

Nye Yachts

By David Fry

When Allan Nye Scott brought his boatbuilding business to Bloomfield some four years ago, he brought with him 18 years of experience in constructing world class sailing vessels: he had started building boats in the late Sixties, in Toronto, before putting in five years in Belleville until harbour-front development there

encroached upon his operations and he decided to move.

Besides a new industry for the village, the move also brought a requirement for new skills and created new jobs.

"We employ as many as 12 men in the Spring and Fall seasons," says Art Athawes, sales manager for Nye Yachts. "They are our busiest

periods." That's when sailors want their craft refitted, refurbished or repaired: before and after the sailing season.

Art goes on to explain that crew of six works year round in the two spacious sheds across the railroad tracks in behind Cobi Foods canning plant. These six are the specialists, the people one just doesn't go out and hire on a seasonal basis: they include a ship's

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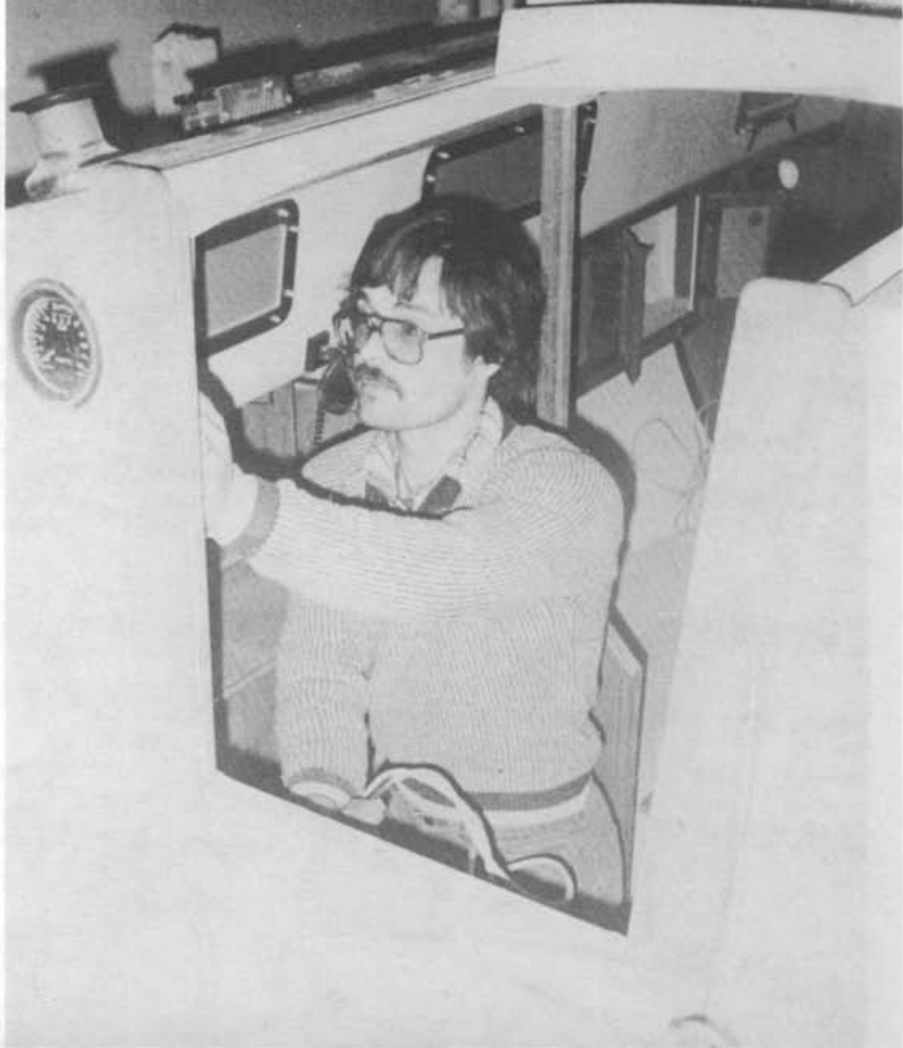


Left: Shop foreman Vic Akey trims up the hull of an Alberg 29. Vic, of West Lake, has been with Nye Yachts since the firm moved to Bloomfield four years ago.

