



# Good to Go

*The First*

*Cape Horn Trawlers*

*Have Launched.*

*Here's An Update.*

Some time ago, in the Spring '97 issue, we toured the prototype yacht of Peter Sever's Cape Horn Trawler Corporation. *Eden Bound* was initially developed by Sever to be the safest vessel afloat. Duplicate systems, spare engines and pumps, hydraulic Z-drive, double-bottom hull with mega fuel capacity...the boat had it all, and was Sever's personal answer to the world cruising equation.

As good as it was, *Eden Bound* was a test, a trial, and Peter soon decided to launch a company around his concept of the ultimately-safe motorboat. Working with Bob Johnston, a Canadian naval architect experienced in commercial vessel design, Peter planned a series of vessels to take his ideas even further, refining his concept and building a reputation around the bulletproof passagemaker.

Well, time has passed, and Peter Sever has turned his ideas into real boats, not just dreams or colored drawings. Working with three boat builders across eastern Canada, Peter is making it happen, and the current Cape Horn building schedule includes fifteen yachts, from 50 to 85 feet in length. All are semi-custom boats, built with a philosophy of safety first and foremost.

I got a chance to visit one of the yards building these steel trawlers, as well as go aboard several of the vessels in various stages of construction. While two of them are finished and in the hands of owners, they aren't quite ready for the full PMM boat tour treatment. Lockers are filled with spare parts, bulkheads are barren of art and pictures, and the staterooms just hint of interior decorating to come.

We'll set a future date to do the boat tour thing, and focus now instead on an update of Sever's operation, as well as a sneak preview of the boats launching under the Cape Horn name. Dreaming time is over.

## On To Nova Scotia

As we recently reported, many of the boat builders located in Canada's Maritime Province have banded together to form the Nova Scotia Boat Builders Association. A result of dwindling new boat construction for Canada's fishing fleet, the association brings focus and new energy to a tremendously talented and experienced work force. Collectively, these people can turn out quality sea boats in fiberglass, wood, steel, or aluminum, and in every shape and size. It is this depth of ability that brought Toronto-based Sever to Nova Scotia.

After much research and discussion, Peter Sever and his Cape Horn Trawler Corporation chose A.E. Theriault & Son, the largest

*by Bill Parlature*

*photography  
by the author*

Commercial boats  
in Meteghan, on  
the Bay of Fundy.

boat builder in eastern Canada, to take up initial production of his steel passagemakers.

The Therault facility is located in Meteghan, on the north side of Nova Scotia. It is a short distance north from Yarmouth, the popular travel gateway, with daily ferry and air service from Maine and New England.

Meteghan is on the famous Bay of Fundy, known to have the world's highest tides—slapping 68 feet in some places! (In Meteghan, it is only 26 feet which is still a pretty amazing sight.)

Another local idiosyncrasy is that during the summer, Nova Scotia has the warmest ocean water north of the Carolinas—a result of the ever-present Gulf Stream. This combination of cold and warm water is why commercial fishing in this part of the Atlantic Ocean has been a mainstay of Nova Scotia industry for hundreds of years.

Unfortunately, it also happens to be a very formidable body of water. Storms come up quickly in these waters and the melding of oceanographic factors conspire against men in small fishing boats. It is not a place to tempt fate. Builders in Nova Scotia take boat building seriously.

Since 1938

## Since 1938

Francis Doucet, Senior Project Engineer at the Therault yard, gave me some company history to help explain the complementary relationship between the Cape Horn trawlers and this family-owned shipyard.

It all started back in the late 1930s, with three and four-masted wood schooners for the fishing fleet. About twenty years ago, they added fiberglass to their construction schedule, and steel construction followed soon after. They can handle vessels up to 150 feet and today's repertoire includes fishing boats, workboats, ferries, fishery boats and government patrol boats. And now passagemakers.

Four brothers run the shipyard, which is one of approximately twenty boat builders on the western end of Nova Scotia. The changing nature of commercial fishing means that in order to survive, the Canadian builders have had to look beyond fishing boats and concentrate their energy constructing pleasure boats, government boats, and excursion boats. (While watching is big business in the area.)

But the rugged fishing boat heritage is never far away.

Doucet ties it together: "The boats built here can operate anywhere in the world. And they tend to be built heavier and sturdier."

Some people may think Nova Scotia boats are overbuilt, but that's not true here. These seas demand such strength.

