

TrawlerLife

Pleasure Boating in the Land of Pleasant Living



■ TrawlerFest has been held in Baltimore in years past; this year, look for it happening at Bay Bridge Marina in Stevensville, MD. Same gorgeous boats, different venue.



■ Chris and Alyse Caldwell at home.

TrawlerFest, the premier cruising event for those with a sophisticated boating lifestyle, rolls into the Middle Bay between September 27 and October 1, with over 50 boats, great expert-led seminars, and dozens of exhibitors filling Bay Bridge Marina in Stevensville, MD. While TrawlerFest does kick off boat show season around the Chesapeake, it's not a boat show like the others. Instead, TrawlerFest is a celebration of a particular lifestyle.

PassageMaker Magazine presents TrawlerFest each year, basing the show on the idea that trawlers (and their owners) need their own space for a celebration. You can't stick them in with the Bay Hunters, Sea Rays, and Boston Whalers, and expect everyone to have the same idea of what it means to go boating.

"Trawlers are no longer a boat style; they're a lifestyle," says Chris Caldwell, a former trawler owner and now a showcase presenter at TrawlerFest. Caldwell and his wife, Alyse, owned their 44-foot Trawler for 20 years, living aboard her and leading seminars about this special lifestyle. At this year's TrawlerFest, the Caldwell's will

lead seminars on provisioning and cruising as a couple (with pets).

"Trawlers originally evolved from shrimp boat trawlers, scallop draggers, and long-lined tuna boats," Caldwell tells me.

"They were desirable for long-distance cruising and passagemaking because they're full displacement to carry fish and cargo, and they're sensibly powered to go long distances with that extra weight.

"There was an evolution when people would say, 'that's not a trawler. It's a semi-planing boat!' They'd complain that a Beneteau Swift Trawler wasn't actually a trawler. But then we started saying that a trawler was more than just a boat: it was a lifestyle. They're the lifestyle for couples who do long-term cruising, not necessarily going around the world, but going from the Chesapeake Bay to the Florida Keys or the Bahamas, maybe doing the Great Loop."

The Caldwell's bought into this lifestyle back in the mid-90s, when they were in

their 30s and 40s and decided to move aboard their boat. "At the time we had a 34-foot lobster boat, but we also had two dogs, a Zodiac inflatable, a kayak, a sailboat, bicycles, and all of the rest of our lives. We had suits for work, and Alyse didn't want to eat Thanksgiving dinner on plastic plates, so we had crystal and china."

Moving into the trawler meant that they could have their life (and their suits) and their lifestyle at the same time. On their trawler, they managed to see a huge part of the world without having to rush, or own real estate. Caldwell says that with the trawler, "it's about the cruise, not the destination."

The Caldwell's soon became experts at this lifestyle, and developed a niche for getting others involved. These days, they've

traded in the closets of suits and instead are turning their passion into their vocation. Their business teaches would-be trawler families how to operate their boats and how to enjoy it at the same time, because pleasure boating is not supposed to be stressful.

“The people we meet, they’ve all had this dream for five to 10 years. They’ve had faster boats, like bowriders, or slower boats, like sailboats. Now they don’t feel like getting sunburnt or rained on with their sailboats, and they’re tired of zipping around, going fast everywhere on their speedboats. They want to have their things with them, and be comfortable.” Caldwell notes that with a trawler, you can take your life with you out onto the water. “You can have a queen mattress, air conditioning, a good-sized refrigerator, and at the end of the day, you can sit down in a nice chair and watch television. You get a more comfortable, pleasant lifestyle.”

To meet the Caldwells and learn more about their pleasant lifestyle, visit them at TrawlerFest-Bay Bridge, where they’ll be leading seminars on Tuesday and Wednesday. ■



■ Chris Caldwell and his pooch go everywhere together.

TrawlerFest Bay Bridge 2016
 September 27 through October 1, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Daily
 Bay Bridge Marina, Stevensville, MD
 For the full seminar schedule, visit:
passagemaker.com/events/trawlerfest-bay-bridge-2016
 Many seminars will sell out, so sign up early.

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