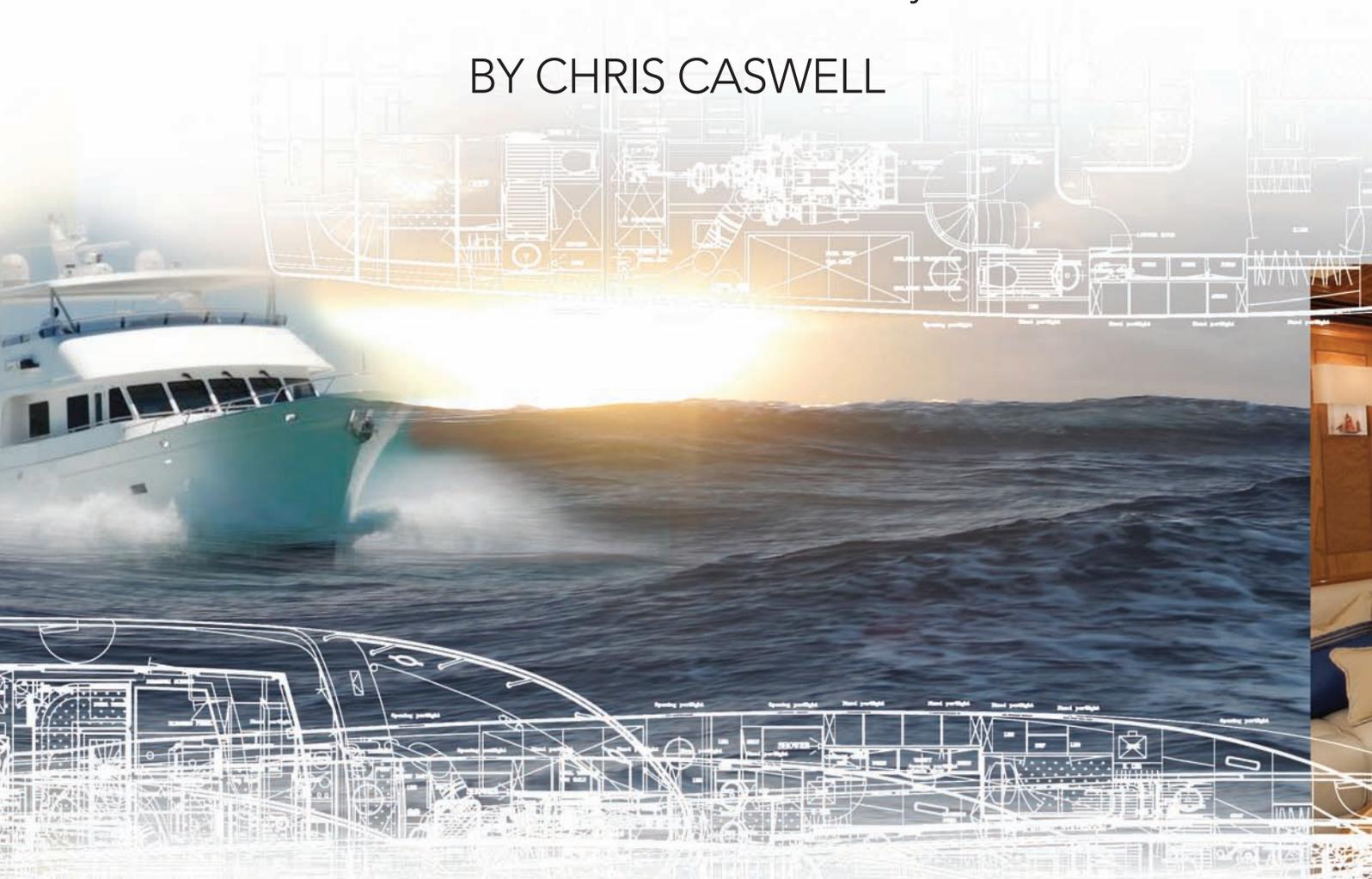


TO EACH HIS

Special orders are an everyday part of **Outer Reef's** menu, as these three 80s deliciously attest.

