



Above: The beamed ceiling visually connects the salon and dining area; the pattern deviates to accommodate a chandelier mount over the dining table. Right: The spacious country kitchen is bathed in natural light from the large windows on the main deck.

Those are two of the most important elements the owners of the 92-foot (27.9-meter) Rayburn *Kathleen M.* Dr. Steve and Kathy Irwin (she is the boat's namesake), brought to the project.

"They let us make many of the [technical] decisions," says Paul Rayburn. With minimal involvement, the owners created a vessel that still gives them a sense of pride in their choices. "By allowing us to do our job and trusting our judgment, their own good taste shines through," he adds.

That doesn't mean the owners were hands-off. Steve Irwin says either he or his representative visited the yard every 60 days during the 20-month build. Irwin has a unique perspective. The orthopedic surgeon knows the value of letting the craftsmen do what they do best. The results are reflected in *Kathleen M.*, and Irwin is satisfied with the choices. "We finished the build and think the boat's just perfect," he says. "We didn't under-build at all."

The 92-footer is the largest boat the Irwins have owned, as well as their first custom project and the first boat they will operate with crew. Accustomed to operating their 65-foot Hatteras enclosed-bridge sportfisher in the freshwater of Lake Michigan, the couple knew both what they wanted and what didn't appeal to them.

"We didn't want a European look or a big boat," Irwin

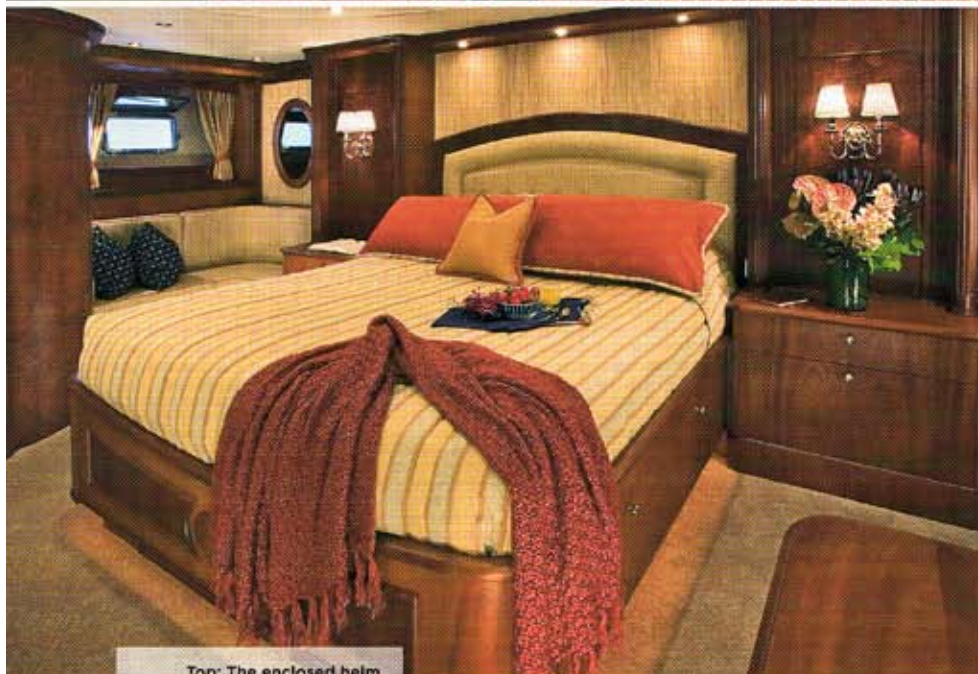


says. They saw the 88-foot *Rayburn Lady* at the 2004 Miami Yacht and Brokerage Show. "We liked the design and size, but we wanted an enclosed bridge." They considered other builders and even had a serious chat with Burger Boat, but they finally decided on fiberglass rather than aluminum.

Impressed with the workmanship displayed in the 88-footer, and enamored with the ride during a sea trial, the Irwins found their yacht.

"Steve grabbed me and my dad by our shoulders," says Rayburn, "and, with a firm squeeze, looked us in the eyes and said, 'You build us a boat just like this with an enclosed bridge and we'll be happy.' It wasn't quite a handshake, but it was a deal."

As discussions proceeded, "just like this" got bigger than the sea-trialed 88 feet. The Irwins' request for more room was >



Top: The enclosed helm and adjacent skylounge is the place to be aboard *Kathleen M*; the space provides panoramic views and comfortable entertaining options. Above: The tastefully appointed full-beam master stateroom is amidships.

timely. "We'd been working on the foundation of a wider hull mold designed [by longtime Rayburn collaborator Ed Hagemann] to handle extra weight and a little more length," Rayburn says. The request resulted in the additional four feet in length and a two-foot increase in the beam to 23 feet.

The Irwins savored the reality of their decisions during a two-week cruise along British Columbia's coast. *Kathleen M* worked into a five-foot chop and swell driven by winds up to 40 knots. "Making twelve and a half knots, there was minimal bow spray, and the windows and decks stayed dry," the captain reports.

The sapele used throughout the interior is the common thread connecting the cabins to the salon to the bridge. The wood is at its warming best in the beamed overhead of the salon. The intersecting beams serve to visually enlarge the area and deviate cleverly in a circular chandelier mount over the dining table that defines that space.

