GOOD OLD BOAT™

Archive eXtractions

Refit Boats 28 - 42 footers

Classic boats that came back to cruise and race again

**These are the family boats, the cruising boats, the well-loved boats.
Some are racing. Some are circling the globe.
All are cherished more than ever
because they began as project boats.**

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

Good Old Boat™

Refit Boats 28 - 42 footers

Thank you for purchasing the 28- to 42-foot edition of Refit Boats.

A common, but nonetheless incredible, dream comes true when a sailor buys a sailboat in need of work and has the vision and skills to make that sailboat seaworthy and beautiful once more. At *Good Old Boat*, we call it "the affordable dream."

Our magazine was founded on the premise that hundreds and hundreds of fiberglass sailboats of all sizes were just waiting for sailors who could see their potential and were willing to invest time and money on rescuing them from a slow decline. During our first year of publication, we began receiving stories about boats that today you might call "rescue boats." These were tales of the efforts sailors had made to clean and upgrade boats that were no longer loved. By the end of each article, however, these boats were sailing again and their rescuers knew every nut and bolt aboard . . . every through-hull . . . every tank . . . every wire.

Some of these rescuers have amazed us with the tales they have told about the "before" condition of their sailing gems. If words alone won't do it, photos of the lichen-covered decks and mossy teak trim have verified these tales. There are countless stories of the damage that has been done to a boat after it sat so long that the cockpit drains clogged and water ran below. Part of each story is the initial effort it took just to make the air inside safe to breathe, simply to purge the boat of all filthy cushions and fabrics, merely to destroy the mold and mildew . . . all so the real work of rebuilding and replacing could begin.

Some refit boats were rescued following a sinking. Some had a fire in their past. Some fell off their stands. But all came back thanks to the love of a skilled and patient sailor. Sometimes the important skills were learned "on the job," as someone who never held a wrench or stirred a pot of epoxy asked, "How hard can it be?" By the time a boat has been fully rehabilitated, that someone has accumulated all the required skills one step at a time and fully deserves the self-confidence that resulted.

You've read these tales too and perhaps have your own pride of accomplishment knowing you have brought your own refit boat back to good-as-new condition. We hope this collection of refit articles will fill more sailors with the necessary can-do spirit that will have them happily sailing their own boats, sailboats they are proud to say they saved from decline or certain destruction. They are the ones who have made the affordable dream come true.

The *Good Old Boat* crew

CONTENTS

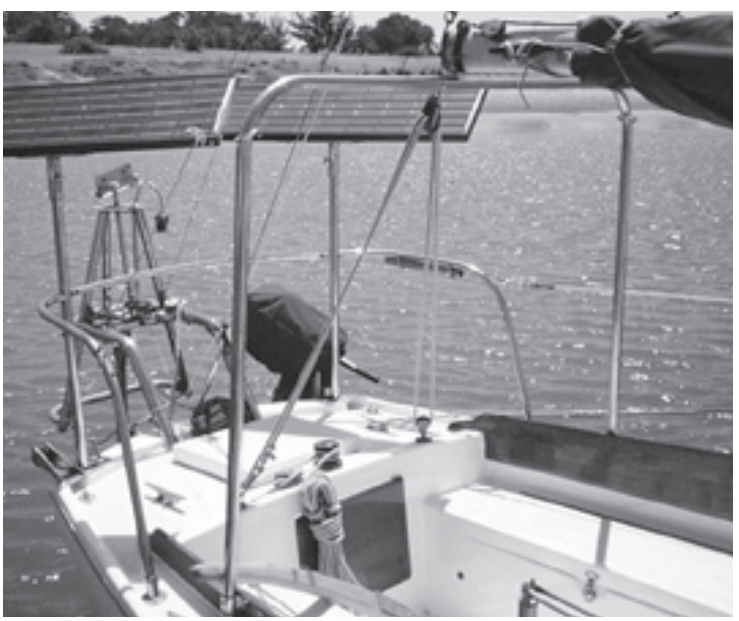
Twice

by James Baldwin

As a child watching sailboats glide across the flat waters of Michigan's Lake St. Clair, I used to imagine they were all bound for distant adventures. Looking back, it seems I'd always dreamed of a sailing voyage that would take me beyond the confined waters of the Great Lakes to explore the open seas, particularly to the fabled islands of the South Pacific. These thoughts recurred as I spent my teenage years finishing school and then moving into my own apartment and earning a living. I nearly married and settled down at one point. Then, at the age of 21, an impulsive decision brought my dormant dream within reach when I spent my entire savings buying a used 28-foot Pearson Triton from a Detroit yacht broker.

I knew little about boats when I bought this 13-year-old 1966 Triton. Fortunately, my broker gave me sound advice when he recommended this as the best boat available in my price range. Some 700 of these Carl Alberg-designed boats were built by the Pearson cousins in Rhode Island between 1959 and 1967, and many are still sailing. Although my broker rightfully viewed this minimally equipped boat as a coastal cruiser, I admired her long keel, low profile, and handsome lines. Instinctively, I knew she was the boat to take me across oceans. Obviously, she would need more equipment and a few structural modifications, but exactly what would be required to make her into my ideal boat would remain a mystery until I gained more sailing experience.

My sailor's apprenticeship began two years later when I quit my factory job in Detroit and convinced two friends that the best way to avoid the coming Michigan winter was to join me on a voyage to the Caribbean. That September we set out for the Atlantic by sailing through lakes Erie and Ontario and motoring down the barge canal to the Hudson River and New York City. We reached Florida by a series of short offshore passages and longer detours inland through the Intracoastal Waterway. In the waterway we practiced running aground and (unknowingly) annoyed impatient bridge operators and road traffic by trying to pass through under sail. Offshore, I nervously plotted our course and speed each hour and made wildly inaccurate first attempts at celestial navigation. Despite some further misadventures, we enjoyed an idyllic winter cruising among the low sandy islands and shallow gin-clear waters of the Bahamas. After making a crew change, we sailed through the Caribbean as far as Trinidad before running low on funds and turning back to Florida.



Strengthened resolve

That first voyage introduced me to a cruising life that suited me perfectly and strengthened my resolve for the ultimate adventure — to sail alone around the world. I renamed my little big-hearted boat *Atom*, in honor of Jean Gau who, decades earlier, made two solo circumnavigations in his 29-foot Tahiti ketch named *Atom*. After working as yacht delivery crew and training as a marine service engineer for one year at a boatyard in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., I prepared for my upcoming voyage by undertaking the first of several refits. To free me from the drudgery of the tiller, I installed a new Aries windvane self-steering gear. I beefed up the original 7/8ths mast rigging by adding a set of forward lower shrouds, upper shrouds, a masthead forestay, a second backstay, and a pair of running backstays. By leaving the original fractional rigging in place I gained the security of redundancy at the expense of some windward efficiency.

A weak point on the Triton is the light overhead beam supporting the deck-stepped mast. When I noticed

Huang Ho-Mei aboard* Atom *in Trinidad, above. She and James are currently sailing in the Caribbean.* Atom's *stern showing solar panel mounts, Monitor windvane, and outboard motor, at left. James using the ham radio, opposite page.

around in a Triton

Fixing his boat in exotic places and exploring distant locales appeals so much, he does it twice

a small crack in the beam and the cabintop beginning to deflect downward, I reinforced it from underneath by bolting a stainless steel U-channel frame around the original wooden beam and supporting bulkheads.

When the boat was as ready as my youthful impatience and limited funds allowed, I found I had only $500 left. Yet I refused to consider delaying the voyage for another year or two. There is a certain wisdom to reckless youth. After all, if lack of money stopped me this year, then other insecurities could just as easily keep stopping me until my exploring instinct faded into a life of vague regrets. With an undiscovered world before me, I set out alone from Miami in June of 1984 and threaded my way nonstop for 15 days through the islands of the Caribbean to Panama.

In all but the lightest of winds, the self-steering gear held *Atom* on her course, giving me the freedom to take short naps, prepare meals, and navigate by sextant. To find some kind of harmony with the creatures who would be my sole companions, I stopped fishing and became vegetarian. After locking through the Panama Canal, I entered the 10,000-mile-wide Pacific Ocean. For six months I explored among the stunningly beautiful islands of Polynesia, Tonga, and the Solomon Islands.

Anchor lines parted

During this two-year voyage, I visited 10 islands. At each I left *Atom* moored securely to two or three anchors while I went out with a backpack for days or weeks to walk across the island and climb its highest peaks. Always I returned to find her unmolested, though sometimes one of the anchor lines had parted from chafing on coral. At that time I used only a short length of chain next to the anchors because I lacked a windlass to handle an all-chain rode. On the little island of Tikopia I was delighted to find one of the last remaining outposts where native Pacific island culture was bravely resisting the onslaught of Western technology. Several times I was tempted to settle down among the welcoming people of these happy isles, but the dream of completing the voyage and the adventures just ahead over the western horizon always lured me on.

While awaiting the end of the Indian Ocean's typhoon season in New Guinea, I spent three months walking alone through the island's forbidding rain forest. Staying in thatched huts in remote mountain villages, I learned how to live as a primitive man — narrowly escaping death from recurring malaria, getting caught between warring tribes, and once falling 50 feet down a hidden shaft in an abandoned gold mine. A village chief who befriended me in the Highlands — an ex-cannibal who had four wives himself — tried to convince me to stay by offering me two of his daughters in marriage. This was a bargain, since daughters as fine as his were usually commanding a "bride price" of 100 pigs each. New Guinea was pure Adventure Country. I loved it, but knew I had to leave before it killed me.

Sailed nonstop

From the smothering rain forests of New Guinea, *Atom* and I sailed nonstop for 30 days through the wreck-littered Torres Strait and past the long, empty, northern coast of Australia to the open waters of the Indian Ocean. The trade winds blow at their strongest here, often at gale force for several days at a time. We made fast passages between the islands, running with deeply reefed sails at average speeds of 130 miles a day.

Although the islands of the South Indian Ocean are less numerous than those of the Pacific, they are no less exotic. I was again lured away from the sea to walk across Mauritius and the French territory of Reunion Island. With its active volcano, knife-edged mountains rising 10,000 feet above the sea, and uncountable waterfalls pouring into lush hidden valleys where small communities live in complete indifference to the mad goings-on of the outside world, Reunion Island qualifies as the nearest thing to paradise on this earth. Perhaps my view of the island is biased, as I remember the girl there who waved goodbye from the shore when *Atom* sailed reluctantly out of the bay.

The only illness I suffered at sea on this voyage occurred after I departed Reunion for Durban, South Africa. Somewhere south of Madagascar, in a region known for frequent gales and unsteady winds, I became incapacitated from a relapse of malaria. As I lay in my bunk for three days in a lonely, helpless fever, *Atom* dutifully looked after herself, and somehow covered 200 miles through disturbed seas in the general direction of Durban.

Increasing deck leaks forced me to take drastic action during my two-month layover in Durban. Many Tritons suffer from waterlogged balsa-cored decks. I removed every deck fitting and cut off the deck's upper fiberglass layer.

Atom's *head, at top, showing the Lavac toilet behind a watertight bulkhead. And the former engine compartment, above, showing the watertight cockpit locker drain hoses (shutoff valves are located under main cabin floorboard) and integral water tank built between the hull and cockpit floor.*

I removed bucketsful of stinking balsa mush, refilled and leveled the deck, and reinstalled the hardware. It was a miserable job I had been putting off for a long time. Having an absolutely dry boat inside made it worthwhile.

Off the aptly named Wild Coast of South Africa, I met the first serious storm of my sailing career. As the southwester blew up some impressive seas, I turned and ran directly downwind under a bar-tight storm jib sheeted amidships. While dropping headlong down one of these slab-sided waves, the strain from the windvane steering lines snapped the wooden tiller. *Atom* instantly broached, roughly plunging her lee spreader into the sea. I remember a loud snap signaling a broken intermediate shroud. But thankfully, due to the extra rigging I had installed, the mast stayed in place. As *Atom* rolled wildly while being hammered by the beam seas, I bolted on the emergency tiller. Ironically, days later we were carried gently past the rocky buttress of the Cape of Good Hope by a favorable current in a flat calm on a brilliant sunny day.

Only two stops

From Cape Town back to Florida, I enjoyed the life alone at sea so much I visited land only twice, stopping briefly at St. Helena Island and Martinique. For navigation, I usually fixed my position with three star sights during evening or morning twilight. The night sky of the Southern Hemisphere had become a familiar field of fiery beacons and signposts. At night in the South Atlantic, I could even maintain my course from my bunk by keeping the frosty streak of Halley's Comet lined up in view through the open hatch.

As exhausting and frightening as it was at times, I now remember the easy days far outnumbering the bad. The personal rewards of the voyage were incalculable, and I never for a moment regretted my decision to go. Those two years as a vagabond sailor created an unbreakable bond between *Atom* and me and ended any chance that I could remain satisfied with the normal life of a land dweller. Within a year I would set out again, this time on a voyage alone to China and what would become a 12-year-long second circumnavigation.

Second time around

Back in Ft. Lauderdale in 1987, I began my second major overhaul of Atom's vital components. To reduce the risk of collision with floating objects, I installed a watertight collision bulkhead in the bow section under the V-berth. *Atom's* original worm-eaten mahogany rudder was replaced with a piece of 1½-inch tapered plywood sheathed in fiberglass. Then, after several months drying out on her trailer in a Ft. Lauderdale boatyard, I sealed the hull below the waterline with two coats of epoxy barrier coat.

For years I had been continuously repairing my Atomic 4 gasoline inboard motor. It had been such a beast to maintain that I decided to remove it entirely and sail engineless. I also felt that I was ready to tackle this sport on a higher level. Sailing alone and engineless seemed the best way to discover my limits. By crossing the Pacific and cruising extensively for five years in southeast Asia without an engine, I proved to myself that it was entirely practical. All that's required are a boat like the Triton that sails well in light air, a sculling oar, and an uncommon degree of forethought and patience.

Borrowed motor

To transit the Panama Canal I borrowed an outboard motor, but barely used it as we took advantage of a brisk following wind to complete the majority of the passage at 6 knots under spinnaker. When I arrived in Hong Kong I found I was unable to get a permit to make a river journey into mainland China as I had originally planned. I did manage to navigate the shoals of Chinese bureaucracy and cruise the mainland coast, however, by leaving *Atom* on a mooring in Hong Kong and signing on as first mate on a three-masted Chinese junk for the British-sponsored Marco Polo Expedition. Between delivery jobs and cruises around Asia on *Atom*, I

stopped to work for two years as production manager for Hans Christian Yachts in Taiwan and Thailand.

Supervising the construction of these well-designed cruisers gave me new insight into boatbuilding techniques as well as the funds necessary to continue making improvements to my own boat. When I made my final departure from Hong Kong, *Atom* was fitted out with all-new teak exterior trim, an improved Chinese sculling oar, three stainless steel anchors, a new dodger and Bimini, and a hefty bronze anchor windlass, among other things.

I upgraded my self-steering with a new Monitor windvane. The Monitor's size may be overkill for a 28-foot boat, but its performance has been exceptionally good, even in light air where the Aries vane had struggled to find its way. I also opted to rejoin the modern world by adding GPS, an HF-SSB transceiver, and a 3-hp outboard motor that hung on an adjustable stern bracket.

For another two years I traveled through the best cruising grounds imaginable among the hundreds of islands in the central Philippines. My days of singlehanding came to an end on Leyte Island when I met an island princess. Marjorie Lacaba was a fisherman's daughter with the innocence and courage to join this mad foreigner on a small boat headed for Africa. We sailed together for the next three years through the Philippines, Indonesia, and across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar and South Africa.

Another refit

In South Africa it was time to give *Atom* another thorough refit. I discarded her mast, due to excessive corrosion between the aluminum and the bolted-on bronze sail track, and replaced it with a new anodized aluminum mast with a molded slot for sail slugs. My new masthead rig was two feet shorter than the original fractional rig. I now added a Harken jib furling system but kept two of my working jibs and a storm jib to use on an inner forestay if the furling ever became inoperable. To give extra support to the mast, the inner forestay normally attaches to a heavily reinforced pad eye halfway between the mast and the stem, where it does not interfere with tacking the jib. If I ever need to hang a sail on it, there is a wire eye strap near the bow that it can connect to.

To support the inner forestay, I installed intermediate aft lower shrouds that can be set up like running backstays but which I usually keep attached to chainplates just aft of the lower shrouds. These sort of semi-permanent running backstays have a plastic sleeve on them to prevent chafe on the mainsail. They not only act as support for the inner forestay but also will provide a degree of redundancy if my backstay or a shroud should ever break.

"That first voyage (Detroit to the Caribbean) introduced me to a cruising life that suited me perfectly and strengthened my resolve for the ultimate adventure – to sail alone around the world"

Down below, I modified most of the lower storage lockers into watertight compartments by adding sealed partitions and gasketed access hatches. I've added enough of these sealed compartments that I'm confident you could knock a hole in *Atom* anywhere below the waterline, and she would remain afloat. Even the Lavac toilet was placed behind a watertight bulkhead to prevent any of its plumbing fittings from flooding the boat.

My Triton came with a plywood cabin sole covered by a thin veneer of teak. Over the years the teak had become worn and chipped until it looked so hideous I covered it with a piece of outdoor carpeting. While rebuilding the interior, I resurfaced the plywood sole with 2-inch-wide strips of African iroko separated by lines of black Sikaflex. I converted the area below the V-berth, where the original 23-gallon fiberglass water tank was located, into a 43-gallon integral water tank whose bottom was the hull of the boat itself. Another 30-gallon integral tank was installed in the otherwise useless space between the cockpit floor, the cockpit side lockers and the hull.

I fit the two deck scuppers with valves that allow me to divert rainwater collected on deck to a hose below deck that I insert into the water tank or use to fill jerry jugs.

In South Africa I replaced my single 12-volt battery with four 6-volt golf cart batteries wired into a single 12-volt bank of over 400 amp-hours capacity. To recharge them I use two solar panels, each rated at 43-watts output. With a good charging system and massive battery storage capacity, I chucked my portable gasoline generator and replaced it with an 800-watt inverter. Even with all this electrical capacity, I replaced all my power-hungry incandescent lights with fluorescent or halogen.

Atom was now in better shape than she had ever been since her birth 33 years ago. This was fortunate because she would soon be tested to the limits in her second passage around South Africa. After our first year in South Africa, my companion of three years decided she would not spend one more cold, dreary winter living in a boat that was being rapidly torn to pieces and slowly rebuilt. It was sad, but understandable, when she boarded the plane with a one-way

Atom's interior. Note the raised V-berth.

Atom *under spinnaker in the Indian Ocean.*

ticket to her home island in the Pacific.

As replacement crew I took on Alex, a young French traveler who admitted to having no sailing experience. This I considered an advantage, as the coming discomforts of sailing a small boat around the Cape of Good Hope are best left to an innocent's imagination. His only other qualification was that he'd been in the elite French commando marines, so I guessed he could handle whatever hardships might come his way.

Port to port

On my first rounding of the Cape 12 years earlier, I sailed nonstop from Durban to Cape Town in 10 days. To make it more interesting and (I thought) easier, this time around I took the standard strategy of running from port to port between favorable weather forecasts. Unfortunately, due to either El Niño, or just God's will, that year the South African coast was plagued by an unending succession of westerly gales. With the rest of the international cruising fleet, we crawled and beat our way from port to port through one cold front after another.

Upon rounding Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of Africa, Alex and I were congratulating ourselves on our clever timing when out of nowhere came a southeasterly storm, locally called a Black Southeaster. In Cape Town, the wind-weary locals hardly notice the average 40-knot gale, which they refer to affectionately as the Cape Doctor. But even the rugged Cape Towners furl their umbrellas and curse the dreaded Black Southeaster. For two days we ran off, hove to, and even tried to run for shelter at one of the fishing harbors in False Bay.

By deciding to go into False Bay I had weighed up the sailor's classic dilemma of choosing between seeking safe harbor in a storm or staying offshore with plenty of sea room. My decision to attempt making port was partly influenced by my crew. Alex may have been the only marine commando never to find his sea legs. During the height of the storm, he retreated to his bunk, drenched from the icy waters that had gone right through his faulty foul-weather gear, teeth chattering like Spanish castanets, and heaving his guts out into a bucket.

First encounter

Because katabatic winds coming off the mountains increased the closer we worked our way in toward port, I decided to exit False Bay and take our chances offshore. This was also my first encounter with hurricane-force winds, and I was surprised to find most of my well-planned storm tactics were totally unworkable once the wind had laid us over flat and breaking seas were sweeping the decks. Going forward to hoist the storm jib on the mostly submerged foredeck was impossible and, besides, I realized my storm jib was ridiculously large for winds gusting more than 80 knots. Because of a lack of sea room, I couldn't deploy the sea anchor. My parachute-type sea anchor needs a minimum scope of 600 feet of line to be effective, and once clear of the coast there was too much shipping in the area to sit there as an unmaneuverable 600-foot-long target. I was thankful that at least my cockpit lockers were now individual watertight compartments because the lee side of the cockpit was constantly awash.

We eventually managed to hoist the tiny 12-square-foot storm trysail which, along with a tiny corner of unfurled jib, allowed us to claw our way offshore, saving us from being dashed to pieces against the cliffs of Cape Point. Early the next morning we weathered the surf-beaten cliffs of the Cape Peninsula by a narrow mile and turned downwind to round the bony finger of the Cape of Good Hope under bare poles. *Atom* stood up remarkably well to this storm, the only damage being some chafed lines and repairable cracks in the deck-stowed kayak. Even Alex's wounded pride recovered when I congratulated him on surviving the worst storm he was ever likely to see. Surprisingly, he agreed to continue on with me to Brazil.

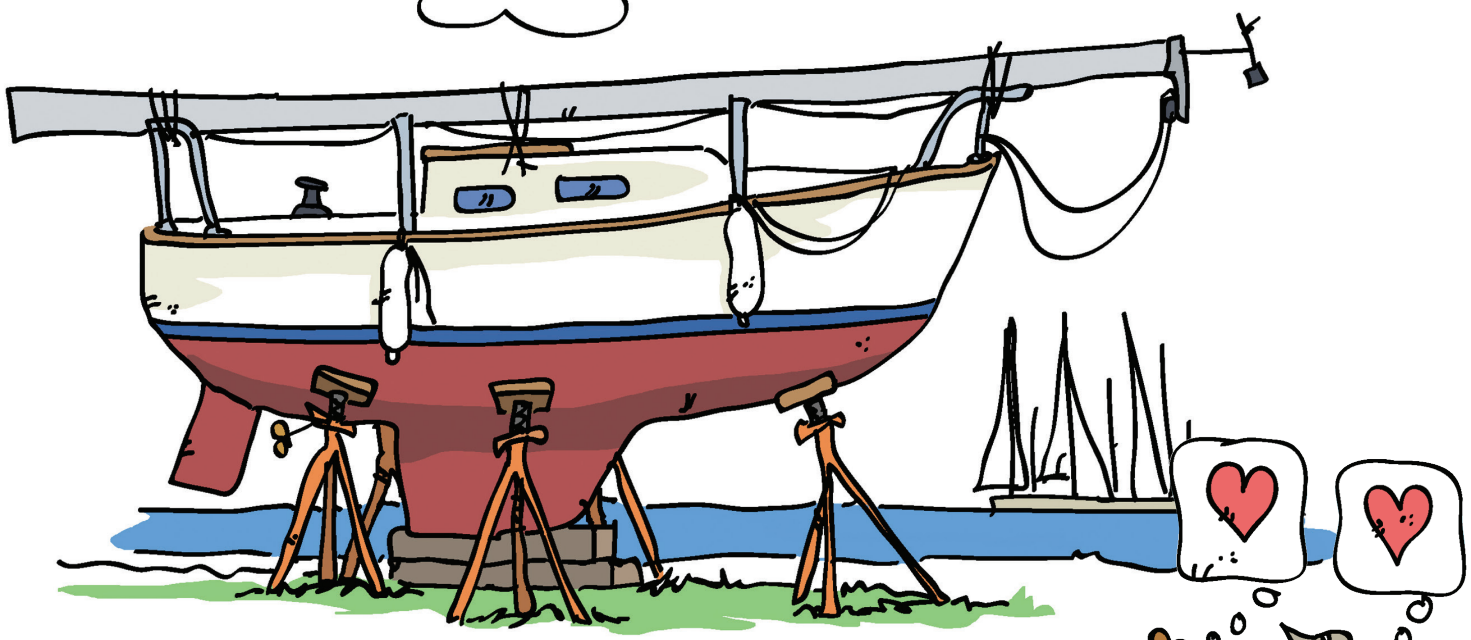
Dream crossing

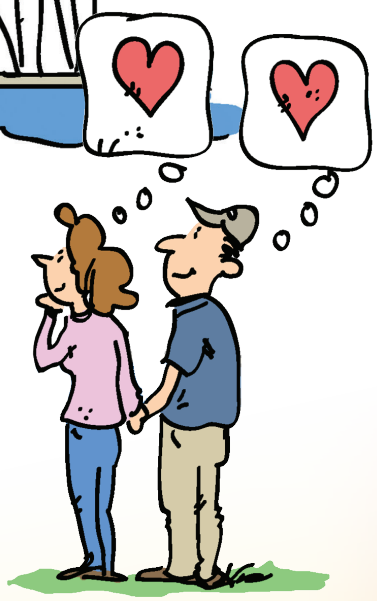
As if compensating for the severe beating, we crossed the South Atlantic with hardly any effort. Day after pleasant day, *Atom* rode the waves with sails spread like giant butterfly wings before the gentle southeast trade winds. In Brazil I made use of dry-out legs fabricated out of stainless steel pipes to dry the boat standing upright between tides. I left Alex in the care of four lovely barmaids at a riverside disco on Brazil's northeast coast and continued on to the Caribbean. I not only lost my crew in Brazil, but I also lost my outboard motor to an envious fisherman who figured he needed it more than I did — which may have been true, after all.

After 20 years of cruising the world's oceans, my 35-year-old Triton is in every way a better boat than new. I've never thought of replacing her with another boat. And why would I, now that she is everything I need in a boat? Over the years, *Atom* has evolved into a self-sufficient and capable cruising boat that has brought me through numerous adventures — with more to come.

James has been published in many popular sailing magazines. Some of his other articles can be down-loaded at <http://www.mightywords.com>. Contact him at: yachtatom@hotmail.com.

GOOD OLD BOAT™





What every *Good Old Boat* subscriber knows:

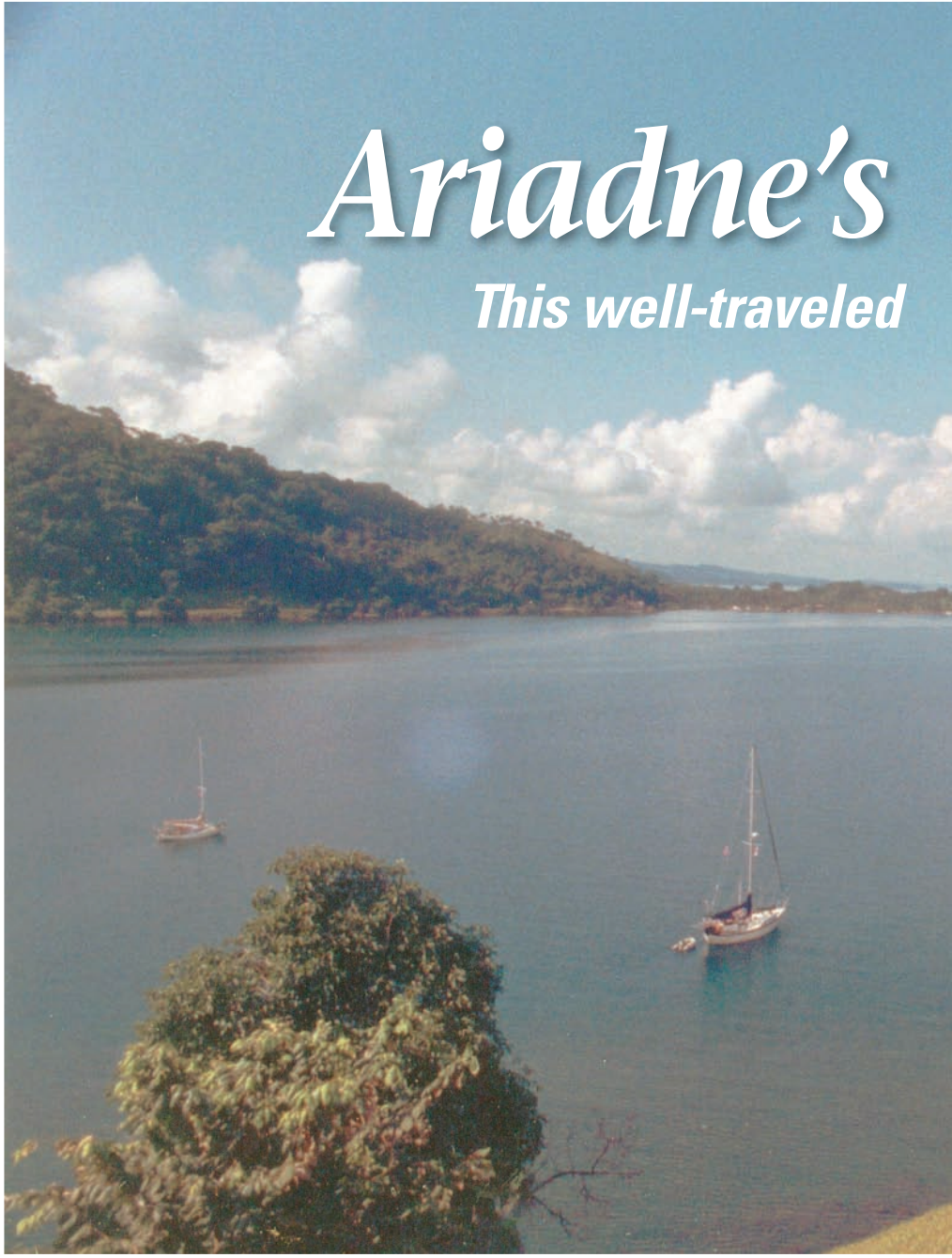
it's a **magazine** • *it's about* **sailing**
it's about **trailersailers** and **globe girdlers**
it's about **daysailers** and **coastal cruisers**
it's about **fixer-uppers** and **all-fixed-uppers**
it's about **the people who love, cherish,** and **baby their boats**
it's about **doing stuff yourself** to the **boat you own**
it's a **resource** • *it's a* **community of sailors**
it's **everything a sailboat owner needs!**

it's Good Old Boat

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Ariadne's

This well-traveled



THE NEW OLD BOAT AT THE MARINA caught my eye. Boats like that always do. Wow! A *real* cruiser. A 1960s boat. A Triton? An Alberg 30? Heavy-duty dodger, windvane on the transom, mounts for storm boards on the ports, big CQR in a bow roller, and another hanging on the pushpit. Everything about her said she'd been somewhere and done something. She looked out of place, tucked into the crowd of weekend toys and dock potatoes. Her registration numbers said California. Since we're in North Carolina, that was a start.

I recalled my next-door neighbor, Dave Hause, telling me, after finding out I sailed, that a co-worker of his had sailed his boat from California through the Caribbean and up the Intracoastal Waterway to Wilmington. A couple of email messages established the match — the boat was indeed a Pearson Triton. Before any time went by, I was a guest crew for a summer evening sail with her owner, Jack James, along with Dave and a guy who taught in the same department as I did and whose wife worked with Jack. That was four years ago.

Since then, Dave has moved away, but Jack and his wife, Beth, and the other guy, Tom Massey, along with his wife, Meg, have become our close friends. I've spent many an evening and weekend afternoon sailing *Ariadne*. She is the boat that showed me in real life what I'd only seen in books and magazines — how a small long-distance liveaboard cruiser really works.

The Triton is in many ways the Elvis of fiberglass sailboats and, as such, her history's been recounted plenty of times already — Sailboat Hall of Fame and the first really successful production fiberglass racer/cruiser. The Triton, launched in 1959, put Pearson Yachts on the road to becoming the world's biggest sailboat builder. More than 700 Tritons were built. Dan Spurr once said it was probably the cheapest, smallest true bluewater-cruising-capable boat (properly modified and equipped, of course) out there. She's a proven circumnavigator and is still raced as a one-design.

Bullet-proof hull

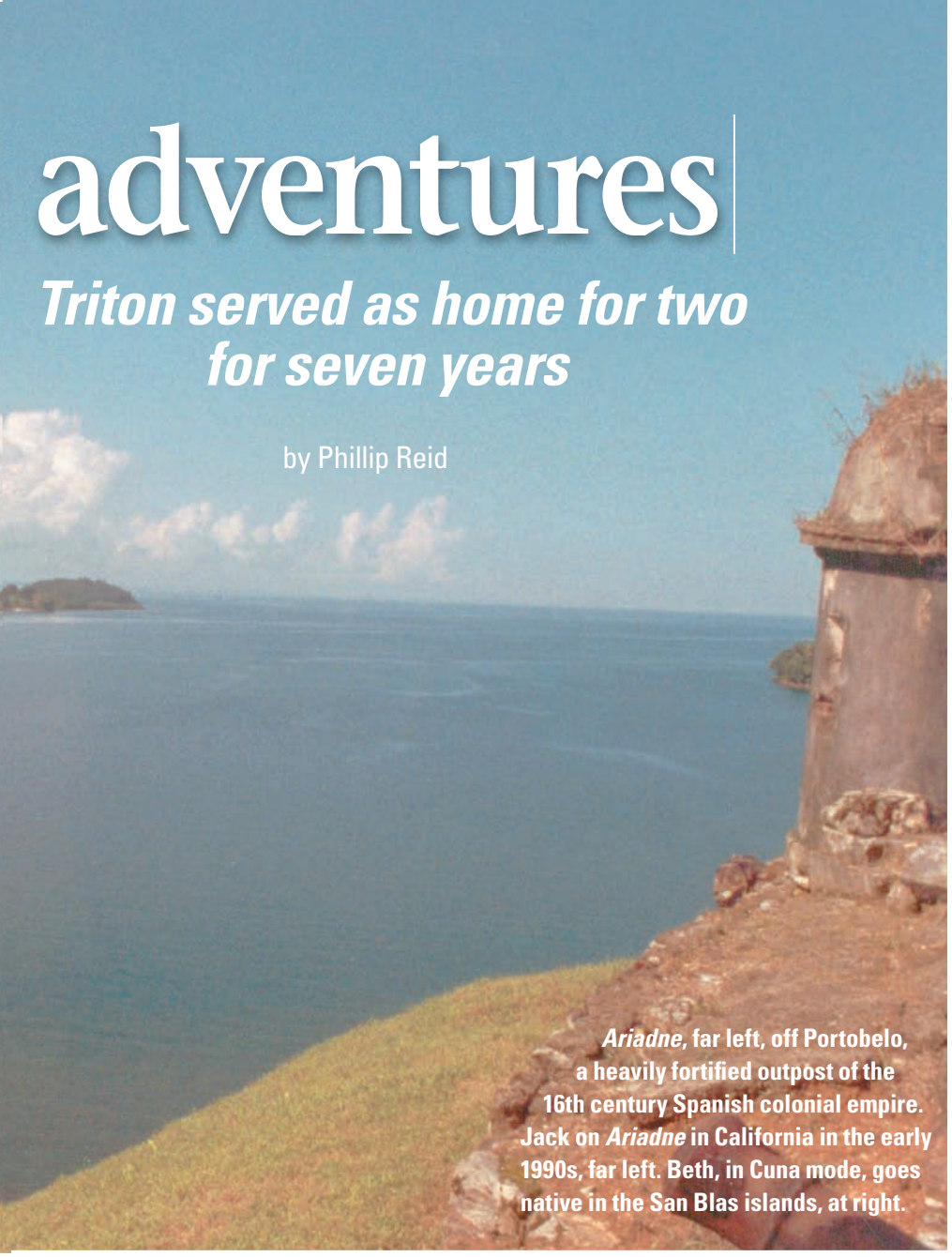
Cruising traditionalists praise her modified full keel, bullet-proof hull, barn-door rudder, and low freeboard. You don't have to be Ted Brewer or sail this boat halfway around the world to appreciate her qualities; she's dry despite her low freeboard, she sails like nobody's business, and she rides like a Cadillac — no mean set of feats for a boat just over 20 feet on the waterline.

But if you want to tackle what Jack did, and turn a tired stock Triton into a seaworthy liveaboard cruiser, you've got your work cut out for you. Scan the big online boat listings, and you'll rarely find a fully restored, tricked-out

adventures

Triton served as home for two for seven years

by Phillip Reid



Ariadne, **far left, off Portobelo, a heavily fortified outpost of the 16th century Spanish colonial empire. Jack on *Ariadne* in California in the early 1990s, far left. Beth, in Cuna mode, goes native in the San Blas islands, at right.**

Triton for sale. What you *will* find are major projects going cheap. There's a world of difference between what the original owner got from Pearson in 1963 and what *Ariadne* is now, 43 years later.

Jack was a teenager when his father bought his first sailboat — a Pearson Electra — so he got familiar with the boatyard early in life. After the Electra, Jack Sr. bought a 35-foot wooden boat, and Jack learned the ins and outs of marine woodwork while helping to restore her. When he was 19, Jack and his father sailed her from California to Hawaii in March . . . a little early in the season. Jack says he was soaking wet for three straight weeks. Several years later he crewed on a 40-footer for a whale research expedition down the Baja coast. After living aboard a smaller boat for a while after college, Jack bought *Ariadne* in 1985, in southern California, even though she's an East Coast Triton. He paid $10,000 for her. He thought that was a great deal at the time. (Her original price was $9,700.) Then the bottom fell out of the sailboat market.

DIY paradise

Jack was living in Los Angeles, which was a do-it-yourself sailor's paradise. All the production builders in and around Costa Mesa had spawned a thriving sailboat-parts economy. Jack wandered through scrap yards and found stainless steel to make his anchor roller, beefed-up mast tabernacle, and storm-shutters.

His two 40-watt solar panels were NASA surplus, and he made his own wind generator which hangs from the backstay and has a wooden propeller like the ones on World War I fighter planes. If he couldn't make it or salvage it, there was Minney's Yacht Surplus. Some of *Ariadne's* blocks and hardware came from a sunken wreck that Jack and a friend dove on in Mexico before they were chased off by the Mexican coast guard.

He needed plenty of stuff. The builder's definition of "basic" in 1963 is what we would call "not done yet" today, and while Jack knows little about her past, he does know she was already a veteran of Baja cruises and showing her age and mileage when he got her. He needed a full set of stanchions, lifelines, a pulpit and pushpit, and an interior that didn't have raw fiberglass surfaces. One cool thing he did get from the previous owner was a homemade windvane self-steering system — the type of auxiliary rudder with a trim tab. It still works.

Tritons have deck-stepped masts supported by an oak deck beam just in front of the break in the split-level cabin trunk. *Ariadne's* was cracked when Jack came along — a common problem on hard-sailed aging Tritons — and he replaced it with a steel I-beam. He

Without putting too fine a point on it, galleys were not the strong suit of the Tritons. Jack added a stove and vital cooking space by installing a Luke stove which folds up and out of the way when not in use, above and far left. The drop-down table, center left, and counter space, below left. Notice the fine woodwork throughout. Jack is a capable finish carpenter.

added a second set of lower shrouds to stop mast pumping. However, he says if the rig is stout, and the mast doesn't pump, leave it alone.

Rotten core

Most of the deck core on one side, forward of amidships, was rotten. Jack drilled six million tiny holes in the outer skin, poured acetone in them, and squeegeed epoxy into them. No problems since. When he went to a boatyard parts counter and asked for non-skid paint additive and they tried to sell him a can of sand for $13, he found some crushed walnut shells (plentiful in California) and used those instead. Concerned about flex in the uncored, thin sterndeck, he glassed-in wood reinforcements underneath it and made a watertight, beefy door for the stern lazarette.

The original Triton rudder was mahogany. *Ariadne's* wasn't in good shape, so Jack made her an exact copy out of solid fiberglass. While he had the engine out, he replaced the shaft log.

As frugal as Jack is, he does have a weakness for teak. *Ariadne* is a teak showcase. Jack reckons he spent around $2,000 on teak 20 years ago. He's a capable finish carpenter, and her hatches, sea hood, propane locker, coamings, and interior trim are works of art. He built the athwartships cockpit locker abaft the bridge deck. The swing-down teak stovebox with the flip-down front and gimbaled Luke stove is very well done. He was living aboard while he did the interior, and he made almost everything with a jigsaw on the dock and a bench sander he kept in the cockpit.

Jack met Beth in 1987. A farm girl from New Hampshire finishing college in California, she warned him before their first weekender to the Channel Islands that she got seasick, but that didn't stop him. Beth was getting out of school and needed a job, and Jack encouraged her to work at West Marine, where they proceeded to score gear — inverter, regulator, the Luke stove, and an early hand-held GPS — at the employee discount as they got ready for the trip down south.

Two luxuries

Still, they kept it simple. The two mechanical luxuries on *Ariadne* are a manual windlass (not a luxury on a larger boat, but counts as one on a 28-footer with a chain/rope rode) and refrigeration (an Adler Barbour Cold Machine for which Jack added a third battery). Jack confirms what's generally reported: the stock front-loading Triton icebox is poorly insulated. But he was pleased with the refrigerator as they cruised the tropics and reports that the wind generator and solar panels were able to keep up with it.

On their way down the Baja Peninsula, there were enough windless

days that they found themselves hand-steering far more than they wanted to, so when they got to Nuevo Vallarta on the Mexican mainland, they bought a used autopilot at a cruisers' second-hand sale on the beach for $30. It worked. Their "hand-held VHF," which is the size of a World War II walkie-talkie, cost $1. It works too. Their inflatable dinghy, which they finally replaced last year when it just *couldn't* be patched anymore, was bought used, as was the outboard.

But as inspiring as Jack's improvements and upgrade list is, it should be noted that what wasn't broken on *Ariadne* didn't get fixed. The most valuable lesson I learned from *Ariadne* was not what I needed, but what I *didn't* need on my own project boat.

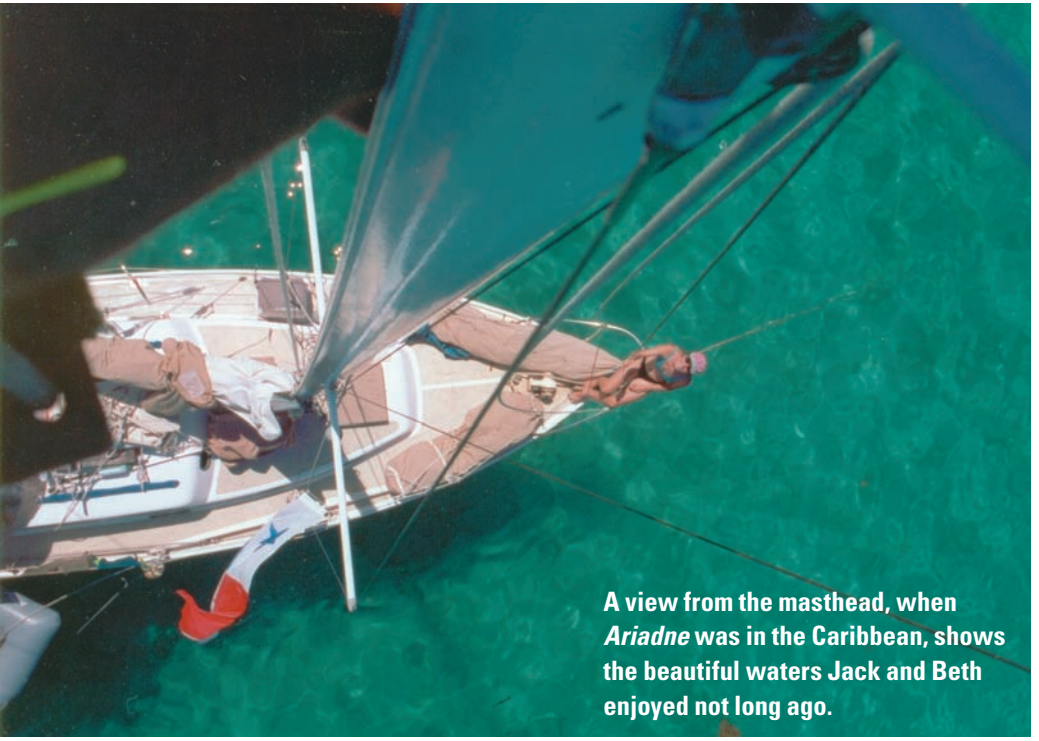
Her original, raw-water-cooled Atomic 4, which Jack pulled and had rebuilt in the '80s, still starts every time and runs like a champ after 42 years and some serious cruising, all in salt water. (He's religious about flushing and tightening the grease cup on the water pump.) The original alternator lasted until last year, and the original starter still works. Her DC panel is original, as is much of her house wiring, main battery switch, galley sink, icebox, ports, spars, and interior lights.

Headed south

Jack, a chemist, sold his one-man garage business making orthodontic parts. With that as their kitty, he and Beth sailed *Ariadne* from San Diego in November 1993, heading down the Baja Peninsula to the Mexican Pacific coast. They explored Baja and Mexico, then jumped to Costa Rica, where they lingered for months.

Moving on to Panama, they knocked around the Pacific side for a month or so, did the Panama Canal, helped some other cruisers through

These days, *Ariadne* sails at Wrightsville Beach, above. Jack's mighty road rig, top right. Jack's hurricane strategy is simple: 1. load boat on trailer, 2. take boat far inland. Even while waiting contentedly in her slip in Wilmington, North Carolina, top left, *Ariadne*, appears to be ready and able to go anywhere at any time.



A view from the masthead, when *Ariadne* was in the Caribbean, shows the beautiful waters Jack and Beth enjoyed not long ago.

the canal and, once on the Caribbean side, proceeded to fall in love with the San Blas islands, which at the time weren't well-known. Picture a tropical island paradise, they say, and you've got the San Blas Islands.

Ariadne's V-berth is still graced with molas, colorful appliquéd panels made by the Cuna, the last indigenous Caribbeans. Framed molas also hang in their log house in the woods. They found the Cuna fascinating, and the Cuna were well-disposed toward Americans, whose government had once helped them in their knock-down-drag-out fight for autonomy against the Panamanian government. Panama was finally forced to recognize a treaty that set aside the San Blas islands as an autonomous reservation for the Cuna. Jack and Beth never wanted to leave, but the Cuna, while friendly and hospitable, do not allow outsiders to swallow the anchor in their unique world.

So they sailed over to Cartagena and spent some time exploring coastal Colombia, went back to the San Blas, explored the Bay Islands of Honduras, and poked around Guatemala and Belize before heading up the Yucatán coast. From Isla Mujeres, two years after they left San Diego, they crossed the Gulf of Mexico to Florida. The cruising kitty was nearly empty. They made their way up the ICW all the way to New Bern, North Carolina, and then to Wilmington for Jack to take a job with a pharmaceutical development company.

