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A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped short-sleeved shirt and dark blue trousers, is running barefoot on a wooden deck. He is seen from behind, moving away from the camera towards the horizon. The deck is flanked by a highly reflective glass railing that shows a clear reflection of the boy and the sky. The background features a vast blue ocean under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall mood is one of freedom and adventure.

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A high-angle, close-up shot of the stern of a white Tiara speedboat. The boat is moving through blue water, leaving a white wake. Three white Mercury 400 outboard motors are mounted on the transom. The boat's interior features grey and white upholstery with red accents. A wooden table and seating area are visible. An American flag and a Tiara flag are flying from the bow. The text "LUXURY SPORT IN MOTION" is printed in the upper right corner.

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The Back Cove 37

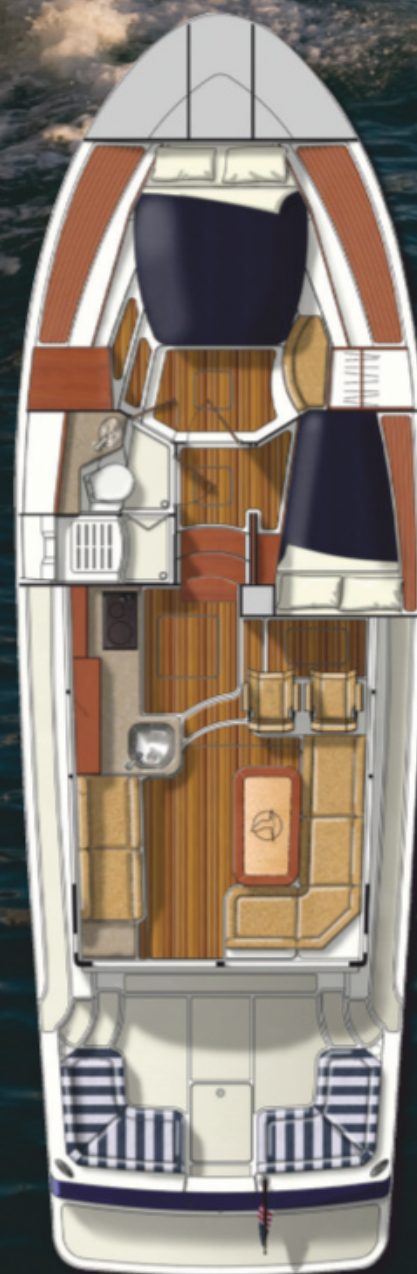
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Boats today seem to be packed with every bell and whistle. The new class of day boats from the Big Three? They're just fun to drive.

LOGBOOK

The British are Coming...

Blasting atop the Bay of Cannes aboard Fairline's highly anticipated F//Line 33, at an easy 40-knot cruise, I couldn't shake the thought: Competition is alive and well on the British Isle. Within a year, the Big Three (Sunseeker, Princess and Fairline) returned to their performance boat roots, launching edgy dayboats between 33 and 38 feet.

Princess' R35 was the first to debut with a launch at the 2018 Cannes show. With a bright red paint scheme and a gala thrown at a French castle (yes, really) the boat's foiling technology lifted its profile to new heights. It appeared the other British builders would have a tough act to follow.

Sunseeker didn't take the challenge sitting down; they tapped late, world-renowned race boat designer Fabio Buzzi to create a hull that, when paired with a pair of monstrous outboards, would truly soar. After one of the sportiest boat tests of my career in choppy conditions on the Solent, I can attest: Mission accomplished.

All this brings me back to the Bay of Cannes on a postcard-perfect morning. Joined by the hull designers from the Slovenia-based J&J Design who were aboard for their first sea trial of the F//Line 33, we jumped to 47 knots and carved smooth banking turns. Hard over at the helm, I felt like I could reach out my hand and touch the glistening water below. I looked back and asked the designers what they thought. They simply smiled widely and nodded. Language barrier be damned, I knew what they were thinking. This boat can fly. Pride was written on their faces.

What is perhaps most amazing about this trio of highly advanced craft is not how they are similar, but how they're unique. Straight shafts, outboards and gas-powered stern drives are as different as you can get. They each have different design briefs; attract a different type of buyer; and the learning curve to get

comfortable at the helm also differs wildly.

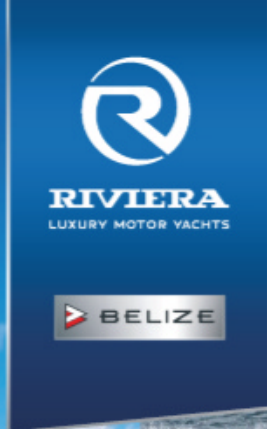
It has been said that a rising tide raises all ships—that is certainly the case with these British builders who have pushed the design envelope to the razor's edge. There's no doubt that there will be a trickle down—or rather, trickle up—effect from this innovation. I predict they're just scratching the surface of what's possible with racing hulls, carbon fiber construction and foils. And it's only a matter of time until other builders around the world take note and raise their game to compete with the British.

But besides healthy competition, what really spurred these builders to launch a dayboats invasion might be a bigger calling: Building boats that will attract younger people to their brand, and indeed, boating in general.

In that spirit of competition, with 2019 in our wake, my colleagues and I looked back on our digital offerings—the deep archive of reporting on our website, our social media channels and our industry-leading video program—and set out to determine which boats were the most popular among our audience. The exercise proved incredibly insightful and inspired our Reader's Choice Awards on page 66. Filled with innovation and horsepower to spare, last year's most popular boats showed me just how fast today's up-and-comers are improving upon the status quo. There was a day, not too long ago, when quad outboards on a center console was an anomaly—now two boats on our list are powered by six.

The issue reminded me of two important truths. The first is that there is no stronger catalyst for change and improvement than competition. And the second is that it's only when you stop and look back that you realize just how far we've come. I don't know about you, but I can't wait to see what 2020 will bring.

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WATERFRONT

Fuel of the Future?

We sea trial a pair of prototype Cox CXO300 diesel outboards and dispel at least a few diesel-related myths.

Diesel outboards have ghosted the periphery of the marine scene for ages. In fact, the first one built in the U.S. that I know of (the 9.25-hp opposed-piston, two-stroke Amarc 10) debuted way back in the early 60s. But hey, when I recently told my buddies at my marina about sea trialing a sleek new Intrepid 345 Nomad with two, prototype 300-hp Cox diesel outboards on her transom, just about everybody got immediately dazed and confused. “You what?” went the typical response, followed by, “Diesels? Outboards? Really? What kinda horsepower? Lotta smoke? Slow? Fuel economy? Torque?”

I shouldn’t have been surprised by all this, I guess. At press time, the 300-hp CXO300 diesel V8 from Great Britain’s Cox Powertrain hadn’t enjoyed a whole heck of a lot of mainstream publicity—and certainly there’d been no publicized sea trials, at least on this side of the pond. Which is kinda odd, when you think about it, given that a prototype made an appearance at the 2018 Ft. Lauderdale International Boat Show and the first run of fully found, whoppingly powerful production engines is likely to cause a stir this year, if in fact it hits the market this month as predicted. After all, over the decades, the development of a practical, powerful, diesel outboard has held significant appeal for lots of boaters, from sportfishing long-rangers to owners of large diesel-powered yachts (who are often forced to lug around gasoline for their tenders) to commercial fishermen and military operators.

Unfortunately, I had to answer all the questions I got hammered with in a rather provisional way. The Intrepid Nomad I sea trialed on the St. Johns River, just north of St. Augustine, was a “test platform,” not a ready-for-prime-time sportster. Among other things, her twin CXO300s were governed to turn just 3600 rpm, some 400 revs short of the 4000 rpm the production engines are expected to turn. Continuing lube-oil-related and other mechanical tweaks were responsible for the limitation, according to Rick Chapman of Ring Power, Cox’s Florida distributor.

Still, what I discovered from my sea trial—the first one to be conducted by a U.S. magazine—was pretty informative. For starters, I detected absolutely no

The author tests the CXO300 diesel V8 outboards on the St. Johns River—the first sea trial of this new technology conducted by a U.S. magazine.







Roughly twice the price of a gasoline-fired product, Cox's diesel outboards nevertheless look to shake up the outboard market.

diesel smell and absolutely no black, gray or white smoke while both engines were running, whether at idle or at higher rpm. And then, during the speed runs, I discovered that our test boat was capable of generating some decidedly sporty performance numbers. More to the point, I recorded a two-way average top end of 38.2 knots at 3600 rpm on virtually flat water with a fuel burn of 30.3 gph. And at a more sedate cruising speed of 27.4 knots at 3000 rpm, I measured a fuel burn of 16.7 gph. Certainly, based on this data, the CXO300 seemed anything but slow and it also seemed considerably more fuel efficient than a 300-hp gasoline-fired powerplant, although determining by precisely how much would have, of course, required a head-to-head matchup.

How about the noise levels and torque? At idle speed, I recorded 67 dB(A) at the helm and at WOT I got 87 dB(A). Broadly interpreted, I'd say this was a little louder than a four-stroke, 300-hp gasoline engine on the low end, but about the same (or maybe even somewhat quieter) at higher speeds. And to get a feeling for the kind of torque the CXO300 is capable of, I averaged eight separate time-to-plane trials and got 8.25 seconds, which was not bad considering that the Nomad, at a reported dry weight of 13,000 pounds (with engines), is a fairly heavy boat, and our 355-gallon fuel tank was nearly full at the time.

Chapman and I have agreed to sea trial a production version of the new Cox diesel outboard in a month or two. But until then, about all



I can tell anybody who asks is that the 300-hp CXO300 is clean as a whistle, quiet, comparatively fuel efficient and hey, without the Cox logo on the cowling, it's possible the average Joe might forget he's even dealing with diesel fuel at all. And oh, one final thing. Cox plans on selling the engine for \$55,000, which is roughly twice the price of a gasoline-fired product. —Capt. Bill Pike

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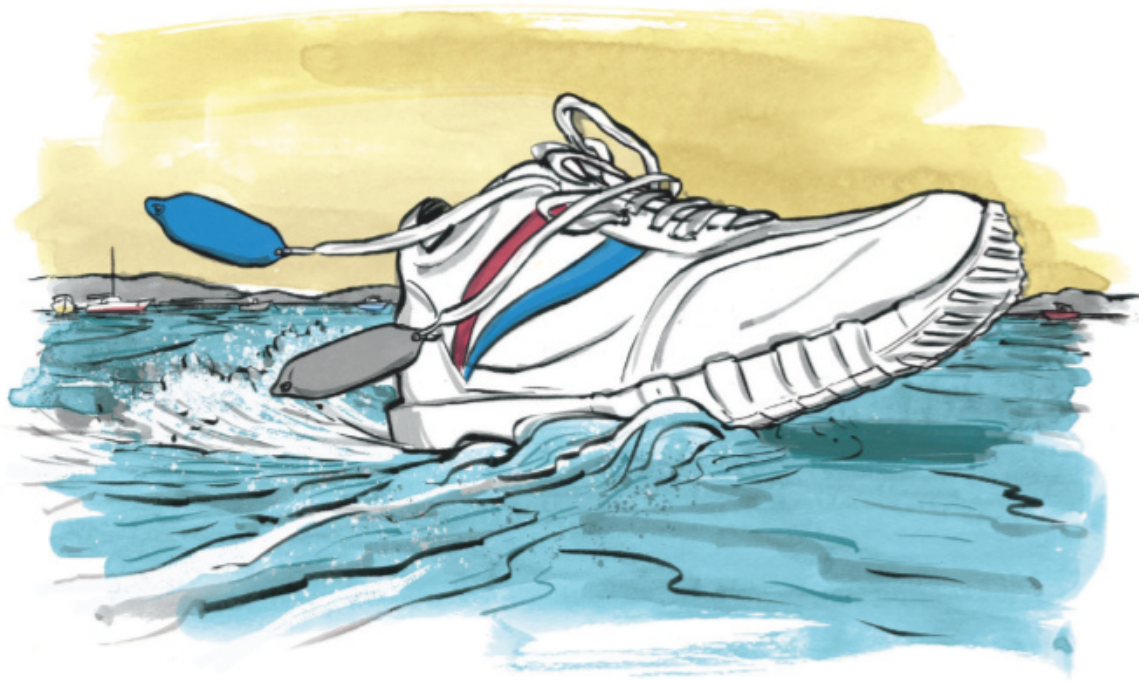
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Stranger Things

When designers without boating experience design a yacht, strange things can happen.

By Bill Prince

I have no clue how to design tennis shoes. That said, I want to fill you in on something I've seen happen often during my 25 years as a yacht designer.

A boatbuilder decides it's time to get some fresh ideas for their new range of production yachts. Instead of calling on a talented naval architect, builders are sometimes compelled to find fresh perspective from a certain group that knows little to nothing about boats: consumer product designers. I had an up-close encounter like this a few years ago, and it was an eye opener.

In this case, the "fresh perspective" was to be provided by an industrial design firm known for shaping video game consoles and styling the stripes on the sides of running shoes. Said perspective was to be applied to the design of a "luxury express yacht" around 50 feet.

A date was set for the reveal, and the builders asked that I come along with them as their expert consultant. While they meant this as a compliment and paid me for my time, I couldn't help but find the whole scenario bemusing. Why not just hire my company? We know boats.

We sat around the oversized boardroom table before the big presentation, gazing at the various products on display around the room.

The design studio's principal was sitting directly across from me, dressed minimally in black while a junior industrial designer (wearing the same black industrial designer's costume) stood before an 80-inch TV. The builders looked on from the far end of the table.

Soon the junior product designer doused the lights and revealed a lifestyle image on the screen. Lots of lifestyle images, in fact, but no boat. I kept an eye on the builders, watching their expressions evolve from smiles and glee to tight-lipped impatience as image after image of sunny skies, sea spray and wine glasses flashed.

Finally, the boat was revealed. Well, the product was revealed. It looked a lot like a boat, but something was ... off. I kept my mouth shut, looking carefully at every detail. There were curved sofas, a windshield, a radar arch and steering wheel. I tried to gauge the

product's size, as its proportions were low and lean.

"Express" being Luxury Express Yacht's middle name, I looked for clues as to how this boat was powered. How much fuel? What sort of speed? These questions were answered immediately—and brutally—as a cutaway drawing of the boat was revealed on the screen.

You see, the "fresh perspective" did not include engines, fuel or running gear of any kind. There was simply no room for any engines or fuel beneath the deck! The thought of such things had simply not occurred to the product designers. The builder might be able to clamp a trolling motor to the swim platform, but otherwise they would be sitting ducks.

They didn't come close to designing a boat. I wondered what they'd been paid for this debacle. On second thought, I didn't want to know.

Soon the Q&A began and I gave the now-pissed builder a look, which was returned with a sharp nod that I took to mean "go for it."

I smiled at the guys in the black t-shirts and began prodding them with gentle questions.

"What sort of cruising speed do you anticipate? What engines do you have in mind? How much fuel do you plan on carrying?" They looked at each other and shrugged.

"How do you guys power these things?" one asked. "What does the steering wheel connect to?" asked another with genuine curiosity. Oh, boy.

Look, if you need some running shoes designed, don't call me. I don't know the first thing about designing shoes, and I'd probably forget the holes for the laces. Conversely, if you need a powerboat to be properly designed and engineered, it's best not to call the guys who design tennis shoes and noise-canceling headphones. They're bound to forget something. Like, you know, engines.

I walked out of that boardroom a few minutes later experiencing a mix of contempt and satisfaction. The builder and I met for dinner that night. Afterwards, I headed home with a new design contract for a luxury express cruiser. □

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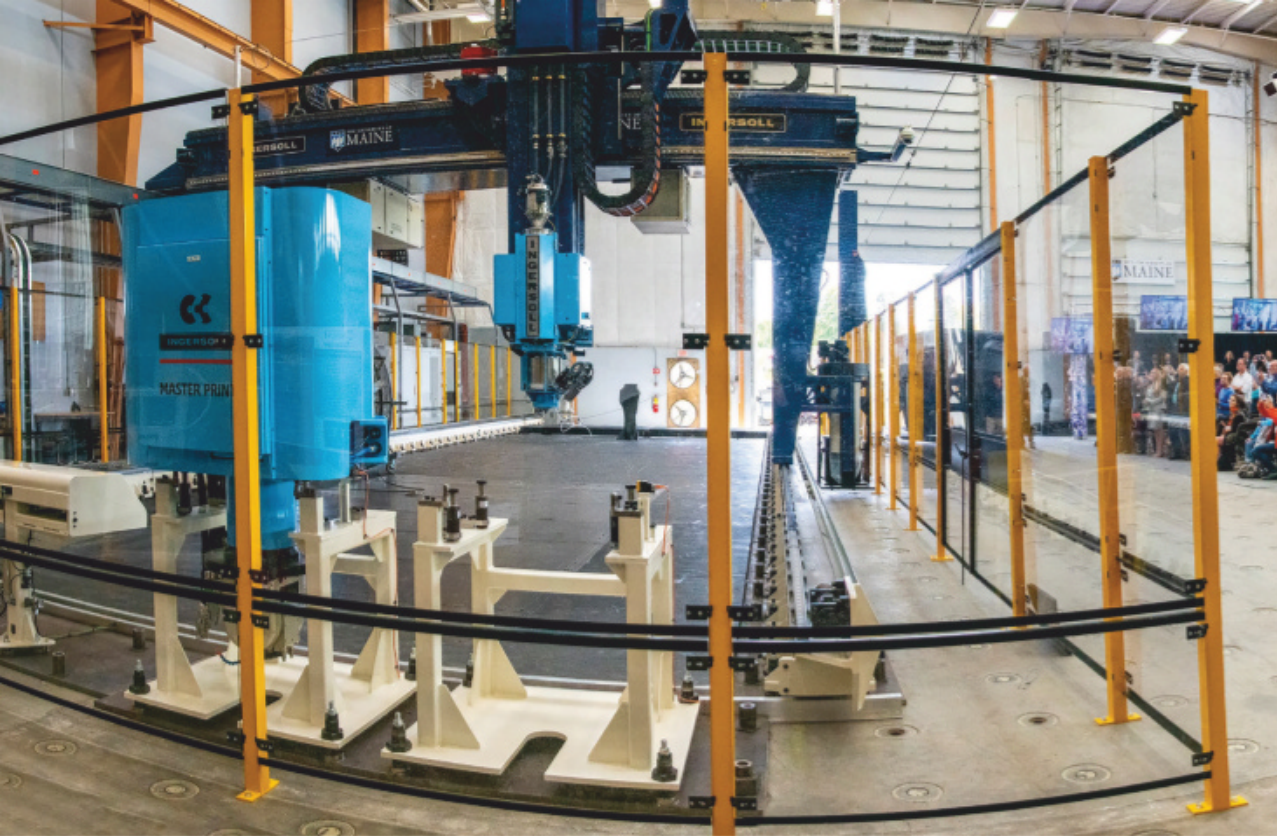
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The massive machine can print objects up to 100 feet long by 22 feet wide by 10 feet high at a rate of 500 pounds per hour.

POWER & TECHNOLOGY

Hot Off the Press

The world's largest polymer 3D printer utilizes two of the Pine Tree State's iconic sources—its forests and boatbuilders—to lead the way into the future. By Jeff Moser

I first covered 3D printing in this column about two years back, highlighting a few European builders who were experimenting with materials and polymers from the aerospace industry to print small components. While some inroads were made, the possibility of designing and building an entire boat was limited by its sheer size.

When the news broke early last year that construction was underway at the University of Maine's Advanced Structures and Composites Center on the world's largest polymer 3D printer, my mind raced with the potential of housing this advancement in the heart of one of our nation's boatbuilding superclusters. After the university secured a \$20 million research collaboration with Oak Ridge National Laboratory (the U.S. Department of Energy's largest science and energy laboratory), they doubled down on a commitment to the state's boatbuilders, and also to its robust forestry industry, to develop a bio-based thermoplastic from wood.