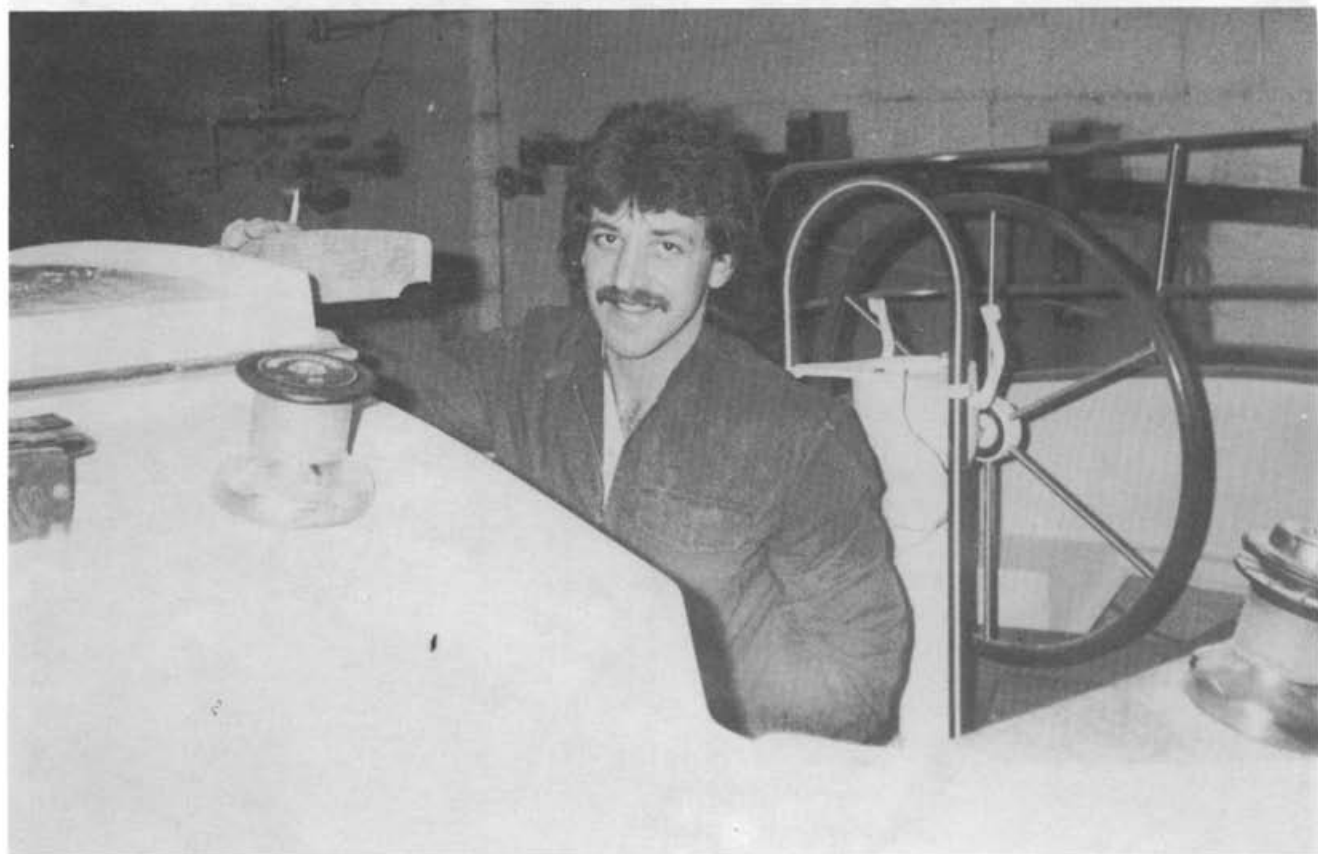
Right: Up among the rafters in the main work shed, salesman Art Athawes demonstrates the engine controls of an Alberg 34 nearing completion at Nye Yachts. In this view, facing aft, the throttle is on the left of the steering pedestal; the glass-domed compass sits on top.



Right: 'Chips' (ship's carpenter) Danny Cowan installs a teak shelf below in an Alberg 29. All vessels now nearing completion at Nye Yachts will be sailing this summer.



Below: Assistant carpenter Laverne Hennessy fits a section of teak trim to the main hatch cover of an Alberg 29.



the cinnamon kind with brown instead of green on the neck, but apparently all came from red Golden at one time.

"There also is a salmon Golden in here so tame it would eat out of your hand."

Young Amhersts were next door who didn't have any colour. "It takes them a full year before they get their beautiful colours. They were just hatched last summer, probably May or June." By September, he claimed, they'll look as stunning as the older relatives.

A short walk then took us to some loose Guinea hens and a Royal Purple rooster perched atop yet another outside pen. These proved to be the noisiest, in my opinion, of the entire farmyard. Underneath these cackling fowl were some Green Mutants from Western Ontario and some yellow Golden hens they raised last year. Next was the daddy of the Amhersts I saw before. He had a lovely long tail with a yellow and red neck and ting orange tippets on his wings. The female stayed up in its tree sanctuary, hidden.

"They don't get along all that well," Mr. Foster said. They did have two more hens until a skunk got into the pen and killed them then went to another pen and killed one more. Besides predators, he's had others die just from moving them into a new surrounding after buying them.

The Reeves that have an extremely long tail, share the short temperament of strangers with the silver pheasants. They also like to use their razor-sharp spurs if needed. I stayed well back from the wire pen this time.

Mr. Foster then went to let his pigeons loose so I could see them tumble in mid-air, and sure enough, after a little coaching, they did the feat magnificently.

Feeling that I had all the information I needed, and more, I thanked Mr. Foster for a most interesting and enjoyable tour of his pheasant farm. With over 48 types of pheasants all together, it proved challenging to sort out the names of each for this story. And, after listening to the recorded interview there were times Mr. Foster's voice couldn't be heard over the chirp and chatter of over 100 birds. In the long run however, the trip was well worth it.



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carpenter, a cabinet maker, three assembly men and a plant foreman, Vic Akey of West Lake.