Custom trailer

He and Beth bought a house two years after they got to North Carolina, and *Ariadne* was no longer the

permanent home she'd been for seven years. Jack had a custom trailer made for her, bought a used dual rear wheel pickup (which together cost far more than the boat), and hoped to use that rig for short-term cruises much more than he actually has so far since he went back to the 9-to-5. He hauls the boat for hurricanes and trucks her inland. He and Beth spent one hurricane living aboard on the trailer in a Wal-Mart parking lot, cozy and comfortable and, most importantly, not worried about the boat. The only trailersailing trip he's had time for so far has been to the Bahamas with his father. They trucked the boat to Florida to make the shortest possible Gulf Stream crossing.

How does the Triton measure up as a liveaboard home for two? "It's pretty cramped," Jack says, "It's about as small as you can really get and make it work." (He's 6 foot 2 inches and Beth is 5 foot 10 inches. They hit their heads a lot.) But they made it work for years. They emphasize that making a small boat work as a home is much easier in the tropics and subtropics where you spend most of your time on deck and in the cockpit, which is why good canvas is so important. You don't need insulation or artificial climate control; you can dive overboard to cool off and clean up.

When they got to the East Coast, they experienced their first real winter aboard. Condensation dripped off the overhead, and Jack found himself improvising interior insulation out of the foam-cloth used on car overheads, with limited success and lots of mildew. The extra clothes you need, blankets, stove fuel, being stuck below …cold weather completely changed the equation, they say.

Many fans

When it comes to her performance at sea, Jack joins the chorus of the Triton's many fans. "I'd trust the boat anywhere but in ice," he says. (He'd only take a steel boat into ice.) During their travels, they ran into one bad storm off Colombia. They set the windvane, went below, and lay down, popping up every so often to take a look around. Beth rested on the low settee berth; Jack made himself comfortable on the cabin sole on some cushions. The waves were huge; they filled the cockpit constantly, but they rode through it.

Jack's not a fan of slow boats or of unweatherly hulls and rigs. "A cruising boat needs to be reasonably fast and able to beat off a lee shore," he says. When they crossed the Gulf of Mexico to Florida they found themselves outrunning an unexpected hurricane. According to Jack, the first priority should be to get a good sailing boat. Then make that boat as livable as you can without compromising her sailing performance more than you have to.

Beth says she wouldn't trade the cruise for anything but wouldn't want to do it again. She spent pretty much the entire time underway on seasickness drugs, and she hasn't been sailing on open water again since their return to the U.S. She was ready to have a house, a garden, and to settle down.

Jack hopes to persuade her to do sheltered-water cruises on the East Coast, using the truck and trailer to minimize time in transit to intended cruising grounds. But for now *Ariadne* is a daysailer and overnighter (they like to anchor out overnight once in a while in the sound behind Wrightsville Beach) — though she stands far apart from the crowd of daysailers and overnighters around here. Her past life and all those tropical miles under her keel are written all over her. Her future as a cruising boat may be unclear, but one thing is certain: "I'll die with this boat," Jack says. After that, who knows where *Ariadne* will go and what she will do?

Ariadne **ghosts along off Wrightsville Beach on a beautiful fall day with unusually light winds.**

Establishing a French

A boat search takes an unexpected turn

by Rob Hoffman

As I write this, Christine and François Ferbos have returned home to Bordeaux, France. They were in the U.S. to visit their son and his wife who reside here, but they made time to visit us in Nashville, Tennessee, and we were delighted to see them again after six years.

During that six-year interval, my wife, Gabi, and I have completed the import, refit, and conversion of the 30-year-old French-built aluminum sloop Christine and François helped us acquire on the French Riviera . . . and thereby hangs yet another tale of enduring friendships between like-minded cruising sailors from opposite sides of the "pond."

We keep our boat in the marina at the Paris Landing State Park in West Tennessee. This is on Kentucky Lake near Paris, Tennessee. While they were here, we treated our French crew to Jack Daniels, barbecue, and catfish. We could not resist showing them that Paris, Tennessee, has its very own Eiffel Tower, albeit a slightly smaller version. We learned that catfish is not eaten in France, as it is considered a "trash fish," but we may have changed that perception with these two at least. (Maybe it was the "Gentleman Jack!")

If that tale ends with a recent visit from our French friends, it actually began just after Hurricane Katrina when Gabi and I decided that — after 10 years of owning a small "retirement" house on a tributary to Perdido Bay on Alabama's Gulf Coast — we had exceeded our limit of hurricane tolerance and the associated hassles with insurance companies, boat and dock damage, and loss of 100-year-old live oaks. We sold our place (and cruising catamaran) and moved back to Nashville, boatless for the first time in 40 years.

It was time to reconsider what being on the water and sailing was going to mean for us going forward. We had owned and sailed almost every kind of sailboat from a large and very heavy Finnish motorsailer to small daysailers and a multihull. We had chartered in many places outside the U.S. and really enjoyed our travels. We realized the enjoyment of diverse sailing locations and cultures was a major part of what we wanted going forward. Tennessee is generally as good a sailing place as most inland venues can offer, but the yen for distant waters and new experiences is still strong within us. The focus of our next-boat investigations eventually turned toward what could be done with a trailerable boat.

The appeal of trailering

As Gabi and I are in our early retirement years, we don't have the time, energy, or financial resources to keep a 40-plus-foot cruising boat in a marina or to sail from a location in the southeastern U.S. to the Sea of Cortez, the Pacific Northwest, the Great Lakes, or the many wonderful inland sailing venues in the U.S. and Canada. Perhaps we can't do all this by water — but we can do it with a boat that gets there by Interstate highway at 65 miles per hour in a few days and at much less expense when compared to sailing there. As a bonus, we have no continuing dock rent, insurance is cheaper, and hurricanes no longer pose a threat.

Having owned a couple of trailerable boats in the dim past, we recognized that there are some thorns in that rosy picture, but once we decided to accept the hassles and built-in limitations of trailer-based sailing, we listed what was important to us in a sailboat and what had worked well and not so well in previous boats. Those considerations had to be merged with what was possible to afford, achieve, and pull over the road. While there is no "perfect boat," most sailors have strong preferences for certain designs and build methods. We're no different.

Our "perfect boat on wheels" needed to be at the upper end of what could be done with a trailerable sailboat without requiring special permits, as our wish

connection

Christine and François Ferbos, seated on facing page, connected Rob and Gabi Hoffman with their French-built aluminum *CanCan*, shown at left running under her twin Solent-rig headsails. *CanCan* is big for trailering and required some modifications to allow the Hoffmans to safely raise and lower the mast. A custom-built bridge connects new inline shrouds to the original pair of chainplates, below.

list included full standing headroom below, an enclosed head and shower, ample stowage and sleeping accommodations, a galley with a real oven, and a diesel auxiliary engine. Our list had more specifics, but suffice it to say we wanted the volume and capacities that placed the boat at the upper end of what was really practical to tow.

One challenge was finding something a 65-plus-year-old couple could manage unassisted when launching and recovering, rigging, and stepping and unstepping the mast. It should also be safe and seaworthy enough for limited offshore use but have very shallow draft, be easily beached, and be able to remain upright on its own bottom without stands or additional supports. All this turned out to be a very tall order. So tall, in fact, that we were considering building from scratch. But since we really didn't have the "scratch" or time to do that, I was ready to chuck the whole trailer-based concept as just not possible when the "French Connection" saved the day.

A Sonate sings their song

One evening while surfing the Web, I stumbled upon some European boat-listing sites. The featured boat on one home page was one I'd never heard of. It was built of aluminum and seemed to have the hard-chine lines of a big sharpie, and it was shown sitting on the hard flat on its own bottom. It was one of the Alubat OVNI series from the design board of Philippe Briand and built on the west coast of France.

My interest caught fire. I researched the Alubats and their design history and I liked what I found out, but although a

few of their older discontinued models embodied some of our basic requirements, the company had never made anything intended for trailer-based use. I learned they had built a 28-foot model called the Sonate 28. It had a design weight of 8,500 pounds and internal ballast. It also had a heavy fully retracting swing keel and a retractable rudder in a cassette (similar to a daggerboard but inside a transom-mounted sleeve, it can be raised and lowered but it does not kick up). These features gave it shallow draft and a low profile on a trailer while still offering standing headroom below. (***Note:*** *The original rudder was damaged by hitting a submerged object and a new kick-up rudder from Ruddercraft was installed in its place.* ***–Eds.***)

There were none of these boats in the U.S. and few for sale in Europe. I could find only two listed at that time and both were on the French Riviera not far from each other.

Buy a 1982-vintage boat in France? I initiated contact anyway, thinking that at least I could get more details on this boat. One was in the hands of a local broker and the other was being sold by its owner (soon to become our French connection). Some emails got the current status and asking prices of each one. We did have a trip scheduled to visit Gabi's dad in Cologne, Germany. What could it hurt to detour for a few days and see one or both boats?

Riviera rendezvous

We emailed François, the owner who was selling his own boat, to say we were coming to see *Nicotine* (I still don't know why he and Christine chose that name). He offered to pick us up at the Marseilles airport and drive us to Bandol, where *Nicotine* was in a slip. Next, he and Christine insisted that we stay aboard *Nicotine* to "get the feel" of the boat. We had not expected that level of hospitality but quickly accepted. Big mistake. If I had any notion of "tire kicking" and *nothing more*, that intent soon flew out of *Nicotine*'s hatch. We were hooked.

We sailed on *Nicotine* as crew for François and Christine and were sold on the way she performed. The OVNI 28s were semi-custom production boats with several choices of interior layouts. *Nicotine* was an exceptional example, but her layout presented difficulties for her conversion for use in the U.S. She had a very small galley and a tiny head compartment forward where we would have had to do major surgery to install a holding tank and the associated plumbing.

François nonetheless provided information of the kind you can only get from an owner with years of experience in maintaining and modifying his cruising boat. Most of those tips are now incorporated in our boat. He also understood what faced us in the conversion to U.S. regulations and agreed with me that perhaps *Nicotine* would not do for us. Then, to my surprise, he offered to drive us down the coast to see and help inspect the other OVNI 28. Neither

The team at JSI in St. Petersburg, at top, converted *CanCan*'s rig and installed the stern arch. Rob added many more improvements, including the holding tank, at right, custom-made bi-fold doors for the companionway, and a canvas shelter for the cockpit, below.

of us knew much about it, other than it was for sale, was owned by a Belgian, and was in the hands of a broker in St. Raphael. I jumped at the chance to have an experienced pair of eyes on my side as we inspected it.

A perfect candidate

Balbuzard (French for osprey) was only a year older than *Nicotine*. The broker had the keys and the asking price . . . but not much else. François, Christine, Gabi, and I went below and discovered the boat's interior layout to be exactly what we needed. *Balbuzard* had a much larger galley, a head compartment amidships near a space under the cockpit where we could put a holding tank, and a more usable nav station and electronics area. Of course she had some downsides due to age and wear and tear, and some visible defects (and some not so visible) but, taken as whole, we saw in her an almost-perfect candidate for what we wanted.

François went into a spirited bargaining posture with the broker, as only the French can do with such flair. It was amazing to watch. The broker got the owner in Belgium on the phone and an offer was made and accepted that lowered the asking price a little. The deal was done.

Suddenly, we owned a boat sitting in a marina on the French Riviera and became responsible for some high-euro dock rent. We had to get her home as quickly as we could. After a local survey gave her a clean bill of health, we completed the purchase and immediately rechristened her *CanCan* in celebration of her aluminum bones and French heritage. The broker and the previous owner agreed to deliver her by water to the port of Marseilles, where I would have her loaded aboard a specialized DYT (Dockwise Yacht Transport) ship for delivery to Florida.

After considerable paperwork, a lengthy process to get her home, and a long wait, *CanCan* arrived on schedule at Port Everglades, Florida, where we met her in U.S. waters for the first time. Her batteries were completely dead as they had been left on by the loading crew in France, but once we got her ancient diesel fired up, I motored her out of the flooded well deck of the DYT ship and into the ICW. We took her to a nearby DIY boatyard, where she was hauled out for de-rigging and transport preparations.

Ft. Lauderdale also provided us with a custom aluminum, tandem-axle trailer that was built for *CanCan* by a trailer specialist company near the boatyard.

Rob opened up *CanCan*'s interior to run new electrical wiring and plumbing, at left. He added amenities including a cabin heater and new stove, below, and fitted fridge/freezers into the cabinets. Note the trunk for the swing keel that allows the boat to be beached.

Custom conversion

After the new trailer was completed, we proceeded across Florida to the St. Petersburg facilities of JSI (Johnson Sails). We had previously met with JSI representatives and naval architect Cortland Steck to discuss the design and fabrication of deck systems that would enable us to raise and lower *CanCan*'s mast by ourselves.

Cort designed and drew up shop plans for our new stern arch and mast tabernacle system. JSI also inspected our existing rig and replaced any questionable components, including all the standing rigging. By the time Cort and the JSI folks were finished, *CanCan* was ready to leave Florida as the very first trailer-based Alubat ever created and the only Sonate 28 of any configuration ever in the Americas. We were, at last, ready for the final phase of making *CanCan* a legal U.S. citizen. Before leaving, we had to have a class picture of all the wonderful and talented JSI folks who had worked so patiently and hard for us to bring our vision into a tangible and well-engineered reality.

Nearly a year after her purchase date in St. Raphael, we had *CanCan* home at last and in my shop for the final phase of the conversion. Her original interior of sapele wood was in remarkably good shape, so most remained intact as we began our interior alterations and refit that included every system in the boat, from plumbing to electrics. *CanCan* also received a new 2-cylinder Beta diesel in the process and, when completed about a year later, she had pressure hot and cold water, a propane system for Gabi's new gimbaled stove, and a full complement of new

CanCan **has a large interior for a 28-foot boat. The sleeping cabin is forward, at left, and the aft end of the main cabin, at right, is devoted to the head, to starboard, and the nav station, to port. The wrapped duct in the head is part of Rob's "air-to-air" air conditioning system.**

electronics, including an SSB radio, wind generator, and radar. She now has 110-volt shorepower and an inverter, powered by a much larger bank of batteries, to supply the outlets when away from the dock.

Her foresails left JSI in a "Solent" configuration, where two roller-furling headsails on two forestays fitted one close behind the other are used as a twin-sail downwind rig instead of a spinnaker. She also gained in-boom furling with a single-speed powered deck winch that does all the heavy lifting, including raising the mast via Cort's ingenious design that uses our twin whisker poles for an A-frame.

Gabi made new cushions and canvas. I experimented with an air-to-air system for the refrigeration and air-conditioning, as we wanted to be able to run every system on the boat (except the diesel) while the boat was on her trailer. We have found that ability to be useful on occasion while we're on the road, as the boat can double as a very nice hotel room. The solar panels do a fine job of running a pair of 12-volt Engel fridge/freezers that we built into the interior cabinetry. These use solar-powered deck vents to exhaust their hot-air output. We replaced the worn-out electric head with a new Raritan PH-II manual model, fitted all new sanitary hoses, and installed a legal holding-tank system.

CanCan is in full commission now and has seen three seasons of use in U.S. waters, from the Gulf Coast to Lake Huron's North Channel and all the way out to Lake Havasu in Arizona for the Havasu Pocket Cruiser Convention. She sails in salt and fresh water and, in spite of her additional cruising amenities, manages to show a lively personality. She took first place in a cruising-class regatta on Kentucky Lake one fall. She does everything we wanted in our big trailer-based sailboat and has also taught me the tricks of maintaining an aluminum hull, which has turned out to be my all-time-favorite hull material.

On reflection, would we do it again? The best answer I can give for that is that I have moved yet another older gal into my shop for a makeover. This one, a Westerly Pageant 23, arrived as a derelict. She already sits on her new trailer. We hope François and Christine will come help us launch *Ladyship* when she's ready to hold court again.

Rob Hoffman began life as a Tennessee river rat and discovered sailing while in the U.S. Navy. A tinkerer, Rob refits boats and "builds stuff." Even as he and his wife, Gabi, enjoy sailing CanCan, *he has taken on another project:* Ladyship, *a Westerly Pageant 23.*

GOOD OLD BOAT
Digital Subscriptions

New Subscribers

Try our digital subscriptions and you'll receive an instant **free** copy. Your subscription will begin with your download of the next issue.
Notification of each issue and a link will be emailed.

Already a subscriber?

Your remaining issues can be converted from paper to electronic if you prefer to receive digital copies.

Sign up online

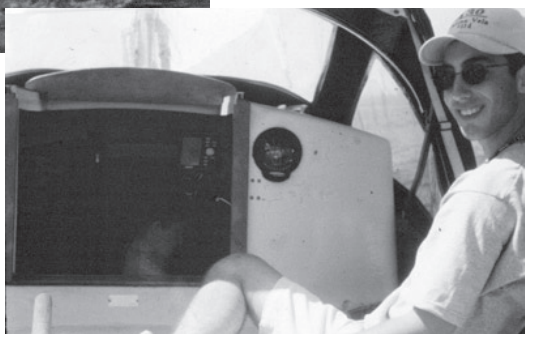
www.goodoldboat.com/
subscription_services/
digital_subscription.php

One-year subscriptions
$39.95

Restoration relived

Rebirth of *Carina*

by Joyce Sousa with son Christopher Sousa



The fall of 1997 brought with it the usual sights . . . the oranges, yellows, and reds of the leaves, the crisp night air and the sounds of children rushing to get a seat on the school bus. But one autumn was a bit different. I'll never forget the sight of that semitrailer with its billowing soot exhausting into the sky, driving up our small residential street, 60 miles from the nearest salt water. Cradled behind it, was a beautiful (so I was told) classic Alberg 30.

I had not been consulted about the purchase of this sailboat, nor had I wanted to be. I thought the 22-foot O'Day we'd owned for the past eight years was perfect for our needs. A family of five could do a little day sailing on Buzzards Bay and then go home. Little did I know that my husband was getting what is called "six-foot fever" . . . something all sailors seem to catch at some point in their sailing careers. Stephen caught an eight-foot strain of this fever.

So now there was a classic boat that towered over the O'Day 22 next to it. I cannot honestly say this classic design was a "beautiful" boat as far as I was concerned. The hull was painted robin's-egg blue, the teak (all of it) was black with gray specks, the lifeline stanchions were bent, the white fiberglass decking was blackened, and the name painted on the stern was not something that I wanted my three children to repeat. And that was just the outside.

Down below, the scene was something from the evening news: "Tornado Rips Through 30-foot Sailboat Interior." Not only did the interior have 30 years of debris strewn about, but there was also a stench of diesel fuel and mildew strong enough to gag anyone walking through the companionway.

At that point I thought: *This is going to be an exercise in futility. It's definitely a boat we should* ***not*** *have.*

Nevertheless, during the day, while everyone else was at school and work, I decided to clean it up just a little. Three hours later, after I heaved 11 large green leaf-bags, filled with everything from pieces of frayed line to 30-year-old charts, overboard, Stephen came home and showed me the long list of "projects" that this boat needed — not in order to sail, but simply to float again. I realized suddenly that the game had hardly begun.

The hull

Luckily, the gods of good weather answered our prayers shortly after we took delivery of "the heap." The first order of business was exterior aesthetics. Armed with a gas-mask-like air filter and a box of 40-grit sandpaper, our esteemed captain took to the daunting task of removing all the urethane paint that had built up for nearly 33 years on the topsides. Nearly 20 hours later, the hull, although still not fully stripped of its paint, was once again smooth, and our skipper had taken on the appearance of Papa Smurf.

When you undertake a task such as repainting the hull of a 30-foot vessel, you often wonder just how much paint it will take to cover all that surface area. But perhaps we didn't wonder enough. After browsing the aisles of the local marine suppliers, we somehow managed to buy enough Hatteras White to paint the Alberg five times over, at two coats

Vela

It took willpower, elbow grease, and a whole lot *of paint, but in the end a skeptic was won over*

per application. Oh yes, we bought a lot of paint.

But at least the painting went well. The first coat looked brilliant in the late fall sunshine. The warmth of the Indian Summer worked its magic as the paint dried. The next coat also came out great, except for slight blushing in the finish. Within the next week, all the exterior teak had been sanded and sealed, and the exterior actually looked presentable again.

The deck

Then we started on the next job, an inspection of the deck. Many boats from the 1960s and 1970s are plagued with deck delamination. Over the years, the wooden (usually balsa) core within the sandwich of fiberglass has soaked up water that has seeped in around badly sealed deck fittings. After a time, the water rots the balsa, and the decks become spongy. But Alberg 30, hull #114, was quite a different story. During the earlier production years (1960s), Albergs were manufactured with Masonite coring, rather than end-grain balsa, in the decks. Therefore, our boat had no water intrusion whatsoever, and the decks were as solid as the day they were attached to the hull. Masonite is also stiffer than balsa, so this boat had no stress fractures. We were happy, to say the least, that the deck needed no structural repair.

Down below

Newer boats often have headliners. These are great for eye-pleasing views

At left above, Alberg 30 **Carina Vela** ***sailing once again — this time on a cruise to the Isle of Shoals. Co-author Chris in the cockpit maneuvers the tiller by foot. Above, Captain Stephen and his now much more loyal crew, Joyce. At right,*** **Carina Vela** ***in the slings as she is about to be immersed at Glouchester, Mass.***

Above, during the refit process the boat's "small, but workable galley," as Joyce describes it, and the V-berth under renovation.

of boat-show quality cabins, but are a maintenance nightmare if you need to rip every piece of wiring out of the boat. This was precisely what we needed to do to *Carina Vela*. The lack of a headliner made wiring much easier.

When we purchased her, the wiring was bunched with tape and terminated with wire-nuts. Wiring was strewn about and routed in endless loops around the cabin. Not one light worked.

During early December all wiring and the fuse panel were removed from the boat and placed in a trash barrel (we kept one bunch as a souvenir). That month, we ordered a custom breaker panel from Bass Electronics, and we bought large spools of wire. In the bitter New England winter months that followed, the skipper and I worked, with the aid of space heaters, roughing in nearly 200 feet of wire to the area that would house the new circuit panel and to the locations of the new brass light fixtures. The tinned wire was crimped and soldered to forestall corrosion. Due to the amount of work still required in the cabin, we did not install any lighting or the box to house the circuit panel for another few months.

The interior of the cabin was the same "robin's-egg blue" color as the topsides and happened to be in the same condition. Before covering the boat for the winter, Steve had sanded, scraped, and epoxied the inside of the cabin to a very smooth surface. Blue dust covered the inside of the cabin all winter, but we consoled ourselves with the thought that it would be removed come springtime.

During the winter months, we also removed all the gate-valve seacocks and through-hulls to prepare for replacement with full-flow ball valves and new through-hulls. We also removed the entire stern-tube/prop-shaft assembly during the fall (which required removal of the rudder), and ordered new ones. This included replacement of the worn bronze shaft with stainless steel, a new stern-tube/Cutless bearing assembly, and a new dripless stuffing box. These items by themselves were a costly venture, but we felt the investment was warranted because of the added insurance they gave us.

The portlights on this vintage vessel were so badly scratched and fogged that they, too, needed replacing. We tried to remove the original aluminum window frames, but the anodizing had worn off long ago, and the frames fractured and fell apart in our hands.

Finishing touches

I felt a developing connection to *Carina Vela*. She had become beautiful to me, and the finishing touches would be mine. The portlight curtains were white-on-white, tied onto mahogany-stained rods. This made for a wonderful contrast to the interior of the mahogany-and-white cabin.

We recovered the cushions with Sunbrella fabric in Pacific Blue, which complemented the large red and blue throw pillows. One glance into our world of varnish revealed an antique beauty that we had seldom seen in similar boats.

The first season aboard came and went, and it was a sad day when *Carina Vela* was pulled from the water and placed on her cradle for the harsh New England winter months ahead.

We decided that year to store her in the marina in Gloucester. I was actually looking forward to watching those streams of billowing soot from the semi hauling our magnificent sailboat up the street. Looking out of my bedroom window this winter won't be the same . . . she won't be sitting on her jackstands, the largest object in the neighborhood.

After sailing on *Carina Vela* for the past two summers, I have discovered that I enjoy being out on the open ocean, reaching for the warmth of the sun and feeling the salt spray upon my face.

I've grown to respect her and the ritualistic dance she does with the waves. Maybe what I've learned is true . . . I've had an experience with calming the fury of the sea in a vessel that is truly worthy of her name: *Carina Vela*.

Carina Vela *is sailed out of Ipswich, Mass, by Stephen Sousa and family: Joyce, Chris, Becky, and Rachel. Authors Joyce and Chris are pictured on the previous page.*

The naming of *Carina Vela*

When you purchase a "new" vessel, the name needs to suit those who will be trusting their lives to her seaworthiness. As I have mentioned, the previous name was a mouthful, and not one I would want to keep. Our last boat was named *Serendipity* . . . a great name; however, a very popular one.

I do understand that the sea gods prefer one to carry the same name over from boat to boat, maybe altering it just so slightly by adding a Roman numeral. But, since we were virtually going to have a "new" sailboat, I thought Neptune would be forgiving this time around.

So now we began a search for a new name that fit hull #114. This was my "project," since there were so many in which I did not participate. Like nearly every sailor, I wanted to have a name that would represent the sea and the stars, by which sailors still navigate to this day.

My son, Chris, an avid amateur astronomer, had several books on the subject of constellations and it didn't take much time to come across some meaningful Latin. In fact, there were two constellations in the southern skies that fit the bill. *Carina*, translated, meant keel; *Vela* meant sails.

Carina alone would have been appropriate, because the Alberg has a very long, full keel. However, the addition of *Vela* completed the name and added a romantic flair to a boat that had graced the waters of New England and the Chesapeake for the past 33 years.

Carina Vela ***sailing on Ipswich Bay.***

Year of the "quick"

by David Waltrip

We owned our Chris-Craft Capri 30 for seven years. Each year our annual haulout included a long list of improvements and things we wanted to fix. My dream was to have a year when all we did at this annual event was paint the bottom and change the zinc. That year finally came in 1999. I looked forward to it with excitement.

My wife, Robyn, had different plans. As the month of the haulout approached, she made a suggestion: "Honey, since we don't have any *real* work to do on the boat this year, could you replace the cabin sole while it's up? You have the week off anyway."

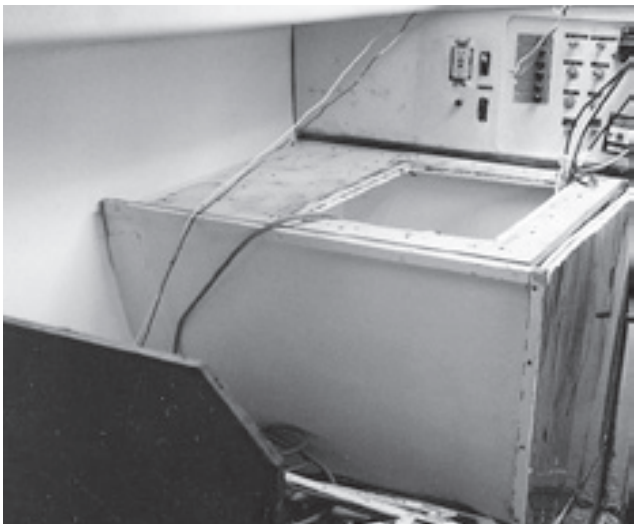
I should have known better, but I said yes. After all, I *had* been promising to replace the sole for six years, and it really was *only* a one-day job.

This was the first of many conversations that started with "Honey, since we . . ."

This is the list of the major things we completed during the year of the "quick" haulout:

- Replaced the sole.
- Replaced the Formica countertops.
- Replaced the leaking mid and forward ports with opening Bowmar ports.

These items started a season-long trend that included refinishing the entire interior, refinishing the mahogany, remaking the dodger, remaking the anchor supports, and refinishing the deck.



During the course of this effort I learned several useful tips (in addition to this one: never tell your wife that you plan a short haulout). These might be useful to other boat owners.

First and foremost, I learned about a tool called a Roto Zip saw. Robyn discovered it, graciously bought it for me, then declared it might be real handy. She's like that, bringing me new tools and expecting me to put them to use. This is a most valuable tool and nearly essential for anyone attempting to restore an old boat. It can be used to cut any shape against a variety of contours and to whatever depth is required. The carbide tip blade lasts for an exceptional number of cuts. The standard blade can be used for cuts which require the smallest possible blade-cut width but will not last as long. If you do your own work, you will find this an invaluable tool.

Easily removed

The first job was to replace the sole. The original sole was tabbed to the hull sides and counter cabinets. This was easily removed with the Roto Zip. However, there were several places that I could not reach with the tool. I dealt with this problem by placing the Roto Zip cutter in a standard Dremel tool. I did not have the control when using the Dremel that the Roto Zip gives, but it was a useful trick for tight places. When replacing the sole I made the entire middle section (about 8 inches wide) removable from the head to the engine compartment. This removable section allows access to the centerboard pin, making it possible to clear debris from the drain path all the way to the bilge. Bracing was permanently attached to the removable portion of the sole so this section could rest against the hull to prevent flexing. It's a little tricky to match the contour of the hull, but the stable floor surface is worth the extra effort.

My next task was to replace the countertop, no small task, but it was easier than it looked. I first removed everything mounted on top of it, then the countertop itself could be removed. The countertop consisted of laminate over marine plywood that was screwed to the cabinet from the bottom and the front. The screws on top were hidden under the laminate. To get to them, the old laminate had to be destroyed. I found that the laminate could be broken loose in very large sections by

Before and after is just a state of mind for refitters and sailors like Dave and Robyn. No sooner did they turn this Capri into a dreamboat than they sold it and started on a Caribbean 35, another Chris-Craft.

Restoration relived

One small project at haulout time leads to another and another

using a wood chisel, but it could not be removed intact. Once it was removed, it was easy to remove the plywood top. That done, it was possible to sand this surface with a belt sander to ensure good adhesion for the new laminate. Once the top was removed, I had excellent access to the icebox. This was important because there was a significant amount of space between the box and the engine room, and it is easy to add additional foam insulation to protect from engine heat. I added about 1½ inches of insulation. This added barrier almost doubled the amount of time we could go without buying ice, from two to four days.

Jigsaw cut

I cut the laminate for an exact fit along the back edge. This was done with a jigsaw, using a hollow-ground blade. It did not give a perfect edge, but nobody will ever see this edge. The front edge and the edges around the sink and icebox were cut to have an overlap of approximately ⅜ inch. Gluing the laminate in place after the plywood counter was installed proved to be the easiest part. I followed Don Casey's instructions and placed waxed paper over the surface after applying the Formica contact cement. Once the new laminate was exactly where I wanted it, I slid out the waxed paper one piece at a time. The result was a perfect alignment. The final step was to finish the visible edges, using a router and a laminate bit to give a perfect finish.

The third major "Honey Do" was to replace the portlights. The Capri 30 came equipped with two opening port lights that had developed a permanent leak after 30 years. We'd been trying to fix it for seven years. We finally decided to replace the ports with new ones and to add opening portlights over the V-berth. Of course, one cannot buy the same size window as the originals, so we had to order the next size up. My wife called the retailer to check on availability while the boat was on the hard. They told her they could provide three-day delivery if she wanted to pay the extra shipping cost; otherwise it would be two weeks. She agreed to pay the extra money, and we removed the old ports. When the ports had not arrived after five days, she called again and was told that the three days was *after* they received the ports from Bowmar in about six to eight weeks. Hell hath no fury like my wife as an angry consumer. We received the ports four days later.

Installing the ports was extremely easy. I again used the Roto Zip to open the space for the larger ports. I sealed the exposed edge with epoxy and installed the windows without a significant problem, although installation did require two people, one inside and one outside. (Note: I did not consider the small hole I drilled in Robyn's finger while she was holding the outside frame to be a significant problem.) The added breeze is wonderful, they do not leak, and Robyn didn't even complain.

The quick haulout prompted a season of additional projects, resulting in all the things we had talked about for years being completed, and the boat becoming a truly beautiful cruiser. So what to do when you've completed the upgrade? We bought a Chris-Craft Caribbean 35 in serious need of our attention.

David's two passions are rebuilding old boats and sailing. He and Robyn cruise the Chesapeake from May through October and are hoping to cruise full-time in 5 years. Sailing and boatyard partners in all respects, the Waltrips argue only about whether David really *can't varnish or just* pretends *to be inept in order to avoid the ordeal. When do you suppose Robyn first suspected this subterfuge?*

Resources for Chris-Craft sailors

Chris Craft Discussion List
<http://members.sailnet.com/resources/links/list/index-new.cfm?id=chriscraft>

Chris-Craft Owners' Association
Robert Pemberton, 803-773-2160
pemberton@sumter.net
<http://people.ne.mediaone.net/dje/ccsail.htm>
Owners' association for all Chris-Craft sailboats (Apache, Comanche, Cherokee, Capri, and Caribbean).

Chris-Craft Apache 37 Web page
dje@mediaone.net
<http://people.ne.mediaone.net/dje/apache/main.htm>

Restoring *Renee*

Adding years of life to a tired 30-foot wooden ketch

by Alan Lucas

I first fell in love with *Renee Tighe* in Townsville, North Queensland, when American circumnavigator Earl Koepke brought her to anchor near my own boat. As she swung to wind and tide, I could not see an ugly bone in her body. She seemed perfect with her beakhead, crescent sheer, tumblehome quarters and champagne-glass transom. The year was 1969.

Less than 10 years later, married and cruising on my third yacht, we came to anchor in lovely Madang Harbour in Papua, New Guinea. While rowing a stern line to a coconut palm I suddenly realized we were in good company; *Renee Tighe* was similarly moored just a biscuit-toss away.

She had completed her circumnavigation in Florida, where Earl sold her to an Australian. He then sailed her back across the South Pacific to her new home (and would later continue his passage to Australia). Now used as a weekend plaything, *Renee* was looking a little sad. My wife immediately shared my love for this much-traveled little ketch.

Another 10 years passed before she was ours. Dilapidated, smelling of rot, leaking, in need of refastening and with the probability of worm in her keel, we bought her at a price only servants of classic wooden boats pay. *Renee* was more than just a pretty little yacht with a big past, she was a well-documented piece of American maritime history that could not be abandoned.

Renee Tighe was designed by Hugh Angelman and Charles Davies for Californians Bill and Renee Tighe. Known as the Alpha, or A30 class, she measured 30 feet by 11 feet, 4 inches by 4 feet, 6 inches (the draft had increased to five feet when I purchased her). Bill and Renee built her in Santa Ana with some unexpected help from a friend, Willard Buchanan. Willard's name was to live in American commercial history.

First of many

Launched on December 14, 1957, in company with her twin sister, *August Moon*, *Renee* was among the first of many vessels built by a company then jokingly called The Willard Boat Works. This would later become The Willard Company, designers and builders of fiberglass and aerospace products.

Bill and Renee kept their little ketch until 1964 when she was sold to John and Fabia Schreiber, who cruised Mexico while raising a family aboard. Then Earl Koepke bought her and sailed her around the world.

In 1988, my family and I had just completed our own world circumnavigation. *Renee Tighe* came on the market within days of our selling our boat. She was to prove the perfect therapy for a restless sailor. I rented a small plot of industrial land and hauled her out for major repairs and restoration.

Having bought her more on emotional impulse than good common sense, I did not survey her below the waterline. I presumed the worst because all her deadwood was of Douglas fir (also known as Oregon pine). I had never been convinced by this uniquely American habit of using softwood in such a worm-prone area. I expected to find most of her backbone eaten away after 31 years in the water, much of it in the tropics.

It was thus a totally unexpected bonus when, after drying and burning back to raw timber, I found not a sign of worm. But that was the only good news.

Renee Tighe, with husband Bill, top opposite page, launches her namesake at Newport Beach in December of 1957.
***Renee Tighe*, center opposite page, waits her turn to launch behind *August Moon* at Newport Beach, California, in 1957. They were the first boats out of the Willard Boat Works yard. (Both photos: *Beckner Photo Services* California.)**
At left on opposite page and this page above, *Renee* out cruising.

> *"Renee was more than just a pretty little yacht with a big past, she was a well-documented piece of American maritime history that could not be abandoned."*

Internal rot

Douglas fir had also been used in the apron and gripe, both of which appeared to be wholesome. But test drilling soon exposed hearts of rot, a condition already suggested by the topside strakes showing their seams in the entire bow area. Most fastenings had been released by the rot, and the strakes remained in place almost by habit alone. Major surgery was indicated.

In planning this part of the restoration, I forced my mind away from traditional methods and instead thought laterally.

A big, thick apron on a small boat represents a lot of unnecessary mass in the limited chain locker. Furthermore, it prevents incoming chain from settling in one place and often snags it on the way out. Also, the tight corners created where apron, strakes, and frame meet are hard to clean and are like reservoirs for freshwater dripping from the chain's deck pipe. There had to be a better way.

I chose to tear all of the apron out as well as most of the gripe and then fair and sand the remaining surfaces of inner topsides and the back of the remaining stem. All the fastenings that would not knock out were cut flush, leaving a smooth, continuous surface forward of the first frame. Any strakes riding proud from the stem were forced back into position with external battens and clamps.

After I filled and faired all fastening holes inside, I fiberglassed the entire area forward of the first frame, using chopped strand mat and polyester resin. This was laminated up to ½ inch thick behind the stem, tapering back to about 3/16 inch at the frame. At this stage, I secured all unfastened topside strakes with through-bolts of around 3/16 inch diameter.

Uncluttered locker

I then fit a false apron against the fiberglass behind the stem and glassed this into place with a similar thickness of laminates which buried the inside end of the through-fastenings. The result was a very strong structure which not only held the strakes more firmly than ever before, but produced a relatively large, smooth-sided and uncluttered chain locker.

Next, I turned my attention to the decks and cabintop, which were leaking at every joint. Because it was made of plywood, I fully expected to find the edges rotten beyond recovery. To my amazement, no rot whatsoever was found in any of the plywood. To the contrary, it looked so clean and new that it could have been delivered the day before. All plywood was,

Above, *Renee* in cruising mode after her restoration.
Reminiscent of the Herreshoff shape, *Renee's* stern sections, below, resolve into tumblehome and champagne-glass transom. She was designed in the 1950s by Hugh Angelman and Charles Davies.

incidentally, made entirely from Douglas fir. My respect for Oregon was growing daily.

The cabin sides, along with all hull strakes, were Philippine mahogany, a well-respected timber for use on vessels of *Renee's* era. Despite its good reputation, there were patches of rot in some planking and a small part of the cabin sides. The only comparable timber easily obtained in Australia was Meranti, a wood known to rot easily.

Meranti does, however, have two extreme standards — sometimes in the same plank. Where it tends toward gray, it is very poor, but where it tends toward red, it is usually of good quality. I always chose red, which had the color and grain closest to Philippine mahogany. After inspecting and refastening the deck and cabintop plywood where necessary, I fiberglassed the entire area from toerail to toerail in five laminates of two-ounce chopped-strand mat and polyester resin. This

covered the outside cabin sides forever and killed all temptation toward excessive areas of brightwork, but it produced a leakproof "roof" for the whole boat.

Original material

This anti-traditional behavior toward the restoration ceased belowdecks. There, I replaced nearly everything in its original position, using primarily original material. But first, all fittings, save a couple of bulkheads, were removed so the hull could be stripped and treated. This was internally drenched in copper naphthenate solution, a rot-proofing agent that has worked well for me in the past. Only varnished areas, such as the internal cabin sides were treated with epoxy to avoid the green stains of copper.

"Perhaps the most unusual feature of the rig was the mainsail gaff. Normally attached to the mast with jaws and parrels, Renee's *was attached with mast track and a slide."*

The stripped and saturated interior needed to sit for a few months, obliging me to concentrate on the outside of the hull. It desperately needed refastening even though most screws were in fair to good condition. I purchased about 2,000 14-gauge silicon-bronze screws two inches long, and set about this most tedious of tasks.

Alan Lucas, left, fitting a new knee. *Renee* had no hanging knees either in the cabin or sidedeck construction. This one was laminated from strips of oak.
At right, as soon as a section was splined and faired, it was painted to keep the hull as cool as possible against any threat of splitting. Splines can be seen above the belting and below the waterline, the latter extending aft only a few feet. The remainder of the underwater body retained its original caulking.

Because each screw behaved differently — whether extracting the old or inserting the new, I quickly found that anything of a power-assisted nature was too insensitive. I thus used a hand-brace for every removal and replacement, and the act of kneeling for much of the work, pushing hard against the bilge, nearly crippled me. I had to alternate the work with something easier and in the standing position.

Having long before decided to spline all topsides, the garboard, and a few feet in from both bow and stern below the waterline, this seemed the logical occupation to offset the pain of refastening. It also promoted a sort of contest within myself to reach a certain stage with one before starting the other.

Simple angle grinder

Because of this ad hoc attitude, I chose not to properly tool-up for the job of splining. Instead of buying or fabricating a special router or saw blades and organizing myself around full-length guide battens, I used a simple four-inch angle grinder fitted with a 60-grit sanding disk.

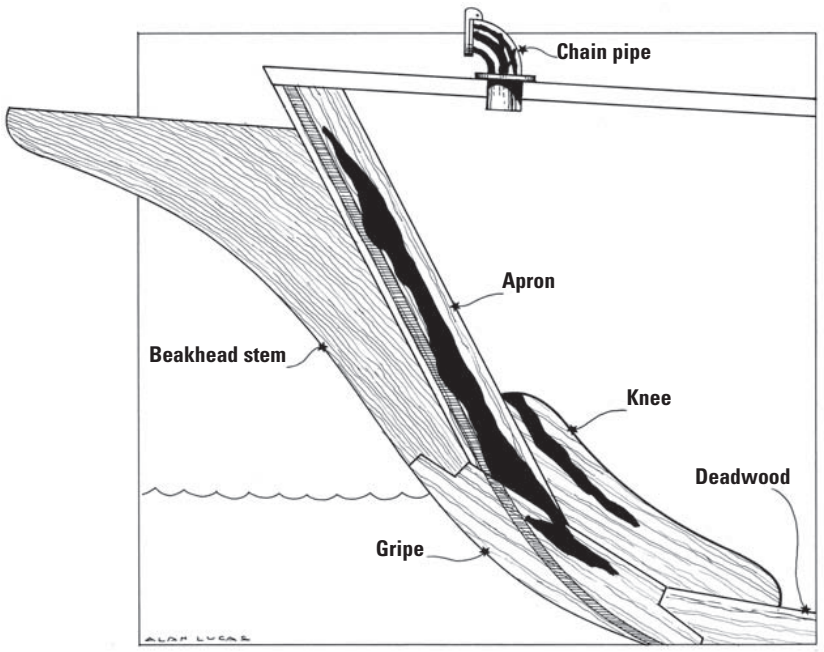
This produced an unexpected benefit. The sanding disk curved into the seam to produce slightly convex sides. Then, when tailoring the splines to their respective seams, the opposite effect of concave spline sides resulted. My impression was that less glue squeezed out when they were driven home.

Before any seam could be shaped with the angle grinder, it had to be raked clean of all caulk and putty.

This was achieved using a large rat-tail file with its pointed end bent to a right angle. This bent end was given a slight edge on the grindstone as well as a shape close to the ideal V for the spline. This roughly shaped seam was then finally cleaned out and improved with the angle grinder and sanding disk.

Because the strakes were of such soft Meranti timber, care was necessary when using the angle grinder. The trick was to keep it moving and to resist using too coarse a grit. It was vital to move against the rotation, lest the disk jam and cause damage to the job and possible injury to me.

As soon as I had prepared an area of seams and finished their mating splines, I drenched all the work in penetrating epoxy and allowed it to cure before gluing. For the latter task,



At left, *Renee's* keel deadwood, apron, stem, gripe, and knee were all of Douglas fir. Incredibly, there was no worm below the waterline, but rot had spread into the apron, gripe, and knee shown in black. This was almost certainly caused by fresh water dripping from the chain pipe. The whole area was torn out and replaced with a fiberglass "apron."
The four inch angle-grinder, above, fitted with a 60-grit sanding disk worked well in shaping the seams preparatory to splining. Not as efficient nor as accurate as a proper tool, such as a shaped saw or router, it nevertheless suited the circumstances of *Renee's* restoration.
The state of *Renee's* bow, below, before restoration. The stem/beakhead, foreground, was OK, but the apron, into which the topside strakes were fastened, was rotten as the loose planks verify. The battens and clamps were a way of containing the trouble while awaiting haulout.

I used epoxy glue. I knifed off the excess glue before it had set hard, and planed the protruding spline fair. Any spline that threatened to drift out during the cure was held in place with clenched steel nails.

No splits or bulges

Although clumsy, the angle-grinder system of splining worked well. The hull was so stable that nine years later no seam had split nor had any spline bulged. This was true of the topsides and those seams splined below the waterline.

From the garboard up to just below the waterline and fore and aft to the end splines, the original caulk was left in place. I suspect it was Willard's original work, for every seam in that area, on both sides, was neat and tidy and obviously undisturbed by time. It was a very tight part of the hull and needed no further work beyond stripping the old paint and applying penetrating epoxy.

Years later, with a full understanding of just how stable the hull was, I knew I could have Dynelled the entire hull without its peeling off because of plank movement. But at the time it seemed sensible to leave one large area on each side in its original condition to allow for some swelling, or shrinkage, depending on how dry the bilges proved to be.

I doubt if such liberties could be taken with hardwood planks. Depending on the species and age, hardwood tends to move a lot more than softwood, especially if it has a poorly defined grain, as in the case of Philippine mahogany.

And while on the subject of hull movement related to restoration decisions, it was interesting to note that *Renee's* engine-shaft alignment remained perfect before, during, and after her 15 months in an open yard. I doubt this would hove been the case had her backbone been of hardwood.

Covered and ignored

Renee's original engine was, I believe, a gas-powered unit that was replaced a few years later by a Perkins 4-107 diesel. This was replaced by a Lister 30-horsepower diesel in the late 1970s. During my ownership, it ran like new with not a moment's trouble. It was covered and ignored during the restoration.

Belowdecks, *Renee* was typical of her era in that her two saloon settee-berths were set so high that even tall people had trouble placing their feet on the sole while sitting. And unless you were extraordinarily short, your head would bang against the cabin sides when you leaned back.

Despite a golden opportunity to correct this very uncomfortable feature, I restored them as original and then spent a number of years regretting my decision. A mini-refit in the water six years later corrected the problem but meant that her large,

fiberglass water tanks (which were in immaculate condition) had to be cut down to fit the lower bunk level.

And so *Renee's* interior was replaced pretty much as it was at her launching back in 1957 with most timber and plywood reused. Sadly, a rather unique wine locker that folded down to become the saloon table, sighted aboard in Madang 10 years before, had gone. Gone, too, was an interesting longitudinal galley locker over the engine box which appears in original photographs.

The galley was one feature neither my wife, Patricia, nor I liked very much. Not because it was cramped, but because its sole was crossed by large sawn frames. We seemed to be forever tripping when entering or exiting the galley with all that that implies when carrying hot liquid or food.

Looking better than she really was before restoration, *Renee,* above, is seen here in her original form. During restoration, her davits were modernized and her lovely wheel steering gave way to a simpler tiller. Patricia Lucas in the galley, below. The intruding frames across the sole were the only source of annoyance on this lovely little ship.

"Belowdecks, Renee *was typical of her era in that her two saloon settee-berths were set so high that even tall people had trouble placing their feet on the sole while sitting."*

Like white oak

The frames were all sawn hardwood of a species forgotten by her builder but similar in appearance to white oak. Built of futtocks bolted together in traditional style, they had suffered very little from the years and needed only a scattering of sister bolts. Their width gave all strakes an excellent landing, which dictated the use of the already-mentioned screws in their fastening.