As construction ramped up, the university tapped marine industry vets throughout the state to work in concert with its team, including Back Cove, Sabre, Hinckley, Hodgdon, Front Street Shipyard and Lyman-Morse. Together with Maine's leaders in composite construction—Kenway Composites, Custom Composite Technologies and Compounding Solutions—the technology cluster worked to develop the wood-filled plastic that would form the materials used by the 3D printer. "The combination of

additive manufacturing and cost-effective, bio-filled materials is a potential game changer for Maine's boatbuilding industry," James Anderson, senior research and program manager of the Composites Center, said in a statement. "[It] can reduce the cost of marine tooling by as much as 50 percent."

That's excellent news to the builders—developing new models and purchasing components, tooling and machining are some of their largest expenditures. To be able to develop large-scale boat molds, implement rapid design changes and remove the need to physically build prototypes saves significant capital and can reduce production times from months to days.

Maine governor Janet Mills and senators Susan Collins and Angus King joined business execs from throughout the state at the unveiling of the massive machine last October. After a brief ceremony that celebrated the three Guinness World Records earned by the Advanced Structures and Composites Center—including world's largest 3D printer—the surprise came for the other two in the form of a 25-foot, 5,000-pound patrol boat, earning accolades as the largest 3D-printed object ever made and for the world's largest 3D-printed boat. "By working together, UMaine and Oak Ridge will strengthen environmentally responsible advanced manufacturing ... as well as the forest-products industry in Maine," Sen. Collins said in a statement. The marine and forestry industries are two of the state's largest employers.

It took three days to print the world-record *3Dirigo*—the name a combination of the tech and the state’s motto, Latin for “I direct.” (It can print objects up to 100 feet long by 22 feet wide by 10 feet high at a rate of 500 pounds per hour.) Watching the time-lapse video of the event with the boat suddenly materializing from transom to bow, my first thought was we’re only seeing a fraction of the machine’s capability, an exciting prospect.

Before *3Dirigo*, builders were hyped about the potential for having smaller parts 3D-printed from all-composite materials, as a way to move forward and cut costs. At the same time, many expressed concerns about the dearth of skilled labor. The 3D printer addresses both issues, best summarized by Rep. Jared Golden: “The University of Maine Composites Center ... will bring jobs to our state ... Their work has impressive potential to change how we make things out of all sorts of materials—including Maine wood fiber. Today, [we] celebrate innovation that will help protect and create good-paying Maine jobs in forest products and manufacturing.”

The upside for 3D printing is huge. Expect to hear much more on how the 3D printer aims to modernize an already highly skilled boatbuilding workforce once the projects move from prototypes to production. □



The 25-foot patrol boat was the centerpiece of the 3D printer unveiling.



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Smartphones and apps have changed the way we live. Why shouldn't they change the way we go boating?

ELECTRONICS

Power in Your Pocket

A proliferation of powerful new apps can help make you a better boater.

By Ben Stein

Most boaters carry around a powerful and easy-to-use computer in their pockets. Smartphones have enough processing power, sensors and capabilities to augment your onboard nav equipment. Mobile and tablet apps for boating offer a compelling set of functionalities that can make our favorite pastime safer and easier.

Although the functionality of mobile apps has improved greatly, they're not a substitute for MFDs and other equipment. (I believe boaters should have at least one dedicated display on board.) Mobile devices are much more susceptible to moisture, heat, dead batteries and falling overboard than single-purpose hardware installed on the boat. In my own cruising, I've dealt with apps crashing, batteries dying and iPads overheating and shutting down from direct sunlight. But, as a supplement or backup to dedicated devices, apps deliver ever-impressive capabilities.

Navigation Apps

In the last decade, navigation apps have matured to the point where their features and functions rival, and in some cases even beat, dedicated hardware. One of the biggest advantages of a mobile device (whether it's a phone or tablet) over installed hardware is a more readily available internet connection that makes updating charts and other data easier. Installed hardware requires multi-step processes to update, and in practice, often results in less frequent updates.

The highly responsive touchscreen interfaces and flexibility to plan your travels away from the helm make apps great planning

tools. The inclusion of tide information, weather forecasts and bridge and lock schedules make them especially useful for building a float plan.

Navionics

Navionics is a full-function navigation app that has recently received a number of new features. It's also easy to use. (Think Google Maps easy.) The core features that have made Navionics one of the leading navigation apps are their dock-to-dock auto-routing, community-sourced SonarCharts, easily downloaded daily chart updates and a responsive, easy-to-use display. In the last year, Navionics has added support for Active Captain crowdsourced data and display of AIS data from an onboard AIS receiver.

Navionics also supports its SonarCharts functionality. SonarCharts Live records depth data from a depth finder and displays it in real time on your chart within the app. That data is also recorded and shared with Navionics, who then processes the data and creates a SonarChart layer within their charts based on the data received from boaters using the Navionics app or an MFD capable of recording and uploading SonarChart data.

Apps can be useful planning tools that allow you to plot your travel course from the comfort of a couch. But, Navionics does one better with Plotter Sync. If you're using a B & G, Lowrance, Raymarine or Simrad MFD, you can synchronize your routes between your MFD and the Navionics app by using your MFD's WiFi connection. Navionics sells its app as a subscription service with a \$22 annual fee.

ELECTRONICS

Aqua Map

Aqua Map is a newer entrant into the navigation marketplace, but they've quickly built a capable app with an impressive set of features. Aqua Map supports several major features important to many boaters, and has a few entirely unique features. It displays both Waterway Guide and Active Captain crowdsourced points of interest to provide information on marinas, anchorages, hazards and navigational features. The app also has a highly capable anchor alarm that makes monitoring your boat's position at anchor easy and accurate. U.S. and Canadian charts are available with lifetime updates included.

Aqua Map has added a feature set called Aqua Map Master, available as a \$10 per year add-on. Master includes the ability to display Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) surveys overlaid onto your charts. Master also includes Route Explorer and the ability to display AIS and instrument data display. Aqua Map Master's greatest value is revealed when traveling in shallow waters, areas with hazards and under bridges. Many of the features were developed for cruising the ICW.

Before you even warm up your engines, Route Explorer's capabilities will alert you to pertinent planning info such as hazards on the route, the bridges you'll encounter and potential fuel stops. Aqua Map makes navigating in skinny water a little easier by overlaying the USACE survey data over the chart display. The survey data gives good visual clarity of where the deepest water can be found in problem areas. The USACE has made survey data available for many years, but it's only been available via district websites in PDF or Google Earth files. Aqua Map easily displays the surveys, and updates them using their chart update functionality.

iNavX

iNavX is one of the pioneers in providing navigation functionality in a mobile app. They have been offering marine navigation since 2008, and have built a lot of functionality into the program, but it comes with a steep learning curve. iNavX calls their app a handheld chartplotter, and they've got a complete set of features to back it up. iNavX costs \$5 with access to free NOAA charts. Additional charts are available within the chart store built into the app.

The app supports the broadest range of chart sources of any mobile app, including Navionics, NOAA, Canadian Hydrographic Service, Explorer Charts' Bahamas Charts, Blue Latitude's Mexico charts, NV Chart's worldwide coverage and Delius Klasing European charts. Plus, iNavX displays their weather and Waterway Guide companion content as chart layers, allowing you to display additional information on top of your chart.

Like Navionics and Aqua Map, if your boat is equipped with an AIS module and WiFi gateway, iNavX can display AIS and other information from your boat's navigation system. But, unlike the other two packages, iNavX can still display AIS information even if you don't have an AIS receiver or transceiver on your boat. Using their AIS Live service, iNavX uses a series of receiving stations to transmit AIS information to your mobile device via the internet. This data isn't updated as quickly as the information coming



The right app can help you plan your next cruise from your couch.

directly from an onboard AIS receiver, but can be a useful alternative if you don't have AIS equipment on board.

Safety and Support

Boating apps aren't limited to just navigation. The United States Coast Guard and Boat U.S. both have apps aimed at making boating safer and easier. The Boat U.S. app allows you to check the weather, look for discounts in your area, check your membership and insurance status and even call for a tow. The Coast Guard's app allows you to fill out a float plan and file it with friends and family. Additionally, the app provides a way to report hazards, pollution or suspicious activity directly to the Coast Guard. Plus, the Coast Guard app provides information on recommended and required safety equipment, access to the rules of the road, state boating regulations and a means to request a safety check from the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Power On Demand

Many recent mobile phones—including all iPhone 8s and later as well as Samsung Galaxy S6s and later—have the ability to charge wirelessly, and nearly all use the Qi (pronounced chee) wireless charging standard. This technology allows you to simply place your phone on a wireless charging pad. Scanstrut's ROKK line of wireless chargers is made for boaters and features a broad range of mounting options for use in the cabin as well as at the helm. Their latest, the ROKK Wireless Edge, has a ball mount, spring loaded clamp to securely hold your phone, is waterproof, accepts 12 or 24 volt D.C. power and can charge your phone at 1 amp, which is about the amount of power navigation apps draw. These mounts can help make your phone an even better companion at your helm, both holding your phone securely and keeping it charged.

The combination of these apps and a mobile device might not be full-fledged replacements for the dedicated and installed equipment on board your boat. However, they can make your boating easier and more pleasant. They keep information at your fingertips, keep you updated when conditions change and can even summon help when you need it. □

NEW BOATS

Valhalla Boatworks

Viking comes out swinging with three new high-performance center consoles.



If the name Mankiller Bay makes you think of *The Sopranos*, you wouldn't be too far off the mark. Falling within the limits of Atlantic City, within view of Harrah's Casino, marsh-covered islands scatter the ominously named waterway: perfect cover, one suspects, for fitting a hapless crony with concrete boots in the dead of night. Fuggetaboutit. In the daytime, Mankiller Bay's fishing grounds offer respite from the snotty conditions typically found nearby in the Atlantic Ocean. Ghastly names aside, you could do much worse when looking for a place to test a new center console—or three. With 3 feet of draft, the twin-stepped Valhalla flagship was right at home.

At a VIP event a few months ago, I found myself aboard the

V-41 with Justin Healey at the helm as we headed deeper into the marshland. We were pushing over 60 knots when Justin eased up on the throttles to show off a critical feature of the Michael Peters-designed hull. I had déjà vu, after witnessing the same demonstration aboard the V-33 and V-37 earlier in the day. (Together, the three herald Viking's first foray into production center consoles.) Justin threw the wheel to port, turning the boat in tight concentric circles, while at the same time ramping up the rpm. Had I not been coached on the powerful grip of the ventilated tunnel hull, I would've felt nervous. But the outcome was the same: the loss of control never occurred, as the grooves in the running surface held the 41 in place without any discernible slide.



How did this happen? How did Viking come out with not one, but three new center consoles? And why now? The project's publicized genesis began at the 2018 Miami Boat Show, when Viking CEO Pat Healey met with Peters and described his vision; eight months later, Valhallas started rolling off the line. But it really started much earlier than that. For decades, the New Jersey builder, famous for a legacy built predominately on sportfishing battlewagons, had batted the idea around. It wasn't until the third generation, brothers Justin and Sean Healey, came up through the boatbuilder's facility on the marsh-lined Bass River that musings and sketches passed around the lunch table coalesced into a concrete idea.

Sean can remember countless nights with his father, whether watching *Monday Night Football* or a Sixers game "and I'm poking him asking 'When are we going to do it?'" When Pat finally acquiesced, and revealed his plan to start with three, "I took a step back and was like, 'Holy shit,'" said Sean. I don't think he was alone. Industry-wide, that earnest reaction seems to be the same.

For good reason. The Valhalla Boatworks V-Series has a similar look and feel, with the larger models upping the cockpit space, console space and available engine options. Altogether, the Healeys can see them utilized as hardcore fishing boats, sport cruisers or tenders. When I asked what has been the most popular model to date, the answer wasn't surprising: the 37, since it hits a sweet spot in the lineup. All three feature a black acrylic panel that spans the width of the console for flush-mounted electronics. For seating, the standard layout includes a forward sunpad with storage; abaft the helm, a bench seat includes tackle storage and Gemlux rod holders with cupholders on the backrest. Up on the bow, forward-facing lounges with backrests are also available.

The Viking DNA is strong in this trio. Anglers will welcome a transom livewell, in-deck fishboxes, a sea chest and tackle storage. As with the parent company, over 90 percent of each Valhalla is manufactured in-house by a team of experienced craftsmen. (Add-ons such as hardtops, marlin or gap towers and electronics packages are installed in-house.) Power is supplied by Yamaha or Mercury outboards with horsepower ratings from 300 to 425 in twin, triple or quad configurations, depending on the model.

Aside from the performance, what I found most impressive in the Valhalla line was the fit and finish. And yet I kept asking myself, are we witnessing anything new? Not including the newest stepped-V ventilated tunnel design from Michael Peters Yacht Design, it is difficult to completely revolutionize this segment. (Even the ventilated tunnel isn't new; it can be found on other center consoles.) Though these three aren't miles-away different from other top center consoles on the market, what makes them unique is that Valhalla is bolstered by the backing of one of the most relentless boat manufacturers in the U.S. Everything seems to have been thought of: from the lazarette on centerline that will provide easy access to the Seakeeper, to the spare-no-effort finish of the bilge. Which speaks nothing of the benefits of joining Viking's globe-spanning customer service and dealer network.

In the desiccated Pine Barrens, the Valhallas have come to dominate the Mullica facility as they move down the line on an eight-day schedule. According to Viking, the plan is simple: build 70 in the first year of production. After that, the sky is the limit. In Ft. Lauderdale, I snuck away from the boat show to get some more time aboard the 41. As we were coming back in, we passed a center console on the ICW. We were close enough to the other boat that I heard an audible, "What is that?" emanate across the water. They would know soon enough. —Simon Murray

NEW BOATS

Absolute Navetta 68

The Italian yard's semidisplacement series adds a fifth vessel to a line that preaches space, light and safety.



Location, location, location. It's an old saw that has been embraced by realtors and the HGTV set alike, but it can just as easily be muttered by boatbuilders jockeying for venue space at a major show. Perhaps the fiercest competition for real estate is during the Ft. Lauderdale show.

Tucked into the south corner of this year's show was Italian giant Absolute. With brokerage boats beside it, my initial thought was that it wasn't the best spot. Not many people were going to stumble upon their display. Then I found the newcomer to the builder's Navetta line, the 68. Sandwiched in a lineup that includes the 48, 52, 58 and 73, the boat enjoyed an end spot overlooking the water.

On day five of the hectic, sultry show, my colleagues and I were at a familiar point: so deep in the weeds with new boat features that you begin to forget the point of it all. It's not, in fact, a design competition—the boats on display are a means to a watery, leisure-filled end. The 68's location reminded me of that.

What I like best about the Navetta line is that it offers the luxury appointments that are expected of today's motoryachts while retaining safety features that any ocean-going ship should have. Case

in point was the cockpit. Yes, it had a large table for dining and a sunshade aft for privacy, but it also had a dedicated, recessed space for a full-size, bright-orange life ring. And right behind the ring, also easily accessible, is a fire extinguisher. It's nice to see that safety hasn't gone out of style with Absolute.

Another example of form meeting function is the wide, protected side decks around the boat. Yacht photography today typically shows this as the ideal location for a size zero Italian model to look out onto the sunset with her sundress blowing gently in the breeze while George Clooney grabs a bottle of champagne. I have no qualms with selling the dream, but the reality is those decks are also used by full-sized humans carrying an armful of cleaning supplies up to the bow. Having enough space to walk forward with beefy handrails is something I think a lot of non-Clooney types can appreciate.

It's probably because at this point in the show my dogs were barking, but I found myself drawn to the lower helm. This is a spot that transcends the yacht-meets-ship design philosophy. An electrically retractable partition between the salon and helm area allows the captain to either socialize or have privacy to better fo-



cus on the waters ahead. Sitting in the rich leather helm seats and looking over the three raised (and one recessed) Garmin MFDs at the open channel, it was easy to daydream about slipping the lines and pointing the 68 toward Bimini and beyond.

Standard twin 900-hp IPS1200 D13s should loan the boat a cruise speed in the 25-knot range, so getting to the islands should be a quick and, if my past experience aboard Absolutes is any indication, quiet affair. A four-stateroom layout with the master in the bow should allow four couples to cruise together.

One of the great industry clichés is to say that a space aboard feels like it belongs to a much larger yacht. Well, I suppose sometimes clichés are true; standing on the flybridge on the 68 certainly made me feel like I was aboard an 80-footer.

As I concluded my tour of the 68, I began to notice at every turn how large the windows were: From the salon to the guest stateroom, the connection with the water was everywhere. All these features, combined with the boat's spot overlooking the water, allowed me to easily picture myself enjoying it the way it was intended to be used. Maybe they had the best spot in the show after all.

—Daniel Harding Jr.



NEW BOATS

Regal 38 SAV

The new 38 center helm design meets the needs of anglers and overnight cruisers alike.



Regal installed a combination livewell/wine chiller on the new 38 SAV. That piece of equipment alone tells the story of what the 50-year-old builder is seeking to accomplish with this boat: A perfect mix of cruising attributes in a very fishable, open design.

When Regal introduced its 33 SAV (Sports Activity Vessel) a couple years ago, it attempted to combine the wants and needs of cruising families looking for a comfortable overnighter that they could wet a line on from now and then. The 33 has plenty of seating and a good-sized cuddy, and yes, you can fish from it, but it isn't all that fishy. The new 38 SAV expands on the concept, offering more standard features that adhere to advanced anglers while not forgetting about the family that may want to spend a weekend on board.

Center consoles in the 35- to 40-foot range typically offer plenty of outboard power to race out to the rip, a ridiculous number of rod holders, massive fish coffins and copious room up front to battle fish, but little in the way of accommodations. Most of these platforms have a small head inside the console and a berth that quickly becomes overcrowded with fishing tackle. The 38 SAV is a complete departure.

Upon walking onto the 38 SAV, it feels much larger than a 38-footer. The deck is laid out to maximize space, with no obstacles that could result in busted toes or traffic jams. The swim step wraps around both sides of the triple outboards, making it easy to get in and out of the boat. This bit of extra standing room will also come in handy when trying to clear the engines with a hot fish on the line. Two doors on either side of the transom and dual side-entry doors make boarding easy, whether it's a guest stepping in from a dock or a big fish being plucked from the sea.

The company calls the 38 SAV a center helm design; it's not a full

walkaround center console. The port side offers a wide walkway and a set of teak steps on the starboard side provides access to the bow—or easy egress to high quays—when docking or anchoring. Four helm chairs are not just for sitting. The outward chairs swing around so you can watch the lures behind the boat, and all four seats fold flat for additional counter space when grilling out on the entertainment counter just behind the captain's chairs. With additional seating in the bow, behind the entertainment center and along the transom, you can carry 15 passengers without stepping on each others' flip-flops.

As for fishing features, the hardtop comes with reinforced mounts for outriggers, there's a row of rod holders on the transom, dual insulated lockers and a pair of 16-inch Garmin displays at the helm. If you're the type of person who would never consider buying a house that didn't have a garage, you'll love the 38's lazarette. The hydraulic-powered deck lifts up to reveal the standard Seakeeper, all of your batteries and switches, the genset and enough storage space for gearheads who can't resist the latest watertoy or fishing accoutrement.

Down below, you see the Regal touch everywhere. With large windows for natural light, you never feel cramped in this comfy living space. A queen-sized berth up front and a convertible mid-cabin settee in the air-conditioned cabin make it the perfect escape from the heat. The full head with separate walk-in shower is something you don't often find on board an open boat of this size.

