

FPB Series

A New Paradigm for Cruising

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Passages

Why Are We Doing This?

We're going to a form of cruising at which we've looked down our noses (well, at least Steve has) for half a century. A stinkpot, motor cruiser, power yacht, fizz boat, f***ing power boat, the dark side? And we're coming from a family of sailboats which power faster, and farther than any trawler, that will overhaul and pass small freighters in the trades, and make passages more comfortably and quickly than any other form of transport operable across oceans by a couple. Are we spoiled? You bet!

And did we mention the pure, unmitigated rush of adrenaline which comes when you have a sailboat like *Beowulf* lit up on a full plane, averaging 16 to 18 knots, hitting speeds in the high 20s, with just the two of us aboard?



But we are past the point where we are comfortable handling this much sail by ourselves, and we do not want to take crew. The FPB is the next step.

When we started this new project Linda was all for it. Steve, on the other hand, felt he was being forced in this direction by the march of time. At 62 years and counting, it is no longer prudent for the two of us to cross oceans, dealing with huge spinnakers and reachers that are part of our sailing equation.

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Recent Press



But we are not ready to give up cruising. We love the ocean and being at sea (as long as it is comfortable), discovering new places, people, and messing around with boats. On the other hand, we've found that we want to visit family and friends on land with a degree of regularity, and for periods long enough that it requires a boat which can be easily put into mothballs. We would also like to spend more time in places that were not as much fun in the sailboats on which we've cruised before - environmentally challenging, higher latitude destinations like Alaska, Newfoundland, Iceland, and Tierra del Fuego.



There are advantages to this new design concept. In terms of crossing oceans, after 8000 miles we have found that we are more comfortable (no heel, comparable motion at a minimum with a much softer ride in some situations), the work load is a fraction (no sails to mess with), there are many more weather options (upwind passages are not such a drag (we've just come 4500+ nautical miles against the wind to prove it!) and we can use our weather routing skills to look for calm rather than wind), and long passages will be a lot more enticing (we've got 6000+ mile range at 10 knots).

With a boat that is oriented towards heavy weather, that has better characteristics as our sailboats, and the ability to hold station in horrendous conditions under power alone, the weather in the higher latitudes becomes more acceptable.

There's substantially less maintenance with the new boat (no rig or sails), and we can haul the boat for storage, put on the covers, and be in a cab to the airport within half a day.



Surprisingly we've found that operating costs are a lot less. True, we've got diesel and lube oil to purchase. But the running cost per mile is half of what was necessary with *Beowulf* when maintaining her sails and rig are considered (using diesel at US\$2.50/gallon as an average cost).



So we've found a better way to do what we love - going to sea - at this point in our lives. Yes, we are giving up the thrills

associated with the type of boats we've heretofore voyaged aboard. But in return we've gotten a vessel that will allow us to go places and do things we have not done in the past. And we'll be doing more sea miles and visiting more new places than we have in the last few years. This new mode of transport gives us options we simply did not have with our sailing designs. And after 8000 miles of sea trials and cruising, even Steve agrees that at this point in our lives this is the way to go.

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