

# ShowBoats

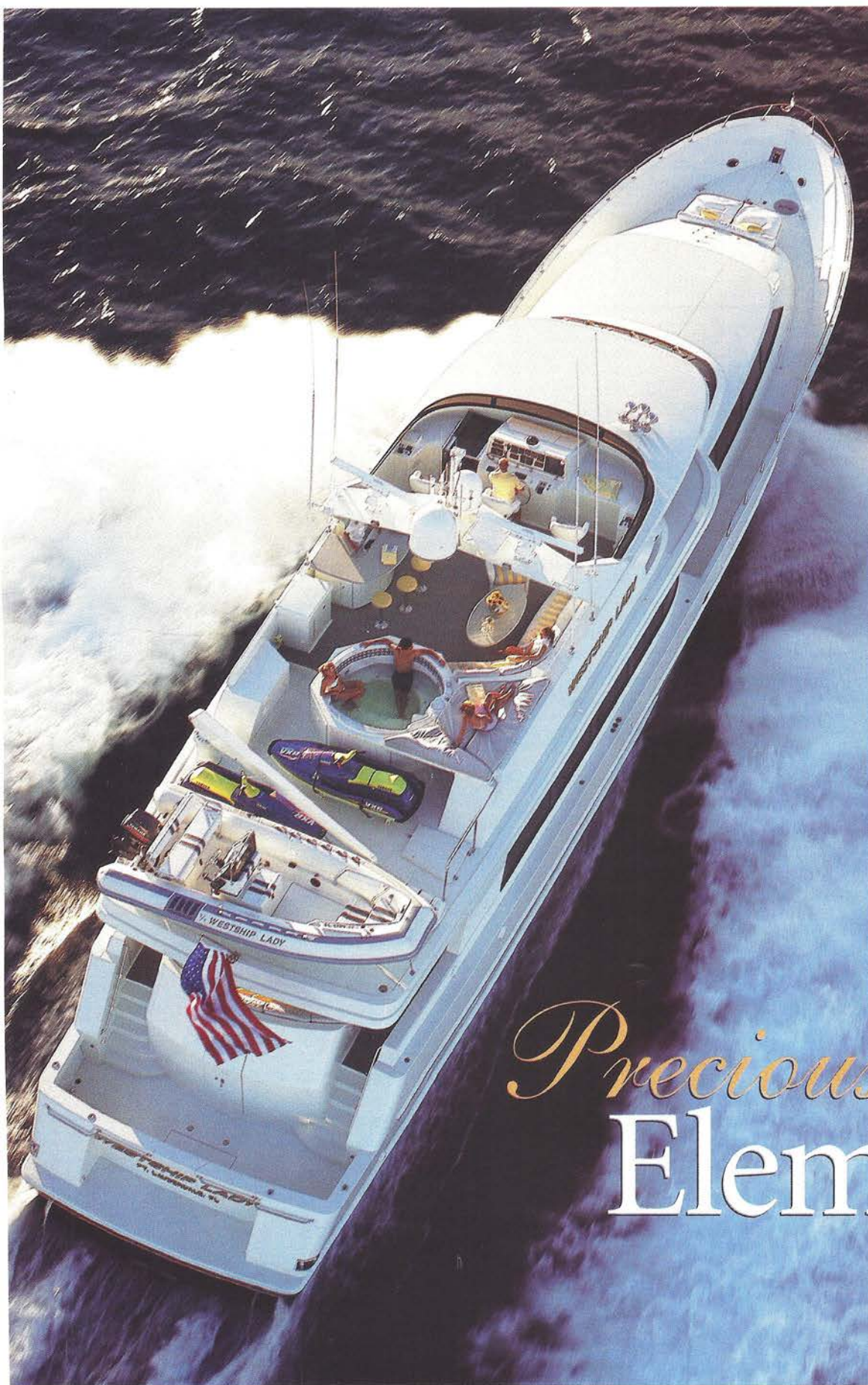
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**INTERNATIONAL**

## **A SOURCE OF RENEWAL**

*For Westship's Herb Postma,  
Yachts are Tools for Living*





HERB POSTMA HAS MELLOWED. Once chief of the world's largest Hatteras dealership, Postma has gone from the frantic pace of selling 40 to 50 Hatterases a year to the decidedly lower-key activity of placing four to six Westships. Thirty-five years into the business of buying and selling boats, Postma has achieved a relaxed demeanor that makes him look more like a yacht owner than a yacht seller.

