Smythes Turn Their Q-Boat Into Dream Boat

BY LIZ BRANDT

Wall-to-wall carpeting, Hi-Fi television, air conditioning and an electric organ are just a few of the "comforts of home" aboard the Matoncas, a 65-foot floating paradise owned by Charles and Mary Jane Smythe.

The yacht is so luxurious— and completely equipped—a friend presented the couple a package the other day with the remark, "It's the only thing I could think of that you haven't got."

What was in it, an electronic device which automatically rings a warning bell in case of fog?

Smythe considers his "dream boat" the biggest "do-it-yourself" project he ever attempted. Four years ago today, he began the job of transforming a Q boat (used during the war as a dispatch boat for convoys) into today's sleek cruiser.

"We spent several months before that just cleaning her out," he recalls, "until all that was left was the hull. You could throw a baseball from one end to the other and never hit a thing!"

Today, life aboard the Matoncas centers around the "austere" appointed salon, paneled in handsome ribbon-grain mahogany, Tangerine and gold are color accents in the predominantly beige room.

Focal point of the salon is Mary Jane's new Hammond organ, which she frequently plays for group singing or just for relaxation.

The yacht is equipped with enough life preservers for 35 people, and can sleep 13, including a 5-man crew.

One of the full-length beds in Mary Jane's sitting room converts into a chair during the day, as the Smythes dislike "a room all cluttered up with bunks." The detachable upholstery is made of plastic foam, and can be used as an emergency life preserver.

The galley, a sparkling combination of plastics, vinyl tile and stainless steel, is equipped with a freezer, hot and cold water, two refrigerators, and innumerable electrical appliances. One cuddled stovetop was used to insulate the craft, and masonry peggboard ceilings and wall-to-wall carpeting also keep noise to a minimum, even when 11-year-old Tony Smythe and his two sisters, Carmen, 9, and Carlin, 7, and their friends are about.

And how did the name Matoncas come about? "Sounds like an old Indian chieftain, doesn't it?" laughs Smythe. "Actually, we decided to name her after the whole family and ended up with MA for Mary Jane, TON for Tony, CA for Carmen and Carlin, and S for me!"

The Matoncas, a power cruiser owned by the Charles Smythes, is tied up at the Houston Yacht Club pier between cruises in Galveston Bay. The club is a past commodore of the club. (Chronicle Photos by Gunnar Liljequist, Jr.)

YACHTING FAMILY ENJOYS MUSICAL INTERLUDE IN SALON ABOARD THE MATONCAS

Daughters Carla, Left, and Carmen With the Charles M. Smythes

Queen May Wear Black for U.S. Trip

London—ONS—It's a "safe bet" that Queen Elizabeth will be wearing lots of black when she visits America this October.

That's the color the Queen's couturier, Norman Hartnell, concentrated on at the London unveiling of his fall fashions collection.

The first suit shown was called "Safe Bet," a sure bet as a hint by Hartnell to the assembled reporters.

For further hints on the queen's possible picks in costume, daytime black was combined with muted colors, while evening gowns worked hand in hand with brilliant shades.