



REVERSON
WASHINGT

Roseate





A UNIQUE Boat

A UNIQUE BUILDER

Story By BILL JACOBS

“A red, seagoing steam locomotive,” I thought as I aligned the 44-foot trawler in my camera’s viewfinder while she edged her way out from Florida’s Longboat Key in 30 inches of water. I had spent some time on board at the dock getting acquainted with *Roseate* and her owners, Charlie and Pat Ball, but this was my first opportunity to take in her unique and purposeful lines.

Her 42-foot waterline length extends below the surface a mere 26 inches to a stainless-steel shoe covering the bottom of the boat. From dead forward or aft, her narrow, 12-foot beam reinforces the look of the locomotive: lean, muscular, and powerful. These days, with retro designs found in so many products, it is only fitting that a trawler like this should come to life—but how, why, and through whom?

Charlie and Pat Ball are brothers and native Floridians living in Sarasota, on the state’s west coast. While both brothers’ lives have revolved around the water for years, they have gone their separate ways professionally: Charlie into law, Pat into construction. Both are committed to being on the water, which is shallow on the west coast of Florida. So, over the years, together they have built boats designed to deal with the shifting sands of the Gulf of Mexico, the last two powered by sail. These sailboats, known in Florida as “sharpies,” typically have hard-chine hulls, centerboards, and lifting

rudders, allowing the boats to be sailed in just inches of water. The last sharpie they built was in 1991 to a design of Bruce Kirby, best known for his Laser sailboat. Charlie ultimately singlehanded this 27-footer all around the Caribbean, visiting Georgetown, Cuba, and Belize.

When the time came to consider more cruising amenities, Charlie and Pat began to think power. Some of their priorities were air conditioning, living space, long cruising range, and low maintenance. They wanted a trawler-style yacht but wanted to retain the capability to enjoy backwaters and bayous without the need to anchor out and dinghy in. A review of available boats did not turn up a single shallow-draft trawler until they discovered the design work of Dave Gerr (pronounced “gear”), a naval architect from New York City.

Dave is known for his versatility in the field of naval architecture. He is the author of *The Propeller Handbook*, one of the most important reference books on the subject. He is responsible for the design of the new 41-foot Santa Cruz Coastal Flyer, an elegant, retro-style motoryacht. Dave has also designed a number of shallow-draft motoryachts. His 42-foot Summer Kyle design was of great interest to Charlie and Pat. Covey Island Boat Works in Nova Scotia had built two of these 42-footers, one of which, *Belle Marie*, was located on the east coast of Florida. After having sea-trialing her, they purchased a set of building plans from Dave.



Charlie Ball



Bill Jacobs



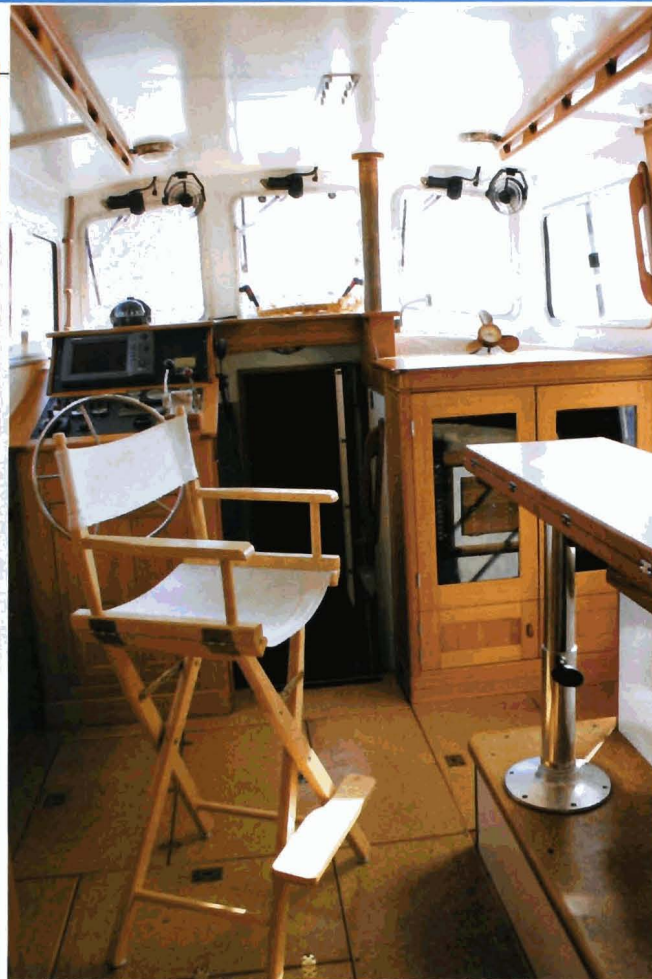
Top left: Coming out of the Precision shed, *Roseate* is taking shape and is ready for the next step in production. Above left: Charlie prepares to pull *Roseate* out of her slip, and her maneuverability is demonstrated in the ease with which she departs the slip. Above right: The view from the bridge is unobstructed. The helm controls are simple in quantity but sufficient for piloting from the bridge.

