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PILGRIM 40

Reflection of
a graceful age

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PILGRIM 40





Pilgrim's Progress

A more graceful age of cruising is recalled by this nostalgic 40-footer.

A BOAT CAREFULLY DESIGNED FOR EFFICIENT PERFORMANCE as a luxury cruiser on canals and rivers, the new Pilgrim has the air of an African Queen, a cheerful and comfortable riverboat. By David Weatherston.

"Dammit, we just can't afford planing speeds any more." The speaker is CTV's anchorman (and Pilgrim 40 owner) Harvey Kirk, but it could have been any of the thousands of Canadians or Americans who have found the words "fill 'er up" synonymous with "that arm and leg will have to come off" since OPEC introduced energy conservation.

Most powerboat builders only flirt with fuel efficiency, and the powerboat scene hadn't seen any real creativity for some time when Ted Gozzard and Gary Ferguson did a tour

of inspection of the Trent-Severn some years ago. Gozzard and Ferguson, originally partners in Bayfield Yachts, saw a lot of boats being used for purposes for which they were poorly suited. Aside from the pontoon houseboats—"wall-bangers"—the majority of the yachts on the system were twin-engine express cruisers. Most of them burn ferocious amounts of fuel and are distinctly unhappy at the slow speeds mandated on the canals and river cuts. Both men were unhappy at what they felt was the skittishness of the

hulls, which are vulnerable to cross-winds and can only be steered effectively at locking speeds by careful jiggling of the throttles.

Gozzard formulated the basic Pilgrim concept: a fuel-efficient (hence displacement) cruiser with comfortable accommodation and good handling characteristics in open water and in close quarters. He then worked the concept into a pleasing design ("The old-fashioned look gives us an excuse for being slow") and launched the first boat last May.

We met the boat in Toronto Harbor on a warm day in June. The Pilgrim, *Finale*, stood out immediately, as it has the lines of a boat built 70 or 80 years ago (in fact, much like the lines of

the Royal Canadian Yacht Club's *Hiawatha*, built in 1898), but it has the color scheme of a modern race boat: bright red and white with gold lettering.

We immediately set off across the harbor for Hanlan's Point on Toronto Island. Our first impression was that the boat was very quiet. This was partly because of the gas engine on this particular boat, but as it had not yet had its insulation installed, you would expect a diesel to be just as quiet.

As we moved out into the confused chop of the harbor, we had a few more pleasant surprises. First, if the nature of a boat's wake is any indication of its ease of movement through the water, the Pilgrim should quickly get a reputation as a very economical boat to run (1½ gph is claimed).

Even at its full speed of about 10 knots, its wake was very tidy.

Second, the boat is very stable in conditions that should have been trying. The wind was blowing at 15 to 20 knots, but no matter what our heading relative to the wind, the Pilgrim balanced nicely, with no inclination to pull one way or the other in the gusts. We tried to trip it up by crossing wakes at odd angles, but it just tracked through steadily without helm corrections and with an easy roll that was quickly dampened out.

Gozzard apparently went back to basic power vessel design and then worked up the hull design from the fundamentals, with modifications based on his own experience. It was only after the first boat was launched that he realized that the Pilgrim hull is almost identical to the tried and true Lake Huron fishing boat. The first boat was taken out in a storm to prove its qualities, and despite green water over the bow, never gave cause for alarm. Although the plumb bow appears to be very fine, there is considerable flare hidden under the rubbing strake, so the Pilgrim has little tendency to pound, yet rises quickly to an oncoming wave. The hard chine at the stern gives it reserve buoyancy for a following sea. As we saw later, the extra volume precludes any tendency to squat under full power and effectively lengthens the waterline at speed to nearly the full length overall.

All the Pilgrims are equipped with bow-thrusters, but we were disappointed in our hopes for a demonstration, as the system had just ingested something noxious and refused to operate. Nevertheless, the Pilgrim's turning ability is more than adequate. Nosing around the island's lagoons in search of photo locations, we were able to turn out of tight spots in little more than our own length. The thruster really comes into its own when you're easing a 40-foot boat into a 42-foot slot on a wall.

Once tied up at Hanlan's Point, we had a tour of the boat. *Finale* has the standard layout, but Gozard emphasizes that the Pilgrim is a semi-custom boat, and virtually anything within reason is possible.