The 38 SAV runs strong with triple 300-hp Yamaha outboards and the company's patented FasTrac hull design. She'll hit a top end of 45-plus knots.

Regal, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, continues to grow by building quality boats and listening to the demands of their customers. The 38 SAV is testament to that recipe for success.

—Charlie Levine

LOA: 38'10"
Beam: 11'11"
Displ.: 18,000 lbs.
Fuel: 350 gal.
Water: 66 gal.
Top Speed: 45 knots
Standard power: 3/300-hp
Yamaha F300 outboards
Price: \$688,000



NEW BOATS

Van der Valk Beach Club 660

Innovative engine positioning grants the 67-footer living spaces that rival much larger vessels.

For over 50 years, the Netherlands-based builder Van der Valk has crafted motoryachts exclusively from aluminum and steel. Known in the industry for a steadfast attention to detail and a mastery of metalwork, the builder was approached a few years back by the Dutch yacht design house Cor D. Rover with an idea.

“They had the concept and were searching for a yard that could execute [it],” Sales and Marketing Head Yoei Bijker told me, and Van der Valk accepted the challenge. Rover’s innovative design jettisons the traditional engine room, placing the powerplants well aft: The engines and drives actually sit within the swim platform. The Beach Club concept was born.

Making its debut at last September’s Cannes Yachting Festival, the 660 is the second build in their Beach Club series, following the 60-footer that launched last year. She was attracting a lot of attention, so I toured the boat on an early morning while the docks were still quiet.

I started on the roomy, teak-clad swim platform—it measures 9 feet long and just over 19 feet wide—and popped the large hatch in the platform sole. The big door rose smoothly on gas-assisted struts (I used one hand to open) and revealed the 12.7-liter, 800-hp Volvo Penta D13s mated to IPS drives, certainly the only powerplant suite that can pull off being this far aft. I thought of ER checks in inclement weather or while at sea: Bijker told me that

there’s access in the lower lounge that requires moving a large settee and as a semicustom builder, they could incorporate a more permanent solution.

Four steps down through an elegant set of curved glass doors built within the transom was the huge living area that is the recipient of space aplenty due to the engine relocation. With no side decks on the lower level, the full-beam lower lounge feels expansive and airy—the glass doors, large hullside windows and open atrium to the upper lounge help. Very few monohulls can offer this type of uninterrupted spaciousness and easy egress to the 660’s namesake, the Beach Club. Aluminum construction eliminates structural bulkheads and what’s needed “can



LOA: 67'
Beam: 19'
Draft: 4'11"
Displ: 83,775 lbs.
Fuel: 1,057 gal.
Water: 198 gal.
Cruise Speed: 21 knots
Top Speed: 26 knots
Standard Power: 2/800-hp Volvo
Penta IPS1050s
Price: \$3.7 million



be moved or rearranged depending on the client's needs," according to the builder. A centerline companionway splits the well-appointed galley and stairs to the upper lounge and provides access to the forward master and two guest staterooms.

The 660's foredeck looks to rival the Beach Club for alfresco entertaining. Side decks flank the upper lounge and its matching set of curved glass doors and lead to a space that'll accommodate a dozen guests on a C-shaped settee and a few sunpads. No need to run aft for snacks: a BBQ and wet bar serve the area. While I loved the fixed glass roof that provides the master stateroom with light, I'd go with electrified glass for privacy.

A clean helm station on the upper lounge—

with a single helm chair and Garmin suite of MFDs—looked downright comfortable for longer passages, with room for eight friends as well. I'd most likely choose to run the 660 from the flybridge where sightlines appear to be excellent, albeit partially obscured aft by the large settee and overhang of the aft deck. A wing station on the upper lounge level should fit the bill for docking and close quarters maneuvering.

Van der Valk threw down the gauntlet with the innovative Beach Club 660. At the time of this writing, the builder is working on bringing a Beach Club model to the U.S. Judging on what I've seen at Cannes, an intrepid stateside owner will soon follow suit.

—Jeff Moser



DRAWING BOARD



Bertram 50 Express

The venerated builder expands its offerings with two sporty, 50-foot express vessels with personalities tailored to their owner's needs.

Heraclitus knew of the ways things change. The Greek philosopher is famous for coining the aphorism “no man ever steps in the same river twice.” Heraclitus never stepped on board a Bertram, but his saying still applies to the 50 Express, the builder's newest sportfisherman. For the 50 isn't entirely like the Bertrams we've seen in the past—and neither are we the same people we used to be. In the ensuing decades, our tastes have changed, and Bertram appears to have readily understood those intricate changes and adopted them into their design.

The 50 falls between the 35 and 61, two boats that heralded, in their own way, the iconic builder's triumphant return under new leadership and a new facility. The 35 jump-started the brand's revival, after Beniamino Gavio, an Italian entrepreneur and owner of superyacht builder Baglietto, vowed to make “an American boat,” acquiring the old Lazzara facility in Tampa, Florida to build his vision.

To get a better read on the direction the company is taking with their new express, I caught up with Tommy Thompson, Bertram's vice president of sales, at the Ft. Lauderdale boat show. The 50's deck was dry fit around the beginning of November. Accommodations include a two-stateroom/two-head layout, with a salon and finishes that—if the renderings are to be believed—slightly surpass the quality of competitors in this size range. Shirking the coupe designation,

the express will be available in both open and sport top configurations. “Coupe sounds like granddad's car,” said Thompson.

The 50 has been built with the serious angler and family-focused owner in mind. That's evident in the 178-square-foot cockpit with mezzanine seating. Better for fighting fish. And renderings hint at the modular nature of the components, which allow a tackle center to be swapped out for double mezzanine seats. Better for cruising. That semi-custom mentality extends along the one-piece deck from bow to mezzanine—a layout dictated in part by customer feedback. Thompson demonstrated the modularity of the boat with four business cards, explaining how the settees and three helm chairs can be moved around or removed entirely.

Don't forget performance. “We felt like hull number one needed to be a rocket ship,” said Thompson. To that end, power options include twin 1,550-hp MAN engines as well as the standard Caterpillar 1,150-hp C18s. Bertram estimates the 50 will be able to reach a top end of around 45 knots with the MANs. With a 1,236-gallon fuel capacity, the sky is the limit for where and how owners will use it. “At their core, they're offshore fishing boats,” said Thompson of the Bertram line. “You can't just throw a rod in a rod holder and call it a sportfish boat.” But he can also envision a couple using it to complete the Great Loop, “maybe a little faster than the other guys.” Look for it to make its debut at the Miami boat show in February. —*Simon Murray*

MAGNETISE YOUR MIND

THE NEW SEALINE F430



C330 NEW C330v NEW C390 C430 C530 F430 F530 | S330 S330v



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www.sealine.com



For a captain with a growing business, Murray still finds time to work as crew. "You don't turn down work. It [leads] to more phone calls later," he told the author.



WORKING THE WATER

Prescription for Success

A promising career on land wasn't in the cards for Mike Murray. His passion led him back to the wheelhouse and he hasn't looked back.

By Jeff Moser / Photos by Billy Black

As the South Florida day turned into early evening, the man noted the garish, artificial incandescence of the halogen-lit space and pined for the halcyon days of blue water and dappled sunlight. He sighed and continued his work behind the high counter with care and precision. The career path he'd chosen was solid, lucrative, but something was amiss.

After earning a B.A. in Biology from Florida Atlantic University, Capt. Mike Murray was on his way to entering a graduate program and becoming a pharmacist. But he was having second thoughts. He sought the advice of a veteran in the profession. "If he could go back," Murray asked, "Would he stick with the solid career choice or follow his passion into another occupation?"

Murray didn't have to wait long for a reply. "He immediately told me he'd do it all over in a second," he told me, "and he encouraged me to pursue what [I] love." Shortly after that conversation, Murray traded his lab coat for his old Grundéns bibs—his prescriptions would now be written in the blood from his quarry.

Murray spent his teenage summers in Lewes, Delaware where he cut his teeth as a full-time mate. With the support of his parents, Murray was "pretty much living on my own, fishing while in high school." He had a solid work ethic, and the crew were kept busy. "We fished a lot and my captain was a hardass, so I never had time to screw around," he recalled. "But it did allow for a real nice tackle budget since I had no bills at the time."

It also helped that on his first day on the job, the boat landed an estimated 750-pound bluefin tuna. "Hard to not be in love with it all after that day," Murray said.

He was hooked long before that. His family had always fished, spending time at their Florida home (he was raised in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania) where they targeted big game on charter boats. It was not a surprise that after four years of undergraduate education, his parents were supportive about his 180-degree turn. "They know my passion is fishing and boats."

They'd help him land a new gig as well. A few doors down from the family's South Florida vacation home was a seasoned captain who agreed to take Murray on for an apprenticeship; it would last nearly three years.

WORKING THE WATER



While the work focused on managing a fleet of high-performance, go-fast boats, the intangibles that he learned on the job proved to be invaluable. “I learned how to think and make a living,” said Murray, earning his captain’s license in the process. “I also learned that [as a business owner] you never get to turn it off.”

I met Murray a few years back when he served as mate to Capt. Danny Ford on an early winter fishing trip off Florida’s west coast. We hit it off immediately: Murray was gregarious, genuinely interested in the day-to-day life of a marine journalist—much more than just a helpful dude who expertly cut bait and retied lines. As Ford ran the boat from one wreck to another, I stood in the salon and watched as Murray effortlessly put together a delicious lunch for the crew; his solid knife skills pay dividends in the galley as well as in the cockpit. Along with photographer Billy Black, our conversation covered the gamut, from photography to geography to a range of shared culinary favorites. Murray explained how to prep sashimi to best preserve its flavor and texture, and after Black asked, showed us photos of a recent trip to the Bahamas where he dove for lobster. The cockpit was full, clients smiling ear to ear. Seems Murray is a seasoned spear fisherman as well.

The morning following our wreck fishing excursion, I was on the flybridge with Ford and was surprised to learn that Murray is a captain with his own growing business, managing multiple boats in South Florida. Later, I reached out to Ford—in his 30 years as a captain, he’s fished in places ranging from Ascension Island to the South Pacific and Nova Scotia—to find out why Murray is one of his first calls for a mate when tournament fishing, delivering a boat or any other job that needs to get done.

“It is always a pleasure to have Mike on board as my mate,” Ford told me. “[He’s] a great all-around waterman [with] a well-rounded knowledge of offshore, inshore and bottom fishing in South Florida and the Bahamas. He’s also easy to get along with and mechanically inclined, which makes him an extremely valuable asset as a crewman.”

For a busy man who runs his own business—Murray Marine Works—and oversees *Ocean Outlaw*, a concierge service and corporate leasing-type program split between a big center console and a 53-foot Hatteras (member trips cover locations all over Florida and



Wreck fishing off Florida's west coast, Murray kept things moving along nicely both in the cockpit and galley. He shows off the first grouper landed by the author (below).





the Bahamas), I wondered how he found the time to freelance for Ford and others. His answer was succinct and spoke to his work ethic: “You don’t turn down work. It [leads] to more phone calls later.”

I caught up with him on a recent weekday morning after he was just coming off a multi-day fishing trip and a sobering supply run to the hurricane-devastated Abaco Islands. “Harrowing. Hope Town is decimated. If not for the striped lighthouse, I wouldn’t know where I was,” he said of the islands that he visits more than a dozen times a year. He was grateful to be part of the Jupiter/West Palm sportfishing community that has been helping the Bahamians get back on their feet.

He was also glad to have his favorite copilot—Hunter, his 3-and-a-half-year-old son—riding along. “I have the flexibility to make up for [being away] when I’m home,” Murray said.

The variety of his day-to-day and building his business is what keeps him going. “I’m not a good person for monotony,” he quipped. Since he left the pharmacy five years back, he’s been at it six to seven days a week. On this day, he was making the rounds of several facilities, checking in on clients’ vessels and chasing down engine parts. “No two days are the same. I could go from boatyard work to managing replacing a turbo on a large diesel to detailing to a multi-day fishing trip,” Murray told me.

With his knowledge of fleet management, maintenance and detailing (“Learning all aspects of mechanical maintenance and cosmetic upkeep are your first priorities; the boat is a direct reflection upon yourself,” Ford had said) Murray continues to build his business on references and just by showing up.

“I’m one of those mates and captains who doesn’t mind the less glorious work,” he told me, then put the phone down to assure that the turbo kit contained all the parts he needed for the replacement. I could hear him asking for and receiving the gaskets that should’ve been in the kit.

It’s this attention to detail and willingness to do the grunt work that keeps his phone ringing. Murray understands that putting the work in between trips is what leads to success. “The fishing side of it is just a bonus,” Ford reminded me. It all goes back to that first day off Lewes: “Any day can be the day,” Murray recalled.

He’ll be ready the next time the outrigger pings and hundreds of feet of line peel off the big Penn in an eyeblink. □

WAYPOINT



Tobermory, Ontario

This serene cruising ground is home to history and mysteries above—and below—the water.

By Bob Arrington / Photos by Dori Arrington

You'll know you're there when the road ends. But arriving in Tobermory, Ontario is more than just the end of the road: It's the beginning of an adventure. Tobermory is located at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula, a narrow finger of land separating Lake Huron from Georgian Bay. The bay could easily have been called the sixth Great Lake, but Samuel de Champlain, the first European to explore and map the area in 1615, saw it as a bay of Lake Huron. He called it "La mer douce"—the calm sea. Boaters have been working and playing on that "calm sea" ever since.

Tobermory is one of the premier towns on Georgian Bay, with the good fortune of being home to two national parks—one above the water and one below. It is also set in the heart of a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

The natural splendor of the area is protected by the Bruce Peninsula National Park. The park contains an ancient geological ridge called the Niagara Escarpment, which extends from New York State through Michigan and Minnesota, creating the shoreline of many of the Great Lakes. Along the Bruce Peninsula, the Niagara Escarpment forms dramatic cliffs rising out of the sparkling clear lake. Tobermory is also the terminus of the Bruce Trail, a popular 550-mile-long footpath beginning in Queenstown, Ontario. The trail follows the Niagara Escarpment along the length of the peninsula.

Tobermory's year-round population of approximately 4,000 grows substantially in the warmer months, as summer tourists and boaters are drawn to the area's pristine beauty. The two primary harbors are





WAYPOINT

Little Tub and Big Tub, with the town's business area centered around Little Tub Harbor. Big Tub Harbor is the largest natural freshwater harbor in Canada. The area's commerce thrives on seasonal boaters and scuba divers who come to enjoy the area's unique treasures. Boaters can stay at the Tobermory Marina in Little Tub Harbor or at Big Tub Harbor Resort Marina. Those looking for more seclusion can easily find empty coves in which to drop anchor, with unspoiled shorelines only a short dinghy ride away. Visitors by land will find no shortage of hotels, bed and breakfasts or cabins to rent.

There are several ways to approach Tobermory by water: from the south through the Trent-Severn Waterway and Georgian Bay, through the North Channel and Manitoulin Island or across Lake Huron from Michigan to the west. However you approach, it is a breathtaking experience. Another memorable way to arrive in Tobermory, if you're traveling by car, is aboard the MS *Chi-Cheemaun* ferry from Manitoulin Island. A trip aboard the *Chi-Cheemaun* has been a Great Lakes tradition since the first recorded crossing in the 1930s. The name "Chi-Cheemaun" translates from the local Ojibwe language as "Big Canoe." It is one of the most beautiful ferry crossings in the world.

Tobermory was a Great Lakes shipping hub for hundreds of years. Ships offloaded the lake's seafood and took on lumber. Over the centuries, the region's uncharted rocks and reefs took their toll on many of these ships. The shipwrecks, having been preserved in the cold, fresh water, are now a scuba diver's paradise.

Fathom Five National Marine Park protects the area's rich maritime history, with Tobermory known as the "scuba diving capital of Canada" and the "freshwater scuba diving capital of the world." Many of the shipwrecks are in such shallow water near shore that they can be enjoyed in a brisk snorkeling excursion. In addition to protecting the shipwrecks, the Marine Park also protects the region's lighthouses and island ecosystems. The islands surrounding Tobermory hold some of the world's most picturesque harbors and coves. Flowerpot Island, with its signature, sculpted limestone shorelines carved by wind and water, is one of the most photographed islands in the Great Lakes.

Many boaters dream of cruising through the Great Lakes, whether as part of the Great Loop or as a destination unto itself. If you are not lucky enough to live in the area, or do not have the time to get your own boat here, charter boats are available on nearby Manitoulin Island. A two-week charter will give you ample time to explore the Tobermory area, as well as the renowned North Channel.

The region's magnificence and seclusion are second to none, but it comes with some navigational challenges. The dramatic, rocky shoreline descends beneath the water's surface, creating unforgiving obstacles for the inattentive boater. However, one of the benefits of a rocky bottom, unlike a sandy one, is that once the area has been charted accurately, it changes very little. As long as careful attention is paid to the charts and local cruising guides, a boater will have little problem navigating the area.

Tobermory is a three-season destination. Many businesses close December through March. The region is uniquely situated to be a northern boater's paradise, where uninhabited islands and fresh, clear water combine to make one of the world's most beautiful cruising grounds. □







RISE OF THE HAWK

AFTER YEARS OF DORMANCY IN THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE MARKET,
SUNSEEKER RELEASES THE OUTBOARD-POWERED HAWK 38 INTO THE WILD.
BY DANIEL HARDING JR.





I slide two small throttles forward and we shift into gear. I look down at the red kill cord secured tightly around my right leg and then back up at the deeply stacked 2- to 4-foot chop ahead of the orange sunpad. I turn around to make sure the others aboard are seated with their trays up and their seatbacks in the upright position. Put away all oversized electronics. The company captain gives me a nod; the seatbelt sign is on and we're cleared for takeoff.

G-forces immediately push me deeper into the plush helm seat as the boat lunges forward. Acceleration is instantaneous and our speed skyrockets; part of me wants to slow down, a bigger part wants to push on. *20 knots ... 30 ... 45 ... 50 ... 52.* We reach cruising altitude, folks. But don't unbuckle that seatbelt just yet. We blast atop the slop of the Solent—a legendary slice of British water that has hosted world-class sailing for centuries—aboard Sunseeker's highly anticipated Hawk 38.

Hearing the whine of props out of the water as you jump a wake is something you never really get used to. Shock mitigating helm seats designed by the Fabio Buzzi Design studio and built by Besenzone dissipate the slamming caused by, you know, gravity. I turn the boat as hard as my courage allows and tense my body for the slam of hitting 3-footers sideways. The turbulence I expect never comes.

Fully loaded, we run into a 20-knot headwind and snotty seas and see a top end of 53 knots. In calm conditions, I'm told the 38 should hit speeds in the mid-60-knot range. During the white-knuckle, in-flight entertainment I'm unable to record rpm and fuel burn measurements. I suppose it doesn't matter. GPH at 3000 rpm is nice information to have. But what you really need to know about the Hawk's performance is: It's a race boat disguised as a yacht. Literally.

About 800 miles southeast of the Solent on the edge of Lake Como was the man behind the Hawk 38, naval architect and designer Fabio Buzzi. Italy's Don Aronow, Buzzi boasted a reputation for having an unquenchable need for speed dating back to his competi-





Deep bolster seats allow both driver and passengers to feel secure as the Hawk 38 flies in tighter and tighter circles. Mercury Racing throttles at the helm warn the helmsman that they're taking control of a raceboat.



LOA: 38'11"
Beam: 9'9"
Draft: 2'7"
Displ.: 11,020 lbs.
Fuel: 185 gal.
Water: 26 gal.
Standard Power: 2/400-hp
Mercury Racing 400Rs
Price: \$817,000



tive racing days in the late '70s. During his storied racing career he accumulated 52 World Offshore Championships, 22 European Offshore Championships and 40 World Speed records.

