

CIELITA

LOA 46', LWL 41', Beam 13.8', Draft 6.1', Displacement 28,500 lbs

Designer: J Boats

Built 2003 by Tillotson Pearson Inc.



Cielita, ready for final launching in the spring of 2003. Note the Lifesling, M.O.M., horseshoe, and Category I GEPIRB on the pushpit and the jerry cans of spare diesel on the swim platform.

Cielita, a customized J-46, was built by TPI in Warren, RI in the summer and fall of 2002 in anticipation of a cruise the following summer to Greenland. The owner had cruised extensively in Maine, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Labrador for many years on his previous boat, a Beneteau 42. He commissioned *Cielita* specifically for the more adventurous and demanding voyage to Greenland.

The J-46 was selected for this cruise, in part, because it could be built on a tight schedule close to the owner's home in New England. The owner was fortunate to have a good friend who owned another J-46 so there was an opportunity to sail on it and 'kick the tires'. The trial sail proved that the J-46 was a powerful, fast passage-maker that was well made and easily handled by a small crew. It had lots of innovations that would prove valuable on an ocean passage as well as cruising a remote coast, including its carbon fiber mast, rod rigging, bulb keel, relatively shallow draft, huge spade rudder, turbo charged diesel, generator, water maker, and terrific refrigeration. Most importantly,

the owner felt that this boat just felt right: sea kindly, stiff, powerfully rigged, fast, solid, and good looking.

The owner discussed his needs with Jeff Johnstone of J Boats and toured the TPI facility, where he met with their engineers. Modifications were developed, based on his intentions to sail the vessel in high latitudes. Most important of these was the addition of extra fiberglass in the forward two thirds of the hull as insurance against collision with growlers and flow ice, and a `collision bulkhead' that would at least slow the flow of water into the main cabin in the event of a serious breach in the hull forward. This involved modifications to the existing main bulkhead that included a watertight door and silicone seals around all wiring and plumbing passing through the bulkhead. In addition plugs were made for the limber holes in the bilge and the openings of the ventilators in the cabin trunk to further seal off the forward cabin in an emergency. A high volume electric bilge pump with a two inch diameter outflow was installed in the forward cabin. These were unique modifications that TPI had not previously done but which they were happy to work out with the owner. Fortunately, none of them were ever needed on the trip to Greenland and Labrador.



High-capacity bilge pump installed in the forward cabin

An extra pilot berth was installed in the main cabin, in place of the standard 'entertainment center', to provide an additional sea berth. A number of more standard options were selected during the construction of the new boat. These included an Espar diesel heater with forced hot air outlets in the three separated cabins, a Mastervolt diesel generator for an auxiliary means of charging the electrical system, and a Sea Recovery water maker. The boat came with a 35 gallon fixed holding tank for the aft head, which was converted to a third fresh water tank. A small bladder tank was installed to serve as a holding tank if needed.



View of the main cabin during construction. The main bulkhead was fitted with a watertight door and silicone seals were installed on all wiring and plumbing passing through this bulkhead.

The TPI production schedule made it possible to deliver the completed boat for launching in Portsmouth, RI in time for sea trials in Narraganset Bay in the late fall. This left ample time to equip the boat the following spring, before departing on its maiden voyage to Cape Breton Island and the Bras d'Or Lakes in May of 2003.

The boat was left at Cape Breton Boat Yard in Baddeck for a month, as planned, in case there was any work that needed to be done following its initial offshore passage. In late June the crew rejoined the boat to begin the eight week trip that took them up the west coast of Newfoundland to Labrador, and thence to Disko Bay at 70 degrees north latitude on the west coast of Greenland. After three weeks of cruising in Greenland, they returned to northern Labrador for three more weeks of cruising on that coast before returning to Baddeck.

The owner felt that the boat performed magnificently. If he had it to do over (and he will!), with a few minor exceptions, he wouldn't change a thing. Careful planning, excellent electronics, a fabulous autopilot (Simrad), spacious refrigeration with a separate deep freezer, a marvelous water maker, cabin heat, many redundant systems, and a well designed and well made boat paid off many times over.



The chart table is equipped with a complete array of contemporary instrumentation including a Dell Inspiron laptop computer, Iridium satellite phone, Furuno Navtex, Furuno NavNet plotter and radar, Raynav instrument readout, Icom VHF radio transceiver, Icom SSB HF radio transceiver, Mastervolt genset controls, AM/FM stereo CD player, and electrical system monitors. Not seen on the bulkhead behind the navigator is the entire circuit breaker panel.



Main cabin looking forward.



View of the galley and aft head



Cielita at anchor in northern Labrador



Underway at the mouth of the Ilulissat Icefjord in Disko Bay, Greenland

