



Matthew Sheahan

After decades of sailing across oceans, bluewater cruising guru Steve Dashew and his wife, Linda, went over to the 'dark side' and swapped sail for power. But this is a boat our Technical Editor never expected to see: a sailor's motor yacht

If all you looked at was her general arrangement you would swear you were looking at a sailing boat. From the interior layout alone you might well deduce that the FPB64 was designed by someone who had plenty of bluewater cruising experience, and from the size of the galley you might also assume that the layout was for a US customer. In both cases you'd be right.

Studying her deck layout would add weight to your original hunch that she's a deck saloon cruiser, albeit with an asymmetric aft cockpit; the dinghy is stowed on the aft port quarter – novel.

Below decks there is further confirmation of a well-thought-out, practical, immaculately built deck saloon bluewater cruiser. From systems to stowage, everything has been carefully thought through with a build quality to match.

None of which is surprising when you realise this boat was designed by bluewater cruising guru Steve Dashew. Steve and his wife, Linda, are well known for their innovative globe-trot-

ting cruisers, such as Deerfoot, *Sundeer* and their favourite, the 78ft ketch *Beowulf*, in which the couple clocked up 40,000 miles double-handed.

But after decades of sailing the couple decided to make the move to what Steve describes as the 'dark side' and they swapped sail for power. 'We've passed the point where we were comfortable handling this much sail by ourselves, and we did not want to take crew,' they wrote in their blog at the time. 'At 62 years and counting, it was no longer prudent for the two of us to cross oceans, dealing with the spinnakers and reachers that are part of our sailing equation.'

Their answer was to build a bluewater motor yacht. Two years later and the Dashews have not only

clocked up a considerable number of miles, but their 83ft *Wind Horse* has been the inspiration for a range of similarly styled alloy offshore motor vessels.

Looking like a cross between a naval patrol vessel and a trawler, the FPB range includes motor boats the like of which you've never seen before. The most recent turned up in Lymington after a 12,600 nautical mile trip from her builders in New Zealand to the UK.

Grey Wolf is a 64ft version, owned by Peter Watson who, with crew Tony Jones, Jeff Holden and a team of Berthon Boatyard apprentices, worked their way home. The Lymington boatyard's brokerage business acts as agent for the FPB range and laid on a fascinating presentation of the trip by Watson and his crew.

Although powerboats are not really my thing, I couldn't help but be drawn in. Perhaps it was the description of the trip across the Pacific, or the familiar way the boat was run, or maybe it was the different approach to clocking up the miles.

Or perhaps it was simply the similarity between this boat and Jimmy Cornell's Garcia 45 *Aventura* (see our video at yachtingworld.com) that so impressed me. The FPB64 is a motor version of the same concept, a go-anywhere luxury cruiser that would surely inspire even the most timid coastal cruising sailor to head over the horizon. This is the first powerboat I've been aboard that draws so much from sailing that I would genuinely love to go and do a test.

While she's no faster than a typical sailing boat of the same size, she will clock up the same miles effortlessly, day after day. But what really drew my attention was when I started to think of the number of hours we have spent motoring a sailing yacht during a cruise. Overlay that with the number of hours spent motoring up and down confined waters instead of sailing a dead beat with multiple tacks or a dead run and numerous gybes and you start to see the appeal.

A sailor's motor yacht. I never thought I'd say that.

To see the boat and range see www.setsail.com

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