

This has been a very strange winter for Cathy and I, as we managed to get to Two boat shows within two weeks of each other. No, not Earls Court and Excel, but Excel and “The Florida Boat Show” in Orlando!. The reason for this happy circumstance was that my work took me to Orlando for a week, and I was able to take Cathy for a winter break after the work finished. It was Cathy, who surfing the web for things to do whilst I was working found the “largest boat show in Florida”.... Well, we just had to see what Excel might be up against!, and I thought it might make an interesting “filler” for the magazine, so made sure I took some photos. The event was easy enough to find, the location was vast, which looked like good news, but actually, the boat show only filled the “north” hall of the center. The car park was the first thing



that showed the difference from the London Events: Quite apart from the sunshine, there was hardly anyone in the car park, and it was VAST.

We paid our \$8 admission, and entered the hall.

Second difference from London, - Virtually no chandlery stands, no big name electronics, and no SAILS!. It was all powerboats, and all petrol engines.

Anyway, having got in we decided to at

least see what was there, and found that all the stand helpers were exceptionally friendly. We were able to look in detail at even the most expensive boats on show, and had some great chats. It turned out that this was the third day (Monday) of a normally two day event, and most Floridians had attended on the earlier days. There were probably only about 200 visitors whilst we were there and the staff were glad of any attention!. – But were still happy to let us wander over their boats without “hovering”.



I’m afraid that at this point I must admit that I did nearly get seduced away from the true CATALAC path, by some amazing interiors: This was a 30 ft power boat, brand new and about £100,000. It had three air conditioning units, (with their own silent generator), as well as the obligatory massive petrol engines to actually power the beast. I think that there were two TV’s, a Microwave, cooker fridge etc... all electric and run from the generator. One

difference that was very noticeable was that the “Cookers” on all the boats were single ring Electric units, often set in beautiful solid “corian” work surfaces like the one in the photo. We talked to the guys on the stand about this and it seems that in the USA, if a boat has “cooking” facilities, then it is classed as a second home, and you

can claim the interest back against tax!!! - But eating out is so inexpensive that most boat owners never cook on their boats and eat out in restaurants... Hence the single electric hob!



We did actually find a lot of catamarans at the show, they were these “pontoon” boats. These are effectively Aluminium tubes with a solid deck, sun shade, motor and lots of seats.



They looked great for the sun and fishing, but I could not imagine what a slight sea chop would do to them!. Nevertheless, some were able to do up to 50mph, by having massive motors and planing surfaces on the bottom of the tubes: Which brings me to my final picture....



I wonder what I would need to do to put these on the back of SCUBACAT?

All the best,

Dagnall and Cathy.