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The Boat Snob!

I've been a professional yacht broker since 1993 and have been boating since I took my first steps. My childhood was spent fishing, snorkeling, scuba diving and cruising in South Florida, Florida Keys and the Bahamas. I'd say that I have spent a fair amount of time out on the water in every manner of craft from a 9' Aluminum Lund with a 6 h.p. Evinrude to 60 plus foot Motor Yachts with Diesels pumping out thousands of horsepower. The one thing I have learned in all those hours on the water is that boats are a compromise!

One of my tasks as a yacht broker is to manage clients' expectations. That is a hard thing to do with novice boat buyers; we call them in the industry "green boaters". It is a delicate mission to dash someone's hopes and dreams without making them feel like I have. The condensed version of the first conversation with a "green boat buyer" usually goes something like this, "I'm in the market for a diesel vessel in the 40 foot range, cruises at 30 knots, that can sleep 8 people, handle 10 foot seas adeptly, catch fish like a custom tournament sport fish and my budget is \$75,000.00." My response usually starts out something like this, "Boats are a compromise and we can cover some of your requests, others will have to be adjusted, tweaked if you will." "Let's start with your most important want." I should have been a politician, huh?

Speed usually means high cost. Sleeping capacity usually means wide beam and wide beam usually means a compromise in speed and sea-keeping ability. Sea-keeping ability usually means deep-V hull design with a narrower beam and requires more horsepower to push to higher speeds. Sea-keeping ability in high steep seas usually means a compromise in stability in a beam sea. Amenities and features mean weight and weight means lower speeds. Low weight means higher speed, but reduced sea-keeping ability. I think you get the idea. Each want has to be compromised to a degree in order to get another want. My father used to say that he is a Jack of all Trades and Master of None and that saying applies here. A well-designed vessel can incorporate many good qualities, but will unlikely be the master of any one quality.

My personal boat desires fall in the purist category. I love boats that are designed with a primary singular purpose. I fell in love with Albury Brothers Boats. They are a pure center console skiff with their main purpose set as being a great ride in choppy inland waters. They were designed by the Bahamian Albury family for running around in the Sea of Abaco in the Bahamas. If you have spent any time in the Abacos, the numerous inlets and bays produce confused sea conditions with tight wave periods and waves coming at you from numerous directions. The Albury skiffs are adept at handling these conditions. They, however, are super simple and have very few bell and whistle type amenities. They could be considered wet and onboard storage is very limited. They also tend to be tender; meaning

their side to side stability in a beam sea is compromised. My purist boat eye also falls to vessels like the Riva Aquariva Super. The Aquariva Super is a 1.2 million dollar 33' diesel runabout. The cabin is tiny and you'd have to be about 3' tall to enter without ducking. Two people cannot pass each other in the cockpit without one sitting down to let the other pass. Maximum seating aboard is 6 and that includes the captain. The vessel is a work of art and its lines are gorgeous! Practical, no, but man what a beauty! Its one singular pure trait is uncompromised beauty. My eye always drifts from the practical Jack of All Trades vessels to the pure Master of One.

I can't remember when it happened, but I just remember having a conversation about boats, which one is better than another and I, of course, launched into the "Compromise" speech. At some point in the conversation I began lamenting about Alburys, Rivas, Hinckleys, Ryboviches, Merritts and a few others. It was then that someone called me a "Boat Snob." I'll wear that badge, however, while I have an eye for the purist vessels, nearly every vessel I have owned, with the exception of two Alburys have been of a practical nature and were compromises. My latest vessel is a 24 foot Pontoon. It is the most comfortable vessel I have ever owned. It is also on the exact opposite side of the spectrum from where the purist vessels my eyes tend to gravitate to. So, while I may be a "Boat Snob," I am a "Practical Boat Snob"!