

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STANLEY ROSENFELD



*Tollycraft 27-footer combines generous flare, ample freeboard, and modified deep-V hull to produce soft, dry ride.*

# THE TOLLYCRAFT 27' EXPRESSCRUISER

BY LARRY KEAN AND JACK SMITH

*West Coast fiberglass cruiser  
utilizes "space-age" construction to  
achieve stiff, lightweight hull.*

From a distance, as we walked toward the pier at Zuber's Seacoast Basin in Brielle, N.J., our main impression of the 27' fiberglass Tollycraft was that her hardtop appeared to be supported by glass; otherwise she looked like an average stock express cruiser. She isn't—but you have to step aboard before you begin to notice the "little" things that make the big differences in this boat.

The Tollycraft has been designed and built with considerable attention to detail—obviously by people with extensive on-the-water experience—and the result is a craft that provides a full measure of accommodation and comfort in 27 feet, has superior stability and handling characteristics, and makes general maintenance a relative pleasure.

It's somewhat unusual when a dealer's first move is to lift hatches and invite you to poke your head into the bilges and under the decks, but that's exactly what occurred as we swung our legs over the rail. Bob Prull, President of Maple Leaf Yacht Sales, and his assistant, Tom Dropchinski, just weren't geared to sell a glossy exterior and hope the work beneath would never be seen; they were proud of the way the Tollycraft was built, and eager to expose her subsurface virtues.

We won't begin to guess how many first-time buyers might be sold by being led straight to the bilges, but it certainly has meaning for the experienced boatman. He knows that most troubles in stock boats happen in places difficult or impossible to reach without tearing structures apart—and most happen because the hidden work and materials are inferior in the first place. The Tollycraft builders have taken pains to avoid that frustrating fault.

Two of the six hatches in the cockpit sole were out when our feet hit the textured surface, and we were immediately impressed. Molded in the form of shallow, inverted trays with insulated undersides, the hatches are designed to rest flush in scuppered channels molded into the cockpit sole. And the scupper system is unique: Water entering around the hatch rim runs to a single hole in the channel and drains through a plastic hose to a fiberglass box

## SPECIFICATIONS

### Dimensions:

Length overall . . . . .	27' 6½"	Freeboard forward . . . . .	4' 9"
Waterline length . . . . .	23' 10½"	Freeboard aft . . . . .	3' 8"
Beam . . . . .	10' 7"	Bridge clearance* . . . . .	8' 3"
Draft . . . . .	2' 0"	Cabin headroom . . . . .	6' 2"

\*Waterline to top of pilothouse

**Displacement:** 6500 lbs.

**Accommodations:** Sleeps four—two in forward V-berths and two in convertible dinette. Galley area with stove, sink, and ice chest. Enclosed head with lavatory and w/c.

**Standard Equipment:** International Rule navigation lights; electric horn; four life preservers; two dry chemical extinguishers; molded fiberglass vent ducts; bilge blower; PAR electric bilge pump; 13 lb Perko anchor and chocks; 100' nylon anchor line; two 25' nylon docking lines; 3" Ritchie compass; s.s. bow rail, grab rails, and taffrail; chrome-over-bronze deck hardware includes stemhead chock with roller, two 6" bow chocks, 10" mooring cleat, two 7" breast cleats, two 8" quarter cleats, and chain pipe; 16½" x 19½" translucent foredeck hatch; aluminum-framed ventilating windshield and sliding side windows; two electric windshield wipers; fixed forward window and aluminum-framed, screened, sliding windows in cabin; front-opening Marvel ice chest; s.s. sink; pressure water system; three-burner Magic Chef propane range with oven; 5½ lb propane tank; Raritan manual marine w/c; molded fiberglass lavatory with single faucet; 32 gal s.s. fresh water tank; instrument panel with Morse single lever controls, twin tachometers, fuel gauges, ammeters, engine temperature gauges, oil temperature gauges, and ignition switches; 12 v electrical system with 11 circuits; glass fuses; bonded grounding system; 12 v battery; 110 v shore power connection; vaporproof battery switch; two 50 gal galvanized fuel tanks; shipping cradle.

