

Gill and I have been boating for over 30 years, starting with a small Zodiac, going on to a speed boat, a cuddy cabin and then 4 cruisers, a Birchwood 37, a Broom 41, a Broom 450 and lastly, our pride and joy, the Broom 425 — SEAWOLF.

We have been fortunate in that over the last few years we have been able to spend all our summers on the boat and have cruised extensively from Oslo in the north to Bordeaux in the south, including the Seine to Paris twice, the Rhine/Mosel, The Mitteland Canal to Berlin, the Baltic and extensively in the Dutch inland waterways system.

When we decided as our "last present to ourselves" to buy the current SEAWOLF, our Broom 425, we were fortunate in that Mr. Martin Broom and Paul Pardon at Brooms were very co-operative and enabled us to have the "spec" that we would like. It was a long negotiation but eventually we achieved what we consider to be the perfect boat for our needs.

I thought it might be interesting for readers to see what we considered to be important when purchasing the boat - and the reasons why.

- 1. A good solid sea boat** capable of 20 knots. We think that a good solid sea boat is self-explanatory but the reason we wanted 20 knots is that whilst we spend many hours slowly moving through canals on calm waters, when you have long passages like crossing the channel, moving up to the Baltic, crossing the Baltic or going around the point of Brittany to Bordeaux, we want to be able to get there in one hop to take advantage of all the various weather windows and tidal conditions. It also enables us to avoid bad weather by getting home quickly if the weather looks like becoming nasty.
- 2. Twin Engines.** Again this enables us to get the speed but also it gives us security and maneuverability. Over our life time I have lost one engine 6 times at sea and had to come home on the second. Twin engines also enable us to moor in tight spaces.
- 3. Semi Displacement.** The reason for this is that planing hulls have their propellers as the lowest point and if you are in the shallow waters of canals and estuaries and you touch "that is the end". A semi displacement hull gives an element of propeller protection with the ability to get planing speeds, and usually has a slightly shallower draft. Displacement boats cannot give us the speed we feel we would like.
- 4. Equipment** This is again I think evident, I would not be without my plotter especially in places like the Swedish and Norwegian Islands, Auto Pilot, VHF radio, depth sounder and speedometer.
- 5. Wide sidewalks.** Too many boats today have very narrow sidewalks and if you are going to do any form of canal work/ river work where there are locks you need the ability to get up and down the side of the boat easily, and as an added benefit, you don't have to rub along the side and get wet and dirty every time you go up forward.
- 6. Cleats.** We found the need to have 6 cleats on each side of the boat whilst perhaps not 100% essential very, very useful especially in locks.
- 7. High inside helm.** We have done many passages in inclement weather and the ability to sit at fly bridge height with the visibility it gives you is essential.
It is also extremely pleasant to be able to stay dry and warm at the same time and only a stem cabin boat gives you this dual facility ie one helm position high inside, covered, and as an added luxury the hot air heating piped to the cockpit.
- 8. Large covered cockpit.** We spend more time on the boat in our cockpit than in any other place. The seating is comfortable, it is high up so you can watch the world go by and, with the ability for the sun to come in in whatever direction you are moored, keeps it pleasantly warm.
- 9. Inside blinds.** We find this a big bonus. When we had outside windscreen covers, they were always put on when you moored the boat, usually wet because you had washed off, damp in between, screen and cover never dry and very cumbersome. If you have blinds you can lift up and pull down inside the cabin. They are more frequently used preventing sun damage to the interior and also much more user-friendly.
- 10. Electric Hook up on the bow.** We frequently moor bow in to enable us to have better views from the stem cockpit and to not have the noise of the pontoon when we are sleeping in our stern cabin, thus a bow shore connection is much more practical than a stem plug in.
- 11. Bow Ladder Shore Connection.** In Europe in many cases, you are not alongside a pontoon you are in a box, a bow ladder is essential if you are going to moor bow in.
- 12. Hinged super structure.** We have travelled and plan to travel extensively in Europe where low bridges are a hazard to be taken into account. Broom very kindly arranged to have our chrome arch above the radar arch hinged which reduced our height by nearly a meter, thus enabling us to pass under the vast majority of bridges without having to take down the main radar arch and dismantle the canopy.
- 13. Hydraulic Radar Arch.** As we are getting older the weight of lowering an arch was becoming a problem, and *Broom* suggested an hydraulic arch which we have found immensely useful. With our hinged chrome superstructure above the radar arch, the radar arch does not have to come down too frequently but when it does it is a pleasure, once having fully opened the canopy you press a button and with our Broom 425 we can go under the bridges as low as 3.35 meters, a necessity if you are travelling in Europe.
- 14. Height poles.** Again, a suggestion of Brooms. *Broom* manufactured two different height poles, one for when the radar arch was down and one for when the radar arch was up (obviously removable) so that when we are approaching bridges we can, if in doubt, ease up to the bridge and if the pole on the bow goes under, it is safe for us to go under, this is very comforting.
- 15. Seat heights.** In the saloon of the standard 425 the seating is at a level where you cannot easily see out. When we are sitting in the saloon we find that part of the pleasure of boating is "watching the world go by" and after negotiation with *Broom* they agreed to make the seating six inches higher so that we had all round visibility.
- 16. Storage.** When you live on the boat for 4 months of the year, storage is an essential factor and we took every opportunity to maximize our storage, with the rising of the seats by six inches this gave us incredible extra storage space.
- 17. Chart Drawer.** When you travel as extensively as we do, you carry a lot of charts and a chart drawer, which we had manufactured under seat in the main saloon, we find imperative.

