

WoodenBoat

THE MAGAZINE FOR WOODEN BOAT OWNERS, BUILDERS, AND DESIGNERS



The Virtues of the Friendship Sloop
Penbo Trawler Yachts
Designer F. Spaulding Dunbar
Strong, Simple Joinery
Restoration: Preserving the Patina

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The Penbo Boats



by Jim Mairs

A voyage to discover the origins of the “trawler” yacht would probably embark from the Eldredge-McInnis docks in Boston and set course for the Grand Banks. Somewhere along the way, however, one must drop anchor in Rockport Harbor in Penobscot Bay.

There, in a waterfront building (which much later housed the Rockport Apprenticeship and later The Artisan’s School), Penobscot Boat Works had its home. Founded by the team of Carl Lane and his son, Bob, in the early 1950s, the yard started off building a line of lapstrake runabouts. The Lanes competed with Lyman, Old Town, and other companies for the runabout market. They built a Sea-O-Ramic line of 17’ and 19’ models and advertised their Arc-O-Planic model, 19’2” overall, as “America’s Biggest 20-Footer,” claiming speeds of up to 45 mph with raceboat-like handling in smooth or rough water. For all manufacturers of this genre of wooden boat, the emergence of fiberglass in the 1960s sounded the death knell.

But by the time Penobscot Boat Works shut down its runabout production line in the summer of 1961, the company was ready to shift its interests. The strategy at Penbo—as the company came to be called—was one that still gives wooden boat builders a competitive niche in markets dominated by fiberglass boats: the ability to customize a hull to a buyer’s specific needs. Penbo reached its zenith with custom wooden power yachts whose designs sprang directly from the experience of their builders.

Powerboat cruising was something the Lanes knew intimately. Carl Lane—who before starting Penbo with his son had made a name for himself as a writer of maritime fiction and nonfiction (see sidebar, page 38)—had decades of experience cruising and living aboard “one-couple” boats with his wife, Marie. They knew what they were looking for, and by the mid-1950s, they began to envision the perfect design for a mid-sized power cruiser. Such a boat would be large enough for an annual winter



MICHAEL EUDENBACH

Efficient, practical cruising was always Penbo's goal, and with the Oceansport Cruising Houseboat model, space efficiency reached its zenith. ACADIA, ex-ADAGIO, was built in 1969. As with SALT, her original flying bridge has been removed. ACADIA is a 38-footer; SALT is a 40-footer. Penbo adjusted station mold spacing to lengthen or shorten boats to suit the owners.

from VINTAGE in her aft great cabin, which extends the full width and runs aft to the transom. Access aft was by way of a deck atop the saloon. The waist deck was shortened even more. Instead of three side windows, this type has one sliding window and two large round ports per side, and instead of a transom window, she was given a graceful four-pane arched oriel. The owner's cabin is still forward, but the great cabin has the galley moved to port, compared with its amidships position on the Trawler Yacht. This early application of a full-width aft cabin provided a modern look, although this was offset by the appeal of the transom windows. Two of the Fifty Fathom Trawlers survive; one of them, PILGRIM, the last carvel-planked Penbo, was named "Best in Show" at the 1983 WoodenBoat Show in Newport, Rhode Island. The judges must have felt that after only nine years she was already a classic.

While possessing far more character than the other models and offering ample privacy and charm, the "Sardine Carrier" type had several inherent drawbacks. For one, space was not used efficiently—the waist deck, after all, occupied the hull's area of greatest beam. As a result, many of these boats were remodeled. Second, the owner was required to pass topside for his morning coffee or other wants, which could be inconvenient in bad weather.

Cruising Houseboats

The Cruising Houseboat models were the most space-efficient of all the Penbos. The single-stateroom layout permitted all other compartments to be above-average in size, giving the boat a spacious feel. The advantages of

the 'midship wing decks were not so obvious. Many boat layouts provide access to the foredeck with full-length side decks, their width reducing space in the main saloon or aft cabin. With the Cruising Houseboat wing decks, only the wheelhouse was narrowed, allowing the aft saloon to be widened almost to the gunwales, leaving an 8" to 10" deck for use while docking. Fore-and-aft movement underway was provided safely through the main saloon. This gave the wheelhouse a more comfortable width, and it served as an athwartships passageway during docking. It is possible to have one foot on a wing deck and one hand on the helm, making access forward only a few short steps. This is a primary concern for a boat handled by one or two people. This application of Carl Lane's genius is only now being rediscovered in the trawler market.

The owner's stateroom was forward, with V-berths, vanity, head, and shower. A companionway to port led up to the wheelhouse with a center helm, settee, and wing decks port and starboard. Another companionway to port led aft to the saloon and galley. The galley was to starboard immediately aft of the wheelhouse. Either a storage pantry, or in a few cases a second head, lay to port. Usually a bulkhead separated the galley from the main saloon, although a few examples opened up these two areas with a counter. The main saloon was no less than 100 sq ft in area on any Cruising Houseboat. Furnishings were built-in, with a convertible settee to starboard and a swing-up dining table to port. The traditional Penbo wood- or coal-burning stove was usually set against the galley bulkhead. Two sliding doors opened wide to the aft cockpit, enabling the saloon and the cockpit to function as one large social area.

