

Ask the Experts

Your technical questions answered by some of the most experienced trawler minds afloat.

Dear Editors: We have a 1985 Ocean Alexander on Lake Michigan, which we love. This winter, we rebuilt both Ford Lehman engines. In doing so, we found replacement parts at American Diesel, like always, but believe we got the last of several parts. There are a number of these engines out there going strong. Where might these owners (and ourselves) find parts for future repairs? —Joe Kimmell, Charlevoix, Michigan, M/V Voyageur

Dear Joe: I'm afraid the sad answer is that as our engines get older, they run the risk of running out of new parts. This doesn't just happen to Ford Lehmans, and in fact, American Diesel is supporting Ford Lehmans far longer than many other brands support their legacy engines. (Have you ever tried to get parts for a 50-year-old Saab marine diesel?)

I'm sure that for a while, there will be folks parting out old engines and selling them on the internet, so that may be a possibility. In some cases,

a needed part can be machined, or a similar part can be modified, but if a truly unique part no longer exists, the only answer may be to repower.

—Max Parker, Zimmerman Marine

A boat I was looking at, someone got to first. After a survey and sea trial, there were a few deficiencies. The buyer wants a reduction in price, but the seller won't budge. The broker shared with me the list of deficiencies, all of which seem pretty minor. The broker asked me, if the deal falls through, would I want it? Would it be necessary to resurvey if I had a copy of the one that was just done? —Anonymous, Port Henry, New York

Dear Buyer: The original buyer owns that survey, and while the broker can and should be aware of its findings, that actual report is not his or her property. When you own a boat, you will keep it in a marina, or at least visit marinas. Marinas require proof

of insurance with a liability coverage. You can't get insurance without a survey. Your underwriter may accept a recent survey, but you really should purchase that survey from the buyer (assuming he walks).

I think you are shorting yourself by not attending a survey and learning as much as you can about the boat before committing. Weighing the cost savings of a recent survey against the knowledge benefit of hiring your own surveyor and attending, I believe you are smarter to commission your own surveyor—and a diesel mechanic inspection—so that you know firsthand how the boat performs, and the condition of the running gear. You should see for yourself what the deficiencies are, along with estimates for repairs.

Any survey is a snapshot in time on that particular date. Anything could have happened since the other buyer's survey. I would also recommend a new surveyor with fresh eyes.

—Jeff Merrill, CPYB

Got technical questions? We've got answers. Reach out to our top technical contributors at editor@passagemaker.com

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