

Trawler Talk

“WHY BUY A TRAWLER”

Now that the word “trawler” has become a more familiar term in the Midwest it brings back memories of the years that we first brought the tugboat trawlers to market. While there had been some trawlers in the Great Lakes at this early time not many people understood what they were, let alone who would buy such a boat and why.

The confusion about the trawlers was further complicated by the tugs. So the question was “what’s the difference between a tugboat and a trawler”. That answer was simple. There is no difference. The tugboat is a trawler. Another common question was “how big a boat can you push with it”.



A working Tug - note pilothouse & smoke stack

After explaining these were pleasure crafts and not working tugs, the next most asked question was “why a tug”. Let us touch on that one right now. The tug style is simply taking the good attributes of a working tug and applying them to a cruising trawler. Starting with the raised pilothouse, the quick access to the deck and the 360-degree visibility are evident. Having all the electronics, charts, binoculars, camera, and many other essential items in one place (the pilot house) is very desirable. The generous deck space on the bow and stern (cockpit and swim platform areas) allow for great flexibility in handling of lines and getting on and off the boat. The American Tug is a good example of the tug style trawler. It features the smoke stack (just for looks, not for smoke) and the round port-hole

windows giving the nostalgic look of a tugboat. Many adults remember the Little Golden Book about Scuffy, TheTugboat. There are also other trawlers featuring the pilothouse design that do not have the tugboat style and will resemble cruising type yachts.



American Tug - Pilot House Style

Another popular style of trawler is the sedan version. This generally features a flybridge and an interior helm on the same level with the salon and galley. Cabins can be forward and aft in the larger vessels whereas in the pilothouse style they are usually all forward. The Camano is a good example of the sedan trawler style. Both types of trawlers generally feature single diesel engines and the full keel hull design to lend the stability, safety, and fuel economy trawlers are so noted for.



Camano - Sedan Style

A third type of trawler is the catamaran with two hulls and a flybridge. The berths, head, and galley are typically in the hull sections and the dining area and 2nd helm station are on what is called the bridge deck. This is the space above

water that spans the entire width of the boat. A catamaran requires twin engines and boasts the best fuel efficiency of all. The narrow entry at the bow allows the cat to slice through the water and therefore not pushing a bow wave. Its wider stance also gives a very stable and comfortable ride. The PDQ Power Catamaran is a popular trawler type catamaran.



PDQ Power Catamaran

Now, what all of these different trawler styles have in common is great fuel efficiency, safety on the seas, and a comfortable ride for the folks on board. Their hull design features include vertical bow entry, a full keel, hard chines, protected props, and large rudders. Diesel engines add to the reliability and fuel conservation needed to make the trawlers great long-range cruising vessels. Interior spaciousness due to the “bulky” design means more storage available for those wanting to live-aboard for extended periods of time. A large percentage of people intending to cruise The Great Loop will choose a trawler for all of the reasons mentioned here.

Our goal as a dealer is to help buyers choose the right boat for them. And there are a lot of choices available. One of the things that has changed in marketing is that the dealer gets less chance to educate the buyer because of the internet. Buyers used to come to the boat shows to see the different boats and find out what to consider. Now it seems that the buyer has looked at many boat choices on the web and has made a decision before talking to the experts. So now, especially in a niche market like the trawler market, the dealer depends less on the shows and more on having a large enough inventory of trawlers, both pilothouse and sedan trawler styles and mono hull and catamaran hull designs, to make it more worthwhile for customers to come directly to their dealership.

If you have been considering buying a trawler, now is the time. Many dealers have available inventory at reduced prices. The perception (not necessarily the true picture in all areas) of a slowed economy has customers on hold. Add to that the higher fuel prices causing many to re-think the purchase of a boat. The

economical fuel burn of the trawler is a perfect answer to those costs. You can still take those cruising vacations or weekend outings because a diesel-powered trawler doesn't mind going slow all day. And besides, you'll be more relaxed at the helm as you enjoy the "journey" to your destination.

Since the dealers are not ordering as many boats from the manufacturers, they are forced to build fewer boats and then raise the prices to cover all their fixed expenses. Plus the higher oil prices have increased their material costs of fiberglass, stainless steel, and most other components. So once the current inventory of trawlers is sold, the 2009 models will see significant price increases ranging in amounts of \$20,000 to over \$150,000 depending on the size of the trawler. It's truly a "buyer's market" right now and you would be smart to take advantage of it.

Watch for next month – Part 2 of the "Triangle Trip Onboard Liaison"

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