Cruiser Carriers

The most distinctive Penbo models are the Cruiser Carriers, affectionately called "Sardine Carriers." These are characterized by a 'midship waist deck separating the forward cabin from the wheelhouse, invoking the appearance of a traditional sardine carrier (see WB No. 141 for an example of the historic type). The original model in this category was the Trawler Cruiser, and later came the larger Trawler Yacht and its variant, the Fifty Fathom Trawler.

The first Cruiser Carrier was CIAO, 38' LOA, built in 1962. This is the only prototype that Carl Lane didn't own for a time. Trawler Cruisers were laid out in two different styles, one with the galley forward and the other with the galley aft. The first begins with a head at the forepeak followed by a galley and saloon with settee or dinette converting into temporary berths. A rounded companionway scuttle leads aft two steps up to the waist deck, which is about 12' long and extends from gunwale to gunwale with a mast stepped near the bulkhead at the aft end of the forward cabin. Aft of the waist deck is the wheelhouse, with deck-level doors on both sides providing quick access to short side decks and the waist deck. With full visibility and center steering, the wheelhouse is the piloting center of the boat, and it has a short settee against the aft bulkhead to keep kibitzers clear of the helmsman. Two steps

down through a companionway in the aft bulkhead is the owner's stateroom, with twin berths, hanging lockers, and dressers, and a full head with shower. On early examples, the small aft cabin trunk provides generous walk-around decks.

With the five Trawler Cruisers built between 1962 and 1967, the galley and saloon combination migrated aft, opening the layout to new possibilities. Enlarging the aft cabin provided more space for social areas, and eventually the aft walkaround decks were eliminated altogether.

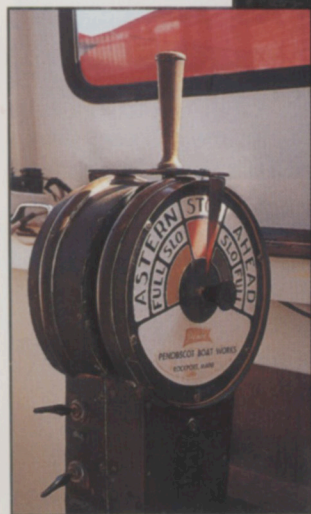
The Trawler Yachts were usually 40' to 42' LOA with twin masts, and later the Trawler Cruisers expanded the length, culminating with the Fifty Fathom Trawlers. The Trawler Cruiser VINTAGE appeared to be a logical development, with an even larger aft cabin and an abbreviated waist deck. This squeezed in more living space. The wheelhouse was raised and the engine moved forward from under the wheelhouse to under the waist deck. The aft saloon became a "Great Cabin" with a head, galley, and an immense settee dining area that converted to four temporary berths. The after decks remained, but were considerably narrowed. VINTAGE and her sistership BERTA III somehow appear far larger than their actual lengths.

The evolution from Trawler Yacht to Fifty Fathom Trawler seemed even more straightforward. Carl Lane's Fifty Fathom Trawler PENOBSCOT differed quite a bit



MICHAEL EUDENBACH

SALTY was launched in 1964 as the Oceansport Cruising Houseboat CAPTAIN HANDY. Notice her wing decks, which allowed broad accommodations forward but good access to the foredeck while anchoring or docking. The narrow decks alongside the aft cabin allow docking access; movement aft underway would usually be through the cabin itself.



Melvin Lash's 42' **PENCHANT** is the ex-PENOBSCOT of 1967, the first of Penbo's Fifty Fathom Trawlers. She was built for Carl Lane, who is pictured at the helm on page 38. Her wheelhouse offers excellent visibility and deck access—along with seamanlike fittings and equipment. Compared with the Trawler Cruiser pictured on page 32, her short waist deck allowed a large forward cabin. Her commodious Great Cabin aft was fitted out with a trademark woodstove and built-in furnishings. Penbos were set up for two—with space for guests to feel comfortable for brief visits.