- 18. Reading lights.** Again, this might seem obvious but with the amount of time we spend on the boat having angled reading lights, particularly in the saloon and in the rear cabin is essential. This is particularly relevant as you get older.
- 19. Heated towel rails.** Broom installed heated towel rails for us in both the rear and forward heads, we find them essential for not only keeping the chill away on a cold frosty evening but also a way to dry clothes after a rainy spell.
- 20. Fiddle rails.** As you will see from our early descriptions we have travelled extensively and often in "lumpy" seas so *Broom* fitted fiddle rails for us in both the heads areas so that our toiletries do not slide all over the place when the boat rolls.
- 21. Midgy nets.** Particularly in late summer in Europe mosquitoes and other similar beasts can get quite annoying, yet when it is warm we need to have ventilation, "midgy nets" are essential.
- 22. Washing machine.** We were fortunate that the Broom 425 had a space for a washing machine unlike on our previous boats and we have used facilities all over Europe. Many marinas now have facilities but the ability to put a small amount of washing into your machine on a regular basis and dry it in the canopy on hooks we've also had put in, makes life much easier, this was not a facility we had on other boats but it is a facility much appreciated.
- 23. Deep Freeze and second Fridge.** With the amount of time we spend on board these are two things we find very, very useful. A deep freeze is now almost an essential and we were lucky that *&van* found a small drawer fridge and fitted it under the cockpit seat where we can keep the wine
- 24. A generator.** With the amount of electrical goods being suggested a generator was an obvious necessity; a generator also enabled us to moor at the many places in Europe where moorings are provided alongside in beautiful country areas, but with no electric hook up.
- 25. A 240 volt socket in the cockpit.** We found this very useful for heater, lights, toaster when sitting in the cockpit on a long northern evening.
- 26. 12 Volt plug.** We had a 12 volt plug in the saloon and in the cockpit, very useful for plugging in certain electrical appliances but also for lead lamps, search light for working in the engine room and also for travelling through tunnels where a good search light is essential because of weak lighting.
- 27. Our dinghy on a Cooney davit.** Again, we are getting older and found lifting the dinghy around was getting difficult. The *Cooney* lifting davit system has made using the dinghy a much easier experience.
- 28. Third Cabin.** The standard Broom 425 has a "dinette". We found that in our previous boats we have never used the dinette as we were always eating in the cockpit or in the saloon. Thus, we decided to ask Broom to build us a small third cabin, which we have found immensely useful. On a day-to-day basis it is used for storage, but it has 2 bunks and when our family join us there is room for the grandchildren - without providing bunks for the grandchildren, our children would not be able to join us.
- 29. Mattresses.** It is a false economy buying foam mattresses; we found that purchasing a good quality mattress was essential for a good night's sleep. Also, putting netting between the mattress and the boards stops the mattress sweating and prevents the accumulation of damp mould.
- 30. Split mattresses.** If you have a double mattress in the stem cabin and you have to get under the mattress to do any work then having a full size mattress creates a major problem. Where do you put it? A very simple answer is to have a split mattress, you will find it a boon if ever you have to work in the stem cabin.
- 31. Solid Stair Well.** A standard Broom comes with an open stair well from the cockpit down to the saloon. *Broom* made us a solid stairwell, which gave us an inu_ edible amount of dry storage under the stairs in the saloon, especially useful for any electrical goods
- 32. Cockpit Hooks.** It may sound silly putting hooks up in the cockpit but they are an essential if you are living on a boat. When you come in with your wet clothes, where do you hang them? Hooks in the cabin for drying rain coats and hanging washing are the answer.
- 33. Plugs and Extension leads.** Whilst not an integral part of the boat they are essential when cruising in Europe. There are several different types of "hook up" so you need one for each type and you will also need a long extension lead to be always sure of hooking up to shore power.
- 34. Grab Hook.** Another little thing we found very useful, again not an integral part of the boat but a useful tool. When you drop things in the bilges, how do you get to them? The "pincer" tool used for picking up rubbish is a little asset we find very useful.
- 35. Buoy Hook.** Most power boats have a high bow and if you have to tie up to a buoy getting a rope through the ring can be a pain. The pick-up hooks available in most marine chandlers are essential.
- 36. High Strength Batteries.** When purchasing a boat, get as strong a batch of batteries as is practical, and also an inverter. When travelling long days through calm waters, an inverter is a useful asset to make the coffee. It can, of course, be used in other ways, such as watching television in the evening (if you have television, but we don't).
- 37. Rope Cutters on shafts.** An essential. Several times over the years they have saved us.
- 38. Extra Fenders.** We cockier 6 down each side are necessary for canals and locks. Baskets to keep them in are a huge asset.
- 39. Hot air heater and screen demister.**
- 40. Velcro panels** to cover the transparent sections in the forward hood. This prevents "sun blindness" when travelling into the sun.
- 41. Bookshelves with straps to secure.**
- 42. A Safe** — passports and money - peace of mind.
- 43. Tube heater** fitted under engines wired through thermostats. For wintering.
- 44. Anchor chain,** paint marked every 5 meters so you know how much chain.