

Chateaux De La Mer

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Off Center Harbor Houseboat Design Contest:

Greetings,

First of all I would like to thank Bill Mayher for reaching out and telling me about your contest. This is the first I have heard of your website and in visiting it, it was nice to see a few familiar faces.

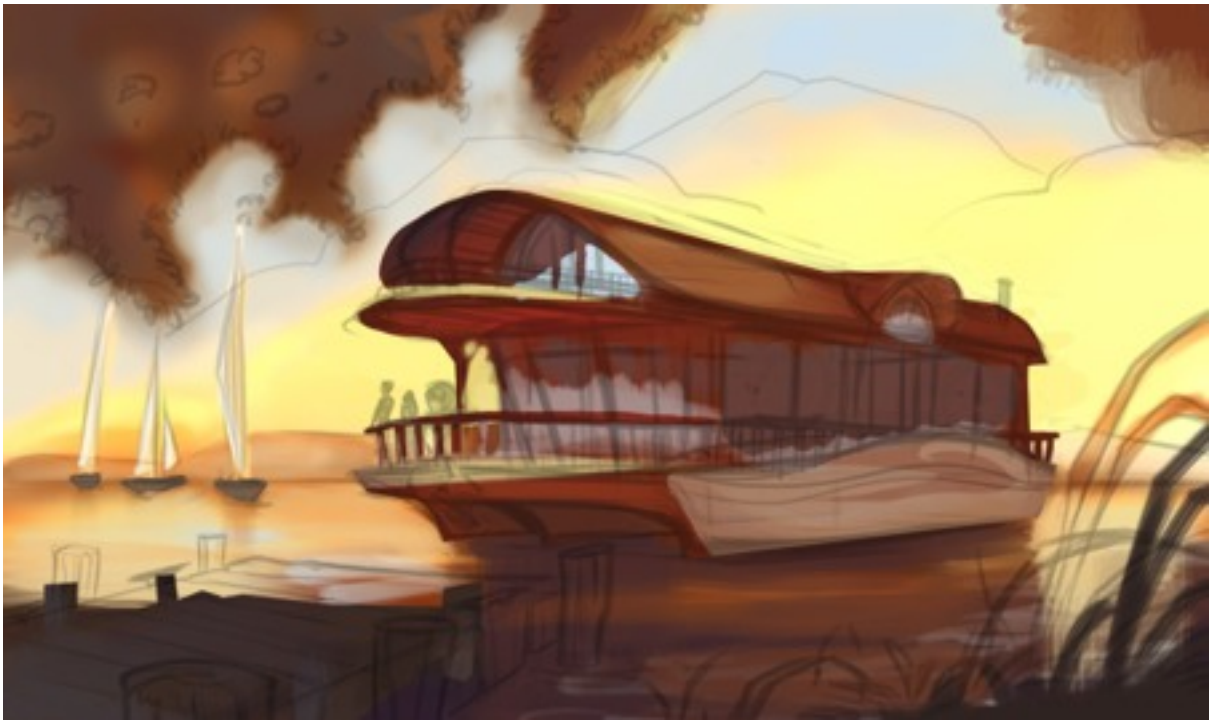
I have been working on various designs for a houseboat for the last 5 years, but before I get into sharing the details of same, I feel a bit of back story might be helpful.

I was a relatively successful contractor in MA through the 80's and early 90's. I served as construction supervisor and project manager for Maine Post and Beam for almost 10 years. I moved my family to Maine in 1992 to get away from the building trades and start an experiential education centre that was to become the Phoenix Centre. As part of founding the centre I spent a vast amount of time building kayaks and leading trips, often out of Center Harbor. We became friendly with Joel White during those first years and assumed an informal role as custodian of Devil's Head island. I think at the time, I slept out on the islands more than I did in my own bed. I know I logged over 3000 nautical miles paddling during that period.

