

M/V VICTORY AT SEA

By John Lebens, Oregon Staff Commodore



Tracing its lineage to the then high-tech design of WWII PT boats, this classic Huckins cruiser recalls the United States' naval victories during the war. Launched in 1950, in Jacksonville Florida, *Victory at Sea* has the same hull form and general construction as the Huckins PT boats of the 1940's, but in a smaller package.

Al and Sharon Thompson acquired this gem in the Fall of 2015 and have polished and tuned it to a high-luster, high performance yacht. Considering she's 66 years old, she looks almost new. She was purchased her from Bruce Zelk, who had her stored under-cover on the hard on Camano Island for about 15 years. She had been damaged by a nearby fire, but except for that prior owners had kept her in excellent condition.

Of course *Victory at Sea* was designed for comfortable recreational cruising, not lethal, high-speed military missions. *Victory at Sea* uses double-layer diagonal planking for the hull. The decks and house are built of plywood with a modern fiberglass layer. She's 40'9" in length, with a

beam of 12' and a displacement of 15,000 lbs. Compared with typical carvel planked vessels of the era, this Huckins was an innovative, high-tech wonder.

Huckins Yacht Corporation, Jacksonville, Florida, is the oldest family owned yacht builder in the country, still producing fine cruising boats. Since the first "Fairform Flyer" hull was launched in 1928, Huckins has been known for their light-weight, planing hulls. Hull #1 was a 42 ft express cruiser sold to

David Goodrich of the BF Goodrich Rubber Company. Huckins built 18 PT boats for service during WWII, including PT 102, piloted by John F. Kennedy while an instructor at the Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons training Center in Melville, Rhode Island.

Victory at Sea was trucked to a airplane hanger at the historic Pearson Air Park in Vancouver, Washington, in September, 2015. Through the cold, wet Fall and Winter of 2015/16, Al, Sharon and Al's son Cody

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◀ Victory at Sea's well-appointed galley.

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and epoxy sealed her bottom, brought her vintage twin Chrysler V-8's into operational condition, and stripped old and failed fiberglass cladding off the house and decks. Then, the long slog of prep and paint carried them into February.

These aren't ordinary do-it-yourselfers. Cody has been a professional boat refinisher for several years. He's our local go-to guy when we need a perfectly varnished or painted finish. Al was a chief engineer on Tidewater Barge Company tow boats for several years. He's spent most of his adult life maintaining and restoring old cars and boats, including production of a series of twelve "Aristocraft" replicas. Al held a 100 ton captain's license for many years and has made many a vessel delivery up and down the West coast. Sharon, raised on a farm near Pasco, Washington, is an accountant and a hands on participant in this project. She was responsible for removing old, failed finishes, curtains and general first mate duties - especially the budget.

In February, *Victory at Sea* was launched and powered to her boathouse at the Portland Yacht Club.

The late winter and Spring months were occupied with deck and house refinishing. By late summer, fittings were re-bedded, curtains were hung and she was ready to cruise.

This vessel is clearly not like one of our sedate, full displacement, slow-poke cruisers. Originally powered

Originally powered by twin V-Drive Chrysler Royal 8's, *Victory at Sea* now sports circa 1954 Chrysler M-45 hemi V-8's.



by twin Chrysler Royal 8's using V-drives, today, she sports more "modern" Chrysler M-45 hemi V-8's vintage about 1954. These 331 cubic inch engines produce about 200 hp at 3800 rpm. At 3500 rpm, this 40 ft vessel hits about 27 knots. But, Al thinks *Victory at Sea* could use a little more power. So he is planning to install four barrel carburetors and eliminate the redundant muffler system. Al may be the very definition of a "motor-head."

Are you wondering how much fuel she uses? I thought so. At 3500 rpm, flow scan shows 15 gallons per engine, per hour. Yes, that's 30 gallons per hour. Consumption falls to 10 gph (both engines) at 2000 rpm and 17 knots. At 8 knots she probably sips no more than our much slower vessels.

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Al has an interesting connection with the Classic Yacht Association. He grew up on the Columbia River just about a mile upstream from where Robert Ekos, Classic Yacht Association founder, grew up. He knew some of the same kids and played around with boats on some of the same backwaters.

He's not new to Huckins restoration projects. For about 30 years, he was the captain and he also maintained *Vorlage*. *Vorlage* was built in 1970 for Earnest G. Swigert, the founder and chairman of Hyster, corp. The boat has been at the Portland Yacht Club ever since.

Al also did a full restoration of *Subito* (Italian for hurry up!) a 1966 vintage, 56 footer now located in Southern California.

Having worked on and around the river most of his life, Al and family plan to use *Victory at Sea* as a second home - a mobile river cabin. None of the other CYA member on the river will be able to keep up with *Victory* at her cruising speed, but we look forward to seeing her at our local moorages.



Passages

By Mike Oswald, #744

This August two of our members, who were friends and shipmates sailed west. Both sailed away while I was out cruising and I could not say goodbye.

I am at a loss of just what to write here, but there must be something put down because both of them in their most inimitable way gave face, voice, and direction to the CYA. They strengthened the organization, gave us direction in how to conduct ourselves and how to keep our boats going. In doing so they gained the respect, admiration, appreciation and deep regard by those that that were lucky to know them.

Shirley Holmes. Shirley was the quiet Holmes. Well, except when she played the accordion, but then who has ever known of a quiet accordion player? In the 25 years we knew her this pretty, cultured and gracious lady made an instant impression when she came into the room. She and Monty made quite a pair as they seemed in many ways complete opposites. Monty the old pro football player, standing firm, with a smile and friendly hand shake ready to regale you with his latest joke. Shirley on his arm, quiet and appreciative of the conversation but keeping an eye on Monty- just a bit. Their personalities seemed to fit well, In Chinese Taoism there is a phrase for it, Yin and Yang. It is said that two opposites that attract and complement each other, yet neither is superior to the other and a balance finally exists that achieves harmony. If anything was true it was that when you met Shirley you would feel the

harmony. Monty often recites a goofy poem about a Scandinavian fellow that knew he was being loved because his girl "put a clam in my pocket". When he would finish the recitation I often noticed he would glance toward Shirley and smile. He had good reason. God bless you and keep you close Shirley.

Malcom H. Munsey. "Well sir, ahh am here to take off your rose colored glasses", he said. It was 1990 and we were at a marina in Olympia. So out of this white jeep comes this fella pulling on his overalls and he has decided to take off my glasses? I had hired him on someone's recommendation, but on the phone he spoke with a weird east coast accent. You know, "paaak your caaa in the gayyraage" sort of way. Was I going to need an interpreter to understand him? That is how I met Malcom.

Indeed he did pull off my rose colored glasses as he proved that the boat of my dreams was in truth a nightmare. Ever since then I learned that Malcom's friendship and knowledge was a treasure. Spare of frame and speech he did not waste words. When he talked, you knew you should listen. His advice was spot on about boat maintenance and such. Yet, there were those times that I cursed him under my breath to high heaven for the amount skin I'd lost, drops of blood left in the bilge and bruises that reminded me at night that boat work is not easy work, yet *Freya* was better for it. Malcom had graduated from the Maine Maritime Academy and went into the United States Navy

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