



SMALL-BOAT CRUISING

You've got to envy the lifestyle enjoyed by Dixie and Brent Betenson. And Pat and Patty Anderson. And Bill and Ellen Fiero. And many others.

• The Betensons, of Richfield, Nevada, have a Ford F450 truck with a custom camper mounted on it and a 25-foot Tom Cat by C-Dory on a trailer following behind.

They tow their catamaran-style pocket yacht to Lake Powell, along the Utah-Arizona border, for freshwater cruising. They've towed her to Mexico to explore the west side of the Baja coast. Last year, they loaded up and drove to Anacortes, Washington, where they launched the Tom Cat and began a 55-day cruising adventure up the Inside Passage into British Columbia. This year, you may see the Betensons and their boat in the waters off Texas and the west coast of Florida. They're entertaining the idea of joining a C-Dory fleet for the ocean jog to the Bahamas.

"We prefer saltwater cruising, and we've always had a trailerable boat because we want to go different places," Dixie says. "We both retired five years ago, and we're still young enough to enjoy it. It's really cool."

• The Andersons, who live in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains east of Seattle, own a single-hull C-Dory 25, which they cruised to Southeast Alaska last summer. "It was beautiful. We had a marvelous time," Pat says.

There often were three aboard the Anderson boat. "And there was elbow room for all three of us," Pat says. Would they do it again? "Absolutely. In a heart beat. I loved it." While Pat's ready to go north again, his wife, Patty, looks longingly to the warmer climate of the Sea of Cortez.

• Ellen and Bill Fiero, who sold their home 20 years ago to go hiking, travel Europe, and boat under sail and power, have accumulated 23,000 miles of cruising on their 22-foot C-Dory in six years. In the summer of 2006, they made the long haul to Southeast Alaska, with their son and grandson on board for much of the trip. If you're wondering about sleeping arrangements, the Fieros had the V-berth in the bow, their son took the cabin floor, and their grandson enjoyed sleeping in the cockpit. They came home still good friends, Bill reports.

• (My wife, Polly, and I moored our 42 Grand Banks next to the Fieros in Lagoon Cove, British Columbia, on a chill and wet day in May 2006. They were among the crowd that helped with our lines, and we remarked later about their cheerfulness despite the drizzly weather.)

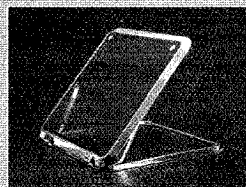
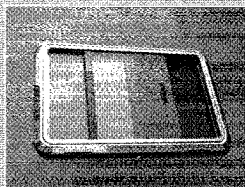
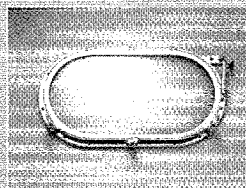


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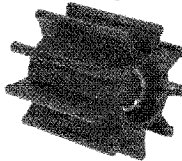
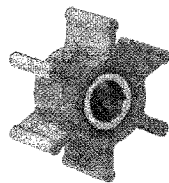
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Before they bought their C-Dory, named *Halcyon*, the Fieros lived for three years aboard a 20-foot Flicka sailboat and traveled 13,000 miles with her along the East Coast.

For the Betensons, provisioning for the Inside Passage cruise was more challenging than what they were used to, but they were ready. "We needed clothing for warm weather and clothing for cool weather," Dixie Betenson says. "And I have an aversion to public laundries."

Because they anchor most evenings (they were on the hook 35 of the 55 days), Dixie and Brent packed dried, bottled, and canned foods and carried a limited supply of perishables in the boat's small refrigerator. "We could go a long time without provisioning," Dixie says, adding that "fresh vegetables and meats were a real treat" when they did go ashore.

The twin-hull styling of the Tom Cat offers more storage space than might be found on other boats of 25 feet, allowing the Betensons to tuck away provisions, parts, and clothing. Dixie describes the storage capacity as "incredible." C-Dory was able to squeeze a queen-sized berth (with storage beneath it) into the bows of the boat, and Brent, who's 6 feet 4 inches tall, says he fits nicely.

The Betensons have space for an inflatable dinghy that can be stowed on a stainless-steel rack above their pair of 135hp Honda four-stroke outboard engines. They also found space to stow folding shrimp and crab traps, and they keep a portable Honda generator in a box in the cockpit. While solar panels power the boat's refrigerator, they often use the generator to heat water for showers when anchored.

The Tom Cat carries 150 gallons of fuel. Although the boat will cruise at 18 knots, while traveling the Inside Passage, the Betensons often throttled back or ran on one engine simply to enjoy the scenery and the adventure of cruising. As a result, fuel consumption averaged 2.4 miles per gallon over 1,140 miles of travel. They bought fuel when it was available but could run for a week between stops at gas docks.

Before they began cruising, the Andersons installed a canvas cover, also known as a camper back, that encloses the cockpit of their C-Dory. It provides more living area and a place to stow damp foul-weather gear. A cooler in the cockpit handles overflow from the small refrigerator. They also have found places to stow folding crab and shrimp traps and a dinghy.

"We carried a lot of food with us, but bought food as we went along, too," Pat says. He says he didn't pack enough clothing, while one of the crew packed too much.

Pat and a business associate, David McKibbin, along with David's son, Alan, ran the boat at full zip from Blaine,

Washington, to Ketchikan, Alaska, in six days. Patty joined Pat for a week of exploration near Ketchikan. Pat and David brought the C-Dory home.

Another C-Dory 25 accompanied the Anderson boat north. Incredibly, neither carried a small outboard as a get-home engine. Their faith in the single 150hp Honda outboard on the transom was justified. Neither boat had mechanical problems.

The Andersons also were pleased with their countertop Wallas diesel-burning heater, which opens to create a cooktop. A fan kicks on when the cooktop is closed, and the vented stove acts as a space heater. "It heats the boat great," he says. "We needed it every night." (Pat installed a carbon monoxide sensor as a safety precaution.)

The Fieros, who learned to pack light while backpacking along eastern mountain trails, carried plenty of food for daily meals as well as a two-week supply of emergency rations. They enjoy fruit and vegetables in their diet, and they went shopping whenever they touched shore along the Inside Passage.

"We believe in simplicity in boating, and that means the smallest boat you can live on," Bill told me. "It's not just for the economy, but because you can go where you please in a small boat."

Dedicated birders, the Fieros enjoy secluded nooks beyond the reach of large yachts.

I found them in an unusual place for such seasoned travelers: a rented condo in Colorado. They had just returned from cruising the canals of England on a chartered boat.

The Fiero boat is powered by two 40hp Honda outboards. While the boat can run up to 27 knots, they usually cruise their 22-footer at 10–12 knots.

Alaska travelers face miles of cruising in the Pacific Ocean. Pat Anderson says he slowed down the boat in the big swells. The Fieros described the crossings as dragons—to be respected—and said ocean cruising in such a small boat requires patience enough to wait for the best weather.

"If you don't have a timetable, you avoid difficulties," Bill Fiero says.—Bob Lane

Editor's Note: We are working on a trailerable trawlers article for a future issue of PMM. If you own a trawler that you trailer to various destinations, we'd like to learn about where you've gone with your boat and for how long, your preferred trailering truck and accessories, and information about the boat and your cruising experiences. We are also interested in photos of you and your boat. For more information on submitting your story and photos, please contact Natalie Friton at natalie@passagemaker.com.