



Corbin 39 Association

Newsletter #4

February 2022



Figure 1 : Eloi Maro when much younger, courtesy Gaetan Girard

That photo is of Eloi Maro when he was younger and on the boat of Gaëtan Girard who took the picture and passed it to me. Now of course Eloi is sailing #135, “Petit Chantier” (ex-“Necessity”) with Anabelle Bilodeau and they are documenting all their adventures for us on their YouTube Channel “Voilier les Copains¹”. They seem to have done about one video per week for almost 3-years, quite remarkable.

This reminds us that sailing on boats is really about the people and their experiences, more so than about the boats themselves. Having said that please excuse me in this newsletter because I will pretty much concentrate on the boats. Especially a study of the Corbin 39 fleet composition, selling prices etc (in the second half, below).

But before I do please can I say thank you to the team of Admins & Mods who have helped behind the scenes the last year. So thanks to Ken Lund, Richard Fuller, Chris Reynolds, and Ron Morrison.

The key statistics of the Corbin 39 group are healthy :

	#1	#2	#3	#4
	Nov 2019	May 2020	Dec 2020	Feb 2022
Boat photo ID	~80	~100	128	143
Facebook Group	~0	98	161	249
Email list	~35	~47	61	72
Finance				
cash in bank	£13.97	£132.08	£328.52	£99.40
minus loan owed	£945.43	£945.43	£945.43	£445.43
balance	-£931.46	-£813.35	-£616.91	-£346.03

The Facebook Group is working well with an average of about one new post per day and approximately 80 viewings etc per day. We had to reclassify the Group from a “public” group to a “private” group because Facebook changed their policies so that anyone could join a public group with no need for prior approval. Given that we were already struggling with bad actors such as commercial trollfarms attempts to join so as to groom and launder their fake profiles, we needed to make that move. Even so almost half of join-attempts are still fakers so the Admin & Mod team are very cautious. We much prefer quality to quantity !



Figure 2: Eloi Maro & Anabelle Biloeau on #135, "Petit Chantier", with thanks

It is only by keeping the Facebook Group as a safe space that people can discuss subjects openly. I'm very glad to say that is the situation and all sorts of Corbin-related stories are being related and questions asked and answered there. The group is working just as we had hoped with lots of spontaneous peer-to-peer interaction between everyone, whether they be owners, ex-owners, crew, or prospective buyers, or just enthusiasts. That

is perfect, so if you are reluctant to go near Facebook (as I am) then this is worth making an exception for. Kudos to Ken Lund for pushing this.

In the course of the last year another 15 boats have been located with a photo, and many of these slotted into the sequence. As more boats are cumulatively identified it becomes somewhat easier to slot new finds into the sequence with more confidence, however there are still about a dozen 'below-the-line' with temporary 300-series numbers. Resolving the unknowns is well worthwhile, so please help if you can.



Figure 3 : #147, "Wawenoc", courtesy Eli Simon

During 2021 I was introduced to the Corbin yard manager Gaetan Duchesne by Raymond Dupuis (ex-owner of #200, "Complicite) and between the three of us we solved a few questions. Critically we can now confirm that the last two Corbin 39s built were the two we know as #200, "Complicite" and #201, "Philosophe".

Gaetan was able to point out that there is one example of a Dufour 39 (as distinct from a Corbin 39) that was built. Gaetan explained that before Marius Corbin agreed to licence the design from Robert Dufour, another individual had bought a set of plans and built his own, entirely independently of Corbin Inc. He says this was "Toi-et-Moi" and it was built by a Mr Robert Harnoi in Quebec. Apparently this was started in approximately 1975 and completed in approximately 1985, and was built

in fibreglass but apparently without using moulds. As of August-2021 Gaetan was aware that Mr Harnoi had fairly recently died, and that this boat was for sale in the Marina St-Mathias where he had kept it. The Canadian register does indeed show a vessel of that name with registry number 393313 and that owner, but that has now been taken from the register. So I guess this should be called a Dufour 39 and will likely be very similar to the mk1 Corbin 39. At present we do not have any photos of this but if anyone can either locate the boat itself or some photos it would be very interesting to know more.

