

After 30 Years, *Invictus* Sails On to More Adventures



Photo by Jolene Coats

Invictus, a Shannon 38 that has sailed around the world, is ready for another 30 years of adventure after a “re-christening” ceremony.

Some boats bounce from owner to owner with little ceremony—but the *Invictus* is not just “another boat!” This full-keel Shannon 38 ketch was launched in the famous boatbuilding town of Bristol, Rhode Island in 1978, and sailed 32,000 nautical miles around the world by the first owners, Marsh and Fran Damerell in 1980-83.

In 1997, they reluctantly decided it was time to sell the boat to Mike and BJ Strickland of Portland. Now *Invictus* has been passed on to the third owners—Gordon and Catherine Bilyard, who organized a re-christening ceremony on June 13 to include the Damerells who would be visiting the NW at that time and the Stricklands who reside in eastern Oregon.

(This degree of respect and dedication to the Shannon yachts is not unusual—they are unique in having been built by the same yard, run by the same owner, since 1975 and have logged over one million bluewater miles. *Invictus* was Shannon 38 #12 and over 100 of the class were built between 1975 and 1986.)

Fortunately, Walt Scholz, the builder of the Shannons, had established a tradition that the Bilyards could follow. It involved



Photo by Les Williams

(l-r) Marsh and Fran Damerell, Mike and BJ Strickland and Catherine and Gordon Bilyard.

toasting the boat and the traditions of sailing with blackberry brandy. On June 13, a group of 20 friends and well-wishers gathered at Columbia Crossings for the ceremony.

It concluded with Marshall Damerell proclaiming: “We re-christen her *Invictus*. May her new adventures be many, her trials be few, and her life be long. May she take care of the Bilyards as she did us, her first family, the Damerells.”

He then broke the bottle over the bow and all glasses were raised for the last toast: “To *Invictus*!”