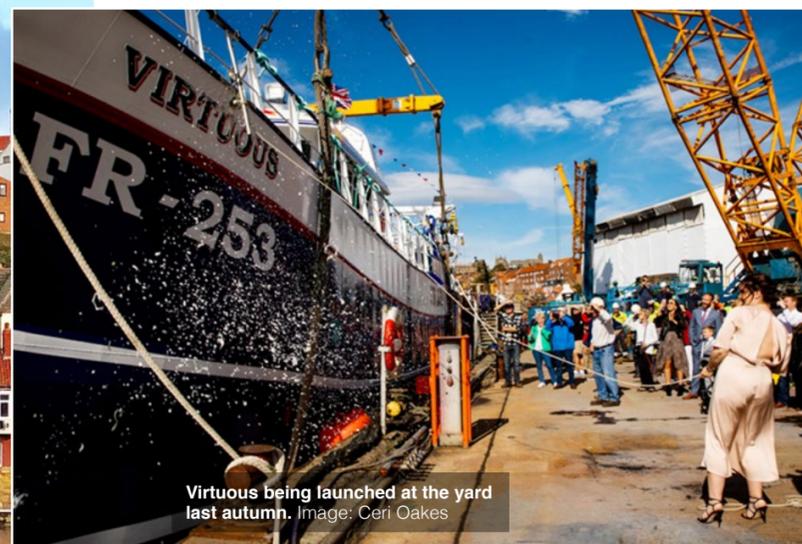


VIRTUOUS



NEW BOAT

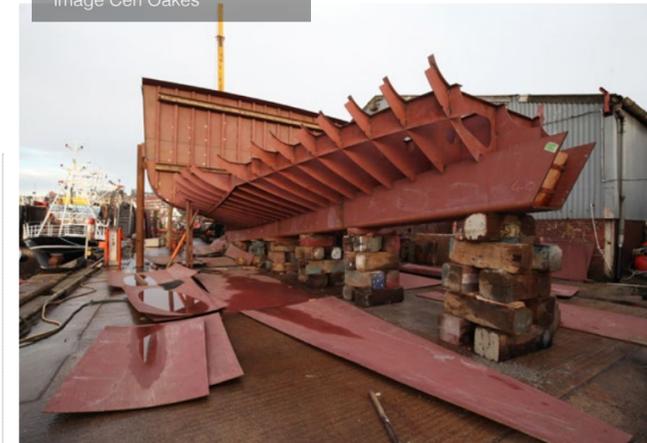
Virtuous FR 253 leaving Whitby last October, homeward bound for Fraserburgh
Image: Mick Bayes Jr



Virtuous being launched at the yard last autumn. Image: Ceri Oakes



Early construction
Image Ceri Oakes



SOMETHING A WEE BIT DIFFERENT

Mixing Innovation with Tradition at Parkol, 46 builds on

Parkol Marine Engineering Ltd. recently completed their 46th build, *Virtuous* FR 253. The second new build by Parkol for owners Sandy and Alex West, after being launched at the yard in Whitby and completing sea trials in October, *Virtuous* has since made her way home to Fraserburgh and is currently proving her fishing

credentials off the east coast of Scotland.

Co-owned by Virtuous LLP and Westward Fishing Ltd, *Virtuous* is a replacement for the West's 23m trawler which was also built by Parkol and was handed over to new owner, Michael Wilson, last September. "We fished pretty well with her. She was a very good boat, a very

good sea boat. A very comfortable boat. So when we went to build this boat we thought, well maybe we need to do something a wee bit different," said skipper Sandy West.

Designed by SC McAllister & Co Ltd. for the father and son duo, the 24m steel hull trawler has a beam of 7.8m, a draught of 4.8m and a moulded depth of 4.25m. Arranged for single and twin rig trawling, the vessel has a round bilge hull, transom stern, bulbous bow, soft nose stem and a full-length shelter deck.

Housed on the main deck is a deckhouse for galley and mess, with the oilskins room and washroom offset to starboard. Hopper and catch handling are also offset to starboard. Aft is a steel shelter and integral gallow arrangement, an over net drum space, with a stern ramp to shelter. The vessel also boasts a weathertight shelter catch handling and winch space.

Below deck is subdivided by three watertight bulkheads into aft accommodation (with 8

berths) with steering gear, engine room, fishroom and forepeak tank. The shelter deck houses the stern ramp, a bag hatch, the gilsen gantry, the trawl gallows, a power block crane, landing crane with an aluminium alloy wheelhouse.

X bow design

Part X bow design, the innovative bulbous bow on the *Virtuous* was designed for extra buoyancy, reduced resistance through the water and increased waterline length which gives better seakeeping. The innovative design is also supposed to damp wave energy and reduce slamming impact.

Another innovative feature of the *Virtuous* is the way she is rigged. Arranged for single and twin rig trawling, the stern ramp aboard has been designed specially to bring the catch in over the stern of the vessel rather than over the starboard forward side as is conventional in Scotland. For safety and efficiency, net drums and winches

are located on the weathertight main deck.

In terms of the design Sandy told *The Skipper*, "Two years ago when we were drawing the plans I knew exactly what I was doing. But two hours before I went out on trials I was quite nervous.

"There's a lot of different ideas. I had to swallow a bit of a breath to go in and instigate them all at the same time. But we did it and everything's worked out well".