BY CHRIS CASWELL



IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE RECIPE TO CREATE A PERFECT YACHT, IT'S AS FOLLOWS:

Take three yachts born from the same mold.
Add three owners from entirely different backgrounds.
Mix in one builder willing to customize each yacht.
Blend until delighted.

Voilà! Three yachts, each perfect for its owner and an intriguing tale in the differences. But how did all this happen?

Our story starts with Jeff Drucek, an experienced yachtsman whose last yacht was a custom 77-footer, aboard which he realized that he could have done it better.

Outer Reef Yachts was born at that moment, and, while

Drucek's original Outer Reef 73 proved successful, an 80-foot version of the same hull gave an even better running surface, not to mention a larger salon and enlarged crew quarters.

As a boater, Drucek was wary of the constraints placed by many builders on their yachts that end up satisfying no one completely. "We think of ourselves as 'can-do' builders," says Drucek, who goes one step further by adding, "If we say we can do it, we do it!"

That attitude, as well as good looks from the sweeping sheer line to the seamanlike flare of the bow, brought three experienced yachtsmen to the Outer Reef 80. One (*Illusion IV*), who asked

OWN



not be identified for this article, is a born-and-bred sailor first dipping his toes, as he says, in the “dark side” of powerboat ownership. Harvey Wilson (*Ruff Seas*) is an experienced owner moving down from a larger yacht so that he and his wife, Terri, can handle her by themselves. And the last, Arne and Kari Grip (*HeartBeat*) are also experienced yachtsmen with a similarly sized yacht in Scandinavia, but who wanted one to explore the Eastern United States and Caribbean.

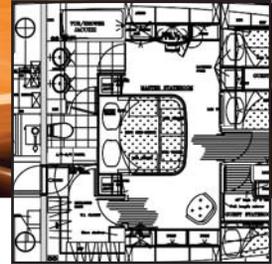
Three different backgrounds, three different lifestyles. And, in the end, three yachts perfect for each.

Perhaps a good starting point is the salon, which is where most visitors will first sample the differences, since each 80 remains essentially unchanged on the exterior. In the basic layout, there is an L-shaped settee aft to port, facing a pair of loose chairs on each side of a TV cabinet, with a formal dining table by the forward galley, which is open to the salon.

Closest to stock is *Illusion IV*, which has the built-in settee and a stretched TV counter along the starboard side (with room for two club chairs) and the original formal dining area. At the other end of the spectrum, *Ruff Seas* feels like a gentleman’s



Illusion IV



ILLUSION IV FEATURES A FORMAL DINING AREA BETWEEN THE SALON AND GALLEY. THE MASTER STATEROOM STAIRS WERE DELETED TO ALLOW FOR A LARGE WALK-IN LOCKER.



TO READ A FULL REVIEW OF ILLUSION IV LOG ON TO WWW.YACHTINGMAGAZINE.COM/OUTERREEF80

club, with all loose furniture, no dining table and no built-ins except the TV cabinet. Comfortable chairs, stylish end tables and a glass-fronted bookcase complete the look. In between is *HeartBeat*, on which the factory enlarged the settee to a full U-shape but also eliminated the formal dining area, replacing it with a casual breakfast counter of granite with three stools. *HeartBeat*, as might be expected from Norwegians used to rainy cruising, features only throw rugs under tables with a teak-and-holly sole throughout. An interesting comment from Arne Grip was that Norwegians were a “hardy breed” and preferred dining on the afterdeck, in the flybridge or in the pilothouse: The Grips didn’t feel the need for a formal dining table. Harvey Wilson of *Ruff Seas* agreed, saying that he didn’t want to devote the space for one meal a day when there were several other dining options.

