

CFN Shakedown Cruise: Calvin Beal 44

shakedown cruise



Brian Robbins photo

by Brian Robbins

Welcome to another CFN Shakedown Cruise. Periodically, we will focus on a new launch and dig a little deeper into what went into the project – whether it be a new model or a hull well known to the New England commercial market. What we hope to do is provide insight and information our readers can apply to their own setups ... and, as always, offer up a little entertainment along the way.

—Editor

WESTPORT, ME – “We think very highly of everyone who was involved with building this boat,” Deb Christie says. “We can’t say enough good things about them.”

Deb speeds the outboard up as her husband Ted swings their new Calvin Beal 44 around and heads toward us. We’re doing a photo shoot on a December afternoon, skimming down the Sheepscot River just off the shore from the Christies’ Westport, ME home.

Deb holds her course as Ted gradually overhauls us in the 44’ Deborah Ann. I snap a series of pictures as he cruises by on our port side; Deb throttles back and puts the big flat-bottomed skiff bow-on into the 44-footer’s wake.

I turn to speak to Deb – and pause, not wanting to interrupt the moment. She’s wearing the biggest kind of a smile, watching the Deborah Ann run; a mix of pride and love.

Pretty cool.

A 20-year stretch

Ted Christie’s last boat was a 35’ RP that he finished himself back in 1997. Ted rented space at Fairwind Marine in New Harbor, ME at the time;

in the process, he got to know Fairwind owner Troy Benner, whom he refers to as an “extremely talented person who had an answer for any problem I came up with. Troy’s one of those guys you can depend on for brain-picking ... he’s been a big help to me over the years.”

Ted’s RP did well by him for the next two decades – as he did by her.

“Maintenance is everything,” says Deb. “Ted is always putting in the extra time to keep things in good shape.”

“You take care of your boat and she’ll take care of you,” Ted says.

But even though she was in good shape after 20 years, Ted’s 35-footer was still a 35-footer ... and at the 50-year mark himself, Ted felt it was time to do something about a bigger boat if he was going to do it.

Ted was intrigued by the array of designs that SW Boatworks in Lamoine had to offer. “They have a nice range of models with the Young Brothers hulls and the beamier Calvin Beal designs.

“I’ve always liked a beamy boat, myself,” he says. “Some people want a narrower hull. Nothing’s right or wrong – it’s just a matter of what you like.”

The Calvin Beal 44’s 17’6” beam appealed to Ted. And he and Deb both were impressed after visiting SW and spending some time with owner Stewart Workman.

“Stewart was good to talk with right off the bat,” says Ted, “and the operation was very organized: the way each boat has its own finish crew and

supervisor ... everything’s catalogued ... each bay even has its own tools that are specific to that bay. It was impressive.”

The notion of having SW not only build their hull and top, but finish it as well, appealed to the Christies; when they found out there was a chance to nail a finish spot in SW’s schedule, they took it.

The Process

Ted and Deb have words of praise for all hands involved in the building of the Deborah Ann – but if you were going to dole out an MVP title to any one person, that would have to go to SW’s Will Duffy. Will (who is the son of Stewart Workman’s wife Alice) not only supervised

the finish process, he was responsible for plenty of talented hands-on workmanship, as well, according to the Christies.

Will – who has worked with stepfather Stewart since 1999 – has “obviously had good training,” says Ted, “but he seems to have a lot of natural talent, too.”

See SHAKEDOWN, next page



“It was a team effort to build this boat,” says Ted Christie. “I could not have done it without Deb’s help and support.”

Brian Robbins photo



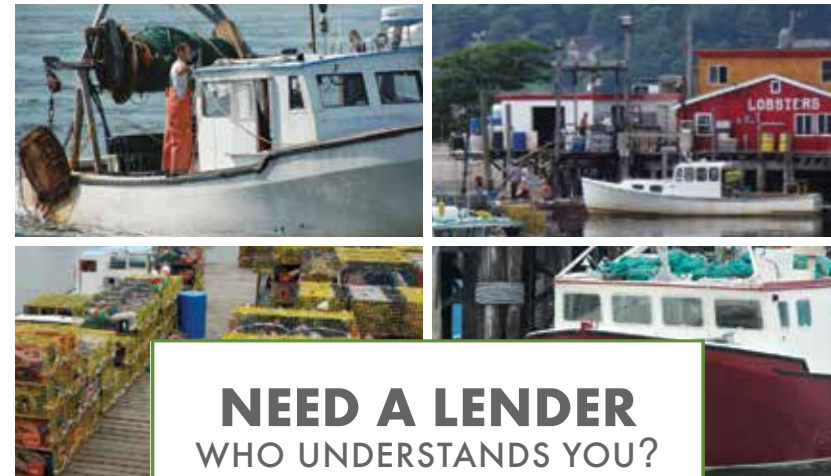
THE BOAT

LOA: 44’
Beam: 17’6”
Transom: 16’2”
Designer: Calvin Beal Jr.

