



The Next Boat

Experience Brings Compromise

I get asked a lot, "What do you think is the best boat?" I always answer, "What are you going to use it for?" In other words, there are as many "perfect" boats as there

are people, which is why I've said before that the perfect boat is the one that gets used.

Just like you become a better sailor through experiencing a wide variety of conditions and learning to handle them, the more real time you spend on a boat gives you a clearer vision of what's really important to you. Usually, a person's second boat is more "perfect" than their first. Their second boat has hand holds down below because in a rough sea, those wide open spaces in their first boat, became a free fall from one side of the cabin to the other without them; that the cavernous cabin they coveted got that way by settees being next to the hull, so there was no stowage behind them for a summer's cruise; they find that you need someone to belay you as you hang upside down getting lunchmeat out of the vast icebox/refrigerator.

Just as a Formula One body is pretty simple, then all the strategic bumps and wings are added for optimal performance, what started out as a streamlined hull and deck on the family boat begins to sprout growths of practicality; a system for the dinghy on the back, or just putting it on the deck; a radar arch may appear on the stern; of course a dodger needs to be added; solar panels appear on the cabin top. A myriad of things will be added to make the boat more perfect.

Now, after a few years of fine tuning your first boat and enjoying the experiences from her, you want more than you can just add on and decide to move to another boat, but this time you'll be looking with more knowledgeable eyes. You don't just see a beautiful work of fiberglass, wood and steel at the dock, but see it in the realistic light of what you really want it to do. It becomes a more practical and informed decision.

Is that to say that all the magic is out of the decision. Of course not. Not many boats are sold, if any, without that unknown "smile" factor entering, if not determining, the decision. We are sailors after all, who love floating around at the will of the wind. Even the most practical sailor won't buy a boat unless it puts a smile on his/her face. It's still fulfilling the dream.

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Richard Hazelton
Editor

Cruising Blogs

Eulalie Sullivan and Eric Laschever have been sailing separately since the 1960's and together since 1978, when they met at the University of Washington's School of Marine Affairs. They have enjoyed careers that have kept them near or on the water and are excited to be able to travel together on *Elizabeth Jean*. In 2014, they sailed from Seattle to Mexico to begin their open-ended adventure.

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48° North

Volume XXXIII, Number 12, July 2014

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Published monthly by Boundless Enterprises, Inc, 6327 Seaview Ave. N.W., Seattle, WA 98107, (206) 789-7350/ Fax (206) 789-6392. Printed in Seattle, WA USA. Dealers paying UPS charges for delivery may charge a nominal reimbursement fee.

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NORTHWEST MARINE TRADE ASSOCIATION



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U.S. one year - \$25 - 3rd Class

(3rd Class is not automatically forwarded)

1st Class in U.S. - \$35 U.S. Funds

Canada Printed Matter - \$35 U.S. Funds

Over-Seas Foreign Air Mail - \$65 U.S. Funds