With the fishing industry moving towards larger ships, the area builders just aren't finding customers for smaller fifty- to sixty-foot boats. Full displacement hulls of that size range are now more common.

Doucet also values Therault's expertise in maintenance work at the Meteghan well.

"We service eighty percent of the commercial and government boats in the Maritimes," he told me, "so we know what works and what will have problems."

Sounds like a good background for building world-capable power yachts, doesn't it?

## You Want It, We'll Build It

Touring the yard gave me a good idea of the full service nature of the Therault yard. I saw a lofting shop, a propeller shop, machine shop, paint shop, mechanic's shop, wood carpentry shop, fiberglass shop, tin smith shop, and three huge assembly buildings. Therault is very much a traditional shipyard without a high-tech, computer-driven production floor.

And everything is big. In one corner of the yard I saw a large fishing boat, that had had a thirty-foot section inserted into its hull to increase her waterline length and hold capacity. Pretty easy to do when you work in steel.

In the yard were two large fishing boats, in for bottom jobs and other maintenance. Both were big steel boats. Imagine my surprise when I noticed that both of them had *bow thrusters*. I thought only we pleasure boat types went in for such equipment. They were both single screw boats, but I have rarely seen commercial boat operators use thrusters.

When I mentioned it to one of the Therault managers, he let out a deep roar from behind his bushy black beard. I obviously didn't get it.

"They don't use thrusters for docking!" he explained with another laugh, as if the image in his mind of some burly fisherman using a thruster to pull in against a pier seems about as absurd as Jesse Ventura in a tutu.

He went on to tell me that the two boats were here for service before the start of the herring season. Boats that go after herring use tremendously large nets to catch the fish. Bow thrusters are necessary when maneuvering on station, when the big boats tender (a heavy aluminum workboat with a 100-hp engine) is working to close the net.

A thruster is a tool for fishing. Imagine that.



## The Cape Horns

Walking into the first large building where the boats were being constructed, I got my first real glimpse of a Cape Horn. Geez, these things are BIG!

Standing before me were three monsters, a 55-footer and two Cape Horn 65s. The three boats were in various stages of construction, and workers were busy welding, grinding, and cutting, in and around the massive boats.

Bilge keels down the midship section of each hull allow the mini-ships to sit fully stable on their keels. Cutouts in the bilge keels are for future installation of fin stabilizers.

The bulbous bow on the CH55 was still under construction, and I could see the 1/2-inch steel used in the hull. I also noticed that they had welded pipe down the full length of the keel to act as an effective keel cooler for the main engine.

Peter Sever told me that one of these boats would get a fixed, hydraulic drive units, while another owner opted for V-drive mechanical drive system. The third would get the same Thrustmaster Z-drive as we saw on *Eden Bound*. This rotating, or azimuthing drive unit gives the operator a high level on control, and is designed for use on tugs and other commercial workboats.

Regardless of which drive unit is selected, Sever explained that any of them allows for the engine room to be located in the stern, saving the wide midsection of the hull for the master stateroom. (Later boats have even fuller stern sections and wider transoms, a change in hull shape made for seakeeping purposes, but also providing additional engine room space.)

One of the boats had just had the interior maple bulkheads varnished, and work would soon begin on the boat's pilothouse. The holes for the pilothouse windows still needed to be cut, and the interior steel was primed but not yet insulated with expanding foam.

Once a boat reaches a certain stage of completion, the hull is pulled out of the main assembly building and sandblasted thoroughly. Then all metal is quickly painted with primer to minimize rust.

Over lunch, Cape Horn's Paul Howard and Peter Sever got into a deep discussion about the evolving boats, and how to better identify potential rust traps. They continually look for little areas or details on the boat where water might collect. Eliminate those pools of standing water and rust will have no place to start. Despite all the epoxy coatings and multi-part paint systems, keeping water from finding a hiding place goes along way towards keeping rust to an absolute minimum.

All phases of construction at the Theriault yard

are under the watchful eye of Graham Oakley, the engineer in charge of the Cape Horn boats in Meteghan. And from what I could see, Theriault boss Arthur Theriault runs a tight shipyard.

Watching steel boat construction is really quite fascinating, especially if you've only ever been around a fiberglass boat project. The smell, the feel, even the workers' clothing is different. Steel construction is more mechanical, colder, less intuitive. There are no molds, so you don't get to see what things will look like until they're built.

