

RESTORATION QUARTERLY


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Freedom



From a Glamorous Beginning to a Glorious Relaunching

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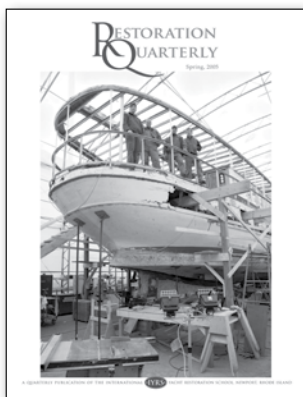


Joseph Pearce

AT LEFT *Freedom* in her heyday.

FACING PAGE *The newly restored Freedom.*

IN THE SPRING 2005 ISSUE OF *RESTORATION QUARTERLY*, we ran an article about the start of a major restoration project. Earl McMillen, head of McMillen Yachts and a group of partners had begun restoring *Freedom*, a 104-foot motor yacht designed by John Trumpy and built in 1926 by the Mathis Yacht Company of Camden, N.J. Since founding McMillen Yachts in 1992, McMillen and his various partnerships have restored and maintained a fleet of classics, including *Scout* (a 1930 Defoe Boat & Motor Works commuter), *Glory* (a 1955 Trumpy) and *Enticer* (designed by Trumpy and built by Mathis in 1935) and *Onawa*, (a 1928 Starling Burgess-designed 12 Metre).



Fast forward four years later. On Saturday, May 9, 2009, more than 100 people came to Portsmouth, R.I., to celebrate the relaunching of *Freedom*. The yacht was christened and then put into the water via Travelift to a cannon salute. While some work on the interior and systems would continue through June, the yacht was a sight to behold. Nearly five years in duration, the restoration cost in excess of \$6.5 million.

Like many classics, *Freedom* has had a long and varied history that started with wealthy private owners but progressed over time to more utilitarian and less glamorous purposes. Built for Aubert J. Fay of Boston, she is a near sistership to the presidential yacht *Sequoia*. *Freedom* was owned for most of the 1930s by Mrs. J.P. Donahue, the daughter of F.W. Woolworth. With a new owner in 1939, she was moved to Miami, Fla., where she remained for the next 60 years.

A series of individuals and institutions owned *Freedom* over those decades, including a religious organization and an oceanographic foundation that was part of the University of Miami. When McMillen found her in Florida in 2001, she was in a truly derelict state. With one additional partner, Chuck Parrish, he brought the boat by barge up to Portsmouth, R.I., in preparation for her restoration, which began in August 2004.

Under the guidance of project manager Jeff Jacobsen and shipwrights Dan Roten, Louis Sauzedde and Todd Jarem, *Freedom* underwent a meticulous restoration. The team made use of photographs, articles and other reference materials to ensure that they

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were doing the right thing. Original parts, fittings and fixtures from other Mathis-Trumpy yachts served as the basis for molds and templates so that new ones could be built. The designer's family, which included Donald, Sigrid, Janie & Trudy Trumpy, proved to be an invaluable asset during the restoration process. They supplied valuable information and original photographs and casting patterns for missing hardware. McMillen asked to give them a special acknowledgement for their much appreciated efforts!

A number of IYRS graduates and students have worked on the restoration – making the transition from a Beetle Cat, Herreshoff 12½ and other projects to one on a much larger scale. According to McMillen, "It is critical that we have access to talented, motivated and passionate shipwrights and artisans in order to fulfill our mission. IYRS has been an invaluable conduit for this rare and precious human resource."

As with the other restorations, McMillen pulled together a group of partners to fund the project (see sidebar). As fractional owners, a concept that McMillen pioneered in 1995, the partners, all with a similar interest but not as much available time, are able to participate in the same mission of restoring and then having access to classic yachts. The partners' role has been a critical factor in the successful completion of a number of restoration projects, including *Freedom*.

Starting in July, the partners will begin a summer of



shakedown cruising on *Freedom*. Each of the partners will have access depending on their percentage of ownership. (For example, a typical 5-percent share would give the partner access to a minimum of eight days per year and four days during the summer.) There is currently limited availability in *Freedom* as well as most of the other yachts in the McMillen Yacht fleet.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Building off the success, knowledge and expertise gained through this and other restoration projects, McMillen has formed

the new Mathis Yacht Building Company in Rhode Island with the plan to build yachts in the spirit of, and inspired by, those designed by John Trumpy and built by the original Mathis Yacht Building Company of Camden, N.J. Although not affiliated with the original company, the new company intends to build yachts that feature composite hulls, modified with additional draft and beam for added stability. The boats will also have modern systems that utilize new technologies such as bio-diesel hybrid propulsion and "at rest" stabilization. As with *Freedom*, all of the joinery below and above deck will be built to the quality and standards associated with the original Mathis Yacht Building Company. ▴

To learn more about McMillen Yachts, their projects and fleet of classics, go to www.woodenyachts.com

❧ Partners in the Restoration of *Freedom* ❧



- Mr. & Mrs. Charles M. Parrish
- Mr. & Mrs. Earl McMillen III
- Mr. & Mrs. George McKerrow, Jr.
- Mr. & Mrs. Edwin A. Wahlen, Jr.
- Mr. & Mrs. Gene W. Milner
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael McChesney
- Mr. & Mrs. Bayne Stevenson
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael A. Miles
- Mr. & Mrs. Fred Burke
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert Pittman
- Mr. & Mrs. J. Rutherford Seydel II
- Mr. & Mrs. Roger Smith
- Ms. Jane Smith Turner
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Klump