With shimmering Chesapeake Bay waters reflected in her topsides, Tory and Betty Sue Salvia's Mariner 36, *Sparkle Plenty*, lives up to her name.

A telegenic Mariner 36

Sparkle Plenty *is an ongoing production*

by Gary Miller

In marriage, politics, and business, a matchmaker is someone who puts people together, knowing the synergy or resulting match will make them productive as well as happy. One of *Good Old Boat* editor Karen Larson's secret weapons is the finely honed skill of a matchmaker. To prove it, here's an email I received from her introducing me to the subject of this story.

"Gary," Karen wrote, after an enjoyable get-together at the Annapolis Boat Show, "Tory Salvia's boat is a 1980 Mariner 36, *Sparkle Plenty*. I have a feeling that she does indeed sparkle plenty. In addition to being a lovely boat with great lines, I think this article has a wonderful people angle as well. Tory has done a very brave entrepreneurial thing with TheSailingChannel.tv. I think the two of you have much in common and will enjoy the interview and the sailing that goes along with telling the tale."

Talk about laying out the red carpet. And was she right? You bet. Tory is indeed a unique 21st-century entrepreneur as well as a skilled sailor and nautical storyteller. He welcomed me, replete with cameras and tape recorder, aboard *Sparkle Plenty* for a fun-filled three-day Chesapeake Bay cruise.

Tory and his wife, Betty Sue, keep their boat at Leatherbury Point Marina in Shady Side, Maryland, a beautiful, well-protected sailor's haven on the Western Shore about a 25-minute drive from Annapolis. Tory and I were joined much of the time by Tory's sailing friend Bob Spann in his elegant 28-foot Alerion. The three of us talked of boats and boat design (especially about the Mariner 36), the weather (we sailed in everything from flat calms to blustery 20- to 25-knot winds, even a flat-out 40-knot thunderboomer on the final leg) and, of course, the concept of bringing good old boats like *Sparkle Plenty* back to life through plenty of elbow grease and electronic, mechanical, and canvas upgrades. Tory and Bob were wonderful cruising companions, making it hard to concentrate on getting this story rather than just messin' about.

Reassuringly solid

The first impression you get when boarding a Mariner 36 is that things are solid underfoot. Solid like an aircraft carrier. Tipping the scales at 17,000 pounds with an 11½-foot beam, *Sparkle Plenty* can take anything the wind gods dish out, especially with in-mast furling in addition to the usual roller-furling jib. Light-air performance, Tory admits, is not her strong suit, but in normal winds she moves with grace and aplomb and in heavy winds she roars like a freight train, a very comfortable and elegant one.

She has wide decks, a modern fin-keeled underbody, and beautiful New Hampshire craftsmanship in the interior joinery work. She is blessed with plenty of drawers, nooks, and crannies for storage. Designed by naval architect Peter Canning, her layout is fairly conventional with a V-berth and filler up forward, followed by a hanging locker and clothes drawers, the head on the port side, and a sink on the starboard side. The main

saloon has an L-shaped settee to port and straight settee to starboard. The U-shaped galley is great for bluewater cooking and opposite is a — believe it or not — small nav room where the skipper can work to make sure the blue water stays on the outside of the boat.

"This boat has good bones," Tory said when we started talking about his many renovation projects to bring the 30-year-old boat up to snuff. "When I purchased her, I had laid out three separate budgets. One was to look for and survey the boat. Two, to make the actual purchase and, three, to bring her up-to-date with replaced or improved systems. I did a lot of the work myself, but I was also not afraid to bring in an expert when necessary. The people I worked with were terrific, not afraid to share their knowledge, and they all made the process a learning experience."

Tory feels that's something you don't get with a new boat: an up-close and thorough knowledge of systems, details, and procedures. Increasingly, he says, most new boats are built from the inside out with little thought of how to get at wiring, fuel, plumbing, electrical, and other critical components. The modifications he made to *Sparkle Plenty* (probably more than he had originally planned) have given him useful knowledge on which to draw if something ceases to work properly.