Fabio Buzzzi, the legendary Italian engineer, boat designer and powerboat racing champion, died in an accident on September 17, 2019 during the closing stages of an attempt to beat his own speed record between Monte Carlo and Venice. He was 76.

Just prior to this tragic accident I spoke with Buzzzi about what would be his last project, his swan song.

"Listen. Terrorists, pirates and other bad guys can get access to outboards now that will make a boat go 50 knots," he said with a rapid cadence and broken English. "If you want to catch a boat that goes 50 knots, you need a boat that can go 70 knots and be directionally stable. We build boats, drives, engines, we make seats. Our boats are very high performance. We're building the fastest military boat ever built."

The hatching of the Hawk 38 marks Sunseeker's return to the performance boat market after a nearly 14-year hiatus, though one could argue the builder's Predator line received a double dose of that racing DNA. Models like the Hawk, Superhawk and Turbohawk ruled the seas for much of the '80s and '90s. Most recently the XS line of surface-drive powered craft, in collaboration again with Fabio Buzzzi, fell victim to shifting customer preferences and the Great Recession.

"In 1984, we had three XS 34s competing in the powerboat world championship. Amidst a heat wave it was the only entry from the cruiser class to win a leg of the world championship outright, beating the Cat 1 boats," says President of Sunseeker USA Sean Robertson. "We have a heritage that ran through the '90s with the Hawks, even into larger products like the Predators with triple 2,400-hp MTUs and Arneson drives."

Watching the industry-wide shift and popularity boom of the outboard market, the British builder is betting big that these modern powerplants will bolster the popularity of their new performance boat.

"Finally we've seen that niche open back up," explains Robertson. "The next generation of clients maybe don't want to own a larger yacht yet. They want dayboats. Unless we cultivate that market, that generation won't build into our larger boats."

Robertson continued: "Outboard power was the best fit for these new boats." According to him, the increased reliability, quietness, relatively low service costs and added interior space were all factors in the plus column. That and of course the speed they engender.

Many will be quick to look at the twin Merc 400-hp ponies on the transom as the reason for the Hawk's prowess on the water (no doubt soon-to-be twin 450s now that Mercury Racing debuted those supercharged motors in the U.S.), but that's only part of the



We'd like to say that you get used to the feeling of being thrust airborne, but that would be a lie. Hull number one is powered by twin Mercury 400Rs.



story. The hull is the other half.

"Today, my boats are machined from a block with 5-axis milling machines and the dimensions are perfect," the late Buzzi said. "It needs to track like an arrow at the speeds it's capable of."

"Listen. We produce military boats," continued Buzzi. "We don't like to build pleasure boats, but we like to work on this boat with Sunseeker because they wanted performance. This boat is an honor for me."

And perform she does. A fellow marine journalist from across the pond swears the 38, while very lightly loaded, hit 70 knots. And the hull's series of four steps gives lift and grip, something I was thankful for when cutting the craft into hard-over turns.

I finally brought the Hawk in for landing and brought her back into neutral. I noted two things before handing the helm back to the captain. I was glad I didn't inadvertently hit one of the many buttons on the NASCAR-esque wheel. (It was a nice touch having all the ship controls at your fingertips because taking your hands off the wheel at speed would be inadvisable.) The second was a small, circular silver decal next to the Fusion control. It read "Hawk 38 RB-001" and below in flowing script "Robert Braithwaite."

Braithwaite founded Poole Powerboats, which would go on to become Sunseeker. I would learn, walking the shop floor of the builder's Poole buildings just two months after his passing, just

how beloved the founder was. Countless departments, from lay up to fabric stitching, hung printouts memorializing him in prominent places along the walls.

Braithwaite, who was 75 at his passing, famously left school at the age of 15 with a dream to build boats. His formative years were spent repairing outboards. He and a partner would go on to borrow £5,000 to build a 17-foot go-fast boat with race-boat designer Don Shead.

The Hawk 38 would be the last boat Braithwaite and Fabio Buzzi had a direct hand in. The Sunseeker executive team decided to honor their founder by placing these limited-edition insignias on the first 10 boats in this new model. A fitting tribute, I think, for a man who started with a humble 17-footer and ended with the 38 beneath my feet, in between overseeing a boatbuilding empire synonymous with luxury and James Bond. Buzzi's legacy will be written in the wake trailing behind the Hawk.

The Hawk 38 swooped into the U.S. at the Ft. Lauderdale show and arguably the most crowded segment here in the states. Outboard-powered speed machines are fast becoming the preferred craft of young families getting into the sport and seasoned cruisers looking to downsize. From its racing hull and exceptional driving experience to its ability to double as a tender, this Hawk is slated to be a lasting tribute to two visionaries who were not afraid to push boundaries. □



BRITISH INVASION

FAIRLINE AND PRINCESS GO HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH CUTTING-EDGE DAYBOATS BOUND FOR U.S. SHORES. BY ALAN HARPER





was sitting in the Bay Horse listening to some jazz, and during a set break got chatting to the dreadlocked young man on the other side of the table. I don't know what he had been smoking—actually I probably do—but when he fixed me with an unblinking gaze and said, apropos of nothing in particular, “There are more answers than questions,” I began to realize that his idea of small talk and mine were somewhat at variance. Luckily the band came back on, and I was able to draw a line under our exchange without having to dig too deeply into my stock of cod-philosophical responses.

But he was right, of course. Two long-established British boatyards recently asked themselves the same question: “What should a fast, fun 35-footer be like?” Their responses could hardly be more different.

For Fairline, the answer is a powerful deep-V with its heart in the offshore ethos of the '60s: An authentic wind-in-the-hair thoroughbred with terrific seakeeping, exquisite handling and a comfortable cabin below. The object of the exercise was to create a moderately priced craft of such irresistible charm that the F//Line 33 would fly out of the sheds at the rate of one a week, securing a firm financial footing for the company while its new management set about revitalizing the rest of the product range.

Princess' response to the question is a radical machine packed with groundbreaking technology, founded on ideas that are totally new. With its all-carbon construction and unprecedented engineering challenges, it didn't present the company with a learning curve so much as a sheer rock face, complete with overhangs. High-concept, high-tech and high-priced, the R35 was tasked with nothing less than reinventing the Princess brand image and attracting the attention of a new and younger customer base, who see nothing





FAIRLINE F//LINE 33

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE	dB(A)
1000	4.8	2.9	298	68
2000	8.4	7.4	204	69
3000	12.6	16.1	140	79
4000	18.8	27.7	122	84
5000	37.7	42	161	82
6000	47.3	65.8	129	86

Seas: Calm | Fuel: Half | Water: Full

LOA: 32'9"

Beam: 11'6"

Displ. (half load): 14,800 lbs.

Fuel: 180 gal.

Water: 44 gal.

Power: 2/430-hp Volvo Penta V8-430-EVC DPS

PRINCESS R35

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE	dB(A)
1000	5.4	2.9	294	64
2000	9.2	6.6	220	69
3000	16.2	13.7	186	85
4000	26.2	23.3	177	85
5000	34.8	41.5	132	87
5950	43	64.2	106	90

Seas: Calm | Fuel: Half | Water: Empty

LOA: 35'9"

Beam: 10'8"

Displ. (half load): 13,000 lbs.

Fuel: 158 gal.

Water: 37 gal.

Power: 2/430-hp Volvo Penta V8-430-EVC DPS





The Fairline cuts a sharp offshore shape with 22 degrees of dead-rise at the transom and a pad in the keel aft to add stability.



unusual in having “sport” and “comfort” modes in their cars, and don’t see why boats shouldn’t have them too.

With their excellent detailing and fashionable plumb bows, as if getting drenched in spray is something that only happens to other people, these are thoroughly modern dayboats. The Princess was styled by the legendary automotive Carrozzeria Pininfarina, and bears the coveted badge just below the windshield. An incredibly involved collection of convex and concave curves, the only straight line anywhere on board looks to be the stem. Tunnels in the top-sides aft are reminiscent of the engine intake scoops of a Ferrari or a Lamborghini, and were originally intended to perform the same function, although the R35’s engines now get their air from a grill in the transom. The finish is lustrous: To save weight, there is no conventional gelcoat but instead a 500-micron resin film which is lightly abraded before spray painting. It’s a technique they also use at Aston Martin, apparently.

The cockpit is compact, and dominated by the three-person helm seat. Down below, headroom is just 5 feet, 5 inches at the door. The dinette table lowers to form a berth measuring 5 feet, 10 inches by 7 feet at its widest, and there is also a basic galley and a head.

The beamy little F//Line 33 offers more space on board than the R35, with its roomy convertible cockpit design, fold-down transom and reversible seat, a useful galley and a cave-like mid-cabin that kids will like. Headroom by the door is 6 feet, 2 inches, and the converting forward berth measures 5 feet, 6 inches by a maximum of 7 feet, 4 inches wide. Italian superyacht designer Alberto Mancini saw to the Fairline’s styling, and imbued it with sufficient levels of detailing to add a real sense of quality, from the embroidered upholstery to the velvety, matte vinyl film coating the hull. Construction is not as high-tech as the R35’s, but still sophisticated: The fiberglass is resin-infused, and the hull is molded in two halves to cope with the complex shapes.

The key to both of these boats is the hull design. Fairline went to the renowned naval architects J&J in Slovenia, who drew them a sharp offshore shape with a 22-degree deadrise at the transom, a pad in the keel aft to add some stability, a broad chine and three pronounced spray rails, two of them stopping short of the stern to help the back end stick to the water. This could be a description of a narrow-beam racing monohull, but actually the F//Line 33 is remarkably wide for its length, and the fact that this doesn’t make it seem at all cumbersome or compromised when underway at speed is rather magical.

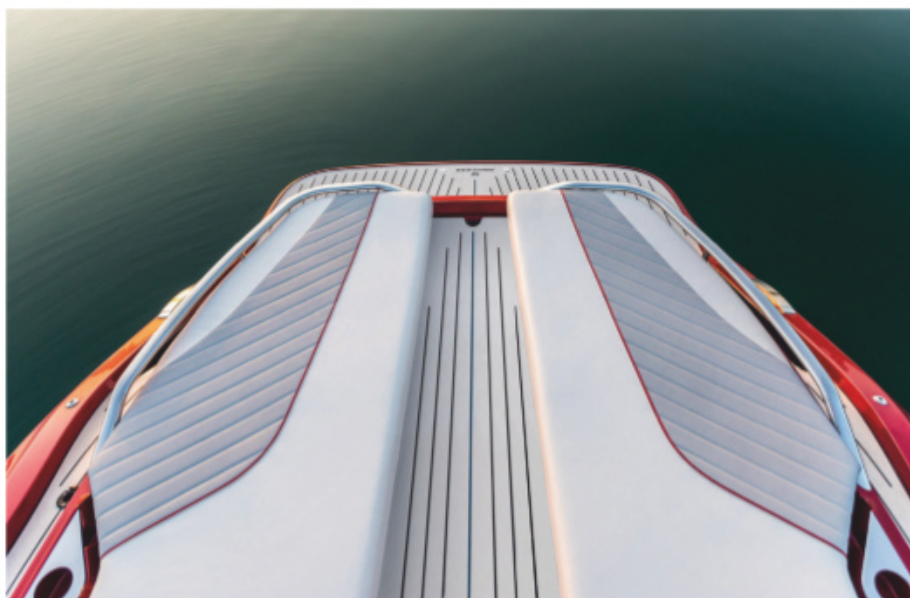
Princess called in the design services of BAR Technologies of Southampton, England. The requirement was simple: “The most forward-thinking Princess ever conceived,” with a new approach to hull design and dramatic improvements in efficiency. Faced with such a brief, perhaps only a company best known for designing dramatic, foil-born America’s Cup catamarans would immediately start thinking in terms of hydrofoils—although it’s more helpful to think of the R35’s as trim tabs rather than foils because they’re about control, not lift.

BAR set out to design a planing hull that was efficient not just at high speeds, but throughout the performance envelope, without sacrificing seakeeping. So the R35 has a very fine, wave-slicing entry that swells out to full-bellied midships sections, before flattening out aft to a low-drag stern that is barely immersed. The foils, just 20 inches long, are lowered downward automatically from the hull bottom into the water flow, forward of the sterndrives, on computer-controlled carbon struts that move fore and aft by five degrees in each direction to adjust the angle of attack.

Their job is to keep the hull at its optimum angle of trim. To make



“The most forward-thinking Princess ever conceived” combines a wave-slicing entry with foils.



this possible, the boat's weight is concentrated amidships; the engines are set well forward of the stern and connected to the stern-drives by two, long, carbon-fiber jackshafts. Screen graphics give the helmsman a comprehensive overview of what's going on, from the angle of the foils to the level of lighting in the cabin. Change the drive mode from “comfort” to “sport” and the screen changes color.

The R35 was designed around a pair of Volvo Penta's 430-hp gasoline V8s. These are beautiful engines, smooth, torquey and electronically controlled, with aluminum blocks and cylinder heads, and based on GM's Generation V 6.2-liter motor. On land, they can be found powering the Corvette Grand Sport. (It's possible that this sounds more exotic in Europe than it does in the U.S.)

Although Fairline offers a variety of engine options on the F//Line 33, starting with twin 240-hp gasoline V6s or 220-hp diesels, our test boat was fitted with the same engines and drives as the R35. So the comparison between the two boats is fascinating.

Some fast boats just feel right. The F//Line 33 is one. An old Air Force pilot once said to me, recalling the F-86 Sabre: “The plane was me.” To think it is to do it. The little Fairline's handling is genuinely





outstanding. And some fast boats feel overpowered—you know they have another 5 or 10 knots to offer, but you just don't want to go there. But even with 860 hp on tap, the little 33 left me feeling comfortably in command at all times. It's a joy to drive. The hull has terrific grip, and a very impressive turning circle even at maximum revs. The incisive deadrise ironed out the chop of our own wake effortlessly, and with one hand on the wheel and one on the throttles, with a slight flex of the knees, for a moment I was Don Aronow charging across Lyme Bay in the 1969 Cowes-Torquay. Not many boats do this to me.

With its 4kW diesel generator and 330-pound carbon hardtop, our test R35 was never going to be the fastest of its kind, but it still managed a lively 43 knots in our sea trial in Plymouth Sound. A boat of such engineering complexity isn't just about top speed, in any case. Incredibly, the R35 feels like any other thoroughbred sportsboat to drive. I was reminded of the Duke of Edinburgh's comment on alighting from his first trip in Concorde: "It felt just like any other airplane." This was music to the ears of the engineers who had worked so hard to ensure that



flying at twice the speed and twice the height of any other airliner felt normal.

Ignore the screen graphics and you would have no idea what was going on beneath the waterline of the R35. There is very little trim change under acceleration, and certainly no “hump” as the foils do their job. With no marked trim transition between displacement and planing modes, there is none of the usual penalty in fuel consumption at moderate speeds. Princess demanded efficiency—here it is.

At high speed, the R35 heels and handles like a good deep-V. In “Comfort” mode it is as good as gold throughout the rev range, heeling gleefully into the hardest of turns with a grip on the water that never lets go. “Sport” mode imparts a little extra edge, a little sense that you could get it to misbehave if you really tried—although I never managed it.

When all is said and done, perhaps the most one can say about the R35 is that, amazingly, it works. And so, triumphantly, does the little F//Line 33.

So let’s drink to our dreadlocked philosopher in the Bay Horse: one question, two answers. Both right. □





ANSWERING THE SHOUT

THE UK VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION RNLI HAS BEEN SAVING LIVES AT SEA SINCE 1824.
BY MARY SOUTH





While some capsizing training takes place in a pool at RNLI's Poole station, regular runs in snotty conditions are integral to get it down (right).

In the early hours of August 20, 1989, the River Thames party boat *Marchioness* was boarded by a large group of revelers. The evening was warm and still—ideal conditions for the happy Londoners gathered for a birthday celebration. With everyone aboard, a staff of two opened the bar and got the music started, while the ship's crew got the boat off the dock for what promised to be a wonderful night out on the water. Within half an hour, though, the *Marchioness* was overtaken by the dredger *Bowbelle* and struck near the stern. She turned hard to port and *Bowbelle* struck her a second time, tipping the party boat on her side and riding directly over her. A nearby vessel came to the assistance of passengers in the water, and the police were called to the scene. But the boat sank, stern first, in less than a minute. Twenty-four bodies were later recovered. The incident still haunts the survivors, friends and relatives of the deceased and lingers in the memories of the British people.

A long, contentious and inconclusive investigation of the accident followed. There was consensus on only one thing: The highly trafficked River Thames needed a dedicated search and rescue team.

Today, there are four lifeboat stations near London—at Tower, Chiswick, Gravesend and Teddington. These river stations are permanently staffed because they are required to have a crew afloat within 90 seconds of being notified of an incident. If this seems remarkable, consider that these are all stations of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), an organization that is 95 percent volunteer run.

Founded in 1824, the RNLI has 238 lifeboat stations, covering 19,000 miles of coastline around the UK and Ireland; in addition to the four stations on the Thames, there are another five inland lifeboat

stations. The organization, which is entirely funded by charitable donations, provides rescue lifeboats, seasonal lifeguard service, flood response and coastal safety, research and educational programs.

Fewer than one in 10 of the volunteers comes from a maritime profession, which means if you get into trouble in UK waters, you are very likely to be saved by an architect, a dentist, a teacher or a mechanic. That's why the RNLI provides rigorous and continuous training for its volunteers.

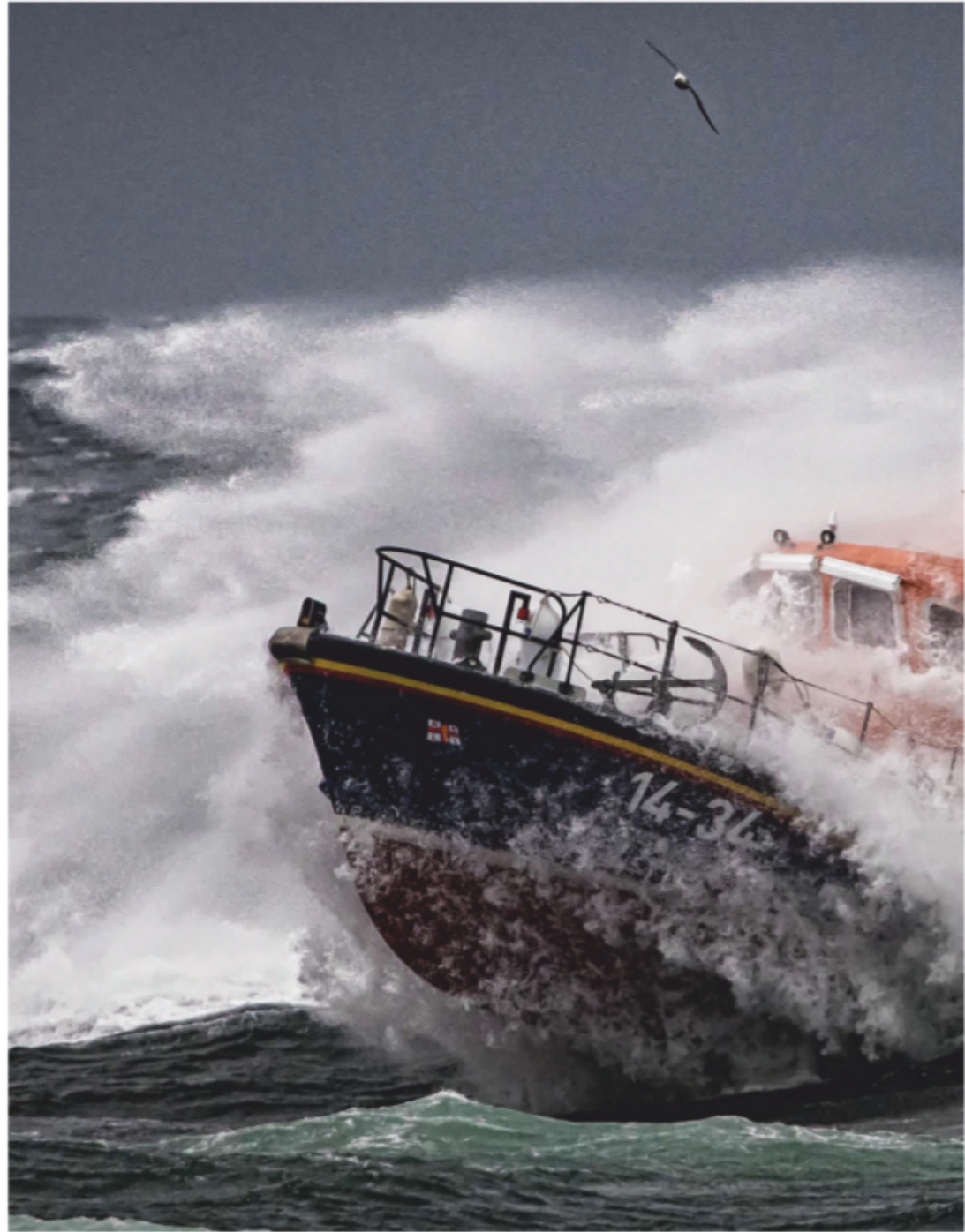
Gunnar Christiansen moved to London with his family in 2016 and joined the Teddington RNLI station.

