

THE BOATS WE MEET: "BONITA II"



"Bonita's" spread-out sail rig is effective. Both masts are hinged to permit easy lowering

Her dimensions are deceiving. This double-ender is economical to operate, easy to manage short-handed and simple to maintain By JIM EMMETT

Bonita II is an unusual boat. Equally so, are her owners, Mike and Bunny de Blicquy of Orillia, Ontario, if only in the miles-per-year they've piled up on this and their other boats. The 5,000 miles which they cover in going to and from Florida each season is in itself impressive, and all the more so because they've been making the jaunt for some 14 years.

At first appearance, *Bonita II* will strike you as being too large for a man and wife crew, especially for activities which involve considerable docking and canal work. Actually she is small for her size as her dimensions—57' l.o.a., 14'8" beam and 5'6" draft—give a false picture of the boat. The fact that she is not only a double-ender but fine forward, sharp aft and also rather low sided makes for a sleek hull. Docked alongside a husky motorsailer of comparable length *Bonita II* appears small in comparison.

Her history, to the point of when Mike took her over, is of interest as it gives an idea of what he had to work with in improving the boat for their particular use. *Bonita II* is a yacht model of a Fundy sardine carrier or, as the type is sometimes called, a Digby boat. Built by Captain Outhouse at Tiverton, Nova Scotia, in 1932, she was completed with pretty much her present deck and house arrangement. Evidently in 1948 a Cummins six-cylinder "A" model diesel engine was installed and her southern migrations began. When Mike bought her in 1957 she had been stored at a Daytona Beach yard for some time and was sadly neglected.

He had the yard thoroughly recondition the hull, the Cummins organization reconditioned the engine. Considering the lack of care the boat had experienced, neither job was formidable. All considered, she was one of those once-in-a-lifetime buys. This happens occasionally where a boat's

dimensions are deceiving and hence shoo off buyers, and especially where the type or model is both unusual and foreign to the area.

Bonita II as she now is reflects Mike's background and cruising experience. Mike was a top Canadian test pilot and later operated his own air and water freight service in the far north. He had to be ingenious and able to work his own way out of mechanical and other difficulties—or else. *Bonita II* has more than her share of "machinery" but all of it has been intelligently selected and properly installed.

The Cummins runs as smoothly as our comparatively new diesel engine of the same make and same basic six-cylinder model. Its exhaust is as clean, and being water cooled, is even quieter than our dry stack. Carrying this comparison farther, both Mike's *Bonita II* and our 38' Bill Garden salmon troller type *Chinook* cruise at the same eight knots honest speed and consume the same amount (two and one-half gals.) of fuel oil. Mike's engine, rated at 67 hp. at 1800 r.p.m., is cruised at 1500. The reduction is 3:1; the wheel a 30" x 24" three-blade. Fuel tank capacity is 200 U.S. gallons.

Aft in the engine compartment a Universal lighting plant provides 110-v. and 12-v. current for the boat's non-dock-side electrical needs, which are principally refrigeration and lighting. Gas tanks and shutoff are on deck; to cut the motor the fuel is shut off and the motor allowed to die, thus avoiding having gasoline below-decks. When at anchor two hours of running suffice for all electrical needs. As Mike explains, once back to Canada they are largely on their own. Along the Trent Waterway, for example, you're free to tie up above or below a lock's chamber, but there are no dock facilities.

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Columbia is now midway through a schedule of crew familiarization runs, using both San Diego and Newport Beach waters as testing grounds. One comment that came forth when Driscoll's capabilities were being evaluated by a few of his long-time acquaintances was the fact that there is no "panic party" aboard Driscoll-skipped boats when things go awry. This point was borne out when *Columbia's* headstay parted with a bang during one of her trial runs.

The weather was miserable, rainy and wet and blowing 20-25 knots in gusts as the racing machine knifed down San Diego Bay. When it parted, in almost a reflex maneuver, *Columbia* was luffed into the wind while the jib was dropped. Crewman Tom Schock went aloft to rig a temporary stay and the 12-Meter headed back to Driscoll's yard. After a brief pause for lunch and rigging replacement, she promptly moved back out for a long, soggy afternoon workout in the San Diego channel entrance, brushing off the whole incident as just another routine delay.

In mid-May *Columbia* is booked aboard a freighter for the trip to the East Coast. The entire crew will move to the old Widener mansion in Newport, Miramar, for the summer-long trial session. That number includes several entire family groups, among them Driscoll's wife Jean and all seven junior Driscolls. Their eldest son, John, an accomplished sailor in his own right, is a member of the reserve team.