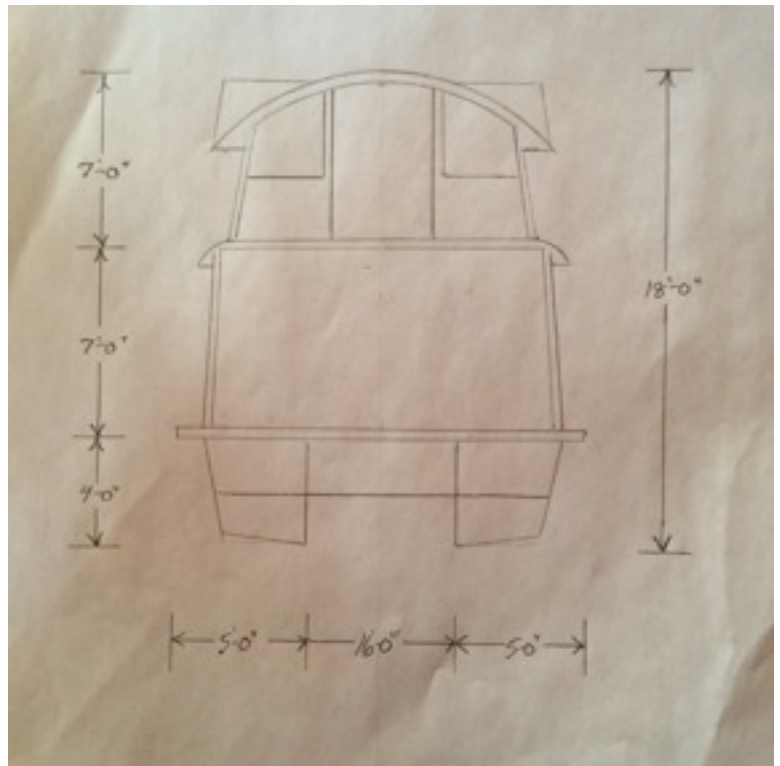
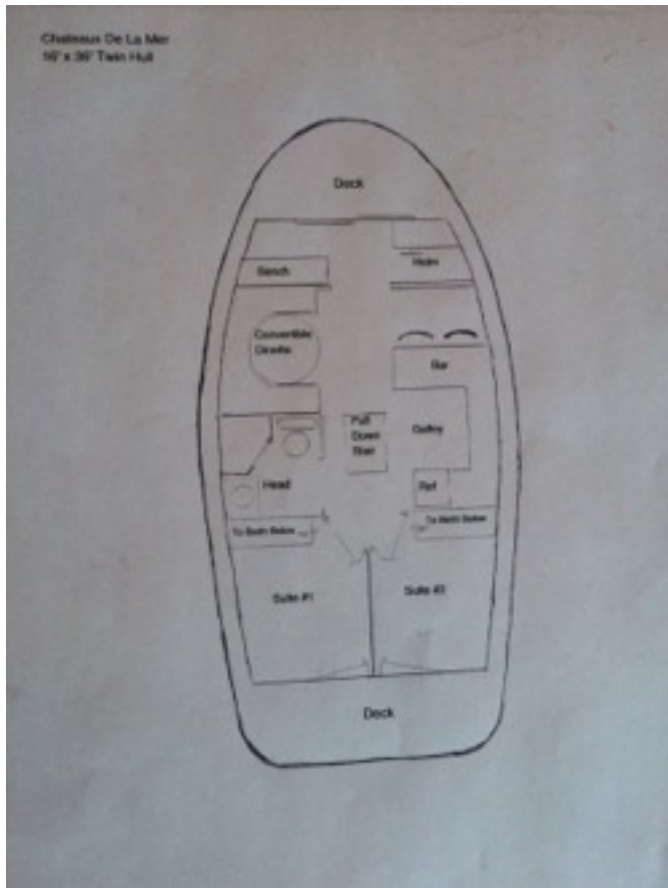
As successful as the Phoenix Centre was in getting people out on the water and teaching an appreciation for nature, the 10 weeks of summers in Maine just was not enough to provide the income to support a family. This led to the off season occupation of diving for scallops and urchins. I logged over 5,000 dives trying to support my family and sustain the operation and expansion of the Centre. Unfortunately the scallop industry proved to be just as hard to sustain, so back to building it was.

Jump ahead to 2008, I hard hit to the building market would be an understatement! I struggle as best I could before finally waving a white flag. So what's a man in living in Maine to do when all else fails? Jump on the stern of a lobster boat of course. 50 years old and doing the job of two 20 something year olds is both a daunting and humbling feat to say the least. It was during those 14 hr days at sea that I knew I had to change somehow. I was stuck in a repeating pattern and I needed to break the cycle. It was then that the idea hit me... Call it a dream, a vision, anything you want, but it has become my obsession.

Leave the bounds of land dwellers ashore and move back to the sea. Breathe it, Live it, Love it ! I share all this with you just to show how much of a role the sea has played in my life. I could argue that I'm about as close to being a merman as anyone walking around on two legs can be.



“Mermaid 1”



The “Mermaid 1” is a houseboat that I’ve actually started construction on, albeit “just” !

The design is simple stringer frame laminated catamaran hull skinned with 1/2” marine plywood. The outside of the hulls will be covered with 14 oz fiberglass and vinylester resin. The inside will get 6 oz and polyester resin.

The hulls will include 6 ea., 55 gallon drums to be used for ballast, potable water supply, and gray water holding tanks. I will not need a black water holding tank as I will be using Laveo Dry Flush Toilets.

The boat will be wired for 30 amp shore power, as well as being equipped with propane generator, propane on demand hot water heater, space heater and propane kitchen appliances.

The deck, cabin and roof will be formed with “site built” sips. Laminated panels cored with 3’ R15 styrofoam in the deck and exterior walls, and R30 6” in the roof. Although it has been designed to receive twin mercury 50 hp Bigfoot outboards, her initial launch will be that of just a floating home.

The interior will be native cedar vee match. The catamaran platform provides or a very stable and flexible floor plan.

Belmont Boat works will haul vessels with up to a 16’ beam for roughly \$3.00 per mile. The problem is height, which cannot exceed 14’ 6” including the trailer. to get around this, the upper cabin is removable, and mounts over a molded curb. Belmont will use their crane the second required escort vehicle, thus facilitating the mounting of the cabin at put in.



Off Center Harbor Contest cont.

This is not the first vessel I started, and your contest brings to mind an interesting possibility. When the idea of living on the water first came to me, I dreamed of having a vessel that was roomy enough for my family, yet mobile enough to follow the sun. We're all getting older, and each one of us will come to the end of the road someday, the trick is to do it with some level of dignity.

I discovered a catamaran in Boothbay, and towed it to Blue Hill to build my dream house!



After starting construction, I was forced to move to Alna, Ironically not very far from where I found it to begin with. So there it sits, waiting for a home.

I would imagine that Matt Cousins would be delighted to have it out of his yard. It would need to be towed to Center Harbor, as if memory serves me correctly she is a beamy 22' x 40'. Ah but what a grand community float she could be. I would be happy to donate any remaining ownership, as well as contact Matt with the intent.



The continuing portions of my dream would be to develop floating Eco Villages, with a common float much as you described. My goal personally is to build my first "home" that will double as show house, and then sell enough additional units until I can afford to build and own an additional 4 for myself. These I would use as vacation rentals, anchoring them.... well just about anywhere I want!

I hope you find this at least a bit entertaining. I apologize for the lack of in-house editor, as well as the low tech submission. My gifts are with creating, not technology.

Thank you again, and I look forward to following your site now that I know it exists.

