

WALRUS

FANS OF TRADITIONAL YACHTS WILL FEEL THEIR HEARTS LEAP WHEN THEY SEE THE 76FT LONG-RANGE TRAWLER YACHT *WALRUS* STEAM PAST. IT'S NOT JUST HER STURDY ALUMINUM HULL, GRACEFUL FANTAIL, JAUNTY SMOKESTACK AND STEADYING SAIL THAT EVOKE SEAGOING VESSELS OF THE PAST. THIS CUSTOM YACHT MAKES A VIRTUE OF TRADITION INSIDE AND OUT—AS WELL AS BENEATH THE WATERLINE.

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PHOTOS: ROB DOWNEY; INTERIOR PHOTOS: BUGSY GEDLEK



"I enjoy old boats," says the owner of *Walrus*, who also owns a steamboat built in 1892 by George Lawley & Sons of Neponset, Massachusetts, an 82ft Burger delivered in 1966, and a 32-year-old canopy launch. A boat builder by trade, the owner personally oversaw *Walrus*' construction at St. Augustine Marine Center in Florida. Though he is better known for his contemporary fiberglass craft, with *Walrus* he reached back into the past to find tried-and-true solutions—like her box garboard hull and Pullman sink—that, in their application on this new trawler yacht, have become innovative all over again.

Walrus, named after a boat the owner had in his youth, was just a gleam in his eye when he started talking with naval architect Dave Gerr of Gerr Marine five years ago about building "a traditional-looking classic boat that had seakeeping abilities and a moderate range," adding that one of his main requirements was a shoal draft so he and his wife could cruise The Bahamas.



Gracing the fantail lounge is an exquisitely crafted fold-out table that houses hidden drink coaster storage drawers.



PEEKING BENEATH HER SKIRTS



CAPT. FORRESTER

When the 42ft trawler yacht *Belle Marie* was being constructed to naval architect Dave Gerr's "Summer Kyle" series plans in 1995, he said, "The hull was so weird-looking...people would look at it and say, 'That will never work.'" It didn't help that it was probably the first "box garboard" hull to be built in more than 50 years. This practical design, which incorporates a round bilge and flat "box" keel, was pioneered by the Sea Bright Skiffs used by commercial fishermen off New Jersey in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Powered by sails and later by inboard engines, they could be grounded or even deliberately beached without damage. In the 1930s, the design was developed further by naval architect William "Billy" Atkin. "[He] came up with the concept of modifying it to make the whole rear end of the boat a giant tunnel, which made it much shallower," Gerr says. The inverted-V tunnel also keeps the boat from "squatting" at speed. *Belle Marie's* hull not only worked, "It

exceeded all our expectations, particularly at seakeeping," Gerr says. He went on to design a 52ft version, called "Kamarea", and the 76ft "Kestrel", which became *Walrus*. Enter *Walrus's* owner, who "threw me a curve," says Gerr. "He liked the look of the famous 97ft fantail-stern boat *Principia*." In order to incorporate a fantail into his Kestrel hull design, Gerr had to "hollow out" the surface above the tunnel, creating even more pronounced skirts or "wings." *Walrus* has a single, highly economical Caterpillar 3406 for propulsion. She also features a steadying sail, which helps to "take the snap out of the roll" when there's a sea running. According to Gerr, with her complex hullform, fin stabilizers were out of the question. In addition, the yacht's ride can be smoothed out further by shifting fuel between her two large tanks for balance. "It's just incredibly comfortable," he says. Her owner agrees. "Who else is out there in bad weather...having dinner on the aft deck?!"

Gerr, who also is president of the Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology, had designed a series of classic trawler yachts with fully beachable "box garboard" hulls. "It's an old style of boatbuilding," says the owner. "It allowed boats to slide over a sandbar." Thanks to this unique hullform, *Walrus* draws just over four feet.

Gerr also designed the yacht's salty exterior and comfortable interior arrangement, which boasts 7ft headroom throughout, including the machinery spaces. "He knew my size," the owner says. The two-stateroom/single-crew cabin layout nicely accommodates him and his wife, a guest couple, and *Walrus's* captain, Tom Forrester.

The owner wanted to build *Walrus* in fiberglass, but Gerr talked him into trying metal. "This is the first aluminum boat I've ever built," says the owner. "I enjoyed working with the material. It's everything they say it is; it's very forgiving."