Unfortunately Gaetan also informed me that Robert Dufour had died in the last couple of years, apparently in Quebec. We have only limited information on Robert Dufour and it would be good if we could collect it together and maybe find out some more, so that we can write up an obituary for him. Please contact me if you can assist.

In a similar vein I have been in contact with Marius Corbin during 2021. Despite his age (79 on 1-Sep-2021) he was very busy on a project with a tight deadline. I left a few questions with him but so far he seems to have been too busy to answer them, but at least he is still alive (and on this newsletter distribution list).



Figure 4 : #28, "Arjuna" in transit from Nova Scotia to Antigua, 1-Dec to 22-Dec 2021 (courtesy Marc Boctor, see <https://www.facebook.com/arjunasailing/>)

The website is now ordinarily at #4 in the Google rankings for the Corbin 39, so always on the first page. Various bits of content have been added in the last year. For some reason whoever controls the Wikipedia entry for the Corbin 39 seems to be keen on not mentioning our website, though they are happy to strip content out of us occasionally ! We now have some better drawings scanned and up on the website in the downloads section.

These were donated by Armand Bouchard who was a previous owner of #020 “Nordic X” in 2021 and passed to us by a subsequent owner Dany Bourassa in early 2022. It was Dany who arranged for them to be professionally scanned by a printer in Quebec City to make the scans. That’s why they are so good. As I explained over a year ago we intended to relocate the website host. During the last few months we have migrated the hosting of the website away from Bluehost to MythicBeasts. Nobody seems to have noticed so that went smoothly, thank you very much to the staff at MythicBeasts. And lastly we have switched the email list from MailChimp to SendFox.

Joan and I have just updated the accounts. Joan has managed to swallow all the website fees apart from one into her Tincton Gallery costs: we owe her many thanks. Various donations and sales listings fees have come in. So we have just repaid me £500 of my initial loan. Therefore the balance is going in the right direction. Thank you as follows:

For Sale Listing, Anthony Nirmaier (#057, Fire Lake) (£70)
Donation, Alexander Acree (#189, "Tangoroa") (\$50 = £41.41)
Donation, Rick Cloutier (#109, "Sea Bird") (£25)
Donation, Jeff Shutic (#145, "Luff Shack") (£50)
Donation, Marc Svare (#191, "Bjorn") (£100)



Figure 5: 135, "Petit Chantier", ex-“Necessity”

In the second half of this newsletter you will find an analysis of the Corbin 39 fleet composition and selling prices etc. Analyses such as this depend on you sharing information with us, and on you trusting to keep some of

that information confidential and private. Thank you very much for that trust and we hope you will continue to share.

Once again that is quite enough writing by me, so can I wish you all a happy 2022 with hopefully more time out on boats and fewer Covid-19 restrictions.

Yours aye,
David Sharman
(#123, Bockra)

admin (@) corbin39.org



Figure 6 : #61, "Cosmic Debris" wintering in west Canada, courtesy the Sailing Infidels

(see next page for the analysis)

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Analysis of the Corbin 39 Fleet - Composition, Sales Volume, Prices, etc

The quantity and quality of the information in our records has improved over the last few years to the point where we can now do some meaningful analysis to assist people buying or selling a Corbin, or to improve general understanding. Lately Richard Fuller has helped with this, particularly in trying to spot Corbins for sale, though of course practically everyone has contributed in some way. Any errors are of course mine.

Fleet Composition

Let us start with the question of how many Corbins were moulded and in which moulding style. Given that #201 was the last moulded, and making the assumption that there are no duplicates in the sequence, and that #13 was skipped, we have 200-mouldings. These two assumptions may not be correct and we do have some doubts. Currently we have photos of 137 boats so we can construct the following table:

