



Attention Savvy Shoppers

story **JEFF MERRILL, CPYB**

In this new column, we'll dig deep into all the elements of making a smart trawler purchase.

So, you want to become a trawler owner. Congratulations! Now, you'll need a good broker and background knowledge about how the intricacies of the sales process works. In this new column, I hope to be your guide to those particulars and a whole lot more.

I've sold hundreds of new and used cruising sailboats and trawlers, and I'm a certified professional yacht broker—a background that gives me unique insight into the trawler lifestyle. It blends freedom, self-sufficiency and accomplishment into a rewarding experience that owners can share with friends and family. Trawlers provide unlimited opportunities to visit new places and meet interesting people.

Tapping into that lifestyle requires determining which trawler is best for the type of cruising you intend to do, and then narrowing your search to the specific boat that is ideal for your needs. This process involves a team of players, including an experienced yacht broker, to guide you and serve as your advocate. These players also will help with banking, insurance, scheduling, paperwork, taxes, legalities, negotiations and—yes—more paperwork. Service people, too, will be key to your team.

In the coming months, I plan to explain my thinking about

the sales process to help you understand all of the dynamics involved. Among other things, this column will discuss:

The offer. This is when your selling broker prepares a purchase and sale agreement, and submits it to the listing broker, who presents to the seller. Counteroffers may follow before the buyer and seller agree on dates and pricing. The clock on the deal starts when the seller signs to accept your offer.

The deposit. Upon receiving a signed contract, your good faith deposit (10 percent of the offer price) is placed in your selling broker's trust account.

The surveyor (and diesel mechanic). These folks are an essential hire for every buyer. Make sure that your underwriter/lender will accept a report from a NAMS or SAMS accredited surveyor. That's the National Association of Marine Surveyors, and the Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors.

The haul-out yard. The seller selects a yard, and an appointment is made for survey haul out.

Survey day(s). You meet at the boat to inspect equipment and evaluate characteristics. The surveyor sets the agenda. An underway demonstration and test is done for all gear (including the tender). The buyer pays all costs for this survey.