"We were new to the neighborhood. I was passing the lifeboat station and saw some volunteers hanging out and thought, *that looks like a cool thing to do*," says Christiansen. He lived within three minutes of the station, so he was eligible to volunteer. Despite his 500-ton USCG Master's license, he has been very impressed by his training.

"We don't have anything like this at home," he says. "There are a lot of boxes to check as you work your way up and until you check all of them, you're considered a trainee. You start as Shore crew, learning to launch a boat for a rescue, then join a Boat crew and can eventually reach Helm."

Along the way, there are constant drills and assessments, improving and testing not only volunteer skills but emergency acumen. RNLI headquarters in Poole, Dorset, sets these high standards and implements the training. The Poole facility also provides accommodation, classrooms and distance-learning resources and has a state-of-the-art lifeboat simulator, wave tank and engine workshop. Crew receive training that costs an average of more than \$2,000 per person, per year.





Gutsy training for volunteers includes working with helicopters to sea survival drills. RNLI lifeguards are “the reason I have my family today.”





The RNLI has a fleet of specially built rescue craft. One hundred and sixty of these are from five classes of all-weather lifeboats, capable of high speed in offshore conditions, safe operation in all weather and self-righting after capsize. These are designed, built and maintained in Poole. There are also 264 inshore lifeboats from five classes—for rescues in shallow waters, surf and near rocks—and seven hovercraft. The RNLI Inshore Lifeboat Centre in Cowes on the Isle of Wight supplies and maintains most of these.

Volunteers, yes. But they are well-equipped, well-trained and well-funded. Lifeboat crew may answer a “shout” that takes them at any hour of day or night to rescue a stricken vessel in foul weather with injured crew aboard, an attempted bridge suicide, a boating collision or a kayaker or kite surfer in sudden danger.

A recent rescue in rough weather off the coast of Wales saw two RNLI crews dispatched to assist: an all-weather lifeboat and a fast-inshore lifeboat. The first boat on the scene, the all-weather class, attached a towline and put a casualty-trained volunteer aboard to assist the wounded sailors, despite the heavy seas. Two had minor facial wounds and a third was extremely cold and appeared to be in shock. When he failed to respond to first aid, the UK Coastguard was called in for a medevac, with the inshore lifeboat crew assisting in the hoist. The all-weather boat then towed the injured party’s 38-foot sailboat to the dock and the inshore crew returned, refueled and were ready for their next shout, a half hour later.

These sorts of rescues happen all over the UK, every day. More than 9,000 people were aided by RNLI lifeboats in 2018. Another 32,000-plus were aided by RNLI lifeguards.

Vicky and Marc Murphy will never forget their rescue. On a romantic stroll around a headland in Cornwall 10 years ago, revisiting the site of their engagement to celebrate Vicky’s recent pregnancy, they became trapped by the tide.

“At first it was only ankle deep,” Vicky said. “But then it was at our knees. Then our shoulders—then before we knew it, waves were crashing over our heads. I had no idea how we were going to get out.”

The couple struggled as the surf continued to push them back against the rocky cliff base.

“I was trying to fight the current, but it was dragging me out to sea. Marc hooked his arm through my dungaree straps, clinging onto the rock with both hands to stop us from being washed away.”

Fortunately, a nearby surfer spotted the couple’s predicament. RNLI lifeguards Chris Lowry and Damian Prisk were soon on-scene in their inshore rescue boat. The rough surf made getting the boat close too dangerous, but Lowry jumped in and climbed to the rocks. Working together, he and Prisk were able to get the couple aboard and to safety.

“The relief of seeing the lifeguards in the rescue boat coming around the corner still gets me emotional to this day ... I’m in awe of their bravery—they are the reason I have my family today,” Vicky said.

What makes the ordinary people of the RNLI heroes? Knowing they’re well prepared is key, but Christiansen points to the RNLI’s fundamental team-building and camaraderie.

“This is such a fantastic group of people to work with. They all bring certain talents.” Christiansen cites a policeman on the crew who operates well under pressure and can “talk down bridge jumpers like no one’s business,” and an airline pilot “who is also cool as a cucumber when the pager goes off. There’s no one here that doesn’t have your back.” □

READER'S CHOICE

Discover the most popular boats of 2019 as determined by you—our readers. Between the 2018 and 2019 Ft. Lauderdale shows, we've reviewed and tested more than 100 boats, all of which you can find at *pmymag.com*. We dove into our analytics to see which boats were the most popular.





#10

Jarrett Bay 67 Sport Yacht

I try my best not to be superficial, but if we're being honest, there's one reason why the Jarrett Bay 67 *Privateer* was so popular among *Power & Motoryacht* readers, and it's not its personality. This boat is just plain beautiful.

Lines from a bygone era catch your eye, and meticulous craftsmanship and finish from the North Carolina builder cause you to stare. Such a pretty and classic looking sportfisherman, it almost doesn't seem right to turn the cockpit into a blood-covered battleground. *Almost.* —D.H.

Viking 38 Billfish

It's her origin story that first captured our attention. Once a rebranded Ocean Yacht 37, the vessel's design brief shape-shifted to incorporate a sleeker superstructure and deck house.

I see her as a versatile alternative to a big center console easily run by an owner/operator. With a battle-ready 109-square-foot cockpit, shaded mezzanine seating and a command bridge to escape inclement weather, Viking's smallest convertible punches well above its weight class, a refined pocket pugilist from an engineering team that preaches serviceability, fishability and ease of maintenance. —J.M.

#9



#8

Hinckley Sport Boat 40x

Hinckley's outboard model line defies categorization. It retains the parent company's essence—the interior joinery glows—and her hull is composed of advanced composites like Kevlar and carbon fiber.

But as our team learned last summer, she's a ton more wash-and-wear than a Picnic boat. We spent our day on board wake surfing, swimming and filling her cockpit with sand and various sporting equipment.

She can be outfitted any way you'd like: Add a livewell and rod storage or faux teak soles in the pilothouse and cockpit and artisanal teak toerails to complete the custom look. In short, the 40x can be as polished or unfussy as you please. Sunset cruise or sunrise fishing trip, whatever your style, the 40x is eager to please. —J.M.



#7

Ocean Alexander 90R

Walls of glass, superyacht-level fit and finish and more bars than a college town are just some of her high points.

When we first met, she sat at the face dock with the sliding-glass transom doors opened to reveal the beach club. This space is set up like a chic little bachelor pad with a sofa, wet bar and TV mounted in the bulkhead.

The rest of her interior is just as welcoming, with wide open spaces accentuated by massive windows in her hullsides. I loved the 90R's profile: curvaceous, aggressive and contemporary, with large sections of the bulwarks absent, allowing guests inside sweeping views. The R stands for Revolution. And the name fits. —J.M.

#6

Ocean Alexander 45 Divergence

“Did you see the Ocean Alexander center console?” was a question I heard tossed around the Miami Yacht Show continuously. “How could you miss it?” was a typical reply.

With their “dive” and “fishing” models resting along prime show real estate, with their enormous fold-down gunwales splayed open, it was indeed difficult to miss these showstoppers. After a test of the Divergence, the boat’s crew and I pulled the boat into a dockside eatery and I can safely say it’s the closest I’ve ever come to feeling like a celebrity. Some onlooking diners threw a wave and a thumbs up. Some whistled. Many fumbled with their phones to grab a photo of me, I mean, the boat. It’s no surprise why this boat is so popular. —D.H.



Sunseeker Hawk 38

When a sea trial starts with a company captain making sure you secure the kill cord to your leg, you know you’re in for a fun ride. Soaring atop the storied waters of the Solent, I was able to feel what true acceleration feels like.

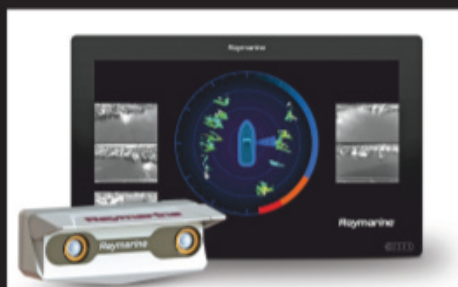
Sunseeker’s return to performance boats was highly anticipated on both sides of the pond. From the gray Hawk I rode atop in the UK to the bright blue model that debuted in Cannes and the fire-red model at Ft. Lauderdale, this bird of prey stopped showgoers everywhere.

Even when tethered to the dock, the Hawk 38 exudes the feeling of speed and power. But like its namesake, these boats belong in the wild. —D.H.

#5



Top Gear



Docksense Raymarine’s DockSense is a remarkable achievement. The system’s cameras and sensors work in concert to create a “virtual bumper,” a simulated

geo-fence around the boat that senses objects within its range. It adds semi-autonomous commands that will take the reins should a collision be imminent. I tested the system last winter and it worked as advertised. While it still needs time before it hits the market, Raymarine has put themselves in an enviable position as the first to successfully demonstrate intelligent object recognition and motion sensing. —J.M.

Mercury Racing 450R

Raw power from a industry stalwart will always get a lot of attention and no outboard outfit had the year like the Fond du Lac, Wisconsin-based



Mercury Racing. Their top-of-the-line 450-hp outboard has the best power-to-weight ratio in the industry and is the most powerful outboard from the big three manufacturers. Utilizing their reengineered 4.6-liter V8, the engine produces 40 percent more torque than their 400-hp outboard. I felt this midrange blast first-hand on 10 vessels equipped with two to six 450Rs apiece. As the outboard horsepower wars wage on, I have one piece of advice for Merc Racing: Watch the throne. —J.M.



#4

Midnight Express 60 Pied-A-Mer

For a day, we were Team Midnight on a poker run to the Keys aboard the largest center console the Miami builder has ever produced. Being Team Midnight affords you some luxuries, like seeing the super console in action first-hand. We were fast, we were mean and we could seriously accommodate 10 adults comfortably while underway at 60 knots. It's the last one that most impressed me. Here was the logical conclusion (for the time being) of building a center console that is unabashedly focused on entertaining. Will we see a larger one in the future? Only time will tell. —S.M.



#3

Solace 345

The pièce de résistance lies between the standard Yamaha 425s: A 4-foot-long cockpit extension for fishing with a hydraulic platform extending from under the transom for safe, easy access to the water. Dubbed the Fish-Thru transom, it had many of us asking, “Why didn’t I think of that?”

Commenters on our social media channels raved about the out-of-the-box design and the wide array of standards, including triple Shock-wave helm seats/bolsters, Garmin electronics package, a FLIR camera, Seakeeper, anchor windlass and a pair of sea chests, to name a few. When the team caught up to the 345 in Newport, the second station really caught our eye for its innovation. The hardtop is hinged aft so it can be folded back into the cockpit to reduce vertical clearance when trailering. —J.M.

#2

Scout 530 LXF

It’s not too often you can actually *hear* the backlash before it crawls out of some dark, troll-filled hole on the web—but that’s exactly what I was imagining as I stood on the 530’s cockpit and ogled the six 400R Mercs affixed to the transom. Was there a more efficient or desirable engine package out there? Maybe. But lambasting the owner’s personal propulsion choice missed

the point entirely. The handsome, South Carolina-built super console combines a ton of forward-thinking features like the cockpit’s movable “floating” bar stools, an ergonomic tackle storage/cooking center and hydraulic side gunwales that transform the already massive beam by more than 3 feet. The interest was palpable, propelling our video review of the 530 to over a quarter of a million views. Good luck trolling that. —S.M.



#1 Cigarette 59 Tirranna



“She’s all lips and hips, ready to break necks and cash checks,” said a dude that looked like someone who’d utter such a phrase to his bro as a group of us looked on from the dock. Dressed to kill in red and black leather, the flagship of Cigarette’s go-fast fleet made a statement at the Miami boat show as one of two super consoles with six 400-hp outboards on her transom.

A few months later, we’d reacquaint in Tennessee. Seems 2,400 hp wasn’t enough—Tirranna was now updated with a sextet of Merc’s 450Rs and ready to boogie. After nearly getting blasted overboard by her 5,200-watt, 29-speaker sound system and 65-knot runs on the lake, I began to appreciate her stunning exterior paint (a six-week affair), handsome teak decks, a well-equipped alfresco galley, seating for a ton of guests and slick belowdecks offerings via Italian design house Poltrona Frau. She was much more than a go-fast machine.

Regarding those dudes back in Miami: We may have fist-bumped in homage to Cigarette Racing’s 50 years of offshore racing. Here’s to 50 more. —J.M.

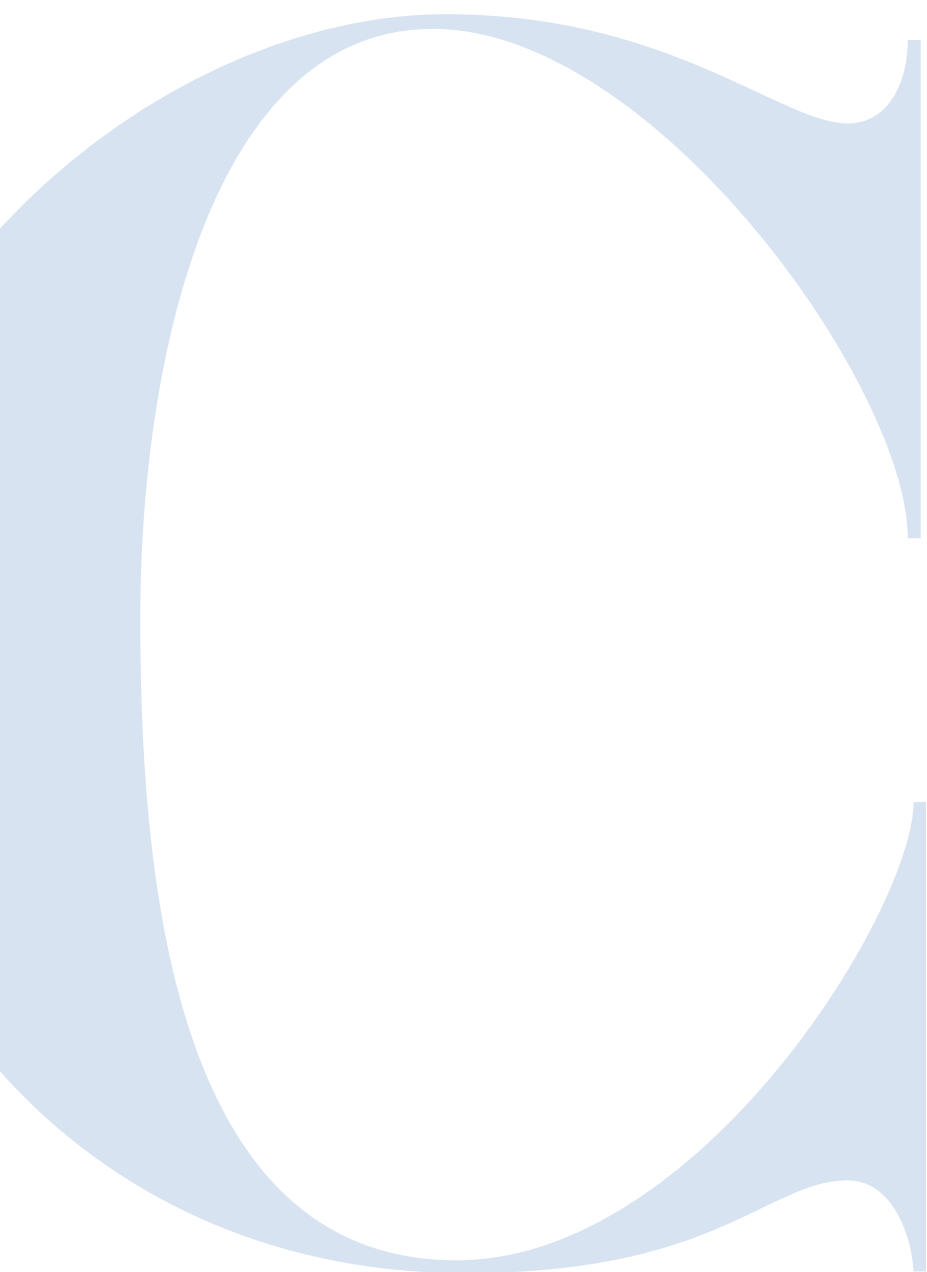




SECRET RECIPE

WITH THE 640 AZURE, OUTER REEF STARTS WITH A BORN-TO-CRUISE HULL AND INCORPORATES DESIGN CUES FROM THE ALFRESCO LIFESTYLE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST. BY JEFF MOSER





Cartographers call the globe's blank spaces "Sleeping Beauties", those expanses relatively free from the scars of civilization. Intrepid yachtsmen feast their eyes on the blue of the map and envision aquatic Sleeping Beauties—uncharted waters where man and machine can be tested—whether it's the open ocean, a remote fjord, a wild river or a rarely visited archipelago.

