

America's first magazine devoted exclusively to Houseboats

FAMILY

HOUSE BOATING

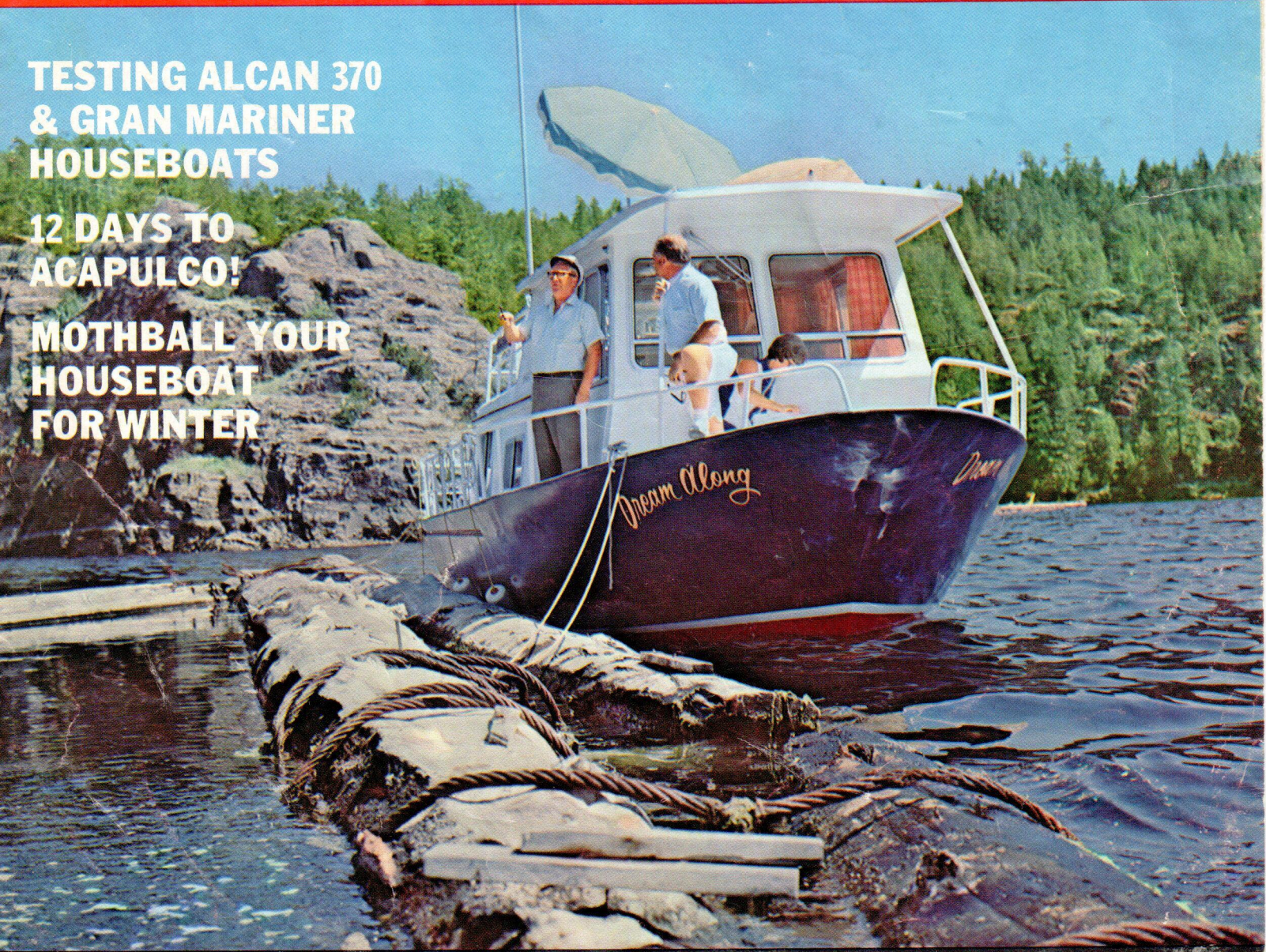
A TRAILER LIFE PUBLICATION

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TESTING ALCAN 370
& GRAN MARINER
HOUSEBOATS

12 DAYS TO
ACAPULCO!

MOTHBALL YOUR
HOUSEBOAT
FOR WINTER



NATIONAL HOUSEBOAT CHAMPIONSHIP RACE!