"What we are dealing with [in the yacht industry] is precious elements of people's lives," said Postma. "Perhaps most precious is their time. In complicated lives, boats present the opportunity to recreate and renew. They take you to paradise and give you the opportunity to know your kids better, maybe even motivate you to go back to that very stressful career. We refer to boats as toys. They aren't toys, they are tools for adding enjoyment, if not years, to life," he said. ▶

# Precious Elements

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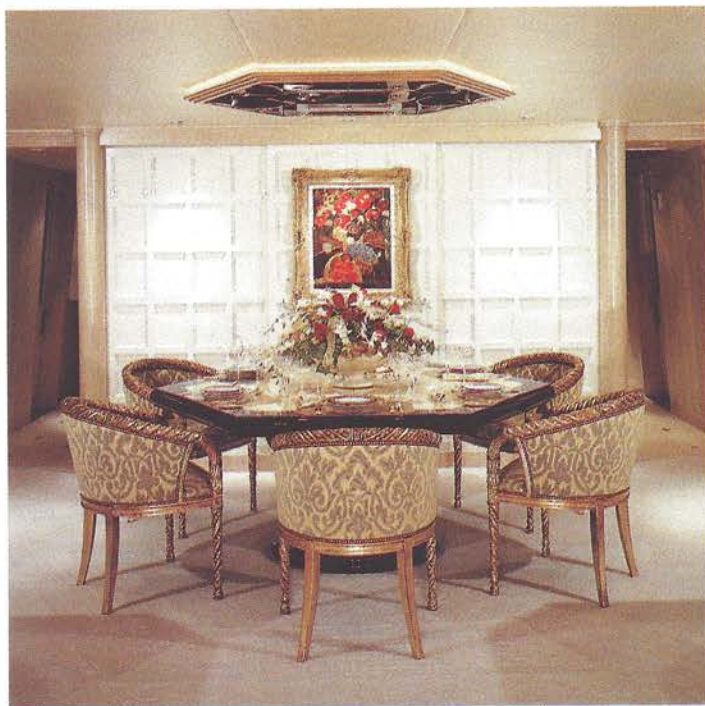


As Postma waxed philosophical, sunlight reflected off the rippling Spanish River and splashed inside the pilothouse of the newest *Westship Lady*. Well-dressed yet barefoot, he looked the part of yacht owner, which in fact he is. "This is the first time the Postma family has had a boat for more than two weeks in I don't know how many years," he said happily. Typically, Postma assigns himself the rare unsold spec boat. This time, however, Postma sold around the current *Westship Lady* to be able to showcase some of his own ideas and the yard's talents at the 1995 Fort Lauderdale and 1996 Miami boat shows.

Postma took delivery of the

THE WHITE LACQUERED PANELED BULKHEAD PROVIDES A FOCUS FOR THE DINING AREA AS WELL AS HIDES A TV. THE PANEL DESIGN REPEATS IN THE LAMBREQUINS FRAMING THE SALON WINDOWS.

current 106-foot *Westship Lady* at the Westport yard in Washington early last summer, loaded his wife Jeanne and their three teenagers aboard, and commenced a grand tour of sorts enroute to Florida. By the end of the Fort Lauderdale show, *Westship Lady* had



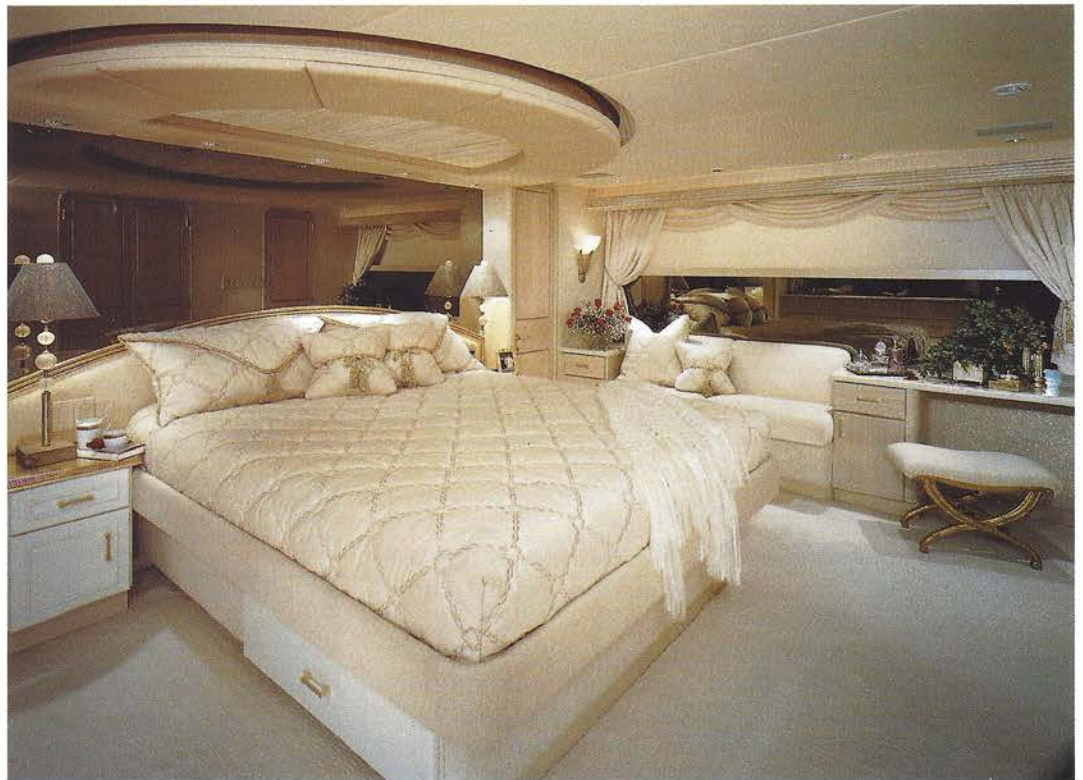
10,000 miles under her composite fiberglass keel without a minute spent in a boat yard.

