

GREAT LOOP ADVENTURE SPAWNS A NEW BUSINESS

By Wayne Prichard

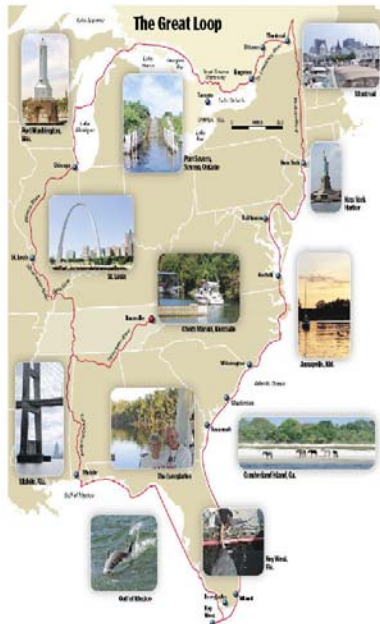
This is a story of how we came to do America's Great Loop and how that adventure led to cruisermarine.com, our web retail store for frugal cruisers.

Background of the Adventure:

For forty years Doris and I have lived and boated on the Tennessee River (yes we are that old). When we vacationed it was usually somewhere by the water. We have always loved boats, and my business, before I retired, was boat related. We both liked the idea of traveling on the boat for an extended period of time, so it came as a logical progression for us to want to spend a year traveling the Great Loop.

The Trip:

Our trip took us from Ft. Loudon Lake, Knoxville, TN, to Mobile, Key West, up the east coast to New York City, then to Canada (including Montreal, Ottawa, Georgian Bay, the North Channel of Lake Huron), across Lake Michigan to Chicago, and down a system of six rivers back to Knoxville, Tennessee. It was a year-long journey of 6,800 miles, 128 locks and 4400 gallons of diesel fuel. This map courtesy of the Knoxville News-Sentinel shows our route.



You can see this map in a higher resolution at www.thefrugalcruiser.com.

The Loop offers many great views to enjoy and one of the greatest pleasures is seeing them over the bow of the boat.



A view leaving Key West, Florida via Hawk Channel

Choosing the Boat:

Choosing a boat that was capable of this trip and which we planned to keep for a long time was not a simple task. In addition, we speak of ourselves as frugal cruisers therefore the boat had to be affordable. After an extended search along with attending a Trawler Fest, the Miami Boat Show, the Annapolis Boat Show and looking at many boats, we chose a 1984 Californian with twin Caterpillar diesel engines. Our boat is a sundeck design with an aft cabin but also with a cockpit at the stern. We then spent four years refitting the boat as a “do it yourself” series of projects. Here she is, Segue, performing in the environment she loves best - cruising.



We learned a lot about boat systems in the refit process. During the Loop we also learned a lot about the needs of cruisers. When we completed the Loop we decided to return to work by starting a boating supply business that combined our love for boating with our cruising and refit knowledge.

Our Business:

The business we started, cruisermarine.com, consists of selling boating products that are frequently needed by cruising boaters. During the Loop we watched items that held up well and those that needed replacing. We thought about products that would have made cruising easier and we talked with hundreds of other cruisers about their lives on the water.

With this background we selected products that we frequently used or found particularly helpful. We also selected products that often needed to be replaced due to the stress placed on them during travel. We decided to concentrate on [dock lines](#), [marine rope](#), [anchor line](#), [marine wire](#), [shore power](#), [fenders](#), [rub rail](#), [deck hardware](#), [dock boxes](#) and [dock steps](#).

Above all, we believe in cruising comfortably but being frugal. The products we selected have two things in common - they are high quality and they can be sold at a price that will please a frugal cruiser.

Here are a few of the reasons for doing business with us:

- 1. We offer quality products;*
- 2. Our web site is easy to use;*
- 3. Our prices are probably the lowest anywhere;*
- 4. No sales tax outside Tennessee;*
- 5. Great customer service from people who are also cruisers;*

We hope you will find our store appealing and will talk with us about your purchases. We welcome your ideas for other products you would like to see us carry. Our web site is cruisermarine.com. Our email is wayne@cruisermarine.com. We will be glad to hear from you.