

Coastal Mariner

News from Coastal Marine Engine

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A Labor of Love

Some boats are a labor of love. And *Zizi* is easy to fall in love with. In fact, everyone at Coastal Marine Engine, from sales to service to the yard personnel at Canal Boat yard, fell for her.

The story began about two years ago when Bill Pettit saw the Storebro Solo *Zizi* when he moved onto a houseboat in the northeast corner of Lake Union in Seattle. The bright-finished lapstrake boat had been imported from Europe along with a 70' motor yacht by a Dutch owner. It didn't take long for Pettit to meet the owner and strike a deal for the 24' boat built in Sweden in 1954.

"It fit my needs perfectly," Pettit says. As a '50s Austin-Healy car buff, now with-



Zizi on the ship canal across from Canal Boat Yard. The 50-year-old's original gas Volvo was replaced with a Volvo Penta diesel by Coastal Marine.

out a garage, it fit his need for a classic vehicle as well.

The previous owner had already done much of the restoration on *Zizi*, but the original little Volvo BB 50 gas engine, while fully operational, had some overheating issues. Pettit was disappointed to hear that the engine model was long out of production and parts were scarce. After consulting with Mike Hudson at Coastal Marine Engine, the solution became apparent. A new Volvo Penta MD2030 would solve a multitude of problems. The diesel wouldn't provide a high top end speed, but that wasn't at all important to Pettit. It would provide plenty of power and fit nicely into the existing engine bed without major modification. The shaft and prop would have to be replaced, but the fuel tank could remain.

The unique demands of little *Zizi* really showcased Coastal Marine's well-known capabilities and highlighted some new ones. With Canal Boat Yard able to pull *Zizi* in and out of the water as needed,



The new MD2030 installed.

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Don, Janet and the Right Way

The phrase "worked their way up from the bottom" can be overused, especially when it comes to the marine engine business. But that's just what Don and Janet Benson each did. And that's what sets Coastal Marine Engine apart.

Don started out at age 15 washing boats in Fresno, California. Within six months he was in the shop working on outboards. "I always was mechanically inclined," he says. It didn't take long for Don to utilize his mechanical skills on gas I/Os and ultimately diesels. Eventually, he moved north to Westport where there was a thriving commercial marine industry. Volvos were his specialty.

In the meantime, far away, Janet had started work in the shipping department at Alaska Marine Engine. When he needed a part, Don began to rely on her. Janet

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Don and Janet Benson with Don's Road King.

Designed Around the D6

It's not often that a boat gets designed around an engine. It's only fitting that builder Stennar Thorson, his new Seawolf 30 and the Volvo D6 he designed it around are all true originals.

Thorson, his wife Crystal and employees Logan Turner (welder/outfitter) and Alan Gutierrez (woodworker/outfitter) are the extent of Seawolf Marine

Mfg.'s payroll. For Thorson, it's just the way he wants it. The bigger the operation, the harder it would be to ensure quality. And quality is what Seawolf is all about. Since opening his doors in 1990, 44 boats have been custom built. When people see the new 30, those doors may have to be reinforced.



The Seawolf Pilothouse 33 is one of the 44 custom boats built by the Thorson crew since 1990.

saving single engine. The boat's owner, a commercial fleet operator, was just as excited and willing to be the "guinea pig." Coupled with the all-new DP-H duoprop sterndrive system, Thorson expects the 30-footer to do 34 knots.

It's no surprise that Seawolf and Coastal work together well. "We build the best boat for the customer, as if it were our own," Crystal says. "We expect the vendors to provide their best as well. Coastal is right there with the service. They're good people to work with; sensitive to our needs and the needs of our Seawolf family members."

One thing that sets the Seawolf apart is its mix of utilitarian, low maintenance exteriors and comfy, cozy interiors. This is no real surprise given Thorson's commercial boat and woodworking backgrounds. And because he is hands-on with all aspects of each project, it's all held to the same high standard. Each boat is a one-of-a-kind.

Seawolf is in an enviable situation. By focusing on quality rather than quantity, Seawolf keeps a steady pace no matter how the economic winds are blowing. "People pay their money, get in line and wait for their boat of their dreams," Crystal says. As each new boat is launched, the Seawolf family grows. With many repeat customers and mostly word-of-mouth promotion, Seawolfs are clearly worth waiting in line for.

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Stennar and Crystal with the Seawolf Pilothouse 26 and mascot Lucia.

After working for several aluminum boat manufacturers including LaConner Boat Works, Thorson decided to start his own company. Like his father, Thorson builds to his own designs. He designs in stability and seakeeping, and then builds them all in aluminum to withstand the worst.

