

By T.J. Doherty

## Juanita Jane

Time-tested and traditional, the B.C.-built Commander 26 meets the standards of a veteran boater.



T.M. DOHERTY PHOTOS

### Juanita Jane

LOA .....27' 11"  
 Centreline length .....25' 9"  
 Beam .....10' 2"  
 Weight (approx.) .....6,500 lbs  
 Power .....Single Volvo  
 .....KAD-42/DP diesel  
 Fuel .....136gals  
 Range .....436 miles  
 Fresh Water .....33.3gals  
 Built by Commander Boat  
 Mfg., Port Moody.  
 Sold by CANMAR Yacht  
 Sales, Richmond.

**N**ORM MARTENS HAS LEARNED what he wants. During several years' shopping, he looked at many boats and visited many shows. As he put it, "There were several locally built boats that came close but I always kept coming back to the same craft."

It was the 26' Commander, manufactured in Port Moody by John Maitland. Martens visited the plant, talked with Maitland and made his decision. This was the boat for him.

The Commander offered a variety of features that Martens wanted in a boat. At 26', it was spacious enough to cruise two couples comfortably. With a grown family, the Martens wanted a boat they could enjoy with their daughters and sons-in-law when they "get away from it all."

Size also ensured the boat was trailerable—important to Martens who wants to trailer it from his home in Burns Lake to Kitimat for salt-water fishing, as well as visit any one of a number of large lake systems closer to home. The Commander 26 is designed right to the limits of trailerability—its 10' 2" beam requires a wide-load permit—giving him as much boat as possible while still being street-legal.

Martens was also drawn by the Commander's solid, long-standing reputation: "The Commanders have been around for a number of years and Maitland has developed it into a good west coast boat."

**TRADITIONAL DESIGN:** Commanders retain a distinctly traditional West Coast profile in a market

saturated with sleek Eurosport design—another attraction for Martens. The hull is a modified deep-V configuration, beamy and high-sided with a fine entry. A flat foredeck runs back to moderately raked windows and a boxy salon. Martens loves this look. He admits these straightforward lines are a "personal taste," but he likes them at least partly because the design allows big windows and lots of room inside the deckhouse.

On the rainy north coast, letting the light in and seeing out are prime considerations.

**CONSTRUCTION:** The hull consists of hand-laid fibreglass using a layup schedule which Maitland has developed over the years and guards carefully against copying. The hull is 3/4" thick at the keel, tapering to 5/16" at the gunwale. All joints are sealed with epoxy, particularly between the fibreglass-sheathed wooden transom and the hull. Five fir stringers are encapsulated in glass, and topped by a plywood floor.

The deckhouse is a one-piece, load-bearing structure, and the windows are not essential to the integrity of the boat. Fuel and water tanks lie amidships to minimize fore-and-aft trim shifts. Both are also sheathed in two layers of glass to protect them from bilge water.

There's no teak outside to weather, and all fittings are made of heavy marine-grade stainless. I would have preferred welded railings, but Commander uses assembled components for greater flexibility with their railing installations.

**COMFORTS:** The custom seat Martens selected for the command bridge offers something for everyone in the relaxation department. Instead of the usual sleeper bench beside the central command seat, *Juanita Jane* has a chaise lounge with a special back rest that flips one way to make a seat and the other to make a recliner.

"When the sun comes out, my wife can go up and enjoy it, while I go on fishing down below," Martens explains.

Inside, there's a V-berth forward and down, and on the starboard side of the salon, a command seat with galley behind it to starboard. To port, opposite the galley is the dinette and an enclosed shower/head. Marten likes the dining area in the salon.

"Many of the new designs put the table in the cuddy cabin, but I prefer to look out," he says.

The interior is beautifully finished in teak with special lazy-boy fabric on the command seat and settee. The Martens selected relatively dark material to stand up better under heavy use.

Many finishing touches in the cabin add up to an efficient and enjoyable experience at sea. For

example, the settee seats are sloped optimally for comfortable posture. The command seat is high and well forward for good visibility. The galley has built-in towel racks and plate holders, as well as mahogany-lined drawers. Under the command seat, a specially designed wine rack slopes abeam and aft to ensure corks stay wet. The quality of the finishing is typified by details like the dovetailed joints on the drawers.

The Martens added special touches of their own, most notably an energy efficient Ice-O-Star 2.3-cu-m freezer cleverly installed beneath the aft dinette seat. It slides out like a drawer and enhances the boat's self-sufficiency.

"There aren't many marinas where we cruise," says Marten.

**RELIABILITY AND RANGE:** Marten chose a diesel for economy, serviceability and durability: a single Volvo KAD-42/DP, the supercharged version of the Volvo KAD-41/DP. This package delivers 230hp at the crankshaft and 216hp at the B5 Duoprop. To obtain a 400-mile range, Commander's standard 106gal fuel tank was supplemented with a 30gal auxiliary.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:** Last but not least on the Martens' "needs" list was respect for the environment. They installed a dual battery system and two alternators, one for the house system, the other for starting. The extra battery capacity lets them settle in for the night without having to "flash up" the engine. A holding tank helps keep their favorite haunts pristine.

Even the engine plays its part: a minisack injector and upgraded fuel pump reduces the amount of fuel left in the system when the engine is shut down. When the engine is restarted, there is minimal cold fuel to burn off and virtually no smoke.

And who is *Juanita Jane*? These are the middle names of the Martens' two daughters. After all, it is a family boat. **■**



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