His wife collaborated with Jacksonville, Florida, interior designer Glenda Wann on the new yacht's décor. "I tried to keep it comfortable, warm and inviting," the wife says. "It's a very traditional interior."

Her favorite spot on board is the fantail sitting area, which is furnished with brightly upholstered rattan pieces. (Their Scottie, Duncan, also has a bed here.) This "indoor/outdoor" lounge can be open to the breeze, but the owners typically enjoy it with the canvas up and the air-conditioning (or heat) on. They take their meals on the elegant high-low table, crafted by Rick Gernick of New York, which flips open to seat up to ten people. A built-in wet bar and freezer make this one of the yacht's principal entertaining spaces. "We've had a cocktail party with twenty-two people here," the owner reports.

The aft deck's tropical feel is echoed in the lower-deck staterooms, which feature light colors and louvered windows to keep them bright and airy. Their solid, sailboat-style furnishings incorporate deep drawers; and in general, storage is maximized throughout the boat.

The main saloon has a more formal atmosphere, thanks to its rich, satin-finish mahogany paneling, which was beautifully built by St. Augustine Marine Center's craftsmen, headed by Dave Bennett, the general manager. Wann added eye-catching touches like an armchair with a dolphin-head detail and an elegant writing desk. A pop-up television and Bose speakers in the overhead lend a modern touch. But the real genius lies in the "little details" the owner designed himself. One of them is the saloon's built-in cabinet, which has dedicated shelves and slots to hold the yacht's collection of Lynn Chase china. "It doesn't rattle, it doesn't break, it doesn't chip," marvels his wife.

More innovative ideas can be found in the functional, full-beam galley. A corner cabinet holds a rotating stainless steel rack system that blows away the usual "Lazy Susan". Two huge pantry drawers in

< MAXIMIZING SPACE >



SAFE CHINA STORAGE



INNOVATIVE DAYHEAD PULLMAN SINK

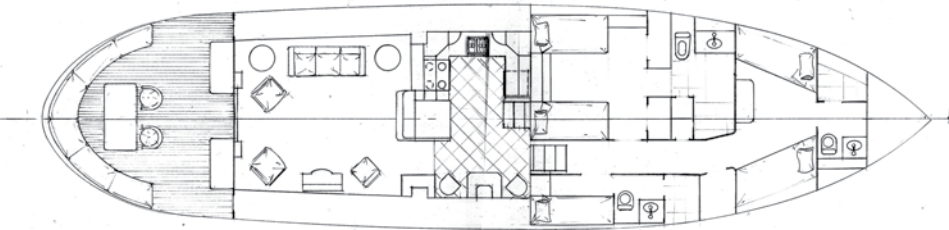
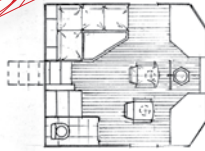
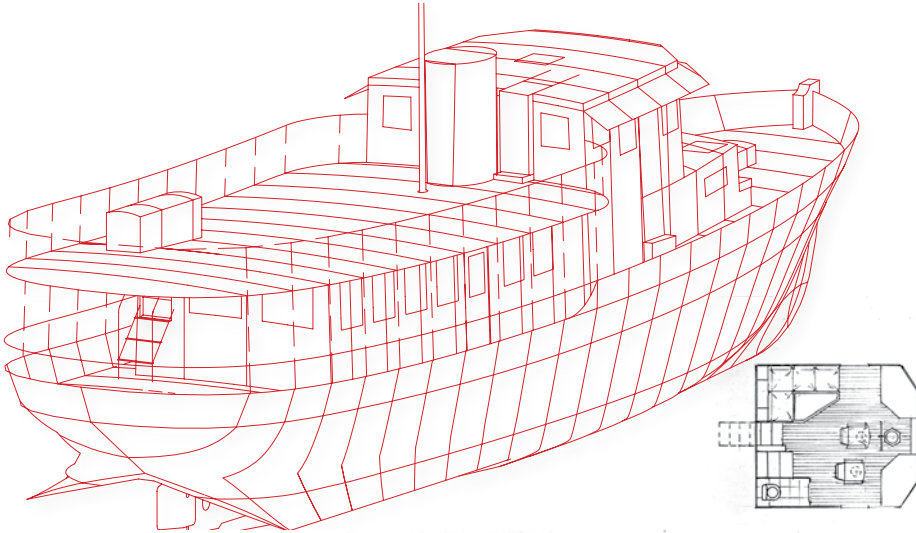
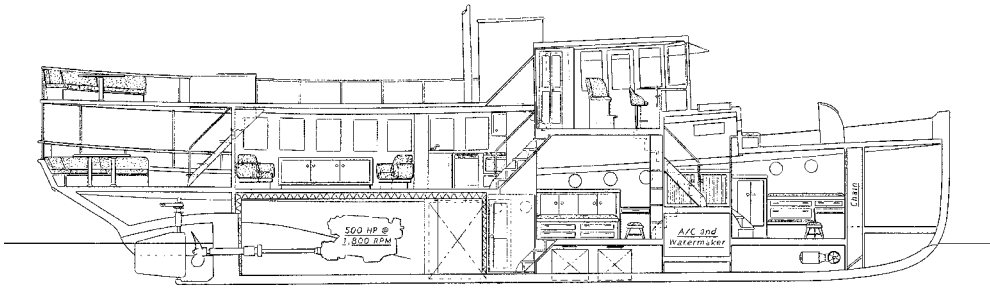