The main mast was removed for restoration and laid alongside on sawhorses. Its grain suggested spruce but, like the mizzen, it was probably Douglas fir. Whatever, it had a little rot at the hounds but was otherwise perfect. Even the heel and keel step — an area that nearly always rots — were in prime condition.

Renee was rigged as a ketch with a gaff mainsail and Bermudan mizzen. A thoroughly useless topmast sat butted to her mainmast top and was held there with a single, thick copper rod. I suspect it was a crude attempt at replacing a rotten top section in the past, and I worried that the hole drilled into the cap would have become a haven for rot.

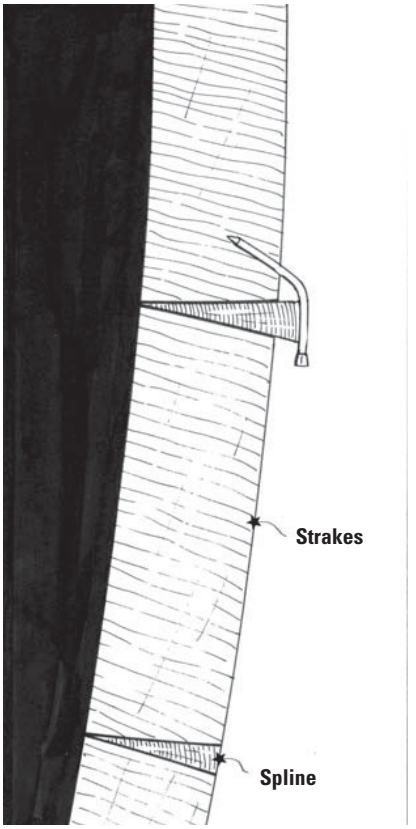
Once more, Douglas fir (if it was not spruce) took me by surprise, for there was no sign of rot, so I plugged and capped the hole and discarded the topmast. The only downside of this decision was that the mainmast was now the same length as the mizzenmast (when set back into the boat), giving her a schooner look. I nevertheless continued to call her a ketch.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the rig was the mainsail gaff. Normally attached to the mast with jaws and parrels, *Renee's* was attached with mast track and a slide. Despite the track and slide being oversized, compared to normal sail track, I nevertheless would have thought it unable to cope with the lateral strains imposed by the gaff when under full sail.

The fact that she had sailed this way for countless thousands of miles over the decades decreased my fears, so I decided to stay with it. The lack of wear and tear on the mast without jaws was certainly a bonus, but the pleasure of having a fast-dropping gaff when sailing off the wind had been diminished.

Never failed

But the beautifully cast ball-joint gooseneck never failed over the thousands of miles I added to her record, and the gaff was definitely easier to lower than any Bermudan mainsail I had ever used. Moreover, without jaws the gaff could not apply leverage between the lower shrouds



Wherever a freshly glued spline threatened to drift out during setting, it was temporarily trapped under a clenched steel nail. All glue was epoxy and all splines were faired back before full curing took place, to prevent a hard ridge of glue from interfering with final fairing.

Renee Tighe's Vital Statistics

Designed by: Hugh Angelman and Charles Davies
Design name: Alpha 30
Builders: Bill and Renee Tighe, California
Length: 30 feet
Beam: 11 feet, 4 inches
Draft: (original): 4 feet, 6 inches
Launched: December 14, 1957, Santa Ana, Calif.
Cruised Mexico with second owners
Circumnavigated the world with third owner
Crossed Pacific Ocean with fourth owner
Registered in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s
Australian registered in the 1980s

and the mast when it was up and working, which is a problem with many traditional systems.

All the standing rigging had been replaced by the previous owner with 1x19 stainless wire some 15 years before. Remembering that stainless work-hardens when allowed to flop, it was definitely the wrong choice because the gaff rig is, by its very nature, a soft, floppy rig. Knowing all this, I was nevertheless encouraged by its good condition and chose to continue using it.

In no way am I promoting my actions, but it has to be said that the same wire was still going strong when I sold *Renee* 10 years later. It certainly challenged the philosophy of replacing stainless rigging wire every eight to 10 years to satisfy insurance demands (a fact that was personally irrelevant because I never insure my boats).

Renee was reborn in July 1990 when she was lowered by crane into Brisbane Water, 20 miles north of Sydney. It was the beginning of eight years of flawless service under my ownership and only came to an end when Patricia and I were free to resume living aboard on a full-time basis. Then *Renee* proved too small and had to be replaced.

In 1998, Patricia and I started building our ultimate boat, a 50-foot, shallow-draft centerboarder based on the Chesapeake Bay skipjack. *(This story will be told in a future edition of Good Old Boat. — **Ed.**)* Toward the end of the year, the capital tied up in *Renee* had to be freed, and we sold her. I had one last sail on her delivery trip.

Owning such a beautiful little craft had been a joy and a privilege. Of the many boats I have built or restored over the years, she was the most satisfying for the way she responded. She never ranked as a work of art either in the way she was built or the way she was restored, but as a design trendsetter and a real head-turner, she had few peers.

Patricia and Alan Lucas aboard their newly restored *Renee Tighe*, in 1990. She took a year to restore which included a full makeover. (Photograph courtesy of *Coffs Harbour Advocate* Newspaper.)

Purchase, refit, and

After buying back his boat, he brought her back again

The legendary singlehanded sailor looked me in the eye, paused for dramatic effect, and said, "Ray, buy this boat. You will not regret it." When the great sea mystic, Bernard Moitessier, gave me that wise advice 30 years ago, I heeded his counsel. And just as he predicted, there have been no regrets. In fact, I am as happy with my little vessel now as I was three decades ago.

Here is a good test for the honesty of that claim: I have *never* seen another 30-footer I would swap for my beloved *Aventura*. Her combination of strength, beauty, speed, and seakindly motion are all one could ask for in a pocket cruiser. In more than 20,000 miles, most of them singlehanded, she has never failed me or even worried me.

Aventura is a 1978 Golden Gate 30. She's a full-keel sloop of moderate displacement designed by Chuck Burns. Sisterships were built under the brand names of Farallon 29, Bodega 30, and Bay Island 30. Back in 1983 when I was researching them, I was told she was a Cadillac boat at a Chevrolet price. But these boats had been built during the oil crisis of the late 1970s when the price of resin skyrocketed along with that of petroleum. This greatly reduced profit margins and many builders went out of business, selling their molds to others.

Now, even though I have just praised my boat as though she were the Goddess of Rum, I failed to mention that when I bought her she was a bit . . . cosmetically challenged. Her teak had deteriorated to the color of pewter. But if she had been a varnish-perfect princess, I would never have been able to afford her. However, her deteriorated teak didn't alarm me because I had a sanding brigade available at my disposal.

And what an 80-grit gang they were! Because I am that rarest of cruisers — a sailor who supports his vagabond ways by juggling bowling balls — my friends are a bit . . . eccentric. There's Dana who juggles torches with a live chicken standing on his head, Babycakes Babs the tap-dancing cowgirl, and Tommy the roller-skating accordionist. Because of the leisure time that graces the lifestyle of someone with "no visible means of financial support," my friends were all willing to spend a few hours sanding in exchange for beer, sandwiches, and other enticements.

Since 18 of my loony friends showed up to help me, we only had to sand about 4 feet each. In one hilarious afternoon, we discovered some stunningly beautiful teak under that dull gray camouflage. Over the next few weeks, I did the finish sanding and laid on 10 coats of high-gloss varnish. My sweet little sloop now gleamed like a new bride's smile. She looked exquisite.

And she remained that way for nearly two decades as I happily wandered the wide waters in her. Together we did a year-long cruise to Mexico and Hawaii and back to San Francisco in 1985. Next, in 1990, I competed in the Singlehanded Transpac (California to Hawaii) and then sailed her back to San Francisco, also alone. In 1992, I gave up my beautiful Victorian rent-controlled apartment in San Francisco and adopted the cruising life full time.

Sold to "the kids"

But early in the year 2000, a combination of extremely difficult family and personal circumstances made it necessary for me to sell *Aventura*. For someone who had meshed so effortlessly into the sea-gypsy life, this was Bad News. But there was also some Good News because my

Pewter is a fine color for metal but not for teak, at left above, so Ray made it the color he prefers with several coats of varnish.

repeat

BY RAY JASON

impeccable boat was purchased by a wonderful couple.

I thought of them as "the kids" at the time, because he was only 19 and she was barely 20. But even though their chronological years defined them as youngsters, their nautical miles and knowledge surely qualified them as salty old dogs. Claude had already circumnavigated. And he didn't do it as a teen aboard a family boat; he made the rounding with a couple of buddies who were only in their early 20s. Julie, his sweetheart at the time and wife now, was born in Paris but spent her entire life growing up aboard her parents' French cruising boat. The two met in Tahiti during Claude's circumnavigation and vowed to get a boat of their own after he completed his voyage.

They had spent months unsuccessfully wandering the want ads and docks of South Florida searching for the boat of their dreams, so they were feeling pretty dejected as they walked toward *Aventura*. The instant they saw her, they knew their luck had changed and they bought her within 48 hours.

It was a heart-rending experience for me to cast off the docklines for the young couple and watch my beloved sloop sail without me for the first time in 17 years. As I tossed the final line aboard, I told "the kids" to contact me first if they ever had to sell her.

Reunion

A couple of years later, the totally unexpected email popped up on my laptop. Claude's dad had bought a large surplus vessel from the South African navy and wanted to convert it to an expedition ship. The young cruisers were going to dedicate themselves to that project and needed to sell *Aventura*. They wanted to know if I would be interested in buying her back for the same price that they had paid me for her.

To make my decision astonishingly easy, they informed me they had done some serious upgrades to her. That was an understatement. They had swapped out the old Volvo for a brand-new Yanmar diesel. They had added radar, a wind generator, refrigeration, new standing rigging, and other gear I could never afford on a bowling ball tosser's salary.

Although this was already a very generous offer, they made it even more alluring by mentioning that my once and future sloop was in a boatyard in Carriacou, down near Grenada. I had always wanted to sail the fabled West Indies and now I wouldn't have to beat into the trade winds for weeks to get there.

The only downside to this storybook reunion was the fact that, while dedicating themselves to upgrading the equipment aboard *Aventura*, Claude and Julia weren't able to maintain her cosmetic beauty as I had always done. And, since she was now way down island, I couldn't afford to fly in even a few members of my long-ago sanding brigade . . . those who were not presently incarcerated.

Singlehanded sanding

By doing it alone, I made much slower progress, but this also gave me far more time to savor the transformation. Three areas begged for my attention. The terminally gray teak was the primary project. Then I had to discover whether there actually was "stainless" steel under what currently appeared to be "rust-more" steel. And finally, the white fiberglass had oxidized to the point at

The young couple to whom Ray had sold *Aventura* upgraded her equipment but neglected her cosmetics, at left. When Ray bought her back, he restored her woodwork, polished her stainless steel, repainted the non-skid, and cleaned up everyting else, at right.

which it was hard to determine where it ended and the gray non-skid began.

A cruising friend loaned me a palm sander. After a few days spent enjoying its labor-saving efficiency, I wanted to build a little shrine to the palm sander and make daily sawdust offerings. This is one great tool. I also eased my sandpaper burden by cutting down the number of teak objects I used to varnish. Many of these were little in size but large in nuisance. The bases under winches and beneath turning blocks are good examples of pain-in-the-palm items that I now covered with Pettit Easypoxy Mist Gray paint. It goes on easily, is readily available, and is very durable.

There is a phase when the teak becomes a pale salmon color so gorgeous I didn't want to apply the varnish. Unfortunately, that stage lasts about as long as a campaign promise, so I laid on 10 coats of West Marine Admiral's Varnish. Between each application, I sanded with 220-grit; except for the last two coats, which got the deluxe 400-grit treatment.

A boat-keeper's tricks

To convert my stainless steel from rust-more to shine-more, I used basic Brasso. It is the only metal polish widely available in Panama. When applying it with a clean rag was not sufficient, I switched up to green scrub pads. On the really tough rusty spots I used toothbrush-sized metal brushes.

To resurrect the hidden beauty of the non-skid I used Easypoxy Mist Gray marine enamel. A barbecue brush does an excellent job of prepping the surface. I used masking tape on the long linear surfaces and would then freehand in the rounded corners. Cutting the brush bristles down until they are only about an inch long helps keep the paint from building up between the high spots in the non-skid.

A final trick that deserves mention in my boat-keeping arsenal is the use of acetone on the lifelines. In my early days of owning *Aventura*, I experimented with many techniques for removing the grime that seems magnetically attracted to white lifeline covers. I finally hit upon acetone as the miracle gunk remover. Other boaters on the docks cautioned me that it was too harsh and would soon eat up the white coating. Well, brothers and sisters, I am here to testify that for more than 25 years now this has not occurred. My lifelines remain clean and white.

In closing, I'd like to address the commonly held belief that sailors can either go cruising or they can devote themselves to keeping their boats looking beautiful. In my experience, this is simply not true. I have been out here in the fleet for a very long time and have discovered many cruisers who maintain their boats superbly and yet rack up the miles, the ports, and the adventures. To me, being cocooned in a beautiful boat is well worth the extra effort.

Ray Jason is the author of Tales of a Sea Gypsy. *He and* Aventura *recently completed a fun voyage from Key West to Mayan, Mexico, then Belize, the Rio Dulce, and back to Bocas del Toro, Panama, where he is usually anchored out by his lonesome working on his "other writing." Visit www.theseagypsyphilosopher.blogspot.com for a sample.*

Preserving a dream

A very determined sailor labors to renovate a 66-year-old Alden woodie

by Tom Garber

When I went for a sail last August on *Zephyr*, my 1938 Malabar Jr., designed by John Alden, it was so much more than a typical day on the water. It was the culmination of a dream set in motion three years earlier and a reminder to be careful what you dream for.

Sailing a classic wooden yacht along New England's coastline is a romantic notion: sun glistening off varnished mahogany hatches, the dance of spray on canvas decks, accolades received from admirers in quaint ports…it's easy to fall in love with a dream. But there is a dark side. Old boats require much attention, quickly fall into a state of disrepair, and can hide a plethora of problems. Despite these negatives, and fueled by a healthy dose of naive optimism, I decided I wanted to take on the restoration of a classic wooden sailboat.

I found *Zephyr* listed for sale on the Internet for $5,000. She had been out of the water for two years in Mamaroneck, New York. After my cursory inspections revealed that she was indeed a "project boat," I signed a contract to pay $2,000 within six months. I then had her moved to my house. While writing the check to the boat hauler, I thought, "Well she's mine now…for good or for bad." One week later the nephew of her owner called me with the news that the owner had died, and it was his wish that the boat be mine for free. I was moved that Don, who had owned *Zephyr* for 56 years, considered me such a worthy successor. I made a promise to myself that no matter what was wrong with the boat, I would get her sailing again.

Looking for rot

My first task was removing the interior of the boat to inspect for rot. What I found wasn't pretty. Most of the oak frame heels were rotten or split in the bilge. The floor timbers were in tough shape as well, but the planking looked good. The Gray Marine engine didn't turn over, the canvas deck had been painted so many times it was cracking and peeling, the mast had a broken spreader, and the list went on. It was hard to know where to start. There was so much to do, and I didn't really have a plan. That first winter all I did was refinish some of the trim. I was clearly intimidated by the project and avoiding the major structural issues.

You had to use your imagination in the early stages of the refit. *Zephyr*, a 1938 Alden Malabar Jr., was going downhill fast until she was rescued by Tom Garber.

From the original construction contract that came with the boat, I learned *Zephyr* was built in the winter of 1938-39 in South Bristol, Maine. She was framed with white oak and planked with Philippine mahogany in the caravel style of construction. Through research on Internet forums like <http://www.woodenboat.com>, I found *Zephyr's* rot problems were common. I bought the recommended books and learned about my options.

To fully restore the boat as she was originally built would require replacing all defective material with identical new pieces (no epoxy or other modern miracles). This type of museum-quality restoration was beyond my skills and finances. But a renovation would allow me to use modern methods and materials to give strength back to the hull. I opted for a repair/renovation job.

Over the course of about eight

Initially a bit overwhelmed by the scope of the project, Tom spent the first winter doing cosmetic work by refinishing some of the trim. But he soon set forth steadfastly on a project that was completed in three years. A nearly new *Zephyr* sails off into the sunset, below. Tom's dream and subsequent refit led to the creation of a film on the restoration: *Dream of Wooden Boats.* For more, visit <http://www.ThirdWaveFilms.com>.

months I cut, fit, and sistered 18 frame ends and nine floor timbers into the bilge. I used white oak with heavy bronze fasteners. It was a real joy to see and smell fresh sawdust in the boat. The new timbers shone brightly in contrast to the older, darker wood. Some sections of the planking needed replacing, and I installed a few new butt blocks. Things were looking good now. My carpentry was rough in places, but it was strong.

Canvas decks

As fall of the first year approached, I turned my attention to the deck. *Zephyr* had, as original, canvas decks over pine tongue-and-groove planking. As I pulled up the old canvas, I was surprised to see it was still very strong. No rot. The planking underneath was also in very good shape. The canvas appeared to be bedded in white lead paste. I decided to duplicate this procedure with the new canvas. After removing the old canvas and tacks, I laid thick roofing paper on the deck, coated it with the lead paste, and then stretched and stapled the canvas over the paste. To size the canvas, I rubbed it with a hot chamois, which drew it tight as a drum. Then I painted it with an oil-based paint.

With the deck now completed, the aesthetically pleasing Alden lines became more visible. The graceful compound curves that make up the stern, the sweeping stem and sheer, and the arched cabin roof are design elements not commonly found on modern production boats. I loved the idea of preserving an important aspect of marine design history. The drive of consumer demand and evolution of modern materials have placed an ideological wall between old and new boats. I couldn't help but wonder, will today's new boats be appreciated in 60 years as much as I appreciate *Zephyr* now?

Over the winter of the second year, I set up an electric heater inside the boat and worked on refinishing and reassembling the interior. Piled high in my garage were about 20 odd-shaped mahogany boards that somehow, when reassembled, would become settees, drawers, and doors. As I looked at the pile, I hoped my labeling and visual documentation were comprehensive enough to lead me back to a finished interior. Over the course of about six weeks, I stripped all the interior wood, sanded it with 80- and 120-grit papers, and put on two coats of primer and three coats of finish paint. It looked great. It was magical to see these odd shapes of wood find their places in the curved hull, forming seatbacks, bunks, and drawers. I realized my skills in repairing this boat paled in comparison to the skills needed to design and construct her.

> *"I found* Zephyr *listed for sale on the Internet for $5,000. She had been out of the water for two years . . . "*

Dreaded engine

With only one major obstacle left, I turned my attention to the belly of the beast: the dreaded engine. The Gray Marine sure didn't look very good. The debate whether to rebuild or buy new was decided when I found a used Yanmar 3GMD on the Internet for $1,000. . .less than it would cost to rebuild. I had the motor shipped from Florida, and it sat in my garage until I figured out how to install it. The whole trick is to get the motor's driveshaft coupling exactly lined up with the existing shaft coupling. I built a three-dimensional template of the motor and suspended

Historical photos of *Zephyr* sailing in her previous life, above and below.

it from a wire running directly in the center of the shaft log. From this I made cardboard templates of the engine beds. Out of large oak timbers, I cut and installed the engine beds. I bolted and epoxied them in place and hired a guy with a backhoe to drop the new motor in. The four rubber engine mounts allowed me to fine-tune its position. I had a new driveshaft made up and reinstalled the stuffing box. A new exhaust system of flexible hoses and a plastic waterlift muffler went in as well. After connecting the fuel line, electrical wires, and cooling water, I cranked the engine over, and it started right up. Beautiful!

Time for launching

I worked full-time for about two weeks finishing up a million little tasks in preparation for launch day. Two-and-a-half years of restoration work were now coming to a head. While watching the white hull and mahogany trim of *Zephyr* roll past me and out the driveway, my mind reeled with thoughts of the past two years and the next 24 hours. I jumped aboard *Zephyr* just as she was lowered into the water and stood in the bilge to watch the water pour in. It streamed down the keelson and wept from the few seams I could see. I lifted the engine hatch and saw a gushing stream, like a garden hose, coming in next to the stuffing box. I wasn't prepared for the sight of my pride and joy leaking like a sieve. I reminded myself the boat had been out of the water for at least five years, so the timbers were bone dry.

I spent the entire day by myself belowdecks in the pouring rain making sure *Zephyr* didn't sink. I felt very depressed at the amount of water coming in. Every time the pump kicked on (at two-minute intervals), I cringed. This was not at all what I had expected or wanted. I began to feel that this whole project was a big mistake, but because I had put so much money and time into the boat, I couldn't back out (something like a bad marriage). I finally figured out that the deadwood area of the keel, made up of large oak timbers, was where most of the leaking was taking place. Over the next three days the gush turned into a stream, then to a trickle. All seemed OK.

After about two weeks I decided to have the mast stepped. The 45-foot Sitka spruce spar went in without a hitch. I let *Zephyr* sit for about a week and then tensioned the shrouds and stays and went for a sail in very light winds. My first sail. What a thrill. She handled well and moved right along in the light air. After a half hour I went below and pulled up the sole around the mast step. To my horror, a stream of water was flowing in…more than had ever leaked before. I dropped the sails and motored back to the dock, not certain what my next move should be. It was scary thinking all that was keeping my boat afloat were batteries and a bilge pump.

"Will today's new boats be appreciated in 60 years as much as I appreciate Zephyr *now?"*

Two days later, I was awakened just after midnight by my neighbor pounding on my door shouting, "Your boat is sinking at the dock." Here it was: my worst nightmare. I drove to the marina not knowing what I would find. By the time I got to the dock, *Zephyr* was floating well, with about 10 men onboard with buckets. On returning from a midnight sail, they noticed *Zephyr* very low in the water and graciously bailed her out. Without their help, *Zephyr* would have been on the bottom. I traced the problem to a blown fuse on the bilge pump. The water level came within inches of the air intake of the motor. Feeling scared and lucky, I had *Zephyr* hauled out.

Still leaking

Over the course of six weeks I recaulked the seams and launched again. Still leaking. I put small copper patches on the stem. Still leaking. I used large copper patches. Still leaking. I put patches on patches. No leaking in the bow, but there was a new leak on the port garboard. I was at my wit's end.

I finally re-launched August 11, believing all leaking was now coming from plank shrinkage and that it would swell up again after time. I motored six miles to my permanent marina, fully expecting something else to go wrong. But it didn't. Over the course of the next couple of weeks, all leakage slowed to a manageable level.

I started taking *Zephyr* out for sails. Always expecting the worst, I was pleasantly surprised. On Day One we had 3 knots of wind. All was OK. Day Two was up to 5 knots. Still no leaks. Day Three had 5 to 10 knots of wind. Still no leaks. Day Four had 10 to 12 knots in lots of chop. There was minor leakage. Then I took a weekend trip to a maritime festival in 15 to 20 knots, and all was fine.

Yes, dreams do come true. You just have to be prepared to pay the price. I have saved a classic yacht from the scrap heap and am helping preserve a piece of maritime history. *Zephyr* needs more work, but with me in her ownership cycle she'll get it. For me, the water sparkles a little brighter, the sun shines a little more brilliantly, and the wind is a little sweeter when I sail my *Zephyr*. I look forward to more.

"Is it done yet?"

A Bristol 30 restoration takes its sweet and proper time

by Dave Satter

Quester **takes up residence in rural New Jersey for a refit that will take four years.**

Every night for four years, when I came in from the yard after working on my 30-foot sailboat, I heard the same question from my family. "Is it done yet?"

How far should one go when fixing up a 30-year-old boat? I should put it in the water and go sailing. That's what "they" say to do: fix it a little each year and keep sailing. However, what most people do is not for me. I had a dream of the perfect boat in my head. I wanted to make it look just the way I wanted it to be.

I always said I'd have a sailboat by the time I was 40 years old. Along the way came marriage and children. At 38, I was tired of looking online and in magazines at boats for sale. My wife, Sue, was tired of hearing me talk about it also.

"Just go buy one and stop talking about it already," she'd say. (Sometimes you have to just jump right in and listen to your wife.) I knew what I wanted: traditional lines, full keel, a little teak, and a diesel engine. After looking at a few candidates close to home in northern New Jersey, I spotted what I wanted in a classified ad: a 1973 Bristol 30 sloop in Maryland. I rationalized that I might as well start with a larger boat since I had run out of the time needed to work my way up.

As we were vacationing in Delaware that summer, I ventured a little farther south to get a look at her. After I met the owner, we struck a deal, and I spent my first night aboard *Quester* on the hard. I didn't have a survey done as I had already spent $500 on a survey for a boat I didn't wind up purchasing. Besides, I planned to fix and rebuild everything on this boat anyway. I knew I was taking a chance.

Assessing the project

I had the boat trucked to my backyard. Thankfully, she was in good shape for her age. The previous owner kept her clean and in good working order, but the chainplates leaked, so most of the bulkheads were soggy. And everything about the boat said 1973. It needed some updates.

A lot of the interior leaks were caused by the toerails, which were loose and needed to be repaired or replaced. I made and installed new ones that I steamed in a 20-foot long steam box. This was one of the hardest jobs on the boat. I hope never to have to do that again.

It's amazing how fast you can take something apart and how long it takes to put it back together. The Bristols have a reputation for being of

Her restoration complete, only ***Quester*****'s original deck hardware gives away her age, at left. Resplendent in her refurbished teak and with fresh paint on her hull, deck, and spars, she looks like a new boat as she sits on the trailer prior to her journey to the coast, at right.**

> **“Almost every day one member of the family would say, ‘Daddy, you’re bleeding again.’”**

solid construction. Taking apart and removing even soggy bulkheads was difficult. My goal was to rebuild the interior with lumber I had on hand: walnut, mahogany, and teak.

Along the way, I needed to replace the electrical and plumbing systems. I also wanted to keep things simple with a minimum number of pumps and only 12-volt electricity.

All in all, I figured on a 2005 launch date. My wife could not believe that the boat would be in our driveway for four years. I responded that I was trying to be realistic here because everyone underestimates these things when they start a project like this. Anyway, I didn’t even have a slip or mooring — yet — but I *was* on the waiting list. It was a very long list.

Working from the bow

This boat has a traditional layout with opposing saloon berths and the galley across the aft end of the cabin. A V-berth occupies the bow. Aft of it is the head with a hanging locker opposite. The head door closes off the V-berth for privacy.

Starting in the V-berth, I had to cut out someone’s homemade holding tank. This was extremely unpleasant. I then modified the space to accommodate a new 15-gallon holding tank. The hull lining in the V-berth was 1970s blue carpet. I replaced it with walnut ceiling strips that I made individually, varnished, and screwed to oak framing I had epoxied to the hull.

Working my way aft along the starboard side, I made two small lockers with cane doors, one wet and one dry. I moved the galley to the starboard side of the saloon. It’s now larger and is fitted with a Dickenson solid fuel heater, a Force 10 propane stove/oven (the smallest one they make), and a new icebox and sink. For the icebox, I purchased the best Igloo cooler that would fit and built it into the galley counter, while adding another 3 inches of insulation around it. Making all this took many cardboard mock-ups, much trial and error, and a lot of late nights in the boat.

Almost every day one member of the family would say, “Daddy, you’re bleeding again.” It’s amazing how often you bump, scrape, and bruise yourself on a job like this.

So I wouldn’t lose a sleeping berth, I made a large quarter berth by eliminating the starboard cockpit locker and removing the aft bulkhead. I finished its

When Dave bought her, *Quester*’s interior decor was state of the art for 1973.

Dave fitted a quarter berth to replace the settee he gave up to make room for the galley.

The new galley counter provides a large work surface and encloses an Igloo cooler.

By applying mahogany to the saloon bulkhead and renewing the upholstery, Dave brought the decor up to date, at left. New cane-front lockers give the forward cabin a fresh look and the cabin heater will make the whole boat cozy in spring and fall, at right.

Leaks around the chainplates led to water damage to the main bulkhead.

The aft galley was common in boats of the 1970s (and so was the woodgrain laminate).

Dave fitted a small chart desk into the space on the port side next to the new engine box.

"After four years, I finally got the call I'd been waiting for. My name had come up on the list for a mooring."

hull side with more ceiling strips and insulation.

Next, I built the engine box and lid, which you stand on as you come down the companionway, and added soundproofing.

On the port side, I added a small chart table above a door that provides access to the fuse panels. I resurfaced the bulkhead forward of the saloon settee with mahogany and added new cabinets and a bookshelf above the settee.

The head got new cabinets that could be protected by a curtain when the shower was in use. I installed a new shower head. The shower draws from a 3-gallon water tank, installed under the galley counter, that gravity feeds a pump under the cabin sole. (See my article in the March 2005 issue.)

I bonded all the cabinetry and bulkheads, especially those fitted with chainplates, to the hull and deck with 3M 5200 and tabbed these with epoxy and cloth to keep the hull and deck stiff and strong.

Electrical and plumbing

I replaced every electrical component and all the wiring and installed another fuse panel for the pumps I added for the galley, shower, and foredeck washdown. I also put in a few extra 12-volt outlets.

Snaking the wires was a tough job, since the Bristol has a molded-in headliner. The only chance I had to do this project was in January which, in New Jersey, can be the coldest and snowiest month of the year. At 25 degrees, your fingers and the wire get pretty hard to work with. The Dickenson heater helped a lot at this time; it used natural charcoal and kept a steady, even heat without a large flame. It also kept the coffee warm. (Remember to keep a port light or hatch open for ventilation.)

The deep-cycle batteries that came with the boat lasted for years in my backyard. I started the Volvo MD2B every week or two except in the winter. Once all the electrical wiring was completed for the new light fixtures, pumps, and running lights, I replaced the batteries with two deep-cycle absorbed glass mat (AGM) batteries and voltmeters. I also added a new heavy-duty battery switch and a Blue Sea Maxi fuse block between the batteries and the fuse panels.

The only bilge pump in the boat was a Whale Gusher 10 that needed to be rebuilt. I added a new Rule-Mate 500 to the bilge on a long piece of PVC pipe so it can easily be lifted out of the 3-foot deep bilge for cleaning.

The boat has a water tank under the V-berth and another in the keel. They are connected so the V-berth tank gravity feeds the other. Both are integral with the hull, so I cleaned, sanded, and epoxied them on the inside through their inspection ports. Sounds like fun, doesn't it? Between the two tanks, this Bristol 30 holds 50 gallons of water.

Under the floorboards, and on top of the water tank in the keel, is a good 6 inches of space where the new pumps for the galley and the shower could be located.

I also added a seawater wash-down pump, which I fitted under the V-berth along with the 15-gallon holding tank for the head. All the through-hulls were bronze. As they were reusable, I fitted them with Groco ball-valve seacocks. The boat originally had traditional tapered-plug seacocks.

Exterior and deck

After removing all the deck hardware, I painted the deck and cabintop with

It had been a long journey, or quest, but eventually, the work was done. At about the same time, *Quester* rose to the top of the waiting list for a mooring in New Jersey's Sandy Hook Bay, where she looks very much at home in her proper surroundings.

Interlux non-skid paint (beige), the cabin sides with Interlux Brightside (white), and the hull with Interlux two-part Perfection (flag blue).

As long as I was in this deep, I decided to paint the mast and boom too. I moved the mast into my workshop, sanded it, and primed it with Interlux Vinyl-Lux prime wash (a two-part, self-etching primer), then I applied three coats of Brightside Sundown Buff. This was the first time I ever painted an aluminum mast and it worked out very well. The hardest part was removing and re-installing the hardware.

The boat only had one opening port and that was in the head, so I replaced all four ports in the forward part of the boat with bronze opening ports. It's a nice touch that gives the boat a traditional look. I replaced the old weathered acrylic panes in the four large deadlights in the main cabin with new polycarbonate.

I re-bedded all the deck hardware, the railings, the anchor roller, and a new mooring bitt with 3M 4200 and installed large backing plates.

Final touches

After four years, I finally got the call I'd been waiting for. My name had come up on the list for a mooring at a marina an hour from our house. If I didn't get the deposit to them immediately, they would move on to the next name on the list. I was able to come up with the money and complete the final touches: cushions and upholstery, cove stripe, and repainting of the boat's name, *Quester*.

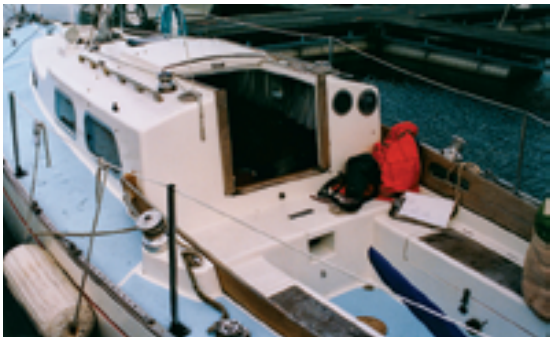
After going through all the names in my head, I realized the name *Quester*, which had come with the boat, had served the previous owner well for 18 years. So the name stayed. Quester means a search or pursuit, an adventurous expedition. Of course, I added all the safety gear: carbon monoxide detectors, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and so on.

I don't know if I would take on a project this large again, especially while raising two children and trying to run a small business. It took a lot of my spare time and money. But you know, if you get the dream in your head, you just have to go with it.

David Satter restores wooden canoes and small boats in northwestern New Jersey. See some of his projects at <www.sattersrestoration.com>. Quester, *in all her new glory, sails out of Atlantic Highlands, Sandy Hook Bay.*

Judging by the smiling faces of the crew, they won't pester Dave anytime soon with that other perennial query, "Are we there yet?"

Slowing down at 70



After nearly a decade of step-by-step restoration, *Scholarship II* is in shipshape condition, at left, a far cry from the sorry state she was in when Dave acquired her, above.

An Alberg 30 takes a racing sailor into his cruising years

by Jim Shroeger

When Dave Terrell began the refit of *Scholarship II*, his 1970 Alberg 30, his plan was to create a cruising sailboat that he could use well into his eighth decade.

Dave has been sailing for more than 40 years and during that time has owned eight different sailboats. Prior to the Alberg 30, he owned a Cal 27 T2 called *Scholarship*. He is a retired college professor and avid sailor and does most of his sailing singlehanded. Dave had spent some time as a club racer, but he slowly came to the conclusion that cruising had much more to offer than sailing around buoys every weekend. That led him to search for a boat that would take him to cruising areas and anchorages that he only dreamed about as a racer.

Dave's Alberg story began in 2002 when he found an Alberg 30 named *Talisman* in Cleveland, Ohio. The asking price was $12,000, but Dave was able to negotiate that down to $8,500 because the boat required some serious work (and the owner was in the process of a divorce and highly motivated to sell). He had his "new" Alberg 30 trucked back to Michigan, where *Talisman*'s rebirth as *Scholarship II* began.

Right up front, Dave had to address some serious issues. The deck was painted a robin's-egg blue and had black mold-spot accents, the head and holding tank had been removed, the boat had broken loose at the dock and the port side had been badly damaged, the sail track was loose (preventing the mainsail from being hoisted), and the sail inventory looked as though it might have at one time belonged to a fellow named Christopher Columbus. In spite of all these challenges, Dave saw real potential in the boat.

In line with the "go easy" cruising concept he adopted after giving up his "go fast" racing ways, Dave has made many changes to *Scholarship II* over the years. In fact, each year that he has owned her, he has made significant modifications.

Setting up to sail solo

Before beginning any work, Dave outlined what he wanted to achieve with the renovation. While his primary objectives were ease of operation and safe singlehanding, he also wanted

The cockpit grating is a classy touch, at right, and the Anderson jibsheet winches really mean business. Most of Dave's on-deck improvements were aimed at making the boat easy to singlehand.

Scholarship II to be aesthetically pleasing to all who saw her.

To enhance safety when singlehanding, one of the first projects Dave tackled was to replace the lifelines and run new jacklines along the deck.

In 2003, he added a Profurl genoa-reefing system and rewired the entire boat. In 2004, *Scholarship II* received a new Garhauer mainsheet traveler and genoa-track cars.

After researching the best sail combination for the Alberg 30, Dave learned that, for cruising boats, a larger mainsail and a smaller headsail are a good combination, so in 2005 he made a major revamp of the sail inventory: a new Quantum full-battened mainsail and a new Quantum 100 percent genoa. This configuration made the boat more comfortable to sail and yet drove her fast enough for him to enjoy cruising in her. Other safety and ease-of-handling improvements led to the installation of new running rigging, all of which is led aft to the cockpit. This fit into Dave's plan to do lot of singlehanded sailing once *Scholarship II* was ready to go.

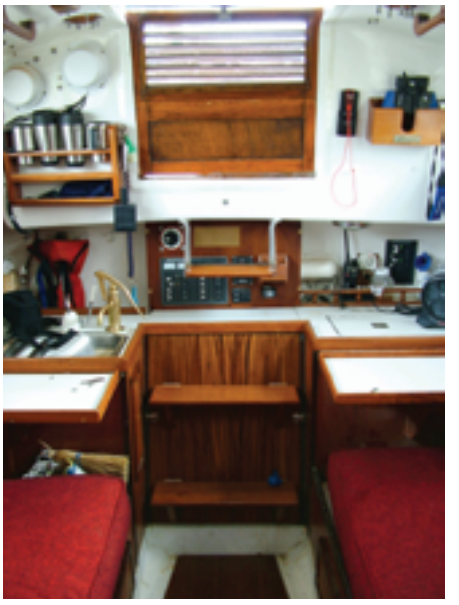
Dave discovered that the fuel tank was rusted through, which could have led to explosive bilge problems given that the fuel is gasoline, so that meant fitting a new tank. Finally, hoping to glean a few more years of service from the old "tin wind,"he fitted a new carburetor and fuel pump to the ancient Atomic 4 engine.

The renovation of *Scholarship II* took another big step forward in 2006 with the installation of a Tides Marine Strong Sail Track and Slide System to improve hoisting the mainsail. Dave also added three new Anderson winches, a #28 for the mainsheet and two #40s to handle the genoa sheets.

The same year, he installed a new water pump on the Atomic 4. However, this proved to be a bit more than the old engine could take. The new, more powerful pump actually blew out the engine's rusty water jacket. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise. When Dave went shopping for a new engine to replace the relic he had been nursing for the past four years, he found another A4 that was 25 years old but had seen only 500 hours of use. The engines were swapped out and the "new" Atomic 4 is still running smoothly today.

In 2007, Dave made some exterior changes. He installed a new anchor windlass, which made hauling the new CQR anchor out of the mud much easier for a singlehander. He also fitted eight new opening ports — four 8 x 22-inch New Found Metals ports in the main saloon and four smaller ports from White Water Marine Hardware in the head and V-berth area. All the ports are solid bronze and give *Scholarship II* a very special traditional look. That only made it right that the saloon and V-berth should get new

Among the major additions Dave made to facilitate boat handling are the anchor windlass, at left, and the rubrail, at right. The ports in the cabin are also new and at different times, Dave had *Scholarship II*'s hull and deck painted.



Before Dave renewed the upholstery, *Scholarship II* was cozy enough but looked a little tired, at left and right. To increase storage, Dave had cabinets built above the V-berth, below left, and above the saloon settees, below right. The blue-green upholstery also is new.

cushions to spruce up the appearance belowdecks. Finally in 2007, Dave installed a new 12-volt refrigerator in the galley.

Major cosmetics

In 2008 and 2009, Dave continued his program with more exterior improvements. In 2008, he had *Scholarship II*'s topsides professionally painted and in 2009, her deck, trunk cabin, and cockpit received the same treatment at his local boatyard. In addition, he installed a full-length genoa track, again to facilitate handling the boat when singlehanded.

One of the most noticeable exterior improvements was the cockpit grating, which Dave had custom made. He had it shipped without the cutout for the rudder head and measured and cut out the opening himself. The result is a truly beautiful cockpit arrangement.

Interior improvements continued, with new bookshelves and a gauge that shows the level in the holding tank. At the same time, Dave added a new combination dining/desk/chart table. This multipurpose table serves as a dining table and has a leaf that folds up to make a sizable work surface, which also makes it a great chart table. It also has built-in storage for charts, navigation tools, and Dave's computer.

When not in use, the table folds against the main bulkhead, exposing to view a handmade inlaid compass rose that adds a very nice nautical touch to the main cabin. Lowering the table reveals a handsome piece of nautical art mounted on the cabin bulkhead. It's interesting to note that the table was made for Dave by a friend who had owned an Alberg 30 for more than 25 years.

Ongoing upgrades

In 2010, Dave embarked on more interior renovations, including new storage lockers built into the spaces above the settees in the main cabin and above the V-berth. Although designed to blend in with the existing woodwork, these units almost doubled the amount of available storage space. Surprisingly, this work was performed by a gentleman who is legally blind. Having seen the results, I find it hard to believe that the person who built them could not drive a car because he could not see well enough to obtain a driver's license. The work is perfect and ingenious.

Another improvement that Dave carried out himself was to completely rebuild the wiring harness on the Atomic 4. He also replaced the old instrument panel with a new system that makes all the engine gauges visible from the helmsman's seat.

The work goes on. Dave's plans for 2011 call for repairing the loose rudder, varnishing the interior bulkheads, repairing the dodger, and in his words, "lots of sailing."

The original design brief for the Alberg 30, which was built by Whitby Boat Works in Ajax, Ontario, was for a boat that would be a competitive racer on Chesapeake Bay. In fact, of the two active Alberg fleets in existence today,

one is in the Chesapeake Bay region (the other is on Lake Ontario, near Toronto). Dave has taken the original design and made it into a comfortable, easy-to-handle cruising sailboat that will serve him well into his eighth and maybe even his ninth decade.

Scholarship II is certainly ready to take Dave wherever he wants to go and she is getting better every year.

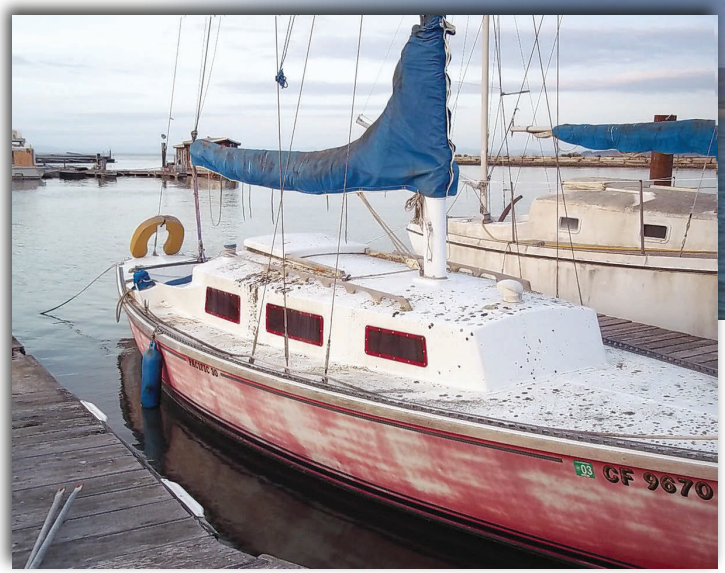
Jim Schroeger has been sailing for 50 years. He began in Jet 14s at the University of Michigan and progressed through a series of small to medium-sized day sailers including a Star. In the early 1970s, he and his wife, Barbara, and their two kids began their summer family cruises on the Great Lakes, which they continue to this day in their current boat, Sundew, *a Watkins 27.*

Dave had a table custom made for *Scholarship II*. When not in use, it folds up against the main bulkhead to open up the saloon, at left. It serves as the dining table, at right, and also as the chart table.

Saved from extinction

A Pacific 30 — possibly the last one — sails again

BY PETER THELIN



Every marina has a few neglected boats. Their owners, enthusiastic at first but now distracted by daily life, have left these forgotten or ignored once-proud vessels to rot.

A few years back, I watched as this decaying process happened to a Pacific 30 in our marina. Dust turned to dirt and mildew transformed into lichen. Bird droppings and broken mussel shells teemed with insect life. Sailcovers, sails, and running rigging degraded in the sun and eventually vanished completely. White plastic fenders yellowed, deflated, and disappeared as their lines rotted. One spring, I noticed a sapling growing on the boat. A few days later, I spotted a neighbor watering the little tree. She smiled and said at least the boat was finally getting some attention.

My wife, Sue, and I live on a floating home north of San Francisco. I've been involved with sailboats — sailing, living aboard, building, and maintaining — for more than 25 years and tend to spot project boats. These have run the range from a Columbia 45, a Bolger Storm Petrel, a Catfisher 28, a Seafarer 24, and a San Francisco Super Pelican, to a Bluenose 23, and a couple of hovercraft. I like challenges.

The Pacific 30 was one of those challenges. I first noticed the striking red low and narrow hull when we moved to the marina. It was docked less than 100 yards from our new floating home. The boat was in awful shape, but I was drawn to her classic lines: the spoon bow, counter stern transom, and long low cockpit. I'd sold my last boat, a Bluenose 23, to afford the floating home, but I was feeling the itch again. I asked our harbormaster about the red boat. She said it had been years since his last visit, but the owner still paid the slip fees and wasn't interested in selling.

I turned my attention to a down-on-its-luck Seafarer 24, but now and then I'd ask about the Pacific 30. After a year of tinkering, I sold the Seafarer to a group of young sailors from Berkeley and swore to Sue that I was done with rescuing boats.

That oath lasted a year. On craigslist, I stumbled on the "largest SF Pelican ever made," a 20-foot Super Pelican located in Oregon. Sue and I towed *Dowser* back from Eugene and I spent the next summer rebuilding her before growing disenchanted with her ability to point (sorry proud Pelican owners). I swore once again I was through with boats . . . this time forever!

But I continued cruising the classifieds. I seriously considered an overpriced Ericson Scorpion made from the same mold as the Columbia Sabre and even took a 12-foot Livingston for a test ride when, out of

Seeing *Ramona* today, at top, who would think she was the same boat as the sad, moldering (but still elegant) hulk, inset, Peter found in his home marina?

the blue, our harbormaster told me the Pacific 30 owner had decided it was time to let her go. I called him immediately, generously offering to take over slip payments. He thought every boat was worth something, so we agreed on $500 and the Pacific 30 was mine.

Grunge, grime, and guano

To start with, the owner hadn't sailed, cleaned, or hauled the boat in more than 10 years. It may have been longer; the quantity of guano, mildew, and lichen was substantial. The sad sapling had been joined by other small plants that I chose not to water. Secondly, the Pacific 30 had sunk — more than once — following a couple of wet winters when the scuppers and cockpit drains were plugged. The interior had filled with a combination of water, oil, and battery acid that created a terrarium atmosphere that cultivated a lush forest of brown and black mold.

Blistered wiring, bloated batteries, rusted mechanicals, and peeling paint filled every nook and cranny. Corroded soda cans and tins of tuna combined to create an interesting aroma. Needless to say, I wouldn't let Sue look inside until the cabin had been completely cleaned, sanded, and repainted. It was the least I could do since I was "done with rescuing boats forever!" You're probably wondering about the previous owner's choice of red portlights. I had meant to replace them, but even Sue agreed that they actually grow on you. Not unlike lichen.

