

CFN Shakedown Cruise: Calvin Beal 44

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

FRIENDSHIP, ME – I asked lobsterman/boat builder Gilbert Simmons of Friendship how many boats he's finished over the years.

"Oh, I don't know ..." Gil said, grinning. "We



Brian Robbins photos

Above, That's My Boy owner Jason Simmons and his father Gilbert – working on another 44-footer in the Simmons Boatworks shop.

don't really keep track. We just do 'em."

That would be Gil: do something and do it really well ... and act like it's no big deal.

"Well," I say, taking a different tack, "when did you start doing finish work?"

Gil looks up into the rafters and squints one eye like he's doing some heavy ciphering.

"19 ... 84? Yeah – 1984, I think. I'm pretty sure it was a BHM that we finished."

Gil's son Jason spoke up from down in the bilges of the 44' Calvin Beal that's currently underway in their Simmons Boatworks shop.

"It's around 40 boats altogether, isn't it?"

Gil shrugged.

"Sounds about right."

He looks around the Calvin Beal's expansive hull.

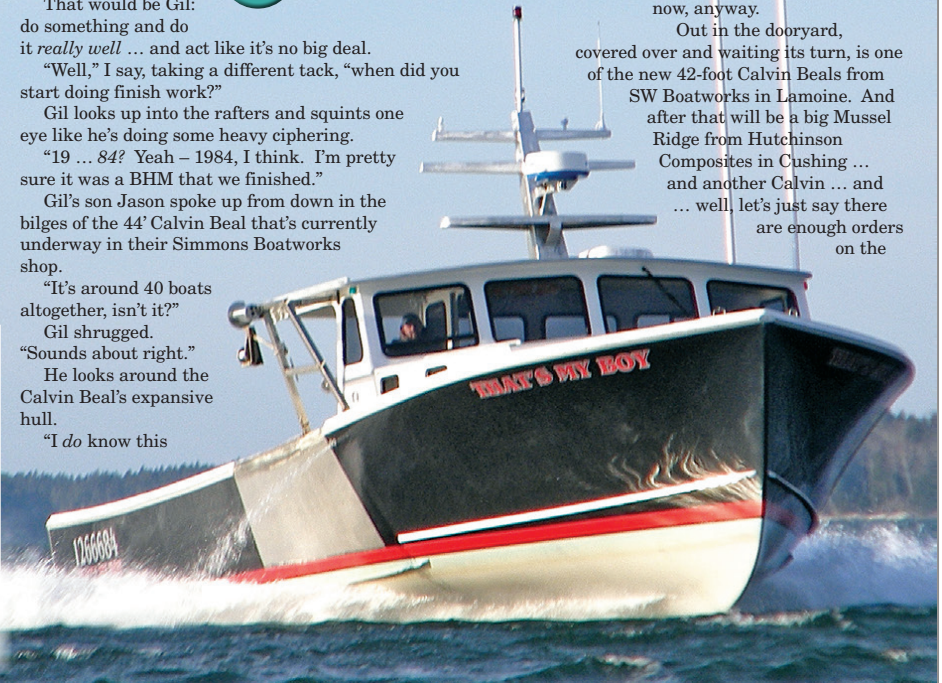
"I do know this

shakedown cruise

much: they're not getting any smaller."

No, they're not. Not for now, anyway.

Out in the dooryard, covered over and waiting its turn, is one of the new 42-foot Calvin Beals from SW Boatworks in Lamoine. And after that will be a big Mussel Ridge from Hutchinson Composites in Cushing ... and another Calvin ... and ... well, let's just say there are enough orders on the



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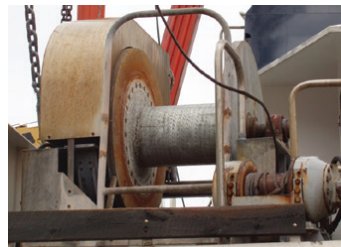
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books to keep the Simmons Boatworks crew busy for a while – especially when you figure in the fact that Gil and Jason both will be head-down and lobstering full-time by summer.

Which brings us to the subject of this month's Shakedown Cruise. The current Calvin 44 makes two in a row for Simmons Boatworks. If you walk out of the shop and scan the cove across the road, you'll see the other one – if Jason Simmons isn't out to haul.

That's his boat.
That's My Boy is the name.

Bigger and bigger

One of my early memories of Jason Simmons is from over 20 years ago: he was a proud young fella at the helm of his new 35' Young Brothers that he and his father had just finished.

Whereas Gil has a history of finishing new boats, working them for a season or two, and then building another (when I ask him how many, he

shrugs and says, "Oh ... I don't know ... 15, maybe?"), Jason has tended to hang on to his for a while.