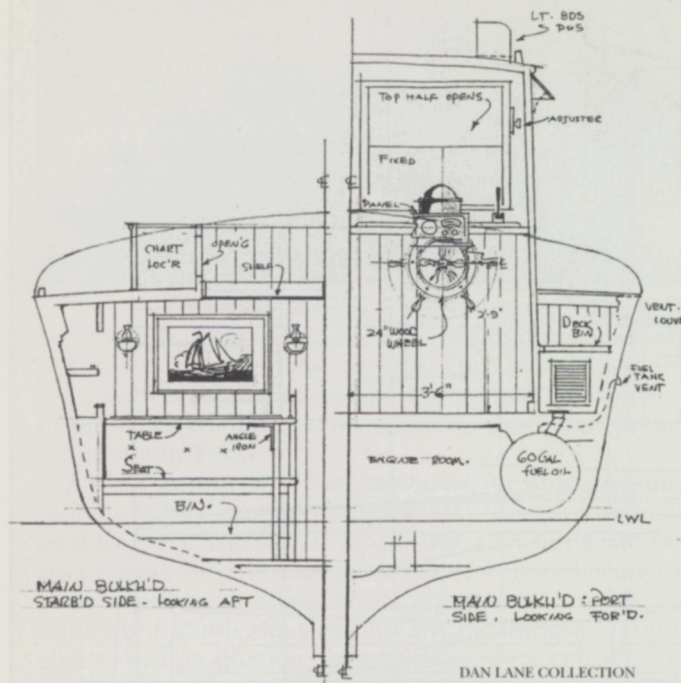


MICHAEL EUDENBACH (THIS PAGE)

boats had a bulkhead separating the wheelhouse and cockpit, with windows and sliding doors providing access; for others, the aft end of the wheelhouse was left open.

Although the Offshore Cruisers may seem to be fairly ordinary boats from this description, their detailing imparted a sense of Down East character to all Penbos. Visored windscreens, skylights, and rounded companionway

scuttles are typical of all models, and many had a wood- or coal-fired stove below, with a custom brass hood. Every available nook seems to be utilized for stowage. A Lane-designed dinghy often hangs from taffrail davits. The hulls are often green and black, recalling their dragger heritage. Bob Lane's lines and his sense of proportion ensured that Penbos were always recognized as Maine-built, and still are today.



Bob Lane's accommodation plans often used whimsical details—for example, the painting and other details of this drawing of the saloon bulkhead and wheelhouse for an Offshore Cruiser—that showed a distinctive sense of style.

three gallons per hour, with most hulls having a "sweet spot" at which speed almost four nautical miles per gallon can be achieved. Higher speeds are attainable with sufficient power, but they exact a price in higher fuel consumption.

The Penbo sales literature mentioned speeds of 14 to 15 knots attained with a lightly equipped boat with a single gasoline engine. But almost all the boats were powered by a single diesel engine, and only one, CAPTAIN HANDY, had twin screws.

Bob used his plans to develop molds, ultimately using three sets of molds for hulls from 36' to 44' overall. By using the molds in various configurations, the yard could adapt hulls to the buyers' needs and desired accommodations. Molds spaced more closely together than the plans specified resulted in a shorter hull of relatively greater beam. Spaced farther apart, the molds produced a relatively narrow but longer hull. Sometimes, an altered stem profile or the addition of a raised deck would bring the hull to an odd length, such as 41' or 43'. Penbos were generally carvel planked with 1 1/4" Eastern cedar over native oak frames and deadwood. The stem, keel, and horn timber were shaped from massive 6"-square stock, and 2" x 3" oak frames were set on 10" centers. Hull fastenings and hardware were bronze. Cabin sides and decks were 3/4" plywood, while the main decks were 3/4" fiberglassed plywood. Penbos were detailed to yacht standards, featuring painted interiors with teak trim. Cabin soles were usually varnished fir, bulkheads and ceiling were butternut or fir. The effect is one of elegant simplicity that does not require skilled maintenance.

Any accommodations plan is a balance of priorities and compromises. A hull of length "x" and beam "y" only has so much space available. To add inches here, inches must be taken there. Going higher may add headroom, but at the expense of seaworthiness. The successful layout begins with a definite purpose tempered by realistic judgments.

Penbos attracted experienced boatmen desiring an easily handled, economical boat with spacious accommodations

for two. Although it may seem strange at first to design, for example, a 42' trawler with only a single stateroom, experience reveals the logic behind such a layout. It is difficult to muster more than two compatible people for extended cruising, and empty staterooms represent a waste of precious space. Penbo's Fifty Fathom Trawlers and Cruising Houseboat models are noted for their especially large saloons, a feature that would have been impossible with more than one stateroom. Many modern stock designs ignore this fact, resulting in layouts that are cut up into multiple cramped staterooms. Penbo sales literature often mentioned the "occasional guest," and accommodations are provided for their comfort for short periods. Guests who overstay their welcome soon realize that their presence should be as temporary as their accommodations. A most logical arrangement.

All models of Penbos share the same basic qualities of robust construction, economy of operation, ease of handling, and seaworthiness. On this foundation, the Lanes added the lessons learned over many years spent on the water. Perhaps others have spent as much time as the Lanes did on the Intracoastal Waterway, but none returned home every year and incorporated what they learned into a new boat. In doing so, Carl and Bob Lane were instrumental in developing the economical liveaboard cruising powerboat—the trawler.