At this point, most boaters seeking to build the yacht of their dreams would turn to a yard experienced in building custom yachts. Not Charlie and Pat. Having already built their own shallow-draft sailboats, they decided to build their own trawler. They had a vision and enthusiasm for the project. While the decision had been easy to make, the boatbuilding process turned out to be more complex than they had imagined.

The project began in 2000. Charlie and Pat felt that the boat needed to be a bit bigger, so they asked Dave if he could enlarge the plans. Because the plans had been produced by manual drafting, enlarging the design would have been difficult. With Dave's permission, the brothers turned the plans over to a friend of theirs, naval architect Jim Ryan. Jim digitized the drawings and stretched the midsection of the design out to achieve a 44-foot overall length. This stretch allowed a more spacious saloon.

As they began to formulate the budget, Charlie and Pat knew funding would become an issue. After reviewing the numbers, they realized a partnership structure would work well for the boat. Two more financial partners were added: another brother, Michael, and a friend, Michael Connelly. A partnership formed: The Thinwater Trust. In addition to spreading out the cost, with more people involved, the boat would get more use. All of the partners were still working, so a group of owners would mean the boat wouldn't just sit around.

They then contacted another friend, Bill Porter, who builds Precision sailboats, a range of compact cruisers. Bill's shop is located in Palmetto, Florida, just north of Sarasota. Charlie and Pat arranged to lease a portion of his shop floor, where they could construct the mold and layup the hull.



The lower helm, located on the port side of the cabin, shows off the old-growth cypress cabinetry and simple instrumentation.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

Actual construction began in 2001. Using the CAD (computer-aided design) drawings, the stations were cut full size on Mylar sheets. Charlie and Pat then began by building the stations out of fiberboard. When all stations were complete, they moved them to Bill's shop and strip-planked the hull shape onto the stations with ribbands set on 3-inch centers. After hours and hours of fairing, this became the male plug. They covered the plug shape with Corecell foam, leaving the bottom of the hull uncored. Some of the Precision employees worked on a moonlight basis to complete the final layup of the hull, using multiple layers of vinyl ester resin and various weights of biaxial cloth. Next, a 1/4-inch stainless-steel plate was attached to the solid bottom. This plate is more than 32 feet long by 5 feet wide and weighs over 1,100 lb.

The hull was rolled over by using a large crane. The plug was chopped out of the hull, the interior lightly faired, and interior glass laid in. Next, Charlie and Pat built the bulkheads out of 1/2-inch marine plywood down to the waterline and closed-cell foam below the waterline. High-density foam stringers were installed and heavily glassed in for the engine stringers, and a stainless-steel framework was bolted in on these stringers.

The 220hp Cummins engine was placed atop the

stringers on special soft-rubber mounts supplied as part of the Aquadrive system. This system includes a thrust bearing and jack shaft from the engine attached by flexible couplers. This configuration virtually eliminates engine vibration from the hull.

The deck and cabin structure were molded by using more Corecell foam and fiberglass. The superstructure was then glassed to the hull, creating a monocoque structure—a single unit that does not creak, groan, or leak. Charlie and Pat built all fluid tanks of fiberglass and glassed them into the hull structure.

The hull assembly was moved to a commercial building in Sarasota that the brothers own. They built a shed onto the side of the building, which became the workplace for the next three years.

