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Good and Bad Vessel Hull Designs

I grew up boating. Nearly all of my happy childhood memories were made aboard my family's vessels ranging from an 11' Boston Whaler to my Grandfather's 42' Post Convertible to my Father's 57' Chris Craft Constellation. I have been a full-time yacht broker for the past 25 years. I'd say I have a fair amount of sea time on just about anything that floats in nearly every sea condition from flat calm to 10' plus Gulfstream monsters.

Now that I have qualified my experience, there are very few bad hull designs. Before you think bad thoughts of me or start yelling aloud at the words you just read, I need to add a modifier. There are very few bad hull designs within the parameters of what the hull was designed to do and within the price point with which it was designed. I will add one thing, some hull designs are better than others are. Wow, that was a mouthful, but what does that mean?

I am often asked the question, "What is the best boat in a particular size range, or what is the best manufacturer?" That question is impossible to answer unless you know exactly how the client is going to use the vessel and what they are going to expect from it. My answer often begins with, there is no perfect boat, but let us see if we can narrow it down based on your desires, expectations and budget. Yes, most of us have grand expectations, but the budget is going to dictate exactly how many of those grand expectations we can realistically expect.

I have only run across a few truly terrible hull designs that were not fit for any purpose, much alone the purpose for which they were intended. I won't go into those here for fear of death threats and, for some reason, a scene from the Godfather movie keeps popping in my head and it involved silk gold sheets and a... For the most part, value boats perform well and high-end yachts perform better but keep in mind that performance, when it comes to a vessel, is a compromise. Most vessels that are roomy and extremely stable tend not to perform exceptionally well in a hard choppy head sea. A vessel that performs well in large chop at high speed tends to be less roomy for its length and may even be tender (the opposite of stable) in a beam sea. A good example of a legendary hull design is the Bertram 31 Flybridge. It is touted by many to be the best 31' inboard hull ever designed. It is truly a good rough choppy water hull design. It is also terribly wet, even in relatively calm sea conditions. It is also extremely tender, especially when operating at slow speeds or at rest, which is the exact conditions present when fishing, one of its main design parameters. The compromise is that most boats are designed to perform well in many sea conditions. Generally, if a boat is exceptional in one or more sea conditions, it lacks in another. There are ways to limit some of the compromises; however, there is

great expense involved. Gyro Stabilizers can make a tender vessel stable. Gyros on smaller vessels at best can take up valuable real-estate and make already cramped machinery spaced even more cramped and at worst can make some areas of the machinery space impossible to access. Here comes the "but" -- depending on size, gyros can add \$80,000.00 to several hundred thousands of dollars to the purchase price. There goes that pesky budget, rearing its ugly head again.

One can maneuver the compromises and match them with the desires and expectations all within a budget with some careful thought and wise decisions.

If you want to discuss hull designs further, I'd love to hear from you. Call or stop by.