**Construction:** One piece hull of hand lay-up, vacuum molded fiberglass. Nine-ply bottom, average thickness 1 7/32" (one layer of 2 oz mat, 1 of 9½ oz cloth, 1 of 13 oz roving, 1 of 18 oz roving, 1 of 10 oz cloth, 1" thick, 2 lb density foam, 1 of 10 oz cloth, and 2 of 18 oz roving). Seven-ply topsides, average thickness 1 5/32" (one layer of 2 oz mat, 1 of 13 oz roving, 1 of 18 oz roving, 1 of 10 oz cloth, 1" thick, 2 lb density foam, 1 of 10 oz cloth, 1 of 18 oz roving). Highly stressed areas reinforced with additional mat and/or roving. Bottom stiffened with molded fiberglass hat-section longitudinal. Composite deck of fiberglass and plywood (one layer of 9 oz cloth, 3/8" marine grade plywood set in 3/16"—¼" of chopped strand spray, and 2½" x 1½" deck beams).

**Propulsion and Performance:** See page 83.

**Price:** With above equipment and propulsion listed on page 83, \$13,950 FOB Kelso, Wash. Test boat with propulsion listed on page 83, \$15,950. FOB Kelso, Wash.

**Designer:** Hull—Edwin Monk. Profile and interior—R.M. Tollefson.

**Builder:** Tollycraft Corp. Kelso, Wash. 98626.



LARRY KEAN

The Tollycraft 27-footer's distinctive styling and large glass areas contribute greatly to her big boat appearance.

## 27' TOLLYCRAFT

*continued*

inside the transom, and the box drains overboard.

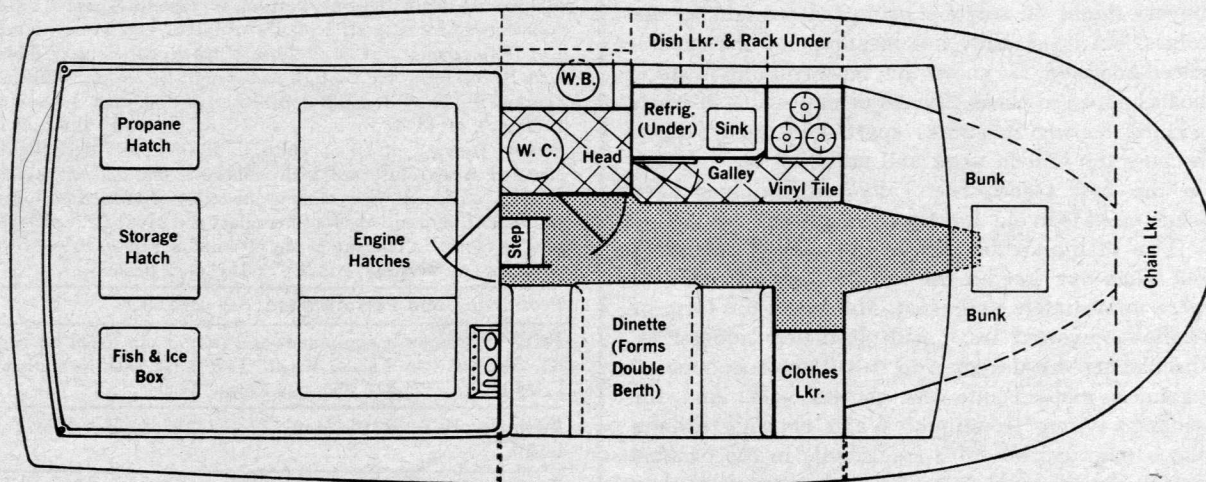
Three of the hatches in the cockpit are forward, side-by-side over the engines, separated only by the supporting channels, and each measures 25½" x 41". Access to the machinery is excellent when all are out. The three other hatches are aft—one centered, one to port, one to starboard. The center hatch, 24" square, gives clear access to the stern installations: two large, stainless steel mufflers; the rudder stuffing boxes and tiller linkages; the drainage box; the 32 gal rectangular stainless steel water tank, which sits on a raised platform athwartships and is vented overboard; and two inboard terminals of a 36 sq in zinc plate, which is centered outboard below the waterline on the transom. The entire electrical system, engines, and gas tanks are grounded to this sacrificial zinc; a superb installation.