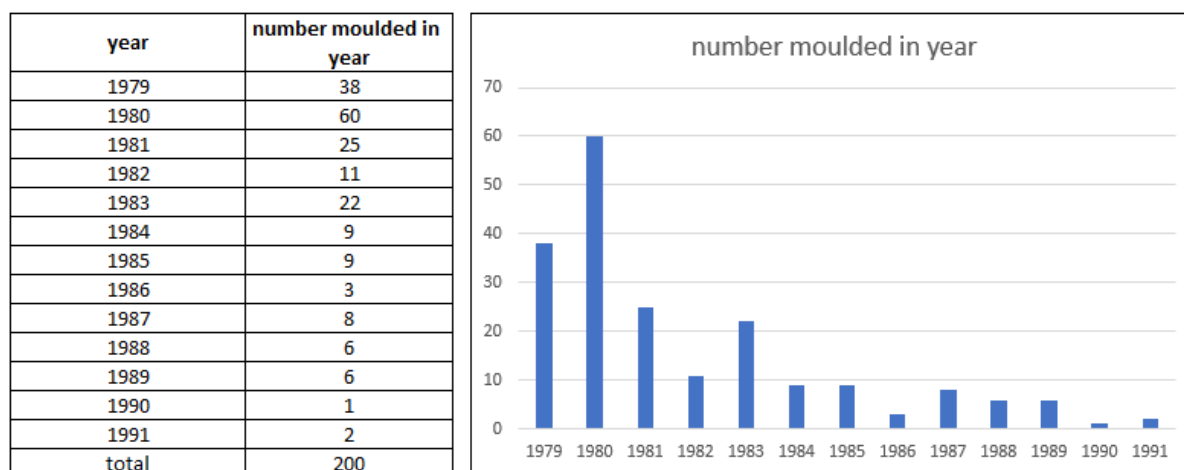
	aft cockpit with pilothouse	centre cockpit, no pilothouse	centre cockpit with pilothouse	total
mk1	63	23		86
mk2	37		14	51
total	100	23	14	137
destroyed in 1982 fire				6
total identified with a photo				143
not yet identified (i.e. no photo)				57
200 boats moulded (last sequence number #201, and #13 not moulded, and no duplicates)				200

This table is useful to understand how rare or common each style of moulding is. Remember that mk2's appear early in the moulding sequence because some unfinished hulls received mk2 topsides mouldings. The fire was in late 1982 and everything from #129 onwards is known to be a mk2. In addition the ones that we have so far identified as being a mk2 and which are pre-#129 are #123, #127, #98, and #80, and of course there may be more to come as we see further photos.

The question of how many hulls were moulded in each year is surprisingly difficult to answer. For starters there are some mould numbers which are claimed by two different boats. Another issue is there are gaps in the sequence of identified boats with known moulding numbers which means that we are not absolutely certain when the year-ends fall within the gaps. In the later years it seems they moved from continuous production to moulding batches in late Summer or early Autumn, so it is easier to pick the year-end point. However there are also some periods when there are contradictions between the mould sequence numbers and the month/year

date numbers. These should run in a coincident flow, but there are moments where we seem to have contradictions, e.g. 172-0685, 173-0686, 174-0585, 175-xx85, 176-0686. This might be because of damage to the reported Hull Identification Number (HIN), or perhaps there are other explanations.

Anyway we can make a fair approximation (but not precise) of the annual moulding rate. This information helps understand the necessity of Corbin Inc ceasing production when volumes fell below the minimum economic batch size that seems to have been approximately half-a-dozen.



