

A boat-themed boat

by Jess Lloyd-Mostyn

Voyagers transform their vessel along the way

I'll never forget stepping on board our boat for the first time. Sure, I'd seen countless photos. It was me who found it online, added it to our list and urged my husband to visit it even though, at the time, it was out of our budget. I ignored the price tag and persevered; I felt, somehow, that this would be the boat for us.

ment of scatter cushions that you couldn't actually sit down, and all of these featured the same image of a yacht.

The bulkheads were hung with gilt-framed prints showing a schooner, a cutter, a Bermudan sloop and several more, although none of them were a painting of our boat. Then there were brass fittings galore, hanging lamps, wall-mounted lamps, an hourglass and a big brass ship's bell.

I loved the wood interior and the feeling that the room was both capacious and comforting, but the style made it look more like a museum than a yacht that was about to sail anywhere.

Fast-forward by five years and that same space looks rather different. There is no sign of blue-and-white upholstery anywhere, and the brass is all gone. The ship's bell was allowed to hang free and sound for our first few passages before we realized that every heel of the boat made it clang. It was soon sold at a swap meet.

Now the walls are filled with the story of our adventures so far. There are Indian animal god figures and a Nepalese timber 'Om' from our previous travels; there is a beaten-up old Spanish guitar; there is a woolen chimpanzee, a painting of a skeletal mermaid, three little monkey masks and a carved decorated jaguar's head from Mexico. The seating has been re-covered in a plain gray to contrast with the vivid patterns of the large Guatemalan cushion and the bold banded Mexican throw that sit on them. Our portlights are fringed with a panoply of handmade cour-

tesy flags. Even the striped teak panels that make up the floor are now partly obscured by a rich woven rug from Oaxaca and a scattering of children's books and toys.

The big hanging gas lamp that once swung above our table has been replaced with a wooden flapping dragon, a painted pink panther marionette and three antique ornate fish that spin in the breeze. Our fruit sits in a dark timber kava bowl, paired with a carved ceremonial ax that adorns one of our doors, found together in Fiji. There are other bizarre sundry items, both bought and found, that I've chosen to paint in a blinding rainbow of colors. Each time we prep the boat for passage, this collection of curios that festoons the space does get at least partly streamlined and stowed away.

This is the stuff of sailing life. In place of the aspirational sailing-themed and yacht-embellished trimmings that used to prettify the inside of our boat when it sat unused in a marina for years, this colorful and jumbled multitude of objects has crossed oceans, traversed both the equator and the International Date Line and witnessed many personal milestones along our journey from clueless sailing couple to salty and skillful parents of two boat babies. No more is it a yachting museum; she's a bluewater home with stories under her keel and a lot more miles to go. ■

Jess Lloyd-Mostyn, a frequent contributor to *Ocean Navigator* voyages with her husband and two children on *Adamastor*, a *Crossbow 42*.



Jess Lloyd-Mostyn

Jess at work amid the colorful decor on *Adamastor*.

However, standing in that great main space for the first time, I realized something quite comical that didn't feel right.

"Is it just me or does our boat have a nautical theme?!"

I looked around and began to mentally catalog the culprits of this matter. There was the navy blue bench seating, the blue-and-white-striped sofa backs and coordinating hatch curtains. Both settees were covered with so large an assort-