Thorson had heard about the revolutionary D6 (see page 3) and was so excited that he built the boat before the engine even made it to the Northwest. At last he could make a 30-footer with a space-

Canal and Coastal, Together at Last

Some things seem destined. For years Coastal Marine Engine and Canal Boat Yard lived and worked next to each other. It just didn't seem right they weren't connected. With Don and Janet Benson's purchase of Canal Boat Yard last March, the obvious has been achieved.

The yard, always one of the cleanest and most accessible, is now under the friendly management of Steve Spicklemire. Don Benson has committed to capital improvements, both in yard equipment and in tools for the do-it-yourselfer. Upgrades include a new boom truck, a self-propelled scissor lift for working up to 36' off the ground and a portable satellite structure, aka The Tent. At 30' x 100', this portable building accommodates vessels in a heated, weather protected environment.

310' of open moorage along the ship canal, complete with power and water, provides an excellent staging area.

Canal Boat Yard welcomes do-it-yourselfers, sub-contractors and of course Coastal customers and dealers. If you don't want to do the work yourself, you can rely on the services of Coastal Marine, Seattle Yacht Service and Pacific Fiberglass, all right at hand. Expect a clean yard and quality equipment. ♦



From the Shop

Denny Arger, Coastal Marine Engine Service Manager, would like to offer the service and technical help that you may need. Our Power Center technical staff stays up-to-date on the latest Volvo Penta engines through regular training at factory service schools. If you need help with anything from engine application, complete overhauls, or just some advice on regular service procedures, that's what we're here for. You can reach Denny at darger@coastalmarineengine.com or give him a call. (206) 784 3703 ♦

Ocean Sport Has Northwest Style

“I just had a hard time finding a good solid reliable boat for the Northwest,” says Ron Meng. So he, along with Jim Lindell, decided to build the Ocean Sport Roamer 30. One significant aspect of this is that the exciting new Volvo Penta D4s are going into hull number two of this state-of-the-art boat.

Meng has been in the marine business 32 years at his Islands Marine Center, nestled in picturesque Fisherman’s Bay on Lopez Island in the San Juans. For the past three decades, Islands Marine Center has been expanding its services to include moorage, sales, service and haulout. Boaters and anglers have come to rely on Islands during those hectic summer months.

Meng has been selling “Northwest Style” boats from other builders for three decades, but none met his idea of the perfect Northwest boat. “What I was looking for was a boat that could go for 8-10 day trips and some serious fishing,” he said. So he decided to create his own.

In Jim Lindell, Meng found a boat-builder with a like-minded philosophy.



The interior is nicely appointed and functional.

They agreed that the boat should be both tough and high tech. They pooled their ideas and called in the Canadian naval architect Jay Simpson as a consultant. The drawings were then taken to Janicki Machine Design in Sedro-Woolley where through the magic of modern technology transformed drawings into CAD designs and then into full sized foam plugs.

“That technology is really amazing,” reports Meng. “More than anything, it’s very accurate and ensures that everything is perfectly symmetrical. It also allows you to make curves you could never do by hand.”

Coastal Marine Engine is excited about its own role in the development of the Ocean Sport Roamer. The first three Roamers all have Volvos. Hull number one has performed well with the proven KAD 44s. Hull number 2 has a pair of the new Volvo D4s. Hull number three, which is headed to Wyoming, will be powered by a pair of D6s to offset the power loss from altitude.

The D4, along with the D6, are Volvo’s exciting new marine-only engines. Hull number one was sea-trialed at 45.6 mph



The new Ocean Sport Roamer sea-trialed at 44+ mph with twin KAD 44s.

at the top end with a cruise of 38 mph at 3200 rpm. (Light load, speeds taken by GPS)

Nothing is radical about the Roamer 30, but everything is refined. The focus is on the details: storage, space utilization and mechanical systems. In short, everything that’s important on a long fishing trip.

With Meng’s financing and business approach, Lindell has been able to focus on building the boat to the highest standards. Hulls number one and two will be at the Seattle Boat Show in January 2004, number one in the warmth of the Exhibition Hall. Number two will make its appearance during the show at the Bell Street venue.

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New Volvo Pentas Worth The Wait

The new Volvo D4 and D6 diesels have the marine industry sitting up and taking notice, and are putting smiles on the faces of Volvo Penta dealers throughout the Pacific Northwest.

One look at the new Volvos reveal they were built from the base up as *marine* engines. Almost all other marine engines are from an industrial base unit. It’s rare for engines to be developed only for marine use because of the high costs, but it allows the engineers to do several things

they otherwise couldn’t. Power curves can be developed to meet the low-end torque needs of marine applications. Turbo matching can be done at the design phase.