By this time, Charlie and Pat recognized how many hours were involved in building a boat of this magnitude. Each of them was running his own business during the day and working on the boat every night and every weekend.

While on vacation in Nova Scotia with his family, Pat learned that the Canadian boatbuilding business was in a slump. He visited the Nova Scotia Boat Builders Association, and the group allowed him to post a note on its bulletin board seeking a freelance boatbuilder. Ray Marshall, who recently had been laid off, replied to the



Photos by Bill Jacobs

Top: Opposite the portside galley, this space doubles as a breakfast nook and is convertible to two bunks. The folding table is reminiscent of some sailboat designs. Above: White Corian counter tops in the galley are a modern contrast to the old-growth cypress cabinets and add to the lightness of the interior design.

note. He and Pat struck a deal. Ray would move to Sarasota and live in a house Pat owned and help complete *Roseate*.

Ray's specialty is ship's carpentry, but his vast experience in boatbuilding made him the ideal choice to head up the installation of the boat's mechanical systems as well as the woodwork. He also produced hand-drawn diagrams to coordinate the many runs of wiring, cable, hydraulics, plumbing, and fuel lines. Prior to commencing construction of the interior work, Ray drew three-dimensional sketches of each cabin. After the sketches were reviewed by Charlie and Pat, Ray made the necessary changes, and these sketches became the plans for the cabinetry and furniture. Ray worked for the next 20 months, averaging 50 hours per week. Charlie and Pat worked with Ray most evenings and weekends.

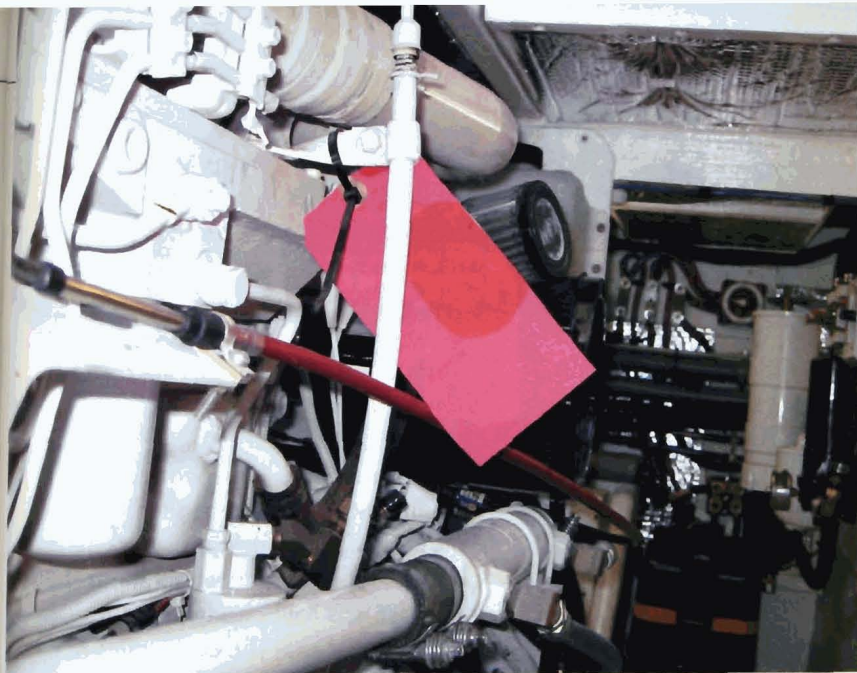
The interior woodwork is unique. The finished cabinet faces are made from old-growth, deadhead cypress logs pulled from a swamp in northern Florida. The cabinet and table tops are made from southern longleaf yellow pine that came from a huge tree that had stood in Charlie and Pat's grandfather's backyard. The tree was so large, it took three men joining hands to surround the trunk. The state forestry department had certified it to be the largest yellow pine on record in the state. It was more than 400 years old when it was felled by disease. The flooring is covered in natural cork sheets that were sealed to prevent staining. This surface is soft on bare feet, enhances the acoustics of the space, and provides an excellent nonskid surface.

