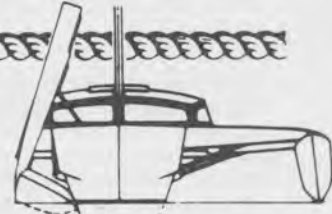


F TRAILER TRI

Newsletter



December 1987 — No. 35

F-27 to Hawaii — the Full Story

As announced in the last newsletter, Mark Robson and John Walton sailed Mark's F-27 KILLER FROG to Hawaii in the 1987 Transpac. Here is the full story, by John Walton.

KILLER FROG is a completely standard F-27, the only additional equipment being carried was a Sat-Nav system, VHF radio, wind speed instruments, Auto-helm, and a twin Solar Panel set-up. A smaller spinnaker was also added, for use in stronger winds, while extra chafe guards were fitted to the spinnaker halyard exit block. These guards are now standard on all F-27s.

Three extra pad-eyes were fitted around the Pop-top, so that it could be securely lashed down, and these also served as anchorage points for the fore and aft safety harness lines.

Other than food and water, this was all the preparation done, but even so, it seemed (as always) to take an inordinately long time.

So now here we were, at 2 pm, starting on the race to Honolulu, in company with AIKANE X-5 (Choy 62' cat), DAMIANA (Shuttleworth 42' tri), MESHACK (44' Walton tri), with WIND WARRIOR (47' Morelli cat) starting about an hour later.

AIKANE X-5 tacks to port, in the slowly building breeze, then to starboard, and disappears over the horizon in search of a new Los Angeles — Hawaii record. WIND WARRIOR in hot pursuit.

KILLER FROG Paces DAMIANA until the 42' tri hits its stride in 10 to 12 knots of breeze and gains a 300 yard gap by the West End of Catalina Island. MESHACK is really only cruising, with the youngest crew member being Luke Walton at 8 month old, and has dropped well behind at this stage.

By nightfall we were still closehauled with the wind N.W. at 15 knots and a 2 to 3' sea. Although Mike Reppy's well sailed Shuttleworth 42' continued to open the gap, we were both steadily working our way through the monohull Transpac fleet, waiting for the wind to clock around for some reaching conditions.

By Midnight they had arrived at 25 to 30 knots and 3 to 6' waves. Full sail was up, boat speed unknown, as KILLER FROG's log was kaput and the replacement was connected inside the cabin. Mark, offwatch, was trying to sleep.



KILLER FROG — photo taken by Butch Hitchcock on MYSTERY

Two things became obvious. One, we were going very fast, jumping off some waves, blasting through others and rapidly overtaking some quite large rigs. Two, this is not fun. The waves we jump off are fine, the ones we blast through end up in my lap and face.

With the 150% Mylar #1 and full main we are also grossly over-canvased, occasionally lifting the very forgiving boat a bit higher than is comfortable, even for hard sailing.

All this is great fun for the hard core ocean racer, but after 12 hours on the helm this old softie was ready for some following winds, an autopilot and a warm dry cabin. Lacking that, the next best thing was wake up Mark, drop the genoa, and relax a little.

Our Sunday sailor attitude catches up with us 3 or 4 hours later when along with daylight a 50' IOR type overtakes us. The seven crew sitting on the weather rail appear much less comfortable than we, so even though we're jogging along at a little over 8 knots under main alone, it's up with the jib and soon we roll over them again, as KILLER FROG leaps and bounds through sloppy seas on a very tight reach in 20 to 25 knots of breeze.

We continued to reach through the 2nd day and night in diminishing winds just south of the rhumb line until on the 3rd day things got so light and the barometer so high that we belatedly dove off south under spinnaker in search of more wind.

While surfing in the 10-12 knot winds and following seas, KILLER FROG would often over run her spinnaker, plastering it back against the stays. This resulted in a few good spinnaker wraps and a small rip in our #1 spinnaker. We changed down to the small #2 equipped with a furling sock. Later that dark night this brilliant and normally useful invention provided us with the most frustrating spinnaker wrap imaginable. Two hours of recovering snarled control lines and fabric from the headstay.

The morning of day 4 finds us once again under main alone as we want to thoroughly inspect both spinnakers in daylight before risking them with some 1700 miles to go. Morning also shows we have come far enough south and given up enough ground to have a couple of 40 footers on the horizon ahead



KILLER FROG off Catalina. Photo by Geri Conser.

So it's up with the #1 chute and we have a great time surfing in the moderate winds and swells. The occasional small squalls with 25-30 knot gusts are exhilarating as the boat sings along, racing down into the trough, at speeds exceeding 20 knots, then up the backside and over the top of the next wave.

