

## Coaster Underway



### Restoring a Pearson Coaster

by Captain Art Ross

She had been on the hard in City Island, NY for two years—a Pearson Coaster, #88 built in 1966. She was in poor but serviceable condition. I determined what I wanted to gain from the restoration experience, what my financial limitations were and what abilities and time I had, and concluded that I wanted a full keel, heavy plastic, traditionally-designed, diesel powered 30'

vessel and she was it. Other than the auxiliary, (now an '86 Universal 25), and the steering (now an Edson wheel), everything was original. Usage appeared to have been light guessing from the absence of a boom vang, the poorly working furler (with the wrong size sheet), the lack of reefing hooks, reefing lines and lazy jacks, and low hours on the auxiliary. This was a boat that had rarely cruised and had seen mostly Sunday afternoon sails in mild weather. She fit the budget due to a motivated seller and I took possession.

I was on Delaware Bay in Greenwich, NJ trying to sail to the Chesapeake when the water pump blew. Surprisingly, this was good luck. I met a mechanic and his crew who I then and there decided would be the restoration team.

What I wanted (in priority order) is as follows: an electric windlass (my back was considerably older than the boat); a new deck (the existing one was badly crazed); a new head and thru hulls (all leaked); a navigation station located aft of the starboard quarter-berth; new electric all around (including a depth sounder on the pedestal and the relocation of the engine controls there as well); smoked glass in the forward hatch; new main cabin hatch; hot water pump; cockpit shower; new furler; new cabin sole; white bulkheads to replace the fake teak formica; a new headliner; new headboards for the v-berth and port berth, as well as a real mattress for the v-berth. Other, smaller additions and changes (like shelving, new brass lamps and fans, refinished ice box, Cetol for all teak, etc.), were worked in around this primary list.

The deck was stripped of all its fittings, ground down, and 3 to 4 coats of white gelcoat applied (the topcoat was non-skid). All by itself, this job took over 100 hours of hard, dirty, dusty work. All teak on deck including coamings, winch stands and boards, were restored with lots of grinding and Cetol (love that Cetol) and then reinstalled. It took 2 days just to tear out the starboard quarter-berth. This boat wasn't put together like a production boat of today—everything was glassed, glued and screwed. The man who does wood for Carabini built the navigation station. He also made a new teak tabletop, the main cabin handrails and replaced the cabin top handrail—a real nice touch.

All canvas (including curtains and bimini) was replaced with Sunbrella. A Furuno GPS was installed at the nav station, as well as VHS, battery gauge, new switch panels, and a light. The hot water heater was accommodated nicely where the footspace was in the starboard berth, aft of the new nav station. The only compromise was an Armstrong "wopod" vinyl sole—real wood would have cost about \$2000. I felt it wasn't a necessary expense and the vinyl is easy to care for and looks OK. The main cabin sink now has hot water and a real spigot. The mast and anchor lights were replaced with up-to-date halogen. In my opinion, my only real extravagance was a leather covered destroyer wheel. A switch for the windlass at the helm has made coming into anchorage a real pleasure. I push the button down and there goes the 22 pound plow, along with 50 feet of HT chain. I push the switch up and I'm out with no back strain. When the windlass was installed in the bow, the glass that came out was almost 1.5" thick—everyone was impressed.

All told, I'm satisfied with my choice of boat. My total expenditure was \$23,500 consisting of the hull for \$7,500, labor/parts at \$13,000, canvas—\$1,000, woodwork—\$1,000; vinyl sole & mattress cost \$1,000. The boat has been appraised and a replacement value of \$40,000 has been assigned. The insurance company has accepted and is covering her for that amount.

Down Jersey Marine Services (856-451-7961), did most of the work. Canvas was by Lippencott Marine (856-764-8282); cabinetry was by Alan Hedges (856-451-8212).