Raising the port and starboard hatches reveals

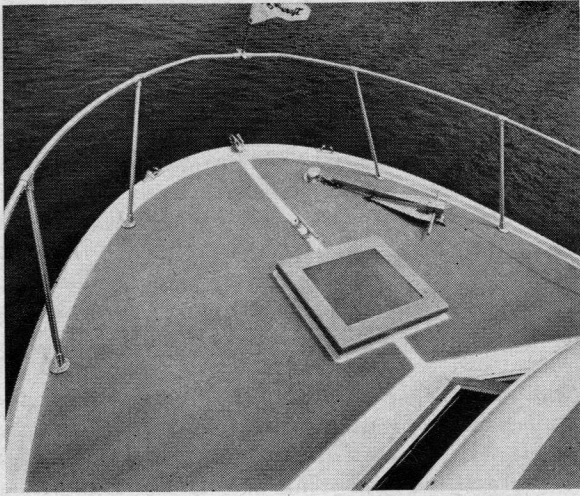
two more interesting features: Each hatch gives access to a well, 16" x 24" and 16" deep, and each well is molded integrally with the cockpit sole, with a drain hole centered in the bottom and a hose leading to the overboard drain. The starboard well is insulated with foam, and can serve as an extra ice-box or a fish well. The port well holds a 5½ lb propane tank for the galley range.

Make no mistake, though propane is popular as a cooking fuel, it is highly explosive, and, being heavier than air, it will collect in the bilges if a leak in the system should make that possible. But the well in the Tollycraft eliminates much of that danger; any gas that might leak at the tank fittings would end up overboard. The only other possibility for leakage would be in the copper fuel line leading to the range, and that is easy to examine regularly.

The two batteries are mounted separately, one outboard of each engine transmission. Close-fitting plywood boxes half the battery height are bonded to the hull bottom to hold them, and each battery has a



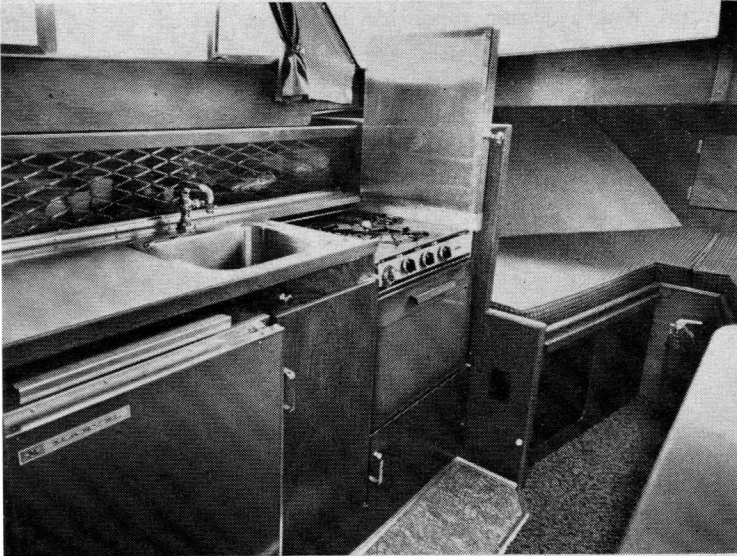
Accommodation plan for 27' Tollycraft cruiser.



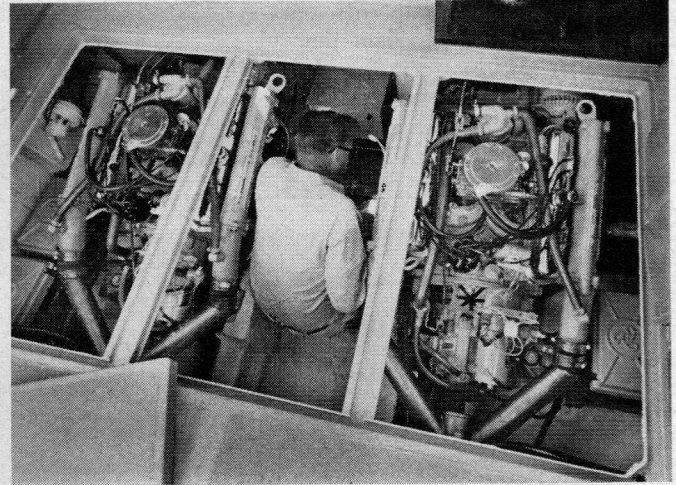
*Uncluttered foredeck has first-rate non-skid surface. Note translucent hatch cover.*