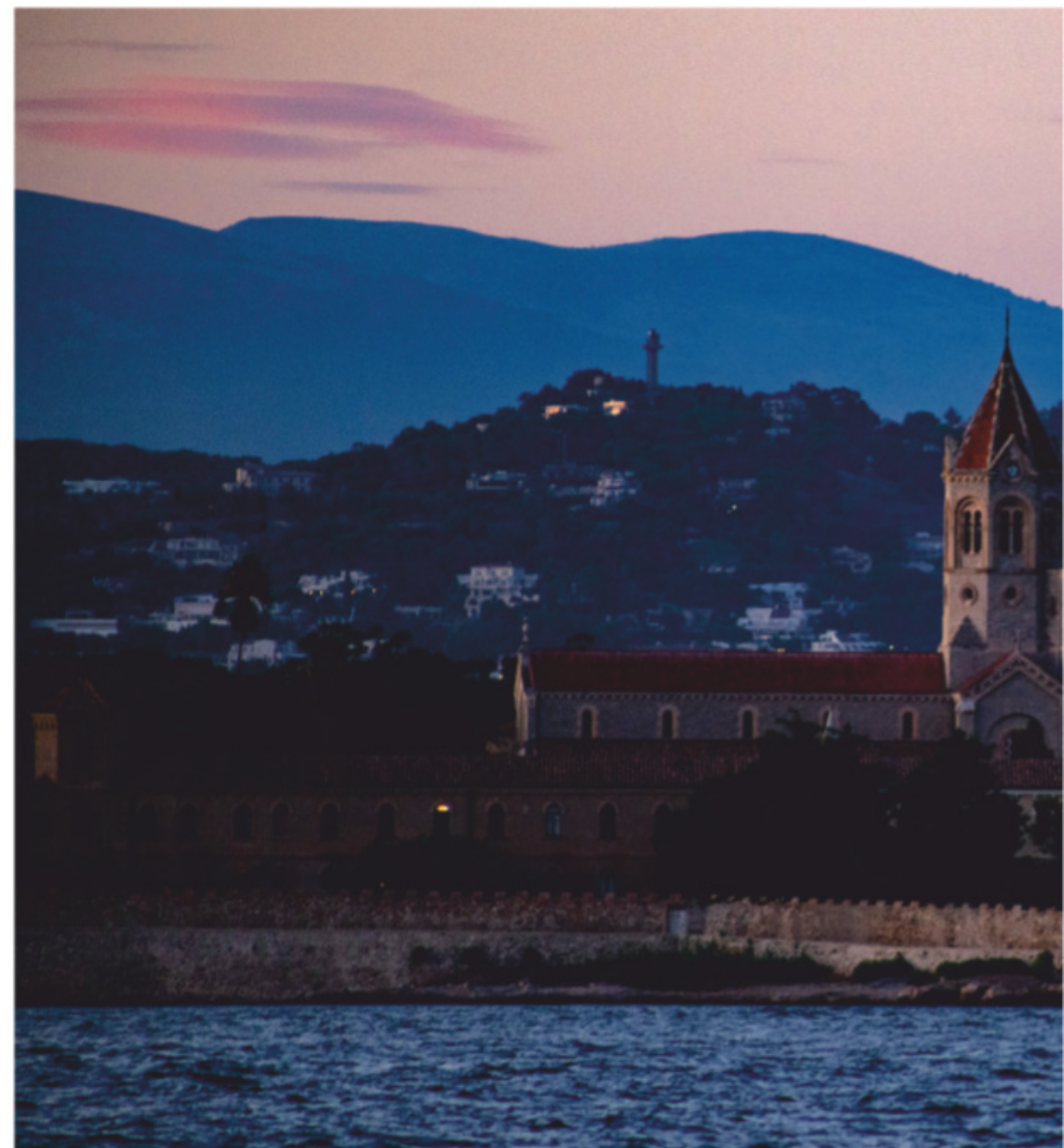
Since the early 2000s, Outer Reef Yachts has earned a reputation for building boats that are born for such off-the-grid travel. Every vessel they have built from 55 to 88 feet (plans to go larger are in the works) has earned CE Class A classification, which means they can handle up to 20-foot seas and 40-knot sustained winds. With sizable fuel capacities and their best-of-both-worlds semidisplacement hulls, they're at home away from home, exploring waters from Alaska to Argentina and everywhere in between. Still, President, CEO and founder Jeff Drucek knew they could offer more.

Drucek is a searcher, and not only in the waterborne sense; he's simply not satisfied staying in his lane, and takes merit in customer feedback. After a deep dive into his clientele, he realized that in the 20 years or so since he's been building custom yachts (he oversaw his own custom vessels before founding Outer Reef), the demographic has gotten younger by the same number of years. "We [needed] a more modern, contemporary interior to cater to a younger demographic," he told me. The 640 Azure is the result.

Based on the same hull as their 630—the builder utilizes monolithic one-piece construction for all of its vessels, refusing to tack on a few feet here and there as models move up in LOA—the Azure incorporates a revised layout that looks to take advantage of the alfresco lifestyle. The amidships galley that would typically divide the salon from the helm area is now aft. To counter the heavier load, the Azure's hull



The 11th century Saint Honorat castle ruins—aged by wind and tide—seem to spill onto the Bay of Cannes.





LOA: 64'
 Beam: 17'2"
 Draft: 4'10"
 Displ.: 107,000 lbs.
 Fuel: 1,000 gal.
 Water: 300 gal.
 Standard Power:
 2/476-hp Caterpillar C9.3
 diesel inboards
 Test Power: 2/500-hp
 John Deere 6090 diesel inboards



has been modified to give the vessel more lift at the stern.

With hull number one debuting at the Cannes Yachting Festival, I had been scheming with Outer Reef's European Director Trevor De Faoite on how we could get the 640 out into Bay of Cannes, as the show's Vieux Port location allows most vessels access to the bay and beyond. With a namesake derived from the Côte d'Azur, we had little choice but to see for ourselves how the 640 would soak in *la dolce vita*; De Faoite agreed. The beauty of Cap d'Antibes and Cap Ferrat beckoned—I suggested Corsica, but we had a few hours to play, not a few days—and we settled on the equally stunning Îles de Lérins for an early evening dinner cruise.

I've been on several of Outer Reef's Skylounge and Classic Motoryachts and found all to be well appointed, comfortable vessels chockablock with rich woods, marble or granite and top-of-the-line appliances ideally suited for whisking away voyagers in comfort. Boarding the 640 felt similar: The satin finish of the salon teak glowed, and her starboard helm three steps up looked like a fine place for a helmsman to whisk away hours while at sea. But moving the galley and going with light Corian countertops immediately transformed and modernized the salon. "Putting the galley aft opens up salon space dramatically," Drucek said on his way down from the flybridge via the internal stairs. "[She's] a traditional style boat with European flair."

I had to agree. The 640's sizable aft galley is a first for Outer Reef, the ideal complement to alfresco entertaining on her aft deck that's protected from the elements via the flybridge overhang. This layout has been a perennial favorite of mine and Outer Reef nailed it on the Azure—the full-height, patio-style door folds away and an electrically actuated glass window disappears to create a remarkable in-

door/outdoor gathering space. We'd have both open for our duration on board and Drucek reminded me that on those blazing hot Mediterranean afternoons, owners can simply close up the space and put on the air conditioning to keep cool.

The 640 traversed the busy Bay of Cannes and the *Power & Motoryacht* crew joined the chef, with one of us seated at the bar and two more in the galley near the cooktop. She set up her *mise en place* like a pro, began to sear some items on the cooktop and preset the oven for others. If she needed a sous chef and a few more assistants, the C-shaped space had enough room for five to slice, dice and measure; there's also a high countertop that flanks the galley for even more prep area. We were all set to pitch in and really give the galley a go, but, smartly, the chef had done a good deal of her prep work beforehand; she politely declined the need for assistance and continued to assemble a delicious assortment of ingredients for our meal.

We gave her some space and took in the sights from the Portuguese bridge, easily accessed from wide side decks and via a pair of pantograph doors on each side of the helm. On night watch or just for easy, safe access to the foredeck, this space is hard to beat. The 640 ambled along and as we rounded the Lérins, the coastal mountain range that towers over Cannes faded into the evening and all at once the 11th century Saint Honorat castle dominated our view. Its ruins—aged by wind and sea—seemed to spill onto the bay with crumbling ramparts that once repelled pirates and Spanish invaders. While daytrippers can visit the castle, the Cistercian brotherhood order of monks remain Lérins' only permanent residents, dedicated to their church and the island's vineyards.

We filed up to the flybridge to take in a more commanding view, and immediately began to vie for a first pass at the catbird seat just forward of the centerline helm. Dubbed the Bridge Viewdeck by Outer Reef, it's the ideal perch for two and as it's down a step, it doesn't impede the captain's sightlines. In total, there's seating for a dozen guests on the flybridge, its large overhang doubling as a sun deck or dinghy storage—a 2,650-pound-capacity Steelhead davit can place a 13-foot RIB athwartships or a 16-footer parallel. A barbecue and wet bar completed the space. We could've stayed for hours, but the aroma of dinner lured us down.

The chef smiled as all eight on board at once entered the galley from both the salon and aft deck. Spread out before us on the counter on both sides of the galley were the fruits of her labor: ceviche with yuzu and avocado; ham with truffles; a foie gras torchon; pasta salad with zucchini; and apple strudel for dessert. Drucek uncorked several local vintages and a few toasts were made to Cannes, present company and the 640 Azure. It was notable that no guests settled in the dining area, but chose to stand in the galley, leaning on the countertops and at the window overlooking the aft deck; the ample space just encourages people to gather.

The 640 Azure hit the Outer Reef trifecta, a custom yacht with myriad well-crafted social spaces, comfortable and private belowdecks areas and a remarkable fuel range. With 1,000 gallons of diesel on tap, she'll see 1,000 nm at 10 knots. Back off the optional 500-hp John Deere 6090s to 8 knots (476-hp Cat C9.3s are standard) and she'll run an estimated 1,687 nautical miles—from Gibraltar to the Greek Isles—between fill-ups.

She's also equipped to handle all the Med can throw your way, with a pair of standard Seabobs for exploring azure anchorages to Trac ABT fin stabilizers to keep things steady in rough conditions. Custom touches like the Garmin MFD next to the king-size berth in the master stateroom spoke to me—I'd use it to overlay

Like any galley worth its salt, the 640 Azure's galley encourages people to gather. There's ample counter space if the chef needs a hand.



a weather routing app 24/7 or just to keep an eye on things while resting belowdecks.

"[It's] the perfect boat for Europe," Drucek said as he took a place at the starboard countertop with the twinkling lights of the French Riviera at his back. He also mentioned that given the hype they've seen at the Cannes show, the Azure layout is now available on all Outer Reef raised pilothouse models up to 88 feet.

Essentially every nook of the Mediterranean has been mapped and oft explored. But the empty spaces still exist, territories untouched by man where the ambient glow from the cities does not impede. These Sleeping Beauties lie in wait for the dauntless traveler, as do the paparazzo-choked anchorages of the Côte d'Azur. With the 640 Azure, it's up to you to decide on the journey. □



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www.formulaboats.com

Formula Boats

Scott Porter, President

PMY: What lessons from the past has helped move your business forward?

SCOTT PORTER: I had helped work Formula Boats through several recessions; however, the 2009 Financial Markets meltdown and huge recession was a landmark event for us. Many boat manufacturers and dealers did not survive. Dealer inventory finance for larger boats disappeared. Formula was determined to be a strong survivor, but major distribution changes were decided for us for our future. In the end, Formula would establish dealer partners who would stock our boats from 24' to 35', and Formula would own and stock the larger display models at major metropolitan hub locations and utilize our dealer partners to conduct the transaction for a fixed low commission. Today we are growing our footprint with this model rapidly and the results are an excellent factory-directed value for our clients. Formula also decided to take and resell pre-owned boats to help facilitate transactions. Another great part of our new model is our rapidly growing network of after-

sale service locations, now at about 150. All of these changes allow Formula to deliver a great value to our clients.

PMY: How will your products change to meet the needs of an evolving marketplace?

SCOTT PORTER: Formula has been involved in an exciting evolution of product offering for several years now. Our clients are busier than ever with life, and we have been evolving and expanding our awesome line of "Crossover Dayboats," the CBR, SSC and ASC models (Crossover Bowrider, Super Sport Crossover, and All Sport Crossover). They are full of great features that deliver comfort and memorable times with family and friends--we are in the memory-making business, after all. Formula has developed an expanding lineup of outboard-powered models to complement its sterndrive power options. Another exciting offering with our Formula models is our fabulous 'Flex' program that allows clients to personalize their new Formula like no other builder. Many of our buyers come to the

Formula factory to spec out their new "dream boat." It is an experience never forgotten, and for some, frequently repeated.

PMY: Construction methods seem to be improving every year; what is your company doing to improve boat construction?

SCOTT PORTER: Formula is well known for superior construction and yet we continue to push the envelope for improvement. Our exteriors have sported "light show" metallic paints and Imron clearcoats for non-fade one-of-a-kind beauties. Our Flex program allows an almost endless combination of graphics and colors, and a custom option allows a client to pick their own custom colors. Formula has continued to evolve our stepped-hull designs for better speeds and efficiency and our Engineered Structural Grids have added structure to match the grueling waters they encounter. Formula continues to specify the best materials available and our senior tenured team deliver the best fit and finish in the Industry.





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M O N T E C A R L O Y A C H T S

www.montecarloyachts.it

Monte Carlo Yachts

Fabrizio Iarrera, Managing Director

PMY: How does your passion for boating and business feed innovation?

FABRIZIO IARRERA: When Monte Carlo Yachts was founded in 2008, our mission was to redefine the meaning of luxury. Ranging from 66ft to 105ft, the MCY Collection combines sophisticated Italian design with cutting-edge technological know-how. Inspired by the aerospace industry and Lean Manufacturing concepts, Monte Carlo Yachts' advanced Production Process constitutes an extraordinarily approach in the yachting sector: the hull, the interior and the deck modules of all our yachts are built simultaneously and joined together during the final assembly stage. The truly innovative element is represented by the interior module, which is built in its entirety as a single piece out of the hull. The internal skeleton replacing the traditional hull structure with the entire beam contributes to increase structural qualities and limits the transmission of vibrations and noise toward the interior rooms providing excellent reliability standards. Furthermore, such innovative elements are essential to offer enlarged

volumes and limitless customization options across the entire MCY Collection.

PMY: How will your products change to meet the needs of the evolving marketplace?

FABRIZIO IARRERA: With customers' interests at heart, Monte Carlo Yachts offers fully custom-designed layouts featuring hand-made elements made with high-quality materials. This year's launch of the second generation of the MCY Collection, namely MCY 66, MCY 70 and MCY 76, is driven by a Vision focused on delivering wider windows, increased brightness and larger volumes. Our long-lasting collaboration with the Nuvolari Lenard Design Studio follows the concept of a yacht as a home-away-from-home by emphasising the close relationship between the individual and the sea. Following the brand's design evolution, I am thrilled to announce that such feelings will be further developed with the introduction of the brand new Monte Carlo Yachts range featuring a wide and customizable Skylounge. As the first Italian brand to design and manufacture such yachts'

category, alongside the spacious main and lower decks, we are delighted to create an added volume to be enjoyed all year around.

PMY: Look into your crystal ball—what trends do you see influencing your future models/product(s)?

FABRIZIO IARRERA: Nowadays the yachting industry is focused on offering larger and versatile volumes characterised by brighter open spaces equipped with the latest technological features. Without decreasing the yachts' performance and with the individual's safety and comfort always in mind, at Monte Carlo Yachts we try to satisfy the owner's needs and desires by going the extra 'mile'. With customer's at heart, our company continues to invest in designing and manufacturing timeless elegant yachts distinguished for its unlimited customization options and attention to the smallest details. Each and every yacht of the MCY Collection is as unique as its owner who guides us in defining the brand's future trends.

MCY 70 with enclosed flybridge





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www.outerreefyachts.com

Outer Reef Yachts

Tracy Burgess, Director Of Marketing

PMY: How important is innovation in the market you compete in?

TRACY BURGESS: Striking the perfect balance between preserving the proven classic functionality of long-range cruisers while incorporating well-appointed, valuable design innovations is extremely important to Outer Reef. Our most recently launched innovations relate to two of our Classic Series models: our 640 Classic AZURE and our 720 Deluxbridge Generation II (skylounge) Motoryachts. The new AZURE offers a sun-filled, open concept aft-galley layout and is the first of its kind within our class. This innovative design can be applied to all raised pilothouse models from 58' – 90'. Both the AZURE and the 720 Deluxbridge models share another recently pioneered innovation within our class - an incredible "Bridgeview Deck™", which is an outside seating area ahead of the upper helm station, offering a 180-degree panoramic view over the foredeck and to the ocean horizon. These offerings move the needle within the owner experience and are strong examples of why Outer Reef is recognized as the most customized semi-custom builder within the long-range motoryacht sector.

PMY: What trends do you see influencing your future model/products?

TRACY BURGESS: Our business is flourishing with fresh interest and influence measured by open dialogue with our clientele, our in-house marketing analytics, and sales results. Influence takes place on both sides of the table; we influence those shopping the market by presenting genuine, relatable content including real-life owners' cruising stories and testimonials. In turn, the market influences our future model offerings by communicating bigger-picture, personalized cruising goals. A typical Outer Reef client is well-educated and well-equipped with their 'wish list' for their next yachting chapter. Often, we spend time with cruising couples who had previously purchased planing-style yachts, and later experienced a shift in their paradigm; they recognize their past purchases didn't translate into their cruising goals. Therefore, the continuing interest in our brand, by an even broader demographic, is the result of a discovery process: a strong desire to journey longer, to journey in confidence and safety within a yacht built for the purpose of withstanding all weather conditions, and to engage in bespoke, purposeful design that encompasses growing families, grandchildren, friends, pets, etc. This is what we deliver.

PMY: Are you attracting new, younger boaters? If so, how?

TRACY BURGESS: I joined the Outer Reef team almost six years ago, tasked with building the brand and generating interest for an already incredible, unprecedented product. I've witnessed Outer Reef capture interest from a new, wider age demographic. This is something I monitor on a daily basis via several resources, from digging into analytics from our 24-7 online showroom (our website), to engaging in casual conversations with those visiting us at boat shows around the globe. Outer Reef has seen a proven spike in younger prospects and actual owners, while maintaining a healthy, steady interest from experienced, discerning yachtsmen whose previous yacht-owning chapters culminated into their Outer Reef brand loyalty. The reason for this? Our product, people, culture, and process are very real – very genuine. When you read our website testimonials, destination stories, see photos of our owners cruising with their children, and experience our service team completing every task with an unmatched dedication, this style of customer service resounds with people of all ages in all parts of the globe. In essence, incredible customer service, paired with a great product, never gets old.





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www.sunseeker.com

Sunseeker

Andrea Frabetti, CEO,
Sunseeker USA Sales Co. Inc.

PMY: How does your passion for boating and business feed innovation?

ANDREA FRABETTI: I've always loved the sea and have enjoyed spending time on the water since I was a young boy. This led to my degree at Università di Genova where I graduated as a Naval Architect and Marine Engineer. Innovation has always been an important aspect of my various roles across key brands in the yachting industry, including at Sunseeker where I initially joined as CTO. My passion and skills have fed into new product development, where differentiation in interior design and making better use of space on board are vital.

PMY: How important is innovation in the market you compete in?

ANDREA FRABETTI: Technology and innovation are so important in the future development of the

market - they keep it moving forward. At Sunseeker we continually invest in research and development, not only in the application of new technologies, but also in the design and construction of our models. We have a dedicated Design & Technology centre which is a unique facility that integrates every detail of our yachts, from the initial concept designs through to the finishing details.

PMY: Look into your crystal ball—what trends do you see influencing your future models/product(s)?

ANDREA FRABETTI: It is extremely important to listen to your customers, especially when planning future models, as they influence new market trends and amplify innovation in products. Customer demand for larger yachts is driving our current partnerships and new build projects within the new Superyacht Division at Sunseeker. We have plans to double our

product range in size to 22 models over the next three years and the response we have had so far has been incredible.

In the future I expect new technology to impact models by enhancing entertainment and comfort for owners, who are spending more time on board. As a result, product design is evolving to focus increasingly on the exterior deck space and you can expect exciting new areas, exceptional audio, and innovative bathing platforms such as the Sunseeker Beach Club. Hybrid propulsion will also lead the way and revolutionise how customers power their boats in the coming years. Sunseeker was the first luxury performance yacht manufacturer to partner with MTU Hybrid Power, to enable a choice of operating modes on future models that produce zero emissions and reduce noise - increasing efficiency for the customer with a better impact on the environment.

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Azimut Yachts

Federico Ferrante,
President of Azimut Benetti Americas

PMY: How will your products change to meet the needs of the evolving market-place?

FEDERICO FERRANTE: In order to meet the needs of an evolving market place, you need to know it. The more and better you know it, or rather listen to it, the faster you can react or influence it. As for everything, knowledge comes from datas, informations, facts. You can't be everywhere at all times, hence you need to build a structure, a reliable, professional, knowledgeable structure which collects, filters, elaborates and delivers datas and informations back. The Azimut Yachts dealers network in addition to our corporate offices located in the most strategic areas of the market are the most extensive presence in the industry and one of the most important tools to listen to and predict the needs of the markets in order not to meet them, but to exceed them, as we do.