After pumping out the bilge and removing bags and bags of trash from the cabin, I donned a Tyvek bunny suit, gloves, ear protection, and respirator and took an orbital sander with 40-grit sandpaper to the interior. The old, mildewed paint hung in sticky sheets and the softened epoxy paint loaded up disc after disc; sometimes it was better to use a scraper. It took a couple of intensive weeks to get down to the bare fiberglass. After that, removing the peeling decorative laminates, sanding and varnishing the woodwork, changing out the wiring and lighting, and cleaning the upholstery made a big difference. Finally, Rust-Oleum Topside white brightened up the interior significantly.

> "Corroded soda cans and tins of tuna combined to create an interesting aroma."

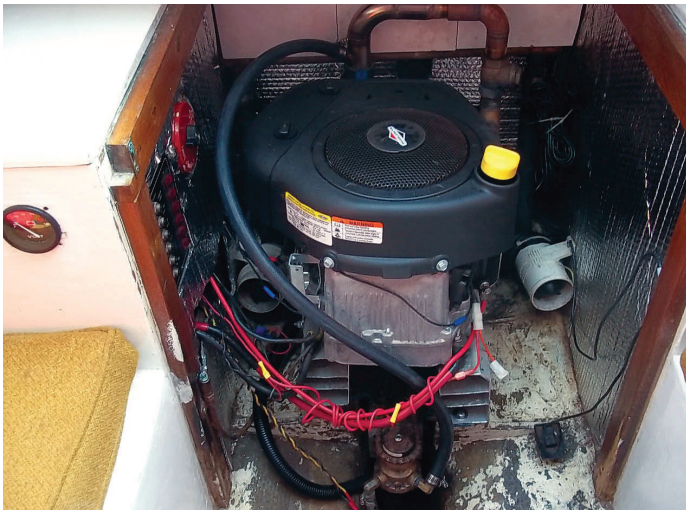
On deck, I took a stack of scouring pads, Formula 409, and Clorox to uncover the gelcoat. Next, I sanded the woodwork and applied Sikkens Cetol. Epoxy and C-clamps bonded the split handrails back together. Then I replaced the faded running rigging, rotted spreaders, and threadbare mainsail cover and Sue made the beautiful tiller cover. I scored a deal on a used stainless-steel hatch from Blue Pelican in Alameda to get some air and daylight down below.

Engine conundrum

The engine proved to be a major challenge. The previous owner told me the boat was equipped with a saildrive unit that had rusted solid long ago. On inspection, however, I found it was actually something I hadn't encountered before; a Baldwin 9.5. This was an Evinrude 9.5 outboard modified to be mounted inboard with a proper prop shaft coupled to the lower unit. The Baldwin uses a remote water pump for cooling and a separate exhaust system. It's a nifty idea, with none of the corrosion issues of a saildrive.

The engine gurus at the Outboard Motor Shop in Oakland knew all about Baldwins and advised me to replace it, rather than rebuild. When I chose to ignore their advice, they sold me a couple of old Evinrude 9.5 powerheads to replace the corroded one. I also bought a new Jabsco water pump and had Metal Magic in Oakland fabricate a new stainless-steel exhaust system.

The day after Thanksgiving, I motorsailed through heavy fog to the Berkeley Marine Center for a haulout



The motor in the Pacific 30, at left, turned out to be a Baldwin — an Evinrude outboard modified to drive a conventional prop shaft. Peter had it working with a new (old) powerhead but eventually replaced it with a Briggs & Stratton air-cooled lawn mower engine, at right.

A great variety of wildlife, from fungus to plants and from insects to birds, had colonized the boat as it sat untended, at left. Undaunted, Peter, with his vast experience restoring boats of all sorts, set to with cleaners, sandpaper, and paint. The result, at right, is spectacular.

and spent the next few weeks sanding off all the old paint, filling little blisters, and shimming the rudder post to eliminate a rattle. I also replaced the through-hull fittings and running lights and reglassed the rudder. I painted the bottom and had the yard spray the hull a luscious deep red. The Pacific 30 was becoming the center of attention.

As the guys at the Outboard Motor Shop predicted, the Baldwin drive proved to be a constant headache. I couldn't keep the engine from hydro-locking. The problem was that the unit — originally designed to hang above the water off the back of a boat — was now below the waterline. Water always manages to find its level, which coincided with the cylinders.

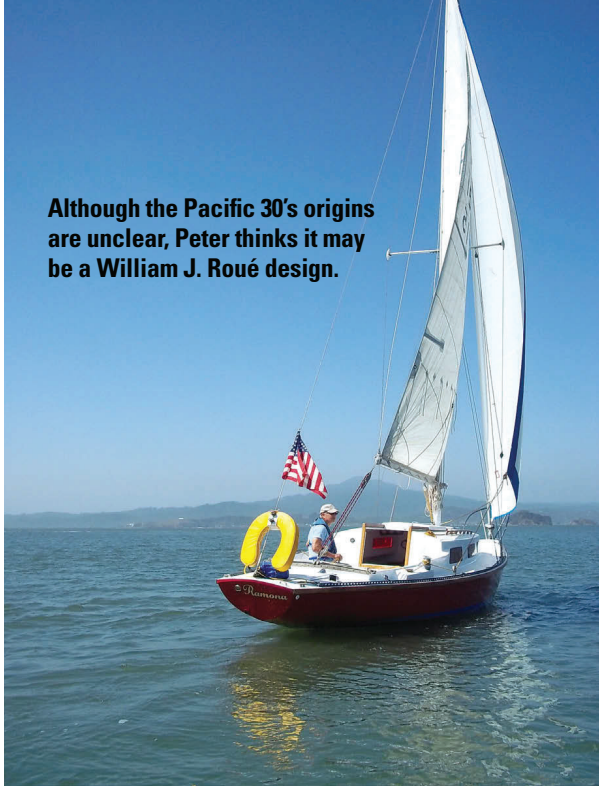
Despite my trying various resilient gaskets (the best turned out to be a ⅛-inch sheet of lead) and filling problematic cooling passages with epoxy, the motor always eventually hydro-locked. I was set on yanking the Baldwin out and mounting an outboard, but the Pacific 30's long counter stern made that location extremely awkward. I considered cutting a big motor-well hole in the lazarette behind the cockpit (ouch!) and debated the efficacy of a side-mount bracket (but the motor would be under water when heeled).

I liked the idea of using the lower unit of the Evinrude to drive the boat, but how to power it? An expensive diesel? An electric motor? Then it occurred to me that an air-cooled lawn mower engine — about the same size, weight, and power as the Evinrude — could work. Was there precedent? I found many online discussions on the subject, most extremely negative . . . except for one fellow who had tried it and said it worked like a charm. He sent pictures of his installation.

Most responses in online discussions were along the lines of "I'd rather drill a hole in my head than listen to a lawn mower engine in my boat," as one sailor wrote. But the 10-horsepower unit (thanks to BrandNewEngines.com) is actually quieter than the old Evinrude due to the inboard boat exhaust system. I kept the Jabsco water pump — chain-driven off the driveshaft — to cool the exhaust and installed some ceramic tiles above and behind the exhaust to handle the heat. I also incorporated a bronze check valve to keep the cooling water from backing into the engine through the exhaust, though in practice that hasn't been a problem.

The engine sits atop two sections from a Lexus 300 rear aluminum bumper — sans vinyl — and uses a Lovejoy shaft coupler to connect the engine crankshaft to the Evinrude driveshaft. Venting is a concern, so I made

Belowdecks it was the same story, at left. The unusual tinge is from the red-glazed deadlights in the cabin sides. They had been due for replacement, but by the time the cabin was refitted and refurnished, at right, Peter and Sue had become accustomed to the glow.



Although the Pacific 30's origins are unclear, Peter thinks it may be a William J. Roué design.

large louvered holes around the compartment and installed a pair of bilge blowers to vent out the rear deck. The Briggs feels more powerful than the Evinrude.

Updates inside and out

New cushions from Foam Creations of Albany, California, perk up the interior and I found a table at the Berkeley Yacht Club Marine Flea Market that was the perfect size.

To make singlehanding easier, I bought a Hood 800SL roller furler on eBay and even managed to install it without completely removing the headstay — not a task for the faint of heart! This requires accurate headstay measurements, disconnecting the headstay from the stemhead, shoving the extrusions and roller assembly up the headstay with one hand while holding the cable taut with the other and, finally, reattaching the whole thing to the stemhead without everything sliding back off into the water.

Pineapple Sails of Alameda made a 100 percent jib for the new furler. Maybe next year I'll spring for a new mainsail too.

I think lifelines provide a false sense of security on small boats so *Ramona* has none. Instead, everyone wears a life jacket/harness and uses a tether when going forward. I also kludged together a retrieval system for the horseshoe buoy.

I decided to rename the Pacific 30 after my late mother, Ramona. Since Sue does boat lettering — her company is AlphaboatGraphics — she supplied the lettering to go on the stern.

Provenance unproven

The name "Pacific 30" was originally stenciled on each side of the hull. There is a P30 insignia on the mainsail and the title states that the boat is a Pacific 30. Yet despite extensive research, my boat is the only example I've been able to find. There's a "15" on the mainsail indicating, one would guess, that there should be 14 more Pacific 30s in existence, but I've yet to see one. The title lists the builder as SPCN, which is a DMV term for "homebuilt", but who was the designer?

A friend pointed out that *Ramona* bears a strong resemblance to an earlier boat of mine, a Bluenose 23, whose designer, William J. Roué, did design a 30-footer called the Roué 20 because it was his 20th design. The Roué 20 is very similar and has all the same specs. The only differences are that the Pacific 30 is a masthead-rigged boat and the Roué 20 is fractionally rigged. In addition, the rudder on the Roué 20 is attached to the keel. Nor does the Roué have an inboard; it uses a motor well in the transom lazarette.

I spoke to David Sadler of Halifax, the builder of all of the fiberglass Roué 20s. He had never heard of the Pacific 30 but agreed that the resemblance is striking. He also said he had considered using a balanced rudder on his boats. Maybe my boat is a variation in which the inclusion of the inboard engine necessitated the repositioning of the rudder.

A refit with dividends

Ramona is a dream to sail: very responsive and tacks on a dime. She sails easily with just fingertips on the tiller and with a little traveler adjustment she'll mostly sail herself. She does well in light air, is reliable in stays, and can easily bury the rails when the wind picks up, yet she feels reassuringly stiff in a blow. There's a little flutter from the tiller that leads me to think I need to shave the edges of the rudder.

For just $500 for the boat, another couple thousand for engines, sails, furler, plumbing, metalwork, electrics, sandpaper, paint, eBay sailcovers, a lot of marine flea market stuff, plus the boatyard fees, and a lot of elbow grease, I've got a very sweet sailboat. Sue and I look forward to many more happy voyages around San Francisco Bay.

Ramona **has the appearance of a boat from an era when grace and good manners under sail trumped creature comforts for the crew.**

Peter Thelin was raised in the Northeast before moving to San Francisco to work for the federal government. A master optician, he runs the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Optical Shop. He has owned, restored, and lived on a number of boats before settling into a floating home.


a


b


c


d


e

PART ONE

Nicholson

A classy English lady gets a facelift

by James Baldwin

Once embarked on a limited refit project on your classic cruiser, you will surely be tempted to carry on until she is transformed into the boat you dreamed she could be. Somewhere along that path you come to comprehend that on an old boat, each seemingly simple job begun inevitably leads to three more complex jobs.

An example of this effect is when we pulled down saloon headliners to reach the fasteners to rebed leaking deck fittings. With the headliners down, it was a good opportunity to install added overhead lighting and enlarged Dorade vents. Then it seemed a shame to reinstall those old sagging, discolored, vinyl-covered headliners. Better to replace them while they're down and the tools are out. If going for new deckhouse headliners, we might as well replace the other headliners under the decks and in the forward cabin to match. If we're going that far, now's the time to add some storage lockers in place of that unwanted pilot berth, since the new headliners under the sidedeck can easily be shaped to fit around the new locker cabinets.

Thus began, step by step, the interior overhaul project on a 1982 Nicholson 31 located in Brunswick, Georgia. Her owner, Jeff Fletcher, works full-time running his mortgage company in Atlanta. For this reason, he asked me, along with my wife, Mei, to upgrade the boat's essential systems and get her ready for extended cruising vacations. As individual jobs were completed, Jeff found this was his best opportunity to customize *Echo* with features unavailable in the one-style-for-all reality of a production boat.

With the maintenance and upgrade work nearly complete on the rigging, sails, deck hardware, plumbing, electrics, and other mechanical systems, we moved on to some more creative work, refinishing and customizing the boat's interior.

Jeff originally thought the teak-faced plywood bulkheads and cabinetry were in such a damaged state with cracked varnish, holes, scratches, and discoloration that we should cover them with Formica. However, closer inspection after stripping and revarnishing some sample areas showed most of the teak veneer could be saved. Besides, covering all these teak surfaces in laminate would subtract from the interior's rich, natural look. It was problematic as well. The fine cabinetmakers at the legendary Camper & Nicholsons yard made skillful use of what they had. But their economy in using thin strips of teak trim glued onto edges of panels and doors meant that the trim would be broken in the process.

We worked out a scheme whereby we stripped and revarnished the navigation table and most bulkheads. Then we replaced the teak plywood locker doors in the main cabin with solid teak louvered doors backed by Formica-covered panels surrounded with generously thick teak trim.

Added locker cabinets

Since Jeff had no plans for bunking six people at a time (*six people living on a 31-foot boat?*), the pilot berth above and outboard of the port saloon settee was an obvious place to convert to storage lockers. Unfortunately, the converging lines of the settee backrest, the cabinhouse sides and sidedeck, and the adjoining curved galley layout meant there were few right angles to work with. Using a cardboard mockup, we worked out a simple cabinet layout consisting of three lockers behind a single vertical panel with a narrow shelf between it and the settee backrest.

To begin, we removed the pilot berth cushion, its plywood face board, and the berth's canvas bottom, replacing it all with a bottom of ⅜-inch-thick cabinet-grade plywood covered on top with Formica. Similar plywood

31 makeover

composed the new front panel cut to fit from the cardboard template. We ordered five sets of teak louvered doors and frames, sized 20 inches high by 15 inches wide — along with separate offset hinges, elbow latches, and finger holes — and assembled them ourselves. We set three of the door frames in position on the front panel, traced them, and cut out their mounting holes. Then we set the front panel in place and marked it for the position of the locker shelves and dividers. One locker was left without a shelf for stowing bulky items or for use as a video locker.

We installed the locker dividers and shelves with 1-inch x 2-inch oak framing. We screwed short pieces of oak framing onto the back of the front panel where needed for mounting support and then laid the panel face down on the back of a sheet of Formica. As with the locker bottom panel, we traced the Formica roughly ¼-inch oversize all around and cut it out with a fine-toothed blade on a jigsaw. Laminates are prone to chipping or cracking when cut like this unless they are well supported under the cutting edge. We set up a makeshift cutting table on the dock using a half sheet of plywood supported by boxes. Cutting the laminate oversize makes alignment easier during cementing and reduces the chance of chipped edges intruding on the finished panel. In any case, teak trim over all edges covers any corner chips or joints with less-than-perfect fit. When it was important that the edges of the laminate be smooth and straight, we clamped the laminate to a piece of plywood that acted as a cutting guide for a small router with a straight-collared bit.

> “…on an old boat, each seemingly simple job begun inevitably leads to three more complex jobs.”

Contact cement

We cleaned the face of the plywood panel and back of the laminate with acetone and coated them with contact cement. When dry to the touch, which took about 10 minutes under the Georgia sun, we laid plastic Venetian blind slats on the dry glue of the laminate and set the panel in position on top of the slats. Then we pulled the slats out one by one, beginning in the center and working out toward the edges. Don't try cementing laminates without slats or dowel rods; the tenacious grip of contact cement gives you only one chance to position it correctly. Once glued, the panel was turned over and the laminate locked in place by hammering a cloth-covered block of wood slid slowly over the entire surface. Following this, we cut out the locker door frame holes and trimmed the laminate flush to the panel edges with the straight-collared router bit. With care, a belt sander or medium-grit sanding disc on an angle grinder can also be used for this work.

All the interior locker plywood was given three coats of varnish, and a 1½-inch-high teak fiddle was glued to the front edge of the locker shelves. Then we screwed the front panel into


f


g


h


i


j

The pilot berth is removed in favor of more space (a). A new shelf is created and cabinet dividers installed (b). The finished settee and storage cabinet (c). The chart table was similarly refurbished, before and after views (d and e). The starboard settee was modified with new cabinets to match those on the port side, before and after views (f and g). The fabric hull liner covering in the quarter berth was removed and replaced with Formica, before and after (h and j). Storage space was revealed (i) between the hull liner and converted to additional lockers.

Heroes

by Jeff Fletcher

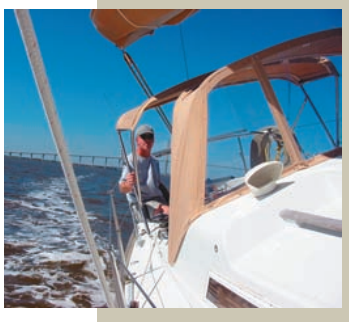
"My heroes have always been sailors.
Still are, it seems.
Gladly in search of and two steps ahead of themselves and their beam-reaching dreams."
With apologies to Willie Nelson

Living in a time when the true heroes of our world are fighting overseas, perhaps it's too much of an overstatement to call sailors heroes. Words such as "admired" and "respected" are just as suited. I have had the good fortune of having my sailboat refitted by a hero of mine. When I needed help, James Baldwin, as luck would have it, was on the East Coast not far from where my boat was berthed.

When I purchased a 1982 Nicholson 31, the boat itself — other than a few cosmetics and cruising items — was exactly the boat I had yearned to own for many years. I think all boatowners have an image of how our ideal boat should look and what equipment we long for. The mere thought of transforming a 20-year-old boat into my vision was a daunting task. Law school and a career in the mortgage business did not equip me with the skills necessary. Enter James Baldwin and his wife, Mei.

Take an engineer's attention to detail, a craftsman's skill, and a long-distance sailor's experience, then finally blend them all together with a romantic's love of the sea and an unselfish willingness to share all he knows . . . and you have James Baldwin. When you add the sharp mind, easy laugh, and loving touch of Mei to the mix, the team emerges, able to jump a boat refit (or anything else they choose to tackle) in a single bound.

I am in awe of their refit and transformation of my boat into one that I am proud to own. Thank you, James and Mei.



When he learned that James Baldwin's article about the refit of the Echo *would be published, Jeff Fletcher wrote this note to the editors. James was not aware of this small addition.*

The exterior of the refurbished vessel; with an old boat, you will carry on until she is transformed into a dream boat.

place from the back to its frames. The exterior edges were trimmed in teak quarter-round molding. The long narrow shelf between the settee backrest and the new cabinets received a ½-inch-thick by 4-inch-high teak fiddle rising 2½ inches above the shelf counter. We varnished all doors and teak trim after the other projects were completed.

We installed the other two teak louvered door sets on the existing starboard locker cabinets at each end of the central bookshelves. The old cabinet's plywood doors were lower but slightly wider than the new doors, so we removed the hinges and latches, epoxy-glued the doors in place, ground the thin teak trim flush, and cut out the correct hole size for the new doors. We made paper templates for the exterior surfaces of the cabinet/bookshelf panels, then traced them onto the Formica, which was cut and glued to the old plywood panels as we had done on the port locker face using plastic slats as separators during fitting. All five cabinet door frames were later secured from the inside with aluminum brackets so they could be easily removed for varnishing. The teak corner moldings were fit and tacked in place with brass finishing nails. The double bookshelf was given removable teak retainers as well as hooked elastic straps needed to keep books from sliding about in a seaway.

Working around the liner

Parts of the interior hull liner, such as the sides of the V-berth and quarter berth, were covered in a fabric resembling outdoor carpeting. In cold climates it offers some insulation. People seem to like its appearance and sound-deadening qualities, and it is cheap and easy to install. It's also difficult to clean or dry and a terrific home for dust and mold. I avoid using it and was relieved when Jeff agreed to have it replaced with Formica. Once we removed the old carpeting and its disintegrating foam backing, we washed the fiberglass liner surface with acetone and abraded it with a coarse sanding disc. We made paper templates and cemented the Formica in place. Bending the standard counter-grade laminate to conform to the slight curves on these surfaces presented no problem. We trimmed the edges with teak quarter-round molding.

I have a special loathing for those prefabricated fiberglass hull liners that save on production costs but block access to vital areas of the hull. The way most liners are installed, it's impossible to reach many parts of the hull and extremely difficult to later add collision bulkheads within the hull's lower lockers where they are most needed. If boats were constructed with a combination of fully accessible lockers, collision bulkheads, and areas of rigid foam flotation between the liner and hull, hull liners would be an asset to sailors and not just the builder.

The hull liner in this Nicholson 31 formed a shelf outboard of the quarter berth. Under the shelf was a 6½-foot void with a small access hole and a narrow slot open to another inaccessible area behind the battery box liner. We converted this into a storage locker by cutting two large access holes in the top of the shelf, fitting them with removable latching doors, and installing a plywood locker bottom. Inside this locker was an ideal location to install the new amateur radio. The radio's low-profile, detachable control panel was mounted nearby on the instrument panel below the marine VHF.

Part 2 of the story of the Nicholson makeover will follow in the November 2005 issue.

Archive eXtractions

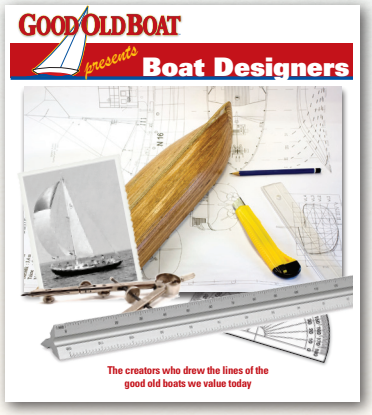
Articles compiled for you from the *Good Old Boat* archives

Boat Reviews

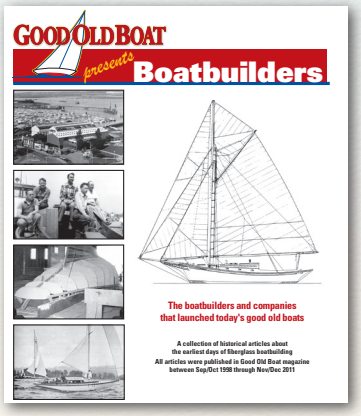
25 – 27 footers
Small keelboats to sail anywhere

28 – 30 footers
The ubiquitous 28- to 30-footers

31 – 36 footers
33 wonderful review boats



Boatbuilders
The boatbuilders and companies that launched today's good old boats

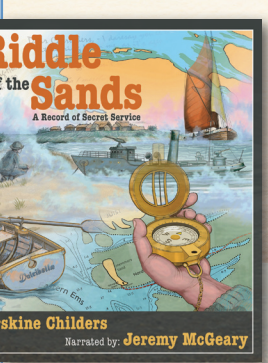


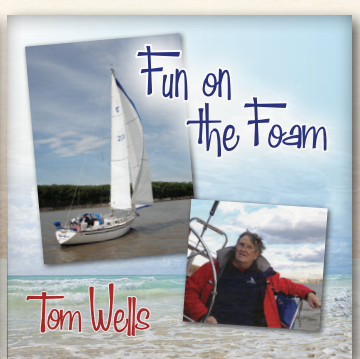
Boat Designers
The creators who drew the lines of the good old boats we value today

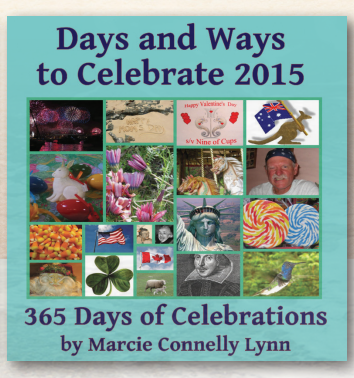
Available from

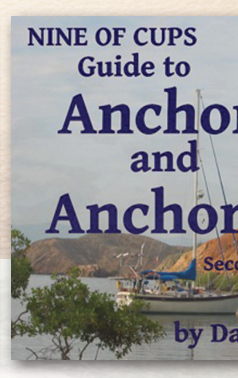
AudioSeaStories.com

Also available from www.AudioSeaStories.com:
back issues, audiobooks, music, and eBooks in PDF format









Explore this unique collection of sailing knowledge and stories today!
www.AudioSeaStories.com

Nicholson 31

A classy English lady gets a facelift

by James Baldwin

In this two-part series, which began in the September 2005 issue, James Baldwin discussed interior modifications, including cabinets, lockers, and the hull liner, of Jeff Fletcher's Echo, *restored with the help of James' wife, Mei. Now he begins with the headliner and discusses countertops and final touches.*

The old headliner in the saloon, forward cabin, and quarter berth was a textured vinyl glued onto a type of particleboard. These panels had deformed and sagged in several areas. Rather than replacing it with more vinyl, Jeff decided on a Formica-faced liner with teak trim. Fortunately, we were able to purchase — at less than half of U.S. retail prices — three 10-foot planks of teak left over from the refit of a neighbor's 60-foot schooner. This supplied all the teak for the projects mentioned here. A portable 10-inch table saw with an 80-tooth cutting wheel made an easy job of ripping trim and moldings from the 1¼-inch-thick planks.

Some of the original overhead plywood battens supporting the headliner were still usable. Where more were needed, we added ½-inch-thick strips of pine battens glued to the underside of the fiberglass deck and cabin trunk. The battens were cut short enough to conform easily to the camber of the house and deck and glued in with epoxy thickened with talc powder to a putty-like consistency. An adjustable support brace, using two pieces of 1 x 2 oak held together with two clamps, works well to hold the overhead battens and panels in place while working. Clean all surfaces with acetone before applying the epoxy.

Top three photos: the previous headliner, the project in progress, and the finished headliner. Bottom two photos: the finished main cabin looking aft and forward.

The forward cabin headliner was fit in two pieces. The saloon required four separate pieces just to fit through the companionway hatch. We cut them into eight pieces for easier fitting to the deck's camber and to maintain maximum headroom for Jeff, who is 6 feet tall. Two more panels went above the quarter berth and one each side under the saloon sidedecks. The outside edges of the headliner screwed onto the lip of the fiberglass hull liner. Unfortunately, this edge was so uneven that we had to remove some of it with a cutting disk on an angle grinder. A tight-fitting respirator, safety goggles, and DuPont Tyvek coveralls with hood were essential for this miserable portion of the job. At this point, a boat could be fitted with insulation material glued to the underside of the deck and cabin trunk between the battens.

Patterns for new panels

The old vinyl-covered overhead panels were used as patterns for the new panels, which were cut from ¼-inch hardwood-faced plywood. Once the plywood panels were trimmed for best fit, we took them to the dock and faced them with Formica cut slightly oversized. The panels containing light fixtures or Dorade vents now had those holes precut. The edges of the panels were given countersink holes for #8 flathead stainless-steel self-tapping screws. The holes need to be close enough to the edge for 1-inch teak moldings to cover the screw heads. Then we sealed the backs and edges of the panels with two coats of varnish. The finished panels were held in place with the adjustable brace topped by a small piece of plywood to spread the load. We drilled pilot holes into the battens and screwed the panels in place. In places where screws needed to tap into the underside of the wood-cored fiberglass deck, we ap-

makeover PART TWO

plied a dab of polyurethane sealant to the screw as it was driven in place. An extra electric drill with a screwdriver bit is useful here.

Once the panels were in place, we measured for the teak molding trim that would cover the panel edges and screw heads. We cut outside edge trim from ¼-inch x 1-inch teak strips and used 1¼-inch strips to cover the more widely-spaced screw heads where two panels meet. Trimming the many curved edges around the inside and outside perimeters of the panels required us to make paper templates and cut the curved teak trim out of ripped ¼-inch stock up to 6 inches wide. The considerable wastage was unavoidable. This should be taken into account when ordering lumber. We rounded the exposed edges of the teak moldings with a router except where they butted up against other trim. We drilled countersink holes for #8 brass flathead screws along the centerline of the trim, spaced as needed for the trim to seat tightly along the camber of the panels. Where the camber was sharpest, the backs of the trim were thinned with a router to allow for easier bending. The brass screws that fell on the centerline between the panels needed to be 1 inch long in order to get sufficient bite into the battens to hold the trim firmly in place.

After the trim pieces were fit and their joints sanded flush, they were removed and numbered from behind, along with corresponding numbers on the panel edges. Numbering the dozens of pieces before laying them out for varnishing avoids having an enormous puzzle to solve during final fitting.

Corian countertops debacle

With everything going well thus far, it seemed only fair to Murphy's Law that we should find some challenging project to test our sanity. We found that test when Jeff said, "While you're at it, let's do something with the galley. My wife would like to replace the worn Formica countertops with that imitation marble called Corian." If I knew then the hassles that job would entail, rather than agreeing so readily, I might have put my head in the galley oven, turned on the gas, and breathed deeply.

Our first setback came at Home Depot where we were told that the pricey DuPont Corian was not available for do-it-yourself installation. No problem, the specially trained Corian installers would come to the boat and take care of everything. I prepared the two countertops by removing the oven, the faucets, and the grotesque factory-installed aluminum galley-counter fiddles. Then I raised the sink so that its lip rested flush with the existing countertop. Two weeks later, a woman came down from the South Carolina-based Corian installation company and made templates of the countertops. After another two weeks the specialists came down to the boat with the precut counters. "We'll have this wrapped up in two hours," the boss of the three-man crew assured me. Five hours later, they left me with countertops so badly misaligned I had to work several hours the following day cutting away and rebuilding the locker lid's supports from under the countertops to match the misaligned cutouts. Now that the lids had supports again, we found the locker-access cutouts on the Corian countertops had not been cut square, so the lids had varying gaps along two sides.

"I'm not paying them $600 for this kind of work," Jeff said. The Home Depot rep agreed, and two weeks later a different crew from the same company came down and spent two hours raising a Corian dust storm as they ground through several lids with their belt sander. The first crew could not

> **"It seemed only fair to Murphy's Law that we should find some challenging project to test our sanity."**

When the dust had settled (or maybe once the dust had been removed and forgotten), everyone agreed that the Corian countertops were a huge improvement over Formica and aluminum. The galley as it looked prior to its makeover, at top; two photos of the galley project in progress; and the finished galley, bottom.

A final touch was the installation of a sealed door on the anchor chain locker to prevent muddy water from splashing on the bunk along with any smells of the seabed dragged aboard from the previous anchorage. The V-berth before (top) and after (below).

cut a straight line and the second crew could not shape a curved one. "I'll have to send down our best man to fix this, he's a real artist — even worked on a boat before," the man said as he packed up for the three-hour drive back to the shop. A week later, the master craftsman showed up and spent the entire afternoon cutting subtly curved lids to fit the slight curves in the countertop cutouts. Finally, the job was finished to everyone's satisfaction, and I had relearned the concept of stepping back and relaxing when things are obviously beyond my control.

We then installed the counter-lid ring pulls and the spout for the new galley foot pump that replaced the water-wasting pressure tap. We did keep the hot and cold pressure water system in place for the shower in the head and for a future owner to easily reconnect the galley sink tap, if desired.

We cut the galley fiddles from ¾-inch x 3½-inch teak and rounded the edges with a router. Then the pieces were epoxy-glued and screwed to the plywood under the Corian with bungs over the screw heads. We cut corner pieces with 45-degree joints out of 1½-inch teak stock. These fiddles had to be fixed in place strongly because they supported brackets for the heavy gimbaled propane oven.

Once finished, we all agreed the Corian countertops were a huge, if costly, improvement over Formica and aluminum … and may even have been worth the struggle and expense.

Some final touches

Among the shrinking list of jobs left to complete was the installation of a sealed door on the anchor chain locker. On deck, a self-draining recessed anchor locker held the windlass under a hinged deck hatch. The hawse pipe below the windlass directs the anchor rode into the chain locker below. This lower chain locker had no drain or door between it and the forward cabin, allowing muddy water to splash onto the V-berth and the smells of the previous harbor bottom to permeate the cabin.

> **"Tackling projects one by one as we can afford the time and expense is another sensible approach."**

The existing cutout in the chain locker bulkhead made it simple to make a cardboard door pattern, which we transferred to a piece of ½-inch plywood and cut to fit flush to the bulkhead. It was then faced with Formica and trimmed with ⅜-inch teak overlapping ¾-inch all around. We glued a rubber gasket to the inside of the teak lip and secured the door with offset hinges along the bottom and a twist-latch door button at the top. At the bottom of the chain locker bulkhead we installed a mushroom through-hull to a drain hose and shut-off valve accessible under one of the bilge-access floorboards.

There are several ways to recognize an English-built boat. Obvious giveaways are the sensible Lavac vacuum toilet and the different color coding of the electrical system. Another English oddity, regulated by law in many countries, is that deck hatches are installed so that they open from aft. Several production and amateur builders around the world also install their hatches this way, the idea apparently being that you scoop less water and have a reduced chance of breaking the hatch off if a wave rolls over the bow and catches the hatch in a partly open position.

Weighing these theoretical advantages against the real disadvantages of reduced visibility when looking forward through a partly open hatch and the reduced usefulness of a Windscoop while at anchor, we rotated the forward hatch 180 degrees. A similar hatch in the coachroof was left reversed since it provided better clearance for a vang in that position and would not be used to look forward or hold a Windscoop.

Stripped old varnish

We stripped the old varnish from bulkheads, teak trim, and handrails using scrapers kept fine-edged on a sharpening stone. Where the teak was discolored, we were able to restore its golden brown tone by light sanding or — in a few areas — with careful use of wood bleach. We repaired screw holes from old fittings no longer used and other isolated damage by drilling out and inserting teak bungs or patching in small strips of teak veneer. We final-sanded all bare wood with 120- and 150-grit paper and cleaned it with acetone before applying a first thinned coat of varnish.

We used different types of varnish for different areas: satin for bulkheads and two-part polyurethane for maximum protection on high-chafe areas, such as galley fiddles. Handrails and selected moldings were sealed with a topcoat of Cetol clear gloss. We gave all teak five to seven coats of varnish, generally with a light sanding between every second coat and before the final coat to fill the grain and get a smooth surface. The numbered moldings were set on battens over covered bunks and on the floor for varnishing and then reassembled by the numbers.

Jeff decided to remove the massive drop-leaf table to open up the main cabin. He has the table at home; if he finds he and his wife miss it, he can install it later.

Is it worth it?

The jobs described here were selected from dozens of individual repairs, modifications, and upgrades we completed on this boat over several months. The question arises as to whether it makes financial sense to put this much work and money into refurbishing an older boat when you will not recover much of that money during resale. This would be discouraging if you were simply trying to make a profit or were pouring money into dressing up an old hound of dubious pedigree that will never suit your needs or make a capable and attractive cruising boat.

However, if you are lucky enough to find a classic cruiser for sale that has already been refitted in exactly the manner you're looking for, it's worth paying a large premium to save the time and expense of doing the work yourself or hiring it. Unless you are doing the work entirely by yourself and are an extremely resourceful materials scrounger, it usually pays to let the previous owner take the loss and go through the headaches of a refit.

Unfortunately, you may never find this ideal boat, recently outfitted exactly as you want. Or you may want the satisfaction of working on your boat and gaining the knowledge and reassurance that comes with doing the job yourself. Often we're committed to the boat we own for practical or emotional reasons. Tackling projects one by one as we can afford the time and expense is another sensible approach.

Like many other boatowners, Jeff does some of the work on his boat himself. He purchased a sewing machine from Sailrite and taught himself to reupholster all his bunk and settee cushions. While tackling the difficult job of replacing the polycarbonate in his saloon windows, he realized he did not have time to run his business and simultaneously learn the skills to finish the many jobs that would get his boat set up for cruising in a reasonable time. In his case, it made sense to hire someone to speed up the process of getting cruise-ready.

Immediately after completing this refit, Mei and I accompanied Jeff and his wife aboard *Echo* on their first cruise to the Bahamas. What we learn in this world should be passed on. It's always gratifying to help a fellow-cruiser realize his dream.

Jeff Fletcher's Nicholson 31 rests at anchor following the completion of her interior refit by James and Mei Baldwin.

***Kuma*, a 1977 Ericson Cruising 31, at left. Facing page: a new anchor sprit and windlass, top. New crossbeams and battens alongside main beams, center. The cabin, looking aft, bottom.**

Making it your boat

Indulging that strong urge to stamp it with your own character

by Richard Smith

Just after high school, I bought a good old car. The first thing I did was to wrap the sun visors and glove box door in fake ocelot skin. That made it my car — not my dad's car — not just any 1947 Studebaker. It's the same thing with good old boats.

I once, only once, bought a *new* boat: a 1975 Ericson 27. The problem with going out and buying a new boat, money matters aside, is that like a new car, it's hard to wrestle the thing completely away from the manufacturer . . . or the bank. As new owners, we're afraid to make any marks on it for fear of making it seem, well, used. But for some of us, there is a compelling and sometimes irrational need to possess a boat, to make it our own.

Naming a boat is a step in the right direction. It felt good to see the name I'd assigned my glossy new Ericson — *Otter* — proudly painted on that lovely transom in big bold letters, but it did little to make the boat feel truly like mine.

Case of the jitters

Popular taste for the new and shiny is right up there with the big and expensive. The thought of adding anything too personal could bring on a case of the jitters. I was intimidated by the pristine gelcoat that seemed to defy the attachment of anything more intimate than registration numbers. Polished teak veneer bulkheads dared me to drill holes to mount a clock and barometer. God forbid, what if I got the holes in the wrong place? Completely cowed, I left my battered old Navy surplus nav box in the garage.

I strapped a crab trap to the shrouds and carried fishing poles on deck but, try as I might, I couldn't get my new boat to feel as if it were mine, really mine, that nautical equivalent of a house that feels like home. In spite of my best efforts, it was beginning to look like everyone else's clean and well-equipped boat, loaded like a lot of other Ericson 27s. Just after the second summer, I became overwhelmed by monthly payments and sold it.

> **"As new owners, we're afraid to make any marks on it for fear of making it seem, well, used. But for some of us, there is a compelling and sometimes irrational need to possess a boat, to make it our own."**

Everything I added to the boat had to be off-the-shelf and brand-new: a depth sounder, VHF, and a few cockpit cushions. I indulged in a fine Dutch brass anchor light, but it didn't seem entirely happy within the welter of stainless steel.

In my view, buying a good old boat goes a long way toward owning a boat

that is truly one's own. It's probably got leaks and a few nicks here and there. Previous owners may have left a trail of small holes: phantom reminders of once carefully placed, replaced, and finally rejected toothbrush holders, clocks, and fire extinguishers. The gelcoat may have sprouted a little crazing and gone flat in places. (Incidentally, I've found that a good exterior, water-based, semigloss paint matches the 30-year-old gelcoat on my boat almost perfectly. It's easy to work with and holds up well.)

Involvement counts

Half the pleasure of sailing an old boat comes from gradually getting to know it and setting it right, one small project after another. This takes time. It doesn't matter whether it's filling holes, scraping blisters, changing zincs, cleaning out the strum box, or replacing duff instruments or worn-out upholstery. It's the involvement that counts, that and realizing your old boat is getting to be a good old boat of your own.

My present boat is another Ericson, a 1977 Cruising 31 that I've had for 10 years. When I first saw this boat it was a real mess. It had the essential features I felt I wanted but it had been badly treated by a succession of owners. It took X-ray vision to see through to the good old boat beneath the surface of confused, misplaced, and ill-conceived add-ons, not to mention star-crossed ideas that hadn't quite worked out.

To my eye, the Cruising 31 is a good-looking boat, especially in the cutter version that sports a long and serious-looking bowsprit. But *Kuma* is the sloop version. She has the same graceful clipper bow, but without the sprit she seems a bit dressed up with no place to go, like a fine Irish setter without the long, fringed tail. Rightly or wrongly, I decided that I could improve her appearance and make the foredeck a bit handier by adding an anchor sprit and bow roller.

Building a mock-up

This was a big modification and I gave it a lot of thought. I made several drawings and built a mock-up to get

the chain lead and other matters right. Stainless-steel straps hold the 3-inch iroko laminations to the deck and are bolted through a large 1-inch plywood blocking plate below. A windlass rides on top of the sprit and is also bolted through the backing plate. The anchor sprit continues the line of the sheer and stops at a point just below the up-per pulpit rail, helping to unify the sprit and the rest of the boat. The whole af-fair is robust and works well.

There have been many such projects, most of them far less complicated and irrevocable than the anchor sprit. It was a pain removing the vinyl headliner to get at the bolts that secured the cabintop grabrails so they could be re-bedded. I decided to fit removable wood trim pieces between the beams. These covered the slits in the fabric that were made in order to get at the bolts. While I was at it, I removed the crummy little plastic strips that hid the rusting staples alongside the beams. It was a few days well-spent, and the additional wood goes well with the snug cabin.

Along with the familiar array of essentials situated about the galley/companionway area, I've installed a piece of stained glass made by an old friend. It fits into a hole left over from a long-forgotten instrument. To me and my mate, Beth, it seems a good and lighthearted companion to the GPS, binoculars, flashlight, and such — a very small thing, but important in making the boat special.

I've built a bridge deck of sorts abaft the companionway where it serves as a platform for chartwork. We place the wooden tray of nav gear (tide tables, log book, pencils) beneath it, where the instruments are out of the way but handy. The improvised nav station suits our particular use of the cockpit well (see *Good Old Boat*, May 2007).

The wooden cockpit sole (see *Good Old Boat*, September 2007) adds a certain individuality and warmth to the plastic cockpit and contributes to the traditional look of the little sloop. We don't mind the marks of dropped winch handles on our homemade softwood floorboards; along with the stained-glass portlight, they've become part of the personal history of our boat.

Marking your boat

Making a boat your own is to let those peculiar habits and attitudes you've acquired over the years mark your boat, even if they alter the original design and seem to go against the tide of popular opinion. For instance, I confess to a basic mistrust and general avoidance of what I take to be less-than-essential electronic accessories. Not surprisingly, that attitude affects the character of my boat. If I don't understand or cannot fix something that's broken, I prefer a simpler arrangement, whenever possible.

We've taken out the rusting water heater from the engine compartment and replaced the pressurized fresh-

This page: Stained glass portlight in an old instrument hole, top. The bridge deck, bottom. On facing page: a handmade mat at the companionway ladder, top. The cabin, looking forward, bottom.

water system with a foot pump. The engine's easier to get at, and we use less water.

When our propane solenoid valve failed, I moved the gas-bottle box from the foot of the mast to the cockpit seat just abaft the main bulkhead. The gas lines are shorter and there is a greater fall for the overboard gas hose. We can also reach through the hatch and turn off the gas directly at the bottle. It's possible to get our arms wet in the rain, but when the knob is turned off, we know we've stopped the gas at the bottle and that feels good.

Beth and I made a small rope mat one winter when we were recovering from the flu. It's the welcome mat when we're in port, and we keep it under the companionway ladder when we cruise, where it contributes to a "shippy" feeling down below.

There are six berths on the Cruising 31, but I seldom cruise with more than two shipmates. Our house on land, on the other hand, sleeps two comfortably and has additional accommodation for one or two others. (It should be added that the house is 5 feet shorter than the Ericson's overall length though, admittedly, it has a wider "beam.")

Improved access

With this in mind, I've taken out the 5-inch-thick quarter-berth cushion to improve engine access. A simple thing, but the gymnastics required to check fluid levels, make crankcase and gearbox oil changes, and tighten the stuffing box are easier to do in the now enlarged scrunching-down space. I can get at the cockpit drain seacocks back up against the transom more readily, and we can slide in crates of additional cruising gear along with bulbous fenders and dinghy oars.

Considering that we can still accommodate more overnight guests in our boat than in our house, I've cut 18 inches off the end of one of the saloon cushions. That makes it a sort of inglenook next to the wood stove, which is now placed down at sitting level where it has a proper, albeit stainless-steel, hearth. The berth is useless as a bed for anyone other than a small child, but it's a cozy place to read with feet up, nudging the warm Dickinson on cold mornings and nodding off on fog-bound days at anchor.

"Half the pleasure of sailing an old boat comes from gradually getting to know it and setting it right, one small project after another. This takes time."

When we change the workings and appearance of a small boat, when we build something of ourselves into it, we help shape its character. That character, in turn, shapes us, making us feel at one with our boat — making us feel that we a sail a boat of our own.

Richard Smith *is a contributing editor with* Good Old Boat. *He has owned and built several boats, including an Atkin Red Onion sloop, a 30-foot Alan Pape steel cutter outfitted from a bare hull, an Atalanta 26, five dinghies, and an Ericson Cruising 31.*

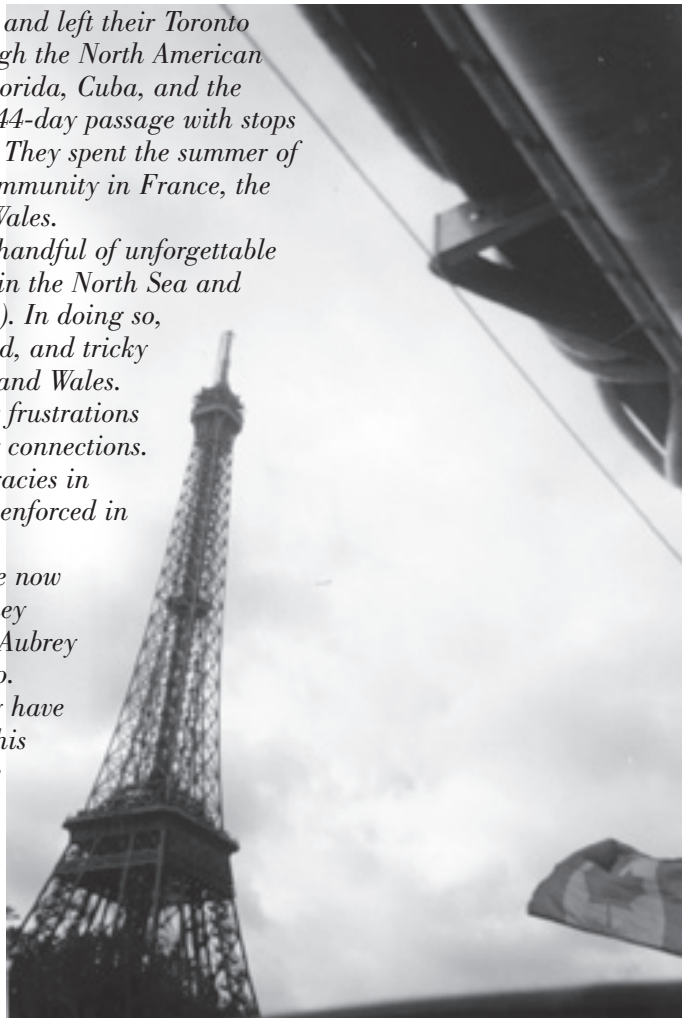
Aubrey and Judy Millard took a good old boat, a 1978 Ontario 32, and left their Toronto home in July 1998. They traveled the Great Lakes and passed through the North American continent using the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. They cruised Florida, Cuba, and the Bahamas and then headed across the Atlantic in spring of 1999, a 44-day passage with stops in Bermuda and the Azores, for Great Britain, wintering in London. They spent the summer of 2000 in Northern Europe, sight-seeing and enjoying the cruising community in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Scotland, and Wales.