Anticipated handling problems in these conditions never materialized, as steering remained responsive and true, while the buoyant bows lifted sharply from the troughs, with no tendency to bury or pitchpole. These rides generated considerable adrenalin, but little water in the cockpit. There appeared to be a reasonable level of safety until the wind was brought too near the beam, threatening lateral stability.

After a few hours we edge to within a quarter mile of MYSTERY, a C & C 43, whereupon one of the two infrequent squalls seems to pick up KILLER FROG and in almost no time deposit her alongside and maybe 40 to 60' to leeward of the larger boat. For several minutes we loaf along in MYSTERY's lee, having a joint photo session with her crew of 7, who are all out on deck for the occasion.

This continues until another squall heralds our departure and transports us another half mile down the Honolulu freeway.

Afternoon and evening of day 4 sees the wind increasing until KILLER FROG can no longer carry the #1 chute. With the wind just off the beam the boat is pushing the stability factor a bit far. Just prior to being doused the chute emits a loud noise opening a large rip near the port shoulder. Ah well, we were gonna take it down anyway.

Although not quite as fast with the genny up, KILLER FROG is very well behaved and still rolls along at 13 to 14 knots while the wind holds, which, of course, it only does for a short time.

The morning of day 5 finds us tired but happy, because even with less than optimum conditions KILLER FROG has exceeded 250 miles the previous 24 hours.'

We are looking forward to even better days ahead, but such was not to be as at about 0800 the lower rudder gudgeon failed, allowing the entire rudder case to swing up almost horizontally to the side. The top gudgeon and pintle were still intact although their bolts gouged out two semi-circles in the fiberglass of the transom.

We immediately took the load off by pulling the rudder kick up line, and then doused all sail, to try to sort out the damage and a possible fix. After removing rudder, by hanging over the transom and wrestling it up on deck, it became obvious that a lower gudgeon weld had failed on the aluminum rudder case.

Fortunately we had on board a good selection of shackles which we used to attach the rudder case to the lower transom bracket which had not been damaged. With the rudder case top undamaged, the boat could now be steered, although with a very sloppy helm because of slack in the shackle chain. Two lines shackled to either side of the rudder case near the lower gudgeon, and led out to the floats, and back to the spinnaker winches, took the slop out and gave us hope of a reasonable continuation of our trip.

To keep the rudder stresses low, we hoisted KILLER FROG's storm jib as a square sail, tacked to each float bow, with no mainsail, for an average speed of 4-5 knots over the remaining day and night.

By the morning of day 6 we were getting bored with the slow progress, so as the rudder was holding up well, the storm jib was replaced by the working jib, which boosted our speed another knot. This lasted a day until continued lack of excitement and a healthy rudder bought out the #1 genoa for its day in the sun, until on the 8th day we found the nerve to hoist the small spinnaker.

KILLER FROG then began to reel off 200-220 mile days for the remainder of the trip under small spinnaker alone, still without a mainsail, while the crew often let the autohelm steer, and the Sat-Nav do its thing. The entire boat settled comfortably into cruise mode.

The remainder of the trip was punctuated only by two broken shackles, in our jury rig, which were easily replaced, one by moonlight so bright that a rainbow off our standard bow was visible in all its color.

We eventually arrived in Honolulu having taken 12 days 4 hours to cover the approximately 2300 mile course (2250 rhumb line) some 6 hours behind MESHACK who had not raced after the first day because of gear problems and other circumstances associated with keeping 8 month old Luke happy and occupied.

The race, as a test for the F-27, was very valuable, showing a possible weakness in the rudder case. The only other problems

were deck leaks, showing that our deck hardware sealing had to be improved. The pop-top also required more weatherproofing, while the value of a spray dodger became apparent once well offshore. In normal coastal work the F-27 has proved to be a very dry boat, but add a lot of speed and big waves — and you're gonna get wet.

Cause of the rudder failure still remains a mystery, as having run the numbers the case itself is stronger than the pintle pin, which never broke. The rudder had unknowingly kicked back slightly for 6 hours before the failure and this would greatly overstress the case. To prevent this, in future offshore passages, provision for permanent lockdown pin is now being fitted in all rudder cases.

But we believe the most likely reason to be that the weld was probably cracked during original assembly, by a slightly oversize rudder blade, and it grew to eventually fail. However, to be safe the rudder case has now been redesigned to completely eliminate all the welding.

