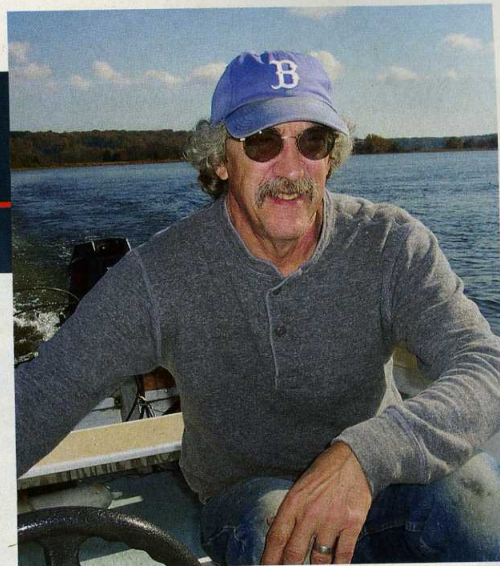


USED BOAT

BY STEVE KNAUTH

Swan 36 sloop



Sometimes you have to get out of boating for a while, though in your heart you know you'll be back someday. That's how it was for Jim Lawlor.

"The attraction of boats is hard to describe," says the 70-year-old retired Connecticut judge. "It's not just the experience of being on the water; it's the adventure of it all."

Lawlor had owned a Swan 36, the popular European-built racer/cruiser designed at the time by Sparkman & Stephens, and sold it in the early 1990s after a decade of use. "The kids were young and had their interests," he says. "But I resolved that I would get back into boats again, and when I did it would be in a Swan 36."

That time turned out to be the late '90s. Lawlor found just the boat he was looking for — a vintage 1969 Swan 36 — in Racine, Wis., not far from the Palmer Johnson yard in Sturgeon Bay where she had been fitted out almost 30 years before. "Swansong had been imported from Finland [to Wisconsin], and she was known as a PJ36 at the time," Lawlor

says. (Eventually, the Swans became known as Nautor's Swans, for their Finnish builder Oy Nautor AB.)

The boat had been actively sailed and raced on Lake Michigan, finishing as high as second in the iconic Chicago-Mackinac race. Though it was still in sailing shape, time had taken a toll on the well-used boat. Lawlor could see that Swansong was going to need some work, but that was part of the appeal. "She wasn't in disrepair and could have been sailed for many years with careful annual attention," Lawlor says. "But I wanted to restore her, and where possible, I wanted to do it myself."



Jim Lawlor

The final price for the 30-year-old PJ36 was \$50,000. "I shipped her to Connecticut, where I sailed her summers and restored her in the winter," Lawlor says.

That's a bit of an understatement. The first project was to repair damage to her stem from being dropped at a boatyard. "She fell bow-first, striking the stem on the concrete, and rolled to port," Lawlor says. She was restored to "new condition" at Brewer Pi-

lots Point in Westbrook, Conn. It wasn't the first big hit the old vessel had taken, either. "She is a remarkably sturdy boat," Lawlor says. "She had sustained serious damage earlier when she washed onto a breakwater in a Chicago storm. Despite these experiences, she shows no scars."

In the years that followed, Lawlor rewired the boat and replaced the original auxiliary engine with a 19-hp Yanmar diesel, upgrading the exhaust system at the same time. Then came a new holding tank and water system. The interior wood veneers on the cabin bulkheads were refinished, along with all of the other interior trim and the brightwork on deck. He also redid the fabrics and cushions throughout. "The work that demanded skills beyond mine was done by Pilots Point," Lawlor says. "At this time she is fully reconditioned and requires only annual maintenance."

Lawlor calls Swansong a "sportboat" and admits she does not have all of the comforts usually found in a racing/cruising 36-footer, but that's the way he likes it. "She is long and narrow, and the fore and aft overhangs do not offer living space," he says. "She had some luxuries for cooking [along with] a

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 36 feet

LWL: 25 feet

BEAM: 9 feet, 8 inches

DRAFT: 6 feet, 1 inch

WEIGHT: 15,000 pounds

HULL: full keel/spade rudder

AUXILIARY POWER: single 15-hp diesel

TANKAGE: 13 gallons fuel, 45 gallons water

SAIL AREA: 238 square feet (main),
294 square feet (genoa)

