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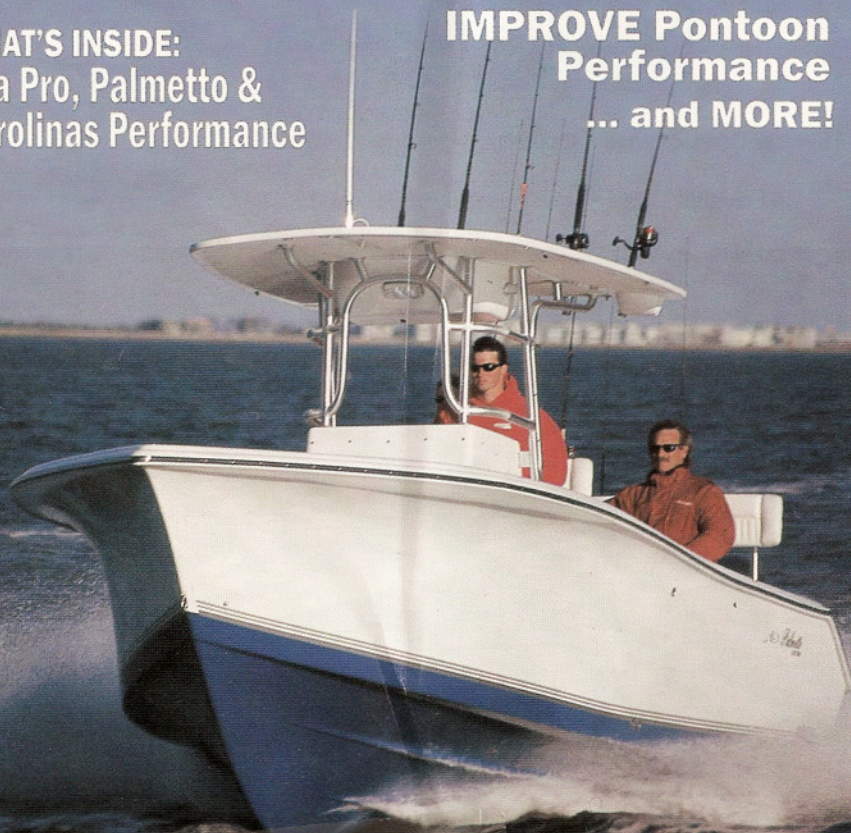
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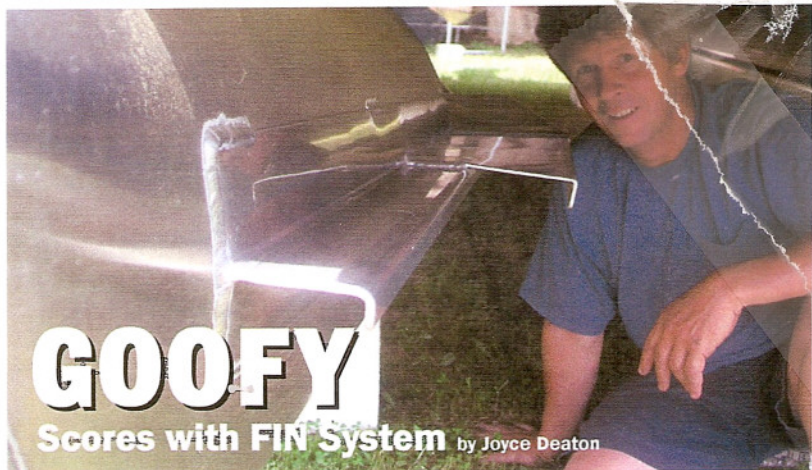
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**WHAT'S INSIDE:
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Malcolm "Goofy" Sohm

What if someone told you he'd invented a product you could add onto your pontoon boat that would give you a softer ride, increase your top speed, improve your fuel efficiency by about a third and cut your turning radius in half? Chances are you'd be buying.

What if he ran an auto body shop in Oshkosh, Wis. and his name was Goofy? Well, maybe not.

That's what Malcolm "Goofy" Sohm ran into when he called on boat manufacturers in the 1990s after developing his Technically Advanced Performance Fin® System. "The engineers were too busy trying to copy each other and add a fancier ice chest, reclining chair or Bimini top," says Sohm. "They forgot that a guy needs to turn his boat."

A lifelong pontoon and deck boat enthusiast, Sohm got the idea from his 35 years' experience in the body shop. "I've always liked to keep my boats real

"The engineers were too busy trying to ... add a fancier ice chest, reclining chair or Bimini top."

clean, and when I would be cleaning the hull, there was always a water line that I couldn't polish out," he says. "Out on the water, I looked between the logs and got down in the water. There was a constant spray that caused the line. I started thinking about how

that was a collision between the hull and the water."

Soon the idea came full-blown: a fin system that would minimize that collision, making the boat more stable and thus faster, smoother, easier to turn and more fuel-efficient. He researched the idea for four years and tried it out with two trips across Lake Michigan—previously forbidden territory for a pontoon boat because of its waves.

Undeterred by the cold shoulder from the industry, Sohm decided to put his life's lessons into action. "I've been divorced a couple of times," he explains, "so I know you have to take something negative and turn it into something

positive." He secured a patent and began manufacturing the fin system in 1999. Now he's under contract with Godfrey Marine to sell the product, and he also sells it through Long Island Marina in Catawba and from his web site, www.conradmarine.com.

Sohm went to work for Long Island Marina shortly after visiting Lake Norman for the PDB Shootout at Queens Landing some years ago. His father-in-law had already moved to the lake, and he and his wife soon followed "so I could boat year-round without pushing ice," he says. At the marina he works in sales, service and gel coat repair.

"Five years ago, when I came to talk to Mark Kale at Lake Norman Marina, he threw me out, but now he gives me the okay, and everyone who's bought a boat this year has added the fins."



PREMIER PONTOONS

How'd he get stuck with his nickname? As a sophomore in high school, on a dare, he agreed to ride a minibike through his high school wearing a Santa suit. The bike fell apart in the last hallway, and the principal came out of his office and said, "Mr. Sohm, that was a goofy thing to do." He's been Goofy ever since.

Not so goofy now, judging from the success of his invention. "Come try it," he says with a smile. ↓