For more information contact
SW Boatworks at (207) 667-7427
or via e-mail: <info@calvinbealboats.com>



Brian Robbins photos



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The Leach Family: Emery, Jan, Greg and Logan with FSB's Amanda Look and Nicole Lovely at Bucks Harbor, aboard the E/V Ol' Sarge, which they renovated and named in honor of their grandfather, Emery Herrick.

Inspired by the dream of their late grandfather, Emery and Logan Leach decided they wanted to be lobstermen. They needed a bigger boat and set their sights on a 31' Duffy, and made the call to Franklin Savings Bank.

“Amanda and Nicole are the nicest people in the world. We understood the process. They explained it,” said Logan. “I asked way too many questions at the first meeting but I was glad I did by the second meeting,” said Emery.

“They talked to the boys. We were there, but Amanda and Nicole treated them as they would us. That was huge,” says Jan. As minors, the boys still needed their parents involved.

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Shakedown cruise

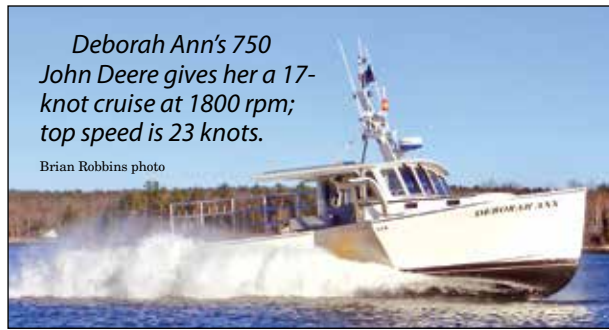
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Ted cites the hydraulic system for the 44, for instance: "We purchased everything from Lonnie's Hydraulics, but Will did the actual installation. Handed him a schematic and away he went."

Ted says there were options to consider "every step of the way. Stewart broke everything down and made sure we got exactly what we wanted."

One key option Ted chose was moving the main bulkhead ahead 20", which made for great visibility, he says – along with extra workroom aft.

Art's Marine supplied the power package for the Deborah Ann: a 6135SFM85 John Deere (rated for 750 hp @ 2200 rpm) matched up to a 2.48:1 ZF 360A gear. Ted says he'd never dealt with Art's prior to this project, but was steered in their direction by Troy Benner at Fairwind Marine.



Deborah Ann's 750 John Deere gives her a 17-knot cruise at 1800 rpm; top speed is 23 knots.

Brian Robbins photo

"I was interested in the John Deere," says Ted, "and Troy recommended Art Stanley. When Troy referred to (longtime Art's employee) Jason Gallant as 'a top-notch mechanic,' that's all I needed to hear."

Another bit of inspiration by Troy Benner was the Webasto diesel-fueled heater which warms the Deere's coolant for ease of cold-weather starting (see sidebar). "Troy told me about the Webastos – I had

one for years on my old boat," says Ted. "Will had never seen one before, but we gave him the parts and he put it all together. It's a really nice rig."

R.E. Thomas Marine Supply furnished Deborah Ann's 2-1/2" shaft and driveline components; on the back end of things sits a 34"x40" 4-blade propeller from Nautilus Marine. (Nautilus also contributed to the metal fab work on the 44-footer, along with Esposito's Welding.) A pair of 250-gallon fuel tanks feed the Deere; below-deck access is through Freeman hatches from Hamilton Marine, along with a custom lobster tank hatch by Esposito's.

Components for the wheelhouse electronics were supplied by Pete's Marine Electronics, while Kramp Electronics (SW's longtime go-to) did the actual installation of wiring for the project.

Ted makes a point of showing me the clean wiring layout and custom breaker panel built by Kramp. "As fussy as Stewart is," he says, "you know anybody he recommends has to be good at what they do."

THE ENGINE

6135SFM85 John Deere
750 HP @ 2200 RPM
Inline 6-cylinder
13.5 Liters/824 CID

USA EPA Tier 3 compliant

For more information contact **Bell Power Systems LLC** at (860) 767-7502 or (800) 225-8669 for the John Deere dealer in your area.

