

Extreme

MAKEOVER

VESSEL EDITION

When Maintenance Becomes a Major Remodel

By Karen Rainbolt, FOGHORN Managing Editor

When Larry Boerner and his wife took a trip to Florida and stepped inside a brand-new passenger vessel, they were instantly smitten with the SkipperLiner-built vessel. "It was just gorgeous," recalls Boerner.

Upon returning home to their own vessel at North Tahoe Cruises, Tahoe City, CA, the Boerners made a decision: rather than conduct the usual off-season maintenance to spruce up their 149-passenger 1994 sidewheeler, they were going to completely remodel it--and they used the

Florida vessel as their guide.


"We contacted SkipperLiner about the remodel for a couple of reasons," explained Boerner. "One, they had just finished that Florida boat that caught our attention. And, two, SkipperLiner built our vessel, so they know it inside and out. It just made sense."

But, Tahoe City, CA where the vessel is located is nearly 2000 miles from La Crosse, WI, where SkipperLiner's facilities are, so plan B was required. After reviewing the plans for the remodel, it was decided that if it was too hard to get the vessel to the remodeling crew in Wisconsin, then the team from La Crosse would just have to go to Lake Tahoe.

"This was the first time we ever did a job of this magnitude outside of our shipyard," said Bernie Clements, SkipperLiner's materials manager.

It became clear that precision preparations were needed to do the job right. A team from SkipperLiner went to North Tahoe Cruises and spent several days taking measurements, making drawings, meeting with Boerner to go over his ideas, and assessing what job skills would be

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needed to get the vessel remodeled to Boerner's expectations.

Back in Wisconsin, Clements got his crew working on building pre-fab materials, especially the cabinetry that Boerner requested. It was easier, they was reasoned, to build these in Wisconsin and ship them ready



An attractive new bar was installed lending an air of elegance and sophistication.



The vessel's new cherry paneling, the state-of-the-art tiled ceiling, and new furniture adds seating flexibility and beauty to the Tahoe Gal's dining room.



The existing bar was a focal point for all the wrong reasons.

for installation rather than trying to make them onsite at the vessel. "We did as much work at our shipyard as we could before we headed back to Lake Tahoe," explained Clements.

But, Boerner wasn't exactly sitting around on his hands either. It took it upon himself to prep his sidewheeler for the new décor by dismantling the existing interior. He removed the ceiling, the paneling and the



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carpeting. Doing it himself brought the costs down, but increased the anxiety of Clements who wasn't sure what to expect when he and his team returned. He shouldn't have worried. "Larry did a great job at the demolition," remembers Clements. "The vessel was completely ready for us when we arrived."

Getting the materials to the job site wasn't terribly difficult either. Clements hired the carrier who works closely with SkipperLiner on vessel delivery to drive a trailer full of the materials that would be needed to remodel the *Tahoe Gal*. In fact, the vessel was shipped via truck, in three separate pieces and put together onsite back in 1994 when it began its service on Lake Tahoe offering seasonal daily cruises, special cruises and private charters. Altogether, it was decided



The new cabinetry was built in Wisconsin, shipped by truck, and installed on the vessel. Precise measurements were the key.



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The remodel offers more than just good looks to the vessel. The new décor is fully functional as well.

that to do as extensive a remodel as this was, along with truck, the job would require six carefully selected craftsmen and 11 days to complete all the work.

When the truck pulled up in Tahoe City, the team from Wisconsin flew out to begin the project. Along with all the materials, the truck included all the tools required, so the team was able to get to work immediately.

The old acoustic ceiling panels were replaced with a metal tile ceiling featuring a compass rose that is more reminiscent with the vessel's overall style as a sidewheeler. The wall paneling and cabinetry are now cherry which adds warmth and elegance to the vessel. The heads received a makeover, also. And, the new wallpaper and carpeting add a beautiful finishing touch.

Boerner couldn't be happier. "The ceiling is state-of-the-art and gorgeous," he said. "The trim work that SkipperLiner did is fantastic. This is most beautiful boat on Lake Tahoe."

This is exactly what he was looking for because the operator was concerned that he could lose business to higher-end competitors, thus prompting his decision to remodel, rather than simply maintain his vessel's interior.

The experience was a good one for Clements too as he prepares for his next big job for SkipperLiner, remodeling a vessel in North Carolina. ■




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