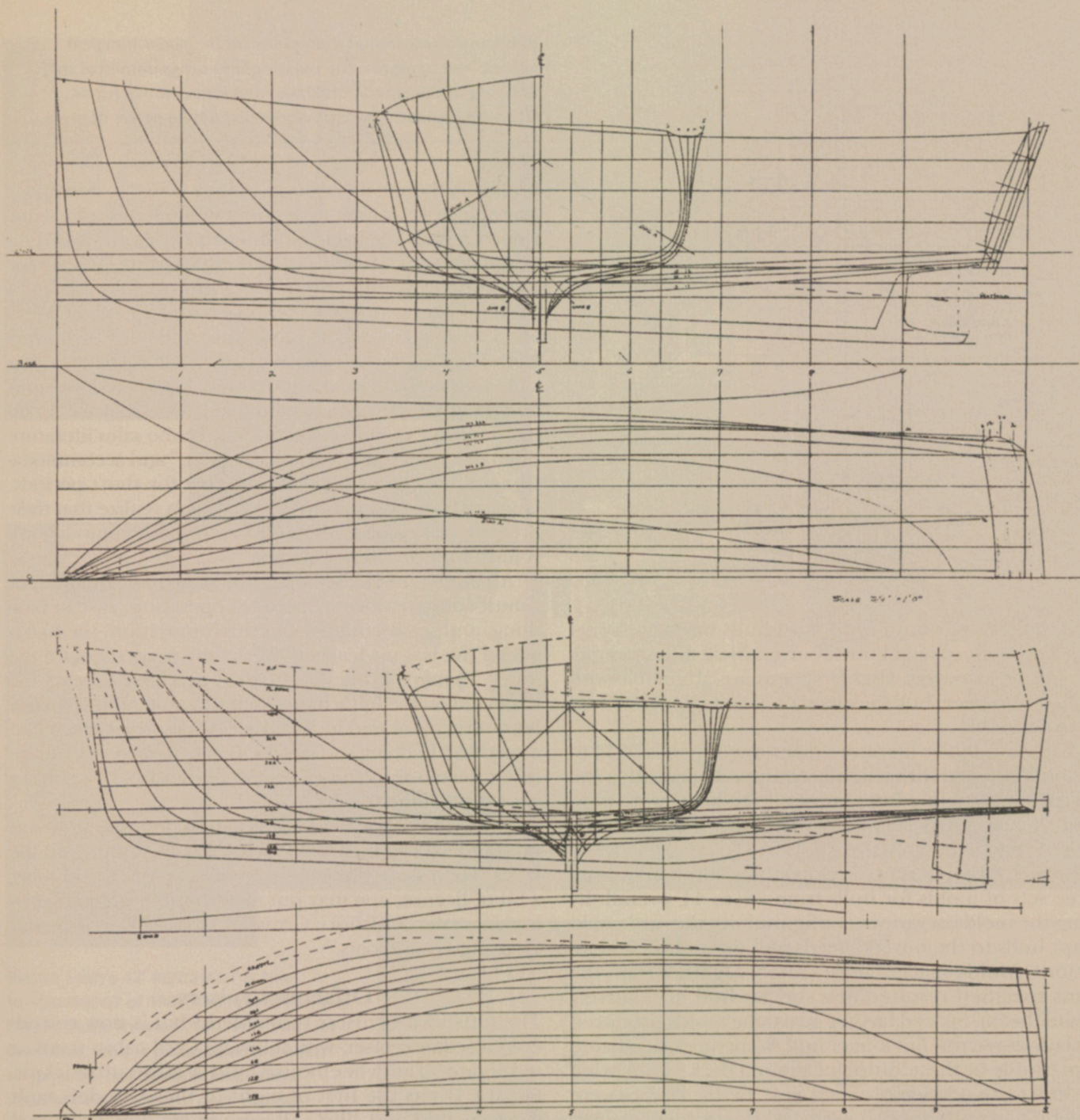
Since all Penbos were semi-custom designs, there was no standard layout; a wide variety existed among all the boats. There were three basic models, however, and using a bit of license, one may put these into a rough chronological order: Offshore Cruisers, Cruiser Carriers, and Cruising Houseboats.

Offshore Cruisers

The Offshore Cruisers resembled what is now considered a sedan cruiser, with a low forward cabin trunk, a moderate-sized wheelhouse, and a large aft cockpit. FINALE II was the first of eight of these models built between 1953 and 1968. All were single diesel powered at 36' overall length, except APPALACHIA, which was originally powered by a Palmer ZR-3 gasoline engine. With three cylinders producing 10 hp each at 760 rpm, the Palmer was an early Lane favorite; the prototype Cruising Houseboat PENOBSCOT was originally powered with a Palmer also, a 40-hp ZR-4.