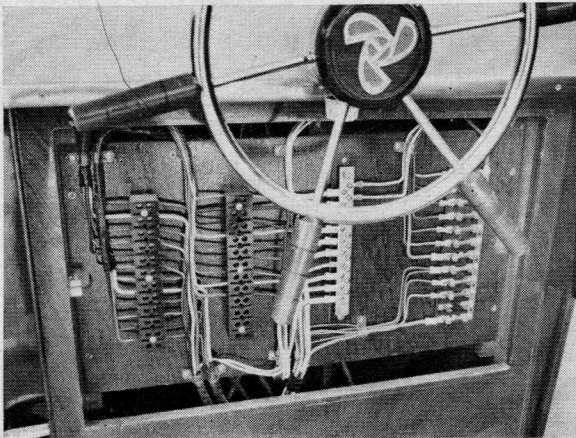
*Fiberglass helmsman's console tilts aft for easy access to wiring and controls. Opened fuse panel is seen below wheel.*



*Compact 5' galley is complete with gas range and oven, pressure water system, and 3.3 cu ft ice chest.*



*Neat, color-coded wiring highlights the readily accessible 12 v fuse panel.*



*Excellent accessibility is afforded by large, scuppered hatches (Center right). Convertible dinette (above) and forward V-berths offer accommodation for four.*

## 27' TOLLYCRAFT

*continued*

thin vinyl plastic cover. Though the batteries lack hold-down straps, the snug fit makes the boxes good retainers. As for the covers, they're relatively shallow, but they do lack vent holes.

Gas tanks, 50 gals each, are mounted port and starboard, aft of the batteries. They're galvanized steel, basically rectangular, with the outboard sides shaped to the hull. Each is properly vented on the hull side, and has a fill pipe on the adjacent side deck, where any overflow will run overboard.

The cockpit is roomy, measuring 8' x 10'. It is 23" deep to the deck line, where a stainless steel rail rises 7" to make the effective depth 30". From the sole, we stretched the tape 6' 2" to the perforated vinyl on the underside of the hardtop—and noted a handy dome light on the port side. Light but sturdy extruded aluminum alloy supports the hardtop.

Side windows slide for ventilation. The forward windows, however, differ from the conventional in a manner that we highly approve. They're fixed, with separate, narrow ventilating panels across the bottom. Equipped with stainless steel hardware, the panels are easily opened to any degree, and permit an excellent flow of air which is directed by an upward curve of the cabin roof outside, just below the framing. The air doesn't blow your head off or whip things around.

The instrument console is a model of func-

tionalism. Molded into the forward top is a well in which the 3" Ritchie compass is installed. Just aft, on sloping faces, are the gauges and switches.

The test boat had vinyl-coated fabric drop curtains to enclose the cockpit under the hardtop. Vertical nylon zippers join together five panels, of which three stretch across the back and one up each side to the window. They can be rolled up and secured by straps, or removed completely from an aluminum track on the underside of the hardtop. An alternate choice, at no extra cost, is a camper back to enclose the entire cockpit, with full head-room back to the transom. This is accomplished with the aid of an inverted U-shaped frame installed on sliding tracks on the side decks. In use, the frame is erect at the transom; stowed, it slides forward at the base points and the top rests across the transom. It's a good setup for rainy days or for accommodating extra people in the cockpit.

Two carpeted steps lead down to the cabin, which is roomy and brightly illuminated through front and side windows and a translucent fiberglass panel in the forward hatch. The layout is conventional—but again, there are distinctive touches. A rotary-cut Bruynzeel mahogany plywood is used for all the wood paneling. With swirling grains and a honey tone, it's attractive indeed. Blue-green nylon carpeting covers the sole, and turquoise curtains of coarse linen have nylon slides fitted into aluminum tracks. Gold-colored nylon carpeting lines the sides of the bow, and the galley counter and table top are a complimentary



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yellow plastic laminate. Berth and dinette cushions are blue-green, in a subtle checkered pattern. Overhead, perforated white vinyl adds to the brightness.