Of all the projects Tory accomplished, one he had not planned on ensued after he found a small patch of flaking bottom paint. It was the tip of the proverbial iceberg and ultimately required the bottom to be stripped from stem to stern, new glass laid on, a new barrier coat and, finally, new hard-surface bottom paint. Apparently, the problem was due to a previous bottom job done wrong — resin failed to harden properly, leading to water penetration and voids in the hull. Luckily, the Mariner's hull is very thick.

On the positive side, *Sparkle Plenty*'s previous owners had taken good care of her. Still, after 20-plus years, she was ready for a major refit.

An inside job

Repairing the bottom required that the rig be pulled so the vessel could go into a large temperature-controlled barn. With the rig down, Tory decided it was time for a rehab. The vintage 1980 Hood Stoway was one of the first in-mast furling systems on the market. Tory was fortunate to find a local rigger who, as a young man, had helped construct these masts at the Hood plant in Marblehead, Massachusetts. The result was a like-new rig sporting fresh Awlgrip paint, along with new standing and running rigging and a new Furlex headsail furler. The rigger even mated a new Seldén line-drive winch to the mast so Tory could reef and furl the mainsail from the cockpit.

"Like many boat projects, the engine replacement set off a new chain of dominoes."

While the hull and rig were being refurbished, Tory turned to the interior and its four leaky Bowmar portlights and two small hatches located in the main saloon and navigation cabin. With guidance and help from a friend who possessed excellent carpentry skills and the necessary tools, Tory removed the portlights and hatches, refinished them, and replaced the foggy Lexan with new, gray-tinted Lexan. He also removed the water-rotted teak plywood and replaced it with epoxy-coated marine ply covered with white Formica. Once the refurbished ports and hatches were re-installed, all the leaking stopped.

Next, he pulled down the yellowing vinyl headliner and rebedded all the deck fittings. Eventually, he would remove more than 100 pieces of oiled teak trim for refinishing with five coats of satin varnish, add a solid white headliner, and refinish the cabinetry and bulkheads of the galley and saloon with gloss varnish.

A diesel deal

Shortly after the rig went back up, Tory got the opportunity to replace *Sparkle Plenty*'s aging 33-hp Universal diesel. A friend with a Pedrick 41 wanted to install a larger power plant and offered his old 44-hp Universal, with only 600 hours, to Tory for just $1,100 (under the condition that Tory help him get the old engine out). The 44-hp got a new Teflon clutch plate, shaft, Cutless bearing, retuned three-bladed prop, and dripless shaft seal. Tory was able to sell the old engine for $900, so it was a pretty sweet deal.

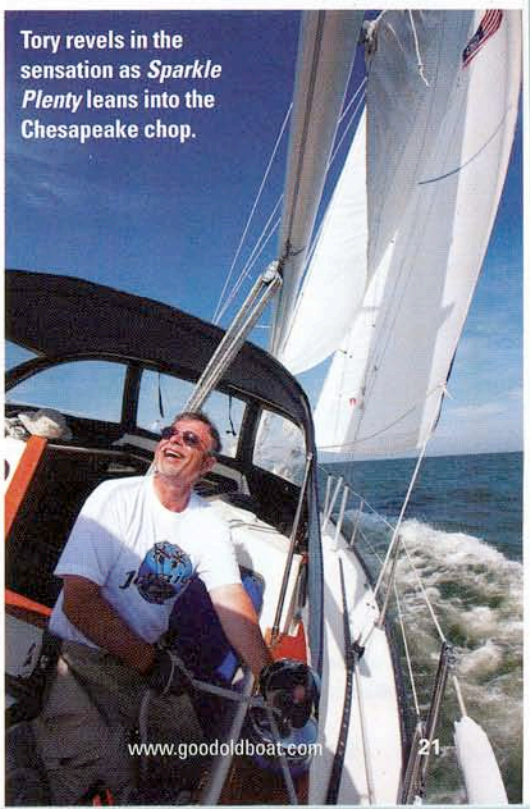
But, like many boat projects, the engine replacement set off a new chain of dominoes. Once the 33-hp was out, Tory did a complete rehab of the engine compartment with new insulation and paint. Much of *Sparkle Plenty*'s electrical wiring in the engine compartment needed to be replaced. Tory decided to rewire the entire boat, this time with the wiring running "high and dry" along an existing wiring channel along the port side.