In Newport, the 1962 Cup winner, *Weatherly*, now owned by the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, will serve as *Columbia's* pacer. It will be here that the value of hull and rigging modifications can be more accurately assessed, since there is no 12-Meter currently available as a sparring partner in California.

Crew members in addition to Driscoll, Trepte, North and Dougan include alternate helmsman Briggs Cunningham, the veteran who guided the "old" *Columbia* to a smashing victory over *Sceptre* in 1958, Fred MacDonald, John Creed, Rob Dougan, Tom Dougan Jr., Rodney Eales, Don Vaughn

and Schock. Reserves are Phil Crabtree, Dougan's twin sons Mike and Patrick, John Driscoll and Jack Hart. The entire roster was hand-picked on the basis of sailing ability and compatability, and the camaraderie is infectious.

Dougan himself summed up the attitude of the *Columbia* ensemble with a relevant phrase. In his view "The two Ds in the *Columbia* group don't stand for Dougan and Driscoll. They stand for Desire and Dedication."

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In the deckhouse are a Kaar radiotelephone, a Raytheon Cadet depth indicator, a Kelvin-White master compass and a Bendix remote compass, and a Metal Marine Wood-Freeman hunting type automatic pilot. Mike singles out the last mentioned item as being highly satisfactory over the years, and is used 90 per cent of the time when on open waters. Steering is straight chain and cable with the entire system simple and out in the open. He also reports the remote compass as being so easily read that it is used most of the time. Additionally, the deckhouse has an impressive array of dials and indicators all of which by their readings or flashings mean something to Mike.

Bonita II's rig is interesting because of two features: (1) both masts can be lowered or raised unaided, by Mike and Bunny themselves, if need be; and (2) there is enough sail area to be effective.

We must remember that Mike has to pass through 74 locks when bound for Canada or Florida. The limiting overall clearance for the Erie and U.S. Canals is 15' and for the Trent 22'. *Bonita II* requires but 13' with masts lowered.

To provide for this Mike sawed both masts off diagonally some distance up from the deck. Then he bolted on 1/2" steel side plates, each pair to take a bushed pivoting pin and, of course, the holding bolts. The main folds or hinges

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aft, the mizzen lowers forward. Halyards and boom, plus beef, are used to lower or raise the mizzen. The 34' main mast, a hefty stick, is handled with an ingenious "A" frame arrangement made of two 22' 2 by 4's. Its feet are connected with homemade universal joint fittings to chocks bolted to the edges of the trunk cabin. The forestay is led over the apex of the frame and pieced out with a line carried to the anchor windlass forward. Then, with a steadying line each side it's a matter of keeping an eye on the slacked off rigging as the mast is eased down. To avoid the tangle of the rigging on deck with the mast down Mike uses a 4-ft. extension secured to the cut end of the main mast. The shrouds with their ratlines are then disconnected and along with the halyards stretched out and triced to this to be up out of the way. Another good idea of Mike's is his leaving the "A" frame and its gear at an upper Hudson River yard when coming down and picking up again in the spring for use on the canalized sections of the route.

The sail area of 750 sq. ft. entitles *Bonita II* to be classed as a true motorsailer. Being a ketch, a mizzen of effective area can be carried, but as Mike comments, it's a sail that is very easy to set or douse singlehanded under adverse conditions. Like most motorsailers *Bonita II* won't beat to windward effectively or come about under sail alone. Carrying sail with a fair wind of any strength can increase speed under power by a couple of knots. Mike uses sail for any open stretches where extra drive will be beneficial and this helps account, I think, for his high daily averages of runs. He ordinarily figures on 23 days of actual running for the 2500 miles from Orillia, Canada to Daytona Beach, Fla.

Bonita II's performance is also impressive in that she is a very dry boat. Whether because of her length, the hull model, or her buoyancy, or the combination of these, she rides over head seas, throwing very little spray in comparison to a heavy bluff-bowed boat.