The galley on each yacht remained essentially the same, albeit with different choices in granite and appliances. On *Ruff Seas* the Wilsons had the day-head opposite the galley moved to the lower deck, replacing it with a wine cooler and serving counter.

helm, remained essentially the same on each yacht. On *Ruff Seas* there is a single Stidd helm chair, while the others went with twin-pedestal Stidds, and the electronics varied to the owners’ preferences.

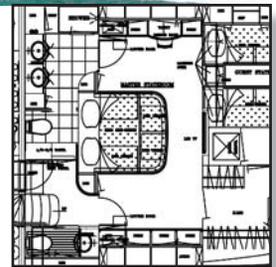
On the lower deck are the guest accommodations. The standard 80 layout has a full-beam master suite amidships, a larger stateroom forward and two guest cabins between them — one with two doubles and one with bunks. Choosing the four-cabin layout, *Illusion IV* has the original single stairway from the pilothouse to a foyer, from which the four cabins open. In her master suite, the head is abaft the suite, and a walk-in closet is aft to starboard.

HeartBeat also has four cabins, but the Grips opted for two entries to the master stateroom: one to the foyer from the pilothouse and another via stairs from the salon. This provided a mini foyer abaft the master stateroom with a watertight door to the engine room.

Ruff Seas features a three-cabin layout, turning the bunk-style guest cabin into a spacious walk-in closet. She also has a door leading to the guest foyer forward, permitting access to its washer



HARVEY AND TERRI WILSON WENT WITH A GENTLEMAN'S CLUB LOOK IN THE SALON. THEY ALSO REPLACED THE FOURTH STATEROOM WITH A HUGE LOCKER WITH ACCESS FROM BOTH THE STATEROOM AND FOYER.



and dryer from the master. It allows the owner to leave the doors open when family is aboard, or close them for privacy with guests. The second master entry is via salon stairs and, in this case, the mini foyer has the repositioned day-head with its pocket door at the base of the stairs. More important to Wilson, who cruises with just his wife, Terri, is the easy access to the engine room from the salon. "It's especially important at night, because I don't want anyone out on the open deck when going to check the engine room."

Whether they carry crew or not, all three yachts have luxuriously fitted crew cabins with entry through a watertight door from the transom platform. Each has a mini galley and lounge with TV, private cabin with double berth and enclosed head with shower. Harvey Wilson notes that the crew area is popular with guests, since it has its own entrance, galley and privacy. "I'd guess that about half our guests prefer the crew cabin to the VIP cabin forward," he says.

When it came to power, there were three different opinions on the best choice. *HeartBeat* is powered by the standard 705-horsepower Caterpillar C12s, the owners of *Illusion IV* upped the ante with 1,015-horsepower Cat C18s, and *Ruff Seas* tops the fleet with 1,550-horsepower C32s. This gave the yachts top speeds ranging from 14.4 knots to more than 24 knots and was a reflection of how the owners use their yachts.

For *Ruff Seas*, with the most powerful engines, Wilson said, "We can always go at a displacement 10 knots when we want, but having that horsepower allows us speed when we need it. We recently had a 250-mile passage with a front approaching. At

20 knots, it took us seven hours, while 10 knots would have taken us 14 hours in bad weather. We can spend six weeks in the Bahamas with fuel left over from our 3,500 gallons, but we still have a fast cruise at 75 percent engine load of 20 knots."

HeartBeat is in no hurry and usually cruises at 10 knots or less, while *Illusion IV* has a top speed of 17 knots and a cruise of 13 knots. Harvey Wilson of *Ruff Seas* noted, "This is a very good hull that allows faster than displacement speeds without devouring fuel."

Stabilizers were another interesting choice. *Illusion IV* and *Ruff Seas* both have conventional Trac stabilizers, while *HeartBeat's* owner opted for the TracStar at-rest version for use at anchor as well as under way. As it turns out, Grip says he really hasn't used them for a couple of reasons. First, he likes to anchor out silently without the generator or the noise of the hydraulic pump and fins at work, and second, the Outer Reef 80 is one of those yachts that seems to be stable even in a bumpy anchorage. Wilson concurs, saying that the yacht is remarkably comfortable at anchor.

