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There was a time during the late '50s and early '60s when something started happening. Ray Hunt was there. So were Dick Bertram and Don Aronow. And, of course, Jim Wynne.

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Aronow, Bertram, and Wynne were racing powerboats, endurance stuff and offshore mostly. Ray Hunt was fiddling with the deep-V hull. He started refining the shape, carrying that magical 24 degrees of deadrise all the way aft, adding lifting strakes. Everybody was fooling around with the hulls and the engines, trying to pump them up. These boats were getting better, but people were wondering how in the world to get more power into them. In spite of their advantages, outboards had their limitations. And these men wanted lots more power.

This guy Wynne finally locked himself away in his father's garage and invented the inboard-outboard, the stern drive. He cobbled it up from some outboard motor parts and an 80-horse Volvo Penta engine without a reverse gear. That solved some of the problems. He got the best of both, the size and reliability of an inboard, the maneuvering and trim of the outboard. Other people had tried to come up with a stern drive, too, but they had never managed to get one to function. Wynne's did.

The dealer who sold him the engine had wondered about that missing reverse gear, but Wynne preferred to maintain the mystery until Volvo sent someone around to see what he was up to. They liked the stern drive and offered to manufacture it under his patents. He agreed, stopping off to see the plant in Sweden on his way to Denmark where he joined Ole Botved to drive a 22-foot Coronet outboard across the ocean. In those days people were doing things like that. JIM WYNNE FEET WET, HANDS DIRTY BY GUNNAR HANSEN

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And then this whole business erupted. All these ideas came together, the new boats, the new propulsion. And these guys started going *fast*.

Wynne took off in the 1960 Miami-Nassau race in weather so bad that most of the other boats just turned back or broke up. His only competition in that race was Bertram and Sam Griffith in the 30-foot, Ray Hunt designed *Moppie* with a pair of V8s — the only other deep-V in the race.

He remembers that race with a certain pleasure. "The Miami-Nassau Race was the toughest ocean race in the world," he says, just what he needed to prove his stem drives. "1960 was the real rough one. At the start it was so rough that the two of us just shot out in the lead because we were the only ones that could keep up any speed. And of course Bertram and Griffith with the bigger and more powerful boat immediately went into the lead. And this little 24-foot

boat with 80-horsepower Volvos in it was running so well that I was running it wide open, which was only about 30 miles an hour." Bertram finished in eight hours and set a new record, and Wynne finished in 10 hours and 25 minutes. The next boat didn't come in till the following day.

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Of course, his performance in that race should have surprised no one. Wynne had been messing around with boats and engines since he was a kid. As a teenager he'd built himself a '32 Ford from parts. Then in '46 or '47 he had stuck an engine into a friend's boat and hit 45 miles an hour with it. That started him racing. And he had kept on racing in college, while he was getting his degree in mechanical engineering. And while he was working on his masters at MIT, he had started doing engine research for Mercury. He had gone to work for them after that, eventually heading up their test division at Lake X in Florida. By the time he got back to his hometown of Miami in 1957, this guy was ready to do something big.

After the 1960 Miami-Nassau, Wynne started doing more hull design, working with Ray Hunt on a 25-foot deep-V production boat for Bertram. Then he and Walt Walters designed a 23-foot Formula for Don Aronow. That was a fast boat. Wynne raced one with his stern drives in the 1962 Miami race. When Aronow started Donzi, Wynne designed the Donzi 16 and 19. And then the Donzi 27, which Wynne raced some in '64.

That year he won the World Offshore Powerboat Championship on points, though he didn't take a first place the whole year.

The boats kept getting faster and the engines bigger. Wynne loved it. There was nothing finer than getting out there in bad seas and just S T

showing people what these boats could do. Nothing like testing the stuff with your feet wet and hands dirty to learn how to make it better.

These guys were going wild. Hell, these were *muscle boats*. They were jumping onto their props and leaving the water.

Soon the racing reached the point that Wynne's Volvo-powered drives were just too small to compete — Mercury was producing stern drives capable of handling 300-horsepower V8s. So Wynne designed a 32-foot aluminum boat for Thunderbird (he'd designed the first aluminum racing boat for them the previous year), and dropped a 500-horse Pratt & Whitney gas turbine into it. Nobody had seen that before.

He won the 1966 Sam Griffith Memorial Race with that combination, again in such bad conditions that only two boats finished. "Dick Bertram sank and lost the boat," he recalls. "Some of the top English boats came apart. All the other boats just dropped out. And we came in something like several hours ahead of the second-place boat, partly because of the performance of the gas turbines, but mainly because we had a very good rough-water boat."

But they didn't give him the trophy. Said it wasn't fair to win with a gas turbine.

Wynne shrugged and took the world championship anyway that year, winning the four other races he entered, all with a more conventional boat. He made a point with that one: he could win, whatever the terms. He's still convinced that the hull, not the turbine, won the Griffith for him.

Some, including Don Aronow, might disagree. They might say that

Wynne won that race. "Jim was an exceptional driver," Aronow says. "He knew what his equipment could do. I was driving by the seat of my pants, but he knew just what he was doing. He could push his boat as far as it could go. He was always my competitor; he was always my friend."

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Wynne retired from racing after that second championship. He had more design work he wanted to do, and racing was interfering with that. Besides, he was on top; he held eight world records. It was a good time to quit.

He missed the racing, the speed, for a long time. But no longer. The times changed, he says, and the racing changed. "I don't think it's true offshore racing any more," he says. "They race primarily in sheltered water. Or if it's rough, they don't race. The boats are so exotic now, they won't handle the conditions. They're much faster, much more expensive, much more dangerous. My main interest was innovating and trying out new ideas. We were still developing deep-V hulls, developing construction techniques, developing new propulsion systems. It was a decade where there was a lot of innovation being done that benefited the pleasure boating market."

But don't get the wrong idea. Don't think that just because he had done some pretty impressive things back then, he was folding up his tent. Jim Wynne wasn't going to quit designing.

Now 57 years old, still living in Miami, and still sporting the same full beard, now white, that he had in those fast days, he is designing hulls and propulsion systems, still fiddling, making things better. And he's still winning. Just this year he was awarded the Charles F. Chapman Award for "...service to the sport of boating."

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And now he's come up with another idea that should, he feels, get added to that list of his contributions — the "propeller pocket," a kind of half-tunnel under the stern which allows the propeller to be brought much closer to the hull. It lets engines with conventional inboard drive trains be carried quite far aft, a good place for them on a planing hull. And a great place when you're trying to do something sensible with the cabin layouts, since it gets the engines out of the way. The world is about to see the latest refinement in the design in a new cruiser that will soon be in production.

But wait a minute. These are cabin cruisers, family boats. Sure, they're efficient, sensible things. Maybe they even move right along. But what about the pure power stuff — that perfect hull, brute of an engine, and let 'em watch my wake when I leave 'em behind — what about the old days? What about *muscle boats*?

"Yeah, I enjoy blasting around at 60 miles an hour down the bay in open water," he says. "But it's a continual source of amazement to me that the muscle boats keep selling the way that they do. They're so limited in what you can do with them, especially at the price they get for them. It's a thrill to drive one, but if you could do more with them than just race around, if you could get offshore in a hurry, get somewhere faster, cover more distance for fishing or cruising, now that would be interesting."

He laughs and adds, "I think I'm getting old."