

Winter 1997 Second Chance Magic

When I was a kid growing up, I always loved the water. I loved to be around it, in it and on it. My father taught school in a one room school house. Mother worked around the house, and we could not afford such luxuries as a boat. Dad decided to build one out of plywood and I watched and helped. (Got in his way) It was a small fishing boat which was squared off at both ends. It wasn't much, but it was ours.

As a lot of young men did back then, they followed in their fathers footsteps. I was no exception. After graduating from college, I too became a teacher/coach in Kansas. I had to have a boat but could not afford to buy one so the school let me use the school shop to build one. It was an 18 foot quarter mile drag/ski boat. You see, I just had to go faster than all my friends. Nothing changes, does it?

Ten years later I sold it with my tow vehicle, a customized 1948 Chevy pickup to contribute to the purchase of a new home. Five year later, guess what? The kids wanted a ski boat. So, I pulled the old plans out, made major modifications, and built another one which I still have.

As I got older I fell in love with the old classics and began to ask around as to where I might start looking for one. Since my current job requires me to travel to different parts of the country, this gave me a chance to look for one of the old woodies. My first real chance to see some was in Cincinnati, Ohio. There were about 50 old boats under one roof in all stages of restoration which a broker/dealer was trying to sell. When I left there I was hooked. I had to have one.

I got serious and began calling on ads in boating publications and thought I found one reasonably priced north of Chicago. Chicago? That was too far away. How was I going to get there to look at it? As luck would have it I just happened to have business in the Chicago area and that was all I needed. The boat was owned by a man who was restoring several old wooden boats and he could not get to this one. It had been setting out for some time and several planks were rotted. The deck had been weathered to a point where it was useless, but it was all there. The 283 Chevy engine was locked up, but all its parts appeared to be there.

The owner had taken all the hardware off the boat since it was setting at a public marina. He said he had all the hardware in his basement and didn't want any of it to get stolen. With blind trust I gave him a \$100 bill to hold the boat and said I would come back with a trailer to pick it up in a couple of weeks.

Two weekends later I borrowed a trailer from a friend and late one Friday evening headed to Chicago. I stopped in Tulsa to pick up a friend who wanted to help me. I think he just wanted to get away from his wife for the weekend. Hope she doesn't see this article. Pulled in my driveway on Sunday afternoon with my prize and my wife met me. The first words out from her mouth were "You paid \$\$\$ for THAT!" My comment to her was "beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and behold, this is for you!"

One year later the boat was complete except for the interior, gauges, engine, etc. Then came the divorce. I sold the boat to a friend and it sat out, covered, in the elements. Water got in it and it froze. The deck "rolled up" and had to be completely redone. I bought it back from my friend after the divorce, did a complete redo on the deck and put 12 coats of varnish on it and another one on the entire boat.

I then completed the interior, engine, gauges, etc. and finally got it in the water. With all of the problems it had been through, I decided to name it... "Second Chance Magic" That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

Don Linsenmeyer
Edmond, OK