The steel Cape Horns are coming together, and Peter Sever will soon have his growing fleet of world cruisers out on the ocean.

**Below: Bulbous bow detail. Half-inch steel makes for a rugged hull. Inset: Keel cooling pipe.**



## The First Boat Launches

*EOS I*, the first Cape Horn to hit the water as a completed yacht, had her sea trials done in Meteghan prior to the delivery across the Gulf of Maine to Boston.

Surveyor David Wells took her out for some extensive sea keeping and performance tests, and noted the boat was very predictable and consistent. There were no surprises.

This first boat, *EOS I*, will be home for the new owners, Manfred and Huguette Betten, and should prove to be a good cruising boat for them as well.

I went along for the trip across to Boston. Manfred Betten was aboard, as was Peter Sever and Paul Howard. I'm afraid it was kinda boring...no storms, no engine failures, no catastrophe. We didn't even run out of food. We *did* lose the autopilot, but it was a wiring issue rather than an equipment failure, so that really doesn't count.

Beyond some unexpected harmonics in the interior, and some directional control issues in quatering following seas, the 50-foot *EOS I* just purred her way across the ocean.

(Peter Sever reports the source of the harmonics was in attachment of the fixed hydraulic motor unit to the hull, and was not a difficult fix. The control issue was a bit more involved, and the hull on *EOS I* was modified slightly back in Meteghan. Future boats have a fuller stern shape, and are also five feet longer.)

I didn't get a chance to see her in strong head seas, but I suspect the Cape Horn would punch through them without a fuss. There is, after all, a lot of boat under water.

One interesting thing I noticed in the hard chined boat was her complete disregard for beam seas. When Paul Howard shut down the hydraulic drive to see what would happen, *EOS I* turned comfortably beam on to the seas, as we expected—then just sat absolutely level with only a hint of up and down motion. The lack of motion was quite amazing.

Unlike a round-hulled trawler that would begin rolling in such conditions, *EOS I* simply shrugged off the five-foot swells. It would have been fun to see her in some heavy weather, but, like I said, it turned out to be a smooth ride for the entire 250-mile trip.

I'm sure *EOS I* will be a beautiful home and competent cruising boat. Which is good, given the plans and dreams of the new owners.

They'll initially cruise the North American East Coast while getting settled on the boat, and future plans may even include a trip across the Atlantic to Europe.

Actually, the Bettens represent a new group of boating people, a group that I predict will explode in numbers over the next several years.

You see, this is their first boat.

Think about it. There is an entire generation of people who have reached that stage in their lives where they're ready for their next goal, their next adventure. Their children are grown and on their own, and the couple wants to travel and spend lots of time together doing things they like to do. They are

*EOS I* completing her sea trials in Meteghan.





not looking to drop out, nor are they ready to retire to a golf course community in the Carolinas.

These people love adventure, travel and the thrill of new experiences, but they aren't willing to give up the comfort and security they've come to expect on shore. In keeping with their successful careers and lives, more people are finding that today's trawler yacht is a perfect way to explore the world, while enjoying the comforts of your own home.

For the Bettens, the Cape Horn is ideal.

## Antarctica Bound

Ron and Caroline Teschke have gone around the world on a sailboat. The Teschkes and their three children made the circumnavigation in 1995-1996, completing the 30,000 trip on a Sundeer 64 sailing yacht. They made fifteen stops during their one-year voyage, including a three-month stint in Africa. Their fast Dashew design, *Dream Chaser*, averaged 7.2 knots around the world.

It was a marvelous time, yet it didn't satiate their love of travel and adventure by boat. It only confirmed their passion.

"I loved the long sea passages, and the routine at sea with the kids," Ron told me when I visited the couple in Maine. They purposely structured their life afloat to include tea time, time set aside for reading, a movie schedule for home entertainment, a disciplined schooling

period each day, and quiet down time for the parents while the children (aged 11, 9 and 5) mastered running the big boat under way.

Needless to say they learned a lot during their world adventure.

"It was very gratifying offshore," Ron recalled, "but to do it right you need a big boat to carry the necessary water and fuel, and to make enough speed."

Now the Teschkes plan to travel the world again, but this time they've decided to go on a passagemaking trawler. Their new *Dream Chaser* is a Cape Horn 65.

The family (sans one or two children who have reached college and prep school age) now wants their next adventure to include the world's remote regions, especially one particular area devoid of life. The Teschkes are going to Antarctica.

