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Ken and Donna Chesler

## **A Lucky Charm** **The Greers' New 105-Foot *Cricket***

BY ANTHONY BROWN



*The Greers' new 105-footer, powered by twin 12-cylinder MTUs rated at 1,630 horsepower, cruises at 10 knots and tops out at 19. The elegant interior decoration, at the owners' request, kept wood to an absolute minimum.*

**T**HREE SUMMERS AGO, Jim and Dot Greer returned to their dock at the Chub Cay Club after a long cruise in the southern Bahamas. The trip had been one of almost constant enjoyment. The couple had made new friends, sampled delightful new seafood recipes and explored secluded harbors bordered by those miraculous beaches and aqua blue water for which the Family Islands are justly famous.

Sound perfect? Well, not quite. Early on, it had become apparent that the small inflatable tender that fit on their 68' Roamer, *Cricket*, was not large enough for the fishing and diving that Jim enjoys nor for the shelling explorations that allow Dot to add to her expansive collection.

"We have had this problem since we first started cruising in the late 1970s," explained Jim. "On the last few trips, I towed a Boston Whaler behind us, but that just posed other problems and slowed us down too much.

"So, on our way back to Chub a few summers ago, Dot and I began to talk about building a boat that would be capable of carrying the 'ideal' dive boat, one that would be easy to launch, eco-



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nomical to operate and handy in a seaway."

"I had originally wanted to carry a 25-foot tender," Jim continued, "but after looking at the weight of the boat, motor, fuel and accessories, my naval architect informed me that the tender had to be somewhat smaller. Otherwise, we'd need a really big, ugly davit, and we'd lose space on the flybridge, neither of which we wanted."

Thus, the new 105-foot *Cricket* has an 18-foot Wellcraft and a 15-foot Boston Whaler stowed on her boat deck. The larger boat is beautifully equipped with a full complement of radios and navigational equipment for serious fishing and diving. The smaller one makes a perfect shore boat for the crew or guests. Either can be launched to port or starboard. Once afloat, the boats can be accessed by an accommodation ladder on *Cricket* starboard side or by the swimming platform at the transom.

In addition to their demand for a larger tender, the Greers had another requirement that had to be incorporated into their new design: low maintenance. *Cricket* will be spending most of her time in the Bahamas, where the water is notorious for its high salt and mineral content. Washing down can be almost as bad as leaving the salt water on the boat. (*Cricket*

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***Cricket carries an 18-foot Wellcraft and a 15-foot Boston Whaler stowed on her boat deck.***

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can make enough water with her desalinators to wash down and still have plenty for the normal uses.) Equally bad for the exterior is the hot sun, which bakes brightwork to a dull crisp and makes quick work of destroying a normally Bristol condition teak deck.

*Cricket spends much of her time in the Bahamas, and décor is tropical rattan, with the colors of Bahamian waters and coral beaches dominant in the upholstered furniture, from the glass-enclosed, air-conditioned aft deck (above) to the dining room (opposite page).*

The answer—no wood outside. Period. Almost.

"I thought the people at Diana Yacht Design were going to die when I told them that there was to be no wood on the boat," remembers Dot with a smile. "All they kept saying was that a proper yacht *had* to have at least some wood trim. Finally, we agreed to have a teak caprail on the main deck level and a teak deck on the flybridge, where we spend much of our time. But I'd still rather not have an inch of wood anywhere. That would suit me just fine."

Diana's interior designer, Felix



*Decoration is by Diana Yacht's interior designer, Felix Buytendijk, working with Carl Mitchell, who did the Greers' homes in Texas and Chub Cay. The little woodwork is finished in a beige eggshell lacquer, and carpets are hand-loomed.*

Buytendijk, worked with the Greers' long time friend and personal designer, Carl Mitchell, to create a layout and mood that matched the Greers' relaxed style of living. This mood is reflected in their homes in the Bahamas and in Texas, both of which were decorated by Mitchell, who is one of the two principals in the Houston-based firm of Wilds & Mitchell.

Inside, the little wood *Cricket* has is finished with a natural luster. Throughout the boat, the color of bulkheads and cabinetry is kept quite neutral. With the sin-

gular exception of the galley cabinets, which are a subdued shade of peach, all of the woodwork in the boat is finished in a beige eggshell lacquer. Soft color is then introduced by the use of pastel fabrics for the upholstered furniture, draperies and custom-loomed carpets. Further accents are made with flooring details, hardware and bathroom accessories.

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***Boat construction is entirely of aluminum alloy, but speed wasn't a top priority.***

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The overheads in a few of the rooms are finished in a high gloss lacquer and are reminiscent of those found in other Diana boats like *Rio Rita* and *Lady Alice*. (See *Southern Boating*, February 1988) The wheelhouse command center is done in a soothing cream-

colored leather and lacquer, which further dramatizes its black high-tech equipment.

The owner's accommodation provides four double cabins, three below and one on the main deck. All have a private head ensuite. There are crew quarters for six in three double cabins, each with a private head. All areas are spacious and pleasant, especially the main saloon, which receives a great amount of light from large windows to port and starboard and fantastic glass doors that fold away to leave the entire area open to the air-conditioned, glass-enclosed aft deck. The yacht's impressive entrance hall has an overhead height of nearly twelve feet.

*Cricket* was built at the Hakvoort Shipyard in Monnickendam, Holland, and was christened last October. She is built entirely of aluminum alloy and has been engineered to have a cruising speed of around 19

*continues*



*The wheelhouse command center is done in a soothing cream-colored leather and lacquer, emphasizing its black high-tech control panels. Equipped with a full complement of radios and navigational equipment, Cricket could cruise anywhere, in addition to her home waters in the Bahamas. Below, one of the four double cabins in the owners' accommodations.*

knots and a transatlantic range when cruising at ten knots. The boat is powered by two 12-cylinder MTU diesels with a continuous rating of 1,630 horsepower. Tunnels in her hull allow safe operation around the coral heads and in the shallow water that her owners frequent.

Although Jim Greer has raced boats and cars, and was the first financial backer of his close friend and auto racing legend A.J. Foyt, speed was not among the Greers' top priorities.

"I really didn't want a fast boat for a couple of reasons," he explained. "First, we do most of our cruising between islands that are not very far apart, so high speed and high fuel consumption are not justifiable. Second, Dot and I are quite happy with a moderate, comfortable cruising speed.

"My reason for designing the boat to have a good turn of speed," Jim remarked, "is because I thought that at some point when the boat is for sale, a buyer would probably rather buy a 19-knot boat than one that does 13 knots. So, here we have a real nice boat that can cruise anywhere in any weather and still make the same speeds as most light coastal cruisers."

When asked about the name of their boat, the Greers laughed.

"Jim and I thought we should come up with a new name for the new boat," remembered Dot, "but we couldn't think of anything we liked. So, we asked Mark [Masciarotte] at Diana's Florida office to come up with something.

"A week or so later, he sent us a few that he thought were interesting. Problem was, when we got them in the mail, all of them were in one or another foreign language. We figured that no one would know what they meant, and that we'd spend most of our time explaining to our friends. So, the next time that we saw the

Diana crew, we told them just to call the boat *Sea Nile*, which is what we figured we'd be by the time she was finished. We really had some good laughs over that name."

In the end, though, the Greers stuck with *Cricket*, in part from fond memories of their first boat, and because her namesake, the familiar little chirping insect, is the ancient good luck charm of the Orient. In fact, the boat appears to be just that, as she brings good weather and calm seas to help expand the Greers' cruising horizon. SB