Starting at the bow, a 12" x 14" hinged plywood door opens to the rope locker. V-berths in the bow extend partly into the main cabin, where they terminate at partial bulkheads. Full headroom over the after third of the 6' 2" berths makes it easy to get into them. For sleeping, an upholstered insert goes between the berths, making them full-width. The entire space under each berth is closed off for storage, with access through a sliding door. Overhead, the 16 1/2" x 19 1/2" fiberglass hatch gives good access to the forward deck.

The efficient galley unit includes a Magic Chef three-burner propane stove with oven; a 12" x 14" x 7" stainless steel sink; the 3.3 cu ft Marvel icebox (converted to a refrigerator); a deep undersink locker with one slideout shelf; and a big locker under the oven for pots and pans.

Over the stove, a hinged cover with a stainless steel lining serves as part of the countertop when lowered and as a heat deflector when raised. A utensil storage cabinet outdoors runs the full length of the galley counter. It has decorative sliding doors of plastic, and a wide shelf on top which is fitted

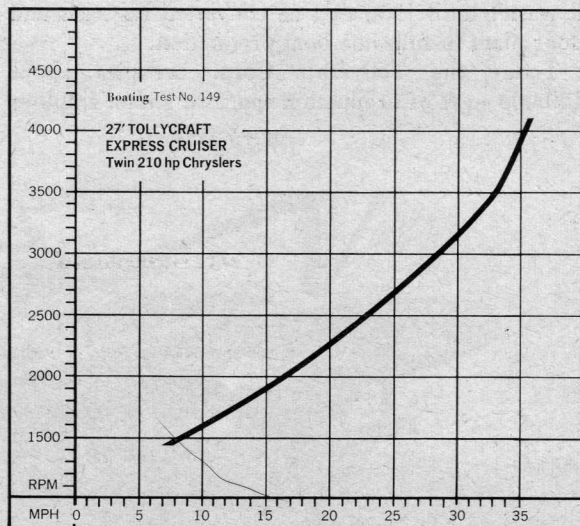
#### Propulsion:

*Standard power:* 210 hp Chrysler V-8 gasoline engine with 318 cu in piston displacement; 3.91" bore x 3.31" stroke; 1.5:1 gear ratio; 16" x 15" three-bladed propeller.

*Optional power:* Twin 210 hp Chrysler V-8 gasoline engines with 318 cu in piston displacement; 3.91" bore x 3.31" stroke; 1.5:1 gear ratio; 14" x 11" three-bladed propellers.

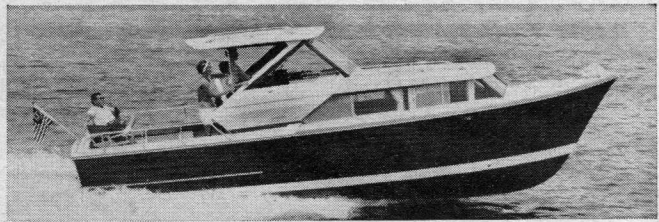
*Test boat equipped with twin 210 hp Chryslers.*

#### Performance Curve\*



rpm	mph	gph	mpg	running angle
1500	8.36	5.50	1.52	4°
2000	16.27	9.20	1.77	5°
2500	22.93	13.70	1.67	6°
3000	28.57	18.25	1.56	5°
3500	33.33	24.50	1.36	4°
4000	35.47	31.05	1.14	3°

\*Speed based on clocked times over measured statute mile, with two persons on board and 90 gals fuel. Fuel consumption measured by Brooks Instrument flowmeter. Engine rpm determined with Merc-O-Tronic tachometer.