The new *Dream Chaser* will be cruised down the South American coast to Cape Horn, then spend a ten-month season in Antarctica completely alone. To do this safely and comfortably, they figured they needed a pretty serious boat, which is why the Teschkes bought the first Cape Horn 65.

With her bright red hull, and even brighter yellow superstructure, *Dream Chaser* is quite a boat. She also shows just how quickly the Therault shipyard is learning how to take a commercial-strong, ice-ready hull and bring the interior up to a true yacht finish.

**Above: *Dream Chaser* arrives in Southwest Harbor, Maine.**



The lush maple interiors common to all Cape Horns. Clockwise from lower left: Master stateroom is wide and comfortable, master ensuite head with Jacuzzi, drawers and lockers abound (and one of several watertight doors on the boat), saloon detail and galley. Inset: Heavy-duty port window is typical of the Cape Horn philosophy.





"I liked the idea of redundancy," Ron Teschke told me, "because everything on a boat is going to break."

"Then there's the steel. I'm going into ice and remote areas. I didn't necessarily want a glitzy yacht."

Ron and Caroline proudly gave me a tour of their new boat, and it was easy to picture what they planned to do on this trawler. Even though they'd only had the boat a week, and it had nothing aboard to make it feel like home—no window treatments, no books, no pictures, no

clothes, no personal touches. The ruggedness and strength were clearly evident. Yet the interior doesn't really look like a commercial-strength workboat. When Ron and I discussed this over dinner, I learned they were actually surprised how well it turned out.

"We expected our new boat to be rugged, which it is. But we really didn't expect it to be as nicely finished as it turned out to be."

As for the "Safety First" slogan of Peter Sever, the Teschkes were equally impressed.

"Bob Johnston designed the boat to right itself after a capsizing. I like that."

The ability to ride comfortably on a sea anchor is something they expect to use while down south, and the boat has a permanently rigged system for just that purpose.

Strong, reinforced ribs on the hull at the waterline will further protect against ice, and add to the character of the bright red and yellow Cape Horn.

The boat deck on this Cape Horn 65 is ringed by high stanchions and railings, none lower than 41 inches. Even the

dinghy crane is designed to lift the RIB over the through-bolted, stainless steel stanchions and railings. No pieces have to be dismantled to launch the dinghy.

When we took *Dream Chaser* out for a couple of hours on the foggy Maine waters outside of Southwest Harbor, the gentle swells didn't particularly mesh with testing her battleship





abilities to handle the Southern Ocean. But the 65-footer ran straight as an arrow, and she rolled so little that you couldn't tell the difference between having her Westar fin stabilizers active or on standby. Just a steady motion.

I got a chance to play with the joysticks that control this steel behemoth—the hydraulic Thrustmaster Z-drive and the powerful HPS bow thruster. No matter what direction the wind comes from, it is simple work to get this boat moving sideways, or forward or backward—or to spin her in a circle within her own length. The amount of control of the Z-drive and thruster combination is inspiring, which is why Z-drives are common on highly-maneuverable tugs. (I already discussed the benefits of the Z-drive when we toured *Eden Bound*. There just isn't any other combination of systems that provides such reliable control.)

Under way, the hydraulic noise is what you hear more than the sound of the running Volvo diesel engine. Peter Sever continues his quest for noise reduction on his boats, and his efforts



**Top:** Large pilothouse adds to the ship-like feel of these boats.

**Above:** Settee and watch berth, with lots of storage.

are paying off. I walked around the boat and measured the following sound meter readings: saloon, 68 dB; forward guest stateroom, 61; master stateroom, 68 dB; and in the pilothouse, 62–64 dB, depending where you are.

Another observation is the importance given to the pilothouse. It is so large, even with a firmly mounted Stidd helm chair, you walk freely around the wheelhouse. There is almost six feet of length between the helm console and the settee at the rear of the wheelhouse. Few



Above: Portuguese bridge opens onto foredeck.

Below, left: Aft deck on the Cape Horn 65.

Below, right: Deep lockers on bridge are very practical for cruising. Good idea.



production or custom boats I've seen have such room dedicated to the pilothouse. It feels like being on a small ship.

### **The Dream Chaser Voyage**

Next May, the Teschkes will head straight from Maine to Venezuela to avoid the hurricane season. Venezuela is also noted for its fabulous diving, which is a keen interest of the family.