The packages are compact, yet all essential maintenance points are easy to reach. On examination, it’s clear how much thought went into each component and, more importantly, the integration of the systems overall. The injection pump and aftercooler seem to blend into the *continued on page 4*



The Volvo Penta D6 and duoprop stern drive were designed together.

“New Volvos” continued from page 3

package. Few hoses mean few headaches.

The new ground these engines are breaking is in smooth, quiet and clean operation. A rigid cast-iron block was designed with a ladder frame to provide rigidity without excess weight. A common rail fuel system keeps noise and vibration to an absolute minimum. The D4 also has counter-rotating balancing shafts.

Perhaps most importantly, all new duo-prop stern drives were designed at the same time as the new engines. The result is a completely integrated system, designed and built by one company specifically for marine applications. The sterndrives were clearly designed with an eye toward the future and higher power demands.

These Volvos not only meet the 2004 emissions regulations, they're set for new regulations coming to Europe and the U.S. in 2006. The common rail fuel system and Electronic Vessel Control System (ECV) were designed to be more efficient and reliable than anything seen before.

The Volvo engineers worked long and hard to meet mariners' power needs while meeting the world's need to stay clean. It was worth the wait. ⬤

“Labor” continued from front

Denny Arger and his installation crew could seatrial *Zizi*, pull and relaunch her until everything was perfect. *Zizi* took a little time to settle into a comfortable position and soak up.

Most importantly, Pettit came away from the experience a happy customer. “I am so impressed with the guys at Coastal. They really adopted the boat, right from the start. They were communicative when changes to the plan had to be made. You're always a little hesitant in a situation like this, you don't know if you'll get it back the same way you brought it in. They took care if it like it was their own!” For the record, *Zizi* does about 12 knots, about the same as before and more than enough for Seattle's lakefronts. ⬤

Communication Update

If 2003 was a year for new engines and acquisitions, 2004 promises to be the year of communication. Coastal Mariner is the first edition of a newsletter which will become a staple. Also, look for a renewed, revamped and renovated www.coastal-marineengine.com coming in February. Content will include complete information on both new and used engines, plus information on specific applications. In the meantime the old clunker version is still on line and can direct you to the Volvo Penta and Northern Lights sites. If you've never been to the Volvo sites, and have a fast computer and a decent connection, they're definitely worth a visit (www.penta.volvo.se or www.volvo.com are good places to start) Video and detailed specs are included and entertaining. ⬤

“Don, Janet” continued from front

may have started in shipping, but her knack for getting the right part to the right place at the right time soon moved her up to parts manager.

In those early days of crawling around bilges at two a.m. and searching cold warehouses for some obscure part, Don and Janet each learned just how critical it was to do things right.

In 1984 they married and started Coastal Marine Engine in Seattle. They were immediately recognized as dealers for Volvo Penta and Northern Lights.

Coastal Marine has remained a constant, consistent presence for Volvo Penta Marine in the Pacific Northwest since 1984. Throughout many changes in the marketplace and at Volvo, Don and Janet's philosophy of doing things right has earned them the respect of both customers and Volvo. In 1994 Coastal was named regional representative for the gas I/O line, and in 1999 was named Power Center for heavy diesels, in effect putting responsibility for Volvo engines under one roof in the Northwest. Coastal's dealer network for Volvo now numbers more than 200. They also offer Northern Lights.

When the opportunity presented itself in 2003, Don and Janet purchased their neighbor, Canal Boat Yard. It gives Coastal the chance to do a wider variety of work.

Not surprisingly, Don and Janet's relaxed management style at Coastal

Marine Engine and Canal Boat Yard demands one thing over everything else: that the job be done right. Or, as Don puts it, “there is no other way.” In an industry that can sometimes fall back on the cheap fix, this attitude sets Coastal apart and builds customer loyalty. Just as importantly, it builds employee loyalty. Many employees have been with them more than 10 years.

Today, Janet might be considered the Coastal firefighter. While ordering and selling parts are still her favorite task, she wears the Personnel Manager, Comptroller, and Advertising Manager hats. If anything comes up, she's usually the first on hand with the hose. But her heart's still in parts. “If I could, I'd love to sell parts all day!” she says.

“I turned wrenches for 25 years,” Don says, adding he doesn't miss it all that much. Now he spends his time working with vendors, management and financial issues. He's enjoying the diverse challenges of supporting the Volvo dealer base and bringing Canal Boat Yard up to speed.

For fun, Don and Janet have entered the world of Harley-Davidson. Don bought himself a Fat Boy in 1997, and Janet soloed for the first time in 2003 and bought her own Harley. They've attended rallies in Manson, Ocean Shores and Montana.

Don and Janet have two daughters, Andrea and Lindsey, and grandson Jaeger who turns two this year. ⬤

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