Begins on page 26

COVER STORY

Take a great new aluminum houseboat, add picture-perfect cruising grounds off Vancouver Island, and you have FHB's enthusiastic staff

CRUISING IN THE ALCAN 370

by Denis M. Rouse

There's gotta be no greater business around than publishing a magazine—especially if your journal deals with something that really turns you on.

To get what we mean, consider we just picked up a paycheck for winging our way to northwestern Canada's beautiful Vancouver Island, guesting ourselves aboard one of the finest new houseboats afloat, and enjoying a couple of days of some of the best cruising, fishing, scenery and just plain living it up we ever had!

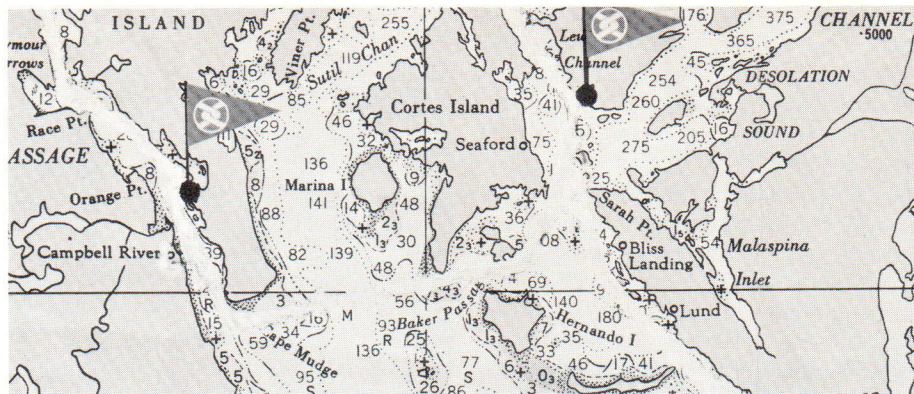




At left: Forward wheelhouse, midship galley and lavatory, and aft stateroom provide well-integrated and appointed interior for the Alcan 370. Below: The Alcan made an easy 28 m.p.h. at 4300 r.p.m., cruised at 15 m.p.h. and 3300 r.p.m.



Above: Hostess Ina Guile was as much at ease at the wheel as when preparing our delectable lunch of freshly caught salmon steak. At left: Perfect weather, fine company, breathtaking surroundings, and a beautifully-made aluminum craft: this is houseboating at its best!



If you cats from Uncle Sam's IRS are listening, don't get us wrong. There was some work involved, because the overall purpose of the trip was of course to bring you, our readers, our first exclusive report of the Alcan 370—the exciting new all aluminum cruising houseboat just being introduced by the world's second largest producer of aluminum, giant Montreal-based Aluminum Company of Canada. Alcan man Bob Kemp—one of the bright young execs masterminding Alcan's houseboat program—made it possible for us to get together with Stan and Ina Guile, a couple of new Alcan 370 owners who previously agreed to have us aboard their new craft for a *FAMILY HOUSEBOATING* shakedown cruise.

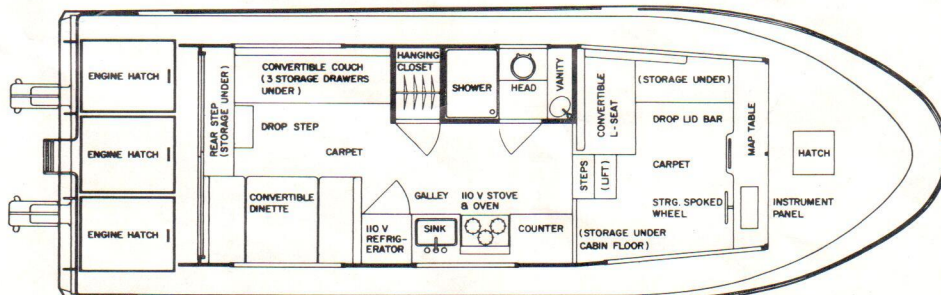
It all started one bright summer morn when kinfolk colleagues Art and Rick Rouse and I hopped a big tin bird bound for Vancouver, British Columbia—a city so clean and sparkling it's sight would make the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce summarily retire. It was here we rendezvoused with Bob Kemp, and ticketed on a short half-hour flight to Campbell River, B.C., where we (in turn) were introduced to Stan and Ina Guile and their *Dream Along*—a glistening new blue and white Alcan 370 on which we were about to spend some time we wished would never end.