PMY: How important is innovation in the market you compete in?

FEDERICO FERRANTE: Innovation, along with reliability, quality and continuity, has been one of the main strategic pillars of our company for 50 years. Innovation is a fundamental part of Azimut Yachts DNA, the market expects Azimut Yachts to innovate the industry, because it's what we do, since always. Think about just few of the innovation we have introduced into the industry, back to 1982 with *Failaka*, the largest GRP yacht ever built at 105' and look at what the industry is building today. Hull structural windows in 2003, you can't find a yacht without today. Manoeuvring joystick in 2004, now available on every boat in the market place from 25' up. Seakeeper gyroscopic stabilizer, developed in partnership with azimut yachts, who had exclusivity of distribution for the first 3 years of production. Now an industry standard and probably the most significant revolution in industry so far. We are working now in several new directions, from hotel mode to active stabilization and few others...which you will discover in the near future.

PMY: Construction methods seem to be improving every year; what is your company doing to improve boat construction?

FEDERICO FERRANTE: Being part of the Azimut-Benetti Group (from 34' to 354') offers a huge amount of know how we can apply to the entire range of products. The entire superstructures of many Azimut yachts' models are designed and built in carbon fiber to improve the quality of the products at various angles, ranging from comfort in terms of stability and features in terms of upper decks sizing, and fuel consumption reduction. We have an internal R&D department dedicate solely to innovation and exploration of new solutions. To mention a few: the development of unique hull lines per each family of product and each model within. Only through the Azimut Yachts brand we offer 4 different kind of hulls: planning, IPS planning, dual mode and d2p (displacement to planning). Each and every model is designed, developed and tested individually to provide the best possible performance.

Azimut Grande 32 Metri



Yes, gelcoat is great. But eventually, adding a layer of linear polyurethane paint may be necessary.



BOATYARD

Shine On

Paint jobs are expensive, but with just a little care, the shine will last for many years.

By Mike Smith

When fiberglass began making inroads into production boatbuilding, one of the selling points versus wood was, “You’ll never have to paint again.” Some manufacturers went so far as to suggest there was no longer any need for antifouling: Marine growth couldn’t stick to the slippery gelcoat. (We all know how that worked out.) The instructions for keeping a fiberglass boat shiny were simple: Compound and wax every year. Nobody mentioned that over time, the compound would erode the gelcoat, and eventually you’d have to paint it to restore the shiny finish.

I’m not here to trash gelcoat. Maintaining it correctly from the outset, meaning regular sealing or waxing to repel dirt, along with minimal use of abrasives, will keep gelcoat shiny for a long time—but not as shiny as a new coat of linear polyurethane (LP) paint. You can’t beat professionally applied LP for that porcelain finish most

boat owners love. And with only minimal maintenance, the finish can last for a decade or more, which helps amortize the nosebleed-inducing cost of an LP paint job. Using the correct cleaners, polishes and high-tech sealers, making a paint job last isn’t rocket science; it just takes a little elbow grease.

All the major paint manufacturers publish instructions for maintaining finish: Awlgrip, Alexseal and Axalta (maker of Imron, and many other coatings) all have the info on their websites. All three agree that maintaining paint requires regular washing with water and abrasive-free, neutral-pH detergent formulated for cleaning painted surfaces; Awlgrip and Alexseal recommend using their own proprietary cleaners and polymer sealers. They advise using soft cloths, microfiber wash mitts or sponges—if a brush is necessary, bristles should be soft. And finally, they suggest drying the surface after rinsing to prevent water spots, which will make the paint look



BOATYARD

dull—a bigger problem when using hard water with high levels of calcium and magnesium. (Test kits for hard water cost only a few bucks.)

“Don’t wash painted surfaces with extremely hard water,” said Matt Anzardo, marketing manager for AkzoNobel, manufacturers of Awlgrip. “We recommend purchasing a water softener, especially when caring for dark colors.” Since dark surfaces heat up under direct sunlight, wash them early or late in the day, he added, particularly in tropical areas. When the paint is hot, it’s even more critical to avoid aggressive wash mitts. Whatever the paint color, every three or four months, apply a sealer to repel dirt and stains and absorb UV rays that will fade the color.

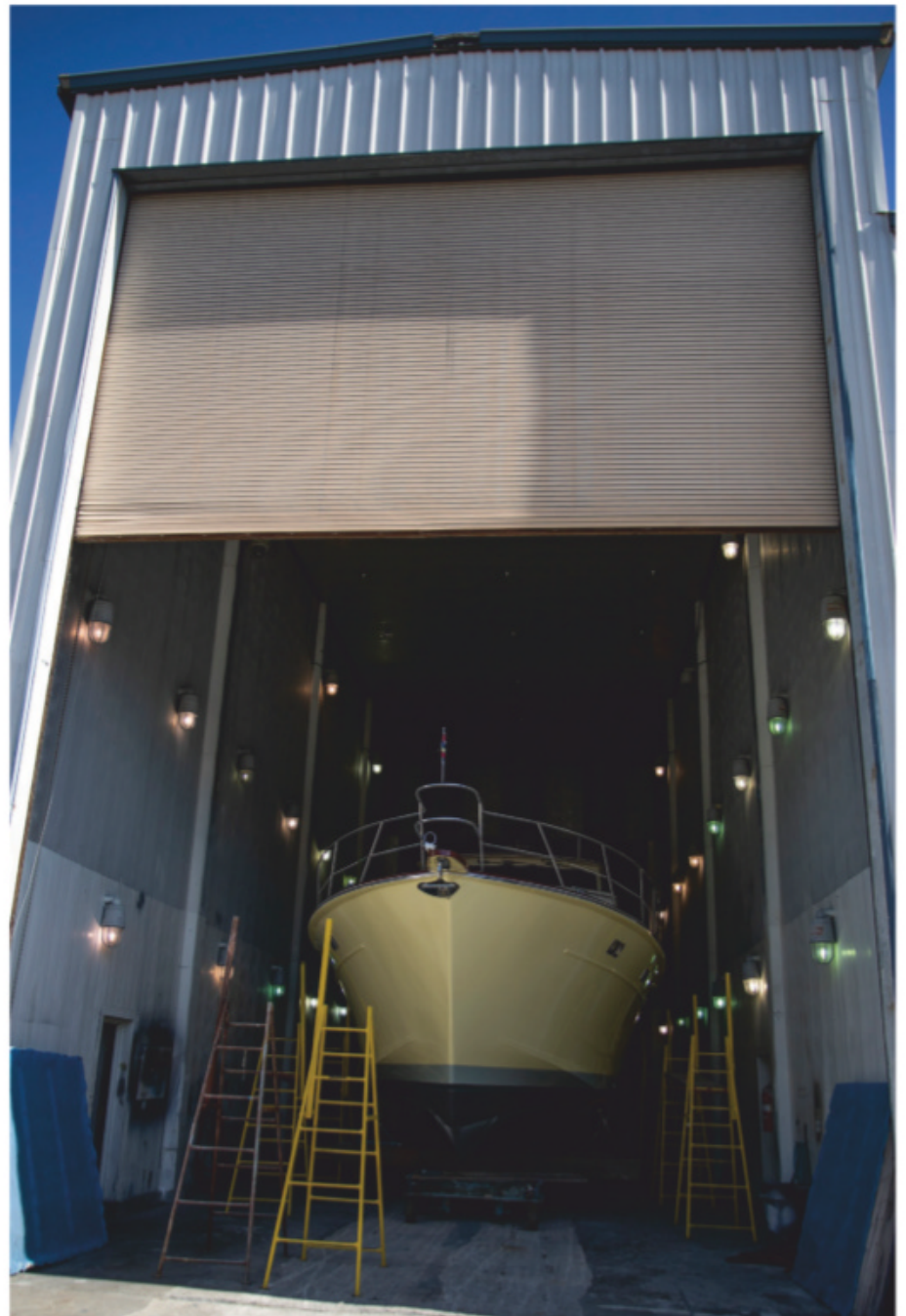
What about stains? Awlgrip and Alexseal polymer sealers both remove mild stains, but tough ones require extra effort. Resist the temptation to attack the stain with an aggressive cleaner or solvent, which could damage the paint. Instead, take a gentler approach. Anzardo said to try removing the stain with a diluted mix of one part white vinegar to five parts hot water, gradually adding vinegar until you see results. (The water/vinegar mix is also good for removing dried salt.) Don’t go over a 50:50 mix, and rinse the vinegar off immediately to prevent it drying on the surface; it’s a mild acid and will damage the paint. If vinegar doesn’t work, check the paint manufacturer’s instructions to see which solvents are safe. Don’t use aggressive stain removers designed for gelcoat.

Not everyone follows the manufacturer’s instructions, of course, but some people get years of shine from their paint jobs anyway. JB Turner, president and general manager of Front Street Shipyard in Belfast, Maine, is one of them. “My basic philosophy—and what I do on my own boat that now has 13-year-old topside paint that still looks great—is to not polish with anything for at least the first eight years.”

Every time you polish, explained Turner, you are taking away the clear layer on top of the pigment, which lies against the hull. “As you do that, you are just wearing out your paint job.” Turner expects to repaint his boat in another three years, so he’ll have 16 seasons “with a very shiny paint job” in New England. If you go south, he said, figure on cutting the paint’s life in half. But that still means at least eight years and, even then, the paint could hold out longer under certain circumstances.

Not polishing doesn’t mean Turner does nothing to maintain his paint. He washes the boat regularly, using Windex or a mild cleaner to remove scum, salt and the like. Twice during the boating season, he applies a coat of Permanon to seal the paint surface. Turner said that two coats of Permanon a season work fine in New England. After about eight years, he gives the paint a very light polish annually, along with the two Permanon treatments. “That seems to work great,” he said.

Capt. Carl Gwinn skippers an 86 Nordhavn in New England in the summer, and points the bow south during the winter. The boat has Imron on the topsides, and Awlcraft 2000 on the decks and superstructure. After more than a decade in constant service—most of it under Gwinn’s supervision—the boat looks brand new. The Imron on the topsides is only four years old, so it has lots of life left;



A linear-polyurethane paint job is a task best left to the professionals.

the Awlcraft on deck is more than 11 years old, and still looks good but demands more effort. Gwinn plans to repaint soon with Imron, since it’s easier to touch up.

Beyond frequent washdowns, Gwinn cleans the paint as necessary with fine 3M rubbing compound, followed by an application of a good marine polish. He uses small foam pads on a dual-action buffer to apply both; stay away from cloth pads, he warned, and “wool pads can burn the paint.” Then he seals the surface with a nano-ceramic coating: Wipe it on, let it dry, wipe it off. “Use ‘nano-ceramic’ sealer,” he said. “It won’t turn yellow like many ceramic sealers will.” The sealer lasts for about six months. He says even the older Awlcraft 2000 comes back to life nicely under this regimen. (Note: Matt Anzardo said that ceramic coatings and polishes are a relatively new trend, and “as we have not yet tested them, we do not support their use on Awlgrip topcoats.”)

Follow the advice of these pros, and you may never have to paint your boat again. □

BOATYARD TIP

Winter Homework

Creating a library of owner's manuals and other stuff has real, hands-on advantages. By Capt. Bill Pike

I'm a disorganized sort of guy, at least when it comes to most office-related stuff. One look at my desk and the average person would say, "I have no idea how this poor soul manages to drink his coffee in the morning, let alone do anything constructive during the rest of the day." But hey, everything associated with my boat is special to me and so I deal with it differently. More to the point, I've got a phalanx of three-ring binders in my office methodically aligned and clearly labeled.

Collectively, these babies contain every printed word I possess vis-à-vis the *Betty Jane II*, way more stuff than I could comfortably carry on board. The one entitled "CD Basics" illustrates the general idea. It features the owner's manual for the Cape Dory 28 Flybridge—that's *Betty*—which I downloaded from a website dedicated to Cape Dory Yachts, a long defunct builder not to be confused with



Do you really know where your manuals are?

Cape Dory Cruisers and Catamarans, a more contemporary entity. It's loaded with engineering and construction details, schematics for electrics, mechanicals and plumbing and specifications and maintenance advice that's just about as useful today as it ever was back in the day.

Another folder contains all the surveys done on the boat over the years, including the one I

paid for. Yet another contains all the information that's relevant to a repower performed in the spring of 2004, complete with bills, descriptions of work performed and a comprehensive list of all the parts involved, including the new 240-hp Yanmar 4HL-STP itself. And yet another contains literature on each and every piece of ancillary equipment.

By now, I guess, you see what I'm driving at. Although it's still not absolutely comprehensive at this point, the assemblage of manuals and other documentation concerning the *Betty Jane II* I have managed to put together over the past three years from websites, previous owners and a host of manufacturers is extensive, well organized and located in an easy-to-access spot. And more often than you'd think, this kind of thing has big-time advantages.

Not long ago, for example, while I was preparing to replace *Betty's* cracked PVC spray rails, I fired up my little library so I could discover exactly how the original rails had been installed and what brand and type of adhesive had been used during the process. The info I came up with subsequently helped me to remove the old rails and correctly and safely install the new ones. Pretty sweet, eh? □



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Call Jason Norcross: 561.722.6858



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2017 Azimut Grande 95 "STELLA MARINA II"

Pristine and New to Market: 2017 Azimut Grande 95 RPH. This is an example of perfection with too many custom features and upgrades to list. Inquire for a full equipment and listing file. Motivated. Contact Darren Phillips at 754-222-3868.



2019 Azimut 27 Metri

Azimut new model that features a wide body with floor to ceiling windows in master. Only 200 hours on it. Fully loaded, Jacuzzi, top of the line navigation and AV package. Impeccable, full time crew, still under factory warranty. Please call Jana at 754-222-3900.



2014 Azimut 80' FLY

This exquisite 2014 Azimut 80 is a fully featured and fully optioned example of one of Azimut's most successful models. A full time crew has meticulously cared for her on a daily basis and spared no expense with maintenance and upgrades. Call Mike Bader 754-222-3274.



2016 Azimut 72 FLY

The new generation of Azimut Yachts, this immaculate boat is fully loaded. Captain maintained, seakeeper stabilizer, bow sitting w/awning, largest fly in its category. 2 sets of ext. factory warranties, coverage until 11/22. Motivated! Asking \$2,795,000. Jana Pina at 754-222-3900.



2013 Azimut 72S

New Listing! Equipped with MAN V12 1800 hp engines. Runs 35knot plus and cruise 28-30 knots. Custom painted hull, Dual Sea Keepers, yacht controller, watermaker, Joystick docking with bow and stern thruster and much more! Contact Mike Doyle at 754-222-3709 for more details.



2010 Ocean Alexander 68' PHMY "SOJOURN"

SOJOURN has an amazing interior layout. Desirable and rare MTU power. 3 SR's with en-suite private heads. Master SR is the largest in this size range w/separate entrance from the salon. This OA 68 is ready to cruise w/full electronics, stabilizers, thrusters & crew quarters. Fast, stable, and beautiful. A must see! Contact Jeff Oliver 954-642-1196.



2018 Azimut 66 Magellano

Strong dual hull, CE category A, extremely well equipped, 5 months old, Extended 6 years total warranty Apple TV's, seakeeper gyro, Wi-fi system, water maker, 200 hours. Priced to sell. Asking \$1.9M. Contact Jana at 754-222-3900 or jana@marinemax.com for more info.



2017 Azimut 66 FLY "LUCKY 13"

"Lucky 13" is a great Example of Azimut quality and design. She is loaded with options including Custom Black hull and transom area, Sea Keeper, Joystick docking and CAT C18's with under 300 hours. Runs great. She shows well and has been maintained by a very savvy owner. Call Mike Doyle at 754-222-3709 for more details.



2015 Azimut 50 Fly "LADY LISA"

Just reduced to \$995K. Original owner, well maintained, shows like new. Full teak package, hydraulic lift, upgraded Zenta joystick with skyhook position hold and much more! Located in Boca Raton. Call Mike Doyle at 754-222-3709 for more information.



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2019 Benetti Delfino 95 - Incoming

Featuring exterior design by Giorgio Cassetta and interior design by Benetti's in-house team, the new Delfino 95 aims to improve on its predecessor, the Delfino 93. The layout allows the living spaces to flow seamlessly into one another, accommodating up to ten guests between five cabins, including a 21-square-meter full-beam master suite.



Azimut Grande 27 Metri Wide Body - Incoming

The 27M Wide Body Azimut Grande features an on deck master with 4 staterooms below therefore accommodating 10 guests. The use of carbon fiber allows for an extremely large interior while reducing weight. The on deck master being the full width on this wide body configuration. A mega yacht design at 87 feet. In Stock.



Azimut Grande 25 Metri - In Stock

Our newest Grande to date this Salvagni design features creative use of wood and stone. Fresh new concepts for your viewing & debuting at this years. Call today to get our full specifications and arrange for your private showing.



Azimut 77S - In Stock

The Azimut Yachts 77S is the ideal yacht for those who enjoy both luxury and power. Featuring a large flybridge with ample seating, this pleasure cruiser is perfect for socializing. It is the perfect balance of speed and comfort in one sleek profile. In Stock.



Azimut S7 - In Stock

The all-new Azimut S7 features the extensive use of carbon and a triple pod propulsion, offering unprecedented design freedom. The overwhelmingly beautiful exterior lines are enhanced still further by the new diamond cut windows in the deckhouse. The interior layout is unique, with the galley on the main deck, a game-changing owner's suite, & 3 spacious guest cabins. In Stock.



Azimut Magellano 66 - In Stock

The 66 Magellano is for people who want to cruise further afield, without giving up the comfort and elegance of Azimut Yachts. The interior spaces were designed for long stays on board. Featuring a limited fuel consumption thanks to the innovative Dual Mode hull and its wide range of cruising speeds. In Stock.



Azimut 66' Flybridge - In Stock

The desire for balance between the elegance of the external lines and the need to build structures suitable for extending total comfort to the owner and his guests, has produced the Azimut 66 Flybridge. This yacht offers both the harmony of contemporary lines, in keeping with the Azimut family-focused designs, as well as the most highly advanced technological solutions. In Stock



Azimut 60' Flybridge – In Stock

The Azimut 60' raises the bar for excellence to the next level. Style, design and innovation come together in an incredibly appealing cocktail that is bound to chart a new course through the waters. It's three outstanding features have lead this model to be the market leader. Call for an appointment to see first-hand what separates this yacht in the Flybridge category.



Azimut S6 - In Stock

As the latest addition to the Azimut lineup, the S6 is the second model of the new S generation to come to life. Trendy and sophisticated, the S6 will deliver an advanced yachting experience: carbon-tech construction, triple pod propulsion, top speed up to 36 knots and the best fuel efficiency.



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NEW 118' Ocean Alexander Megayacht - Incoming

We've taken our alliance with Evan K. Marshall to a different level. The new 118 lets light pour in, opens interiors in entirely new ways, and beautifully reflects how owners and their guests really use a boat: for privacy, luxury and intimate entertaining.



NEW - 100' Ocean Alexander Open Flybridge - Available

The all new 100' Ocean Alexander Open Flybridge 5 stateroom layout features an on deck master stateroom. Entertain on this impressive flybridge one of the largest in its class. We've scaled living space upward in the 100 using strategies usually found only in megayachts. With increased spaces in the galley and crew area, the Ocean Alexander 100 is perfect for private ownership or charter. For immediate delivery.



