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Houseboat

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Majestic

Minnesota

**Houseboat Life
on the Upper Mississipp'**



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Majestic Minnesota

John and Linda Mathews
make the best
of business,
pleasure
and
houseboating
adventure



Mixing business and pleasure is supposed to be a no-no, right? Tell that to John and Linda Mathews of St. Paul, Minn. For years they've been violating that oil-and-water admonition and don't show any signs of changing their ways. In fact, the at-work and on-water worlds they inhabit are now closer than ever, thanks to their third and—by far—most ambitious cruising abode, *CC Man III*.



FOOD FRIENDLY:

The front salon on this boat isn't at the front at all. In its place is a forward galley, which has worked wonders for entertaining guests.

THE OFFICE: John and Linda keep their work close to them, but not too close. Once the top deck doors close, business hours are over.



Fitting to its name, the 85-foot custom mono-hull, built by Kentucky-based Majestic Yachts, has three combining elements that make it unique among houseboats of this class.

The first is sheer liveboard comfort, reflected in its tradition-breaking custom layout. The second is the "office floor" at the aft end of the top deck. The third is sheer power that allows the boat all the necessary maneuvering ability for cruising the currents of the upper Mississippi River.

"We're quite proud of what we've done with this boat," says Linda. "We have lots of special touches for living aboard, like a laundry room, upright freezer and garbage disposal and water softener...It's a very homey atmosphere. We've got just about everything but the garage."

John adds that they were also sure to make allocations for a special 20-gallon tank specifically for drinking water and ice cubes in the galley and upper wet bar, plus a 500-gallon fresh water tank for the couple to take up to 10-day cruises out on the river.

"Having houseboats before, we knew what we wanted," he said. (Their previous *CC Man* vessels included a 36-foot vintage Gibson and a 47-foot 1985 Harbor Master.)

"Like with the layout, we knew we'd be doing a lot of entertaining and meals on the boat, but we wanted to keep it separated from the living areas."

As a result, they designed the cabin with a forward galley—the hub of their onboard social gatherings. On a trip out to the Mathews' boat last summer, we had the chance to see this feature in use. The dining area is immaculate and quite large, boasting a long L-shaped counter with several pedestal chairs and enough cupboard space to hold a lifetime's worth of utensils, groceries and all the kitchen comforts of home. In case of visitor spill-over or just an elevated view of Willie's Hidden Harbor Marina, the top deck's wet bar offers plenty more space to socialize. And of course, both locations include a sampling of John's favorite drink and namesake of the boat: *Canadian Club Manhattan (CC Man III)*.

ever. We've got it all right here."

If the overlap of home, office and boat poses any problems, with the Mathews it certainly doesn't show.

"With that office up top, it gives us definite closure when the work day is over," John says. "We close the door, and we're done. The difference is that it's a very rapid commute to work, and hey, you can do it in your bath robe."

In addition to all the at-home creature comforts and conveniences of an on-board business center, one of the most important attributes of this boat isn't just what it is, but what it does.

Powered by a pair of 8.1 liter MerCruisers, this boat easily handles the trickiest currents Old Man River has to offer. John proved to us that it even catches enough speed to pull a skier. (See photo.) It has V-drives for added maneuverability, and thrusters to aid in docking or any close-quarters operation. John also added special roller devices on the fore and aft rail gates to safely hold the boat against the lock wall and allow the boat to move fore and aft, up and down, without ruining the fenders when navigating locks. Other special touches for river travel include a double-plated bow for beaching and a remote control for vessel operation anywhere on the boat. Additionally, Mercury's SmartCraft digital cockpit monitors all systems while underway.

"Majestic did a fantastic job," John told us. "It's been a very good relationship. The stability of the hull is unbelievable, and they gave us numerous choices on fabrics, colors and helping us in completing our customized floor plan. Additionally, both the hull and interior walls are insulated with 3M Thinsulate, not only for insulation, but also for soundproofing."

Beyond the comfort, the convenience and the performance of their craft, the Mathews and their two canine companions (Buddy and Emmy) have the benefit of living in a

There is one place, however, that the casual visitor rarely sees. Tucked back behind the second-story bar station is a room that looks more fitting in a city high-rise than on a houseboat.

Not only are John and Linda liveaboards. They're bona fide "workaboards." As entrepreneurial spirits in the automotive industry, they keep their work and pleasure under the same roof.

"It's really no different than having a home based business, except for the 360 degree waterfront view," explains Linda. "You can always work when the work needs to be done, and all you have to do is climb the stairs. We actually keep 'business hours' like anyone, but most people go off to the bank or what-



FAN FARE: If you're a Packers fan and find yourself spending the evening on *CC Man III*, be prepared to stay in John's favorite room, designed in the spirit of his home town of Green Bay, Wis.



WHAT THE...? Yes, that's a water skier. Such a feat is possible thanks to *CC Man's* twin 8.2 MerCruisers. On the shifty waters of the Mississippi, the added power is often necessary.

marina second-to-none on the upper river. Willie's Hidden Harbor seems to be a magnet for fun-loving hospitality. The dock community here exudes an atmosphere and collective personality that made it more than a little difficult to ever leave.

After settling down in the special "Packer room"—a guest suite reflective of John's Green Bay roots—we

had the chance to mingle on and off *CC Man III* with boaters from all walks of life, each of them bound by an infectious enthusiasm for helping out and having fun—even if the lion's share happen to be Viking fans.

"We can do a lot of things quite comfortable because whatever happens, we know here at the dock we have a good support system," Linda

concludes. "We share ideas, offer solutions, help each other with the winter covering of boats and watch out for each other. It's a great place to be."

For more information on the custom creations of Majestic Yachts, you can reach the builder at 270-385-9828; Fax: 270-384-4737; email: sales@majesticyachtsinc.com.

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