In summary KILLER FROG had averaged 191 miles per day, or 7.9 knots for the 2330 miles covered. Probably one of the fastest ever ocean crossing averages for any yacht under 30'. This is even more remarkable when you consider that more than half of the course was sailed with a broken rudder and that 9 hours was spent hove to doing repairs. Omit this and the average jumps to 198 miles/day or 8.2 knots. Best 24 hour run was just over 250 miles or an average of 10.54 knots.

KILLER FROG is still in Hawaii, and has logged quite a few miles around the various islands. Several long windward passages, into 30 to 40 knot winds have been an excellent test, and Mark reports that KILLER FROG handled the conditions very comfortably. While beating into 30 knot + winds and big seas, with a triple reefed main and jib, he has been able to maintain good boat speed, at a 30 degree apparent wind angle. Under reefed main only KILLER FROG can still maintain good boat speed at 35 degrees apparent.

Mark's future plans for KILLER FROG are still uncertain, but a voyage further south to Tahiti is a possibility.

Coming Events



A start during the last Australian Trailertri Nationals in Bundaberg.

U.S.A.

5th March — Berger Series, Marina Del Rey, Contact Jeff Koczynski, Ph (818) 500-1631

13th March — St. Patrick's Day Race, hosted by the Oceanside Yacht Club

Should be at least 10 F-27s racing.

22nd April - 1988 Newport Ensenada Race

Australia

March 12/13 Trailer Sailer Club Qld. Race — Manly/One mile/Manly

March 27th — April 3rd Bicentennial Trailertri Nationals 20 to 25 starters are expected

Other F-27 News

Production rate has now reached the 1 per week level, and after a little more refinement we should double this later in the year. There is still a waiting list for the F-27 of around 4 to 6 months, but we will improve on this, as the year goes by.

No major changes to the boat, apart from upgrading the interior with a special fabric liner imported from Australia. This now provides an interior standard of finish and prestige expected from such a world class boat.

The not so good news was a price rise in September 1987, for the fully equipped F-27. This became necessary as the production rate stabilized and more accurate costings became available.

Our aim has always been to provide the best possible, highest quality, precision engineered boat at the best possible price, and we will not compromise our quality by using cheaper materials or methods, for false economies. Anybody who has closely inspected an F-27 will agree, I'm sure, that our attention to detail is excellent, and the quality of construction is probably the best in the marine field.

We are now also offering a lower priced base version, which is built with exactly the same techniques, and with the same high quality materials, but has a lower equipment level. It is still a sailaway boat (with sails), and can get you sailing on one of the most exciting craft in the world for a reasonable price.

The falling U.S. dollar has made the F-27 economical to export, and it is now available in Japan, being distributed by Glenshee Japan Ltd., in Tokyo, Ph. (03) 434-2285/6. The first F-27 for Europe is being shipped, and distributors are being set up in France and England.

No news on availability for Australia and New Zealand as yet, but we are still working on this.



Crane Launching an F-27

A number of Marinas or yacht clubs do not have a launching ramp, with the only means of launching being by crane. If this is the case we can install lifting points in the F-27 to accommodate this.

F-27 shown is Greg and Christy Trigeiro's SEA SKATE, which is kept at South Western Yacht Club in San Diego.



Here and There

Once again this newsletter is rather late, due again to work commitments on getting the F-27 production rate up. Hopefully, we can get back to normal soon!

The February 1988 issue of the U.S. magazine *SOUNDINGS*, is devoted entirely to the future of boating. We were rather flattered to read that the boat that comes closest to the Technical Editor's ideal boat for the future is a Farrier designed Trailertri. We have known this for some time of course (!!) but it is nice to have such an independent, favorable opinion, of the Trailertri concept. Thank you Dennis.

For Sale: Rafi Francke has available for sale a Super Tramp mast and sails. This will fit any standard Tramp, and will boost performance. Rafi can be contacted at (213) 478-1882.

Wanted to Buy: Trailertri 680 or 720. Lee Hardy, 1255 Culver Rd., Orlando, FL 32825, Ph. (305) 281-4999.

For Sale: Perry Kinder of North Little Rock wants to move up to an F-27, and has 2 Eagle/Tramps for sale! (It's a long story). Both seem very well equipped and Perry can be contacted at (501) 661-4169 (H) or (501) 771-1967 (W).

For Sale: Due to business pressure, am selling my Trailertri 720. W.E.S.T. system plus glass. Boat to 99% drawing Specs. Firm Price, no offers \$19,000 CDN. dollars. Tony Peacock, 8503 — 71 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Ph. (403) 466-8532 evenings.

If you want to charter a Tramp, for a holiday weekend, then Fred Adler of Adler Marine, Lake Havasu, Arizona, can oblige. Fred's phone number is (602) 855-1555.