The overall length of 36' seems to have been judged the smallest that could fit the needs of a liveaboard couple. The wheelhouse had a central steering station and a settee. Accommodations forward included a head, stateroom, galley, and dinette. All Offshore Cruisers were given center steering, which became typical of all Penbo layouts. Any powerboater who has been tossed about in nasty weather can appreciate being as close to the center of buoyancy as possible, and in these circumstances the comfort of the helmsman is a prime consideration.

A cockpit extended to the transom from the aft end of the combination wheelhouse and saloon. Some of the



Bob Lane developed a solid, forthright hull type that he considered a cross between a trawler and a lobsterboat. The lines at the top of the page are of the 34' APPALACHIA (1953), his first cruiser, built for Carl and Marie Lane's personal use. The lower set depicts a standard 40' Trawler Cruiser, with the dotted lines indicating the hull's adaptation for the Fifty Fathom Trawler type.

by the third design station, this fullness is carried through the first third of the length until reaching the station of maximum beam. Amidships, the lines remain full, with a rounded bilge and a shallow 6" full-length keel. Slightly aft of the center of buoyancy, the hull makes a transition to straight aft sections, with a very slight—almost flat—V-bottom. In this transition, the rabbet rises to a wide transom, with a large deadwood serving as a deep skeg protecting a large rudder. Combined with the ability to swing a 28"-diameter propeller, this underwater hull shape makes for excellent maneuverability. Bob says the Penbo hull is best described as a displacement hull with wide, straight aft sections.

As the lines suggest, the Penbos are good sea boats, with easy motion in seas ranging from 8' Gulf Stream swells to a jarring 5' Albemarle chop. The rounded bilge induces a rolling motion that is neither harsh nor stiff. Cruising speeds can be maintained in rough waters. The low cabin profile reduces windage and keeps the center of gravity low, further increasing sea-handling abilities.

Penbos may not set any speed records, but they are real contenders in predicted-log events. Performance is what would be expected from the design. Adhering to time-proven speed-length ratios for displacement hulls, Penbos' cruising speeds range between 7 and 8.5 knots. Fuel consumption averages between one-and-a-half and



In the 1950s, Penbo's production line targeted the runabout market with 17' to 19'2" models, but the company made its longest-lasting impression with semi-custom power cruisers.

Lane did. It is important as well to recognize the original owners' input in these designs. The Carrier Trawlers are a perfect example: the type started with a customer-inspired design that progressed in five short years to the Fifty Fathom Trawler.

Unlike production fiberglass boats, for which accommodations are generally mass-produced and standardized to a one-size-fits-all layout, wooden hulls can be adapted for specific customers' needs without having to retool a production line. Hull, cabin trunks, and decks built from molds can prohibit any meaningful design change in a production fiberglass boat. If CIAO had been built in fiberglass from molds, numerous copies would have been made over several years in order to justify the setup and tooling costs, freezing the design during that period. With today's technology, designs for production boats must spring from the drawing board as "perfect creations" and cannot be easily refined by user feedback from one boat to the next.

It's instructive to see that the first Penbo Cruising Houseboat and the contemporary prototype Grand Banks, SPRAY, are remarkably similar. But more than 1,400 Grand Banks boats have been made to this identical design. In contrast, Penbos differ so widely that the term "sisterships" can hardly be applied to any pair. Even boats that inspired the creation of a duplicate vary markedly upon close inspection, with no dimensions

being the same. The Penbos are so different that a Trawler owner and a Cruising Houseboat owner might not recognize their boats as having the same origins. Yet even with this diversity, all are Penbos. What they have in common is ease and economy of operation, simplicity, practicality, and seaworthiness—all qualities that mark the Lanes' elegance of design. Quite remarkably, there is not a bad-looking or characterless vessel in the lot. Taken together, they are truly a celebration of the use of wood as a boatbuilding medium.

It may be that the Penbo trawlers and cruisers contributed to the overly broad use of the term "trawler yacht" in today's marketplace. Penbo only used the word "trawler" for its Cruiser Carriers; the Offshore Cruiser and Cruising Houseboat models made no claim to the name. Today, however, all Penbos are called "trawlers" in yachting circles, and "trawler" is used to describe Grand Banks and similar models, which even Carl Lane, creator of some flamboyant ad copy, would have called cruisers.