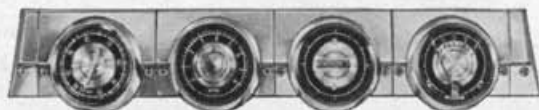
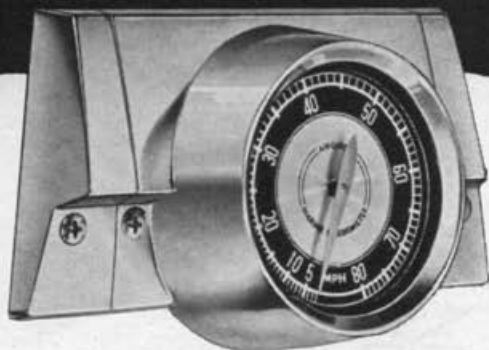
Naturally, she has lots of room, both on deck and below. The interior particularly has that spacious look obtainable only in a large boat and by keeping the arrangement simple and the quarters uncluttered. In the forward cabin, aft of the toilet room, space in the forepeak, are two extra width berths with pipe berths over. In the passageway between the two cabin houses are sail storage to starboard, another storage compartment to port. The 9' x 15' main cabin has a toilet room in one forward corner, balanced by a big clothes locker to port. Port and starboard are wide settees with padded backs and lockers outboard. Right aft a curved stairway leads down from the deckhouse. The bulkhead there is lined with bookshelves, except for its door to the engine compartment. This still leaves a five-foot full-width space clear for chairs, etc.

Except for the companionway to below decks, the entire forward end of the deckhouse is taken up by navigational equipment. Doors are each side, convenient to the man at the wheel. Vision aft and to the sides as well as ahead is excellent. Across the entire after four feet of the deckhouse, separated by partial bulkheads each side of a wide opening, is

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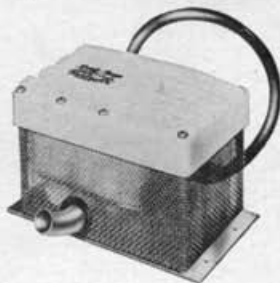
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the galley. In between are a pair of backed settees each with its permanent table.

The after trunk cabin, in addition to housing the light plant, has its workbench and numerous lockers. It also provides direct access to the fuel tanks under the side decks and to the engine itself, which is beneath the after end of the deckhouse.

Mike and Bunny began their migrations to Florida in a 30' houseboat. This, a modified oyster garvey type hull, built by Mike from Wm. Atkin's plans, proved quite comfortable and entirely satisfactory. For their first trip in 1952 a single 25 hp. Johnson outboard was used. Later a 45 hp. Palmer inboard was installed. Speed in both cases was 7½ knots. Stern drives were unobtainable at that time but Mike feels that one would be ideal power for such a boat. Incidentally, the houseboat is still going strong, up on the Trent Canal.

Bonita I's extremely shallow draft was advantageous for the more or less protected major part of the route. And even for the open stretches the houseboat proved to be more able than might be supposed. Mike lists these open water stretches as: the 25 miles from Sandy Hook to Manasquan, N.J.; the 62 miles up Delaware Bay, and the 150-mile stretch of the Chesapeake. By having due respect for the weather he had no trouble at any time.

The two *Bonitas*, the 30' houseboat and the present 57' double-ender, in being virtually opposites and extremes as to type and size, go to prove that there is no one ideal boat for extensive cruising. But how the boat is improved or fitted out for one's purpose, including allowances being made for its peculiarities and any shortcomings, are important factors.

OFFSHORE POWERBOAT RACING, 1966

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major offshore event when she captured the Sam Griffith Memorial Trophy, then went on to become the highest outboard point winner in the offshore category.

Big Broad Jumper—This 32' Maritime relied on two 525-hp. Daytonas early in the season; later shifted to a pair of 700-hp. Holman & Moody's. Her owner piloted her to victory in the Palm Beach-Freeport race and scored a close second in the run from Miami to Key West.

Thunderballs—A 700-hp. Holman & Moody engine provided the thrust for this two-year-old, 23' Thunderbird-Formula hull. Owner Peter Rothschild shared driving duties with Larry Smith and Chuck Daigh as this West Coast challenger walked off with the California YC Challenge race, the Long Beach-Hennessy contest and the two-day thrash from Long Beach to San Francisco. She became top-ranking inboard in U.S. high point earnings.

Broad Jumper—With a length of 28', this Donzi hull could hardly be called "Little" *Broad Jumper*. Her power is twin 580-hp. Holman & Moody's. Allan Brown steered her to a close win in the Around Long Island Marathon.

Delta 28—This 22' English contender was built by Souter from a Levi design. She carries two Daytonas rated at a total of 1,200 hp. Owner Don Shead was in command when she won the Wills Trophy race in the Channel.

Thunderbird-Maritime—This 36' aluminum hull, with a name indicating her origin, became the most controversial offshore boat of the year. Her twin United Aircraft turbines, rated at 445 hp. each, rendered her ineligible (under the then-existing U.S. rules) to score in the Sam Griffith Memorial race. When Jim Wynne brought her in first, the controversy flared, but Wynne was awarded nine valuable international points.