Aubrey's logs speak of many grand and glorious moments and a handful of unforgettable "character-building events," primarily of the heavy-weather variety in the North Sea and the Irish Sea (worse than anything the Atlantic crossing handed out). In doing so, they earned the chance to explore some of the most beautiful, isolated, and tricky anchorages in Northern Europe, particularly the coasts of Scotland and Wales.

As they've moved from country to country, they have had ongoing frustrations about the compatibility of email systems and about propane canister connections. And they've experienced the usual cross-cultural issues and bureaucracies in which rules and regulations are proudly promulgated and expressly enforced in languages that were not their own.

Having spent a cold and wet North Sea summer in 2000, they are now soaking up the sun and slowing their pace in the Mediterranean. They arrived there mast down through the French canal system. All told, Aubrey and Judy have logged more than 15,000 miles since leaving Toronto.

Aubrey summarizes, "It must sound exotic . . . It is! We frequently have to pinch ourselves to establish that this is our good fortune to have this lifestyle and our fantastic opportunity to see the world. However, one of the reasons I am writing these logs . . . is to encourage people to dream and to work toward making their dreams come true. We are not rich in terms of financial wealth, but we have accepted what life has given us, both the good and the not so good, and have made the necessary adjustments and decisions to realize a dream we have both had for some time. My theme is, 'You can do it! You are only in this life once. Go for it!' "



Take a good old boat and just go

"You can do it, go for it!" is this couple's advice to others

by Aubrey Millard

In this account, I have given close estimations of costs incurred, not to show how shrewd or economical we are (which we are not), but to give others a frame of reference for expenses and to illustrate that a couple does not have to be rich to set off on a world voyage in a seaworthy, comfortable sailboat. But they do have to be prepared to pay the price, financially and emotionally.

We bought *Veleda* for $28,000 ($42,000 Canadian) in May of 1996 from her third owner. We had heard the Ontario 32 praised as a solid sailboat, and we loved *Veleda* from the first time we saw her in midwinter in Brockville, Ontario. During the summer of 1996 we sailed from Toronto to Thunder Bay on Lake Superior. The second summer (1997) we sailed Lake Erie. We departed on our world cruise the third summer (1998).

We did not do any upgrades until the winter before our departure, with the exception of installing a Dinghy Tow system. Those first two summers gave us the experience with the boat and her systems to show us what changes we would like to have for liveaboard comfort and safety.

We had *Veleda* surveyed before we bought her and again in the fall, at a cost of $290 ($435 Cdn.), before our departure to outfit her for ocean cruising. We were cautioned by the second marine surveyor that we could expect to put 50 percent of her value into the necessary upgrades for bluewater sailing in safety. This we did.

These are the major upgrades we undertook. (Prices in parentheses are Canadian dollars.)

A new engine – The original 20-year-old, 15-hp 2QM Yanmar seemed powerful enough but had impeller problems, was raw-water cooled, and had already been in salt water for one or two seasons. The engine was our major concern. Did we have the right boat for what we wanted to do? Was it

The Dinghy Tow system allows the Millards to launch the dinghy quickly. They removed this apparatus only for their Atlantic crossing.

worth a new engine and all the expenses to upgrade her? We did a considerable amount of soul searching about our plans and the boat. However, she had a solid hull and rigging, we liked her sailing characteristics, and we were impressed with her below-decks space and layout. To buy a larger, more expensive boat would still mean expending money to upgrade, and we could not afford boats in the $50,000 to $65,000 ($80,000 to $100,000) range.

Our dream was in danger of fading or being postponed for a couple of years. So we decided to go for it with *Veleda*. We had E&C Marine, in Toronto, install a new 3GM 30-hp Yanmar with a heat-exchanger cooling system for $10,000 ($15,000), less the $1,000 ($1,500) they got for selling the old motor. They gave *Veleda* a backhanded compliment when they complained that her hull was too thick when they were drilling a through-hull for the water system. We also had a Vetus anti-siphon system installed and a larger exhaust opening made. We are quite happy with their service and with the engine.

A new dodger/Bimini – At the Toronto Boat Show we were impressed with the dodger/Bimini system we saw at the Genco stand. As I'd had a cancerous growth removed from my arm that fall, we knew we would need good sun protection. We initially were going to have just the dodger/Bimini made, but then went for full vinyl-and-screen side curtains *(see photo on Page 23)*, and even new cockpit cushions. The Bimini had a new design whereby it was secured to the toerails rather than to the outside of the cockpit coaming.

This design gave a more spacious cockpit enclosure, and has proven to be quite stable. We have standing headroom beneath the dodger and 6-foot headroom under the Bimini. We also had a clear vinyl window with a Velcro flap made in the aft third of the Bimini to permit a view of the set of the mainsail. Pockets sewn into the dodger give a handy place to store a sound horn, sailing gloves, navigation instruments, and light lines. Straps sewn on the port and starboard top of the dodger give useful handholds when getting into or out of the cockpit. We spent another $2,000 ($3,000) but feel it was well worth it for an "Add-a-room." We have had the system up all the way across the Atlantic with no problems, even through 55-knot winds. We rarely use our foul weather gear now as, with the full enclosure even in rainstorms, we are dry and warm. The structure makes our boat look bigger, but does not detract from her lines.

As much as we like this system, had our budget permitted, we would probably have gone with a rigid dodger and Bimini with appropriate canvas/vinyl side curtains.

Electrical systems – We wanted alternate rapid and reliable sources of charging our batteries, so went with an Air Marine wind generator for $1,000 ($1,500), a 30-amp marine battery charger for $350 ($525), and a 100-amp heavy-duty alternator for $330 ($500). We replaced the standard, heavy-duty automotive-type 12-volt batteries with four 6-volt, golf-cart batteries for $300 ($440). The advantages are that they are lighter-to-handle, sturdy, deep-cycle batteries that we were able to fit beneath the cabin sole, lashed down on a platform built on top of the keel bolts. Two are hooked up in series (for the equivalent of one 12-volt battery), and then two pairs are hooked up in parallel, making a single house bank of two 12-volt batteries. We kept one 12-volt, automotive-type battery separate, lashed in a battery box in a cockpit locker, for engine starting only.

We also installed an Alpha regulator for $150 ($225) for controlling the charge rates from the alternator, allowing a higher charge rate for a longer period before dropping to an intermediate rate, then to a trickle charge. An Echo charger ensures separation of the starting and golf-cart batteries, so that the house bank cannot drain the starting battery but allows both starting and house banks to be charged.

My favorite toy is the E-Meter installed above our electrical panels. I was always frustrated by the question of how much charge we had left in the batteries? As far as I'm concerned, simple ammeters and volt meters are not as dependable. My E-Meter monitors the house bank and tells me the voltage, the current draw in amps, the number of amp-hours used, and the number of amp-hours remaining at the present rate of consumption to lower the bank to its 50-percent level.

Major suppliers:

- **E & C Marine,** 31a Parliament St., Toronto, Ontario, M5A 2Y2; 416-363-7770.
- **Genco,** 544 King St. West, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1M3; 416-504-2891.
- **Holland Marine Products,** 3008 Dundas St. West, Toronto, Ontario, M6P 1Z3; 416-762-3821.
- **Nautical Mind Bookstore,** Queens Key West, Toronto, Ontario; 416-203-1163.
- **Ocean Marine,** Railside Rd., Toronto, Ontario, M3A 1B2; 416-444-0105.
- **Davron Marine Products Inc.,** 33 Cedar Ridge Rd., Gormley, Ontario, L0H 1G0; 888-DINGHYTOW (346-4498).

The household wiring was replaced with marine-grade wiring throughout the boat. We replaced the domestic AC switch box with a marine-grade AC panel for $115 ($170) with a master breaker and reverse-polarity warning light as well as four breaker switches separating the battery charger, water heater, and port and starboard AC outlets. The old six-switch DC fuse panel was replaced by four panels, giving us 22 fused switches.

Dinghy Tow – One of the first upgrades we got for *Veleda* was the Dinghy Tow system. We actually got it the first year we had our boat. At the Toronto Boat Show in 1996 we saw the system on their video and it appealed to us as the ideal solution for towing an inflatable dinghy. We had the usual problems of towing a dinghy behind the boat. We wanted a more powerful motor, one we did not have to "man-handle" off the dinghy each time we left an anchorage. In addition, we always had to watch that the dinghy line did not get fouled in our prop when coming alongside or anchoring. As we enjoy anchoring, a reliable, powerful dinghy was a high priority.

We purchased this system *(see photo on Page 22)* for about $650 ($1,000). It is one of the best purchases we have made. It came as a do-it-yourself kit, which took about two hours to install on our transom. It consists of two rigid arms attached to plates secured to the transom. The arms are controlled by pulleys attached to the stern rails, allowing them to be raised from the water level up to about 120 degrees. At the end of each arm is a quick-release hook; these clips fit onto brackets attached to the transom of the dinghy. Thus the dinghy is towed with the transom raised out of the water, with only the bow dragging in the water behind *Veleda.* This allows us to leave a 9.9-hp engine on the dinghy, with the gas tank, life jackets, bailer, anchor, and line secured in the dinghy while towing it. When we come to anchor, we lower the dinghy into the water, slip the quick-release mechanism, releasing the arms from the transom of the dinghy, and pull it alongside for immediate use. Very handy.

On a few occasions when we have grounded, we have lowered the dinghy into the water, but not detached it. I would then enter the dinghy, start the engine, and with Judy at the wheel of *Veleda* in full astern, and me in the rigidly attached dinghy, full ahead on the 9.9-hp outboard, *Veleda* has always come back off any grounding so far. The only time we removed this system was when we crossed the Atlantic. Otherwise, we have had it on all through the Great Lakes, down the Mississippi, around the Florida Keys and the Bahamas, and ever since our landfall at Falmouth in July of 1999, including through a Force 9 gale the following summer in the North Sea.

Sails – *Veleda* came with an inventory of an 18-year-old full-battened main, jib, and 150-percent furling genoa with luff pads, and a spinnaker. We got a storm jib (never used), and purchased a used, but good, mainsail for $800 ($1,200) and a 120-percent genoa with luff pads for about $900 ($1,400). We never used the spinnaker before we left. We actually crossed the Atlantic with the original sails on the assumption that if they blew out, we had replacements. However, they are still flying, albeit with some new UV cloth, and some stitching and patch repairs.

Other upgrades:

New navigation light – The original port and starboard lights were mounted on the hull. We installed bow-pulpit-mounted lights and repaired our trilight for $200 ($300). And we installed our sternlight on the wind generator tower.

GPS – We waited until just before departure to purchase a GPS to replace the Loran C that we had been using until then. We got an economical Garmin 128 for about $330 ($500) with a swivel mount for $33 ($50) so we can use it in our nav station, and swing it out into the cockpit for heads-up navigation. The antenna was mounted on the stern Bimini frame. It has proved quite satisfactory.

Jordan series drogue – Judy made this drogue system for "Perfect Storm" conditions. It consists of 100 droguettes on 150 feet of line, to be streamed aft as a last-resort maneuver in horrendous storm conditions. We purchased the kit from Genco for about $130 ($200). We have not yet deployed this system, although we hove to several times in heavy conditions.

Jack lines – We replaced the rope jack lines with flat nylon braid lines, so they would not roll underfoot.

Antifouling paint – We soda-blasted the hull for $560 ($850) to clean it off, then applied epoxy putty to seal the few blisters we noted. We then put on two coats of epoxy paint, plus one coat of red, and two coats of blue Woolsey bottom paint to seal the hull — Holland Marine products, $230 ($350).

Radio/tape/CD player – We purchased a good used car radio/tape/CD system with a cartridge for 10 CDs for about $210 ($320) that was connected to our two main cabin speakers.

Aubrey and Judy aboard* Veleda, *at left, and the full cockpit enclosure they have appreciated so much, below.

Mast steps – Triangular fixed mast steps from Holland Marine for $240 ($360) were installed to facilitate climbing the mast under all conditions. We have used them alongside a dock as well as in mid-ocean.

Refrigerator insulation – As we were heading toward warm climates, we increased the insulation around the Adler Barbour Cold Machine refrigerator with sheet (where possible) and spray can expanding foam. We unwound a wire coat hanger and used it as the support to direct the expanding foam insulation through tubing, behind and around the fridge.

Sewing – Judy did a good job of sewing fitted sheets, blankets, and quilts for our V-berth cushions. In addition she made a bag with zipper top to hold our towels and washcloths, and another bag for spare sheets. She also made curtains and a mast cover for the main cabin, as well as throw-pillow covers.

Spice rack – A spice rack was constructed above the stove area for a dozen spice jars.

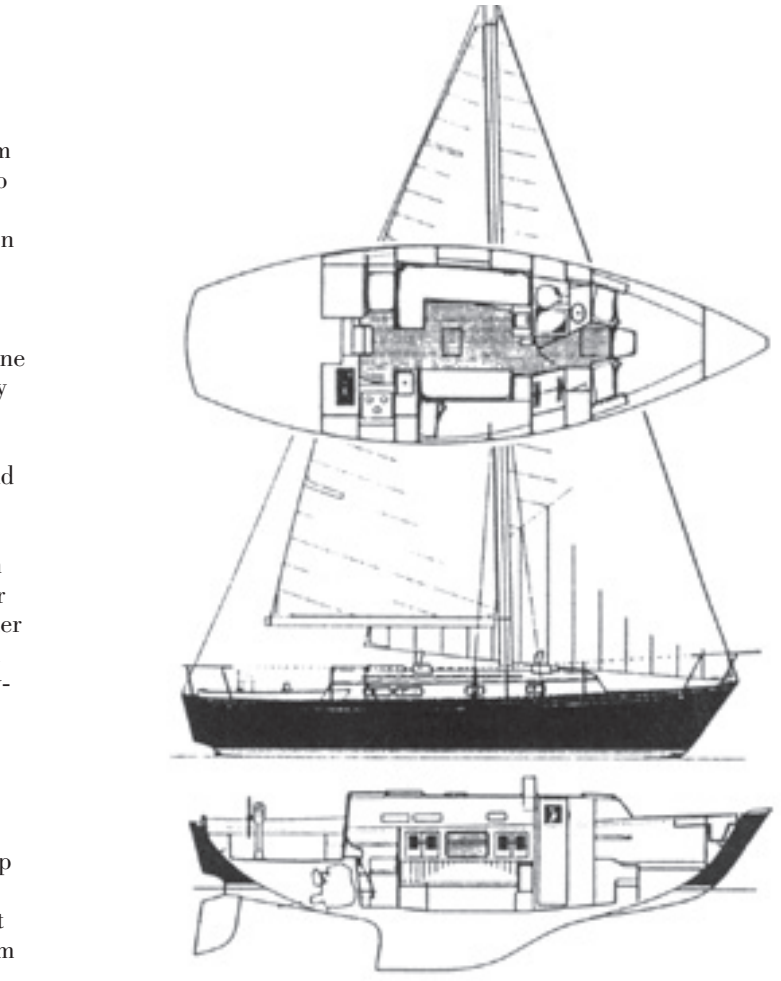
Flag halyards – Port and starboard flag halyards were installed on the spreaders, and a main flag halyard was fixed two-thirds the way up the aft stay.

Stanchion bases – The bow and stern pulpit bases were replaced as cracks were noted in them — Holland Marine $53 ($80).

Barbecue – A Force Ten barbecue, a gift from my son, was mounted and connected up with propane on the stern rail.

Laptop computer – A friend gave us an old Macintosh Powerbook 170 laptop computer that we connected up to an AOL 2.7 email system that we've been using for communications via email from Toronto to England. I initially wanted a more up-to-date computer for chart plotting and electronic navigation but soon realized it was too expensive and impractical for our budget. We have been generally happy with the AOL local access numbers we have been able to use throughout the States, Bahamas, Bermuda, Azores, and England. It has limited capacity and cannot download sophisticated attachments and graphics but can email logs of our voyage to more than 75 addresses: clubs, magazines, and friends.

After writing this article and summarizing our expenses, I can readily see why people refer to a boat as a hole in the water into which you keep throwing money. We will never recover the money we have put into *Veleda*, but she is our home and our way of life. Without a doubt, it was worth it!



Ontario 32

Major costs:

These are minimum estimates, as there were many additional miscellaneous costs.

	$U.S.	$Canadian
Dodger/Bimini enclosures	$1,980	$3,000
Garmin GPS	$330	$500
Binoculars	$208	$315
Charts, pilots, and guides	$330	$500
Charger and heavy-duty alternator	$890	$1,350
Batteries	$290	$440
Alpha regulator	$148	$225
Echo charger	$132	$200
30-hp Yanmar diesel, installed	$9,900	$15,000
Sails: genoa and mainsail, used	$1,700	$2,600
CD player, tape deck, and AM/FM radio	$208	$315
Soda blasting and bottom paint	$780	$1,180
Medical kit and supplies	$528	$800
Navigation lights and repairs	$132	$200
Electrical panels and wiring	$330	$500
Propane switch and hoses	$265	$400
Capstan cleaning and repair	$200	$300
Wind generator and supports	$900	$1,500
Flares	$66	$100
Total	**$19,420**	**$29,425**

This represents a minimum expenditure, not including taxes which would come to another $2,650 ($4,000). It is quite economical in U.S. terms, but moderate to expensive in Canadian terms, depending on your budget. We did all installations ourselves, with the exception of the new engine and the heavy-duty alternator.

Veleda *was named when the Millards bought her. The name is that of a Germanic priestess in the 1st century AD. Aubrey started sailing dinghies in the late 1950s as an officer cadet in the Canadian Navy. He has continued sailing recreationally and has earned a number of sailboat handling and navigation qualifications. He and Judy invite email correspondence: VeledaIV@aol.com.*

Classic in blue

New sailors freshen up an Irwin 32

by E-J Ohler

Sailmates **leaves the barn after spending the winter getting a "hull lift."**

I learned to sail when I was 5 or 6 years old on Curaçao in the Caribbean. While I was in my early teens, my family moved to the Netherlands where "everybody" sails. I became an active sailor in racing dinghies, starting with a Cadet I built, and worked my way up through the Vaurien, Flying Junior, Flying Dutchman, and Tornado classes, and finally to cruising boats.

When I came to the States, more than 30 years ago, I didn't do much sailing at first. I dabbled in small weekend boats with friends on inland lakes and rivers before becoming a classic powerboater. I've always been stricken by woodies and wound up restoring several Chris-Crafts.

My friend Tim Hafner envied sailors leaving the channel out of South Haven, Michigan, but he had never been a boater, so he asked me if I would like to buy a sailboat with him. I jumped at the offer. We started looking for used boats but, as Tim and his wife, Mary, had no boating experience and my lovely wife, Doris, had only motorboat experience, I was the only sailor. I determined that we needed a solid good old boat, such as a Morgan, Pearson, C&C, or Chris-Craft, for a reasonable initial investment. I knew it was possible that any of the three other partners might not like the sailing experience and we might therefore have to sell after the first season. For this reason, we did not consider boats costing $40,000 or more.

After looking at many boats, we settled on a 1972 Irwin 32 Classic, a boat big enough for four of us and one with great motion comfort and capsize ratios. It's not the fastest boat . . . but it's not the slowest either. This would be a good cruiser for Lake Michigan, the "big" lake. I crawled all over the boat checking for possible problems and found none that really concerned me. We made an offer while she was on stands and covered with snow. It was contingent on a sea trial.

Even prior to the final sale, we took the sails home and spread them out on the grass to check them over. The 160 genoa needed a minor repair and we opted to do that at our expense before the sea trial. It poured rain during the sea trial, but everything worked. We signed the contract that afternoon and planned to sail 84 nautical miles to her home port that weekend.

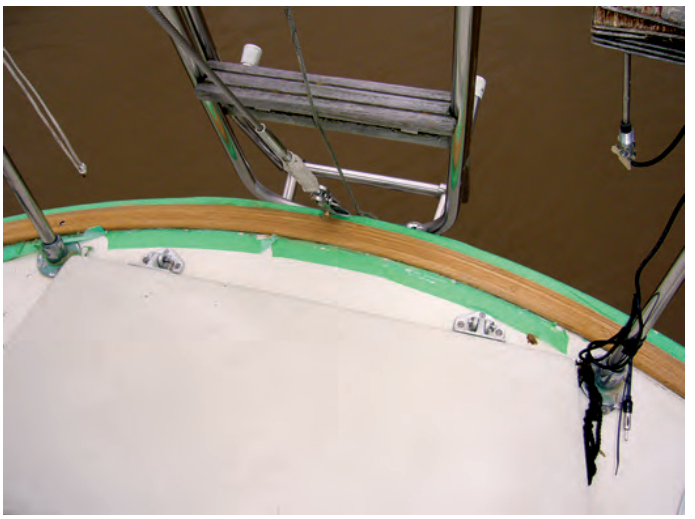
As well as inspecting and repairing the sails in advance of the sale, we convinced the previous owner that he should let us clean and wax the boat before she was launched. This would be a win-win situation for all, as we would have the boat clean and shining if we accepted her and, even if we did not sign the purchase papers, he would have a clean boat. We scrubbed and cleaned and polished and rubbed for two weekends and she didn't look bad, except none of us liked the off-white color of the old gelcoat. She wasn't in bad shape but colorwise we thought she was "blah."

We began to understand what a great sailing vessel we had when we completed the 84-mile passage in just 13 hours.

Repairs and cosmetics

Once she was in her new home port, I made new companionway dropboards of solid mahogany and varnished them. I also made a mahogany cabin table as the boat came without it and it was necessary as the bottom for the port "double" berth. To support the table I used a pedestal receiver and chrome pipe of the type used for cockpit chairs. I admit that cutting a hole in the cabin sole for the receiver was hair-raising, as I did not know what might lie beneath.

As a group, we agreed to attack the teak toerails and handholds first.



When E-J and his partners bought the boat, her woodwork had been rather neglected, at left. Restoring it was one of the first tasks they took on, and the taffrail, at right, came back nicely after some heavy sanding.

We soon realized we'd rather sail when the weather was nice than work on scraping and sanding. For simplicity, I opted for Cetol teak finish, even though I was used to using Interlux Schooner varnish in my mahogany Chris-Craft work.

I rebuilt the forehatch with mahogany and new acrylic as the old one was completely crazed, the teak trim was rotted and leaking, and I didn't trust it to carry our weight. It was interesting getting the trapezoid form with the dado for the seal put together. I used clear ⅜-inch acrylic and put a limousine-grade film on it to block damaging sunlight and provide some privacy. To this, I added a solar-powered Nicro ventilator.

After a season of great sailing, Tim confirmed that he really liked to sail. We knew then we'd keep the boat and decided she needed a new color. Since she was almost 40 years old, we looked at classic colors — red, burgundy, dark green — and settled on blue. I then needed to determine which system to use. I considered Awlgrip, Alexseal, and Interlux. I had painted two 30-footers and many smaller ones with Interlux paint and Interlux varnish so I knew these were good products.

Then, at the Strictly Sail Chicago show, I saw a good old boat that had been repainted with Interlux Perfection in flag blue and I was sold. We chose Interlux Perfection two-part polyurethane. The cost was many times less than for Alexseal and Awlgrip. The Interlux representative at the boat show cinched the deal when he said the temperature range and paint application was more

Nobody liked the "blah" off-white hull color so, over their first winter with the boat, E-J and Tim stripped the bootstripe and spent 80 hours sanding the hull, at left. The deep blue and the red bootstripe certainly banished the blahs, at right.

amateur-friendly than my other two choices. Since we live in Michigan, application temperature was important.

Painting by degrees (F)

We were able to store the boat inside an old lumberyard building. We spent approximately 80 man-hours removing the boot and cove stripes and "roughing up" the gelcoat with palm sanders and 60-grit paper in order to assure good paint adhesion. We used heat guns to remove the vinyl name from the boat and I filled a couple of small gouges with epoxy.

We then had to wait for the right temperature for applying the first coat of primer. This was followed by another 20 hours of sanding, this time with 120-grit paper, and another coat of primer. We opted for the roll-and-tip method as spraying required a minimum of 50-degree weather and roller painting could begin in 45-degree weather. These temperatures were hard to find in early spring in Michigan.

After the two primer coats we applied a new red bootstripe and waterline. This required two finish coats. We did all our work on weekends and some evenings. Tim is a hard worker but not a do-it-yourselfer. As he was often away on business, he could only help when I was there, so some evenings and weekends I worked alone.

While we waited for another weather break, Tim worked on the teak toerail and handholds. I put in another bronze through-hull for a raw-water pickup in the head as it had been designed to use potable water. I repaired the urethane prop that had been nicked by flotsam over the years and had a slight vibration.

"With the second coat, the boat looked beautiful."

I used West System epoxy with fairing filler for this and it worked great.

At last the time came to apply the first coat of blue. I caught a weekend in late April 2011 that was forecast to be 46 to 50 Fahrenheit. I mixed the paint (based on volume), let it stand, and applied it with a high-density foam roller. These are not the inexpensive black rollers you buy at the hardware store. We used West System rollers. Tim rolled and I followed immediately, tipping the paint out with a high-quality brush.

We were disappointed when the first coat didn't cover as well as we'd hoped. It was a bit too cold and we discovered that the paint didn't level out as well as we'd hoped. It flowed OK while we were applying it, but a higher temperature would have made it "settle" better.

After letting the paint harden, we sanded the hull once again, this time with 220-grit paper, and cleaned it again with MEK. Waiting for warmer weather in order to apply the second and third coats was unbearable, but I finally had a couple of days that looked acceptable and applied another coat by myself.

With the second coat, the boat looked beautiful and we decided to do a third coat, if needed, in the spring of 2012. All that remained was the cove striping. We opted for gold as we also had a small gold pinstripe at the waterline. Originally, we were going to paint it, but I found a nice gold vinyl tape that fit perfectly in our cove. The waterline stripe was one that remained from one of my Chris-Craft restorations and we applied that also.

Additions and improvements

While the mast was down and it was too cold for painting, we removed, restored (that is to say, filled the rot), and varnished the oak spreaders. I also rerouted some of the wiring and installed spreader lights using automotive LED fog lamps.

During the winter and spring of 2012, we installed a second lifeline and a new imitation-wood cabin sole. I used a product I had discovered at Menards (also at Lowe's) called Aquarius. It is specifically made to be 100-percent waterproof and snaps together like most modern laminate flooring. This was a great and inexpensive way to quickly improve the appearance of the old cabin.

All that is left to do now is to repaint the deck and cabintop and maybe even put on PlasTeak decking. Before we tackle those items, I'd like to look into getting new sails, halyards, and lines even though the current ones aren't too bad. I'd just like to be sure that nothing fails while in 40-knot winds on Lake Michigan. A good old boat is always a work in process.

E-J Ohler was a very active sailor as a child and in his teens. He and his wife, Doris, now sail with their boat partners, Tim and Mary Hafner, out of South Haven, Michigan, on the Irwin 32, SailMates, *they have been restoring.*

The original plan was to buy a sailboat to see if it would be fun. E-J, in the cockpit, at left, knew it would be but Tim had not sailed before. Their wives, at right, Doris Ohler (left) and Mary Hafner (right), apparently take having fun very seriously.

My journey with the *Vera May*

A plan for the future and a project for today

by Stephen Thompson

When I was in high school, a friend of mine and his father were working to restore a Jaguar Roadster. Anytime I asked when they were going to get it finished, he would simply say, "Someday." Only when I undertook my own restoration project did I finally understand what he meant. Sometimes the journey can be as rewarding as the destination. This certainly was my experience in rebuilding the *Vera May*. The best part is that the journey continues right on through to new destinations as well!

My journey actually started during a long drive to Calgary, Alberta. I was thinking about my plan for retirement. Although it was 10 years away at the time, I've always been one to think ahead. Yes, I was saving for it, but to what end? All my life I've had business objectives to accomplish and I realized that, without a goal or mission, retirement might not be that enjoyable. I wanted something that would be challenging and fulfilling at the same time.

The idea of cruising around the world came to mind and a dream was born. To do that, I was going to need a boat. As I didn't want to go into debt, I initially thought I was going to have to build one myself. Then one lazy Saturday morning, I was searching the used-boat listings on the Internet and found what I was looking for within my limited price range (dirt cheap).

When the Hallberg Mistral 33 that was to become the *Vera May* arrived in Edmonton, above, she was showing signs of neglect. The rotten cockpit coaming, below, was only a beginning.

She was a 1970 Hallberg Mistral 33. She had a good pedigree but suffered from the neglect that comes with having been left on the hard for at least three years. She was obviously going to need work, but I had some experience with building a small wood and fiberglass sailing dinghy so I took the plunge. (***Note:*** *The* Vera May, *in "mostly finished" condition, was the feature boat in* Good Old Boat*'s September 2011 issue.* ***–Eds.***)

She was in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and I had her trucked to Edmonton, Alberta, where I was fortunate to have a heated warehouse. She arrived on a November morning frozen solid with 2 inches of ice above the interior floorboards. She had to thaw out before I could even drain the bilge. Most of the wood above deck had rot damage, but she was mine! When I looked at her, I saw my retirement dream. Others saw her a little differently. I was told that my friend's son had asked, "Does Uncle Stephen know he bought a rotten boat?" I didn't mind. I had a dream, a plan, and time. This is perhaps the first of a number of lessons I learned during my journey: restoring a good old boat is a real joy as long as there are no deadlines. I believe impossible deadlines cause many rebuilds to be abandoned.

After assessing the boat's overall condition, Stephen decided there was nothing to do but remove everything from inside the hull, at left. By the time his father came to visit, at right, Stephen had begun reassembling the interior. The yellow color is the Kevlar laminate he added.

Not restore but rebuild

What I thought would be a touch-up-and-refinish project was going to be a complete disassembly and reconstruction. A previous owner had practiced the out-of-sight-out-of-mind mahogany-maintenance program. Any time he discovered wood damage, he covered it up with stainless-steel sheeting and sealed the moisture in with silicone. But no matter, I was originally thinking of building my own boat anyway. This way I had a good fiberglass hull and a quality design. Besides, I would know everything about the boat when I was finished.

The first thing I did was to measure everything I could. I also took plenty of pictures to record my progress and for later reference. As you work you learn, and as you learn you begin to notice more. It's amazing the things you see in a picture you never noticed previously. The answers to questions are often right before your eyes.

I soon settled into a pattern of researching, reading about other people's rebuilding experiences on the Internet, and planning the work during weekday evenings. Then I spent weekends working on the boat.

I wanted to keep as much of the original design as possible but still incorporate some of the better innovations that have occurred since 1970. A lot of things needed doing that I knew very little about, and that led me to another lesson I learned on my journey: the actual process of restoring the boat will lead you to develop the skills you need then and in the future. I knew very little about boat construction, DC wiring, marine heads, or seacocks, for example, but I learned as things went along.

The solid wood construction of the interior that had been glued and screwed together had all become loose over time. It was easy to tell the difference between the original Hallberg workmanship and that of items added by previous owners. I gained a good appreciation of the boat's heritage. I completely disassembled the interior so I could restore the components and reassemble them like a giant jigsaw puzzle. Remember those pictures? I stripped her down to the bare hull and tore out all the old wiring and plumbing. I cut the rotting cabintop into pieces and removed them but I was careful to keep the overhead beams as templates.

From a bare hull

Once the destructive phase was completed — with everything removed, cleaned, identified, and set aside — I began the reconstructive phase of the journey.

Since I had taken everything down to the bare fiberglass hull, it was easy to epoxy Kevlar cloth to the inside of the hull from the companionway bulkhead forward. I like to think she's now bulletproof.

I changed the original anchor locker design to drain externally, rather than into the bilge. I refinished most of the original bulkheads and re-installed them to the fiberglass tabs on the hull using stainless-steel bolts and 3M 5200 adhesive. A couple of the bulkheads had suffered significant rot and had to be replaced with new plywood. It took some doing, but by sanding with a Scotch-Brite pad between applications of two different colored stains, I was able to stain the new okoume marine plywood to match the original Honduras mahogany bulkheads. (See the article in *Good Old Boat*, March 2008.)

Soon the interior was taking shape again. However, there was a little spongy spot on the foredeck. I thought that it might be separation between the Divinycell foam core and the upper layer of fiberglass. I was originally going to inject thickened epoxy into the deck but thought better of it. Instead, I cut out a piece of the upper layer to inspect it. The core was sopping wet! I wound up cutting away the entire upper deck surface to expose wet core. A previous owner had removed the original teak decking without sealing the screw holes. He just painted over them with a thick paint with a non-skid additive. I ordered core material from the local boat store and learned about re-decking a sailboat.

I reconstructed the new cabintop by measuring the pieces of the original and using the existing fiberglass mounting flange on the deck. I laminated the beams out of ¾-inch plywood and encased them in fiberglass. I covered the top with two layers of ⅜-inch plywood and four layers of fiberglass cloth.

Now it was time for painting. Boy, do those small imperfections ever stand out when you put glossy paint on them. Sand and paint, putty, sand and paint. Repeat. However, this is what really makes or breaks your rebuild. Nothing says "I did

The Mistral was built with a wooden trunk cabin, and Stephen rebuilt it, at left. He kept the original beams to use as patterns for the new ones. Stephen also refinished the joiner work, at right, and made new parts as needed. His mother was his inspiration, so he named the boat for her, below.

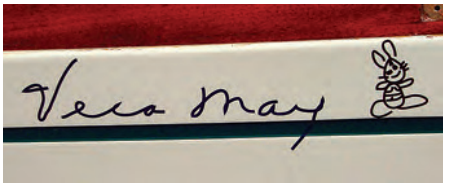
it myself" like a poor paint job! Take your time, do the preparation work, and use a number of thin coats. The modern paints help a lot too. Get the good stuff!

Lessons for life

The woodwork continued as I rebuilt the cockpit coamings and added new toerails. (See the article in *Good Old Boat*, March 2011.) It seems like a lot of work and maybe it was, but I found it very enjoyable. I was fulfilling a dream, it was what I wanted to do, and it was a creative release. I began to see this project as a culmination of skills I had gathered previously in life. Thoughts of my father showing me how to fix things and many of my mother's life lessons came to mind. I remembered her saying, "Stephen, we can accomplish almost anything in life if we just put our minds to it." At that moment, I decided to name the boat after her. She would be the *Vera May*.

I told myself (and talking to yourself will become a habit if you restore a good old boat) that, if the cabintop came out looking halfway decent, I would spend the extra money and apply a teak or synthetic teak deck, rather than painting it with a non-skid coating. I chose Tek-Dek and was glad I did. It was easy to work with, simple to apply (kind of like arts and crafts meets boat restoration), feels good underfoot, and looks great.

I tried to keep the monthly budget down to about $500 for the first two years. However, in the third year it was closer to $750 and even in the range of



$1,000 as I was finishing things up in the fourth year. Throughout this process, however, I had a great time researching the products or systems I would use in the restoration. I even enjoyed having the local chandlers order special things for me. That way I got the pleasure of buying them several times (first, when I selected them from the catalog or Internet; second, when I ordered them at the store; and third, when they came in and I paid for them. Nor can I overlook the pleasure when they were installed and when I got to use them). Another lesson I learned was to purchase the higher-quality products. I tried used parts from eBay, but soon realized you get what you pay for.

I rewired the whole boat with modern LED lighting, circuit breakers, and localized fuse boxes. I changed all the through-hulls to bronze seacocks. (See the article in *Good Old Boat*,

November 2009). I redid the plumbing and scuppers system and installed a new Volvo Penta diesel engine.

I finished off the underside of the cabintop by insulating it with two layers of Styrofoam. The first layer added thickness and helped hide the electrical wires. I bonded the second layer with Sunbrella to create an attractive surface.

Looking back on this whole journey, I am struck by the fact that after 54 years of messing things up, I seem to have finally mastered the fine art of leaving well enough alone. Oh yes, there were many times early in the process that I just couldn't resist adding a little more paint so that it would run, used too much sealant, or worked a little too late and then sat on the cabintop I had just fiberglassed. But lately, I've been able to walk away after hearing that little voice say, "that's well enough," and enjoy coming back to it later.

Rewards

Finally, though, after four years of restoration, that "someday" came, and the *Vera May* was ready to be launched. Part of me didn't want the journey to end, but another part of me couldn't wait to sail her. Restoring a good old boat is a rewarding experience. You will discover many things about yourself and your boat that can only be learned by doing. I thoroughly enjoyed the journey as much as I am enjoying the initial destination. Retirement is still a few years away, but I'm well on my way to realizing a dream. Thanks, Mom.

Stephen Thompson has been helping his dock neighbors with projects; see page 22.

By the time he was done, Stephen had pretty much rebuilt the entire deck and cockpit, at left. He rewarded himself by cladding the deck with Tek-Dek, at right, so it looks much like it did when the boat left the builder's yard. Of course, the real reward was to be able to sail the *Vera May*, top.

Transforming *the* Yard and Bay Boat

There's nothing that patience, skill, parts, and plenty of money can't fix

by Fred Siesseger

I HAVE THREE LINGERING IMAGES OF *Kalypso*: first, lying idyllically for sale at the end of a private pier on the beautiful upper reaches of St. Leonard Creek, Maryland, almost two years ago; second, sitting stripped bare on blocks with improvised plywood hatches on a cold March morning a year later; and third, entering her slip in Solomons Island on the Chesapeake Bay this fall, looking and sailing better than when she was launched in 1967.

I should have known there would be a lot to learn when I asked the previous owner of the Morgan 34 that first day about the unusual spelling of *Kalypso* on the transom. With humor, he replied that "k" substitutes for "c" in the Greek alphabet. With hindsight I know that "k" is no substitute for "c" in the English alphabet, particularly for words such as "cash" and "calamity" when rebuilding a boat launched more than half a human life ago. Unlike humans, however, old fiberglass boats can be returned to youth by a highly skilled plastic surgeon, plentiful parts, and a parting pocketbook.

First sighting

Her lines are so classically beautiful that I have now learned to expect a thumbs-up sign from other sailors upon entering a new harbor. Her previous owner advertised correctly that she was often complimented by Hinckley owners. In my mind now, comparisons fall short. Charley Morgan (see profile in March 2005 issue) was already a premier designer/builder when the Morgan 34 was conceived in the early Vietnam War era, just before his America's Cup forays. I marveled at *Kalypso's* transom overhang, teak toerail, and solid shallow-draft hull, all of which are far removed from the efficient layout, spade keel, and thin test-tank hulls of today. I admit that I wasn't in a mood to look closely for furrows or flaws in the old lady. This beauty was best courted in dim light. I was enamored and planned my proposal. I asked myself, "What is sailing about, after all?"

My proposal was made shortly after obtaining an objective opinion one cold January morning. A leading surveyor from Annapolis drove the hour to Solomons, and after a few expensive minutes said, "The hull looks good, and the deck is dry."

Should I admit it? That was enough for me. I decided not to watch the rest of the six-hour survey and didn't read his subsequent report flogging her flaws until after *Kalypso* was mine.

It would have been easy to walk into a full-service marina, hand them the survey, and say, "Go to it," for the going rate of $55 to 75 per hour. At that price, however, I could have bought two new boats by the time they'd worked their way through *Kalypso's* long list of problems. It seemed to me that a 35-year-old boat deserved a more personal (and cheaper) restoration, even if its new owner had little knowledge of what to do.

The best solution

It took me a while to find the best solution: Bruce Gay, of the Long Beach Boat Company, in St. Leonard, Mary-

***Kalypso*, a Morgan 34, above and at right, following her transformation at the hands of Fred Siesseger, the apprentice and owner, and Bruce Gay, the boatyard owner and voice of experience.**

land. With more than 30 years' experience in all phases of boat repair, Bruce has established a niche business, working personally with owners of all skill levels who are willing to put some elbow grease into rebuilding their older boats. I wanted to learn about my boat and help in making the repairs in addition to cutting expenses. He had the expertise. We agreed on a program for replacing all the hardware and rigging, painting the deck and hull, and making major and minor mechanical improvements. It seemed a good deal. Eventually, I was proved right, although I had a few doubts along the way.

The low point came a few months later. In the Ides of March when *Kalypso* was a shell and the weather was from hell, I threatened myself with buying a gallon of stinkpot fuel, a cigarette lighter, and…you guessed it! By then, we had removed all the old hardware and filled the holes temporarily with silicone, cut plywood covers for the hatches (which Bruce was refinishing in his shop), and sanded most of the deck when the fundamental question hit me: "Why didn't I just buy a new boat at the Annapolis Boat Show last fall?" My funk was fomented after some vandals trashed *Kalypso*. They pried off the makeshift plywood companionway, stole some tools, and fired off the extinguishers in her saloon. Then I had to clean up the additional powder from the police fingerprint expert.

My deal with Bruce was that he would undertake the project personally. While I would assist with the unskilled work (of which there was a lot), the timetable depended on Bruce's schedule. I had to accept the fact that he had other customers. And if he got sick, bitten by a snake, or impaled on a nail (all of which happened), the project would be put on hold. Add bad weather (major snowstorms, 28 straight days of spring rain, and Hurricane Isabel), and a lot of time sailed by with little progress.

"I learned quickly that fixing a known problem on an old boat almost inevitably leads to finding an unknown one."

Bruce Gay peels fiberglass in his shop, at top. The lowest ebb of Fred's refit, center. This is the time during which a boatowner should refrain from playing with fire (Bruce briefly considered gasoline and a cigarette lighter). The finished cockpit, at bottom. These days *Kalypso* turns heads wherever she goes. This beautiful classic won Fred over because he chose *not* to look her over very carefully in the beginning.

Chain of problems

I learned quickly that fixing a known problem on an old boat almost inevitably leads to finding an unknown one. This is not all bad; it's better to know your problems than not. But it adds time and expense. One project, for example, was to replace the Cutless bearing. In the process we found that the shaft was scored and had to be replaced. The rudder had to be removed to get the shaft out, and we then found that the bolts holding up the rudder had to be replaced (a specialty machine-shop job). This also involved removing the steering quadrant and then finding that the cable nuts were corroded. Since the shaft stuffing box needed service, I decided that I might as well buy a new dripless stuffing box. What started out as a small $250 sub-project ended up costing in excess of $2,500 to fix related problems. Toward the end, the standing joke was that *Kalypso* should be renamed the Yard and Bay Boat.

During this period I could always brighten my mood by shopping. The sailboat parts business was floating high in dot-com waters and good deals were just a keystroke away. Almost everything for *Kalypso's* refit (except the paint, some cabinetry, sail work, new canvas, and cushions) was purchased on the Internet. I saved thousands of dollars buying and installing equipment, as compared with retail vendor and marina prices. Rigging, lifelines, electronics, plumbing, electrical equipment, and innumerable other items came from SailNet.com. Concentrating your purchasing power yields even bigger discounts; I could hardly wait to get my rebate certificates in the mail each week. A lot of practical advice on what to buy came by asking dumb questions in the chat rooms hosted by SailNet.

Bargains on sale

Hardware and fasteners were replaced at Bosunsupplies.com. Various supplies were purchased on sale from Westmarine.com and Boatus.com. Specialty websites also came in handy for items such as a helm seat from Teakflex.com. Teak door louvers were purchased directly from Thailand at Thaiteakmarine.com. These merchants were all knowledgeable, efficient, and friendly. I also scoured eBay for bargains. My final winning bid was a five-inch fossil shark tooth from the ancient Chesapeake to serve as the boat's talisman.

Of course, if I had sent *Kalypso* to one of the full-service marinas last fall, the work probably would have been finished by spring, and my story would be unremarkable. My only surprise might have been the size of the bill and, probably, I wouldn't even know what was meant by "replace the Cutless bearing, refurbish the steering quadrant, and so on."

I still spent more than twice as much on the rebuild as I did on *Kalypso's* initial purchase. Having been involved every day of the rebuild, however, I am familiar with every moving part in the bilge. I know how my new seacocks and plumbing work. I know where the new electrical wires lead, and what fuses they take. I have confidence in my new portlights, knowing how they were installed. Since all the hardware is new, I have no leaks.

Granted, I still might not be able to fix some of this equipment if it broke at sea, but at least I could identify the problem. This knowledge could be invaluable some night in a storm. Moreover, working personally with an experienced and talented professional like Bruce yielded innumerable tips on maintenance which will save me many dollars in years ahead and add to my boating enjoyment. Most important, I have the satisfaction of knowing that I contributed to the restoration of my boat and met many interesting people along the way.

Rewarding process

If I ever need more convincing that the process of restoring an old boat is rewarding, I will think of the sailboat next to *Kalypso* in the yard all those months. It was an unfinished 40-footer on a custom steel stand. The owner bought the boat on his honeymoon in London in the early 1970s, and it was shipped to Baltimore on a freighter with the newlyweds. They had high hopes of finishing construction and sailing to New Zealand. Until the mid-1980s, he and his wife worked on the boat together for a few weeks each summer. Then they moved away, and jobs interfered with progress. But they held onto the dream. When the boatyard closed, they moved her to the present location in Maryland and continued to make improvements. He told me with great enthusiasm about all the projects they still plan. It is now more than 30 years later, the boat has never been in the water, and this couple is still happily married. He now looks forward to his grandchildren finishing the work and sailing to New Zealand.

Kalypso's refit included interior work as well: teak-and-holly sole, repainted bulkheads, electrical updates, complete revision of the galley, hot water heater, interior cushions, portlights and curtains, and much more that doesn't show (hoses, seacocks, wires, batteries…).

What is sailing about, after all?

A passion for boats

Bruce Gay began his 30-year career in the marine industry when his stepfather, then the captain of the presidential yacht, *Sequoia*, arranged his first job: working in the Anacostia Boat Yard in downtown Washington, D.C. Watching disgruntled commuters creeping and honking on the bridge near the marina, Bruce concluded, as a young man, that the boatyard was preferable to the business office. While learning the wide range of skills required of a yard professional, he also worked stints in marine salvage and boat delivery.

In the mid-1980s Bruce moved to the Flag Harbor Marina on the Chesapeake's western shore. A couple of years ago he started his own business, the Long Beach Boat Company, in St. Leonard, Md. Bruce likes to work on old boats and encourages their owners to get involved. One of his projects has been the restoration of a 40-foot wooden sailboat built in 1960, working side by side with the owner. He also enjoys working on old engines and always has an Atomic 4 or two on his shop bench. Bruce says, "There is often a lot of work in refit projects which doesn't require my experience or pay scale. So if the owner wants to help, some money can be saved." Asked if he thinks his business model would succeed in other areas of the country, he says, "I think so, but some marinas have restrictions on what boatowners can do. Also, the insurance coverage in my business is not cheap."

Bruce's passion for boats doesn't end with the workday. One of his evening hobbies is building vintage model boats to the sound of classical music in the loft above his shop. When asked why, he says simply, "I don't watch much television, except the History Channel."

Bruce can be reached by calling 410-586-8255.

A Cal 34's second life

Her past glory inspired a restoration

BY MARY KINNUNEN

The Cal 34 *Vagus* was once a star. That was in the mid-1970s to the mid-'90s, when Lake Michigan's Bay of Green Bay was busy with races that *Vagus* won with seamanship and style. Then, in the late '90s, she was donated to the Sea Scouts who eventually put her on the market. Through sun and snow, she sat on her cradle, uncovered, until 2010, when Joe Shepro paid her a visit. "I knew her to be a great performer and I loved her traditional lines," he says, speaking from the perspective of someone who'd sailed against her.