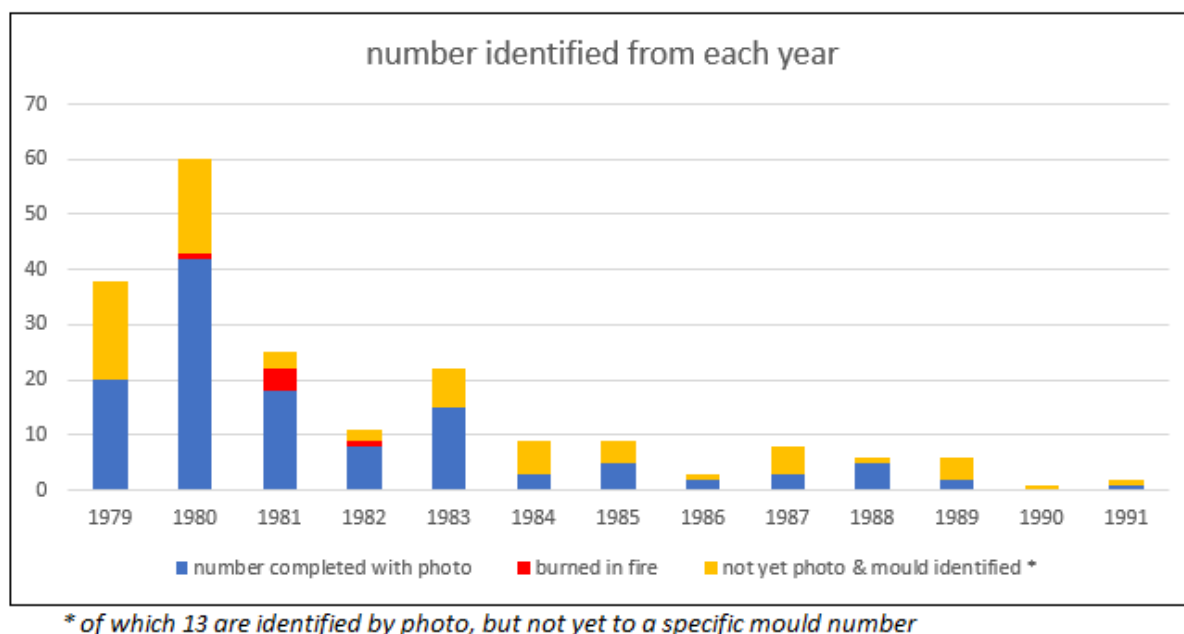
We can further investigate how rare boats are from any particular year, by subdividing this into the number to which we can attribute a photo (as a crude proxy for completion), or which were burned in the 1982 fire.

year	number moulded in year	number completed with photo	burned in fire	not yet photo & mould identified *
1979	38	20		18
1980	60	42	1	17
1981	25	19	4	2
1982	11	8	1	2
1983	22	15		7
1984	9	3		6
1985	9	5		4
1986	3	2		1
1987	8	3		5
1988	6	5		1
1989	6	2		4
1990	1	0		1
1991	2	1		1
total	200	125	6	69

** of which 13 are identified by photo, but not yet to a specific mould number*

Not all the photos are of finished boats as a few are of boats that have not yet been finished, and one photo has been confirmed as scrapped unfinished. Also there are 13 where we have a photo but we cannot yet

be certain of the mould number. Lastly there are boats which we think are finished but we have no photo of. Nonetheless this gives some insight into the situation with respect to hulls moulded and completed, and style of hull moulding.



Turning to the question of rigs it makes sense to only consider the 137 for which we have a photo.

It seems about one-third of the mk1's have chosen to fit a full bowsprit, and of course all the mk2s have a bowsprit – this is the “Special Edition”. A few hulls are still in build and have yet to decide, and a couple have partial bowsprits. Ordinarily this is where a platform projects out the front but the forestay is not located onto the bowsprit. It would probably be easy to relocate those forestays provided that the bowsprit is a fully structural one, of which the most obvious indicator is whether it has a bracing bobstay. There are a variety of partial bowsprits in this group.

	without bowsprit	with bowsprit	partial, or in build, or unknown	total
mk1	51	26	9	86
mk2		51		51
total	51	77		137
destroyed in 1982 fire				6
total identified				143
not yet identified (i.e. no photo)				57
200 boats moulded (last sequence number #201, and #13 not moulded, and no duplicates)				200

On the question of masts we cannot realistically know the precise height of every mast as different boats bought their masts from a few different sources. However we can usefully group them into those with a taller double-spreader mast versus those with a shorter single-spreader mast.

	single-spreader mainmast	double-spreader mainmast	in build, or unknown	total
mk1	21	41	24	86
mk2		51		51
total	21	92		137
destroyed in 1982 fire				6
total identified				143
not yet identified (i.e. no photo)				57
200 boats moulded (last sequence number #201, and #13 not moulded, and no duplicates)				200

Determining the mast type from photos is not always easy. The mk2s all have double-spreader masts. Of the mk1s approximately two-thirds of those we can determine appear to have chosen the double-spreader and so consequently can carry more sail.

We have not been able to gather data as to which position the mainmasts have been stepped on each of the mk1s.