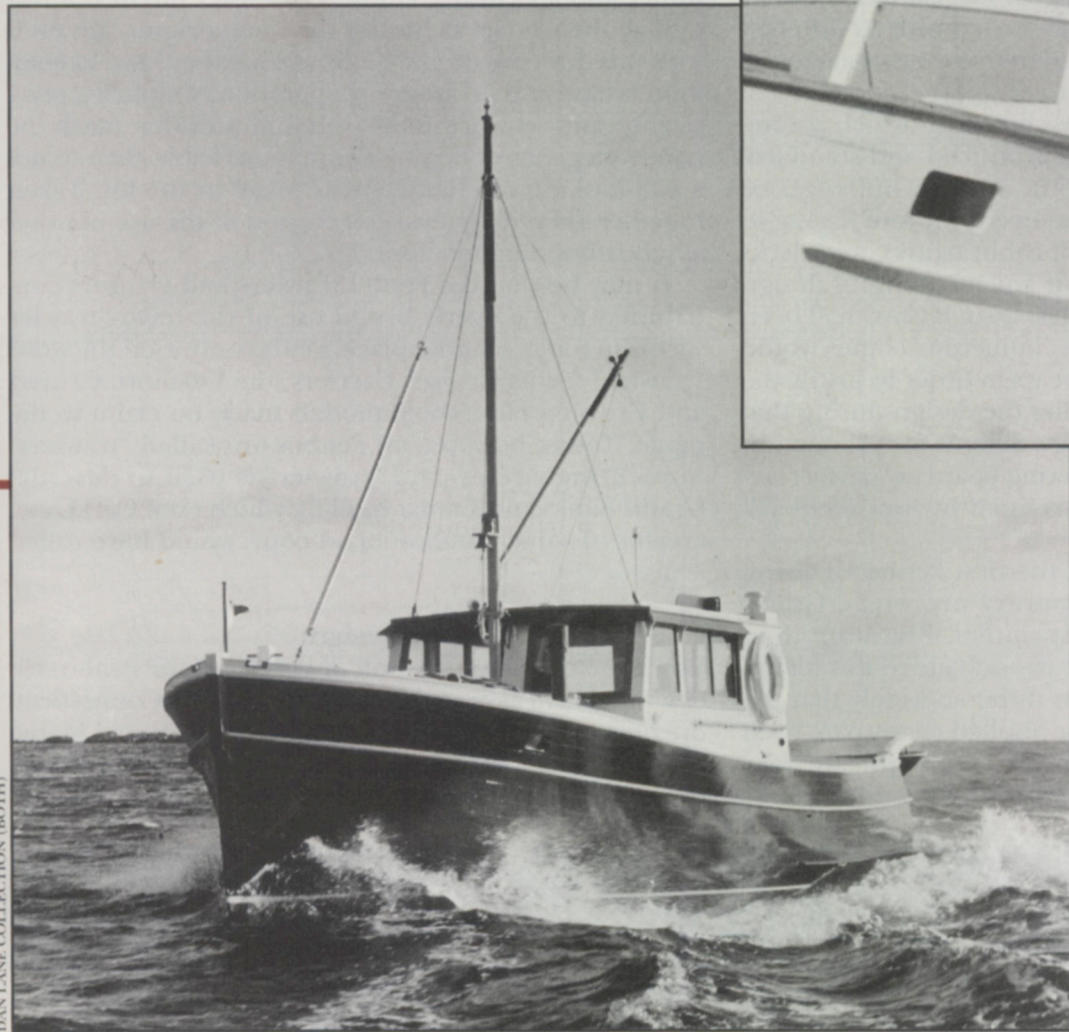
Design

Bob Lane did all of the hull design work for Penbo. He describes them as resembling the Stonington, Connecticut, draggers above the waterline and the traditional Maine lobsterboat below the waterline. Starting with an almost plumb stem, the bows are initially sharp. Becoming full



With CIAO of 1962, Penbo developed the first of its Trawler Cruisers, inspired by the Maine coast sardine carriers. Note the waist deck amidships but the little-changed hull profile. This type later evolved into the Fifty Fathom Trawlers, Penbo's largest.

Carl and Bob Lane left a mark on power cruiser styling



Above—Bob Lane was in his 20s when he built a 24' power cruiser for himself, long before he and his father, Carl, established Penobscot Boat Works.

Left—The first Penbo Offshore Cruiser, FINALE II, drew on Bob's ideas about hull form and the Lane family's cruising experience.

Opposite page—SCARLET shows the seaworthy form much beloved by Penbo owners.

cruise from Maine to Florida—large enough for months of living aboard, but easily handled by a couple; reliable enough for an extensive cruise up and down the East Coast, but economical. They wanted a minimum of maintenance and easy access for it. They needed ample accommodations for a winter's stay, with provisions for occasional guests. With Carl and Marie's goals in mind, Penbo built APPALACHIA, 34' LOA, in 1953 for their personal use, which continued until they sold the boat in 1956 to step up to a 46' William Hand motorsailer. Carvel planked with Eastern cedar over native oak, APPALACHIA's hull helped establish the lines of the Penbos that followed.

As the market for the wooden runabouts evaporated, Penbo began developing prototypes for what would eventually become a line of power cruisers—known by the broad company titles as Offshore Cruisers, Carrier Trawlers, and Cruising Houseboats, each of which had several variations within it. The first Offshore Cruiser was

a 36-footer, FINALE II, launched in 1961. A year later came the first of the Trawler Cruisers, CIAO, a 38-footer; and just a year later, in 1963, Penbo launched PENOBSCOT, the first of the Cruising Houseboats, a category that would include the company's largest and best-appointed boats, the Fifty Fathom Trawlers, the first of which came off the ways in 1967.

