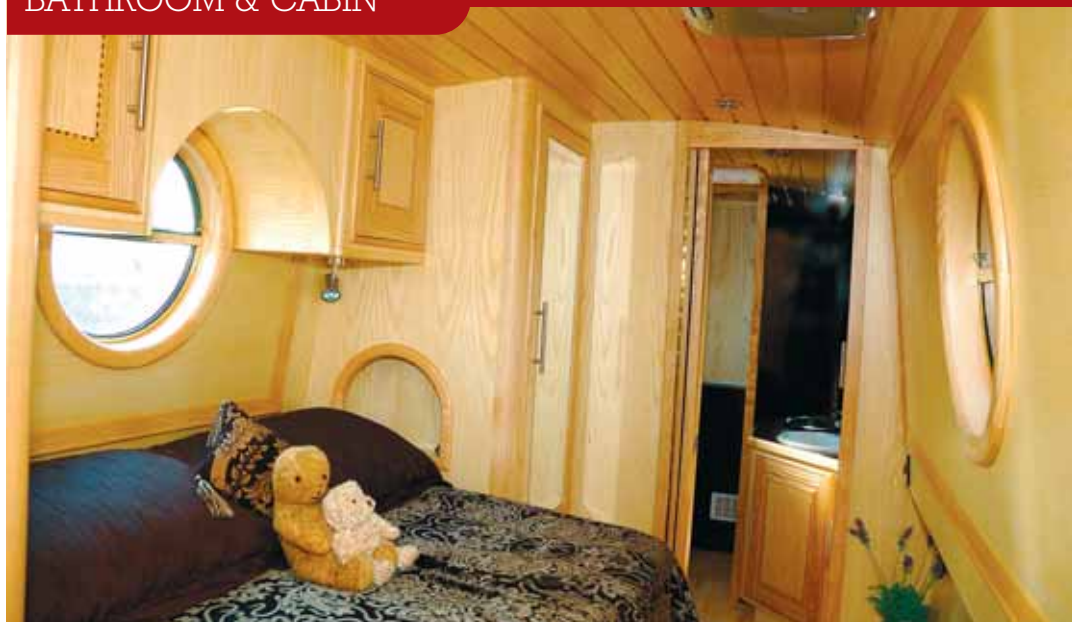


BATHROOM & CABIN



Large cabin has ample storage with wardrobe and drawers either side of cross-double bed, underbed drawers and wall units

the handsome rebated tongue-and-groove pattern ceiling timberwork, and the ash veneered cabin-side linings are nicely framed with solid ash.

Every exposed corner is also neatly radiused and there are good looking ash trims for the portholes and Houdini hatch. The finishing touch is that cupboard doors here (and throughout the boat) have a delicate marquetry inlay.

Black laminate and large mirror gives bathroom a classy look. Toilet can be closed off by a bi-fold door and has own fin-rad heating

GALLEY

The galley units are ranged either side of a central walkway but the Wells wanted to avoid the 'railway corridor' effect when planning the boat so the units are shaped to sweep the natural gangway from the saloon from the port side through into the centre of the galley. Worktops are laminate with timber facings and all external corners are pleasantly curved. Again, doors and drawer fronts have marquetry detailing.

Like the saloon, the galley is light and bright with a Houdini hatch centrally above and a side hatch in which sits a very substantial wood

framed, lift-out glass window. It's a shame a hinged or sliding panel couldn't have been devised, for this is a heavy item to remove and would then need to be stored somewhere. Chances are it will rarely be removed and any begging swans will have to go hungry!

The galley itself is relatively modest by liveaboard standards. The shorter run of units has an angled cupboard at its forward end. There's a free-standing DIT500 cooker and built-under 220v Beko fridge, separated by three narrow but deep drawers. Opposite, the longer run houses circular sink and drainer bowls, with double cupboards under and a three drawer unit beyond. The curved forward end of the unit creates a deep, angled cupboard unit. A glass doored display cabinet either side of the central rear exit completes the units.