Practically all the boats are cutter-rigged with only a handful set up as sloop-rigged since inception. It would in any case be a relatively easy and cheap undertaking for a sloop-rigged Corbin to add the inner forestay and become a cutter. Similarly a handful also carry a second forestay at the bow and so are solent-rigged, and most of these are also cutter-rigged. One (a mk2) manages to tick all the boxes and is a cutter-rigged ketch with a solent stay.

On the subject of ketches there are about a dozen, spread almost equally between mk1 and mk2.

	single-masted cutter/sloop	twin-masted ketch *	in build, or unknown	total
mk1	79	5	2	86
mk2	44	6	1	51
total	123	11		137
destroyed in 1982 fire				6
total identified				143
not yet identified (i.e. no photo)				57
200 boats moulded (last sequence number #201, and #13 not moulded, and no duplicates)				200

** note most of the ketches are cutter-rigged ketches.*

All of the above information can be seen online on the website, either in the summary listing where an updated version is uploaded once or twice a year (see <https://corbin39.org/summary-list/>) or in the individual boat index pages which tend to be updated fairly soon after new information is passed to us (see <https://corbin39.org/corbin-39-boats-index/>). The full database behind the summary list includes some contact information for some boat owners who wish to remain private, so it is only the redacted version that is published in the summary. But anybody could reproduce the above fleet composition analysis from the info online.

Sales Volume and Pricing

In the last year we have tried to improve our records some more by methodically recording sales of Corbin 39s - both selling events, and offerings of them for sale. We have tried to capture everything from 2015 onwards, and a few earlier ones have also been swept up in our trawl.

In contrast to the fleet and boat information the individual sales outcome information is not being published as many owners wish that to remain confidential. Therefore, just like email addresses, we keep that private. Listings on the other hand are normally fair game as the whole world can see boats that are put up for sale ! There are though some exceptions to even this, and there are some listings which are kept private but which have been shared with us. So please continue to send us this data as you buy or sell a boat and then we can continue to offer this service to the Corbin 39 community. A big thank you for everyone who has trusted us.

There is probably a fleet of about 170-180 boats that are in circulation. Typically owners seem to have a boat for about 10-15 years, which implies that we should see approximately 10-15 listings in each year and about the same number of sales. It seems to take about a year on average for a boat to go through the sales cycle, so at any one moment about 10-20 boats should be advertised as being for sale ('listed'). This stock of listed boats will naturally include some that have been on the market for a long time – perhaps they are overpriced, in a difficult to access location, or are in a bad condition. In the last few years Covid-19 has also had an effect. Anyway we have managed to identify 67 listings:

	listings by year	sales by year
2005	1	
2006		1
2010	1	1
2011	1	
2012	1	1
2013	1	1
2014	1	
2015	10	5
2016	3	2
2017	3	5
2018	6	3
2019	13	11
2020	11	11
2021	15	11
2022		2
not yet sold, or withdrawn, etc		13
total	67	67

I don't think we can draw any volume conclusions from the data pre-2019 as we may have missed quite a few instances. Anecdotally we think that volumes are rising after a period in which the Corbin 39 was not well known, and not well understood, but in truth the quantitative dataset is not solid enough to confirm that anecdotal view. However in the last three years listings and sales are indeed running at about 10-15 per year which seems healthy and in line with our expectations.

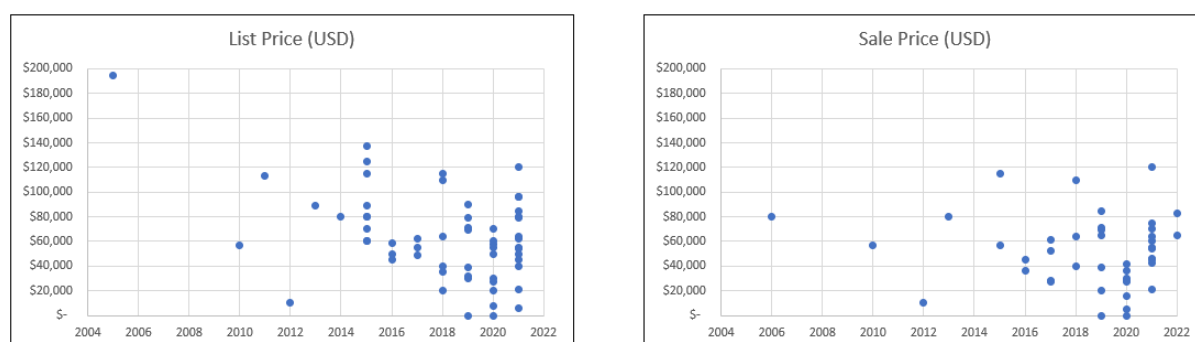
Of the 13 that were listed but not yet sold, 10 appear to be for sale and 3 appear to have been withdrawn from sale or have sold but we missed it. Those 3 which we think are withdrawn were all listed back in 2015. Of the 10 unsold they have all been listed in the last 3-years with one exception.

