

SPECIFICATIONS »

A: 82' (25m)
 VL: 70'7" (21.5m)
 Beam: 19'6" (5.9m)
 Draft: 4'6" (1.4m)
 Displ.: 63 tons (half load)
 Power: 2x 1,000-hp Cat C18
 Top speed: 26 knots
 Range: 1,000 nm @ 15 kts.

A BRIGHTER REFLECTION

Inspired by a classic, a couple builds their own timeless beauty for comfort and convenience.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILLY BLACK

LYMAN MORSE 82 It's not common, at least in the Northern Hemisphere, to name a boat after a burrowing, plant-eating Australian marsupial, but then, *Wombat* isn't a common boat.

Her profile is reminiscent of the 77-foot Lyman Morse-built motor yacht *Magpie*. *Wombat's* owners saw *Magpie* dockside from across a channel at the Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo. Even in the fading evening light, she stood out. "We liked the lines immediately and decided our next boat should look like that," the husband recalled.

That may seem like a snap decision, but it was actually one made from the experience of having owned about 30 boats. Sure, among those was a 16-foot skiff, but there was also the 151-foot Delta *Sally Ann* – aboard which the »



Honduras mahogany and teak were used to create a traditional-feeling interior with a nautical flair, including the main salon, above, and the master stateroom, top left on opposite page. Hand-worked headboard carvings, opposite top right, and a compass rose inlay in the galley, opposite bottom left, further the theme.

couple enjoyed a four-and-a-half year circumnavigation. *Wombat* is perhaps their most important choice. "This will probably be our last boat," he said.

Admittedly addicted mariners, they are never without a boat. When the couple saw *Magpie* they were downsizing from *Sally Ann*. "We wanted a boat that looked nice, was reasonably fast and could deliver a thousand-mile range," he said. They also wanted to get back to a boat they could operate without crew. Five feet longer than *Magpie*, *Wombat's* extra length shows up in a spacious wheelhouse salon abaft the helm.

The husband commissioned the Setzer Design Group and Maine boat builder Lyman Morse, the same team who had brought *Magpie* to life. He requested performance criteria based on his recent experience. The couple's 80-foot *Offshore*, an interim boat that replaced *Sally Ann*, used 4.5 gallons per mile at 13 knots. "I wanted better performance for that economy," he said. Setzer used a proven planing hull with long smooth tunnels, a 16-

degree transom deadrise with a single lifting strake and a deep forefoot. Cruising at 18 knots, *Wombat's* twin Caterpillar 1,000-hp C18 engines burn 4.4 gallons per mile and at that speed deliver a 650-nautical-mile range. Top speed is 26 knots.

He knew of Lyman Morse's construction capability using SCRIMP infusion technology and its reputation for impeccable woodworking. Using *Magpie* as a style guide for fit and finish, work commenced in January 2003.

"I didn't want to micromanage the project," the husband said. "I told them what we wanted and gave the go-ahead to build it."

What the owners wanted was a traditional interior with a nautical flair. Tradition is abundant at Lyman Morse, and *Wombat's* teak-and-Honduras-mahogany interior, combining satin and gloss finishes, is traditional yet contemporary. "We make an enormous effort choosing and placing every piece of wood and veneer," said Mac Ferris, the builder's chief woodworker.



Ferris drew on his experience and knowledge to deliver the nautical look, relying more on skill than on technology. Inlays were hand-cut by heritage Inlay Design in England. Ferris insists that the human hand produces a better product than laser cutting. Testaments to his theory are rope-style inlays accenting the tabletops and a beautifully sculpted compass rose in the galley bulkhead. The headboards are distinguished with a single carved-wood shell. Ferris based the design on one used by 18th-century New England furniture builder John Goddard and modified it. Maintaining the ambiance, hand-carved pierced-mahogany fretwork accents the overhead at the air-conditioning vents. Ferris said, "I made six design sketches and they picked one they liked."

The husband praised the builder's insistence on creating mock-ups of each area before going forward with any construction. "It really paid off in the wheelhouse," he said. In the mock-up, the flush floor proved itself too low to provide safe sight lines forward. The sole at the helm and observer seats was raised 10 inches, functionally separating it from the deck proper and providing the necessary viewing angles. Knowing the benefits of attention to detail, the husband insisted that all the valves be labeled, identifying their purpose. The two Northern Lights generators

are mounted on racks above the machinery in the engine room. They are accessed through cabinet doors in the cockpit without having to raise the engine access hatches in the cockpit sole.

Convenience of boarding was important, so gates were built into the stainless steel rails amidships, port and starboard. Integral stairways molded into either side of the cockpit are convenient without impeding cockpit traffic. Standoffs on the boarding ladder adjust to fit the curve in the hull so the ladder can be used at any location.

A 19-foot beam provides a spacious three-cabin interior with enough separation to afford privacy. The VIP is forward with a queen-size berth mounted athwartships. "I like it this way; it's more comfortable when she's rolling," the husband said. Aft, the master suite's layout allows a centerline walk-around bed. Starboard amidships is the bi-level twin guest cabin.

The owners' short list of boat names was two pages long, but the couple decided on *Wombat* in honor of the cute, furry animal they encountered in Australia during their world cruise. "It's not something you'd keep as a pet," the husband said, but they liked wombat the marsupial and they love *Wombat* the yacht. □

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