

Westward Returns From Pacific Circumnavigation

August 30 will mark the return to Seattle of the city's most historic motor yacht. Powered by her original Atlas Imperial engine, the 86-foot, 84-year old *M/V Westward* will make landfall at the Wooden Boat Center on South Lake Union after an 18-month Pacific circumnavigation that took her to French Polynesia and back by way of Japan, the Aleutian Islands and her historic Alaska and British Columbia cruising grounds.

Designed by celebrated naval architect Ted Geary, launched at the Martinolich shipyard on Maury Island in 1924, *Westward* began her career as the flagship of the Alaska Coast Hunting and Cruising Company, an enterprise that offered the pre-World War II equivalent of adventure travel to some of the most famous names in early 20th Century business and entertainment. The charter guests traveled to Alaska to hunt game, the bigger the better. *Westward* owner Campbell Church, Jr. and photographically-inclined clients like George Eastman and Walt Disney preferred hunting with cameras rather than guns, however, and the early history of *Westward* was captured on hundreds of 16 mm films.



Westward at Seattle's Fisherman's Terminal circa 1924. Note the square-rigged ships in the background.



Westward in Alaska in 2002 during her second stint as an Alaska excursion vessel (photo provided by owner Hugh Reilly).

In the 1970s, still powered by what now ranks as the world's only working Atlas, a four-ton monster that idles at 100 rpm, winds out at 285 and has more than 100 exposed lubrication points that must be hand-oiled every two hours, *Westward* undertook a five-year, 60,000 mile round the world cruise under the command of 25-year owner Don Gumpertz.

After purchasing the vessel in 1993, current owner Hugh Reilly put her back in the business that occupied her early decades: the Alaska expedition trade. When he retired her from commercial operations in 2004, Reilly embarked on an 18-month refit that included replacing 92 big timbers (fastened with iron to match the original fastenings) and fabricating from scratch multiple parts for the Atlas. As his own reward, Reilly, wife Theresa, longtime engineer John

Williams and a rotating assortment of crewmates set forth for the South Pacific islands, a region the lifelong mariner had initially explored in the early 1960s.

On hand to greet her on South Lake Union will be Seattle documentarian John Sabella who's upcoming film *Westward in the 21st Century* will premiere this fall. Utilizing the Campbell Church films that chronicled the vessel's history from the mid-1920s to the outbreak of World War II when *Westward*

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was pressed into military service, a trio of films recorded during the Gumpertz round-the-world, contemporary footage shot during Reilly's tenure at the helm, and hundreds of historic photographs, the film will chronicle nearly a century of nautical history as viewed from the decks of the venerable vessel.

For more information about *Westward in the 21st Century*, click here:

<http://www.johnsabella.com/detail.lasso?title=50100>



Westward in Polynesia, 2008. Note: high resolution images available upon request.

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