F-27 Report from Maine

Tom and Kitty Clements took delivery of their F-27 last year, and have since done a lot of cruising in Maine. Tom writes:

Dear Ian,

It seems time for a progress report on Spread Eagle and I am delighted to report nearly everything is positive. Since cutting the umbilical cord, we have had an absolutely marvelous time with the boat. The trip to the Bras d'Or Lakes on Cape Breton, N.S. was highlighted by a superb 12 knot sail with 20 knot winds through 2-4 foot seas with the occasional 5 footer. Water was flying everywhere, but with beautiful warm weather, that just enhanced the experience. On another occasion we had 15 knot winds with no sea and got the boat up to 17 knots. Wow! What fun.



On to a list of specific comments.

Has anyone found a good swim ladder that fits and if so what is it?

The rear arm (guide) for the trailer is superb. One guide is enough, but there should be fittings for it on both sides of the trailer and the guide itself should have a 6 foot polypropylene line attached to the top. The guide is put on the downward side of the trailer for retrieval and on the upwind side for launching. This setup combined with the existing bow line means two people can launch and retrieve under quite high wind/sea conditions with the boat under perfect control at all times.

Rain/spray in the stern cabin is a problem. Spread Eagle lives on a mooring, so any rain is always driven directly astern. The space between the washboards on the stern cabin opening insures that water will enter. We have on order some velcro and a piece of canvas from which we can make a raincoat.

The rubber bow block on the trailer split on the drive back east. Route 80 through Pennsylvania is unbelievable. I would suggest that all long distance travelers carry a spare block as they are much larger than normal and I had to order a replacement (plus a spare) from AROS when no local trailer supply house had them.

We have a Yamaha 8 hp outboard with electric start and dual thrust propeller on order. I will give you a report on that combina-

tion after some experience. I should mention that there has been no problem with the Evinrude 6 hp 20" shaft. It is just that we wanted an electric start.

I am also about to install a Solec Solarcharger III 20 watt unit on the deck between the working jib and genoa tracks. The unit can be walked on and this position is close astern of the battery compartment.

That's the report from the field for now. We are having a ball with the boat. Many thanks for a truly superior product.

Sincerely,
Tom Clements III
Blue Hill, Maine

As Tom mentions, we have had a problem with the aft hatch leaking, it being a difficult area. However, all F-27s now come with a canvas cover for this hatch, and these are also being sent out to all earlier buyers/owners.

F-27 in Michigan

Rankin Peck has been interested in Trailertris for quite a while now, and finally took delivery of his F-27 last year. Rankin writes on his first season of ownership:

Dear Ian,

I took my F-27 out of the water last Sunday and might take her to Florida during the winter. The folding sells this boat, along with comfort, speed and cruising facilities. It is faster than all other monos — up to 60' which I have raced with, and most multihulls. It is even better than I ever expected.

Of all the races I engaged in I took first 6 times, second twice. My competition was a 24' Seawind, 34' Crowther tri, 36' McGregor, 22' Tremolino, 31' Kalua cat, and others.

On a single-handed race in 6' seas and up to 35 knots I was first boat by 34 minutes in a 37 mile race. I believe I was the oldest participant at 66 and beat the first monohull (38' Catalina) by 34 minutes, even after starting 20 minutes late.

This race was sponsored by the Great Lakes Single-Handed Society and was the Fall Lake St. Clair Race in October 1987, of which 26 boats participated, including 5 multihulls (24'—34') and 19 monohulls (22' to 40').

Rankin Peck, Grosse Point, Michigan.

A 680 in Colorado

Dear Ian:

We just completed our third season of sailing our Trailertri 680 (I named it "Triple-Point") purchased from Gerry Sayer-Smith. The boat has been ideal for sailing our gusty mountain winds and trailering up our mountain roads.

I get plenty of comments about how nice it looks and envious looks as I sail past boats with reefed mains etc. on gusty conditions.

I had a canvas enclosure built for my 180° turned pop top and it works great!

I have gotten a little confident and sail thunderstorm out flows for the fun of it. In one storm, however, we experienced what we meteorologists call a "down burst". I estimated 45 kts and sustained winds for over 20 minutes with peak gusts over 60 knots. I got caught with full sails up and as I let loose of sails I could feel the entire boat lifting. Upon full release of sails it settled down but I blew out batten and batten pockets. The same storm caught a Catalina 22' (our previous boat-type) and laid it down with the spreaders in the water, if I'd done that I would have never gotten my wife out sailing again!

So we're pretty happy with it.

Sincerely,
Bill Cotton
Bellvue, Colorado

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