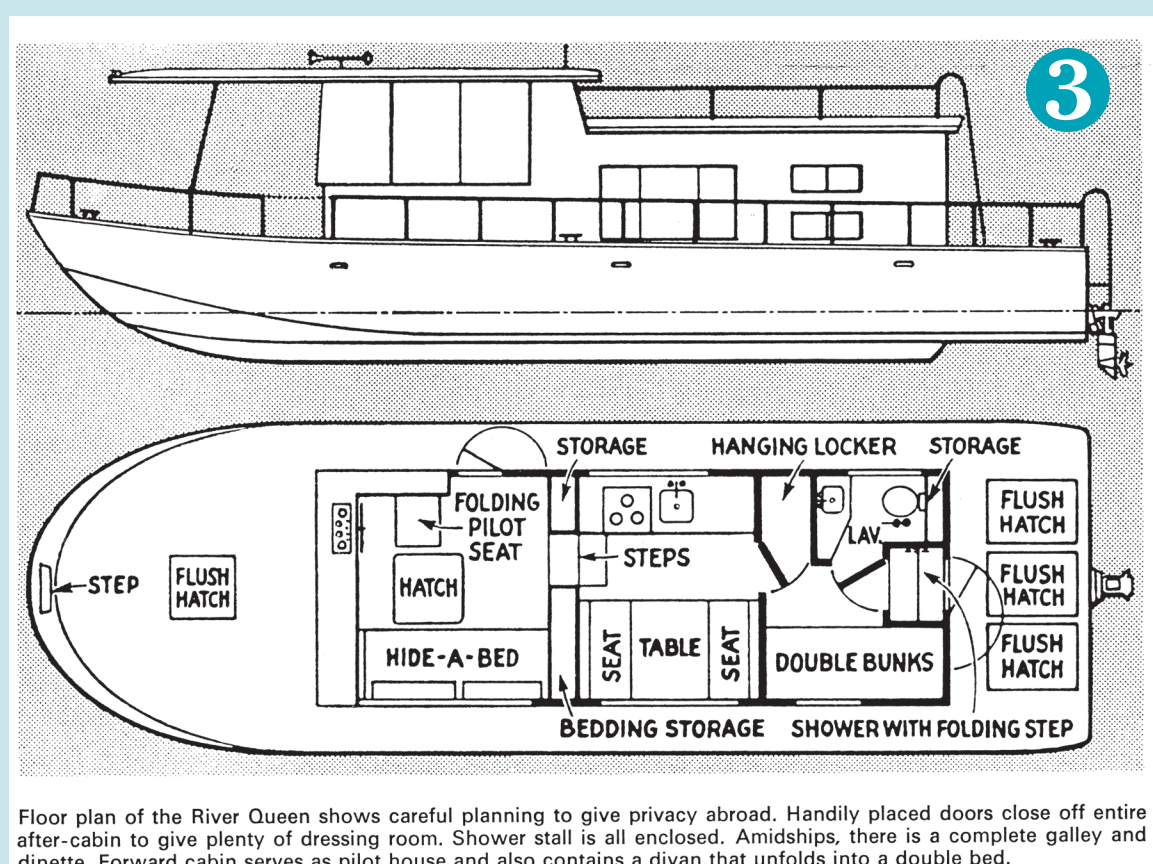


This is a *River Queen*



1 The first River Queen was built by R.E. Peterson, a U.S. Steel executive. The quirky, stern-wheel paddleboat was built for fun but proved so well suited for “lazy living” that in 1954 Peterson designed and began manufacturing steel houseboats in Gary, Indiana.

2 In 1966, Peterson purchased the former Harding Hotel (a vast, curved-roof structure on Ferry Street in Douglas that once boasted “the longest bar in the world”) to build River Queens locally. Under the leadership of R.J. Peterson, R.E. Peterson’s son, the River Queen Boat Company of Douglas constructed nearly 500 vessels from 1967 to 1973.



3 Over time the River Queen evolved from a boxy, flat-bottomed, floating club house, into a sleek craft with a V-shaped, keeled bow, a flybridge (secondary steering wheel on upper level) and full accommodations including a head (toilet), shower, galley (kitchen) and room to sleep six people.

4 The versatile craft was comfortable and also performed well, even on the big lake. Open up the twin 210-horse-power engines and a River Queen could reach speeds of 30 miles per hour. Erik Peterson, R.J.’s brother, regularly cruised his River Queen up to Beaver Island or even the North Channel in Canada.

