



HELMSMAN 46 PILOTHOUSE

LOA: 50ft. 1in.

Beam: 16ft. 3in.

Draft: 5ft.

Displacement: 45,000 lbs.

Fuel: 800 gal.

Water: 300 gal.

Engines: 1x 500-hp John Deere 6090

Brawn and Beauty

Helmsman launches its 46 Pilothouse, a new flagship for the long-distance trawler yacht builder.

STORY **NORRIS COMER**

The man who owns Hull No. 1 of the new flagship Helmsman 46 Pilothouse had the boat commissioned at CSR Marine boatyard in Seattle. I caught up with him at the nearby Salmon Bay Café, where he told me about his life growing up on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, spending a lot of time on boats.

"I've had all different kinds of boats, from fishing boats to express cruisers and now trawlers," Robert Chanpong told me,

going through about 20 years' worth of boats. The Helmsman is named *Kiskadee*, after a tropical bird native to the Caribbean.

Chanpong's trawler lifestyle began in 2018 when he ordered a Helmsman 38E. "I had a fishing boat at the time, an aluminum outboard cuddy cabin," he says. "To be honest, because I wasn't catching salmon—fishing was terrible, but crabbing was fine—I decided to, on the urging of my spouse, Gail, go slow."

NORRIS COMER

He saw Helmsmans up close at the Seattle Boat Show. He got a deal on a Helmsman 38E that was originally intended to be an East Coast show vessel. It was delivered in 2019.

"It was love at first sight," he says. The Chanpongs spent a year preparing for a grand Alaska adventure that ended up spanning three months and several thousand nautical miles going through iconic spots such as Pruth Bay, Red Bluff Bay and Warm Springs Bay. "Everything on the boat was absolutely first class, functioned properly," he says. "She was easy to operate. Easy to dock."

They had so much fun, they wanted to go again—but they had a few notes. For one thing, Gail wanted more stowage.

"I said, 'Well, would you like to have a bigger trawler?'" Robert recalls. "And to be honest she looked at me and said, 'Why would you want to have a bigger trawler? The 38 is just fine.'"

Robert didn't agree. In addition to the stowage issue, the engine compartment under the salon was tight when a water-maker is added alongside the genset and engine. He talked to Scott Helker, co-founder and president of Waterline Boats, and founder and president of Helmsman Trawlers.

"We talked about different aspects of a larger boat," Chanpong says. "I'm interested in your 46, but you don't have one. So, Scott said, 'Well, would you like to be the launch customer?' And I had a moment and then I said, 'Yeah, sure.'"

Helker says the Helmsman Pilothouse 46 resulted from customer inquiries and a decision to stick with the builder's ethos versus chasing trends.

"With our 37, 38 and 43 models, we had developed a strong reputation for exceptionally well-built trawlers that sold at a price that made them a great value," Helker says. "And then

many inquired, 'Do you build a larger trawler?'"

That's why Helker says he decided to extend the Helmsman Trawlers line. "Our naval architect, Ivan Erdevicki, did a beautiful job of translating these instructions into a lovely and unique trawler design," Helker says.

The 46 Pilothouse has a reported cruising speed of 8 knots with a 11-knot top speed, achieved with a single 500-hp John Deere engine. Design features include an open pilothouse and semicustom stateroom layouts, with two- or three-stateroom and convertible-office options. The 46 doesn't have full-length side decks because the salon spans the full beam.



Above: Owner Robert Chanpong onboard Hull No. 1 as she undergoes commissioning, standing near the four integrated, waterproof stowage compartments in the foredeck. **Below:** The flybridge is accessed from stairs on both sides of the 46 and is finished with fore and aft-facing seating and a boat deck with Nick Jackson davit.



Helmsman
TRAWLERS



46 PILOTHOUSE



43E PILOTHOUSE

SUPERBLY CRAFTED SURPRISINGLY AFFORDABLE - TOP QUALITY MEANS SAFE COMFORTABLE CRUISING

46 - Designed for long-range cruising! This expedition pilothouse trawler features a full beam salon, a variety of two and three stateroom configurations, spacious engine room and large flybridge/boat deck.

43E - Innovative lowrise pilothouse trawler design with excellent visibility from the helm, an expansive full beam salon, two staterooms, two heads, a full engine room and sizable flybridge/boat deck.

helmsmantrawlers.com +1 206 282 0110 46 43E 43S 38E 38S

HELMSMAN, NORRIS COMER



Above: The U-shape galley is open to the salon and includes plenty of refrigerator and freezer capacity, stowage and countertop space.
Below: Redundant systems in the wheelhouse include two chartplotters, three VHF radios, Starlink and AIS.

Chanpong also liked the four weatherproof stowage compartments integrated into the foredeck. The layout is classic Helmsman, with dual reverse rake and deeply seated steps leading up to the flybridge from the foredeck. The flybridge has a dinghy davit and sheltered seating area.

One notable change from previous models is the addition of stabilizers. *Kiskadee* has a MagnusMaster setup that's low on power consumption with a small interior footprint. "We had, let's say, five experiences of very bad weather when we were underway [on the 38E]," Chanpong says. "Washing machine kind of waves. Two- and three-meter seas. Wind. Rain."

Boat owners like the quick deployment time of about 12 seconds, he adds, as it lets a skipper deploy the stabilizer when an approaching wake is sighted in calm conditions. Chanpong



38E PILOTHOUSE



38S SEDAN

SUPERBLY CRAFTED SURPRISINGLY AFFORDABLE - TOP QUALITY MEANS SAFE COMFORTABLE CRUISING

38E - Innovative lowrise pilothouse trawler design with excellent visibility from the helm, full beam salon, separate day head for guests, full engine room, one stateroom.

38S - A sedanstyle trawler with classic lines, walk-around side decks, all-round lower helm visibility, spacious flybridge/boat deck, one or two staterooms.

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HELMSMAN

PHOTO CREDIT



Above, from left: Hull No. 1 was on the hard over the winter, getting systems updates that includes MagnusMaster stabilizers; While the owners went with split berths, a variety of guest accommodation layouts are available. **Below:** The master stateroom has a split head for privacy and copious stowage.



says he also likes that they're electric, not hydraulic. The average power consumption is about 700 watts per stabilizer when fully deployed, so a generator is not required to run them.

The MagnusMaster has proven popular on our new Helmsman Trawlers, and they've also done a retrofit on a Helmsman Trawlers 38E Pilothouse, Helker says. "Our experience across a number of vessels shows about a 0.2- to 0.3-knot decrease in speed when the stabilizers are deployed. We hear about this being useful when cruising the San Juans midday or out east on the ICW," Helker says. (For more on MagnusMaster, read "Balance of Power" at passagemaker.com.)

Another of his favorite features is the traditional wooden look of the interior. "I didn't want to have anything that was too avant-garde," he says. "I like the traditional style."

There's a split head in the master stateroom with a shower on one side and the toilet on the other, for privacy. The pilothouse has a customized electronics layout. Redundant systems include two chartplotters, three VHF radios, Starlink and AIS.

Chanpong's plan is to take *Kiska-dee* north to Alaska in May, with an itinerary that will include Ketchikan and the Behm Canal. After exploring southeast Alaska, the couple expects to cruise through Desolation Sound and Princess Louisa Inlet. "We will stay out several months," he says.

If the best sign of a boatbuilder's quality is happy, loyal owners, then Helmsman Trawlers seems to be doing a great job. More Pilothouse 46s are in progress for customers, and a 43 Sedan model is set to launch this year as the company opens new European and Australian markets. ❁