All of which means there's no freezer, no microwave and relatively

modest food storage compared to other liveaboards we have tried, but as we have often said before, that's down to personal choice.

There is also no dinette area on the boat – it had to be ruled out on space grounds but Chris and Stelle are contemplating a fold-away table and chairs though this, again, poses stowage issues.

OFFICE

A bi-fold door – one of several on the boat and a good space saving idea – leads from the galley into Chris's office. Sensibly, since he mostly works from home, he hasn't stinted on space and a large built-in desk occupies the whole of one side with his computer and 3G internet access. The computer can also double as a TV and the boat's TV system is wired so that different channels can be viewed in the saloon, office and cabin if desired.

There are wall cupboards above the desk, a floor cupboard and drawers underneath it. Opposite is an additional shallow cupboard – on which is a



statuette of his much loved Ducati!

A side hatch with hinge-back roof panel provides another exit from the boat here and, ingeniously, the steps for it slide away into the cupboard when not needed to leave maximum corridor space. There is another very substantial wood framed, lift-out glass window here.

BATHROOM

More clever thought has gone into the cross bathroom which you enter on the port side and leave at the starboard rear. Extensive use of glossy black laminate, an almost full length mirror on one wall and the light from a central Houdini all combine to create a smart and spacious feeling room.

For practical reasons the couple wanted a separate toilet but this can take up space so in the end they devised a bi-fold door which can close off the Tecma macerator toilet from the rest of the bathroom. A built-in fin-rad behind a grille keeps this area warm.

Diagonally opposite the toilet is a full size corner shower cubicle with

'Belle' etched into its smoked glass door. Again, one has to be impressed by the smoothly rounded corners to the wood trimmed cubicle. Across from the shower is the vanity unit with its huge wall mirror and as well as storage space in the unit itself there are smaller cabinets alongside.

CABIN

The cabin area is large, practical and elegant. The cross-double bed is one of the easiest we've seen to bring into use: two base extensions slide out on drawer-style runners from the main bed and latch securely into a shelf opposite.

There's generous clothes storage: each side of the bed is a large single wardrobe with hanging space above and drawers below as well as a mirrored door. Each also has a neat little 'niche' on its bed face, ideal for the alarm clock or that bedtime reading paperback – unless you happen to be watching the flip-down TV, that is. Two underbed drawers offer extra storage and there are also the traditional wall cupboards either side of the porthole window.

UTILITY AREA

A stable door (the dog, remember) leads from the cabin into a small but handy area where a washer/drier is discreetly tucked away behind a



cupboard door, with a small worktop and wall cupboard above. There's also a practical full-height wet locker.

Steps up from here lead out onto the rear deck past a locker for maps, walkie talkies and the like, and there is extra stowage under the steps as well.

TECHNICAL

Chris hasn't stinted on the technical spec of *Belle*. His chosen engine is the cocooned version of Beta's Greenline 43 and his spec also includes Cramm hydraulic bow thrusters which can be used for extended periods rather than the electrical type which are more for short 'bursts' of use.

The engine is packaged inside its own 'box' and only the top panel needs removing for routine checks – that is easily done by lifting a floorboard. Sandhills have also very tidily boxed in the rest of the unit which can be progressively revealed by removing more well-fitted panels.

The weedhatch, greaser and hydraulic tank and controls for the bow thrusters are found under a large hinged cover in the counter which can only be opened when the rear doors are open.

The boat lives away from a shoreline and on-board AC electrics are provided by a 3.5kW Travepower AC alternator together with a 2kW Mastervolt

TECHNICAL

Utility area, top left, has built-in washer/drier and wet locker. Engine compartment holds electric cupboard and shelf unit with bow camera monitor

Cocooned Beta 43 engine is easily accessed, weed hatch cover is secured shut when rear doors are closed