Postma has a long relationship with fiberglass boats. At age 13 he went to work in the family's dealership in Grand Rapids, Michigan, selling mahogany runabouts. "Shortly after that, we decided to take advantage of a new product called fiberglass," said Postma. "We were the first in the Midwest to sell fiberglass boats. I still remember people said they'd break like an egg."

Selling Owens, Carvers, Bertrams and Hatterases, Postma kept moving into larger boats. He began prodding Hatteras to build larger boats because he was tired of losing clients when they outgrew the Hatteras line. As a stopgap, for years he bought stock Hatterases from the factory and added cockpits and designer interiors at his Fort Lauderdale facility.

By the time Hatteras was ready to debut its first megayacht — a 92-footer — Postma had already seen in 1989 the next boat he wanted to sell, a 98-foot composite fiberglass motor yacht designed by Jack Sarin and built at Rick and Randy Rust's Westport Shipyard. While Postma completed an agreement with the Rusts for a series of long-range, offshore yachts over 100 feet, Hatteras, with plans of its own for larger yachts, recoiled at the idea of its largest Hatteras dealer also selling Westships. So, in 1991 Hatteras and Postma went their separate ways.

"I've been an avid boating enthusiast all my life," Postma said. "My kids have been living aboard since they were babies. When you experience yachting as real people, you develop a different perspective. Most designers and brokers only party on boats. The development of the Westship series is the pursuit of the better mousetrap,"



THE NEUTRAL INTERIOR DECOR IS COMPLEMENTED BY SPLASHES OF COLOR. IN THE COUNTRY KITCHEN (TOP), MARBLE TILES OFFER A MOSAIC LOOK. IN THE ELEGANT MASTER STATEROOM (ABOVE) BRONZED MIRRORS ADD CONTRAST.

Postma said. "The intent has always been to take the features that someone would buy a 120-footer for and put them in a smaller package. A smaller boat is simply less aggravating in the long run," said Postma.



The current *Westship Lady* is the 12th *Westship* and the culmination of a fair amount of tinkering, but no radical design changes. In this evolutionary process, Postma rearranged the interior with the seventh yacht to locate the crew quarters in the stern. This change not only met the owner requests for more areas of guest accommodations, but gave the crew more private quarters with separate entrance to the boat from the cockpit, plus immediate access to engine room and auxiliary power controls.

*Westship Lady* is four inches wider than the original, giving her a full 23-foot beam and enough room for port and starboard foyers. From the portside foyer, curved steps access the main lower deck accommodations, which means the salon is not compromised by a staircase. This stairway to the owner's stateroom and two largest guest cabins is wider than on previous models and exits on a handsome lobby, with the master stateroom opening through double doors. The master features storage for extended cruising and



decorative ceiling treatment.

Another of the refinements is in the full-width master bath. Its position well forward of amidships means the space is somewhat narrower than full beam, yet Sally Dills of Yacht Design Associates turned what could have been a negative into a positive by rethinking the concept of the his and hers bath. Instead of allocating tub and shower by gender, Dills placed both the tub and a glass-enclosed shower on the centerline with access from either toilet room. Instead of a boxy whirlpool, the tub is a long, deep,

steeping model by Kohler with fill knobs at either end and a flashy waterfall spigot.