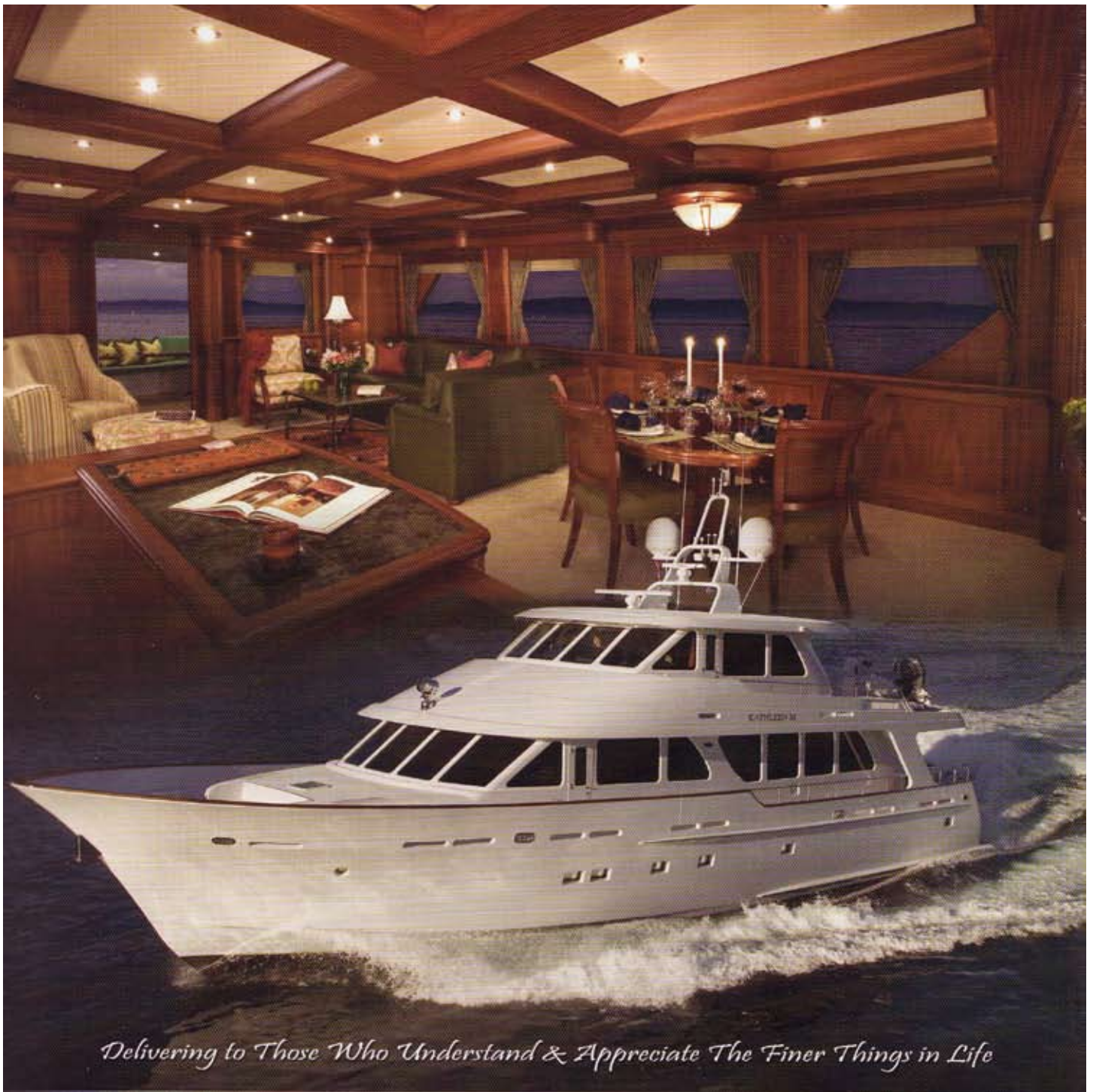
The crew quarters benefited from the size increase with private double and single cabins for the Irwins' crew of two or three. A must-have item for the avid divers was the dive center, which is anchored by a four-tank Brownie dive compressor installed between the crew cabins and the engine room. The remainder of the additional length shows in the form of a stepped sheer that adds higher freeboard forward to deliver a dry ride. "It also gives her a more seaworthy look, and the style nicely carries the increased structure of the enclosed bridge," Rayburn says.

The enclosed bridge eliminates the need for a helm on the main deck, but not the convenience of four additional steering stations—wing stations off the pilothouse and port and starboard on the aft deck. *Kathleen M*'s settee forward of the galley, in place of the lower helm, converts the area into an inviting country kitchen. Below, the full-beam owner's suite—with private stairway—and three more cabins provide the cruising accommodations the Irwins sought in the 92-footer.

Rayburn tended well to the details behind the finish. A substantial sound-attenuation package includes graphite/rubber tiles placed inside the hull, directly behind the spray knockers on the bow and at the waterline, muting water noise when the yacht is under way and at anchor. The salon sole and engine room bulkheads are floating, which breaks the vibration chain.

Kathleen M enjoys substantial carbon-fiber reinforcements for a lighter, open structure that meets ABS standards. Structural members are all inorganic composites, including all the structural bulkheads, five of which are watertight, including the steering compartment. Below the waterline, the hull is vinylester fiberglass over Corecell. PVC core is used in the topsides and the superstructure for its resistance to core-altering heat in warmer climates.

Attention to details such as these keep the perils of custom boatbuilding to a minimum and produced *Kathleen M*, a yacht that made the journey for the owner and builder well worth the effort. Contact **Rayburn Custom Yachts** at 604-820-9153. www.rayburnyachts.com ☐



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