Joe learned to sail in the mid-'70s when stationed at the Coast Guard's Loran station in South Caicos. There, he soaked up the Bahamas sun while restoring a Haitian sloop that had run aground. After returning stateside, he got out of sailing and worked for years at cabinetmaking, including a stint doing interior trim at Gulfstar Yachts in Florida. By the early '90s, Joe was back in Michigan and back on the bay, where he match-raced his yellow 5.5-Meter, *Chiquita*, against his teenage son Joey, who sailed on a friend's 5.5-Meter until purchasing his own 5.5-Meter, *Flash*.

Joe was racing a Catalina 25 in 2010 and initially thought that the on-the-hard Cal 34 hull #152 wasn't worth fixing up. "That was until my third visit . . ." he says with a competitor's gleam in his eye. "It has a lead keel and the hull had been stripped and barrier-coated to a very nice racing finish."

Designed by Bill Lapworth and produced by Jensen Marine from 1968 to 1975, the Cal 34 has a 33-foot 3-inch overall length, a 10-foot beam, a fin keel that draws 5 feet, and it displaces 9,500 pounds. It has aft, midship, and forward berths, a 30-horsepower Atomic 4, and is steered with a tiller.

Memories and hope

While specifications are informative, Joe's earlier connection to the Cal 34 was a strong pull. He had always admired it, so he felt that, at $5,000, it was a very good deal despite the dirty standing water, neglect, and unknowns. Did he have it surveyed? "No. I had hope," he says, "and the main and genoa were relatively unused."

Joe built a temporary structure alongside his house. To get the Cal 34 there from the boatyard, he used the trailer he and Joey had once built with the thought that, one day, they'd find a hurricane-damaged boat to restore. About the outset of the restoration, Joe says, "I had no plan, but I wanted a seaworthy boat that would sail well and look great."

With winter settling in on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Joe sat in the cockpit and contemplated how to achieve those admirable goals. Key issues were the discovery of rotten spreaders, a forestay worn to half its diameter, and soft plywood deck core.

Joe's woodworking skills proved valuable for the relatively simple task of making new spreaders, for which he chose white oak. The soft core and delamination was more involved and

Underdog **races frequently on Michigan's Bay of Green Bay, at top. Here, she's flying a spinnaker that dates to her days as** ***Vagus*****.**

> “Joe, a fan of the Underdog cartoon series, knew the Cal 34 could once again be top dog.”

When Joe acquired *Underdog*, her interior was shabby, above left, so he applied his woodworking skills, above right. The result was a galley with beautifully refinished trim and a new countertop, at left. The original upholstery works well with the new laminate tabletop, lower left.

required a lot more than “just” repairing the deck core. Other related issues had to be dealt with also as the shrouds had been tightened to the point of pulling the chainplates through the fiberglass. He removed the galley and took out two big aluminum plates that had been added to beef up the hull, then he replaced the rotten deck core.

He stripped loose paint in the cabin, sanded tired varnish, and tossed out old electronics. He stored removable furniture parts in the basement where he sanded them. But he varnished those pieces in the dining room.

As well as turning a blind eye to the workshop in the dining room, Joe’s wife, Kathy, pitched in by crawling into tight spaces to help install oversize stanchion backing plates, painting the bilge, sewing new curtains, fashioning new lampshades, and restitching the genoa that had been cut down to fit the new roller furler.

A growing commitment

Once the boat was looking rough and bare, the realization that hits many good old boaters struck Joe: “This was a bigger project than expected.” Eventually, however, the re-varnished woodwork was reinstalled in the galley, the icebox was converted to dry storage, and the tabletop and 4-foot countertop were replaced. The alcohol stove had been removed sometime in the past. This left space for a fridge. Joe cooks aboard with a two-burner propane stove and a microwave.

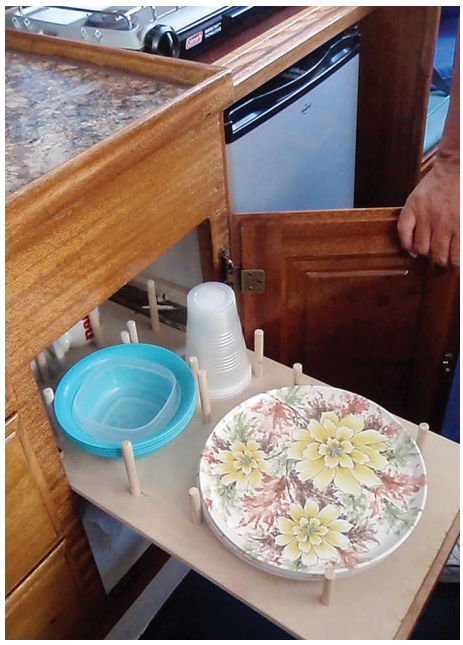
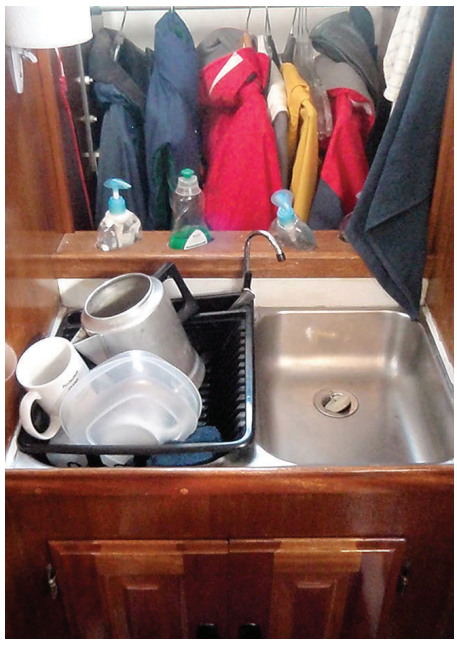
Then there was the head with a questionable macerator and toilet. Joe’s solution was to replace the dubious fixture with the Porta Potti from his van.

Topsides, Joe removed all the hardware and windows prior to repainting the deck. He updated most of the deck hardware but the original genoa and spinnaker winches remain.

“Yeah,” Joe says, “self-tailing is pretty cool, but I’ll stick with the bronze — and someday may polish them up.”

New hardware includes rope clutches, cam cleats, and blocks and the re-sized genoa now has a luff tape to work with the new Seldén Furlex furler. Other improvements are the addition of a Raymarine A70 chart plotter and tiller pilot, a depth finder, a radio, and two compasses.

Once the boat was repainted, it was time to add the name. Joe, a fan of the Underdog cartoon series, knew

Joe fitted rope clutches and led the sail control lines back to the cockpit, at left, to make singlehanded sailing easier, but he kept the original winches. He made secure storage for dinnerware, center, and made more galley counter area by fitting a double sink in the head vanity, at right.

the Cal 34 could once again be top dog. "The name seemed to fit the boat perfectly," he says. Voilà! *Underdog* it would be. He went on to name the dinghy *Sweet Polly Purebred*.

With the boat once again afloat and in fine form, Joe says, "This Cal 34 was a racer/cruiser, but now she's more of a cruiser." Joe's son Nathan, a Ford mechanic, keeps the Atomic 4 running smoothly. On battery power, the refrigerator keeps food and drink cold for two to three days. That's about the limit of the Porta Potti as well, which Joe says he has emptied in some tony yacht clubs up and down Lake Michigan's shore.

A presence on the lake

Sailed by a crew of family and friends, these days *Underdog* rounds the buoys in local races and has ventured south to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to take part in the Queen's Cup Race.

Describing *Underdog*'s performance under sail, Joe calls her "an incredible sailing boat — her meat and potatoes is reaching, and she handles 20-knot air beautifully." This was proven on a recent 55-nautical-mile night race north to Fayette when, in 15- to 20-knot winds under a full main and genoa, *Underdog* had an average speed of 6.6 knots and topped out at 8 knots.

From her curtains to her cam cleats, *Underdog* impresses onboard guests with Joe and Kathy's work. The layout also gets positive reactions as the cockpit is roomy and the saloon feels airy rather than cramped.

As for Joe's hope of rescuing a boat someday, he now skippers a boat he brought back: a seaworthy Cal 34 that sails well and looks great. Along with the $5,000 purchase price, he added another $5,000 of electronics, hardware, and materials.

Joe didn't tally the labor hours he and Kathy put in during those five months *Underdog* was in the shed, but he's not concerned with that. When presented with the question, "What was the most surprising thing you learned about refitting a boat?" Joe replies, "How much I enjoyed it."

Remembrance

Sailing is bittersweet for Joe, however. In 1995, 17-year-old Joey, the avid racer who loved being on the water, sailed his last season before dying of an aggressive form of cancer. Now, the Marinette-Menominee (M&M) Yacht Club sponsors the Joey Shepro Double Handed Memorial Race, an annual event that raises money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Joey has another connection to the water: even though his 5.5-Meter sails no more, Joe used the mahogany deadwood from *Flash*'s keel to make *Underdog*'s tiller. In his home workshop, Joe planed, sanded, and finished it into a beautiful new form.


The dining room became a workshop where Joe varnished cabinets and Kathy sewed boat curtains (and sails!), at left. Joe and Kathy relax in *Underdog*'s spacious cockpit, at right.

Mary Kinnunen is a writer and sailor who lives in Wisconsin.

Cozying up your cabin

Allied Seabreeze 35 refit: Make your refuge from the elements a place in which you're happy to spend time

by Art Hall

Your boat's cabin is your refuge from the elements. It's where you spend the quiet evenings relaxing with a favorite book or waiting out the fog with game after game of cribbage. Many good old boats are going strong, and many will be taking us wonderful places for years to come, but their interiors are often looking the worse for wear. While the obvious thing to spruce up the old girl is a slick and expensive topside paint job, it seems a lot of boats never really get the same degree of attention down below. Updating the interior is something we do for ourselves, not just for dockside admirers. Modern laminates are a viable, inexpensive solution for upgrading the dark surfaces of older fiberglass boats.

Step below aboard the average production yacht built in the early era of fiberglass. It is evident that builders were conscious of a certain chilling quality of fiberglass. Their solution was to revert to an age-old material that dependably conveys a feeling of warmth: wood. They built a boat from test-tube materials and then turned to mother nature to hide their handiwork. Because they loved their modern materials, they primarily used laminates with a wood-grain appearance. Formica is one brand of decorative high-press laminate, which, like Kleenex, has become a generic term.

Interestingly enough, Formica largely comes from trees. It's basically made of paper and a binder with a top layer of decorative plastic, all laminated together under high pressure. It's relatively cheap, not terribly difficult to work with, easy to care for, and so durable it seems to last forever. However, what looked good to builders in the 1960s unfortunately doesn't necessarily thrill us today. If some manager was partial to pea green, you're stuck with pea green. The most common pattern you'll find is an attempt at teakwood grain, which turns many cabins dark and gloomy.

A few years ago, we purchased an aging Allied Seabreeze 35. Naturally, we consider her one of the best looking boats of her size and type. She's got just the right bounce to her sheer, long overhangs, low freeboard, and a traditional transom with just the right amount of rake to it. *(More on this Allied Seabreeze in September 2000, when she will be our feature boat. -eds.)*

We're delighted with her outward appearance, but down below she was a cave. Virtually all the bulkheads and cabinetry were covered with teak-grained laminate. The table and countertops were a light, textured pattern and actually quite attractive but, like the other surfaces, were showing the wear and tear of 35 years' use. While the laminates may have looked passable when new, after three decades they were decidedly faded. They were also riddled with screw holes from every gadget marketed to the boating public. (Why is it that so many old boats seem to have at least one of those tacky plaques reminding us about the ineptitude of the skipper?) To compound the problem, the solid teak trim had never seen a varnish brush and was blackened with mold spores. Drastic measures were necessary to brighten things up.

One relatively simple approach that has gained popularity is to properly prepare the surface and paint it with a high-quality polyurethane paint. This is fine if you have the patience to cut in many linear feet of trim. The newly

painted surface is still subject to nicks and dings, and you'll likely feel the need to re-paint in a few years. I figured that since the original laminate has lasted more than 30 years and was still firmly bonded, I should make use of it again. My objective was to overlay the original plastic laminates by bonding the new material directly over the old.

The tools required are neither too exotic nor too expensive. If you are handy enough to consider this approach, you probably have the usual collection of shop tools. The only special tools I purchased for the task were a high-speed laminate trimmer, laminate shears, and a set of Forstner drill bits. The high-speed trimmer and shears are available at your local Home Depot. This is also a source for the laminate, and they usually will have a modest selection of popular colors and patterns in stock. Generally speaking, you will have to make a special order of your selection. The Forstner drill bits are unique in that they produce a very accurate, flat-bottomed hole. They are available at good suppliers such as the Woodworkers Warehouse. (It is safer to order them through the mail, as I have discovered a personal visit can be a very expensive experience.)

To get a professional appearance, it is necessary to remove the existing trim. This allows you to cut the new laminate pieces a bit less than perfectly, so the rough edge will be covered when the trim goes back. Each builder installed trim in his own unique way, and its removal is perhaps the trickiest part of the job. Trim pieces can often be removed by carefully getting a wide woodworking chisel under an edge and slowly working it loose. If it was installed with brads, you may want to drive them through the trim with a small-diameter nail set and then fill the hole afterwards.

If you find it has been applied with a tenacious glue, you may want to rethink the project. There will undoubtedly be some pieces that are screwed in with the screw holes bunged with a wood plug. The simplest way to remove the bungs without destroying things is to select the proper diameter Forstner drill bit, usually 3/8 inch, center it carefully, and drill out the bung down to the screw head. You may have to clean the old glue out of the screw slot with a fine pick to back out the screw. This method also prepares the hole for the new bung. It's entirely likely that you will break or damage several pieces, so be prepared to make a few replacements or glue up the remains with epoxy. Practice in an inconspicuous place on a piece that will be easy to replicate.

While the trim is off, take the time to sand and refinish it. My home has the good fortune to have the nearly perfect varnish shop. It is well lit and clean. It has doors to shut out airborne dust and a large, flat work surface. This same space reverts to its original function as a dining room for dinner parties and holidays. (I must add that my wife has attained sainthood status.)

A good brand of polyurethane varnish will stand up well for many years. Plan on a minimum of four coats, preferably six, to obtain a silky smooth finish that wipes down for easy maintenance. Gloss is traditional, but a satin finish is softer and more forgiving. (Many builders sold their boats with bare wood inside and out under the premise that teak doesn't require any finish. The truth is that finishing woodwork properly is very labor-intensive and would have driven up the cost of the new boat significantly.)

Cutting and fitting the laminate is done with laminate shears. These specialized scissors actually remove a 3/16-inch kerf of material so the sheet of laminate doesn't tend to curl, much as sheet metal will. I suggest you practice with smaller pieces and work up to the more difficult ones as you develop your technique. Always dry-fit the piece before gluing. Large complex areas such as bulkheads are best laid out with a full-sized paper pattern.

The old laminate requires a little simple preparation. Once the trim is off, wash down the surface liberally with alcohol. This will remove waxes and oils that may be present. Then simply rough it up with some very coarse sandpaper to give it a bit of "tooth." Make sure that any old screws are removed. Run your hand over the area, feel for high spots, and make sure they are sanded off. Old holes, up to about one inch in diameter, need not be filled. The new laminate needs no special preparation other than assurance that no debris is on the surface to be glued. Any chips that get left behind in the glue joint can produce a slightly raised area.

The most common adhesive used for laminating is contact cement. I strongly urge anyone to use the new water-soluble neoprene-based products. They are much safer and easier to use and have the same bonding abilities as the traditional cement. If you have never worked with contact cement before, follow directions and keep in mind that you only get one chance to position the material. The laminate cannot be removed or shifted once it is applied. It's a good idea to get a helping hand to position the large pieces. After you have it in place, you can tap it down with a hammer and a piece of soft wood to make a complete bond. (The pros use a J-roller, but buy one only if you're a tool junkie. OK, I confess . . . I have one.)

Do not try to fit the material around openings such as drawers and lockers. Simply pretend they aren't there. After the laminate is in place, trim these openings with the high-speed trimmer. Wherever you have used the trimmer, whether on an outside edge or an opening, it is wise to soften the machined edge with a file or 120-grit sandpaper. The edge left by the trimmer is very sharp. Also check to see that the new laminate edge is flush with the old. Any material standing proud will be prone to catching and damage.

This is not a task that can be tackled in a couple of weekends. It makes a good off-season project or can be done piecemeal over the span of a few years. If you elect to do it over a period of several years, it's wise to purchase all the laminate stock you

will need, as certain colors and patterns can be discontinued. I chose to work with an almond color. It's been around a long time, it's bright without being stark, and it should be available for the foreseeable future. Styles that have patterns or wood grain must be oriented in a certain direction, causing significant waste.

When it comes time to replace the trim, you will find that it doesn't always fit quite right. This is because the laminate, thin as it is at approximately 1/32 inch, will cause the dimensions of some cabinetry to increase. This sometimes leads to narrow gaps at corners. I have found that by using tinted wood fillers, then varnishing, the small gap can be concealed. Good paint stores have a wide selection of colored fillers, putties, and crayons to choose from. Another source for a wood filler is to simply make a paste out of fine sawdust and your varnish.

This assures a perfect color match but tends to be a little harder to work with. If you drilled out old bungs with the Forstner bit, you can buy new bungs from most marine suppliers. I would suggest you purchase your own bung cutter, also available at Woodworkers Warehouse. (The rest of the world will refer to this as a plug cutter, but aboard a boat it's always referred to as a bung.) The advantage of having your own cutter is that you can match the wood species, grain, and color to match whatever project you're working on.

The Allied Seabreeze is a pedigreed class with renowned sailing qualities. The reputation she enjoys makes her an excellent candidate for the investment of time and money. The interior now has a new and larger feel, it is bright and easy to clean, and it will serve well for many years to come. I'm even looking forward to a day of fog and game after game of cribbage.

Art, a licensed chief engineer of steam and motor vessels of unlimited horsepower, is a lover of CCA-era "project boats." So far a Pearson Triton and an Allied Seabreeze have seen vast improvements with Art's ministerings. He sails coastal Maine with his wife, Sandy, and two daughters.

Scorpio 35 refit

Hard work (plus cash) saves a classic from the scrapheap

by Barry Hammerberg

Strider's clean white deck and the rich red paint job attracted our attention as she floated in her slip at Sugarloaf Marina in Port Colborne, Ontario. She looked new, yet she displayed classic lines. Intrigued, we wandered over to talk to Dave MacMillan, the owner, and learned that she had gone through a major refit.

Dave's brother, Joe, frequently cruised to the marina in Dover, Ontario. As many sailors are, he was interested in orphaned boats, those that were sitting on cradles while others were sailing. Lost souls. He returned often to a flashy red-hulled sailboat that had been sitting in the parking lot for several years. He mentioned to Dave that this could be a very nice project boat; it just needed a little work. As Joe kept an eye on the boat, the price dropped annually from $69,000 through $29,000 to $20,000 (all prices in Canadian dollars). Dave decided to take a look.

He and Joe headed to Dover one rainy day. As they pulled into the yard, Joe pointed out the boat. Even in the rain, the hull glistened, beckoning. She was bright red with a gold stripe accentuating her burgundy cap stripe, a nice paint job. This was not exactly Dave's choice of colors, but she was attractive. He and Joe climbed her ladder. There they found a dirty, spongy deck with areas that flexed to the point that Dave feared falling through. Inside the cabin it was raining just as hard as it was outside; water was dripping from the overhead. The broker agreed that the boat was about a season from becoming a total scrap, yet it appealed to Dave. This roomier 35-foot project boat, when finished, would be larger and more comfortable than his family's Halman 27. All that was needed was a little money and a lot of work.

> "The broker agreed that the boat was about a season from becoming a total scrap, yet it appealed to Dave."

Made an offer

Dave brought his wife, Diane, to look at the boat. After some thought, they made an offer and bought the boat for $12,000, about the cost of the paint job on the hull. They were now the new owners of a Scorpio 35, vintage 1981. It sorely needed attention. Undaunted, Dave figured others had done it, and he could too. He had space in a heated building built for his earth-moving equipment. He had the boat hauled to his shop to begin the restoration.

The first thing on his list of projects

A newly completed *Strider* on facing page, is not to be missed in the middle of the other boats in the Buffalo Yacht Club basin before the Lake Erie Cruising Race.

— before it caved in — was the delaminated balsa core deck. Dave decided to leave the interior in place to support the deck shape while they worked on it. He removed all deck hardware and fittings: cleats, turning blocks, ports, everything. To preserve the original shape of the deck, Dave and Joe cut the outer skin off the deck in sections.

Dave was amazed at how thin the skins were. He later learned the engineering principle of a cored structure that uses thin skins over a lightweight core to increase stiffness without creating excessive weight. As suspected, the core was wet and, in many areas, rotted. Much of it was literally wood pulp that could be cleared away with a putty knife and wire brush. A portable router with a bit set to the thickness of the core cleanly removed the remaining balsa wood.

They set about rebuilding the deck. Section by section, they sanded the inner skin and troweled on a layer of filled epoxy. They pressed new end-grain balsa core in place and vacuum-bagged it using a small medical vacuum pump and clear film. The film allowed them to see the epoxy flow through the core as the vacuum pressed it tightly to the inner skin.

After a section of impregnated core hardened, they sanded it, troweled another layer of filled epoxy over the core, and set the outer deck skin back in place. The vacuum was again applied to clamp the outer skin in place. They repeated this process until the entire deck was re-cored. As they progressed, they filled all the holes in the deck, including the old portholes. They added solid reinforcements where deck hardware would be placed. They also added ABS plastic core for a pair of genoa tracks.

Sanding and priming

Once the deck was structurally sound, Dave and Joe went to work on the boat's appearance. They applied epoxy and fiberglass over the cuts they'd made in the outer skin. Now came what Joe calls the boring part: sanding, applying epoxy primer, and sanding, repeating the steps until the surface was true. Then the deck was sprayed with Awlgrip epoxy primer and sanded to a better-than-factory-smooth finish. They followed this with a spray coat of Griptex mixed with the first coat of Endura two-part polyurethane. A second coat of white Endura sealed the non-skid. The deck looked like it had just been released from a factory mold: fair and high gloss with no holes or cutouts.

During deck reconstruction the cockpit seats were slightly redesigned with rounder edges to make them more crew-friendly. The teak planking on the seats was replaced. The original teak cockpit floor grate also needed sanding and oiling, but it was then reused.

Dave remounted deck hardware in the original locations and added new running lights and genoa tracks. He cut new port openings and installed modern ports. Below the waterline he

Dave MacMillan bonds the deck skins back together, above, after the top skin was vacuum-bagged in place. Other views at right from top: the balsa core is vacuum-bagged; Diane MacMillan wet-sands the deck between layers of paint; the bow during painting; the cockpit at a similar stage; and Diane does finish work on the cherry tongue-and-groove planking which lines the hull.

Images at left: the completed cockpit and the completed deck. In the center: the completely rebuilt head and the power panels. At right: the saloon and the galley.

and Joe stripped the hull of all paint and gelcoat. Dave located templates and faired the keel. This task was complicated by the fact that previous owners had bought a shoal-draft kit, cutting the draft to 5 feet 4 inches and crudely adding a half bullet to each side of the base of the keel. Dave and Joe faired these to create a smoother transition. They applied Interlux Interprotect 2000 barrier coating below the waterline, following the manufacturer's instructions. Interlux VC-17 provided the final finish.

Interior shambles

A year into the project, the exterior of the boat looked great, but the interior was still in shambles. It would have to be rebuilt. The layout didn't suit Dave's needs, so he gutted the interior during the second winter of the project. Only the head remained in place, sans walls. He discarded all plumbing and wiring. He checked the hull's balsa core and found it to be OK except for some damage around the through-hulls. These areas were cut away and rebuilt to eliminate future seepage.

Dave redesigned the interior with two aft quarter berths, a port galley, opposed saloon benches, and V-berth. He created a navigation station starboard aft of the head with cabinets to accept the electrical panels and electronics. It looked good on paper. Now it was time to build it.

He installed new cherry bulkheads, defining the cabin layout. He built cabinetry using cherry wood that was tabbed in place. Then he bonded ¼ x 2½-inch strips of plywood to the hull on 12-inch centers. He attached tongue-and-groove cherry planking with polyurethane glue and brads, effectively lining the hull — even behind the cabinets.

Dave planed and grooved all the cherry planking from rough kiln-dried stock. He ran out of planking and had to set up to make more, making a mental note to overstock next time he calculated a project. Because he only needed to make one or two of everything, he felt he never got efficient at making any single component. The wood was finished with satin-rubbed-effect varnish to naturally darken the wood to a rich warm look.

Cherry battens

He bonded wood strips to the overhead to accept screws for mounting off-white vinyl wrapped panels. Cherry battens held the overhead panels in place. The results looked professional.

During the construction of the interior, Dave installed 12v DC and 110v AC wiring and led this to the new panel locations. The electrical cabinets were built with key locks that opened to reveal wiring and junctions, all arranged for easy service. The interior is stunning.

The engine had low hours and was in good condition. A new, 2-bladed folding propeller finished the propulsion system. Dave was able to clean and reuse all the original tanks. Fortunately, the sails were good enough for a season, allowing him to select a new inventory based on future needs after sailing the boat for a season. The current sail inventory is a 2004 main; a light and heavy #1, circa 1985; a Mylar #2, circa 1995; a #3, circa 1990; a cruising spinnaker; and two symmetrical spinnakers.

> **In these races *Strider* was a real eye-catcher. She is essentially a new boat with classic looks.**

Twenty months passed before this awesome project was completed. The boat was christened *Strider* and launched July 2, 2003. Unfortunately, Dave's work prevented his attendance at the launching, but Joe and his wife, Linda, helped the yard step the mast. Joe delivered *Strider* to Dave's slip without incident.

When I asked if he had ever looked at the mess and wondered what he'd gotten into, Dave replied that he'd enjoyed every step because it was a learning process and a challenge. The results, he said, were always gratifying. He had Joe, Diane, and another friend, John, to help him throughout the project.

Longer than expected

"What was the worst part?" I wondered. "The last few weeks were hard because every step seemed to take longer than expected," he told me. Joe noted that sanding was the part he liked least. Looking back later, Dave said he'd figured the project wrong. He had expected a lot of work and a little money. Well, he'd missed the target on the cost. He figured he had about $30,000 Canadian in the refit. Based on the results, it's still a bargain.

Strider races out of Port Colborne, Ontario, in the Wednesday-evening fleet. We caught up with Dave and had the chance to take photos during the 2005 Lake Erie Interclub Race series (three distance races between the U.S. and Canada and two triangular courses). In these races *Strider* was a real eye-catcher. She is essentially a new boat with classic looks.

When asked why he chose the name *Strider*, Dave replied, "When I read *Lord of the Rings*, I felt Strider was a cool character: a ranger who quickly and quietly roamed the kingdoms." To Dave, that's what sailing is all about: quietly and quickly roaming the seas. That's exactly what *Strider* does.

Scorpio 35

Builder: Scorpio Yachts
Located: London, Ontario
Year: 1981
LOA: 35 feet 0 inches
LWL: 26 feet 6 inches
Draft: Was 5 feet 10 inches; Mars Metal bulb kit shortened to 5 feet 4 inches
Beam: 11 feet 2 inches
Engine: Yanmar 2GM (15-hp)
Tankage: 15 gallons fuel, 30 gallons water, 30 gallons holding tank
Construction: Balsa-cored fiberglass deck and hull

Payoff time after all the hard work: *Strider* sails beautifully. *Strider's* chute is up for a light-air Tuesday-night race.

ATELIER.

. . . is an ongoing work of artists

BY ZORA AIKEN

Sailors may have many reasons to switch boats, but upsize and update would probably apply to most. Our boat-buying history didn't follow an orderly path. Having bought two new cruising sailboats — the first a 28-footer and the second a 27 — we first downsized and later backdated by choosing a used 35-footer as number three. Although this third boat seemed well-suited to our cruising plans, we soon exchanged her for another used and older still 35.

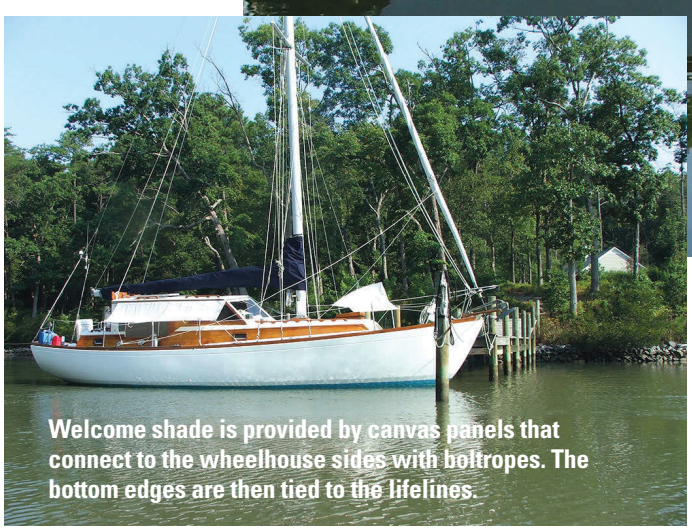
That one, finally, was the keeper. The year was 1978, the boat a 1963 Chris-Craft Sail Yacht (or Motor Sailer, depending on which brochure was given to the original owner). In 2013, at age 50, she became our official antique.

When your broker is a friend, you trust his hunches. About this boat, he'd said, "It's a good deal. If you find you don't like it, you can always slap on some paint and sell it. Then you can start looking again."

That plan never appealed to the person who, at the time, was doing the paint-slapping, but once we got past the apparent cosmetic drawbacks, the boat did have a lot of appeal.

She had a top designer in Olin Stephens and an experienced builder in Chris-Craft (although we cannot count the number of times we've heard, "I didn't know Chris-Craft made *sailboats!*"). Once the brightwork on her mahogany cabin was restored, she'd look like a woodie, but her hull was fiberglass and built to early "tank" standards. (A later version of the Sail Yacht 35, the Chris-Craft Caribbean, is all fiberglass.)

Perhaps most important from our perspective was the center-cockpit design. With the well-separated two-cabin layout this creates and a phenomenal



Welcome shade is provided by canvas panels that connect to the wheelhouse sides with boltropes. The bottom edges are then tied to the lifelines.

A split backstay allows the dinghy to be carried on top of the aft cabin. David hoists the dinghy over the transom, at left, then secures the dinghy to a sturdy cleat on the boom gallows, at right. The two backstays prevent the dinghy from shifting side-to-side when sailing.

Atelier **at anchor in a quiet cove off the Rappahannock River in Virginia.**

amount of storage space, this boat was ideal for two workaboards. Besides all that, she was the perfect fit, in size and character, for the brass trawler lamp we'd purchased years before, when our cruising boat was an 18-foot daysailer we took camp-cruising on Lake Michigan.

The transom view shows the split backstays. The wheelhouse provides a convenient place to carry propane tanks.

A surprisingly apt name

Most cruising sailors modify their boat to suit their travel plans and liveaboard style. We added one more variable with our desire for separate work spaces. When we left Chicago in the fall of 1973 for a year that became a lifestyle, we quit the busyness of commercial art studios, but we didn't quit the business of graphic design, illustration, and copywriting. We continued to do some of that work as we traveled. We both paint, too, not just bulkheads and boat bottoms but hang-on-the-wall pictures. That was the reason for the boat's name. We understood *Atelier* to mean "artist's studio," until we met a Frenchman who wondered why we wanted to call our boat "workshop." In any case, we soon added editorial writing to the workshop's mix.

We'd already completed two Great Loop trips, but ours followed the Mississippi all the way to New Orleans, as the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway was not yet open. With the Keys as a home base for a few winters, we'd meandered around and across Florida. Wherever we would cruise next, we planned to travel from anchorage to anchorage with few marina stops, so dockside power would be available only occasionally. Solar panels were a great idea later, but initially, we removed all unnecessary items that required excess electricity. We weren't specifically trying to embrace a minimalist philosophy, but we did believe in the familiar, if pessimistic premise, that if something could go wrong, it would. Removing the causes of potential problems was the simplest way to avoid tempting Murphy.

We didn't write a restoration or refit plan, but the actual work started as soon as we finished the paperwork. It was October in Annapolis, so we had very little time to do just enough to take the boat south. "Enough" proved to be a quick sandblast of the bottom followed by a tedious filling and fairing and recoating of the hull before adding the necessary coats of anti-fouling paint. We repainted the cabin exterior, too, not because we liked the painted look, but in an attempt to save whatever wood was salvageable under a fairly fresh coat of paint that had apparently been applied to cover the evidence of peeling varnish, mildew, and naked weathered wood. Stripping and varnishing the mahogany cabin sides would have to wait.

Once out of the Annapolis yard, we hurried to Florida by alternating Intracoastal Waterway motoring with outside sailing, then crossed to the Bahamas for the first of many winters

A Lexan panel in the top of the wheelhouse sends light inside and makes the mainsail visible from the helm, at left. Solar panels are installed on both sides of the Lexan. The dinghy gets to look at its reflection in the hull after the most recent hull-painting, at right.

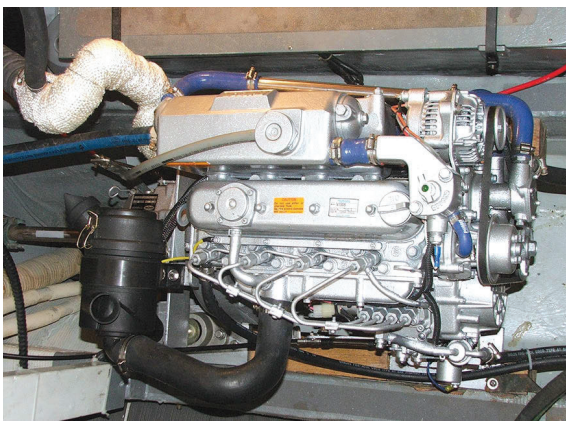
there. The first trip, always, is the most memorable, and so it was for us. Beyond the beautiful surroundings, it gave us a bunch of ideas on how best to adapt the boat as a movable home and workplace.

Changes for cruising

When we first saw *Atelier*'s windshield, we agreed it would have to go — real sailboats do not have windshields. But it was mid-November when we left Annapolis and, as we sailed down Chesapeake Bay against all that crisp-now-biting-cold air, the windshield took on new meaning. Amazingly, we did not need foul weather gear. By North Carolina, the windshield was not nearly as objectionable as its first impression had suggested. By South Carolina, it was gaining silent admiration. By Georgia, it was removed from the removal list. The windshield could stay, but now the giant yellow Bimini would have to go. And so it did, in stages.

We would move into a boatyard for a month or two each year to finish a project or two. Not surprisingly, one of the first such projects involved the Bimini. We wanted to close in the center cockpit, at least partway. Not only would we be sheltered from sun and rain, but the enclosed area would make fall sailing so much more comfortable. We'd joined the snowbird migrations by this time, heading south to Florida and the Bahamas for the winters and north to the Chesapeake or New York for the summers.

With the windshield as the starting point, we built a hardtop over the forward half of the cockpit, later finishing it to cover the entire space, including the helm station. We added a bulkhead aft to form an almost complete wheelhouse. The remaining side areas could be closed in with fabric panels that had plastic ports or with full-panel screens, depending on the climate. These panels can be rolled up in place or easily removed when not in use.



A Phasor/Kubota diesel, is *Atelier*'s third engine.

Sail-handling was upgraded, also in stages, with Pro-Furl's jib-furling, lazy-jacks, and a boom gallows, an especially good addition to a center-cockpit boat, where it's hard to reach the boom to safely furl and tie the sail. Later, a tabernacle joined the rigging alterations. (Our first lesson regarding DIY mast-lowering: don't do it near a naval air station. Low-flying helicopters create wind and waves on even the calmest of days.)

Dinghy handling got much easier with another change. After years of fighting with an assortment of dinghies and no good place to carry one, we replaced the original backstay with a split backstay. Our dinghy can now be raised up over the transom and pulled forward between the two stays. It comes to rest atop the aft cabin and is secured snugly to a cleat on the boom gallows. The two stays prevent it from swinging to either side when we're sailing.

As for auxiliary power, we'd bought the boat with its original 60-horsepower gas engine, which almost killed the purchase for David; it was too big and would burn too much gas. To its credit, however, the engine soon taught us about our new boat's sailing capabilities. At the start of our November trip south, in the

Zora and David's logo is sand-blasted onto a Lexan panel for a translucent forward hatch,

pre-Sea Tow era, the starter broke off the engine about mid-Chesapeake, forcing a night sail to Norfolk and a tacking exercise up a side channel not known to be especially wide or deep.

We kept that engine for another season or two and then installed the first of two new engines, a 36-horsepower Volvo diesel. We were aware of some disapproval of the brand, the subject of many love-it or hate-it discussions. But ours proved OK by us, lasting 25 years, even though it was raw-water cooled. A second diesel, a 37-horsepower Kubota, is now in place, this one with freshwater cooling.

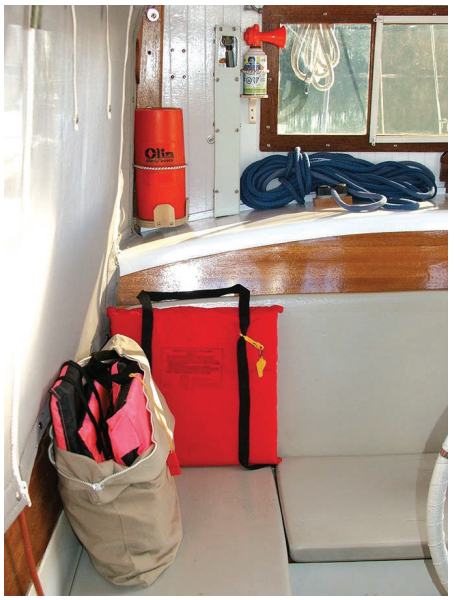
Changes for living aboard

Since owning the Chris-Craft, we've seen a few sister ships and heard about enough others to know that most, if not all, owners of this model modify their boats extensively. The original interior could best be described as non-traditional, due in large part to the center-cockpit layout, which forces a different kind of forward cabin. Fortunately, the boat's heavy hull construction enabled extensive alteration.

Center cockpit – Because our center cockpit is farther forward than that of similar boats, it carries the full beam of the hull, making it the most spacious area on the boat. For us, it is the main saloon. Though the wheelhouse was initially conceived as a way to extend fall cruising time, the changes made for cruising added liveaboard comfort as well, with one more advantage for summertime. The wheelhouse provides a way to attach a narrow awning on each side of the cockpit, to create shade and lower the daytime temperature inside by a few degrees. The awnings connect to the wheelhouse with a boltrope at the top. Lines at the bottom tie out to the lifelines.

The cockpit/wheelhouse/saloon can also sleep two, when we need extra bunks or when we're looking for a stray breeze on a steamy summer night. It is the site of popcorn or pizza parties, music sessions, holiday dinners, and endless talk fests. On special days, it's a good place to watch fireworks or listen to an outdoor concert. And, every day, it's the perfect spot to catch the sunset or moonrise with the crew or the cat, or both.

Forward cabin – As originally designed, our boat could sleep six. Because the center-cockpit design leaves less room forward, the boat has no V-berth, eliminating two of a sailboat's usual bunks. If the owner had wanted to take five more people out for a cruise, four would sleep in the forward cabin, upper/lower bunk-bed style. The upper bunks were hinged to swing up and out of the way when not in use. We had no need for six berths and replaced the uppers with storage lockers and bookshelves.



Zora and David gathered safety items for an article on the subject. Here, some are visible starboard aft in the wheelhouse, at left. This is also the location of the manually-operated propane shutoff. Wooden doors close the aft cabin when necessary, center, but a square of Plexiglas slides into the original hatchboard tracks so that, on a cool day, the cabin can be closed for heat but open to light. More safety stuff — bell, boathook, binoculars, and a boating emergency ladder — is arranged in the port aft corner of the wheelhouse, at right.

In *Atelier*'s galley, far left, the sink is original but that's about all. The storage cabinet above the sink started as a way to cover the back of the depth sounder. Enough space was still available for two more smaller shelf units, now holding important necessities like onions and cat food cans. The design of the port, at left, is credited to Herreshoff, Cherubini, or Ralph Wiley (and probably others). These ports are usually made of wood, though the four DIY versions on Atelier are metal. They can hold a screen or a Plexiglas port or both at the same time. With the screen held tightly against the window frame, the plastic panel tilting toward the inside of the boat, and the wooden wedges between them holding both items in place, it's possible to enjoy fresh air even when it's raining.

The cabin also sported a huge drop-leaf table that, when dropped, left little room for the knees of persons perched on the settees. To replace the original table and leave more room in the cabin, David made a small oval table, a good size for dinners for two or snacks for more. A larger finished-plywood panel stows against the overhead, ready to attach to the oval table when we want the larger surface.

Galley – The original galley had an upright bar-sized icebox. Its front-door access opened into the center of the cabin, guaranteeing a loud and messy spill if anyone was foolish enough to open it when sailing on a starboard tack. We chose to "repurpose" some storage areas and build in a top-loading ice chest that could later accommodate a refrigeration unit. (The galley photo in the boat's brochure actually shows a top-opening ice chest. Our galley was probably a custom installation.)

The stove was a standard-for-the-time two-burner alcohol type, aligned lengthwise with the hull on the starboard side behind the sink. Reaching it was awkward. Fortunately, when the stand-up icebox was removed, it left a perfect vacancy to be filled by a gimbaled two-burner propane stovetop and a good-sized storage bin for pots and pans beneath.

Head – The boat brochure boasted two heads. Both were electric on our boat. With an alternator that could hardly keep up with lights and radio, these did not seem practical for our cruising plans. A generator had been in place to run off the engine (separate from the standard alternator), but it had long ago ceased to function. Eventually, the electric heads departed, one at a Nassau dock, the second in a Florida boatyard.

Through the years, a number of heads have been in and out, some removed because they just plain quit, others because we were always looking for a better solution. We finally settled on a LaVac toilet and a LectraSan treatment system, which probably makes the head compartment the highest-tech place on the boat.

> "With no alteration required, the center cockpit serves as a gallery when people come aboard to look at our paintings."

Aft cabin – The original aft cabin had two single berths with a seat between them. The berths were long, reaching their designed length by extending underneath the cockpit seats, so occupants slept with their heads next to the bulkhead that separates the cabin from the lazarette. That's not particularly unusual, but this boat added the questionable amenity of a toilet not so discreetly placed under that center seat. To make better use of the aft cabin, we remodeled. The starboard bunk grew in width to become a double. The port bunk gave way to a large storage locker accessed by front-opening doors, leaving the top available for use as a hinged-top desk. As noted earlier, the toilet left the boat.

Changes for working aboard

Forward cabin – Most 35-foot sailboats don't have space for a dedicated work area, unless the owner is willing to sacrifice the V-berth. We've seen full workshops and art or hobby studios in former V-berths, but our boat had no such space. Instead, the forward cabin is David's studio. The daily conversion to work area is easy. He removes the drawing board from its storage space against the overhead and places it atop the oval dining table. A length of 2 x 4 glued on one edge to the underside of the drawing board keeps the board at a proper angle for drawing or painting.

A small V-section forward of the seating area was intended for sail storage. Instead, we stowed our two extra sails in the cavernous cockpit seat lockers, leaving the V-space open for David's supplies.

The bookshelves and lockers on the starboard side of the main (forward) cabin were once half of a bunk board. The oval table replaced a drop-leaf variety. The carpet-wrapped mast support is a really good scratching post for the ship's cat.

Aft cabin – The sleeping cabin converts to a versatile workstation. The portside locker hides everything needed to turn the cabin into a mini office or an art studio, keeping all the supplies contained but still reasonably accessible.

The hinged desktop covering the locker serves multiple purposes. "Desk" is the obvious one, when the laptop sits on top of the opened-out desktop and the writer sits on the center seat. At other times, the seat supports a tabletop easel and the desktop in the closed position serves as a taboret, holding the paints, palette, brushes, water jar, and anything else the artist needs. Still other times, the sometime desk is the surface upon which mats are cut to frame watercolor paintings.

Cockpit/wheelhouse/saloon – Add "gallery" to the center cockpit's cruising and liveaboard descriptions. With no alteration required, the center cockpit serves as a gallery when people come aboard to look at our paintings. It has convenient seating, and it has the best space on board to provide an appropriate distance between the viewer and the viewed.

What next?

Given our extended time frame, the major work on the boat has long been finished. Although hull painting, alas, is not exactly permanent, much of the other maintenance can be handled by timely touch-ups with only an occasional do-over. A typical haulout is limited to a short stay for the requisite bottom paint; we don't miss the annual boatyard condo living. We still find small projects to do at anchor or dockside, a holdover perhaps from years of writing for the original *DIY Boat Owner* magazine. We're still pleased when strangers admire the boat and ask about her history.

After so many years, the question of "What next?" is a strange thought. The flippant response returns a question: "Why a next?" or "What's wrong with status quo?" But even when we try to be serious, no good answer has thus far surfaced. We've lived on board too long to imagine being away from the water, so that remains a priority. Cruises may be planned in days or weeks rather than months, but they are still planned. We have so many years of memories that make us smile. For now, "next" is just looking forward to more of the same.

Zora Aiken and her husband, David, are the authors of several books about boating and camping. Their seventh children's book, Chesapeake Play Day, *written by both and illustrated by David, was published in April.* Atelier, *a 1963 35-foot Chris-Craft sloop, is their movable studio, office, and home. See David's work at davidaikenart.com.*

Bucco is probably thinking bad thoughts. He learned how to push the zipper tab up to let himself out of the screen cage. So the zipper tabs are now held down with shockcord around a tiny hook fitting.

This classic Pearson 36 whispered in his ear

by Hugh MacMullan

Photos by Ted Fullerton

Transforming *Sundog*

Zora Neale Hurston nailed it when she wrote, "Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board." True. But do boats have wishes also? Surely *Sundog's* wish in July 2002 must have been to be owned and sailed by Ted Fullerton, a cheerful graduate of the I'd-better-do-it-myself-because-no-one-else-will-do-it-right university, a perfectionist who kept *Sundog*, a 1973 Pearson 36, virtually at his side while he lovingly made her better than new.

Ted had just sold his Wianno Senior Knockabout 25, *Sandpiper*, a 1928 beauty, in order to be a more responsible small-business owner and to care better for Magnum, a golden retriever he'd inherited from his father. It was his intention to be boatless for three years. But even the best intentions are sometimes difficult to honor. Two days after the sale of *Sandpiper*, he ran into an acquaintance at a convenience store, a woman who told him, "I have to sell my boat," and asked for his help. Ted agreed to check out the boat and give her his suggestions. He had a friend who might be interested.

The next day, Ted and the boatowner took the boat for a sail. The boat was in poor condition. Ted noticed the liberal use of house paint and duct tape. The battery was dead — they needed a jumpstart to leave the mooring — and after the motor began vibrating badly, Ted shut it down. But he noticed that the boat sailed well in brisk conditions. He managed to pick up the mooring singlehanded under sail in Wharton Creek on Chesapeake Bay.