A CLEAN, UNCLUTTERED WHEELHOUSE



THE GALLEY'S "COFFIN" PANTRY





SPECS

LOA: 76ft (23.16m)
LWL: 71.1ft (21.67m)
Beam: 20ft (6.1m)
Draft (max): 4.2ft (1.28m)
Displacement: 170,000lbs
Engine: 1 x 650hp Caterpillar 3406
Propeller: 5-blade
Rig: Steadying sail
Mast and boom: 1
Sail area: 545 square feet
Sailmaker: Doyle
Furling systems: Leisure Furl
Speed (max/cruise): 13/8 knots
Fuel capacity: 4,100 gallons
Range: 4,000nm @ 8 knots (approx.)
Bow thruster: Naiad
Stabilizers: None
Generators: 2 x 27kW Onan
Watermakers: Spectra Newport 400
Freshwater capacity: 720 gallons
Gray/Black water capacity: 220 gallons
Security systems: Panasonic cameras
Monitoring system: Nauticomp
Air-conditioning: R-Beers
Communication/Navigation electronics: Raymarine
Entertainment system: Bose
Owner and guests: 4
Crew: 1
Tenders: 17ft Egret flats boat/37hp Yamaha diesel; 16ft custom rowing dinghy
Tender-launching: Steelhead davit
Paint: Awlgrip
Construction: Aluminum
Classification: ABYC
Naval architecture: Gerr Naval Architects
Exterior styling: Gerr Naval Architects/Owner
Interior design: Glenda Wann/Owner
Builder/Year: St. Augustine Marine Center/2008
 404 Riberia Street
 St. Augustine, FL 32084
 Tel: (904) 824-4394
www.staugustinmarine.com

the bulkhead, referred to as the “coffin” by Captain Tom, slide out to hold enough dry stores for a lengthy cruise.

In the wheelhouse, pop-up and pull-out cabinets completely conceal the navigation instruments within the mahogany helm. “I wanted it clean,” the owner explains. Even more remarkable is the folding sink in the bridge’s small dayhead. “Pullman sinks were very popular on boats years ago,” the owner said. “It was a space-saver in crew quarters.” When you open this one, the water automatically starts running!

A smallish, watertight hatch leads from the pilothouse onto the boat deck, where the owner’s 17ft flats boat and 16ft lapstrake rowing dinghy are stored in cradles, launched by a 4,500lb Steelhead davit. The crane also removes the top of the “faux” smokestack (which stores the AC compressor). In addition, the steadying sail’s mast is on a tabernacle and can be folded down, giving *Walrus* a bridge clearance of 15 feet. “We did it so we could cruise the Great Lakes,” says the owner. Deck chairs aft provide a perfect spot for sunning and viewing the world.

The boat deck and wide foredeck, which has lounge seating, are teak-free for ease of maintenance. The yacht does have varnished caprails, however. “I couldn’t get away with paint; no one would let me do it,” the owner says. On a boat like *Walrus*, tradition must be observed.

Cruising the waters off St. Augustine, we hoist the steadying sail for the first time. The owner returns to his seat at the wheel, pleased with the performance. His future plans with *Walrus*? “We’re gonna go out of here one day and head north, until we run out of...food.” |

A 1944 Evinrude outboard accentuates the stern deck railings, symbolizing this imaginative owner’s penchant for boats—of any kind.