He hired a marine electrician who agreed to let Tory work as his helper. Over the winter months, they rewired all the boat's AC and about half the DC. Once the new Universal was in place, they installed a wiring harness, 130-amp alternator, separate regulator, and a 2,500-watt/130-amp inverter-charger — all connected to a computerized controller monitoring the four Trojan golf-cart house batteries and a high-cranking starter battery.

Over the years, Tory has completed many other projects. Major ones include a new chart plotter and sailing instruments, new propane locker, rehabbed teak cockpit grate, rebuilt traveler cars and strengthened bridge-deck mainsail traveler, davits, deck wash-down system, new faucets for galley and head sinks, several new through-hulls, new head, sanitation hoses, and holding tank.

Rare breed

Only 84 Mariner 36s were produced between 1979 and 1983. When Tory



Tory revels in the sensation as *Sparkle Plenty* leans into the Chesapeake chop.

With the table stowed on the bulkhead, *Sparkle Plenty*'s saloon, at left, is airy and spacious. The white laminate headliner replaced aging vinyl. A full-width head compartment, at right, separates the forward cabin from the saloon.

sees another one, it's an occasion for celebration. He says it's a real "sleeper boat" but one he's proud to own, certainly one visitors ooh and aah over. A number of boats called Mariners were built in the Far East but, Tory says, these were birds of a different feather.

A televisionary

Shortly after purchasing *Sparkle Plenty*, Tory, who had more than 30 years' experience in media production, realized that television and video were not far from being delivered on a mass-consumption basis via the Web. It had been a hollow promise for many years, but a culmination of time and technology, as he puts it, made it clear the Web would soon be ready for TV and video. And Tory would be ready for it with TheSailingChannel.tv (TSC).

Like many of the Web's success stories, this one would take years of work before it could be declared a winner. Tory was ready to invest a lot of time, energy, sweat, and tears in making TSC a reality for him and his viewers. He kept his day job for a while, but his enthusiasm for sailing and his skills as a storyteller eventually turned TheSailingChannel.tv into a full-time and profitable job. In his own mind, Tory never had a doubt. A less driven person would never have made it.

Tory's behind-the-scenes support team was there every step of the way. Betty Sue had been instrumental in keeping his earlier TV/film/video-production company cooking and she helps out with TSC as well. Sons Peter, 32, and Jon, 29, are also accomplished video editors in their own right. Both work as video producer/editors in Washington, DC, and work with Tory on productions for TSC.

TheSailingChannel.tv is a potpourri of sailing television programming — videos on making the ICW trip, building a steel sailboat, cruising the Virgins, heavy-weather storm tactics, cruising with notables like Lin and Larry Pardey, and dozens of other topics. There is a PBS series called Adventures In Sailing that Tory co-produces with WPBT2 in Miami (that Tory says put TSC "on the map"). What's great about TheSailingChannel.tv is you can order DVDs or, for much less money, simply download a video in QuickTime or Windows Media formats.

Also on the website is a short "music video" of the *Good Old Boat* crew singalong at the 2010 Annapolis boat show, with the matchmaker, er, editor, singing along enthusiastically.

Gary Miller is a cinematographer/producer/writer/editor whose real fun comes from sailing with his wife, Ann, in their restored 35-foot Pearson centerboarder named Viridian, *out of City Island, New York. See Gary's work at <www.wordsandpixels.com>.*

The U-shaped galley on the Mariner 36, at left, is a little tight but plenty seaworthy. Its glossy varnish is a result of Tory's lavish attention. Tory checks the engine, at right, which he obtained on very reasonable terms from a friend.

Measuring the Mariner 36 . . .

. . . against its cruising contemporaries

by Ted Brewer

The long waterlines, moderate draft, husky displacement, and modest sail area of both the Mariner 36 and Pearson 36 are a solid indication that their designers intended these two yachts as family-oriented cruisers for coastal and bluewater voyages.

The Pearson was built as a true cutter, complete with staysail stay and running backstays, and her cutter rig has definite advantages offshore.