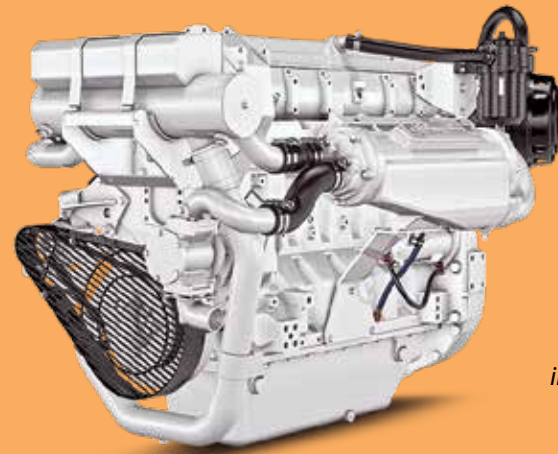


Photo courtesy Bell Power

... AND THE HEATER

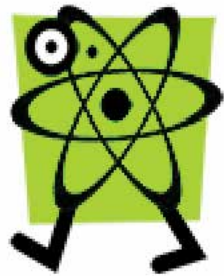
Ted Christie's Webasto coolant heater is plumbed into the water jacket of his John Deere; setting the unit's thermostat at 100° F makes for easy cold-weather starting. The heater taps into one of Ted's fuel tanks with 24V ignition. "I've run one of these for a week straight with my old boat and never killed a battery." Webasto offers a range of coolant heaters; at right is the Thermo Pro 50 Eco model. For more information (including the Webasto dealer in your area) visit the Webasto website: www.webasto.com



Photo courtesy Webasto

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Photo courtesy of Zipwake

THE TRIM TABS

Ted gives his Zipwake trim tabs high marks: "I just set them on 'automatic mode' and let them do the work. They'll compensate when you're loaded with fuel and bait; she'll gain a knot sometimes cruising with them." Zipwake's blade-style "interceptors" come in four sizes ranging from 12" to 30" wide and are built from non-corrosive materials.



Brian Robbins photo

They are controlled by a waterproof dash-mounted panel with built-in GPS and motion sensors. For more information visit the Zipwake website: www.zipwake.com. To locate the dealer in your area, go to the Imtra Corporation website: www.imtra.com/zipwake.htm

On the water

For Ted Christie, the comfort of having a bigger boat under his boots was just as important as any other reason he had for having the Deborah Ann built. A few weeks after launching – and having already put in some blowy days hauling – Ted had high marks for his new 44-footer.

"I was hoping I'd feel better physically – and I do," he says. "She's no lightweight, which I think helps to make her very comfortable and stable ... there's no snapping and jerking to it at all. I've seen the difference already," says Deb. "When Ted walks through the door after a long day, he doesn't look beat up."

The 750 Deere combined with the deep gear ratio and good-sized prop combine to give the hefty 44 a top speed of 23 knots; throttling back to 1800 rpm provides a cruise of around 17 knots with a fuel burn of 22 gallons per hour.

As mentioned earlier, Ted reports good visibility from either station – and is glad he chose to go solely with a jog lever as his inside helm. "I'm really liking how uncluttered it makes things in the wheelhouse," he says. "I'm always going to be on the outside helm with the steering wheel for any close-in maneuvering, anyway."

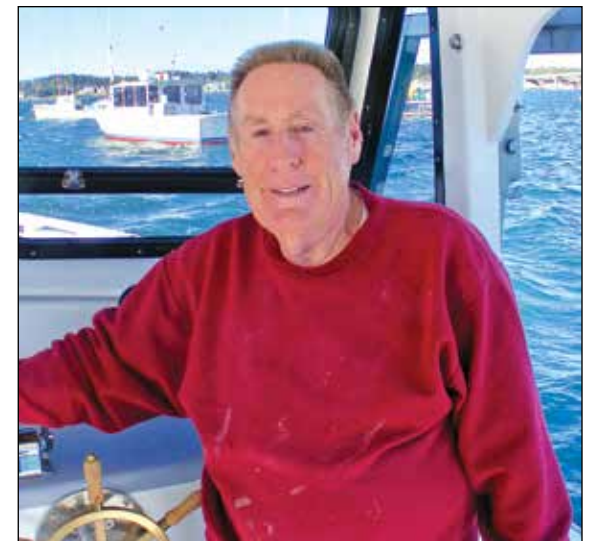
So far, Ted has taken on a load of 130 "Super Fours" – which were no problem for the Deborah Ann. "The 2.48:1 gear and the big prop help handle the weight," he says. "And space-wise, I think we could put 150 'Super Fours' on her, no problem."

The Christies insist on taking me out for a ride before I leave (I'd spent all my time in the skiff for the running shots). "You've got to feel how smooth and quiet she is," they both tell me.

They weren't kidding: I'm standing back aft as we're skimming along the Sheepscoot – and the water sitting in the cups of the lazarette hatch is mirror-smooth ... not a vibration to be felt.