The years between that 35-footer and Jason's newest boat were shared by his time fishing a Simmons-finished 40' Young Brothers. "It was a great boat, but I really wanted something a little bigger," Jason says.

These days, SW Boatworks is the source for both the Young Brothers model line and Calvin Beal's designs. Jason chose the 44 Calvin for the jump up in size from his Young Brothers, gaining 4' of beam as well as a 4'

increase in overall length.

That's My Boy is set up with a split wheelhouse (the molded top was modified by the Simmons shop), providing a clear 28' of cockpit from the back of the house to the transom.

Though Calvin Beal designed plenty of flare into the bows of the 44, it

doesn't hinder visibility, according to Jason Simmons. "I can see great from either steering station," he reports.



THE ENGINE

C12 Caterpillar
705 HP @ 2300 RPM
Inline 6-cylinder
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provided the 44-footer's 2-1/2" shaft and running gear.

The combination seems to be a good one, Jason says. "Wide open, I can hit about 26 knots."

And cruise? "20 knots at about 1950 rpm," he says.

Now, there's one bit of information you should be aware of: Jason Simmons' C12 Cat is the last one, according to Milton Cat. (Even though we can't provide official details at this hour, we can say there is a plan afoot for something yellow in that horsepower range in the near future.)

If you watch That's My Boy running, you'll notice how clean the hull

See *SHAKEDOWN CRUISE*, next page



THE BOAT

LOA: 44'
Beam: 17'6"
Transom: 16'2"
Designer: Calvin Beal Jr.

For more information
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Brian Robbins photos

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sails. Besides Calvin Beal's lines and the keep-the-weight-aft approach applied to the finish, the PVC lifting rails the Simmonses fitted to the hull no doubt contribute to things.

The forward ends of the lifting rails slightly overlap the aft ends of the 44-footer's chop rails on the bows, raised and angled enough to prevent them from digging in. From there, the lift rails strike a compromise between the outer bilge line and the hull's sailing attitude. When the 44 is up on its lines, the rails are catching the water firing out from beneath the hull, resulting in a nice overall lift and a clean ride.

If there's a lesson to learn there, it might be to learn all you can about your particular hull's sailing attitude. Chasing the waterline may provide an easy guide when mounting lift rails, but it might not necessarily be the best angle in relation to the water's surface when you're up and running.

The bottom line: it sure looks like Simmons Boatshop nailed it on That's My Boy.

Fine-tuning

A pair of below-deck fuel tanks provide a total capacity of 450 gallons to feed the C12. The deck itself is fitted with Freeman hatches from Hamilton Marine.

That's My Boy's twin steering stations and pot hauler were supplied by Marine Hydraulics Engineering Co. Inc. Pete's Marine Electronics provided the wheelhouse electronics package.

Metal fabrication on the project was split between Bisson's Welding and Jason Simmons himself, who did the stainless work. One custom touch to the hull is a hinged tailgate, which Jason admits he might do differently another time.

"I've never had an open stern before," he says, "and I wasn't sure how I was going to like it.

"It's actually great; makes it easy about getting on and off the boat – and it's good about setting gear ... but ..."

At this point, Jason walks aft and points to the hinges on the sides of the tailgate. "I learned right off the bat that you had to run the gear out straight off the stern or stuff was going to catch around the hinges."

Jason's in the process of rigging up guards to fend rope and toggles away from any potential snags.

"Another time, if I wanted the extra length out over the stern, I think I'd just go with a fixed extension and forget about hinges."

But that's the small stuff at this point; overall, Jason is very happy with his 44 and the extra workroom he now has.

"Handling-wise, it'll turn about the same as my 40-footer did," he says. "It's a lot bigger boat, but it's really good around gear."

And you can't ask for any better than that. ■

THE DESIGN ... THAT ALMOST WASN'T

In 2006 Calvin Beal Jr. of Beals Island, ME began the strip-planked plug for the largest model 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 there 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. "Stewart (Workman of SW Boatworks) is known for great workmanship." Over the 8 years since then, the market has rebounded, big time – and Calvin's vision has become a reality. The Calvin Beal 44 is the most popular model of SW's large stable, which also includes the Young Brothers hulls and the Libby 34 and 38 – all designed by Ernest Libby Jr.



In the above CFN file photo from the early 90s, Calvin, left, shares a laugh with fellow boat designer/builder Ernest Libby Jr., who passed away in 2012. Ernest (who Calvin always called "Nernie") was Calvin's brother-in-law – and more: "Nernie was enough older that he was like a hero to me when I was a kid."

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