Alan Gurney's Islander 36, with her lighter displacement and good draft, fits more into the "performance cruiser" category, as one would expect of the designer of the famous, record-setting 73-foot ketch *Windward Passage*. Islander Yachts did offer an optional 4-foot 9-inch draft on the 36, and this might be the better choice for the shallower waters of the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico. Even with the reduced draft, the Islander would still be a very good performer in light to medium weather due to her ample sail area/displacement ratio.

The Mariner 36 should have good form stability, given her 11-foot 6-inch beam, but the ballast ratio is on the light side. This is probably due, in part, to the fact that Mariner built heavy, solid yachts, as I know well from experience with their work on my Mariner 47 design. Still, if I were heading far offshore in a Mariner, I would be tempted to add another 600 to 700 pounds of ballast deep in the bilge and well strapped down, just for the peace of mind.

The Pearson promises to be the stiffest of the three yachts, having ample displacement, good beam, and greater draft than the Mariner and a generous 41 percent ballast ratio. The deep-draft Islander should be fairly close to the Mariner in stability, but the shoal-draft model — with even less draft than the Mariner, a narrower beam, and lighter displacement — appears to be the least powerful of the three yachts, although still quite capable of offshore voyages.

It's rather surprising that the Mariner and Pearson have such modest sail area/displacement ratios. Given their beam and displacement, they are somewhat under-canvassed and, to my way of thinking, could easily carry as much as 60, or even 70, square feet more sail. Being slightly under-canvassed is not a major fault in a yacht intended for family bluewater voyages, of course. Still, in many of our coastal areas where light summer breezes are the norm, it could leave the skipper whistling for a wind and firing up the iron breeze while he waits for Aeolus to answer his prayers. The Islander, with lighter displacement and undoubtedly less wetted area, given her beam and waterline, should slip right by the others when the breeze turns soft.

Things are different at sea, of course. Having a moderate, easily handled rig is a very handy thing on a short-handed cruiser. In her day, the Islander 36 was designed as a serious cruiser/racer. For racing sailors, taking an extra day to get from A to B was simply unacceptable, but an extra day on a long voyage is rarely a major problem for the average cruising skipper and crew. There, the primary concern is to get from A to B in safety, regardless of wind and weather. That is where the stronger and more versatile cutter rig of the Pearson stands out.

Both the Mariner and the Pearson show very well in the motion-comfort department due to their husky displacement. Both have comfort ratios approaching those of many larger boats, including my Whitby 42 design. Surprisingly, the Islander is not all that far behind them, thanks in large part to her shorter waterline.

I know that at least one Islander 36 has completed a circumnavigation . . . solo! I am not aware if either a Mariner 36 or Pearson 36 have circumnavigated but I feel certain that, given a knowledgeable skipper and crew, they are both quite capable of cruising the seven seas in safety and comfort. These are three fine designs, all well suited to their intended purposes.

Mariner 36 Islander 36 Pearson 36

	Mariner 36	Islander 36	Pearson 36
LOA	36' 0"	36' 1"	36' 5"
LWL	30' 1"	28' 3"	30' 0"
Beam	11' 6"	11' 2"	11' 5"
Draft	5' 0"	4' 9" or 6' 0"	5' 6"
Disp.	17,000 lb	13,600 lb	17,700 lb
Ballast	5,650 lb	5,600 lb	7,300 lb
LOA/LWL	1.20	1.28	1.21
Beam/LWL	0.382	0.395	0.381
Disp./LWL	259	269	293
Bal./Disp.	0.33	0.41	0.41
Sail area	595 sq ft	575 sq ft	615 sq ft
SA/Disp.	14.4	16.2	14.5
Capsize no.	1.79	1.87	1.76
Comfort ratio	31.7	27.4	33.2
Years built	1979–83	1971–86	1976-82
Designer	Peter Canning	Alan Gurney	Bill Shaw

Ted Brewer is a contributing editor with Good Old Boat. *He is one of North America's best-known yacht designers and over the course of a long career he has imparted his knowledge and love of sailboats to a great number and variety of designs, from pocket cruisers to ocean greyhounds. Many of them may now be older, but they are still good.*