BALLARD’S SHIPWRIGHTS
A WELL-KEPT MARINE INDUSTRY SECRET

STORY & PHOTOS STEVE D’ANTONIO

SPECIAL THANKS PASSAGEMAKER MAGAZINE & AIM MEDIA
Granite countertops, cherry joiner work, stainless steel appliances, a big screen TV, a 750 horsepower Cummins QSK 19, bulbous bow, and bow thruster; she sleeps six and cruises at 8.5 knots. You might mistake this for a description of a custom-built expedition yacht, that is until you read the rest of the specifications, which include titanium refrigeration chillers, 65 and 150 kw generators, all stainless steel hydraulic plumbing (and lots of it), and an 18,000 capacity; one of a kind deck cruise.

This vessel is in fact a newly-completed fishing trawler, recently commissioned in Ballard, Washington. I spent about an hour aboard her while dockside, going through her myriad systems, and speaking with her proud owner, John Barry and his commissioning contractor, George Hooper of Hooper Marine. The builder laid up the hull, decks and cabin, painted it and then handed it over to Barry and Hooper, and they, along with their hired contractors, finished out the systems.

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Fast forward to late 2013; over dinner one evening, I was in town for a Trawler Port event. PassageMaker magazine’s founders, Bill and Laurene Parlatore, drove me to the locks, they both had a strong affection for the locale, although at the time I wasn’t sure why. I would later find out, as I began to work more closely with Seattle’s marine industry.

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and machine shops to canvas makers and hydraulic crane manufacturers, the multitude of crafts was dizzying. I was truly in my element and enjoyed every moment.

The skill sets I encountered included joiner work, cold molding (wood and epoxy), electrical, electronic, metal fabrication, hydraulics of every sort, engine installation, repair and rebuilding, machine shop work, propeller repair, and paint application. In short, every specialty was represented within the Ballard fold.

The stops we made were by no means comprehensive, and given the choice I would have gladly crisscrossed Ballard’s maze of streets, docks and railroad tracks, visiting each and every one, getting to know the owners, managers and shop floor personnel. Also, that would have required a week or more, and thus it simply was not possible. Those included below are the highlights, but by no means the whole story.

Therefore, in no way should the reader draw any conclusions regarding the absence of any Ballard marine business, other than there simply wasn’t enough time in the day to cover, and write about, each and every one.

One of my final stops on the Ballard Marine Industry circuit was Stabbert Yacht and Ship or SYS. Based on the Ship Canal, SYS is a shipyard that handles commercial, scientific and pleasure vessels up to three hundred feet. Its principal, Dan Stabbert, Don’s brother, prides himself in the work ethic they’ve established. He points out that this work ethic is not unique to SYS, it’s prevalent throughout Ballard’s marine industry, saying, “The Ballard and Seattle maritime culture is one of the most unique in the world, in its integrity, technical ability, and respect for the vessels in its care, and its customers. Outside a few other seafaring communities in Scotland and Norway it’s unrivaled. It’s a culture of which we are very proud.”

If you are considering undertaking complex, challenging or lengthy refit or repair work, Ballard should be on your short list of destinations. With its high concentration of talented crafts men and women, and capable manufacturing, fabrication and supply facilities, there are few places friendlier to the boat owner in search of high quality marine services.

Finally, thanks to Don and Sharry Stabbert for hosting me during this excursion.

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**Ballard’s Shipwrights \ CONTINUED**

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- Pre-purchase inspection for new vessels
- Pre-acceptance inspection for new vessels
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**POST-PURCHASE SUPPORT SERVICES:**

- Initial refit or repair project guidance and advocacy
- captains@stevedmarineconsulting.com
- phone: 804-776-0981
- steved@stevedmarineconsulting.com
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**Purchasing Support Services:**

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- Refit and repair project guidance and advocacy
- Inspections prior to placing your boat on the market
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- Education: through SDMC’s website, master’s articles, educational seminars for boat owners and boating organizations, and blogs located at stevedmarineconsulting.com

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