Which brings us to ancillary electrical systems. All three yachts have dual 25 kW Northern Lights generators, but beyond this specification, they vary. Because the owner of *HeartBeat* prefers no noise at anchor, he installed an oversize bank of batteries and an inverter that will easily power all of



HeartBeat

ARNE AND KARI GRIP OPTED FOR A MORE TRADITIONAL INTERIOR TREATMENT THAT COULD HANDLE ALL OF THE ELEMENTS WITH EASE. IN THE SALON THEY CHOSE A HUGE U-SHAPED SETTEE (ABOVE). HEARTBEAT IS EQUIPPED WITH 705-HORSEPOWER CATS, PROVIDING A 10-KNOT CRUISE (OPPOSITE).

the electrical systems (except air conditioning and cooktops) for 24 hours. *Ruff Seas* also anchors out, but the owner says that the generators are so well shielded and muffled that they can barely be heard even on the after deck, and there's consequently no problem using them at night.

In addition, *HeartBeat* has an ASEA Power Systems multivolt shore-power converter because the dock power in the Caribbean

tends to vary widely.

When it comes to anchoring, there are yet more personal choices. *Illusion IV* has warping winches for planned Mediterranean cruises, and her owner opted for twin anchor systems, with one carrying a Rocna anchor and the other a CQR. *HeartBeat*, used to anchoring in Europe, likes to hang from a single hook with lots of chain available. This yacht also has warping winches aft, not for Med-mooring but

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- Easier to Board...Stroll thru side doors at floating dock height.
- No Climbing...The fresh air flybridge is on the main deck.
- Easier to Dock...IPS joystick docking with Volvo DPS.



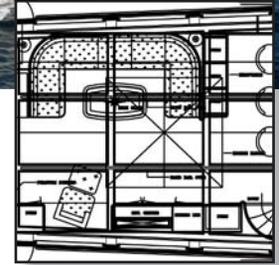
TOUCH AND GO

Service and maintenance go digital on every Outer Reef.

If you're like most yachtsmen, you have a journal or stack of notes with all of your maintenance milestones. If you're an Outer Reef owner, however, you can take advantage of WheelHouse Technologies (formerly SeaKits) integrated Marine Maintenance System (MMS). It allows owners to follow a service plan, generate work orders, track and order parts, and perform other smart functions. The owner's manual is also formatted digitally. Buy a tablet such as an iPad, and you have an overview of your vessel from anywhere, at any time. WheelHouse will also develop a program that fits your specific boat. www.wheelhouse.tech.com



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changes in electronics and such amenities as refrigerators and barbecue grills.

So there you have our three Outer Reef 80s. Casual or formal, faster or slower, more cabins or fewer ... it's fascinating to see how each reflects the owner's needs and desires so perfectly. Some want speed; some want to anchor out in silence; others cruise short-handed, while some fill the yacht with family and friends.

Like gourmet chefs, the builders of the Outer Reef 80 delight in adding or subtracting from their recipe to satisfy the tastes of every owner. □

Outer Reef Yachts, 954-767-8305; www.outrereefyachts.com

with 300 feet of chain on each. In conditions where he wants to control the lay of the anchored yacht, such as facing into swells rather than into the wind, he drops both anchors well apart and then settles in between the two, using a line to link the after anchor to the stern. He doesn't feel the need for a warping winch for handling the stern anchor, saying that bow and stern thrusters can move the yacht in any direction needed.

Each of the owners left the flybridge alone, with only minor

- Less Bridge Waiting Time...12' clearance.
- Less Maintenance...Under \$10,000 per year.
- Less Pitch & Roll in Waves...Low center of gravity.
- Less Wake, Fits More Lifts...12' beam and 20,000 lbs.
- More Fun to Drive...Predictable response of a sportscar.
- Better Built in the USA...Epoxy, Kevlar, Eglass & Corecell

...while still sleeping 3 couples in privacy, having a separate shower and running at 30 kts with sound levels under 80 decibels