"We tried to showcase different things with this boat," said Postma. "The interior has a decidedly more European flair than we've delivered in the past. The white lacquer surfaces on the main deck show what the yard can do in that vein."

In the salon, entertainment electronics hide behind a sliding door near the dining table. Lowering the floor behind the service bar has kept bar height level with the window sills. Counter tops are a mix of painted wood and intriguing papyrus inlays covered in a clear, maintenance-free urethane. Air conditioning flows gently out of the soffits so as not to create cold spots.

One of most congenial spots on board is the country kitchen on the main deck. Its large, raised, u-shaped seating area faces both large windows and the cook. A short island section allows for the informality of two stools at a breakfast bar. The galley itself is large, and spiced with decorative marble inlays. Clever slide-out pantries increase storage without taking up valuable floor space.

One of the visible economies of production is the wheelhouse. The *Westship* team has refined this command center into a space that doubles as a workable office. Rather than reinvent the wheelhouse for each yacht, the console has been designed to accept all currently available instruments and monitors. Once the owner specifies controls and equipment, *Westship's* craftsmen place the gear in prearranged areas. Postma estimates that not redesigning each wheelhouse saves his customers \$5,000 to \$10,000.

The office elements have evolved with input from *Westship* owners and Postma himself, who often conducts his business from the wheelhouse. Computer, fax machine, modem, and monitor are all neatly

THE CANTILEVERED AFT DECK OVERHEAD SUPPORTS A JACUZZI, AND IS STRONG ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A HELICOPTER. IT ALSO PROVIDES A SEMI-ENCLOSED LOUNGE. THE WHEELHOUSE HAS A SPACIOUS DINETTE THAT DOUBLES AS A DESK FOR THE OFFICE WITH THE ULTIMATE VIEW.



tucked into cabinets. To save space, both the computer and the Maptech navigation display use the same monitor.

*W*e've been paying more attention to the true mobile office concept," said Postma. "The yachts now are wired with four separate phone lines because that's reality. A functional office aboard allows people to get out and enjoy their good fortune sooner."

The aft deck has banquette seating plus a handsome high-low table that scoots closer to the settee as it rises to dining height. Beefy but invisible box beams support the cantilevered upper deck, which is rated for a helicopter. Those box beams represent an \$80,000 expense including tooling and engineering, according to Postma, who says the unobstructed view makes for a better product. "We don't apologize for the cost of a Westship; we build the world's finest 106-foot boat. Owners

THE 12TH YACHT OF THE 106-FOOT SERIES, WESTSHIP LADY HAS TRAVELED 10,000 TROUBLE-FREE MILES SINCE HER LAUNCH. DESIGNED FOR EASY MAINTENANCE, THE YACHT RUNS WITH GENERALLY JUST TWO CREW.

don't want their experience diminished because you cut corners somewhere," Postma said of his product that sells for upwards of \$6 million. "Every Westship that has been resold — and there aren't many — has sold for more than was originally paid for it," Postma said.

With the 14th Westship soon to be delivered to a West Coast owner and the next two hulls also sold, Postma admits he is once again thinking about his owners' next boats. Realizing that almost as many owners are downsizing from their present yachts as moving up, Postma is making the first addition to the Westship line a 92-footer. "We've gone to great lengths to make sure that the smaller yachts are every bit a West-

ship," said Postma. Two of the yachts have been sold to date at prices between \$3.8 and \$4.5 million, with the first yacht to deliver this spring.

The next project is a series of 100-foot yachtfishermen targeted to debut in mid-1997. Utilizing a Westport deep-V Catalina express ferry hull, these sport convertibles will have high speeds and exceptional sea-keeping ability.

Considering the Westship 106 can be ordered as a 112-footer, is Postma considering growing with his customers as well? "We're developing plans for a tri-deck 130-footer. It won't be a stretch version of the 106, but a totally new vessel with a fresh hull design and the interior benefits of a

150-footer," said Postma.

Although Westship affords owners almost unlimited personalization, Postma steers them in the direction of using Yacht Design Associates, partially by not charging a design fee for their interiors. "Sally has a great talent for executing very diverse themes from contemporary to traditional and has designed all our interiors to date," said Postma.

While he won't decline an owner's request to use an outside decorator, he refuses to allow wholesale revisions that would, as he says, bring the production department to its knees. "As a one-off, it would cost nine million dollars to build this boat, and that's almost impossible to justify. We work like Canadair or Gulfstream. You can personalize the envelope but they don't let the customer mess with the length of the wings. Our mission is clear," Postma said. "We won't let you shoot yourself in the foot."