

REAL

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Captain Jerry Chitwood
Voyage of the Eskimo III







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One could talk for hours about Captain Jerry Chitwood. Known locally for Chitwood Charters, most in Sarasota don't know what this unpretentious individual has accomplished, and who he knows. Be it the huge picture that still hangs in Indiana's Ben Davis High School commemorating his wrestling feats. Or, the tough middle linebacker at Indiana State University, who also was

the team's captain. Maybe it's becoming a pilot at age 21 and being featured in Neiman Marcus' 1971 "His/Her Gift of the Year" Christmas catalog piloting an Eglan Hovercraft. Perhaps it's being told by Sarasota bankers and yacht brokers that his business plan for a yacht charter company wouldn't fly when he relocated to Sarasota many years ago to escape the harsh winters in Indiana.





Ah, next it's his little black book whose pages overflow with the likes of Howard Koch, Jr. (former President of the Academy Awards), Nick McClean (Cinematographer; Friends, The Right Stuff, Chuck Yeager, Deer Hunter), Bob Netolicky (Top 30 player in the history of the ABA), David Kingman (King Kong Kingman; 442 home runs), Heraldo Rivera, Jimmy Buffett, Burt Reynolds and more. Other pages contain politicians; The Shrivvers, Kennedys and then some. Locally it contains Sarasota game changers like Kevin Daves (Ritz Carlton, The Concession) and Tom Mannausa (Original partner with Pat Neal and developer of The Jewel). At any moment the Captain can pick up the phone, reach out and engage these individuals, some of whom called him during our time together. These aren't casual relationships, they are true long lasting friendships.

That's not the story here. This story is about passion, a love for the water and saving a piece of timeless nautical history, the Eskimo III, a sister ship to the Presidential yacht, the Sequoia. Originally the third Trumpy/Eskimo commissioned by paper magnate, John Kimberly, the Bill Gates of his time, it was docked here locally in major disrepair. Nothing was invested in her upkeep for 20-25 years and she was rough. There were two options, scrap the vessel or spend untold hours and money to bring it back to its original splendor. Knowing her history Captain Chitwood opted for the latter, purchased the yacht, spent over two years and close to \$700,000 completely bringing the Eskimo III back to its original splendor. As the Captain shares, "It's a treasure that became a love affair."

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Stepping aboard the Eskimo III one feels the history; the prince and princesses, the socialites, the politicians, the who's who of society, the movers and shakers, all of whom enjoyed the Eskimo III's grandness, the grandness only found in a Trumpy.

In every field there are names that become benchmarks against others are judged. Take Rolls Royce for example. That is exactly the case with the name Trumpy, which graced motor yachts from the late '30s through the early '70s and which still remains a yardstick by which luxury yachts are measured. Over this span of time Trumpy & Sons built more than 400 wooden yachts for celebrities, dignitaries, and discerning yachtmen. The Eskimo III is a privilege to be on and a step back in time.

Each Trumpy wears an ornate and filigreed scrollwork "T" flowing from the bow that was a stamp not just of authenticity but also of quality. True to this day the approach of a yacht with that scroll stops activity on most waterfronts as the classic lines are admired by "those in the know".

Trumpy were hand-made of double planked wood with no worry about weight. A displacement boat designed to travel in the water, rather than plane atop it, her hull was designed to glide through the water with minimum fuss.

Each Trumpy was assembled by a team of master craftsmen, who took an immense pride in their dexterity with a piece of wood. Each seam, each joint, each finely finished detail, was done by a single man who ran his rough but sensitive hands over it until it was good enough to

satisfy two tough critics: that craftsman and John Trumpy, Sr. Only then was it good enough for the client. The same is the case here with Captain Chitwood's restoration, only the top craftsmen were permitted to work on "his" restoration project.

The Eskimo III was delivered to Kimberly in 1958. A 68 model (64' in length) she contained many innovative features not seen in Trumpys until a decade later. She'll effortlessly cruise economically at 12-14 knots without a hint of shudder due to the power of her twin 871 Detroit Diesels. She'll comfortably sleep 7 guests and 3 crew members, with all modern amenities. A 22.5 KW generator supplies the power, 4 A/C systems, including one for the fantail, provide the creature comforts.

Her structure consists double planked Mahogany (Outside hull) and double planked White Oak (Inside hull). The hull was completely rebuilt/replaced and now contains 4 coats of bottom paint. Her bilges were scraped and cleaned, then the interior wood of the bilges finished off with Thompson's Water Seal. 14 new brass "Thru Hulls" were installed and the transom rebuilt. This took over 10 months at the renown Rybovich Shipyard in West Palm Beach, FL.



Rybovich then rebuilt the diesel engines and prepared all of the vessel's props, shafts, rudders, bearings, cutlass and pillar blocks to specifications, as they are accustomed to refurbishing old yacht systems. After a couple months Cortez Shipwrights finished off the rudder supports, transom and redid the entire keel. The boat's integrity is there. This beauty has dry bilges from stem to stern, and she's almost 60 years old.

Inside all of the Teak and Holly woodwork, found from stem to stern, above and below decks, was completely stripped and refinished by nautical restoration craftsmen. Each piece of wood was either varnished, repainted or oiled, quite some task for this complex wooden vessel. All headliners and trim were redone by local craftsman at Surfside Marine who also did the exterior paint job that turned our marvelous. The curtains, the windows, nothing was overlooked. This was a rotisserie restoration done to the finest specifications.

Captain Chitwood is holding this grand beauty for special trips along our gulf coast waters. "I'm saving her for the prospective new owner, it will be their trophy. She's in Bristol condition and will be delivered that way," he shares. The Eskimo III can dock at your slip for \$750,000. She may be visited by appointment only. To schedule your acquaintance with this magnificent lady call Captain Chitwood at (941) 383-5232. A piece of timeless beauty and history can be yours.