Nye Yachts has traditionally specialized in three designs by the late, renowned American naval architect Carl Alberg of Boston, Mass. Smallest is the 22-footer, a trailerable, four-berth vessel with a displacement of



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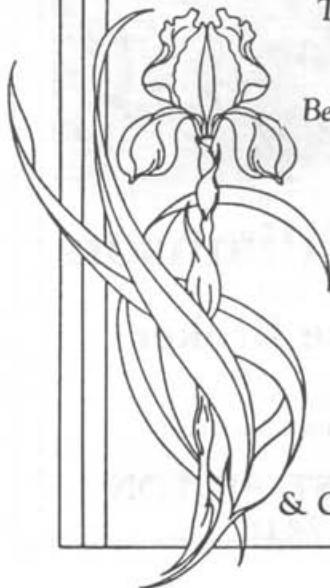
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3,200 pounds designed for "cruising the lakes today and the ocean tomorrow", as one of the firm's brochures points out.

Next in the line is the Alberg 29. With a displacement almost three times that of the Alberg 22, it is a five-berth beauty that combines the speed required for racing with a layout designed for comfort and classy looks.

And then there's the Alberg 34! Displacing 14,000 pounds, this is a six- or seven-berth, compact but luxurious home afloat whose finish is a tribute to all who lavished their competent care upon it. Describing it fully here would be impossible; suffice it to mention that, besides the gloss of teak joinery finished with Danish oil, the rich tone of bronze fittings and polished brass lamps, the galley has fully gimballed stove with oven.

The reason for specializing in these three Alberg types becomes obvious when one sees a yacht in the process of being born. The molds for two half-hulls have to be made before any boatbuilding can commence; and making molds involves creating a perfect hull in wood from design drawings, layering it with fiberglass, removing the cast and sawing it precisely in half. A lot of time and an incredible amount of care go into this most critical phase; but, once this has been done, of course, it is *relatively easy* to produce hull sections at will.

Hulls for all three of the 'made in Bloomfield' yachts are laminated in fiberglass to meet Lloyds' maritime specifications.

Two female molds, left and right (or, perhaps, that should be 'port and starboard') are wheeled into position next to each other; parallel but with a passageway between for the work crew. The mold's inside faces are first given four coats of hard wax to prevent adhesion, and then are sprayed with a product called Gelcoat, in the colour of the future owner's choice. When this has dried overnight, there begins the long and exacting process of applying layer upon layer of resin-saturated fiberglass mat and woven robing. For a 34-footer, the process takes up to seven days to complete.

With the basic laminating done on both hull sections, the two are brought together and clamped securely before more fiberglass layers are added to produce a full hull of great integral strength. Removal of the molds is a moment of almost mystical joy, almost akin to that of watching, for the first time, a baby chick emerge from its shell: suddenly, the dull interior of the hangar-like workshop is brightened by the emergence of a glossy, curvaceous form; the obvious beginnings of a beautiful yacht.

While the hull is being readied, the deck section is also being formed. This, too, is fiberglass, but laminated on a balsa core; and, once again, the initial Gelcoat layer is customized to the future owner's choice of colour.

Once these two stages are complete, the vessel to be is trailered into the assembly hall, a cavernous place with a platform running the length of three of its walls at deck-height, about 11 feet above the building's floor. Here the hull becomes the domain of the cabinet makers and fitters, none of whom lack for exercise as they climb and descend the scaffold stairs countless times to perform the painstakingly gradual, little miracles that convert an empty shell into a luxuriously appointed, eye-delighting beauty of a yacht.

Meanwhile, in the workshop hall, the stainless steel fittings have been added to the extruded aluminum mast and boom sections so that all parts of the whole yacht will come together, on time and in neat order.

The 29-footer now nearing completion in the finishing hall will be trailered out one bright morning soon to greet the sunshine that will be its companion from now on in memorable journeys around the world. For a while the yacht, its bronze portlights, cleats and winches glowing softly in the newfound light, will bask in the admiration of workmen and management alike. Its crafted teak and oak cabinetry will be admired and humble hearts feel honest pride at the beauty of their creation.

Then, partly covered and in road-ready condition, it will be hauled away.

"There's always a sense of loss when one of these beauties is towed away," says Art Athawes. "But there's usually at least another one, sometimes two, in the works to take our minds off it."

On a wall in administrator Bob Perry's office, there hangs a map of the Windward Islands, a favorite destination and winter playground for owners of Nye yachts. On his desk lies the morning's mail, a colourful card atop a heap of routine stuff.

"This one's from Totola, British Virgin Islands," he says. "This couple's sailing one of our 34-footers. Their first long voyage and we've had a card from them, every port of call."

And as he goes on to enumerate "those far away places with the strange-sounding names," the listener gets to share the magic that's going on in his mind: to see a product of Prince Edward County lying at rest in some sunny haven among the tall, bare masts and neatly shrouded sails, while rigging taps out a music inspired by the gentle, tropic breeze.



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Sense of Tradition

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of the major building decisions have been made, based on his studies of the architectural plan, with flexibility built-in for the buyer's specific needs.



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