NEW - 90R Ocean Alexander MY Available

Evan Marshall and his team took their extensive knowledge of Ocean Alexander and masterfully revolutionized our legacy. Introducing the 90r - a yacht unlike anything we've ever built. Powerful engines. Unwavering safety. Luxurious spaces. Breathtaking views. They transformed everything without sacrificing anything. Prepare to blow everyone away at the dock with her sleek new design. The new full-width main deck expands living space without compromising the incredible performance and efficiency we're known for.



NEW - 84R Ocean Alexander MY- USA Debut this Fall

Ocean Alexander and Evan K. Marshall have once again partnered together to masterfully combine world-class engineering with extraordinary design. Introducing the 84R — the latest awe-inspiring addition to our Revolution line of luxury yachts. The impressive master stateroom boasts phenomenal views of its own, and the finishings in the stone-clad master head are pure perfection. Both the skylounge and flybridge options provide you with the ultimate entertainment space.



NEW - 88E Ocean Alexander MY

To commemorate Ocean Alexander's 40th anniversary, we present the Ocean Alexander 88' Special Edition. This Special Edition takes all of the traits most enjoyed on the 85 Motoryacht and further elevates the capabilities. Equally perfect for a family weekend or a private escape to sea and sun for weeks at a time. With the addition of an enclosed skylounge, you gain a second salon for you and your guests to enjoy. There's no better place to enjoy the vista than this skylounge.



NEW - 70e Ocean Alexander MY

Beneath the 70e's striking new exterior is solid Ocean Alexander engineering - now made in America. The 70e's fresh look makes it clear "e" stands for evolution. You'll fall under the spell of a clear sight line throughout the main deck and big views from expansive windows. Everywhere you look, you'll see our deep dedication to craftsmanship and know why we've earned a sterling reputation for safety, performance and fine engineering. For immediate delivery.



NEW - 45' Divergence

Ocean Alexander is taking its reputation of excellence and bringing you a whole new class of luxury. Introducing Divergence - our new 45' boat that transcends boundaries by flawlessly merging the comforts of a yacht with the size, swiftness and accessibility of a sport boat.



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2016 Ocean Alexander 100 Skylounge

Measurably larger than other yachts in its class, the 100 Skylounge is arguably the most spacious and luxurious entertaining spot you will find on the water. Sea N Sea features heated granite floors in the master bath, custom wood flooring in the salon, Crestron electronics, wireless Yacht Controller, and awnings for bow and flybridge seating area. Located in Miami Beach. \$8,099,000.



2015 Princess 68 Flybridge

The perfect blend of luxury, space and performance, the 68 has more interior volume for her length than any of its models. The 4-stateroom, 3-head layout offers a full-beam master accessed through a private staircase in the salon. Valuable options include V-Cool tint on main deck windows, Yacht Controller, Seakeeper, SAT TV, and upgraded MAN V12 engines. With the recent 1000-HR engine service performed, this yacht is truly turn-key. 700 Hours. \$2,495,000.



2017 Azimut 66 Flybridge

The 66 is known for having one of the largest flying bridges in it's class...this vessel is highly optioned with a very low 378 engine hours on twin 1150HP Caterpillars. Key features and highlights include: Seakeeper (w/ an additional control station on fly), stern thruster, Raymarine Platinum Package electronics, electric bimini top on bow, and gangway. Captained and maintained, all services are up to date including a recently completed bottom job. \$2,200,000.



2019 Galeon 640 Fly

This transformer yacht was built with every option available to make the most of your time on the water. Don't Tell Mom features an extended cockpit and aft flybridge with enlarged seating areas, an enlarged swim platform, and an electric privacy shade on the aft deck. Foldable aft balconies, sliding aft windows, and a convertible bar area give you the ultimate entertaining space as an additional 108 square feet is added to the aft cabin with the Beach Mode Package. Other notable highlights include lower teak decking, wood flooring in galley, 3-stateroom layout, and custom tile work in Master, VIP and Guest heads. 265 Engine hours. \$2,449,000.



Contact James Corts at MarineMax Naples

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2000 Intermarine 105

OUTTA TOUCH was built in 2000 and outfitted in 2001, this captain maintained luxury vessel w/raised pilothouse is powered by twin 1,850hp MTU engines. She showcases 4 staterooms with en suite heads, crew accommodations and hut tub. She features a Sally J Ferguson interior with polished burl cherry wood joinery and makes for the perfect charter vessel. Located in Ft. Myers Beach, FL \$1,690,000



2010 Hatteras 72 Motor Yacht

JUST IN TIME is truly a unique Hatteras 72 Motor Yacht, she is the only one made with an enclosed fly bridge! The vessel's interior is rich and vibrant and finished in wood accents. Featuring a custom electronics package, low hours and a multitude of upgrades makes every moment enjoyable. Located in Ft. Myers, FL \$2,749,000



2011 Ocean Alexander 70 Pilot House

TIKA2 is a captain maintained 70 Pilot House powered by twin 1150 CAT engines along with hydraulic thrusters. She showcases 3 staterooms, 3 heads, a gorgeous salon and a large galley that is generously equipped. She offers privacy, comfort & the perfect areas for entertaining. She defines luxury and she's ready for new adventures. Located in beautiful downtown Ft. Myers, FL \$1,674,000



2017 Hatteras GT 70

NOTORIOUS is a 2017 GT 70 built on a variable dead-rise bottom with a sharp entry and powered by twin 2600 MTUs engines. She comes with gyro stabilization, day head and extensive electronics. Inside, you'll find a lavish interior including a gourmet galley w/custom glass storage & a spacious salon that leads to 5 staterooms & 4 heads. Located in Palm Beach, FL \$4,995,000



2011 Hatteras 64 Convertible

CRACKER is a luxury custom yacht built by a long time Hatteras owner. Every thought and detail went into her 4 stateroom layout. Featuring Furuno electronics, CAT C32A, twin generators, custom pipe welders tower, teak cockpit and custom painted *Mask*. All services are up to date and she's recently had new bottom paint, along with prop work. Located in Ft. Myers, FL \$1,699,000



2016 Sea Ray 510 FLY

EITEL TIME is better than new and by far the strongest Sea Ray 51 FLY on the market today. This three stateroom, two head beauty has been captained since delivery in March 2016 and is under Sea Ray warranty until March 2020. Her cummins 600's are under warranty until March 2022 as well as her generator. She comes with a water maker and new decor. Located in Naples, FL \$999,000



2017 Sea Ray 460DA

LOVING LIFE is a one owner, captain maintained Sundancer and is in LIKE NEW Condition. She offers two well appointed staterooms and beautifully equipped head/shower rooms. She is powered by twin diesel v-drive inboards, has SAT tv and packed with all the technology you need. She is gorgeous, packed with upgrades and priced to sell! Located in Naples, FL \$729,000



2018 Galeon 420 FLY

Meet IMPLUSIVE, she is a gorgeous 2018 420 FLY Galeon powered by twin Volvo Penta D6-435HP engines with low hours and has recently received new bottom paint. She features 3 stateroom, 2 heads and comes with a Seakeeper and Xenta joystick technology. \$699,000



2015 Boston Whaler 350 Outrage

Immaculate, one owner, gorgeous Abaco blue paint, new bottom paint and triple white Mercury 300 engines. She has the beauty and performance of a new Whaler but with a bargain price tag. Maintained to the highest standards, up to date on all services, has low engine hours and a platinum engine warranty that is good thru 06/17/21. \$269,000



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2017 Marlow Explorer 49E

"Prop 23" is a Command Bridge model. With 1,100 hours on her upgraded Cummins 715hp engines she is ready for 17kn cruising, with stabilizers, bow and stern thrusters and yacht controller. Make her yours today.



2016 Marlow Explorer 58E

"Another Bubble" is a stunning example of the 58E. Impeccably maintained, with upgraded twin 1150hp Caterpillar® C-18 engines, and many mechanical upgrades she offers performance, quality and comfort second to none!



2010 Marlow Explorer 57E

"MYgration" a rare gem with 3 generous staterooms with ensuite heads, seperate crew accomodations for maximum privacy for her owners and guests. Powered by twin Caterpillar® C-18 1015hp engines she is ready to cruise.



2005 Marlow Explorer 78E

"Bacalao" combines both elegance and performance with refined accommodations, and the ability to cruise at 22+ knots. Powered by twin CAT 3412 (1400hp), this 78E Marlow Explorer is one of the most sought-after yachts in the industry.



2003 Marlow Explorer 65C

"Salty Dollar" is a unique and extraordinarily well kept vessel. With her custom entry to the master state room this 3-stateroom, 3-head vessel has the interior volume of a much larger yacht. Cruise to your next destination in style.



2015 Marlow Explorer 49E

"Love Shack" is a pampered yacht, with extensive mechanical upgrades such as, twin CAT 715hp engines, stabilizers, water-maker, chilled-water air-conditioner and 1,000 gallon fuel tank making her a cruiser extraordinaire.



2003 Marlow Explorer 57C

"Bayflower" is perfect for the couple that wants to run their own boat. This three stateroom yacht offers exquisite craftsmanship and design. Powered by twin 800hp CAT 3406's and ready to whisk you away.



2017 Marlow Prowler Havana

"Rover" is a Prowler Havana with state-of-the-art electronics and high performance Mercury 400hp engines with only 300 hours on them. She is ready to fish or cruise in style. Call today!



2003 Symbol Motoryacht 56'

"Time" is a beautiful three stateroom Raised Pilothouse Motoryacht that has received numerous upgrades throughout. She is powered by the popular 700hp CAT C-12's and ready to cruise. Please call for more details.



2017 Yellowfin 42

"Night Moves 2" was the fishing boat that accompanied a larger yacht She has the best options available including a painted hull, tower with controls, bow thruster, GOST tracking system, and a state of the art electronics package.



2015 Marlow Pilot 32

"Reely Ours" is an enclosed pilothouse and powered by an economical single 260hp Yanmar® diesel. Ready to cruise. Visit today.



2013 Boston Whaler 285 Conquest

This well-equipped 285 Conquest powered by twin 250hp Mercury engines is in pristine condition and offers plenty of features for fishing trips and day trips as well as ample space for overnights!

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Marlow Marine Sales, Inc.



2013 Marlow Explorer 97E

This exceptional Explorer has been captain maintained for a seasoned and experienced yachtsman. She is powered by twin Caterpillar® 1800hp C-32 Acert engines and is capable of long range cruising at 9kn and a fast cruise of 23kn. She offers a luxurious on deck master along with four additional staterooms and is ready for her next grand adventure.



2015 Marlow Explorer 80E-CB

"Lady Eme" is a very unique command bridge and skybridge. Powered by twin Caterpillar® C-32 1800hp engines she is made for long range exploring in style, with minimal crew. Professionally maintained. Call today.

2017 Marlow Explorer 53E

"JIA" is outfitted with twin Cummins QSM11 715hp engines, and the largest engine room in her class. She is a shining example of craftsmanship, technology, value, performance, and style. Call now before she becomes "the one that got away"!



2006 Marlow Explorer 53C

"Mermaid" is a 3 stateroom yacht. Powered by twin Cummins QSM11 635hp engines she can cruise at 8 knots or 16 knots with a top speed of 19 knots should you need to get there fast! Call for details.

2015 Marlow Explorer 58E

"Biscuit" is a pristine and luxurious Explorer. She boasts the upgraded high performance, fuel efficient "go fast" engines utilizing Caterpillar® C-18 1050hp engines and is ready for the ultimate adventurer! Call Today.



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2018 Marlow Prowler Havana
"Vixen"



2004 400 Mainship
"Double D"



2018 Marlow 58E
"Imagine"



2014 Marlow Explorer 58E

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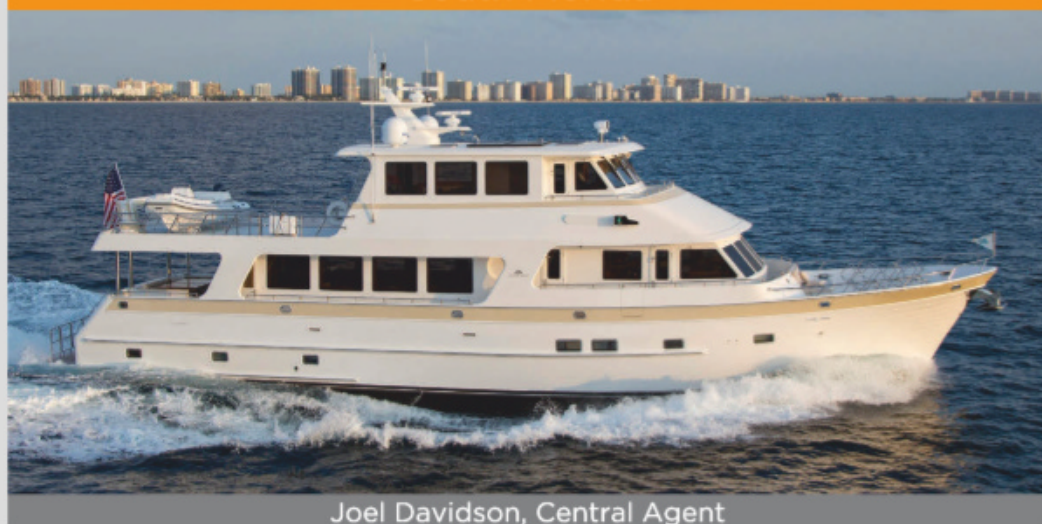


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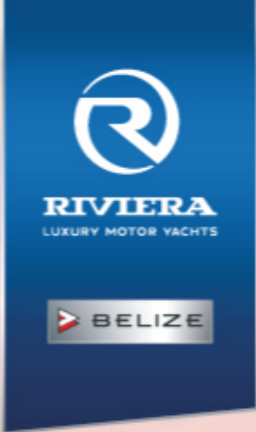
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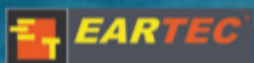


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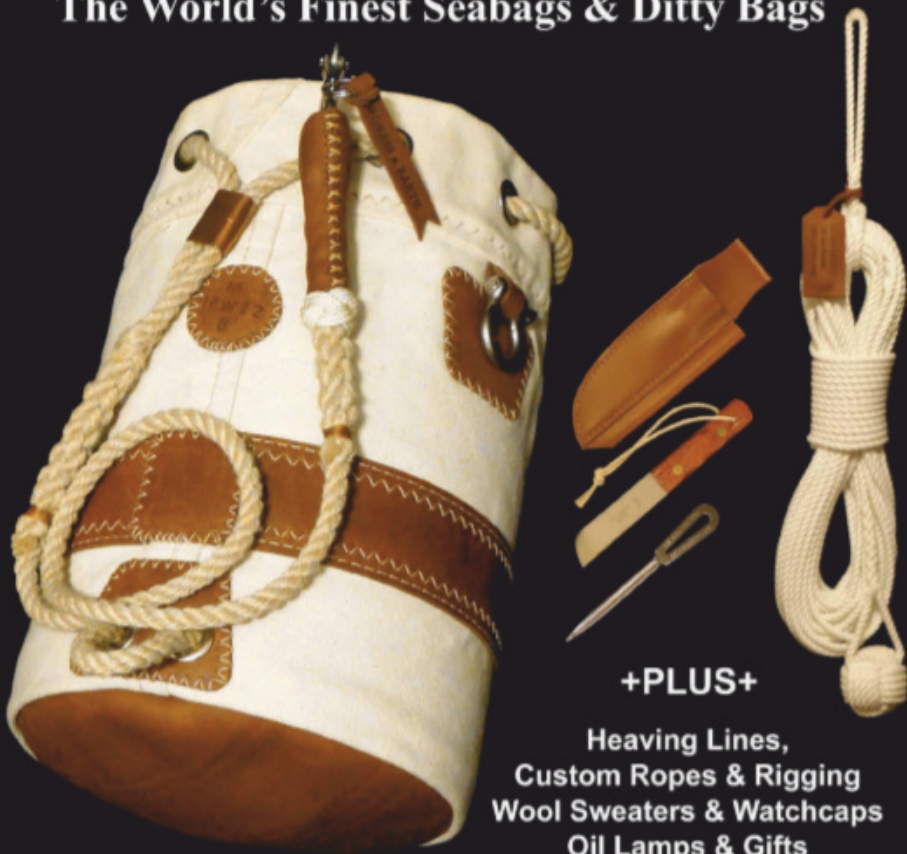
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UNCHARTED WATERS

Every Trick in the Book

Not enough fuel to get home? Try a big book and a stealthy approach to propulsion.

By Capt. Bill Pike

There's something exotic about communicating via single-sideband marine radio. The distorted, far-off way a conversation sounds is part of the deal, I guess. There's an almost cinematic quality to it, especially if you're participating in a call while standing in the wheelhouse of an oilfield boat pulled alongside a frowzy dock down in Trinidad, as I was back in the frowzy mid-80s. The marine superintendent of the company I worked for at the time was on the other end. His name was Gary. And he'd gotten a little feisty of late, given the deplorable state the "oil patch" was in. Boats, and the folks who worked for the companies that owned the boats, were being laid off right and left.

"I just can't authorize takin' on fuel in Port O' Spain right now—we don't have the money," said Gary. "Whataya want me to do? Come down there and write you a damn check outta my personal account?"

"But Gary," I said, "how are we gonna get home?"

"Figure it out," said Gary before signing off. "Magellan did!"

Of course, actually, Magellan didn't. But, at the time, there seemed little sense in arguing. I sat down on one of the settees and looked at my buddy, J.B. The two of us had been roommates at the maritime academy. And we'd since been through lots together, from deck-hand jobs on the Mississippi to delivering high-speed patrol boats to cloak-and-dagger types in Central America. But this was a newbie—somehow, we were supposed to shepherd the *Point Liberty*, a 200-foot supply vessel, from Trinidad to Morgan City, Louisiana without enough fuel to actually make the trip.

What happened next was truly memorable. J.B. began rifling through lockers in the wheelhouse while muttering to himself, eventually coming up with a large book entitled (as I remember it) *Atlas of Pilot Charts for the North Atlantic Ocean*. He cracked it open on the chart table, turned to the pages concerning winds and currents in the Caribbean and, after a little study, shot me a hopeful

look. J.B. was nothing if not resourceful in those days.

"What if we take advantage of the currents," he said, pointing, "and lock down the shaft on one of the engines with a Stillson wrench? Then go slow?"

The can-do nature of this theory both surprised and encouraged me, given the way things had been going. What a dog of a trip it had been! First, just south of Cuba, we'd blown a head gasket on one of the Detroit Diesel gensets, a problem the chief engineer had only semi-addressed by cutting a temporary gasket from an old chart. Then, in the Trinidadian seaside town of Chaguaramus, a dozen or so Canadian pipeline divers had walked off the boat in a huff after discovering that the *Liberty*, despite her relative newness, did not have the Dynamic Positioning System they'd been promised. Instead of precise, computer-controlled hovering, all the *Liberty* offered was J.B. and I, a couple of dicey humans, throttle-jockeying two engines and a bow thruster. And then finally, having run up a pile of gambling debts in Port O' Spain, the chief engineer had absconded, also in a huff, mostly because the *Liberty's* crew wouldn't bail him out. As a parting gift, he'd overfilled both main engines with lube oil, a nasty ploy that blasted the greasy stuff out of the stacks and all over everything (including a hyperbaric chamber and a small yellow submarine) when we subsequently cranked up.

"J.B.," I said, tapping the *Pilot Atlas* with enthusiasm, "you are a freakin' genius, man!"

While I can't remember exactly how many gallons of diesel we saved by slowing down and removing one engine from the propulsion equation, the amount was just enough when teamed up with the currents we rode all the way back to Morgan town. Heck, I believe the *Liberty* finally pulled in with almost 300 gallons to spare. And to this day, I still feel like, during the whole extravaganza, I was party to a modest but genuine feat of seamanship. And my old friend J.B., who I'm sad to say passed away last year, deserves all the credit. ▣

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