We were fortunate indeed to be guests of two people like Stan and Ina. Stan retired some years ago after a successful business career to enjoy the things he likes best—and boating among the emerald green and blue majesty of the islands

Specifications ALCAN 370

Length (Overall)	36'-7"
Height (Overall)	11'-3"
Beam	11'-10"
Freeboard	
Forward	4'-6"
Aft	2'-6"
Transom	
Height from Waterline	2'-6"
Width	11'-10"
Walkways	14"
Draft	
At Keel	21"
At Outdrive	40"
Keel	9"
Cabin	
Length	22'-6"
Width	8'-7 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Height	6'-5"
Deck	
Forward	6'-6"
Aft	5'-0"
Sundeck	12'-6"
Fuel Cap.	
Single	62.5 Gals. (50 Imp. Gals.)
Twin	125 Gals. (100 Imp. Gals.)
Water Capacity	62.5 Gals (50 Imp. Gals.)
Hull	Marine Aluminum
Cabin Structure	Marine Aluminum
Hand Rails	Marine Aluminum
Insulation	
Hull	420 lb. Foamed-in-place Polyurethane
Cabin	Fiberglass Blankets
Windows and Doors	
	Heavy-duty, Marine-type Anodized Aluminum Frames, Safety Glass
Hatch Size	
Forward	2 Ft. Square
Aft	3 — 3'-0" x 4'-3"
Weight	
2-225 h.p. Mercruiser	12,000 lb.
2-155 h.p. OMC	11,000 lb.

Above: Twin OMC 155 h.p. V-6's kicked up this spray and gave the *Dream Along* quite a push. Bigger power option could give you speeds in excess of 30 m.p.h. at full throttle.



SSO MARINE SERVICE



Above: Gassing up the Dream Along before casting off for the island-filled waters that top the Georgia Strait. Alcan's configurations are designed to accentuate the boat in houseboat.



Editor Art Rouse and Alcan host Bob Kemp show off one of the salmon they caught in the Campbell River.

Recently FHB's first family . . . Publisher and Editor Art Rouse and sons Denis and Rick . . . took off from the office and into Western Canada to find out for themselves about the Aluminum Company of Canada's new houseboat. The story on these pages is their combined report, with the pictures by staff photographer Rick and the words by Denis, who also happens to be FHB's Advertising Director. The Editor (we are told) just sat back and enjoyed the entire experience . . . and all three came back more confirmed housboaters than ever. They may, they say, never go "landlubbing" again! — The Staff



At left: Denis Rouse not only enjoyed the cruise; he spent much time getting inside the craft before writing this report.

which form the head of the Strait of Georgia pretty well top his list during the warm Summer months. Few private sailors can match Stan's knowledge of boats and boating—and, as previous owners of several traditional cruiser craft, his and his wife's enthusiasm for their new Alcan is testimonial certainly for houseboats in general.

The early morning that we idled the Dream Along out of the harbor in Campbell River and into Discovery Passage (the

channel from where we would begin our cruise of the area) was really too much to believe. The water at slack tide was absolutely flat, and perfectly mirrored the stature of the surrounding mountains and tree-rich islands. What a paradise this is, we thought, as visions of typewriters, and phone calls and appointments slowly faded into the quiet magnificence of a land yet unspoiled by the fingers of mechanized civilization.

Perhaps the idyllic surroundings made it a little tough to be anything but wildly enthusiastic about the Alcan 370, but this is truly one hell of a houseboat! This became apparent at the very beginning of our cruise as we all marveled at how extremely quiet this boat operates. Consider a few items: Full 3/16" bottom hull plating, 10,000 pounds flotation-worth of polyurethane foamed in the hold, lead shielding on the engine compartment bulkhead, and liberal fiberglass insulation throughout the deckhouse walls and ceiling. Add super-strong all-welded construction, and you understand why all we heard was the smooth muffled hum of her twin OMC 155's, and the splash on her bow.

