to show off whenever possible. For the cost of breakfast and some fuel, he agreed to haul her to our yard. I arranged to take a long lunch the following Tuesday and a half day off on Wednesday to get her out. Time was of the essence; I believed that if she stayed in that yard one minute longer she would be doomed to rot there.

The extraction

Rick and I met at the tire store at high noon to get new tires on the trailer, then we were off to the yard. The crane was there when we pulled up, and after not much deliberation the trailer and crane were set. Up, up, and away! At that moment the yard owner strode over, claiming he had a lien on the boat. Uh-oh.

I got Don on the phone immediately. Don said that he was completely square with the yard, I faced the guy down and asked what the charges were. When he mumbled something about a $50 stand rental, I handed him the cash, turned back to the crane, and gave the lift signal. There was no way *Heidi* was not leaving with us. Period.

We had her up, over part of the building, over another boat, and resting securely on her trailer in less than half an hour. I felt like the ringmaster in a circus. The yard was abuzz. A boat was leaving! "Where are you taking it?" someone asked.

"Back to the water, where she belongs!"

The reality of that statement was unclear in the moment, but crystal clear in my dreamlike fantasy. The next day, we met to feed Daryl breakfast and his monster truck fuel in preparation for the short trek to bring *Heidi* home to "our" yard. We hooked up and got out with no fuss. As we turned onto the main road, however, Daryl nearly stopped my heart when he barked the tires and peeled off, whipping into the lane and swerving the trailer a few times in short strokes, and then put on the steam for real. Following, I had to punch it

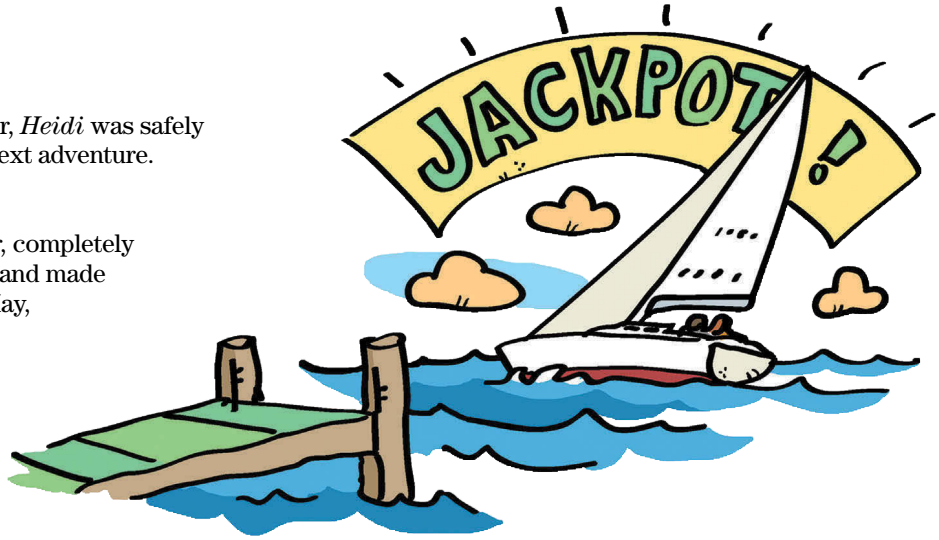
hard just to keep up. Within the hour, *Heidi* was safely locked in a side yard awaiting our next adventure.

The adventures begin

We found and installed a new motor, completely rewired and replumbed everything, and made *Heidi* whole again. The following May, she was launched. Barbara and I have enjoyed her every week since then and are logging many hours of adventure as we voyage ever farther.

We've all heard the snarky explanations for the acronym B.O.A.T. Well, I say it stands for Best Of All Things! The best we can hope is to be good stewards, so that *Heidi*'s tale may never end.

None of this would have been possible without the support and encouragement of quite a few others, most notably my wife, Barbara, and of course Mom and Dad, the entire '07/'09 crew at Schooner Creek Boat Works, and the original designers and builders at Yacht Constructors who built *Heidi*.



***Seamus Holley**'s earliest memory to do with sailing is of his mother, who went sailing with friends (without him — he was 5) in San Francisco Bay and the boat almost sank. Years later, as a cook at a Boy Scout camp, he had access to Lasers and Hobie cats . . . and forgot it all until 2005, when he bought a "Kool" Snark for $25. He later got a job in a boatyard and bought his first "real" boat, a Cal 20.*