Sense of wrongness

You already know what happened next. What led to the purchase, as Ted remembers it, was how well the boat sailed, her ample headroom below (he is 6 feet 4 inches tall), and his perfectionist's sense of wrongness about how the boat was being maintained.

***Sundog,* a Pearson 36 lovingly restored by Ted Fullerton, improves the Massachusetts scenery at Nantucket Island's Brant Point Light.**

The rest of us know, don't we, that the boat whispered in his ear, "We'd be good together. Look at how we managed that mooring pickup. We belong together, don't you think? You could name me *Sundog*, after Magnum and your favorite atmospheric phenomenon. If you fix me up, I'll sail fast for you, I'll point well." Ted had been boatless for the grand total of eight days… $6,000 sealed the deal.

Ted's sailing and boatowning credentials were nearly as laudable as *Sundog's* Pearson pedigree deserved. Ted's parents were Star racers. That's how they met. His father built and raced iceboats. Ted's first sail occurred when he was 2 weeks old. When he was 4, in 1962, Ted's family purchased

> **“Ted had been boatless for the grand total of eight days … $6,000 sealed the deal.”**

an Olson 35.5 at the New York Boat Show. They sailed it for months every summer in New England. A favorite family photo is of Ted, a 6-year-old capitalist, collecting trash for tips in the family dinghy in the Cuttyhunk Harbor.

Ted was 15 when he first bought his very own boat, a 1934 19-foot Chris-Craft runabout. It cost him $25 and an assurance to the seller that he and his buddies would remove it from the VFW parking lot where it had died. One of his father’s sailing friends gave Ted fiberglass resin and fabric, and he glassed the boat’s bottom with it . . . his first major repair job. He bought the Wianno in 1992 for $2,500. Ted says he “did everything and then some” to it, upgrading his personal repertoire of old sailboat rehabilitation skills. He sold the boat in 2002 for $25,000 to someone who admired all the varnish.

Giant list

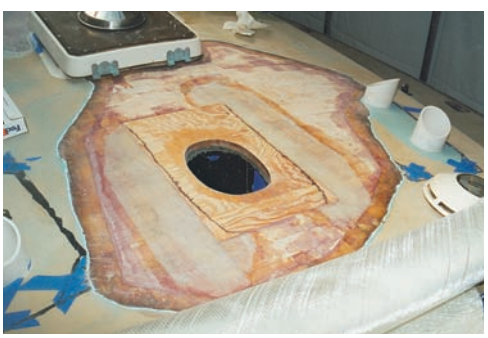
The first thing Ted did after buying *Sundog* was to make a giant list of everything that needed to be done to the boat. First, so he could easily single-hand her, he installed a Raytheon 4000 Autohelm. At the Annapolis Sailboat Show, he bought additional instrumentation, including wind speed, depth-finder, knotmeter, and a chart plotter, as well as a new mainsail, a 150-percent jib, sailcovers, and a Bimini.

He fretted over the vibrations under power and determined that there was nothing wrong with the engine, a Yanmar diesel with only 80 hours on it. Instead, he decided that there were repairable structural issues with its installation. While tackling that issue, he also installed a new battery box and two new batteries. He replaced halyards and sheets and painted the boat the colors he was considering.

That November he had her hauled and trucked to a spot behind Upper Bank Studios, his photography business in Media, Pennsylvania. He bought and assembled a giant prefabricated RV shed around the boat, adding adequate propane heat and lots of light. This enabled him to work throughout the winter. And so it was that during the 10 months between November 2002 and August 2003 *Sundog* and Ted really got to know each other.

During this time, Ted:

- Purchased a moisture meter and identified six major problem areas in the deck. After getting a $23,000 quote to fix the deck, Ted fixed it himself.
- Pulled all deck hardware and sent it off to be re-chromed.
- Replaced all exterior wood (teak toerails, winch bases, trim, and grabrails) and built two new Dorade boxes.
- Made new hatchboards for the companionway.
- Installed new cowlings.
- Made Sunbrella Dorade box covers, grabrail covers, and wheel covers.
- Made Sunbrella winch-base and winch covers with magnets instead of snaps.
- Installed new stanchions and lifelines.
- Installed new portlights.
- Repaired hull damage discovered while replacing the toerails.
- Stripped the boat’s bottom and applied seven barrier coats.
- Refilled and reglassed the damaged skeg.
- Installed inboard tracks and rollers for jib sheets.
- Purchased ash rollers for shrouds.
- Installed a new Edson steering column, including new cables.
- Sanded, primed, and prepared *Sundog* for painting.
- Found and hired a skilled marine spray painter from Oxford, Mary-



On the list of “wrongs” that Ted felt he had to address to make things “right” with his new boat were the slapdash repairs, at top, made with house paint and duct tape. He felt the boat that was to become *Sundog* deserved better. The soggy deck core also deserved and received Ted’s attention, center photos. He also replaced all exterior wood including toerails, trim, grabrails, and winch bases, bottom.

land, to paint *Sundog's* deck and hull. Warned about a yellow hull's issues with bad luck and durability, Ted decided nonetheless to Awlgrip her a Fighting Lady Yellow.

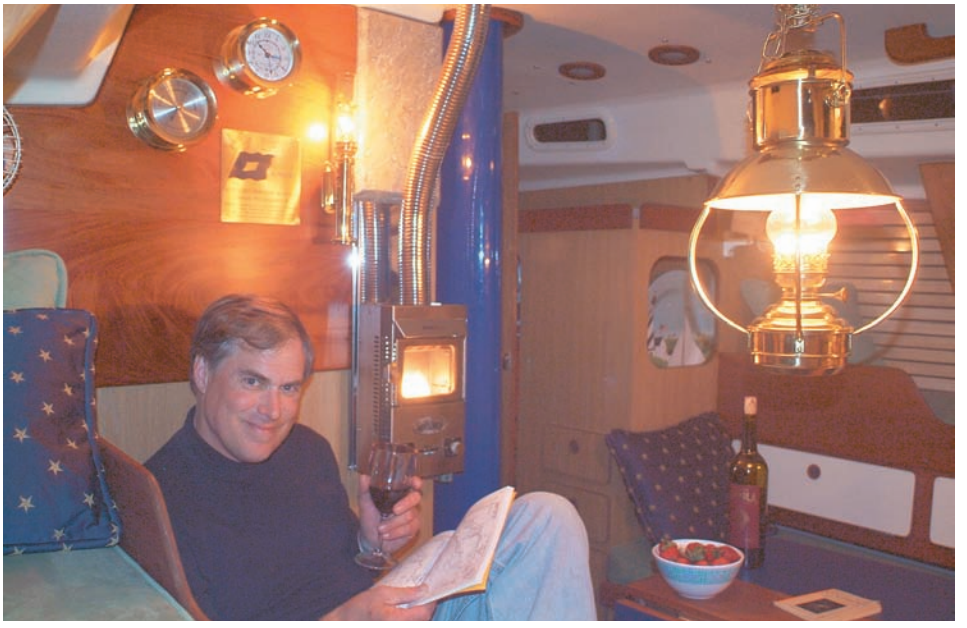
- Sanded, primed, and painted *Sundog's* mast and boom a bright royal blue.
- Devised and painted *Sundog's* unique stern logo.
- Reinstalled the newly chromed deck hardware.
- Epoxied (six coats) and varnished (seven coats) all exterior wood.
- Installed a new oversized stainless-steel sink.
- Installed new interior lights.
- Purchased 35 yards of moss green Ultrasuede and found a seamstress who would recover the interior cushions for him.

Sundog went into the water in Essington, Pennsylvania, in August 2003. She and Ted sailed to New England. For three weeks, they sailed to Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, Cuttyhunk, and Padanaram, Massachusetts, reprising Ted's childhood summers. During this time Ted learned *Sundog's* approach to sailing and revised his to-do list. By mid-October, *Sundog* was hauled, trucked, and back under the shed. It was boatwork time once again.

> "By mid-October, *Sundog* was hauled, trucked, and back under the shed. It was boatwork time once again."

That winter, Ted:

- Installed a rudder reference guide to enhance the Autohelm's performance.
- Installed a propane fireplace.
- Insulated the cabin and installed varnished ash strips on interior surfaces.
- Cleaned, sanded, and oiled all the interior teak.
- Replaced all the interior Formica.
- Carpeted the interior of most storage spaces.



- Installed a stainless-steel-and-teak swim ladder (at his mother's request).
- Installed a ship-to-shore radio.
- Installed a satellite radio.
- Built a birch cabinet to house the ship-to-shore and satellite radios.
- Purchased two additional batteries and installed them in a specially fabricated box in the engine compartment.
- Reinforced the engine box with a floating structural beam.
- Installed a raw-water washdown system.
- Painted the interior.
- Installed a new 42-gallon fuel tank with a fuel polishing system.

Ted and *Sundog* had a full season of sailing in the summer of 2004. She turned heads in Block Island, Cuttyhunk, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Padanaram that summer. Ted's favorite compliment was delivered by an old-timer in Padanaram — home of Concordia Yachts — who reckoned the Pearson had "the best-looking varnish in the harbor." Ted's favorite moments of sailing were when *Sundog* twice sailed faster than theoretically possible boat speeds, managing more than 10 knots under spinnaker.

The next winter, Ted:

During the winter of 2004-05, Ted got around to the smaller items on *Sundog's* wish list. That year he:

- Installed exotic anaconda marble behind the heater flue.
- Installed a mahogany panel with barometer, tide clock, and Pearson plaque next to the fireplace.
- Installed a wine rack in a bit of space he found under the nav station.
- Made an oversized coffee-cup holder, a replica of one he had admired on a Hinckley.
- Replaced the head.
- Added a ship's lantern and clock.
- Re-routed the mainsheet, spinnaker halyard, and uphaul through a teak-based triple-rope clutch in order to access a new winch just forward of the wheel.

Last winter (2005-06), Ted:

- Added a Raytheon 6000 Autohelm, leaving the 4000 Autohelm in place as a backup.
- Installed a new front hatch.
- Added a dodger with a fly to the existing Bimini.
- Installed a maple cabin sole, with teak accent strips.
- Purchased a light shade for the hatch.
- Installed a deck-mounted light prism to light the head.
- Replaced the acrylic on the center hatch.
- Reinforced the forward keel bolt bulkhead.
- Fabricated and installed a teak cowling shutoff.

Including the purchase price, Ted has spent about $48,000 on *Sundog*. He's also logged about 2,200 personal manhours on "getting it right," as well as developing invaluable relationships with folks who invariably went out of their way to help. He awards the Fullerton Above-and-Beyond Award to Dennis Johnson at Mobile Marine, Cheryl Gerfin at Defender Marine, Winston Savage at Raytheon's Tech Support, and Paul Linehan at Jamestown Marine. *Sundog* is at last 100 percent Ted's boat, with all of his wishes aboard.

A better-than-new Pearson 36 — a yellow and blue beauty — will be in New England every summer from now on. If you see a tall guy with a golden retriever aboard, you'll know she's *Sundog*.

The newly refinished exterior wood and the interior (complete with Magnum in the sun spot on the V-berth), at top on facing page. After a multi-year refit, Ted drinks a toast to his new, more comfortable surroundings, and *Sundog* gleams in the reflection of a Dorade vent, below left on facing page. This page: *Sundog* sails the Eastern Seaboard, at top, and Magnum, *Sundog's* real captain, below.

The rebirth of *Maruska*

This orphaned Pearson 365 will rejoin the fleet of good old boats

by Dale Tanski

MOST OF THE TIME I AM LOOKING AT OR looking for boats. If there were a self-help group for excessive boat ownership, my wife would have me enrolled. Our fleet numbers over 20. Hey, you have probably said it yourself, "No one boat can do it all."

Some people collect lost cats. I collect boats, most of them project boats. I regularly do quick Internet searches for sailboats under $20,000, and it's nice to see what's out there for a reasonable buck. That's how I found *Maruska*. Perhaps she found me. In any case the events that led to her purchase had many fantastic twists and turns.

Maruska initially popped up on one such search. A $20,000 maximum price, a 35-foot-and-up length criterion, and a simple push of the Enter key on my computer brought up several pages of intriguing prospects.

Most often, as I make a quick glance down the list, I see that the offerings are too old, too wooden, or too ferro or else they're boats you would need swim fins and a mask to see. On this day, however, one listing caught my eye. It was a 1976 Pearson 365 ketch in Havre de Grace, Maryland. We had looked at several of these ketches in the past. All were basically out of our price range, and the timing wasn't right. But I love to look at boats. The Pearson 365 turned into a "someday boat," like many, many before it.

When the listing for a Pearson 365 hit the screen for the magic $20,000 number, the wheels in my head began to turn. I saw right away that the listing was cleverly crafted. There was no equipment inventory, no vessel specifics, and no information except for the words "project boat." It was topped off with a half dozen pictures of what looked like a Pearson 365 afloat, along with several fuzzy pictures of a "modified interior."

I returned to the listing again and again for the next several weeks. I compared pictures of the boat with pictures of sister ships and tried to determine just what this particular project was really all about. I


1


2


3


4

At first glance in the boatyard, *Maruska* looked like the "someday boat" of Dale's dreams (1). Like so many other sailors, he'd fallen in love with the Pearson 365 long ago. But long ago the timing wasn't right and the price was too high. "Someday" had arrived in the Havre de Grace Marina, however, and now the price was right. The lower price, unfortunately, reflected the condition of the boat's interior. Listed as a "project boat," *Maruska* was all that and more. The rig was in good condition (2) and, all in all, *Maruska* was in good shape on the outside (3). But the bent ladder at the stern was indicative of her true condition (4).

5

6

7

8

The modified mizzen mast step was one of the exterior modifications by a previous owner who, shall we say, did things his own way (5). The starboard cockpit locker shows the red engine cooling expansion tank, hot water heater, pressure water pump, and blue battery charger (6). The port cockpit locker reveals a rectangle where a battery once sat (7). The rear bulkhead had been cut away and a "wiring area" installed. The Magic Marker stuck in the hose to prevent sea water from entering the boat is an interesting touch. Opening the companionway hatch had taken Dale and his son, Eric, into a whole different world (8).

shot off an email message to the listing broker and then a phone call. Both went unanswered.

Life is hectic. I wanted to know more about the boat while at the same time I didn't want to know, so I never followed up. One morning I glanced at the ad and my heart sank. Apparently she had been sold because the Pearson 365 for $20,000 no longer showed up. I scanned the listing rows one last time . . . What was this? A price reduction to $15,000!

I quickly called Arvid, the listing broker and owner of Havre de Grace Marina. With startling machine-gun repetitiveness, Arvid insisted that I would have to "look at her." Her previous owner had modified her interior, and I would have to "look at her." What she had for gear was onboard, but I would have to "look at her." She needed a lot, but I would have to "look at her." Arvid said it was tough to explain over the phone. He repeated for the fifth time to come and "look at her."

I decided to go.

Long ago, I learned to make out a contract. In the past I've lost several boats because of time wasted from indecision, the "we-will-sleep-on-it excuse." One Fuji 32 in the Florida Keys was in the path of a hurricane, so the scared owner took the first bid — any bid — that came along. The hurricane, by the way, took a sharp left after I heard the news that my lowball offer was too late. I even lost one while driving to look at the boat!

I emailed a contract and faxed a copy of a deposit check for *Maruska* to Arvid. This turned out to be one of the best decisions of the day; there apparently were plenty of people watching and waiting, and the $15,000 number shook the bushes.

My son, Eric, and I pulled an all-nighter, and 370 miles later I was looking at what appeared to be a reasonable Pearson 365. She needed a good cleaning and some new running rigging, but, all in all, *Maruska* was in good shape on the outside. Upon sliding open the companionway and descending the cabin ladder, however, we entered a whole different world. It was a cabin filled with questions, loose ends, missing pieces, and an awful smell. From the forward bulkhead aft, almost everything had been modified or removed. The U-shaped galley had been literally cut down the center of the icebox. The overhead storage unit had been non-surgically removed via Sawzall.

There was a gaping hole in the sole where beautiful teak cabinetry once stood, cut wiring and plumbing dangled every-

where, a good portion of the hull was exposed, and you could see straight through to the transom on the port side. The port and starboard water tanks had been cut open, the engine enclosure was gone, rank bilge water had been high over the sole. The depressing list went on and on.

My son and I hurried topside for some fresh air. At breakfast, our discussion went from "no way" to "what if?" and we headed back to the Havre de Grace Marina for another look. Unfortunately, nothing had changed; the interior of the boat was still a disaster. The story, as it unfolded, was that the previous owner had retired and purchased the boat. His plan was to make some changes. When he was done, he and his wife would sail away.

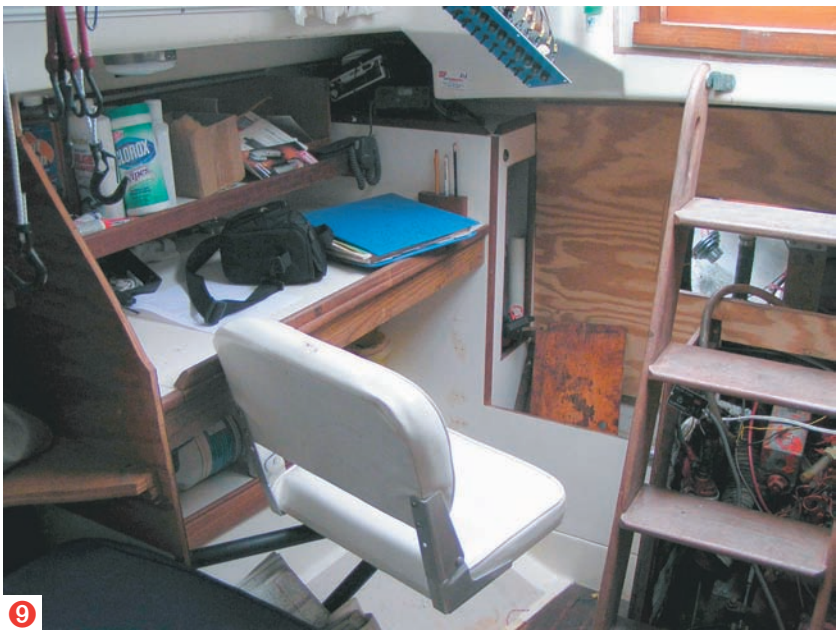
Unfortunately, he died six months into the project. Sadly, he took his dreams and aspirations with him, as well as any indication of which direction he was heading on the project. Instead of doing one project at a time and completing it, the owner had begun 20 or more; the result was chaos. The Pearson had languished for a year and a half, literally an orphan. She was taken from the original marina when her slip contract was canceled and towed to Havre de Grace.

A steady procession of would-be buyers and dreamers crossed her decks weekend after weekend. The broker said that *Maruska* had generated more inquires than any vessel in his 30-year history of selling boats. He got to the point where he refused to answer email inquiries. Just during the time we were aboard that Saturday morning, the broker received three email messages and two phone calls.

I was the only one foolish or visionary enough to sign a contract. The truth was that each item that needed attention required only modest repairs. The grand total, however, of dozens of individual things to fix was massive, even for a project boat veteran. Perhaps my quick emotional attachment to this orphan clouded my senses.

I have to admit that for me, *Maruska* will be the boat project of my lifetime (so far). I have a chance to make her into what I think a sailboat should be and an opportunity to sail her home to Buffalo, New York.

Please join me in the upcoming issues of Good Old Boat *as I take you through the rebirth of* Maruska.



9

10

11

The real puzzles were in the cabin. Almost everything below had been modified or removed. The U-shaped galley had been cut down the center of the icebox. There was a gaping hole in the sole. Cut wiring and plumbing connections dangled everywhere. Both water tanks had been cut open. The engine enclosure was gone. The rotten abandoned-boat smell drove Dale and Eric out of the cabin for further contemplation. But after a breakfast discussion, they returned to *Maruska*. Although nothing had changed, Dale made an offer. This was the boat of his dreams, after all, wasn't it? The nav station (9), half a galley (10), and the port settee and mainmast chainplate (11).

The rebirth of *Maruska*

Garbage out, good used stuff in; the saga begins

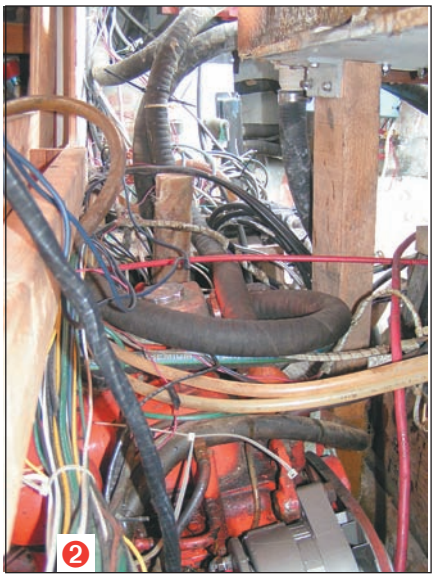
by Dale Tanski

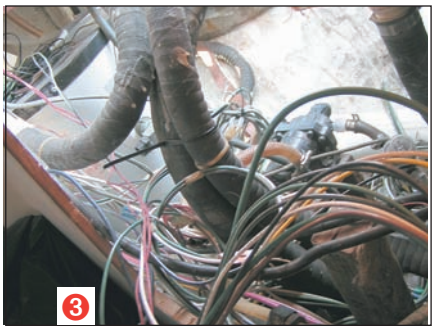
THE GAME PLAN FOR *MARUSKA* WOULD have to be aggressive to meet a June departure. My primary goal was to make her seaworthy and reliable for the long trip home. Havre de Grace, Maryland, to Norfolk, Virginia, would be her shakedown. The offshore passage from Norfolk to Sandy Hook, New Jersey, would put her sailing systems to the test, and the Erie Canal route through New York would require a very reliable driveline. Keeping in mind that this trip would be a sizable undertaking for any well-prepared sailboat, my to-do list for *Maruska's* 30-year-old systems grew by the hour. A float plan of more than 1,000 nautical miles would mean things had to be done right the first time.

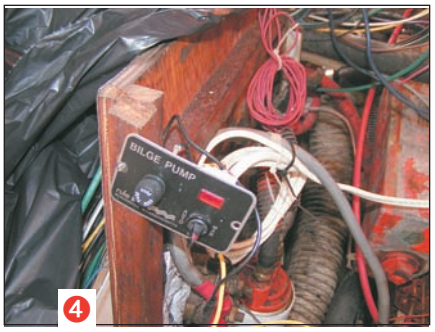
With the papers signed and the check accepted, the deal was done. The first work weekend started with a thorough cleaning of the accumulated parts, pieces, and gear from the boat. One pile to keep, one destined for eBay, one to trash, and one conspicuously set by the marina dumpster. This last pile was made up of items too good to throw out. These disappeared one by one as the weekend progressed.

I tried to diminish the rank mixture of rancid bilge water and diesel fuel by spraying everything I could reach with a pump-up orchard sprayer filled with a mint-scented cleaning solution. This was like throwing perfume on a pig; there was no denying it: *Maruska* stank!

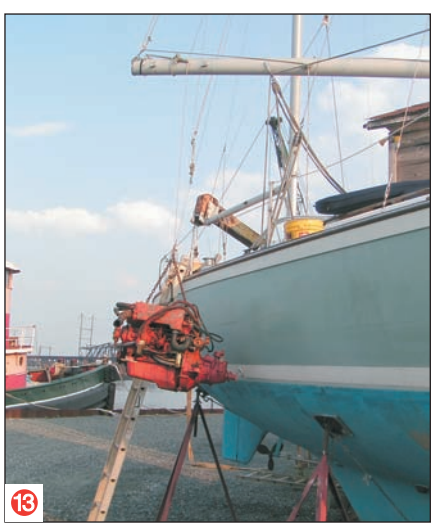
It was difficult to stay focused on any one task. Everywhere I looked, there was something different to think about. Repair, replace, or just remove . . . the choices seemed endless. "When in doubt, throw it out" became the motto of the day. The ground around *Maruska* was littered with garbage bag after garbage bag of old wiring, exhaust system, hoses, and obsolete gear. The electrical system was a concoction of each previous owner's interpretation of what boat wiring should be, interlaced with the original Pearson factory wiring. Stranded wire, telephone cable, solid conductor house wire (Romex), and lots of lamp cord tangled its way from one end of the boat to the other. Hoses of all sizes and other materials started nowhere and ended nowhere.







The master warning gong was hooked up (but to what?). A battery cable by the gong crossed over the tank and had ground its insulation jacket down to the copper by rubbing on the tank (1). A maze of wiring, hoses, and tubing (2 and 3). What was left of the bilge pump control (4). The Walter V-Drive and shaft (5). Hauling the engine out of its bed (6). Slung off the main boom, the engine goes up nicely (7).



The engine has left the boat (8). On departing, it presented a bit of an obstacle for anyone using the companionway (9). The engineer in Dale worries about the weight of the engine while hanging from the end of the boom. For safety's sake, he first runs a check stay to the nearby building (10). Up and over the side it goes (11 and 12). *Maruska* breathes a sigh of relief following this weight-loss program (13).

Stainless hose clamps with carbon-steel screws failed with the slightest pressure; others were so loose they rotated freely about the hose with the mere insertion of a screwdriver. The plastic through-hull for the bilge pump snapped as I tried to remove its surrounding hose. The view of the parking lot stones below through the exposed hole was a stark reminder of what could happen if I missed the slightest detail.

Removal of the Walter V-Drive and the engine drive shaft were welcome diversions as I uncramped from lengthy bouts in the cockpit lockers. I spent several wasted minutes trying to decipher the engine wiring harnesses. Like everything else, it was a tangled illogical mess and was eventually removed with the yank-and-snip method. The hoses were "adjusted" with a hacksaw, and the engine rose from its beds dangling from the mainmast halyard strung through the end of the main boom. The engineer in me thought through the overhanging weight of the engine and transmission at the end of the main boom swung over the side. Just to be sure, I decided to secure a check stay to the foundation of a nearby building. I worked well past dark that first day building a shipping cradle for the engine for the long ride home on the utility trailer. Cushions, bags of sails, and parts and pieces piled high must have left quite an impression with passing motorists.

By the end of the first weekend, the engine and driveline had been removed, as well as 8 percent of the wiring and about 50 percent of the plumbing. When I wasn't fishing for bilge surprises and hauling bags to the dumpster, I collected model numbers and manufacturers' information from everything I could find. I made dimensioned sketches of what was left of the interior, took pictures, and made notes of every aspect of the project. These items became priceless 370 miles away as I scoured catalogs and the web for additional information on the equipment I had, as well as for what I needed to replace or upgrade. The ride home that first weekend proved invaluable as I thought through the events of those two action-packed days. Then I scribbled pages of notes as I formulated a game plan and schedule for the upcoming months. The cosmetics could follow down the road, but at all costs the boat must be seaworthy and reliable for her trip home.

I developed many lists. One was composed of those items that I knew would be difficult to locate at a price I could afford. These items would be the basis for the long-term "wanted list" that consisted of

such things as a high-amp alternator, refrigeration unit, new electrical panels, quick-release inner forestay lever, and so on. To acquire these items I became an eBay junkie like never before. I scoured eBay morning, noon, and night. Whatever I could not procure used, I would eventually have to purchase new when the rebuild schedule required it. It is amazing what gear you can find used if you are diligent. I have been on a first-name basis with my local chandlery, Obersheimers Sailor Supply, for several decades, but this project ratcheted it up a notch. One of the other lists was the "wish list." You know the one: the if-money-were-not-an-issue list.

Besides hunting items in the time between boat visits, selling items to raise cash became a big activity. Fundraising took on a whole new meaning. I scoured the house and garage and sold and auctioned items that were no longer being used. Reflecting on the boat stuff alone, I must have sold 10 bags of sails from boats that I never owned or would never own. The selling price was not the issue; the goal was to generate cash. As long as I could keep the money coming in ahead of the money going out, the *Maruska* project could continue.

Please join me in the upcoming issues of Good Old Boat *as I take you through the rebirth of* Maruska.

The rebirth of *Maruska*

Rainy day projects become priorities

by Dale Tanski

As I slid back the hatch upon my return to *Maruska*, steady rain revealed new problems: she leaked like a sieve. All but one port and two out of three deck hatches wept.

Painting priority

My goal for the weekend was to epoxy-coat the bilge, engine bed, and fuel tank areas. The rain continued throughout the first day causing frustration, as the bilge remained too wet to paint. While waiting for the rain to stop, I rebuilt the hot water heater platform and exhaust muffler base, reinforcing and retabbing both to the hull.

After a thorough vacuuming and with a quality respirator strapped to my head, I slithered back into the cockpit lockers to apply a coat of epoxy paint. With the engine out of the way, this was the time to revive these lockers if ever there was one. I used a high-build, low-sheen epoxy primer that filled and sealed the rough areas. Many hours later, the fuel tank bulkheads, engine bed, and anything else in the aft part of the boat that was dry and I could reach had been completely sealed and was looking good.

Water tank removal

To begin the reconstruction in the main cabin, I would first have to do something with the port and starboard water tanks. They apparently did not fit into the previous owner's plans; he had cut out the fronts of the settees as well as the fronts of the tanks. After concluding that the tanks were beyond salvage, I removed what remained of the starboard tank with the help of the Sawzall. Undoubtedly, the blade manufacturer's stock dividends will increase. The awkward positioning and unforgiving nature of the fiberglass tanks ate blade after blade. A stretched string, straightedge, and tape measure produced the basic dimensions for a sketch of a new water tank.

My intention was to have these tanks built by a sheet metal shop from 316 stainless. I soon learned that the


1


2


3


4


5


6


7


8


9

cost to have custom-fit stainless tanks made would be $1,800 each. The cost of stainless has gone through the roof! Instead, I located an individual who welds polyethylene. We agreed that I would fabricate flat sheets of polyethylene and he would weld them together.

The tanks will be foamed into place using pour-in-place polyurethane foam. This foam works best in 80-degree weather; the warmer it is, the better it expands. Naturally, the better it expands, the better it insulates. Installation would have to wait until warmer weather, but the tanks and associated plumbing could be fabricated and fitted in place so I could continue reconstruction on the surrounding cabinetry.

Keel and skeg leaks

I believe the nonstructural factory fiberglass covering over the rudder skeg was a dry layup and porous. Over time, water either entered the rudder skeg from the top down (the rudder post packing gland is uphill from the area) or the rudder skeg itself developed a leak and filled from the outside in. While painting, I discovered one unanticipated problem: the rudder skeg was full of water.

Why more sailboats don't have a keel sump drain is beyond me. If you store them up north, ice in the bilge can cause lots of damage. A careful measurement, a sharp drill bit, and two weeks' worth of accumulated rainwater became a worry of the past. To prevent this from being a problem in the future, I installed drains in the keel and rudder sumps.

Boat show time!

Since we were in the Annapolis area and it was boat show time, we buttoned *Maruska* up and headed to the Annapolis Sailboat Show. There is nothing like tent after tent of marine distributors and suppliers to make the time-consuming task of selecting equipment a little bit easier. Short on time, we did not set foot on one single boat. We *had* the boat. It was *gear* we needed. A show is also a great place to hunt down "boat-show specials" and collect every catalog and distributor's business card available.

We made decisions on replacement batteries, an upgraded alternator and charging system, replacement ports, and even some dressy items like stainless Dorades. For every item that was crossed off of the need list, 10 were added to the wish list.

I was taught a valuable lesson this trip: you can't count on the weather to cooperate. On a project like this, it became obvious that it is necessary to have a backup set of tasks, plans, and materials for when the weather does *not* cooperate. I did not waste any valuable time, but I headed home with a different list of completed items than I had originally planned. It goes without saying that the master schedule was a bit disrupted.


10


11

The hot water heater platform was rebuilt and painted (1 and 2). In the port side sail locker, the built-in support for a battery long since gone (3) had to go. The locker area (4) got a thorough cleaning and Dale added a layer of low-sheen epoxy primer. The mizzen chainplates are evident in the aft locker (5). The water tanks were next. To get a sense of the magnitude of this project, take a look at the remains of the starboard tank, as Dale first found it, along with the pilot berth above and cut out storage cabinets (6). Although he sacrificed a large number of Sawzall blades to the water tank project, Dale made progress on the starboard tank (7, 8, and 9) and created a pile of former tank parts on the ground below (10). Three holes in the rudder skeg were necessary (11) before Dale found the bottom of that cavity and was able to drain several gallons.

by Cheryl Fitzgerald

Bluewater Catalina

How a couple converted White Dove, *a 36-foot coastal cruiser, for offshore work*

Can a 1989 Catalina 36 be sufficiently modified to become a bluewater cruiser? After five years of grueling boat projects, we set sail in October 1998 to put *White Dove* to the test.

Jerry and I left California on *White Dove* in October, 1998, and sailed to Mexico, through the South Pacific islands including Tonga, and on to New Zealand. From there we visited Fiji and cruised up the east coast of Australia, then headed across the South Indian Ocean to South Africa with short stops in Mauritius and Reunion Islands. Our passage continued around the Cape of Good Hope, up the South Atlantic with a brief rest in St. Helena, and on to Trinidad. Then we island-hopped through the Caribbean and Bahamas. We completed our voyage in July, 2001, in Florida, where we lived aboard for another year.

To feel secure crossing oceans, we replaced wire lifelines with 1-inch stainless-steel tubing around the boat except for a short distance leading to the bow pulpit. We secured 33-inch-high double rails to tubing stanchion bases and ¼-inch stainless-steel plates. We incorporated a heavily reinforced radar arch made of 1½-inch tubing into this system to provide support for two solar panels, a permanent awning, and a wind generator. This arch has been worth every penny (and it took quite a few), since it provided us with the safety and security we needed, even during the roughest weather.

We added 8-inch bulwarks with a clearance of 1 inch off the deck, attached to custom stainless-steel brackets, some of which also served as rail-stanchion bases. Made from three layers of clear spruce and laminated together with resorcinol glue, these were coated with epoxy and two layers of glass, and then painted. They serve as an integral part of our rail system.

This was our most challenging modification, but the bulwarks prevented many items from being washed overboard and also created good attachment points for our web-

strap/snatch-block setup through which we could run the jib sheets.

Attachment point

We constructed a boom gallows over the companionway, which also served as the forward attachment point for our sail awning. We raised the cabin-top handrails 1 inch for an easier reach, and they also served as foot-holds. One more interesting addition: we welded a ladder-like structure to the boom. With a width of 23 inches, it provided good handholds, a nest for the mainsail to rest in, and additional strength for the boom.

One of the most important investments for a boat is a reliable, user-friendly anchoring system. Our horizontal Lighthouse anchor windlass is mounted on a pedestal far back on the foredeck. Overall it has served us well. Due to its easy operation, we don't hesitate to re-anchor if we're in doubt. The only complaint my husband, Jerry, has is that all horizontal windlasses have a tendency for the chain to jump off the gypsy under sudden, severe loads. For the price we paid, we could have bought two vertical windlasses.

We built a large chain locker by forfeiting a small portion of the V-berth and constructing two additional bulkheads. Anchor rode falls directly to the bilge, allowing a better balance for carrying 250 feet of chain and 400 feet of nylon rope, keeping the load lower down and aft. The real bonus is that the chain freefalls into the locker and neatly stacks itself.

We made several modifications to the rigging. We moved newly designed chainplates outboard and through-bolted them to the hull for better support of the mast, and we attached longer spreaders to accommodate the shrouds. A longer, 14-foot boom provides more sail area lower down. And by adding a 6-foot spruce bowsprit to move the headstay forward and installing an inner stay, we converted *White Dove* into a cutter. The variety of sail options available has enhanced our sail performance.

"One of our most ambitious alterations was glassing in the cabin sides, which came with stock, non-opening ports (except four) and installing 12 Lewmar Atlantic opening ports."

Two thoughts

All of these items have proved effective, but in retrospect two thoughts are worth mentioning: first, a metal wishbone bowsprit might be more practical for walking out to handle headsails, and second, twin headsails, one placed just ahead of the other, would be a useful addition for running two headstays. We've covered many miles of downwind sailing.

We added running backstays to increase mast support when beating with the staysail. These proved to be a hazard and a hassle. We wonder now whether permanent stays behind the lower aft stays would have been better.

Many people were puzzled when we removed the wheel and converted to a tiller (most folks do the opposite). But we wanted to reduce the amount of friction on the windvane. Besides, a tiller can use a simpler, less expensive, autopilot. This gave us the luxury of owning three (believe me, you'll use all of them). Most important, we had no steering cables to break.

However, we encountered a different type of steering disorder . . . our rudder sheared off! (See the July 2001 issue of *Sail* magazine for that story.) In New Zealand we fabricated a new rudder, using 2205L stainless steel for the shaft. This held up well for the remainder of our journey, but we also carried an emergency rudder that could be attached quickly. The best option for any spade-ruddered yacht is to install a Hydrovane or Autohelm windvane to act as a steering windvane and a second rudder. A compromise would be to convert the spade rudder to a half-skeg by creating a third attachment point.

Traveler changes

On deck, we moved the traveler aft to accommodate our hard dinghy and installed a Catalina 42 track and traveler car with a 6-to-1 purchase, placing both control lines to starboard. To secure the boom, preventer lines with a 4-to-1 purchase, port and starboard, run from a mid-boom attachment to

Cheryl and Jerry Fitzgerald's Catalina 36, *White Dove*, on facing page. A work in progress, at left below, White Dove has new rails, bulwarks, ports and boom gallows. At this stage of the renovation, the cockpit was filled with a full-size workbench. The outboard chainplates, bulwarks with integrated stainless rails, and a few of the new opening ports, at right below.

deck attachments behind the lower afts, out to the rails. The lines lead back to cabintop corners and are secured in large jamb cleats. This is convenient and effective for safely controlling the boom.

We constructed heavy teak doors for the companionway, retaining the dropboard slats. This was much more practical for going in and out, and it added strength and security in heavy weather.

One of our most ambitious alterations was glassing in the cabin sides, which came with stock, non-opening ports (except four) and installing 12 Lewmar Atlantic opening ports. We also replaced our small center hatch with a 24-inch-square hatch. These conversions have proved very valuable. Sufficient ventilation is a key factor to comfort in a tropical climate, but don't forget to add several fans, good for circulating the air during rain squalls and on windless days.

One last item of importance is refrigeration. We replaced the chart table with a new refrigerator/freezer and removed the unused nav seat. The new refrigerator top can still be used as a chart table. The original refrigeration locker gave us additional dry storage. Four inches of insulation surround the new box, and we installed a Technautics coldplate system. This worked flawlessly, even in the tropics, for three years, but went out on us during our longest crossing: up the South Atlantic from South Africa to Trinidad.

We ultimately discovered the problem to be the Aero-Quip line connectors. The valves became contaminated and restricted the flow of refrigerant. Nauti-Kol in Trinidad was able to fix our unit and recommends not using this type of valve.

". . . this ambitious venture worked for us and gave us a safe, comfortable bluewater cruising boat to enjoy while sailing the many oceans of the world."

Worth it?

Would we do it again? Should we have bought a boat (at twice the price) closer to our needs? No matter what the boat, Jerry still would have found an infinite number of projects to improve and restructure existing systems. Overall, our modifications greatly improved the functional effectiveness of our Catalina's performance as a bluewater cruiser.

Taking on the many challenging projects to transform a Catalina 36 is not something most sailors are willing to do. But, this ambitious venture worked for us and gave us a safe, comfortable bluewater cruising boat to enjoy while sailing the many oceans of the world. We were rewarded with the enrichment and creation of magnificent memories and the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.

The preventer system, above left, with lines running to the cockpit. The running backstay is attached to the sidedeck when not in use. Above right, the companionway doors with the traveler system shown behind the dodger. At right, the finished navigation station which incorporates a refrigerator/freezer below the work table.

Reworking a classic

Their Hinckley 38 dreamboat came with a multi-year project list

by J Kolb

Nixon was in the oval office, the Vietnam War was dividing the country, and up in quiet Southwest Harbor, Maine, H.R. Hinckley and Co. (now The Hinckley Co.) was building beautiful sailboats that have since become classics. The company's William Tripp-designed Bermuda 40 and Sparkman & Stephens-designed Pilot 35 have achieved something approaching cult status.

Many sailboats were racing under the Cruising Club of America (CCA) rules. Hinckley, looking to capture part of the CCA racer/cruiser market, started to build the S&S-designed Hinckley 38. Our H-38, *Kotchka*, is the second hull of the series. Like many boats of the era, she has beautiful overhangs, a narrow beam, functional but modest accommodations, and fine craftsmanship. In the brokerage market a Bermuda 40 in similar condition will command nearly double the price of the H-38. The beautiful but much smaller Pilot 35 also commands a higher price. The H-38 with her affordable price, sweet-sailing characteristics, and traditional appearance suited us well.

When we bought *Kotchka*, we knew we were buying a multi-year project of changes, alterations, and upgrades. She required serious updating even for the comfortable, reliable weekend cruising that we could foresee. (Our cruising at that time consisted of weekend outings and a longer vacation cruise each summer.) Like many sailors, we dreamed of a more extensive cruising lifestyle, of moving aboard, and of setting off to parts unknown. Seeing the dream becoming possible later triggered further projects aimed at improved livability, safety, and handling.

One might ask, "Why not buy a boat that required less work?" Since traveling along the water at the pace of a brisk walk is hardly a logical activity, I can only respond that logic is not always the driving force with sailboats.

Rigging and sails first

Our first undertakings were rigging and sail changes. When we purchased *Kotchka*, she had a mixture of rod and wire standing rigging and an extensive quiver of hanked-on foresails. The old glass backstay insulators for the single-sideband radio were cracked and no longer functioning. We replaced the insulators with modern components and were able to keep the rod backstay. We also converted from hanked-on sails to a Furlex roller-furling unit. We replaced the fore and aft lower shrouds and cap shrouds. Our large quiver of foresails was reduced to one all-purpose 145-percent genoa, re-cut from one of the existing 150-percent jibs, and a smaller, heavy-weather backup sail, also re-cut from the inventory. The original sail inventory included a tri-radial spinnaker that we re-cut into an asymmetrical and set up with an ATN snuffer. This allows us to fly the chute simply and safely with a crew of two.

Next came the addition of a holding tank. *Kotchka* had a head that pumped overboard. We installed the plumbing, tank, and pump ourselves. We ended up with a stock 15-gallon holding tank mounted under the V-berth with a through-deck and through-hull with a manual pump-out option. Initially we had the head plumbed directly to the holding tank. We recently added another Y-valve between the head and the tank so we can pump the waste directly out when we're offshore. This system has performed without inci-

***Kotchka*, above, shows her classic lines while sailing downwind. J and Marci Kolb were attracted by her reasonable price, when compared with the Hinckley Bermuda 40 and Pilot 35. The revised foredeck with a repositioned windlass layout, on facing page.**

dent with only regular maintenance, consisting of a weekly dose of white vinegar followed by a splash of vegetable oil.

Before our first launching, we had the old bottom paint removed. After a good drying, we applied a barrier coat and anti-fouling paint.

Thinking things through

We thought things out carefully in each case, and the results have been very positive. But updating a 30-year old sailboat is not always straightforward. Each project was a mini-lesson, forcing us to learn more about the boat, her construction, and our capabilities. The bottom line, which we tried to apply every step of the way, was to take the time to consider everything before purchasing anything, cutting any holes, or taking anything apart. The old cliché reminding us to "measure twice, cut once" only gets at part of the issue. Our considered advice now is, "Before doing *anything*, carefully consider *all* the options."

Case in point: after our first year of ownership we decided to replace the ancient (and frankly, scary) battery-charging system with a Heart inverter/charger and a Link battery monitor. This upgrade provided an opportunity to review all of *Kotchka*'s wiring — a great side benefit to the installation process. Like many older boats with multiple past owners, *Kotchka* had a mixed bag of wiring, some well done, some terrible.

We wound up removing what seemed like miles of old, unused wiring, some of which was household lamp cord. Some wires were simply clipped on each end and left in place, presumably as they were either replaced or no longer needed. Tracking each wire individually, trying to determine what was in use and what was a dead end, was a mess. In hindsight, we should have just pulled out all the wiring and started from scratch. We were negligent and paid the price by not considering all the options before diving in.

Kotchka has had some equipment upgrades as well. A broken Loran was replaced by a Garmin GPS. A massive 12-inch-deep CRT radar unit that was fading rapidly was replaced by a slick new Raytheon flat-screen unit, and we added a cockpit repeater for the GPS. Although Marci and I are not fans of linked electronics, we did opt to interface the GPS with the radar. This enables us to place a waypoint on the radar screen, a nice feature when looking for a particular buoy on a busy and fog-bound Maine coast. The Signet wind indicator and depth sounder and the ICOM M700 SSB on the boat at purchase remain in working order.

"One might ask, 'Why not buy a boat that required less work?' Since traveling along the water at the pace of a brisk walk is hardly a logical activity, I can only respond that logic is not always the driving force with sailboats."

One big surprise

Most of these changes were anticipated, planned, and budgeted, but there was one big surprise. The fall after our second annual hauling and winterizing, the yard mechanic noticed oil in the antifreeze. A professional examination of our Westerbeke 4-107 diesel engine was inconclusive. Compression was low but not outside specifications. Westerbeke indicated the problem was simply old age. Not very satisfying.

After a lot of research, we boiled our options down to two: repower with a new engine or rebuild our 4-107. In favor of the new engine: quieter, lighter, and more powerful, plus a nice new engine warranty. Downside: cost, a big difference. On the plus side for rebuilding: parts for the 4-107 are easily available, any good diesel mechanic can work on it, it is tried and true technology, and no changes to the boat would be required. The engine in *Kotchka* is located under the floor of the main saloon on top of the keel bolts. A new engine would require new mounts, new plumbing for the exhaust, and other reconfiguration expenses related to the tight and awkward space.

We decided to rebuild. While the engine was out of the boat, we seized the opportunity to make a few minor upgrades. We changed the stuffing box to a dripless system, added a dedicated electric pump for oil changes, painted the bilge, and changed the location of the oil filter for easier access. We can now change *Kotchka*'s oil and filter in less than 10 minutes. This makes sticking to a regular oil change schedule a breeze.

This rebuild project, although costly and unanticipated, resulted in good operation and simplified maintenance for a bit more than 1,500 hours. The engine then sprang a tremendous oil leak. Examinations revealed a great deal of blowby air and oil coming back up through the oil fill. The most likely culprits were rings or valves or both. We knew we had to revisit the repower-or-rebuild issue. This time we opted to repower with a rebuilt Perkins 4-108, a slightly more powerful and a bit faster-turning engine with the same footprint.

Sailing often

During our first seven years of ownership, we sailed *Kotchka* as often as possible. We worked on keeping her varnish in good shape, improved her cosmetics with a new paint job, and plugged away at the 101 regular

jobs all boatowners face. Then our cruising plans took a dramatic turn. I lost my job, and Marci was able to take a leave of absence. We seized the day and spent 10 weeks cruising Downeast Maine and the eastern shore of Nova Scotia. This extended cruise gave us insight into the difference between weekend cruising and being full-time liveaboards. We returned from this trip armed with a "to do" list in anticipation of moving aboard and cruising full time.