Then it will be a non-stop passage to Buenos Aires for a month-long visit, before heading south again towards Cape Horn.

Nearing the lowest tip of the continent, they plan to visit the remote frontier city of Ushuaia, with its population of 100,000 people living and working right on the edge of mankind. It is actually a growing area of opportunity in terms of tourism, forestry, fishing, and skiing. Pretty view too.

In December, Dream Chaser will leave Ushuaia for the 600 NM trip to Antarctica, hopefully arriving before Christmas.

For such offshore voyaging, Ron explained they have 3/4-inch storm shutters for over the forward pilothouse windows, and aluminum shutters for all other windows on the boat. He figures they will be prepared for arctic conditions, and is confident in their ability to spend ten months in Antarctica before moving up the Chilean coast to Punta Arenas, north of the Strait of Magellan.

They may next head west to New Zealand, but it all depends on their experience in Antarctica.



Above, left:  
View of swim  
platform under  
way. Exhaust  
exits under  
platform.

Above, right:  
Bulbous bow  
and steel ribs for  
ice protection.  
Below: Secure  
side decks are  
great offshore.



Why go so far south, literally to the end of the earth?

"The ice of Antarctica is unbelievable," Ron explained. "It is the Grand Canyon of the sea."

"And it is also one of the last places people have not gone. It has all the challenges, the isolation, the need for self sufficiency. You are really on your own."

Pretty strong stuff for a family, but then again, compared to the many harmful distractions facing today's modern family, maybe the Teschkes' adventure is really a move back to a time when a family explored and shared and learned to work/live/survive together.

I wish them good luck.

## Good To Go

Peter Sever has come a long way from his original plan to build a safe motorboat and sail off onto the sunset. Indeed, his plans have changed some, but his drive has not. His successful organization now works closely with three Canadian yards to produce rugged and competent cruising boats.

The ongoing plan is to have the Theriault shipyard continue building the Cape Horn 65 model, while Cape Horn 55 production is now at Kanter Yachts in St. Thomas, Ontario. Kanter has proven themselves over the years, mainly with custom sailing yachts. Now, they look forward to the task of building Cape Horn's steel passagemakers.

Production of the larger Cape Horns moves to Pictou, Nova Scotia. Pictou Industries is a large commercial shipyard on the other side of the province from Meteghan, and can easily handle the demands of building what are essentially small ships.

I can't wait to see the other yards, as Kanter is well-known, and recently launched a Dave Gerr-designed 57. The Pictou facility is more of a commercial shipyard, definitely hard hat country.

Paul Howard is currently Production Manager for all three yards, and Sever is in the process

of adding more staff to manage the growth.

Also expanding is the naval architect support for the line of semi-custom trawlers. Bob Johnston heads up the evolving Cape Horn 55, and Sever has Dutch naval architect Marius Lengkeek working on the 65-footers.

American Chuck Neville is also on the team to support the development of the larger Cape Horns, and the first Cape Horn 75 is now under construction.

It's kind of funny how the universe unfolds, and, catching him in a moment of reflection, I asked Peter if it is all turning out the way he hoped.

"We thought we'd build a couple of boats and then see what happened," he remembers. "But it's grown to *five times* that expected growth, and in such a short time! The world is really responding to this type of boat.

"People have a different feel for steel boats these days," he continued. "They are much less worried about rust, especially with today's coating materials."

## What Next?

"Now that we have some really great boats in the water, even the more cautious customers are going to take a close look," Peter said.

So what is the future of the Cape Horn Trawler Corporation?

Peter is quick with an answer. "I'd like to build fifteen boats a year in these three yards. My plan for growth is to continue to grow, but only up to the point where quality suffers. I know it's there, but I just don't know where that point is. But I don't want to build boats beyond that production level.

"Quality is very important to me."

The demand for these boats continues, especially now that there are boats in the water. Most won't be heading around Cape Horn like the Teschkes, but the philosophy of safety and redundancy struck a nerve out there.

These vessels aren't slick yachts that will appeal to someone wanting glitz, but they certainly make an impression in all who go aboard them.

The first step in enjoying the trawler lifestyle is finding the right boat. For some of us, the concept of the right boat coincides with Peter Sever's approach to safety, redundancy, and comfort. For the owners of the first three Cape Horns, the first step has now been taken. Their wait is over.

Now it's time to go find some ice. ●