A WALK THROUGH

As you tour *Roseate*, her relatively narrow beam makes its presence felt throughout her interior. The tour begins forward with a V-berth guest cabin. Just aft of the V-bunk is a walk-through forward head. The boat is then divided into a galley down to starboard and a day bunk to port. A center stair leads up to the main saloon and is hinged to provide access to the forward part of the engine room. Two additional hatches in the main saloon provide access to mid and aft portions of the engine space.

The saloon has an inside steering station to port, with a chart table and an electrical panel to starboard. The settee occupies a narrow space to starboard, but with the heavily hinged table that opens up and two folding captain's chairs, it provides dining space for four. The large and numerous port lights provide a light, airy feeling in the saloon and also allow great visibility in all directions from the helm.

Four steps down on the port side of the saloon lead



Top: The engine room is a tight space, but most components are easily accessible. Above: Pat (on the left) is a contractor, and his brother, Charlie, is an attorney; they are both cruising enthusiasts and boatbuilders who had a vision.

ROSEATE

LOA	44'
DRAFT	26"
BEAM	12'
DISPLACEMENT	27,000 lb.
STANDARD POWER	220hp Cummins
CRUISE SPEED	9 knots
MAST HEIGHT	15' 6" (mast up)
FUEL CAPACITY	346 U.S. gal.
WATER CAPACITY	120 U.S. gal.
HOLDING TANK	60 U.S. gal.

to the master stateroom. A queen berth to starboard is balanced with a suite of cabinets and drawers to port. A full head with shower completes the interior accommodations. The overall feeling throughout the interior is one of simplicity and seaworthiness.

The upper helm station is nicely equipped with repeaters for all electronics and comfortable seating. Aft of the seating area sits the dinghy, which can be lowered from the mast-mounted boom. The mast and boom also are rigged with a substantial and functional steadying sail. This is an important feature, because the shallow-draft hull does not allow a sufficient hull volume for using active stabilizers.

In January 2005, the electronics installation began. Arthur Clark, a local marine electronics expert, selected, purchased, and installed all electronics. The Furuno package includes a chart plotter, GPS, depth sounder, speed indicator, and radar. Art also installed all galley fixtures, communications, and air conditioning equipment. The generator is a Northern Lights M643 three-cylinder 5hp unit that has no problem running both air conditioners. The two Anchor Marine PH16-12D units cool the boat to a level of comfort never before experienced by the ex-sailors.

By the fall of 2005, the boat was substantially completed and ready to launch at a local Sarasota marina, about 10 blocks from the building site. Katrina had just ravaged the northern Gulf Coast, and all boat movers in the area were engaged in the cleanup. Pat called in one of his building relocation contractors. *Roseate* was placed on a house-moving rig and taken to the marina for a date with the travel lift.

Since her launch, the partners have put on about 250 engine hours during a variety of shakedown cruises: down to the Thousand Islands of the Everglades, off shore to the Dry Tortugas, and up to Caladesi Island. *Roseate's* unique tunnel hull design, coupled with hard chines, not only facilitates cruising in shallow water but also serves to reduce her tendency to roll. Using her steadying sail when transiting strong beam seas contributes an additional stabilizing effect. The partners agree that she is somewhat active but safe in all conditions, and they find her more comfortable than a Grand Banks 42 without stabilizers.

GOING CRUISING

In April 2006, Charlie, Pat, and a few friends delivered her to Georgetown in the Exumas, where she



Roseate

Bill Jacobs




A seagoing locomotive...trawler style. *Roseate* was a boat project worth doing that has resulted in many enjoyable cruises with more to come.

spent the season cruising throughout the Bahamas before returning to the west coast of Florida ahead of hurricane season.

While the boat was in the Bahamas, all four partners spent time cruising with friends and family. *Roseate* will be a well-used boat, and there is no better way to care for a boat than by using it.

It took just about five years to complete the boat. The brothers estimate the total time to build her was 10,000 man hours. This workload was split among the brothers, the fiberglass workers, Ray Marshall, and Art Clark. Charlie's reply to a question about the total cost was "over budget." So it would appear that the economics of the process would be difficult to justify, but if you love messin' with boats and want to be absolutely knowledgeable about what's below your feet while on deck, it's probably a bargain.

And besides, if you're a partner, you receive a custom-embroidered hat displaying the rose-colored, spoon-billed bird that loves to feed in the shallows and gives this unusual vessel her name. 

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