

Winter 1996 "The "Perfect Boat"

All my life, somehow, I've been around boats. All kinds of boats. Our family had a weekend ski boat in the late 50's. It seems that boats, for some reason, fascinate and arouse my curiosity to no end. I've tinkered with cars over the years, but I always have had boats. I have friends with fishing boats, friends with hot boats, and some rather large boats. I like them all, and tend to evaluate each and make comparisons. And then there are the ones I've owned. My first was a 16' ski boat I bought on my own in '72. My dad nearly had a fit, but it was my money. Then came others, depending on which year it was, I thought I had the "Perfect" boat, but I always wanted some improvement in one area or another. Then there's always the "need for speed". In 1981 I ordered the latest in Fast, a drag racing hydroplane. Powered with an aluminum hemi engine, it took me to just shy of 150 mph in less than 9.5 seconds in a quarter mile race. That was fun, but what about the family? Back to the family weekender; then the fishing boat; then the ...

Now I'm older and I know the real truth; that there is no one boat that can satisfy a real boat lover. Ya just gotta have a lot of different boats! But who can afford more than a couple, and where would it stop anyway? So you must compromise. Not that a classic wooden boat is a compromise, but trolling for that big walleye is definitely out, and what about that 70 mph burst of speed? But, you know, if you've seen one fish you've seen 'em all, and my eyes water if I go over 40 mph anyway, so a classic boat is where it's at.

You just can't get enough of them. They are "Perfect". You are never upset if it breaks because it's so old you just have to understand. And you can't get mad at it, it's too pretty! Every outing brings compliments to the proud owner by onlookers everywhere that he goes with his prize. But aah, oh, which classic boat to own? Boy, I sure thought those Cobras were cool, but every time I got used to the price, the price got higher! A guy in Dallas had a '56 Capri, though, and I thought I would take a look. Well, the second we laid eyes on it, guess what? It was "Perfect"! My wife was ecstatic. Even I was surprised at her reaction that day. We refinished the wood and installed new interior and engine parts. It was great fun...but it wasn't a Cobra.

Finally in October of 1995 I finally bought my "Perfects boat; Cobra #BR 18 045. How'd I get it? Well I had this rich uncle who passed away and led it to me in his will! NOT REALLY! OK, I was out hunting and found it parked under a tree. The farmer paid me fifty bucks to haul it off! Naw, not true either. But it is true that good things come to those that wait. My boat came as quite a basket case, missing pieces here and mismatched pieces there, yet, this is all I could afford to spend on a Cobra. This was really a blessing in disguise. Having resurrected this beauty from its meager beginnings is already becoming quite satisfying. Good or bad, this boat will represent mine and my family's time and workmanship from bottom to top. Besides, there's nothing like getting to know each nut, bolt, and plank firsthand. And as it goes together day by day, I just know it's the "Perfect" boat!

So, as the summer approaches I'm working ever harder to complete my project. Many people have come to the rescue with parts and knowledge, but without great Classic .Boat Club of Oklahoma. members Larry Hinton and Steve Spinharney and his boat, I'd be quite lost. This summer we will attend functions and boat shows and I hope to see you all, but if you think you see a flaw on my Cobra, go easy on me...remember it's the "Perfect" boat!!! Hey, I just noticed something, it doesn't have a back seat...

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