At the top of the list were several creature comfort improvements. We replaced the cushions in the sleeping berth. While adequate for weekend cruising, they and our backs did not hold up with their everyday use. We wanted a multi-density foam, firm on the bottom and soft on the top, for the cushion. We were talked into five inches of semi-firm foam. We should have been more insistent, as we quickly realized we wanted more softness. First we tried egg-crate foam purchased at a discount store. While this was an improvement, we still didn't have the comfort we wanted.

"We replaced the cushions in the sleeping berth. While adequate for weekend cruising, they and our backs did not hold up."

We've recently replaced the egg-crate foam with a thicker foam mattress pad cut to fit. This has made a dramatic improvement.

During our test cruise we also realized that getting out of the weather was important, so we installed a more robust dodger and a sun awning. New cockpit cushions were also part of this round of work. For this we opted to use Sunbrella fabric for everything: interior cushions, dodger, awning, the works. But cockpit cushions are exposed to the elements and are subject to lots of dirt, traffic, and stains. Sunbrella was not the right material. We have since recovered these cushions with a more cleanable, stain-resistant fabric called Phifertex. Once again a little more thought and research might have saved us some dollars, time, and aggravation.

Other quality-of-life improvements addressed storage and functionality in the living spaces. Long overhangs, a narrow beam, and beautiful tumblehome make *Kotchka* a sweet sailer and a handsome vessel, but they don't do a thing for functional interior space. Her wide and deep cockpit lockers were great for carrying the sails necessary for a hanked-on racer in the CCA days. As functional storage space for a liveaboard, however, they leave a lot to be desired. Sliding saloon settees and pilot berths were great for an offshore racing crew but severely limited our storage space. We modified both pilot berths to improve storage. The starboard side was altered to create under-berth stowage. The port side was modified to create additional cupboards, drawers, and cubby storage. Cockpit locker storage is still a work in progress, but it is at the top of the list.

Ground tackle changes

Kotchka's ground tackle, windlass, and so on — while fine for a racer/cruiser — were not adequate for liveaboards who use this gear nearly every day. When we purchased *Kotchka*, her ground tackle consisted

Additional storage spaces were created throughout the boat: in the nav station, above, and in the saloon, left and right, where the port pilot berth was transformed into additional cupboards, drawers, and cubbies and the starboard pilot berth was modified to create underberth stowage.

of an adequately sized CQR linked to 6 feet of chain and 200 feet of ⅝-inch three-strand. She now has 175 feet of chain and 250 feet of rode linked to the CQR. We also carry a Danforth and a Fortress, both with chain and rode. Anchor sentinels were added to our ground-tackle inventory. The sentinels keep *Kotchka* from tripping the secondary rope rode with her keel when swinging in a current or wind shift. We also repositioned the windlass to allow for a better fall of the chain into the locker. This whole process of redesigning and changing the anchoring system was done in several steps. Had we known better what our cruising needs for an anchoring system would be, we could have saved a lot of time and money.

The transition from weekend cruising to liveaboard status caused us to make several changes. All of these were considered "must-haves" before moving aboard. We added a four-man life raft, an EPIRB, a Sailomat windvane, and solar panels to *Kotchka*'s inventory. Many cruisers opt for wind generators. We've never regretted our decision to go the solar route. The panels have delivered quiet, unobtrusive, maintenance-free operation. Even on cloudy days, they produce a bit of a charge. Every time we are anchored near a cruiser with a wind generator, the constant whir has confirmed our choice. After about a year of use, we reconfigured the solar panel mounting brackets to allow us to tilt the panels to better catch the sun's rays. The improvement has been significant.

Rigged for cruising with a windvane (lower right) and solar panels (top right), *Kotchka* has spent two years traveling north from Maine to the Canadian Maritimes and south to the Bahamas. The engine is shown above.

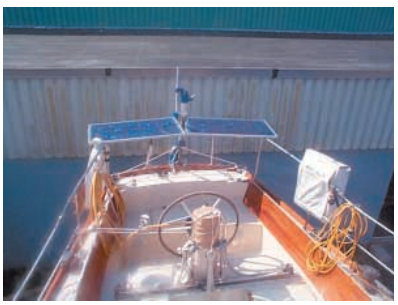
The list goes on

When we moved aboard, our mid-1980s-vintage belowdecks autopilot was functioning, albeit a bit erratically. During our first six months of cruising, it finally gave out. We opted to replace it with an above-deck unit from Scanmar. We looked at several below-deck and above-deck installations. Tipping the scales in favor of the Scanmar unit were easy installation, a competitive price, and generally good reviews. The unit has not performed well, however, although support from the company has been very good. It is awkward to engage and disengage the unit, and it has erratic steering. Plus or minus 20 degrees is about as good as it will do. In spite of less-than-stellar performance from the autopilot, single-handed watches are now significantly easier, more enjoyable, and (in our view) safer.

> *"We added a four-man life raft, an EPIRB, a Sailomat windvane, and solar panels."*

Our first year aboard we sailed *Kotchka* to Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, and Nova Scotia. Then we moved down the East Coast of the U.S. to Florida and on to the Bahamas. The second year saw us cruising Maine for the summer, followed by another trip south, then on to the Out Islands of the Bahamas.

During our two years aboard we've learned a lot, met many wonderful people, and have been aboard many great cruising boats. We're often left yearning for their roomier interior, efficient anchoring system, cutter rig, and/or mizzenmast. But for all of her limitations, *Kotchka* is our home. It takes just one admiring comment from a fellow cruiser to remind us of what she has — great classic beauty, sweet sailing, and years of our own sweat equity — to help us to overlook any shortcomings.



A *Christmas* tale

A classic Alden yawl becomes a treasured family cruiser once more

by Tom Young

The 1961 Alden Challenger yawl looked quite large on the jackstands that brisk fall day. The price and this somewhat rare boat made me curious. "Only taking a look," I told myself. I wasn't prepared for a pretty boat though. With her long overhangs, large shapely ports, stepped cabinhouse, and oval spruce spars with the sails still bent on, there was no mistaking the era of the design: Cruising Club of America (CCA) Rule, the 1950s and '60s. She was lovely to look at. Before long she would be ours. We would name her *Christmas*.

A long, sharp, spoon-shaped bow loomed overhead as I approached. It was easy to imagine it slicing through a wave, gently pushing the sea aside as I walked aft along the waterline. A moderate beam and somewhat slack turn at the bilge amidships looked like it would move easily through blue water. Following her lines aft to the graceful stern, I saw smooth water and a tiny wake in the shadow of her counter quietly moving away.

Above the solid fiberglass decks, the boat was built entirely of wood. Long wide sweeping decks framed the graceful mahogany cabin sides. A white cabintop met the sides in finely shaped moldings. Hatches, Dorade boxes, coamings, cockpit…these parts were built of fine teak and mahogany.

Dorade ventilators, heavy hatch hinges, stanchions, and cleats were all nicely forged of thick nickel-plated bronze. Details such as the boathook and its carved mounting block; the spruce spinnaker pole and chocks; the hand-cut, dovetailed corners on her deck box and Dorade boxes — all showed a high degree of quality. The spars looked fit to be displayed on a wall. The workmanship was splendid.

All wood below

An old bronze lock under the John Alden identification plaque turned easily. The heavy mahogany hatch slid smoothly into the stainless-steel sea hood.

She was all wood below. Her large,

***Christmas*, a classic 38-foot 6-inch John Alden design built during the era of the CCA Rule, shows her overhanging stern and spoon bow to advantage in the fading light of a Maine sunset. One of the early fiberglass boats, she was one of approximately 50 Alden Challengers built in the 1960s.**

Author Tom Young brought a water-damaged and mildewed interior back to a sunny and gleaming haven. He saw the quality woods and craftsmanship there and was not dissuaded by the project that lay ahead of him. He went at the project one step at a time, he says, taking great pleasure in building the pile of varnished parts, below, ready for re-installation in the spring. His goal through the entire project was to keep *Christmas* on the water and sailing each summer.

shapely old ports lit the interior as if the sun were in there. She was nearly all original after 40 years of what looked to be a lot of use. The boat wasn't ancient, just old enough to have some history.

Only about 50 Challengers were built in the 1960s. The fiberglass hulls and decks were laid up by hand at the Halmatic yard in England. This hull was then shipped to the Molich yard in Denmark. There the rest of the boat was constructed following the blueprints supplied by John G. Alden Naval Architects, Inc., of Boston. Designed to the CCA racing rules of the day, she resembled several similar boats of the era.

The boat I was looking at was priced below the lower end of the few Alden Challengers for sale or recently sold. She wasn't moving either. She needed a lot of work. So here I was: faced with the "old boat fixer-upper dilemma." A second offer had fallen through when the survey came in, lowering the boat's price…again. Her disrepair was obvious. Was this last fallen offer a ploy by the buyers to lower her price one more time for a third offer? After much thought and inspection, I decided not to find out. Was the boat worth it? Despite its problems, I thought it clearly was and more. I made a fair offer with no survey contingency. I wanted the sellers to know this was a real offer and I wanted the boat. (I don't recommend this tactic; it usually turns out to be a mistake.)

I had done my own survey. The design has some common problems in the built-in fuel tanks and chainplates. These were repairable. But I believe her general disrepair caused the other offers to fall through. To someone without the skills to bring her back, the yard estimates would have been staggering.

"A full boatyard restoration, added to the cost of the boat, would quickly surpass her value. Luckily, I could supply the missing care she needed."

High-quality yawl

But I saw a different boat that day. I saw a 38-foot 6-inch CCA Rule design…a high-quality yawl. The Alden name alone put the boat in a class few others share. There was nothing like her in this size, quality, and price range. She had a bomb-proof 1960s-style heavy fiberglass hull, external full lead keel, and bronze centerboard. She was fully equipped; few parts were missing. She had good sails: a Harken furled genoa, five spinnakers, and lockers full of sheets and blocks. She had gleaming two-speed self-tailing winches and secondaries. She had two full sets of ground tackle and a well-installed electric windlass for hauling them up.

There were well-installed compressed natural gas (CNG) tanks, a beautifully built original pedestal, and a fine compass as well as a lovely, old, finely joined wooden wheel with an added stainless rim. Docklines were coiled in a beautiful wooden deck box on the aft deck. What a wonderful idea.

There were shapely and well-built stanchions, pulpits, and double lifelines, all heavily installed with large stainless backing plates. A well-built hull-to-deck joint was sealed, through-bolted, and glassed together. On deck were the highest quality fittings, a well-designed dodger attached to a high mahogany curb, and stout yet well-finished wooden parts expertly joined and as strong today as the day they were assembled 40 years ago. With care, they'd be good for another 40 years. This was quality construction.

Below I saw the same complete high quality. An old fresh-water-cooled Japanese diesel looked to be installed nicely and had been well cared for. Cases of spare oil filters and fuel filters were a good sign. She held 80 gallons of fuel low in the bilge (and the tanks were full), and she had three stainless-steel water tanks holding a total of 120 gallons of water.

No-nonsense electrical

There was an older no-nonsense electrical system with two house batteries and a separate engine battery, plus heavy and well-installed wiring, meticulously led throughout. There were adequate electronics. Her galley stove was nearly unused. Plates, tableware, cooking utensils … everything was still with the boat.

Dozens of drawers and doors held tons of spares. Even a full complement of tools — from tiny screwdrivers to huge bolt cutters — was with the boat. Solid teak-and-holly floors were hidden under years of use. There was something else below: the 40-year-old work of skilled Danish craftsmen and the fine materials they used. To someone like me, this was priceless. She even had a beautiful old fireplace.

Another example of quality was in the two overhead hatches. These were well designed structurally and expertly joined in their day. Now crazed beyond recognition, the ½-inch-thick Plexiglas would have to be replaced with new Lexan. One of my first projects was to strip the ports of finish and hardware, replace the windows with Lexan, refinish, reassemble, and reinstall the ports. With simple maintenance, these wooden hatches and their heavy hardware are once again strong and finely finished.

The work on deck was no less daunting than the interior project. The ports leaked, the fiberglass cabintop was cracked and peeling, and lifted varnish was everywhere. The first spring consisted of rebedding ports in an effort to quell the leaks and stripping and varnishing the exterior cabin sides. *Christmas* spent the next winter under cover as all cabintop parts and hardware were removed, renewed, and reinstalled on the repaired and freshly painted cabintop.

"The Alden name alone put the boat in a class few others share. There was nothing like her in this size, quality, and price range."

Fortunately for me, other buyers didn't see what I saw that first day. They saw peeling paint and varnish above and below the decks and realized the boat was in need of total stripping and refinishing. It was hard to see the fine wood below a sun-bleached layer of peeling finish.

The cabintop, built of ¾-inch plywood with a layer of fiberglass over that, was cracked and peeling. All ports had been leaking into the interior for some time. There were water stains and lifted varnish throughout. Water had damaged many under-deck ceilings as well. There were leak and rust stains through handholds, hatches, and other parts all over the overhead. Paint was peeling off in large chunks.

Common dilemma

Labor costs are high today. These repairs would no doubt bring boatyard estimates nearly as high as the selling price, a common dilemma today. A full boatyard restoration, added to the cost of the boat, would quickly surpass her value. Luckily, I could supply the missing care she needed. Despite the obvious damage, I suspected the boat had been well cared for with only a few years of recent neglect. This turned out to be true; research showed me that she was a New England boat that had been loved by members of one family for 35 years. She had been stored inside during the off-season.

I knew this restoration would require more than a few nights and weekends. *Christmas* needed to be on the water in season; that's our first priority for a sailboat. I would have to split the restoration into parts to be performed over time.

The biggest trick with a project like this — as I have learned during 25 years of building and restoring homes — is keeping the tasks achievable. There are times to step back and look at the total project, but the actual work is done in small increments. My advice is to cut the project into parts. To restore a cabintop, the first project is to remove everything. Even that may be daunting. Just get one part off first. It starts with removing one screw, then another. When removing parts gets frustrating, go home and start stripping the ones you have. Keep yourself motivated by applying yourself where you are most productive and you can see results. With the "parts removal project" completed, the top itself is an easy project.

The first spring consisted of removing all ports, stripping the exterior cabin sides, rebedding the ports, and applying varnish to the cabin exterior. The next winter under cover involved removing everything from the cabintop. Refinishing the parts in a warm shop when time was available became a project within the project. Seeing the parts begin to build up ready for re-installation was a mental boost. I stripped the interior of paint and varnish. In my shop, I refinished any interior parts easy to remove.

Once weather permitted, I made fiberglass repairs to the top and followed that with a new coat of epoxy paint (brush applied). With the cabintop parts rebedded and fastened, the interior overhead was repainted. It was wonderful to see the leaks stop.

And so a restoration goes. Step by

***Christmas* had been owned and loved by the members of one family for 35 years (and was even stored inside each winter) before meeting with neglect. Now she sails again with Tom Young and his family, a foursome that is appreciating her fully and treating her once more in the manner to which she had previously become accustomed.**

step. A little more this year. Above all, every year she sails. Every year she gets better. A lot of work? Sure, but there are rewards. *Christmas* has become a welcome addition to our family of four. She is nearly perfect for our coastal sailing in New England. She's wonderful and very responsive, even in light air. She's well suited to our Maine coast cruising grounds. Since she's easily balanced under way, we often watch her sail herself. The large cockpit and wide decks make time under way and at anchor very comfortable. With her board-up draft of 4 feet, we go where many can't. Her yawl rig is easy to handle and fun to sail. When it pipes up around here, she can get us home.

Except for cutting down her enormous center table with seating for six, I left the old tried and true belowdecks layout alone. Although they were designed for racing crews, the two pilot berths are about as good as it gets for two kids. The lower extension berths make great seats and pullout couches for lounging around an evening fire. The forward cabin is large, private, and airy with tons of storage space. The head is the warmest spot below when the fireplace is burning, thanks to a grating in the bulkhead.

The no-nonsense galley/navigation area just works well. We love to cook at home and aboard. The huge stainless-steel icebox with a separate sump holds tons of food and ice and makes a good navigation station with a full-sized chart drawer above. These old boats hold so much gear and stores in countless lockers and drawers that the temptation to take off in them is always dangerously appealing.

More character now

The newly refinished African mahogany belowdecks glows like soft sunlight. Water-damaged ceilings over bunks provided templates for new contrasting birch veneer ceilings. The satin-painted overhead has more character now. There is nothing like fine old wood, renewable yet enhanced with age. There is a feeling of a little history as you climb below. She raced to Bermuda in the 1960s. Would she do it again?

This isn't a boat for everybody. But if gently brushing varnish onto a newly prepared cabin side lowers your blood pressure, maybe an Alden Challenger is for you. Many good old all-fiberglass CCA designs are out there. Some will require similar labor-intensive restoration. High yard costs to refurbish these boats may drive the price down on boats in disrepair. It will also drive up the value of performing these tasks yourself. Look closely. If the boat has the other important parts, supplying the restoration part may be cost effective.

Take a close look at some of these older neglected boats. Get a survey. What parts are missing? I still remember my first look at this boat that wasn't selling. That brisk fall day I saw a different boat.

What did *Christmas* cost?

by Tom Young

When I found *Christmas*, she had recently been appraised for insurance purposes at $50,000. I made no offer at that time. Nearly a year later, after buyers backed out of contracts due to survey reports, I offered — and bought the boat for — $30,000. After a year on the open market, a little down on her luck, I believe that was her value on that day.

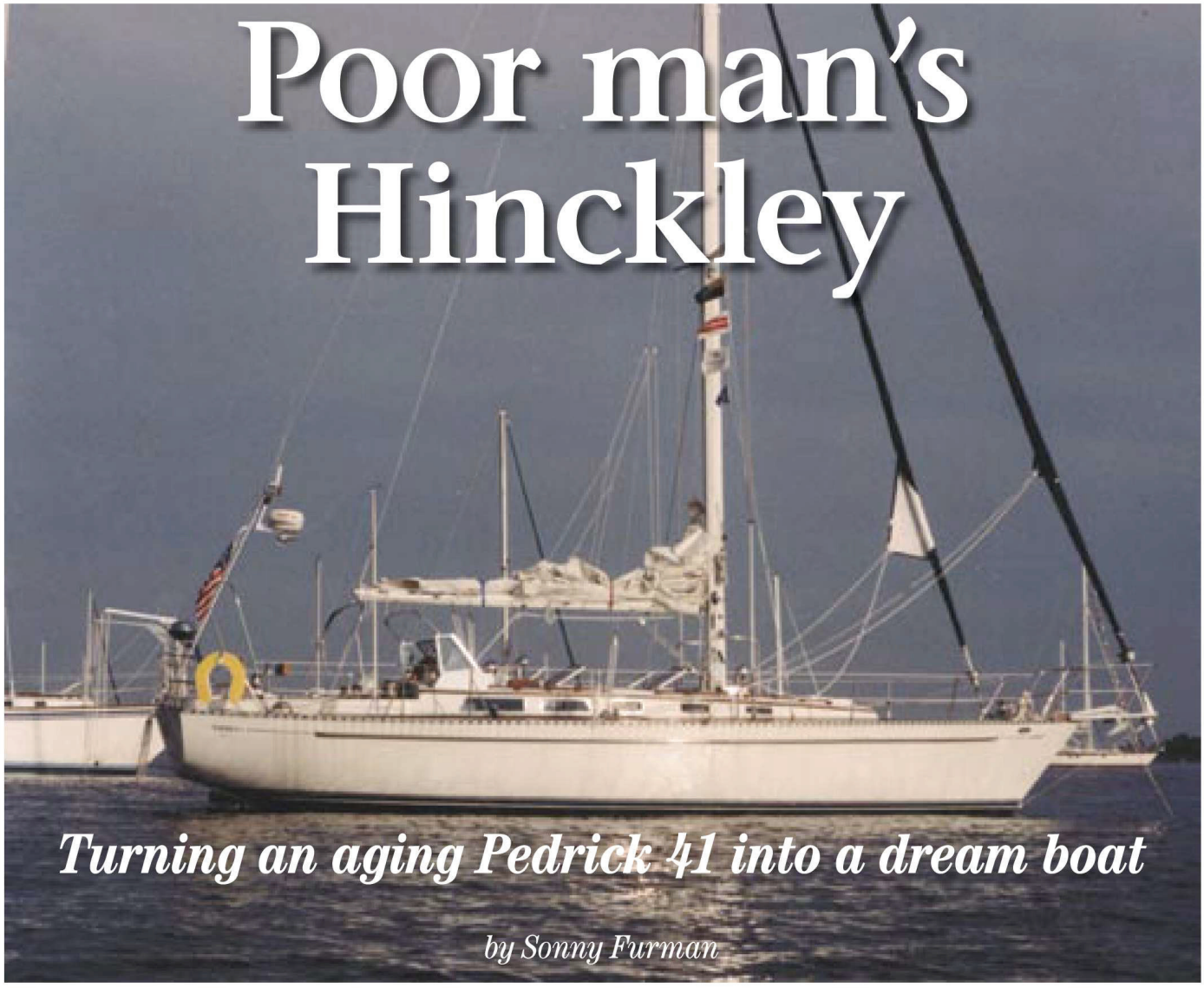
I estimate that I have spent around 400 "mostly pleasant hours" on the general refit over 3 years. The high level of quality and workmanship that was evident when I surveyed the boat has resulted in little repair or replacement of major parts or systems. For me, this is the key in choosing a boat for a refit. The high labor costs necessary to refit older, tired boats with sound fiberglass hulls and quality parts reduce their value. High boatyard labor costs will create "project boats."

Restoring boats is no way to make money. Nonetheless, sailing a pretty classic that doesn't cost too much is, for some of us, a real pleasure.

This CCA era in the 1960s produced some elegant designs with lasting appeal and now, for some, rising values. Alden Challengers in good condition have listing prices in the $60,000-range and go up from there for the really-well-cared-for boats.

What *Christmas* is worth now can best be summed up by a surveyor who gave me an overview of the boat, prior to purchase. "A 38-foot Alden Challenger yawl, CCA classic, high Alden quality, and with the equipment that boat has in that price range…there is nothing else like that out there, nothing," he told me, and he was so right.

Poor man's Hinckley



Turning an aging Pedrick 41 into a dream boat

by Sonny Furman

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH BOATS BEGAN in 1971, while I was ferrying aircraft in and out of Vietnam via Ching Chuan Kang, a Chinese Air Force base in Taiwan used by the U.S. Air Force for C-130 operations.

During downtime, I would travel to the southern ports along the coast, mesmerized by the sleek yachts under construction for wealthy foreign owners. I would sit and dream, hoping that someday I might set sail in one of these beautifully crafted "leaky teakies," as those early Taiwanese boats were sometimes called. But it would not be until many years later that, still humbled by the craftsmanship and labor that went into building those boats, I would realize my dream.

Years of sailing and four boats later, I embarked on a quest to find what might become the perfect cruising boat for me. Knowing that all things are at the very least a tradeoff, I set out to find a boat that would fulfill my most basic needs. It must have moderate speed in light air, moderate draft, and the ability to stand up well in offshore conditions; be a dry sailing boat with comfort both in the cockpit and below; have good storage; and, naturally, be affordable.

"Neshuma began life as a sloop, but with a pitiful anchor storage arrangement and some undesirable weather helm. I decided to change her into a cutter and add a more suitable bow platform and a means of extending the rig."

In order to keep such an ambitious project within my budget, I also knew that I must be capable of doing the refurbishing and repairs myself. After much searching, I finally found the best candidate suited to the task, a basically well-kept 1983 Cheoy Lee Pedrick 41 keel/centerboarder located in the Gulf of Mexico.

I bought the boat and had it shipped to my home in Annapolis, Maryland. By the time it arrived I already had a fair idea of what it would take to turn my dream boat into a reality. So I set about on a two-year task that did a good job of wearing down my fingers as well as thinning out my bank account.

***Neshuma*, Sonny Furman's Cheoy Lee Pedrick 41, has been extensively modified. He added a bow platform and re-rigged her as a cutter. He added a windshield to protect the cockpit from spray and davits to carry a dinghy. He installed new roller furlers for the headsail and staysail.**

Changed to cutter

Neshuma began life as a sloop, but with a pitiful anchor storage arrangement and some undesirable weather helm. I decided to change her into a cutter and add a more suitable bow platform and a means of extending the rig. I constructed the platform of laminated teak strips, through-bolted internally every 10 inches with stainless-steel threaded rod. I also fabricated the custom twin rollers, scuff plates, headstay fittings, and all other metal fittings.

The platform was firmly bolted through the foredeck with massive backing plates and an adjustable internal truss rod in the anchor locker to take the load of the inner stay. A bobstay connected to a heavily reinforced bow fitting takes the lower loads and those of the truss rod to equalize the forces. I then cut the original bow rail and welded in sections to extend it.

I installed new roller furlers for the headsail and staysail. These increased the total foretriangle area by 120 square feet. This alone made a vast improvement in light-air sailing, decreased the weather helm, and provided much greater flexibility in sail combinations for all conditions. *Neshuma* is now very well balanced on nearly all points of sail and much easier to manage singlehanded.

"I located a newly rebuilt 65-hp Perkins 4-154 diesel. Of course, it was no easy feat shoehorning that beast into place, with a scant 1/8-inch clearance going down the companionway."

The original engine was a 44-hp Universal model 50 diesel, with barely enough power to make headway into any kind of seaway, especially considering the boat's 24,500-pound fully-loaded displacement. I decided to replace it with a bit more heft, so I located a newly rebuilt 65-hp Perkins 4-154 diesel. Of course, it was no easy feat shoehorning that beast into place, with a scant ⅛-inch clearance going down the companionway.

Tight squeeze

The engine had to be stripped of all accessories then reassembled after having been fitted to the beds, all in a space that scarcely had room for a hand on either side. The entire swap took me more than a month of intensive labor and much custom fabrication in my basement shop. The repowering required new engine beds, a complete new custom exhaust system, and a plethora of custom fittings, each requiring careful engineering and fabrication, including special machining to adapt the Hurth V-drive. Of course all the boatyard mechanics said it couldn't be done . . . not enough space.

A new custom three-bladed propeller and shaft were provided by Jimmies Prop Shop of Miami, Florida; those guys really know what's going on and delivered superb service and pricing. Yes, I could have gotten one locally, but at Annapolis prices. With the new engine and prop I can attain

Sonny replaced the 44-hp engine, at left, with a more powerful one, below, which barely fit through the companionway.

The galley, before, at left, and after, at right on facing page.

hull speed quite handily, but I normally cruise at 7.5 knots at 2,400 rpm.

In the electrical department, I fitted a new 100-amp Balmar alternator, along with a Heart 2,500-watt inverter and three gel cell batteries totaling 525 amp-hours. It's proven to be a real bulletproof system. I also decided to upgrade the entire electrical panel and rewire the entire boat, since most of the wiring was old and marginal. I also built a custom breaker panel into what had previously been a shelf space at the side of the nav station.

The rewiring job was daunting but ultimately worth the effort. I needed to replace and upgrade all the electronics, but I knew right away that the original open shelf above the nav desk was inadequate, so I built in a new and larger teak-faced panel. It was mounted with a piano hinge so the entire affair can swing out for servicing (see photo on Page 50). It houses all of the radios, radar, and instruments with a built-in look.

Teak and stainless

I wanted my cockpit instrumentation mounted in a pod at the wheel, but all I could find were rather expensive pods made of PVC. I rounded up some scraps of teak and cut out the side of an old stainless-steel fire extinguisher (see photo on Page 50). Hey, this modification didn't even cost what I call a full "boat unit" ($100, because it seems that's the minimum you spend every time you open your wallet at the marine store).

Sonny welded his own davits for the dinghy, at far left, and constructed the anchor platform, at near left, out of laminated teak stripes.

Early on it became apparent that with the low coachroof, the boat seemed more likely to get green water in the cockpit, making for a somewhat damp ride at times. I hit on the idea of a hard windshield, remembering just how many soft dodgers I've had to replace after just a couple of years in service. A quick look on the eBay website turned up a nice used powerboat windshield, which I bought for less than the price of dinner at the marina, herein known as a "marina unit."

All I really wanted was the frame material anyway, so work then began: making templates, cutting, welding, and forming up a coaming from marine ply and fiberglass. I had a local glass shop make up the windows from tempered plate. The finished product looked almost as though Hallberg-Rassy had put it on at the factory. A new custom mini-dodger was made up that could stand alone over the windshield and further keep out spray, and the new Bimini top was fitted with a center section that can be zipped in to complete the entire ensemble and provide full shade and weather protection.

"…I bought [a nice used powerboat windshield] for less than the price of dinner at the marina, herein known as a 'marina unit.' "

Since I normally carry my dinghy while sailing, I looked high and low for davits that would do the job, but most were quite expensive and even a bit flimsy, so I welded up my own, using 1½ inch-square 316 stainless tube. I designed it so that both arms can swing up out of the way in a crowded storage area or tight slip. I simply

For the most part, Sonny left *Neshuma's* interior as it was, concentrating instead on her sailing characteristics and exterior. However, he did rewire her and added an alternator and inverter. He also ripped out all leaking ports (that is to say *all* ports) and redesigned them, modified the folding table that blocked traffic through the boat, tiled the head and galley countertops and sole in the head, and revised the navigation station.

remove one pivot bolt, and there are no more charges for additional boat length. The total cost in material was two marina units.

Leaky ports

The interior was basically in excellent condition, save for the ubiquitous leaks found below every fixed and opening port — a Cheoy Lee hallmark. I ripped out every port and window in the boat, only to discover that they were held in by little more than their interior wooden trim rings. One good wave and it might have been all over.

I cut polycarbonate windows for each, but added another 1 inch of material to the perimeter, which was then through-bolted to the stainless exterior trim rings and sealed with 3M automotive window mastic. It required shimming the interior panels just a bit, which I covered in matte white Formica. If nothing else, this really helped brighten up the interior. No more leaks.

The original folding teak table in the saloon was actually too big when opened — I seldom seat eight

for dinner — and blocked all traffic to the forward cabin. I narrowed the leaf on the walkway side by 10 inches and constructed a teak-faced plywood cabinet to enclose all the wasted space under the table, along with two opening doors. This adds much-appreciated storage for dry goods and those ever-so-tall cereal boxes.

The floor in the head and all countertops are now covered in matte white 2-inch tile, which looks superb and is easy to keep clean, all courtesy of Home Depot. Cost? About one marina unit. Because of all the dark teak, the head had to be revamped. Now it's faced mostly with Formica and teak trim. Much brighter, easy to clean, and inviting.

The hull and topsides were in remarkably good shape when I first purchased the boat. The previous owner had the entire boat painted with Imron polyurethane, a project I would *not* suggest for the do-it-yourselfer.

"To this day, I often hear the same flattering comment by dockwalkers, 'Isn't that a Hinckley?'"

No blisters or rubrails

The bottom had also been given a complete epoxy job, and there was no evidence of blisters. One obvious glitch was the lack of rubrails, something most of us think about when docking, especially with beautifully painted topsides. I laminated and spliced up long strips of select mahogany, through-bolted to the hull every 18 inches, and capped it with sacrificial stainless-steel rubbing strakes.

Once I had the new cutter rig, I was disappointed with the original mainsail, so I had one made up by a loft in Hong Kong. I won't say just how many boat units, but it was about 30 percent cheaper than the prices quoted by the local lofts, and the finished product was better than I expected.

Today, the refurbishing of *Neshuma* is essentially done, or as done as any boat ever is. Like everyone else, I have my lists. She has recently been fitted with a Pur-40 watermaker, as well as a new rigid inflatable boat (RIB) and outboard. I've also fitted a 75-watt solar panel atop the davits with an adjustable swing mount to catch the sun at various angles. An extended cruise to the Bahamas, South America, and beyond is drawing very near.

It's interesting to note how similar the specifications of this David Pedrick design are to the Hinckley Sou'wester 42, designed by McCurdy & Rhodes. With the exception of the lower coachroof, the hull form, keel/centerboard, underbody, sail plan, and dimensions appear to be nearly identical.

To this day, I often hear the same flattering comment by dockwalkers, "Isn't that a Hinckley?" When I then explain that it's a Cheoy Lee built in Hong Kong, most look a bit puzzled and just keep smiling.

The restoration complete, Sonny and his wife, Sharon, are heading toward South America aboard *Neshuma*. Photos from top show the modified instrument pod at the helm, the nav station, and the interior cabinetry.

by Steve Bunnell

An *Improbable* conversion

Famous wooden ocean racer now modified for shorthanded cruising

IMPROBABLE IS THE WRONG NAME FOR this boat. *Logical* would be better, or *Synergy*, or *Refinement*. I wasn't thinking about names when I first spotted her at Seattle's Shilshole Marina. I simply responded to the boat's great lines, clean open decks, carbon-fiber spinnaker poles, jillions of winches, no real cockpit…all the parts of a serious raceboat. But she was made of wood! I couldn't help but stroll over and meet owner Len Schwab.

Len had singlehanded his 42-foot boat down from Friday Harbor in the San Juan Islands to have covers made for the two beautiful carbon-fiber spinnaker poles chocked onto *Improbable's* deck. The twin poles are the latest refinement, the latest tweak in Len's ongoing effort to improve his singlehanded sailing. Carbon fiber, of course, because there is little lighter or stronger, and Len wanted poles that he could manage alone. Twin poles, notice, because he's worked out a two-pole spinnaker-jibing system he can pull off all by his lonesome with the boat charging downwind.

At the time, Len was 66 years old. His boat was 31 years old. They'd been together since 1976 when *Improbable* retired from a successful ocean-racing career that included an overall win in the 1971 Fastnet Race. This makes sense since the boat was designed for and does best in heavy weather. Built in 1971 as an all-out ocean racer with design input by the Bay Area racing's who's who ("Commodore" Tomkins, Skip Allen, Tom Wylie, and Ron Holland), *Improbable* proved to be a great ocean racer and the breakthrough design her creators envisioned. She set a record in the heavy-weather 1971 Miami-Montego Bay race and won her class in the 1972 Transpac. Those, plus other victories, landed her in

***Improbable*, a 42-foot wooden racer designed by Gary Mull, becomes a singlehanded sailer with the refinements made by owner Len Schwab. At right, a hydraulic autopilot with the power to work in heavy seas.**

Len has worked out a safe procedure for solo spinnaker launch and recovery. He also uses a jackline system with dual tethers so he's never unclipped.

Sailing magazine's 1993 "100 Greatest Sailing Yachts in North America," the only Northwest boat to be included in the "modern racers" category.

Intelligent modifications

It's interesting to take a closer look at the intelligent modifications Len has made for singlehanded or shorthanded cruising, a situation that challenges many of us. An engineer by profession, Len takes a very practical, solid approach to so-called shorthanded modifications. He has a Benmar pilot steering system on *Improbable*, so it's not likely to fail. Adapted from hydraulic units used in fishing vessels, *Improbable's* autopilot has the power to push a 19,000-pound boat around in heavy seas. There are no little plastic gears to explode, just good old hydraulic fluid squishing around inside fat hoses. It's an impressive system.

From the beginning, Len saw the need for the robust autopilot system. He has maintained the same simplicity and ruggedness in all the other modifications he has made to his beloved vessel. A review of one man's visions may stimulate the dreams of others.

But first a bit about the boat. Designed by Gary Mull in 1970 to goals generated by a racing syndicate, *Improbable* is far from the usual production vessel. Nonetheless, she has proved to be a first-rate ocean-cruising vessel precisely because she was designed to go fast under difficult conditions. She was the antithesis of the customer-pleasing assemblage of head-to-bed specifications around which naval architects try to wrap a successful sailing vessel. Stepping below on *Improbable*, the immediate impression is "Gee, this is a working boat . . . a stripped-out ocean voyager." But a second look reveals that it's all there from bed to head to nav station and galley. It's just all in one "room," and it isn't fancy.

"Len modified the cockpit until it had a depth of only 6 inches. Why? He never sat in it, and eliminating the foot well created a usable aft cabin."

Dave Allen, a top San Francisco Bay area sailor, and his syndicate cohorts first planned a 38-foot ocean racer. When their planning efforts did not gel, Dave took many of their parameters to young Gary Mull and asked him for a similar ocean racer but one with standing headroom. In his words, Gary's 42-foot response featured a " . . . fairly fine bow and good stability for windward work, and at the same time (would) maintain a long, light hull for off-wind performance." He configured a deep, stern-mounted, tiller-controlled rudder for maximum steering force.

The design called for a small, shallow cockpit with a low deck box surrounding the mast for the stowing of halyards and control lines. A fin keel was called for, hanging under a narrow hull with a deeper vee than today's ocean racers carry.

Weight concentrated

Beam came out at 11 feet, waterline length is 37 feet, and draft is 6 feet 11 inches. Sail area is around 830 square feet, balanced by 8,500 pounds of ballast. Weight was concentrated mid-vessel with the engine just aft of the mast and the top section of the steel keel holding diesel fuel. To further save weight, the boat was constructed of cold-molded, triple-laminated New Zealand kauri wood over 4-inch laminated kauri frames. Because they were experts in such things, and because the wood was there, Dave Allen had *Improbable* built by the T. K. Atkinson yard in Auckland, New Zealand (remember, this was before the world knew much about New Zealand sailors).

Final displacement came out to just 18,000 pounds (very light for its day). Len figures she displaces about 19,000 pounds today. The hull struc-

Using a deck-circling line led to the tiller, at left, Len Schwab can steer from anyplace on the working deck. The winches are designed with hefty and convenient below-deck driveshafts, at right, linking winch handle to winch.

ture consists of three thin kauri-wood skins wrapped around longitudinal stringers. Hull thickness is 1 inch. Len has since glassed the hull for extra strength and reduced maintenance. There are two sizeable watertight bulkheads forward, joined to stringers that create a strong girder arrangement. The hull has remained stiff and rot-free, a testimony to the design, the builders, and the dense kauri wood, which is now almost a protected species — no logging, no exporting.

The small cabin makes for an open deck space which accommodates 14 spinnaker, sheet, and halyard winches. The setup testifies to the power of the lever. Len doesn't have to manhandle much. *Improbable* even has a unique set of linked winches that allow sheet trim from the opposite side of a heeled deck. The winches are designed with below-deck driveshafts linking winch handle to winch. They are hefty, powerful, and convenient. Len modified the cockpit until it had a depth of only 6 inches. Why? He never sat in it, and eliminating the foot well created a usable aft cabin. The autopilot steers; he moves around adjusting or goes below to eat, rest, and sleep. Course adjustment is often done with a simple joystick.

Rudder redesign

In his quest for strength and efficiency, Len has redesigned the big rudder three times. By the time I met him, he thought he'd finally got it right. He says *Improbable* goes to windward very well in heavy weather, chunking along at 7 knots even in big seas. When not sailing under the autopilot, Len can steer from anyplace on the working deck using a deck-circling line led to the tiller.

Len has worked out a safe procedure for solo spinnaker launch and recovery. He doesn't hesitate to fly the big kite even in blustery conditions. The boat tracks so well, the autopilot steers so well, and the dual spinnaker poles jibe so easily, that Len has been known to drive her solo downwind at speeds up to 12 knots.

Sails and steering aren't the only controls that Len has modified. He has put in a thoughtful system of central pad-eyes that enable him to move about the boat firmly tethered at all times. A dual line clipped to his harness means that he is never unclipped, and the short jacklines protect against projectile falls as well as possible man-overboards.

> *"Improbable retired from a successful ocean-racing career that included an overall win in the 1971 Fastnet Race."*

Len's engineering training certainly aids his modifications of *Improbable*. Just as important is the wisdom he has gleaned from his considerable sea time. He began sailing in 1964 in southern California. Soon he purchased a Baltic 29 and got in some offshore sailing before taking a job with Boeing, in Seattle, where he purchased a 38-foot wooden ketch and moved aboard. By the early 1970s he was off with his three young sons for what would be a three-year cruise down the Atlantic seaboard and through the Caribbean aboard a 39-foot wooden cutter. Then to San Francisco, where what should catch his eye but the mighty *Improbable*. He bought the boat and returned to Seattle where the boys once again attended school.

Singlehanded passages

Since buying the boat, Len has singlehanded up and down the West Coast several times when he moved between various aerospace firms. He doesn't hesitate to take the old war horse out solo, even when conditions are a bit blustery. He is confident about the boat and confident in his modifications. When sea conditions prohibit sailing, Len can set *Improbable* up with a small backed staysail to lie hove-to, a configuration he's used successfully in more than 60 knots of wind.

For good old boaters, the *Improbable* message is twofold. First, well-built former ocean racers can make great (but not fancy) cruising vessels. And second, even big, powerful, 42-foot vessels can be set up for singlehanded control. More than money, it's the proper application of physics that counts. Don't hesitate to modify your own boat. Keep your eyes open to other setups, let yourself dream new configurations, test modifications in mild conditions, and always think safety, safety, safety. In this world of high-tech complexity, there is much reward in the straight-ahead physics of boat rigging. We can actually see the need, dream the solution, and configure the mechanism, and almost feel like we've got a bit of control in an increasingly technical world.

After sailing a 36-foot fin-keeled sloop, Scott and Kelly Foss decided the perfect boat was a Westsail 42 they named *Aleta*. They bought her in 1987 and made many improvements, finally living aboard until they sold her — with regrets — in 1994.

The queen of our hearts

Refitting a Westsail 42 brings years of happy sailing and a sad goodbye

by Kelly Foss

We were two ecstatic people. With our soaring spirits we didn't mind the cold on that December day in 1987 when we putt-putted out of Squalicum Harbor in Bellingham, Washington. We had big dreams for the 42-foot Westsail we were taking home to Anacortes. It was breezy in the center cockpit without a dodger, and we huddled together at the wheel, toasted our voyage with a glass of wine, and laughed a lot.

We felt so lucky when we negotiated a trade with her owner. We sailed our other boat to Bellingham, pulled into the slip next to our new ketch, tossed life preservers and a picnic lunch into the cockpit, and cast off.

We had sailed a 36-foot sloop for eight years, and it had served us well. She was a fine boat, with lots of excellent features like a fin keel that made her easy to maneuver. She had a simple rig and an easy-care fiberglass deck without a single sliver of teak to sand and varnish. But after living aboard for a year and a half, we had some other features in mind.

> *"My husband, Scott, wanted a beamier, heavier boat with more displacement; I wanted a cabin with ports that allowed us to see what was going on outside."*

My husband, Scott, wanted a beamier, heavier boat with more displacement; I wanted a cabin with ports that allowed us to see what was going on outside. After some careful research and a lot of dock walking, we found her. She had all the things we wanted and more. The ketch rig was a surprise; we hadn't thought of wanting two masts and another sail. And the teak deck was a bonus, though it needed some work. The entire yacht needed refurbishing, but nothing major.

Queen *Aleta*

We renamed her *Aleta*. I remembered that name from my favorite comic strip of my childhood, Prince Valiant. Aleta was the Queen of the Misty Isles. The Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia, one of our favorite destinations, are also known as the Misty Isles.

She was built in 1975, and she could use some upgrading. Refitting and renewing occupied us the rest of the winter and for several winters to come. Scott added electronic bells and whistles and had a roomy refrigerator-

freezer built in the galley to accommodate the salmon, halibut, bottom fish, prawns, and crabs we stocked on our annual summer cruises north. We also splurged on a new galley stove, but the bottom plate in the oven warped immediately. We replaced it three times with no better results.

We (mostly Scott) recaulked the deck and refinished all the teak on board. There was plenty to keep him busy: toerails, bulkheads, grabrails, and such on deck and all lockers and cupboards down below. To provide more storage, he also built drawers in the passageway to the aft stateroom where the navigation center used to be. As we were considering a cruise down the Pacific coast to Baja and beyond, we installed a saltwater purification system. The rope anchor rode was replaced with a heavier anchor and miles of heavy chain.

Aleta was everything we had hoped she would be: seakindly, comfortable, stable. She sailed like a champ downwind, but her performance close-hauled was less than stellar. She wasn't built for racing, but then neither were we. Nevertheless, we had some glorious runs in the open waters, and the Perkins engine got us through narrows and rapids against winds, tides, and currents.

Lost interest

By the time we returned to our home port, we had lost interest in heading south with the flotilla to Mexico. Neither of us enjoys continual hot weather, and the stories we heard from enthusiastic friends about the laid-back lifestyle did not lure us. So much for the desalinator we'd installed. We sure wouldn't need it in the Pacific Northwest. We moved back into our house for the winter, and Scott got busy and built a wood-and-fiberglass dodger for the cockpit, with a windshield and wipers. As dodgers go, it was decent looking, and it would keep us drier. We also added belaying pins for that salty look and rigged lazy-jacks so we could have the mainsail re-cut for full battens, hoping to improve her — and our — sailing ability.

"…we had some glorious runs in the open waters, and the Perkins engine got us through narrows and rapids against winds, tides, and currents."

We decided that since the new dodger needed painting, we'd redo the entire cabin and cockpit. Linear polyurethane was the paint of choice at that time. The brochures showed tanned young men in spotless shorts and white deck shoes painting their dinghy on an equally spotless dock. It looked so easy. Everybody said that was the way to go, so we went.

We removed hardware and sanded and sanded, preparing the surfaces by the book. The marina was being enlarged at the time and dust was flying everywhere, so we decided to take *Aleta* out to a more secluded anchorage in the San Juan Islands to do our painting. We applied the first coat, and it looked magnificent. The next morning it looked like, well, it was beige. The night air had laid a "blush" on it, and the coat was ruined. Sanding it off was not a simple chore. It's like sanding granite. Two days of that, then back to our home slip to regroup. We decided to keep to our departure schedule; we would work on the paint job as we went along. Another mistake.

Flyspots

The next time we tackled our project, tiny no-see-ums landed on the wet paint and stayed. Polyurethane became a fixation, and we squandered many warm, sunny days at remote anchorages, sanding, priming, applying gloss coats, sanding, priming, and repainting. We finally produced

a passable job, except for a few runs in the cockpit that we'd missed. Cleaning up the mess was a project in itself. The two-part polyurethane products have, no doubt, been much improved since then, and other folks seem to have had better luck.

In 1990 we sold our house and moved aboard. It was great, living aboard the most comfortable boat we have ever owned. We had so many happy cruises with *Aleta* and were proud of her wherever we sailed.

One day we were cruising up Fitz Hugh Sound in the rain as a large cruise ship passed us. Scott eyed the few passengers out on deck through his binoculars, and they looked back at us. We were discussing the depressing concept of paying $5,000 or more per couple for a week's cruise in that kind of weather. Then we realized that most of the passengers were probably sitting in a warm dry lounge, saying, "Look at those poor buggers in the little sailboat." I remarked that they got off cheap. But there was no way we would trade places with them.

"We sometimes wish we hadn't sold her, because we still miss her. In fact, within two months we purchased another, much smaller not-so-good old boat."

We sold *Aleta* in the autumn of 1994. It was time to return to land…or so we thought. We sometimes wish we hadn't sold her, because we still miss her. In fact, within two months we purchased another, much smaller not-so-good old boat. But *Aleta's* buyers became great friends, and the following summer found us heading north once again, with *Aleta* following right behind us, on one of the best cruises we ever had. It was easier for us to part with our boat, knowing she was in good hands.

Kelly and Scott Foss aboard *Aleta*, above. *Aleta's* next buyers became great friends, and the Fosses were able to continue their relationship with her, knowing she is in good hands.