All but one of the prototypes were built for Carl Lane's personal use and later sold. Lane had a succession of boats—most of them named PENOBSCOT. His last PENOBSCOT was a Penbo Cruising Houseboat that he bought back from the original owner in 1972.

A Distinct Advantage

The 30-odd Penbo cruisers represent a unique opportunity to evaluate the work of a single design-and-build team. Few have successfully walked the fine line between custom and stock boatbuilding as well as Carl and Bob

We have traced twelve Cruising Houseboats, equally divided between Coasters and Oceansports, the latter being equipped with flying bridges. Unfortunately, two Oceansports have been lost, MAGGIE to a shipyard fire in Essex, Connecticut, and RANTUM SCOOT to Hurricane Hugo in Georgetown, South Carolina. Two others, CAPTAIN HANDY and ADAGIO, have had their flying bridges removed.

If Cruising Houseboats are closest in appearance to a modern "trawler," their Down East style and Lane detailing give them a very traditional look. The owner of RANTUM SCOOT described his very first fuel stop after leaving the Rockport yard in 1972 when the dockmaster remarked that he had never seen a finer restoration. Even brand new, Penbos had a timeless appearance.

The Penbo Legacy

Eventually, the modern era closed in on the large Penbo cruisers as it had on the lapstrake runabouts. The winter of 1969 was the last the yard produced its full capacity of three boats. One cruiser was built in each of the years 1970, 1972, and 1974. In the meantime, Bob Lane and Tom Eesley began developing the Quoddy Pilot, a 31' LOA traditional sailboat modeled after the Eastport pinky, building eight or nine between 1970 and 1978. These were built of edge-nailed strip planking covered with polypropylene cloth set in epoxy.

In 1973, the Lanes sold the yard. PILGRIM—the last Penbo cruiser—was still under construction at the time. Later, Bob Lane had STAR OF MAINE built at the yard for his own use, but she differed from the other Penbo cruisers in using the same fiberglassed strip-planking technique used for the Quoddy Pilots. Her unique layout defies classification, but accommodations for two mark her as a Lane design.

Although the yard remained in operation under the ownership of Andre Rheault until 1981, past experience and inflation led the new management to question the cruisers' profitability. The Quoddy Pilot became the basis for a line of traditional-style sailboats. Despite numerous inquiries, no more Penbo cruisers were built. The era of Lane-designed power cruisers had come to an end.

Today, Penbo cruisers have a timeless quality. Their owners prize them for their detailing and for their cruising characteristics—the same characteristics that benefited so greatly from the experience the Lanes brought to their concept and their construction.

Jim Mairs, who owns the Penbo MARE'S NEST, grew up in Coconut Grove, Florida, the son of a naval architect. In Biscayne Bay, he learned to love wooden boats and simple, elegant designs. After traveling, he returned to the Grove, convinced that paradise was indeed lost. He now resides in North Carolina, "convinced that all our societal problems are due to Dylan, and still trying to master the six-string."

The Penbo Registry

Compiled by Jim Mairs for the Penbo Boat Owners' Association

NAME	YEAR	LOA	MODEL	PAST NAMES
LAURIE ANN	1952	17'	Sea-O-Ramic Outboard	
PATRICK HENRY	1953	34'	Offshore Cruiser	(APPALACHIA)
Runabout	1954	19.5'	Sea-O-Ramic Outboard	
PANDA	1961	36'	Offshore Cruiser	(FINALE II)
WHITEFLASH	1962	36'	Offshore Cruiser	(SCRIMSHAW)
CIAO	1962	38'	Trawler Cruiser	
COMPROMISE	1962	36'	Offshore Cruiser	
INTEGRITY	1963	38'	Trawler Cruiser	(SARAH J, CAMULIN IV)
PEQUOT	1963	38'	Coaster CHB	(PENOBSCOT, DYAD, PEQUOT)
SCARLET	1963	36'	Offshore Cruiser	(KING TUT III, WANDERER, BLUEFISH)
MISS KITTY	1964	36'	Trawler Cruiser	(PENOBSCOT, BONAVENTURE)
SALTY	1964	40'	Oceansport CHB	(CAPTAIN HANDY)
NICKELODEON	1965	40'	Trawler Cruiser	
JAX	1965	40'	Trawler Cruiser	(GRISETTE)
CHANTEY	1966	41'	Trawler Yacht	(VINTAGE)
OLDE SALT	1966	42'	Oceansport CHB	(PLUM DANDY; TOM BOY IV)
VIRAGO III	1966	40'	Coaster CHB	(PENOBSCOT)
JOHAN VAN				
OLDENBARNEVELDT	1967	42'	Trawler Yacht	(BERTA III)
GYPSY	1967	38'	Coaster CHB	(SALIBU)
PENCHANT	1967	42'	Fifty Fathom Trawler	(PENOBSCOT)
MARGRET M	1968	36'	Offshore Cruiser	(ANN LOUISE; CATHY B; SHERRY G)
ARIEL	1968	43'	Coaster CHB	
ACADIA	1969	38'	Oceansport CHB	(ADAGIO; ELLA D)
CHALLENGE	1969	40'	Coaster CHB	
MARE'S NEST	1969	42'	Oceansport CHB	(ANACIN V; RIPARIAN)
COMPROMISE III	1970	38'	Coaster CHB	(NEREUS; BOFFIN)
POLARIS	1974	44'	Fifty Fathom Trawler	(PILGRIM)
GRATITUDE	1975	40'	Single Level Cabin	(STAR OF MAINE)