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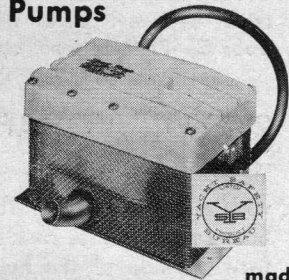
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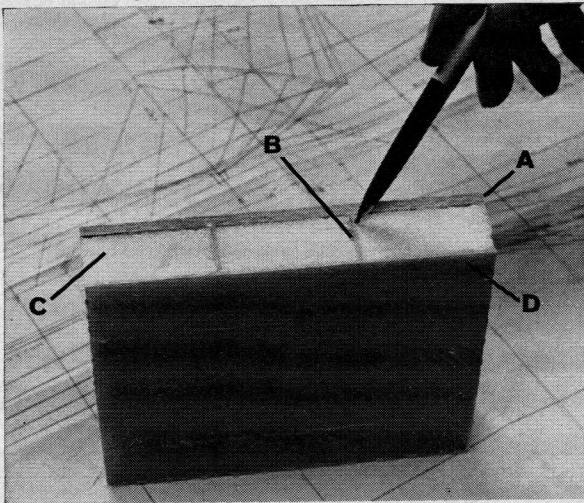
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LARRY KEAN

Section of Tollycraft's Pli-cor hull shows construction details: A—Heavy outer fiberglass skin; B—Fiberglass web; C—1" thick foam core; D—Inner fiberglass layer.

## 27' TOLLYCRAFT

*continued*

with a sea rail. Over the icebox, a sliding breadboard pulls out. A rack for six glasses hangs on the forward side of the head. The overall dimensions of the plastic laminate countertop are 20½" x 58½" and it has a sea rail at the forward edge. A well-planned touch in front of the galley is a foot-wide strip of vinyl tile to help prevent stains on the carpeting.

Both sinks (galley and head) are fed by a pressure water system—with a filter in the fresh water line!

In the head, which is wallpapered with ship-design vinyl and has a vinyl floor covering, the width is 35½" and the fore-and-aft length is 34¼". Items include a Raritan head, dome light, mirror, towel rod, paper rack, and cup rack. The fiberglass vanity top has a molded-in 11¼" dia sink, 7" deep. Below, a cabinet with a sliding door has one shelf, and the water pressure pump is mounted to one side. The bronze shut-off valve for the head intake is located in the bottom.

The dinette to starboard is 6' 2" long and has a 3' mean width. The cushions, as elsewhere, are 4" thick. This unit converts to a double berth in a somewhat different manner: The 34" x 36" table, hinged against a mahogany rack for eight glasses below the window, is raised up to the overhead with its leg folded back and secured by a web strap; the seats then slide toward the center, where short legs support them, and the backs drop down to complete the berths. It's simple and efficient.

We noted only one thing that may or may not be an inconvenience at night: The raised table tends to block off the dome light over the dinette. If the light were a little closer to the centerline of the boat, this wouldn't happen.

The dinette is surrounded by ample stowage space. There are five drawers below, three under the forward seat and two under the sole. They're plastic with ¾" plywood fronts, and are of generous proportions. Under the after seat, a big deep locker provides stowage for bedding. It has a hinged door

at the front and a cutout aft on the side gives access to the back. Forward of the dinette, a full length hanging locker with hinged door has a shelf on top that is fitted with sea rails.

Out on the decks, footing is good because of the textured surface which is molded in. Stainless steel grab rails on the sides and cabin top aid in access to the bow, though the side rails tend to be a little low. All hardware that takes any load is through-bolted, with ½" plywood backup blocks.

The sea was like glass for our test runs. We regretted it, because the boat felt good and we would have liked to have tried her in a slop. Though the hull is relatively light in weight, she felt extremely solid—undoubtedly because of the rigid, foam-core construction which Tollycraft calls Pli-cor. This also had the effect of dampening sound, and there was minimum transmission of vibration.

The best test we could give her was repeated runs through the wake of the camera boat, while Stan Rosenfeld clicked away. She handled well through-out—and banked into turns like an aircraft. A number of times the camera boat was obscured by the hardtop as we circled her, but this would be true in just about any hardtopped boat circling an object at high speed. She cut through the wakes well, exhibited good stability, and there was every indication that in a seaway she would be fairly dry, without excessive pounding.