The island-filled waters that top the Georgia Strait — however beautiful they are — are no place for a boat that can't take a whole zoo full of treacherous winds, riptides, and currents which can occasionally make the going all too rough for anything but the most sturdy craft. And some of the deadheads floating around make flying around at full throttle like driving the freeways with no brakes. But the all-aluminum Alcan is configured to accentuate the *boat* in houseboat. Four-and-a-half feet of forward freeboard and just the right amount of V-entry at the bow keep the sweat off your hands when the afternoon wind kicks up whitecaps. And her hull is heavy enough — beefed with four watertight transverse bulkheads and several longitudinal stringers, to weather hours of the most severe pounding.

Our boat was powered by twin OMC 155 h.p. V-6's, and this was the first houseboat experience we've had with these particular powerplants. For relatively small displacement engines, we were amazed at the performance they pushed on the Alcan's hull . . . an easy 27 to 28 m.p.h. at 4300 r.p.m., and pleasant 15 m.p.h. cruising at a smooth 3300 r.p.m. With the bigger available power option — twin Mercruiser 225's — we're sure you could expect speeds well in excess of 30 m.p.h. at full throttle.

Usable deck space on the 370 is really

out of sight—a happy habit, of course, with most houseboats, but particularly true on this one. We spent a good deal of time fishing and loafing on the aft deck, and found it to be extremely comfortable and a pleasant place to just relax. In addition, a full 6½ feet of forward deck, and a huge 12½ feet of sundeck atop the main cabin is enough outside area for a full scale class reunion. Fully finished aluminum railed walkways—14 inches wide for easy walking—add the final perfect touch to a fantastic deckplan.

When Ina Guile invited us inside later in the afternoon for a lunch of freshly-caught Coho salmon steaks, we took time after a great meal to take some notes on the interior of the Alcan. A houseboat is home inside like no other kind of boat, and the appropriately-named *Dream Along* made us wish she were ours to come back to.

Teak paneling trimmed with anodized aluminum and smart natural teak molding give an appearance of luxury and general craftsmanship that would put many boats more expensive than the 370 to shame. Full carpeting and rich nylon fabric upholstery, with color-coordinated window curtains, add a touch of plush warmth that impressed us greatly. Everything interior is fitted and right-looking and finished—truly superior workmanship that's a pleasure to behold in these days of furious-paced production.

Three major cabin living areas — the forward wheelhouse, midship compartment with fully equipped lavatory on one side and galley on the other, and aft stateroom which houses dinette and main sleeping accommodations — are all extremely comfortable, have lots of storage space, and are well integrated into the overall interior plan. The wheelbase boasts a tremendous amount of usable storage space under the cabin floor, and a large L-shaped lounge couch which easily converts to a double bed. Just adjacent to the wheel and directly in front of the lounge there is a combination chart table and bar with all kinds of room in a cabinet below for bottles of spirits.

The all-electric galley has got to turn

on the fussiest cook. A big refrigerator, stainless steel sink, 3-burner 110V stove, and lots of storage and counter space highlight a great cooking area a full nine feet long. Across the aisle is a hanging wardrobe closet, and a roomy lavatory complete with electric head, vanity, sink and shower. We personally like the all-electric nature of the Alcan, which is coordinated into two 30 amp control panels, allowing you to draw a full 60 amps from shore should it be available. At sea of course, the electric chores are handled quietly and efficiently by a 6.5 KW gas-driven Onan generator which is neatly installed in the engine compartment. The unique sound-muffling construction of the boat — as aforementioned — almost totally dampens the sound of the generator when it's in use.

The aft stateroom's convertible dinette, and another convertible couch transform neatly into sleeping room for four more adults — bringing total sleeping capacity to six adults. A good deal of stowage beneath the rear step, plus three drawers under the couch, provide more than enough space for duds you'd want along on a cruise of any length. All through the boat, all kinds of sliding windows — rimmed and rounded beautifully in brushed aluminum — allow for great ventilation and visibility. You have to give the overall livability of the Alcan 370 a full 100 percent in every regard!

As our cruise came to an end, we thought about the fact we really had nothing negative to report on this latest of modern home yachts being made by our neighbors of the north. Maybe it was the perfect weather, or fine company, or the breathtaking surroundings. But we suspect it was more because there really is nothing to fault on this beautifully-made aluminum craft. This is honestly a houseboat that perfectly represents all that's behind the current booming trend toward more home afloat with no sacrifice in boat.

Make no mistake about it — houseboating, and the Alcan 370, are here to stay. ■

This article reprinted from

FAMILY HOUSE
BOATING