Of the 67 listings there is no sold price associated with the 13, only a listing price. There are 7 boats where a sale has occurred but we do not know either the listing price or the selling price. Therefore we have 60-listings-prices and 47-sold-prices in our database.

All prices have been converted to USD.

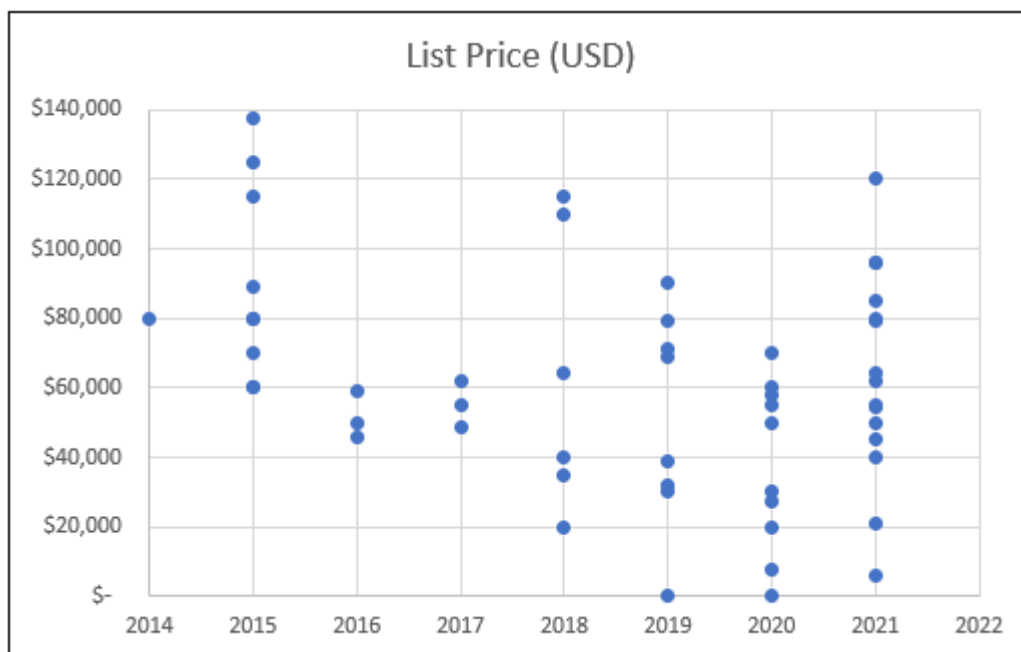
Reviewing the overall fleet composition and comparing it with the composition of the boats that are being put up for sale there is no discernible difference, i.e. these are a completely representative set of Corbins that are a normal mix of the fleet within the expected range. Therefore this article will not break down the composition of the listings as that would be tedious. (I've done the exercise, so you don't have to suffer).

This scatter plot gives all the listings and sales prices by date, but is deliberately anonymous with respect to boat identification.