Hats Off to Carl Lane!

by Peter H. Spectre

A short time ago, I heard a radio interview with a mandolin player who described in great detail the roots of his artistry. He said he had become involved with country-style music as a young boy, when he met Bill Munroe, generally known as the "Father of Bluegrass." Munroe touched him, both literally and figuratively, and his musical direction, he said, was forever fixed. I was reminded of Carl Lane, whose effect on me was the same, though the subject was different.

The first non-juvenile book I ever read was by Carl Lane, and even though I was only about eight or nine years old at the time I can remember the circumstances in detail. I had pulled some outrageous stunt or other around the house, and my mother got mad and sent me to my room for the day. When I complained that there wasn't anything to do up there, she said yes there was, that I could read, and that I would be a better person for it.

I don't know where it came from—certainly no one in my family had any interest at all in boats—but in a corner of my room was a book called *The Boatman's Manual*. I picked it up, became intrigued by the illustrations, and started to read. Of course, it was a difficult slog. When I came to a word I didn't understand I'd yell downstairs to my mother. She'd ask me to spell it. "B-o-w-s-p-r-i-t," I'd say. "Never heard of it," my mother would say. Which made the book all the more fascinating: Here was something my mother, the smartest person in the whole, wide world, didn't know anything about. I can trace my fascination with boats, ships, and the sea to that day and that book.

The Boatman's Manual was by Carl Lane, and over the years whenever I came across another book by him I'd drop everything and read it. His writing was clear, direct, opinionated, accurate, and captivating. (An example: "No boat need strand on a strange coast if the skipper is a navigator and seaman in fact, not theory. No boat need suffer a 'licking' at sea if the skipper is a seaman and sailor in fact, not theory. No boat need suffer any form of shipwreck if her skipper



DAN LANE COLLECTION

has fitted her out and equipped her for the purposes of her use, wisely and generously.") His illustrations—simple pen-and-ink sketches—were as clean, simple, and concise as his writing.

As I gained actual experience with boats, spurred on by Lane's writing,

I came to understand that his style was boaty, not yachty, and that he belonged to a school of nautical writers of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s that included Hervey Garrett Smith, William Atkin, Clifford Ashley, and Wade Ham DeFontaine. No Herreshoffian posturing here. None of the class distinctions inherent in yachting of that time. Just unadulterated boatiness, with emphasis on the happy, almost childlike appreciation of the traditions of the sea. (You can see that style typified in the drawings of Smith and Ashley, the designs of William Atkin, and the boats of Lane's Penobscot Boat Works.)

I never met Carl Lane, even though I lived in the next town from his for many years. The closest I came to him was to rent a cottage he once owned, filled with furniture he made by hand—strong, simple, rustically elegant—and to give serious consideration to purchasing a boat that was once his and with which he made the run down the Intracoastal Waterway and back many times. But like the bluegrass mandolin player and Bill Munroe, I can trace what I do and how I do it to his example and influence.

Books by Carl D. Lane

Nonfiction

- *Boatowner's Sheet Anchor: A Practical Guide to Fitting Out, Upkeep, and Alteration of the Small Wooden Yacht*
- *Go South Inside: Cruising the Inland Waterway*
- *The Cruiser's Manual: A Complete Handbook of Yacht Cruising Under Sail and Power*
- *How to Sail*
- *The Boatman's Manual*
- *The New Boatman's Manual*
- *Handbook for Crew Leaders* (Boy Scouts of America)
- *American Paddle Steamboats*
- *Navigation the Easy Way* (with John Montgomery)
- *Seamanship* (Merit Badge Series, Boy Scouts of America)
- *What You Should Know About the Merchant Marine*
- *Sea Explorer Manual* (Boy Scouts of America)
- *Your First Boat: How to Choose It, How to Use It*

Fiction

- *The Fire Raft*
- *The Fleet in the Forest*
- *Mystery Trail*
- *Black Tide*
- *Treasure Cave*
- *River Dragon*