I catch a glimpse of Ted and Deb as the low-setting sun hits the wheelhouse windows ... they both have that same grin I described on Deb's face earlier.

Pretty cool. ■



Brian Robbins photo

THE DESIGN ... THAT ALMOST WASN'T

In 2006, Calvin Beal Jr. of Beals Island, ME began the strip-planked plug for the largest model at that time to bear his name: the 44'x17'6" **Calvin Beal 44**. "I wanted to have a design out there that wouldn't be outdated in a few years," he says. "The demand was for bigger and bigger boats." Which it was ... until the bottom fell out of the boat market later that year. At that point, Calvin nearly gave up on the project, but says his wife Jeannine encouraged him to keep going and finish it. In 2008, **SW Boatworks** in Lamoine acquired Calvin's molds, which was a source of relief for him after years of long-distance relationships with layup shops and market fluctuations. "I couldn't have found anyone better to be building boats with my name on them," he says.

"When you fish all day on the rugged Oregon coast, the last thing you want to do is clean a hot, oil covered engineroom."

Capt. Mike Fitzpatrick

Detroit Diesel 471 Natural Before

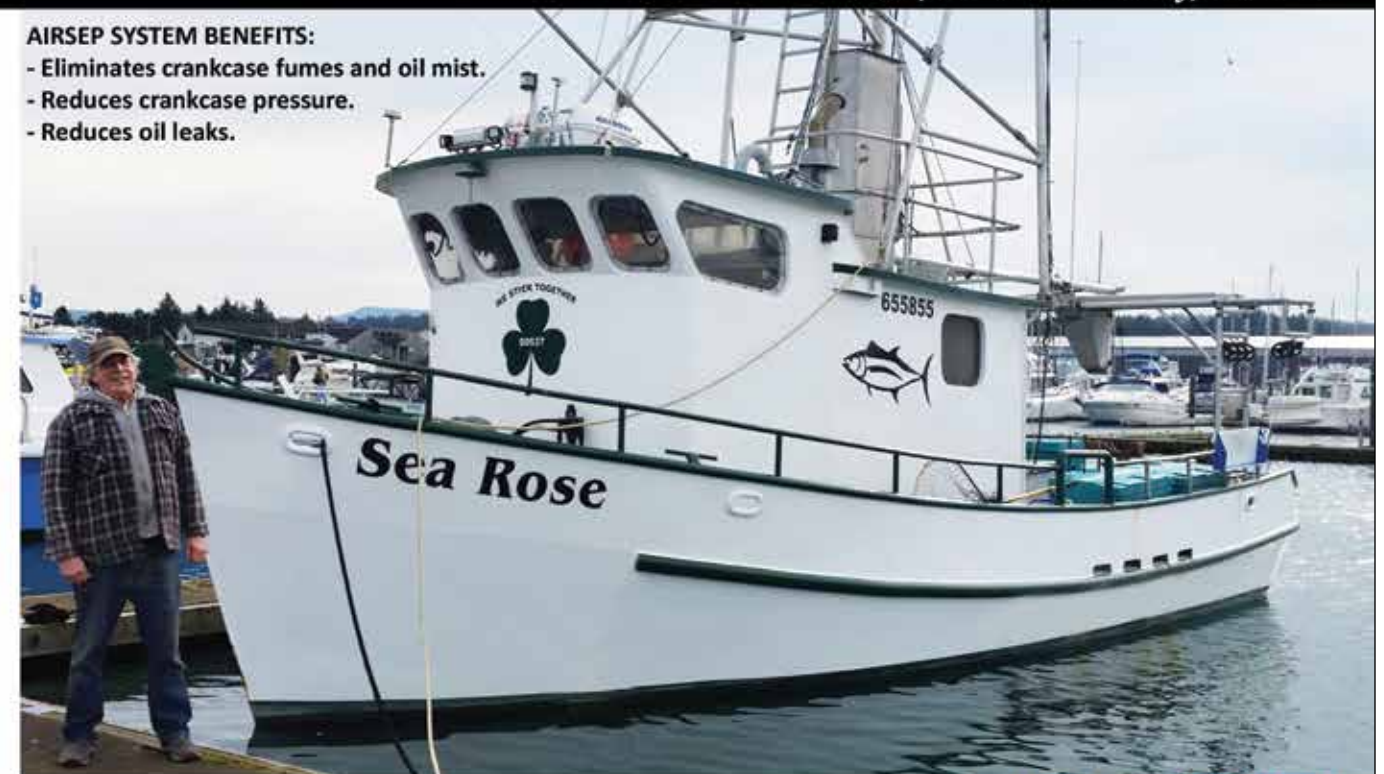


Detroit Diesel 471 Natural After



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