This boat has a simple upper deck, with only a varnished

spruce spar, dummy funnel (useful for housing air-conditioning equipment) and dinghy stowage with davits. As alternatives, an owner can have an outside steering station on top of the pilothouse, and a spar rigged with a boom to launch the dinghy instead of the davits.



At the foot of the access ladder is one of the boat's most pleasant features, what Ferguson calls the "veranda deck." This is a pleasant place to lounge and watch the world go by, shielded from sun and rain. The entryways from the side decks can be closed off with doors and the whole area can be screened.

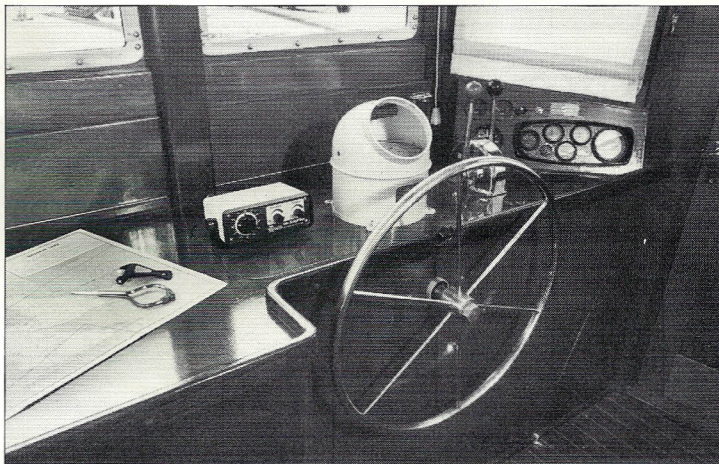
The cabin plan explains the interior better than words, but there have been some changes since it was drawn. The companionway to the forward cabin has

been moved to the space occupied by the chart table and the chart table omitted. This is not a great loss, since the skippers of these boats will probably navigate with compact strip charts. The advantage gained is clear space around the forward end of the bed.

There was less than heartfelt admiration for the sleeping cabin, which is dark and fairly small, but in truth, most of one's time will be spent elsewhere. However, rather than accept the small cabin, Harvey Kirk has elected to personalize his boat with some extensive changes, including a larger cabin.

Kirk's boat will have a cabin made larger by raising the pilothouse floor and deleting the forward head. This allows him a bed that can be walked around and a good deal more breathing space. He's also opened up the interior by replacing the dinette with a U-shaped galley that incorporates breakfast stools on the aft side of the counter. The head has been moved to port, with the remainder of the cabin space given over to dining and entertaining.

We were curious that a 40-foot boat should have only one double berth, but Ferguson says that most owners' needs will be amply



A spacious interior allows little room for sleeping accommodation, though the builder is flexible. "Basement" access is through the galley. An interior helm station can be supplemented by a bridge.

served by a pull-out couch in the saloon and the convertible dinette. For most of the people who will own Pilgrims, privacy will be an important part of owning a boat. The standard layout gives them the option of having short-term guests in pleasant surroundings not so comfortable as to encourage an overly long stay. There might be some argument about that, however. There are less comfortable experiences than sleeping in a nicely furnished saloon of white panels and varnished mahogany, which will be illuminated in the morning by large tempered glass windows and a mahogany skylight.


Finally, we had a tour of the hidden spaces. As might be expected in a boat with 14-foot beam and 20 feet of clear underdeck space, the Pilgrim does not lack for stowage space. The area under the veranda deck has more than enough



room for bicycles, diving gear or anything else you might happen to want. The "basement" (as Ferguson calls it) under the galley and head has six, 70-gallon aluminum tanks for waste, water and fuel, plus space for a washer and dryer and a ton of baggage. The engine bay will swallow Harvey Kirk's 100-hp Westerbeke and 12-kw generator with room left over for a duplicate set. Future additions will prove no problem whatsoever.

A handsome boat that's pleasant to live on and cruise on should have no trouble finding interested buyers, particularly

Out of the sun and also out of the wind, the aft "porch" could be screened. Ample tempered glass allows lots of light inside.

among sailors who have tired of wrestling with sails. The Pilgrim 40 is scarcely inexpensive at about \$120,000, but Gozzard says the premium is more than covered by materials far superior to those found on the average power yacht and by a standard inventory that includes the bow-thruster and Wagner hydraulic steering with autopilot. He's confident that the Pilgrim will be a hit, and I agree with him. 

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