Along about 1932, a young fellow in Kelso, Wash. decided to build himself a speedboat . . . and because he was a skilled cabinetmaker with an intimate knowledge of wood and woodworking, his 16-footer reflected his skills. As with the usual stereotyped success story, people saw the boat, were impressed, and demanded copies. But the young fellow, R. M. (Tolly) Tollefson, played it cool and it wasn't until 1952 that he converted his sash and door plant to full-time boat production.

Today the Tollycraft Corp. occupies about 140,000 sq ft of production space in Kelso, employs



LARRY KEAN

Unique assembly system permits easy access to interior during construction. Bulkheads are later bonded to hull.

140 or more people, build: pleasure craft up to 50', and has dealers on both coasts.

As we approached the plant a large sign caught our eye . . . "Visitors Welcome—Tour The Plant." Now this open-house attitude is common in many industries, but quite rare in the boating field.

Once inside the plant it was obvious that they had something to be proud of. Under the guiding wing of Tolly we spent a good two hours on a preliminary inspection. As it finally worked out we spent about a day and a half in the plant. We were particularly impressed with the plant housekeeping. sweepers were manning their brooms in every department.

Tollycraft's fiberglass construction method was the major item on our agenda . . . we were anxious to find out all about their Pli-cor system. We found the mold for the 27-footer with six or seven people laying-up the outer skin, a combination of mat, cloth and woven roving. With this step completed the Pli-cor was fitted in place. Pli-cor consists of 2 lb density foam mandrels (2" x 1" on the bottom and 3" x 1" on the topsides) wrapped in 10 oz fiberglass cloth and stitched together along one edge (see photograph on page 84). The material is placed in position and covered with 18 oz roving.

Now comes the interesting part . . . the hull mold is draped with a plastic sheet and 29 inches of vacuum are pulled. This forces the Pli-cor into intimate contact with the outer skin, resin is forced into the layers of 10 oz cloth between the foam mandrels, and excess resin is forced out of the lay-up. With the vacuum still working, the mold is rolled into a curing oven where it spends 45 minutes at 95° and an hour at 130°.

Cooking completed, the mold is removed from the oven and the hull popped out. The heat cure insures that the hull is fully cured—no days or hours of waiting for a "green" hull to stiffen up.

Tollycraft claims several advantages for their technique—lighter weight, stiffer hull, sound and shock insulation, and of course *some* flotation advantages. Unfortunately, the volume of foam in the 27-footer is not quite enough to float a loaded hull.

We certainly agree that the method produces a very stiff, rugged hull as the Pli-cor in effect produces an "I" beam structure with the closely spaced webs running in a fore-and-aft direction.

The Tollycraft plant is full of little surprises. The boat's internal structure, bulkheads, berths, head, and galley are assembled on the floor and attached to the deck and lowered into the hull (see photograph on page 84). This is a complete reversal of standard practice and has one obvious advantage . . . the owner will never take delivery on a Tollycraft that has bilges full of pump-clogging sawdust.

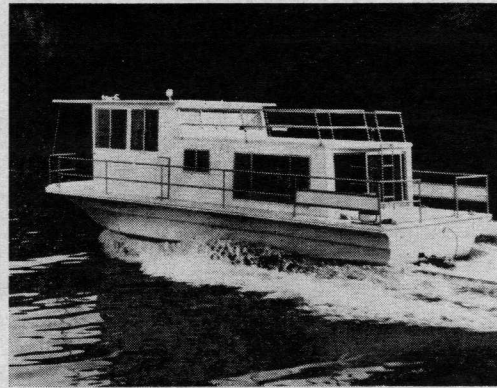
Frankly, we found the Tollycraft an eye-opener—and it's always a pleasure to see a manufacturer doing so many things right.

Considering the overall design, the construction, and the care taken in selecting and mounting the necessary accessory equipment, this boat stacks up as one that offers the buyer excellent value—and the accessibility of equipment when it finally becomes necessary to repair or replace parts is a hidden bonus that will continue to pay dividends. ⚓

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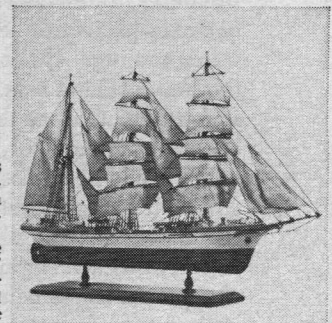
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