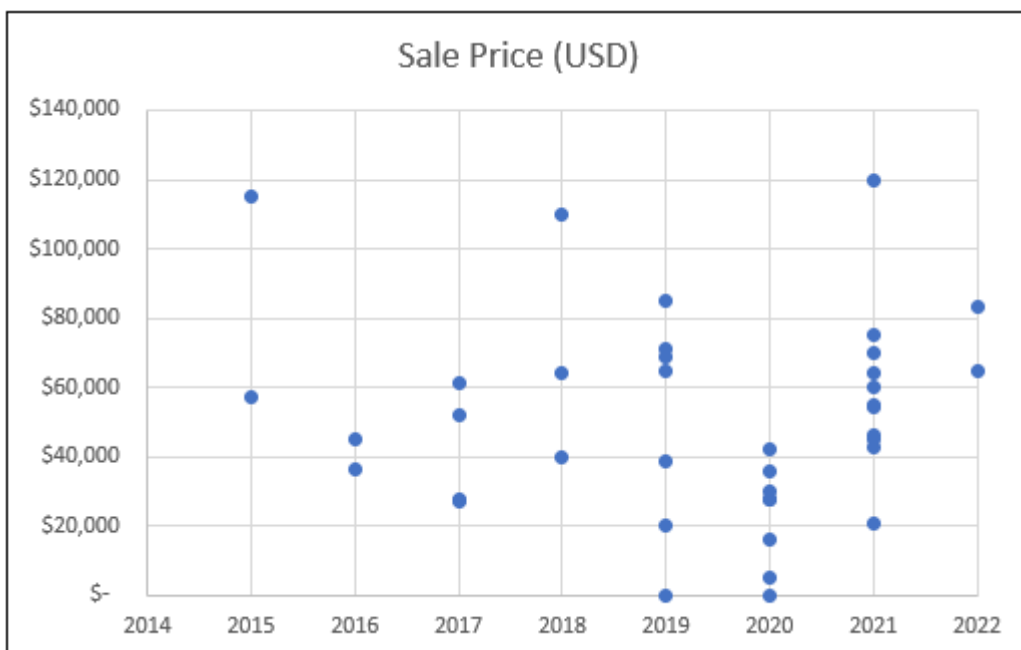


The above is a bit of an eye-chart which is shown so you can get a feel for the data set. There is one hull in the dataset that we can trace through three sales events from 2005 to 2021, and many for which we now have two sales events.

Zeroing in to a more useful level here are the more recent list prices:



And the more recent sales prices:



There are two boats that were given as gifts following the death of the owner, hence them showing as being zero-priced.

As you can see there are three sales events over \$100k in the last few years, but the bulk are in the \$27k-\$80k mid-range bracket. Below \$27k tends to be those boats in an out-of-the-way location or where the boat is in need of significant attention.

The three over \$100k were one mk1 aft-cockpit pilothouse cutter (PH-C), a mk2 PH-C, and a mk2 centre-cockpit pilothouse cutter (PH-CC-C). This would be a pretty typical random outcome as there are 10:4 aft-cockpit vs

centre-cockpits in the fleet composition, and it shows that no one type is achieving all the high prices.

A similar story emerges in the mid-range where thirty sales were mostly aft-cockpit but some centre-cockpit, and fairly evenly spread between mk1 and mk2 with no particular price associated with any particular moulding style or rig type.

A consistent report comes from buyers and sellers alike that Corbins that have been well built; maintained to be in good condition; presented well and described honestly; located in easily-accessible places for buyers; and which are priced to reflect their condition are then easy sales. This holds true as much at \$100k+ as at \$70k, and we have had a number of stories of Corbins going on the market and having several buyers offering within days, including in one case the surveyor trying to buy ! In those situations they tend to sell at or in excess of the list price within weeks.

In the mid-market an average list price of \$68k results in an average outcome price of \$56k representing an average 18% reduction. The more realistic the initial price the faster the sale and the less the reduction.

If a boat is in an out-of-the-way place then it is necessary to consider this when selling. Most Corbins are in North America and bought by North Americans. If a typical purchasing couple need to fly long-haul to view a boat then the travel & accommodation costs alone are \$5k-\$10k just for a viewing trip, plus the value of the lost time to view. Add to that the return visit to take on the boat, fix it up, and relocate it and a discount of \$10k-\$20k should be considered as a starting point unless the boat is only being offered for sale in the local market, or is in exceptionally good condition. If the boat is a project boat this realistically means a nominal \$40k boat needs to be offered at \$20k just to attract attention. Wherever possible it is important to get the boat to the main buying market prior to offering it for sale.

Overall our impression is that the market now much better understands and appreciates the Corbin 39, and that prices, volumes and speed-of-sale are gently rising to reflect that. We will update this analysis in the future provided that owners send us their sales listings and prices achieved.

Regards, David

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