"I was always keen to bag over the stern and I was quite interested in these X bow type vessels as well. You see them in the North Sea, these big oil vessels with X bows and they look very comfortable. So I investigated that a wee bit and that has proven to be very comfortable. The boat is amazingly comfortable up into the wind now. She's very very

canny into a swell. We're very happy.

"Bagging over the stern has made a big difference to us in equal measures. I know the Irish boats have been bagging over the stern for a long time and it's probably something we should have been doing a long time ago ourselves."

A big priority for Sandy was safety on board. "If you have your crew all working in the one area the communication is a lot better. Now the crew are all working on the aft side of the wheelhouse, so they can all talk to each other, they can all see each other and they know what's happening. Also, the wheelhouse is quite a big structure there and it's providing quite a lot of shelter for the crew as well."

In terms of the layout, Sandy wanted to keep the net drums under the shelter deck. "I didn't

see the point of moving from a vessel which was covered in aft and then exposing the guys to the elements after not being exposed to the elements. So we had to think quite a bit how we were going to keep the shelter over the top of the net drums where the lads were mending, shooting and hauling and yet still work over the stern. That's why the ramp ended up going up the middle of the vessel.

"Another thought there as well was we wanted to keep the cabin aft. We didn't want to be moving the cabin into the forward part of the vessel where it's more uncomfortable. So we've managed to keep the cabin aft as well, in the traditional place of the boat and so we kind of mixed new ideas with traditional ideas and it took quite a bit of working out to be honest with you. But we got there in the end."

FACT FILE

BOAT Virtuous FR 253
OWNER Sandy and Alex West
COMPANY Virtuous LLP and Westward Fishing Ltd.
SKIPPER Sandy West
REGISTRATION FR 253
HOMEPORT Fraserburgh
CREW 8/9
BOATYARD Parkol Marine Engineering Ltd
LENGTH 24m
BEAM 7.8m
DRAUGHT 4.8m
DEPTH MOULDED 4.25m
GT 242 tonnes
FUEL 22,000 litres
FRESHWATER 17,000 litres
LUBE OIL 400 litres
HYDRAULIC OIL 1,000 litres



Wishing every success to Sandy, Alexander, family and crew with your new VIRTUOUS. We wish you safe and successful fishing.

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Wheelhouse



Galley



Spacious accomodation



Virtuous being launched at the yard last autumn. Image: Ceri Oakes

In terms of a standout feature of the new build, Sandy said, "There's actually a few things, to be honest with you. But if someone was to say what is it you are most pleased about with your boat I would say it's the comfort levels. How good a sea boat she is, I would say."

Communication was key

With such an innovative design, and many of the design elements of the boat feeding into one another, communication, says Sandy, was key to the success of the build.

"With some things we had to wait until the boat was built to see how it was going to work out, we had an idea how we wanted to do these things but we didn't really get an idea about how they

were going to work until the build was almost concluded. Most of it was done from the middle of the North Sea, to be honest with you. Videocall, broadband videocalls. We saved a lot of time because of the communication from the yard.

"We weren't in Whitby a lot at all. WhatsApp video is a fantastic thing when you're in the middle of the North Sea."

With a long relationship with the yard, having worked them previously and having been very interested in the work that was coming out of the yard long before that, Sandy was confident they could deliver from the outset. "They're very easy to work with," he said.

"They are very good at keeping us updated with how the boat was going. And they wouldn't do anything without asking us.

They've done a fantastic job.

"From the very design stage, the architects are asking what do you want to achieve? What do you want to do with this? We had two or three meetings down in York with Ian and drawing the boat with him and we just got exactly what we wanted."

Ahead of schedule

The build itself started in October 2018 and was completed less twelve months later. "We were actually a month early. From the time the first steel arrived in Whitby to the time we took the boat home was 11 months," said Sandy.

Virtuous is powered by a Mitsubishi S6R2 T2-MPTK-3 main engine producing 555kW@1,350rpm, connected to a Reintjes WAF 474L 7,476:1 reduction gearbox, powering a 2500mm diameter four-blade propeller. The vessel is also installed with 2 x Mitsubishi 6D16-T and 1 x S6B3T2 auxiliary engines. Main engine and auxiliaries were all supplied by Padmos. Electrics onboard were installed by Pearson Electrical of Hull and the yard's own onsite electrician.

The impressive wheelhouse package aboard was supplied by Echomaster Marine Ltd. and includes an array of the most up-to-date Simrad kit. 2 NS1500 seats were supplied by Norsap. A custom-made deck machinery package was supplied by Killybegs' EK Marine and includes three 15 tonne split winches, twin 2300mm diameter double net drums, two 15 tonne Gilson winches, an EKM powerblock crane, landing crane

and winch.

and winch.

Nets onboard — 2 x 195ft twin-rig prawn scraper trawls rigged on 6in and 8in discs; 2 x 155ft twin-rig discer nets rigged on 8in and 10in discs — were supplied by Scotnet, warps by Karl Thomson of Buckie, trawl doors by Thyborøn. With space for 1,000 boxes, refrigeration was supplied by Fraserburgh's Premier Refrigeration Ltd. The vessel is also fitted with two Zeigra ice machines capable of producing 1 tonne of freshwater ice per day.

With landings under their belt already, the Fraserburgh skipper was busy getting ready to go to sea the day I spoke to him. "It's going well. The boat's fishing well. We're very happy with her, she's a very comfortable boat. She feels a lot bigger than she actually is, to be honest with you," he said.

"We've been working with seven men just now. But we usually manage to work a boat with five men really. To start with we've kept a full crew on all the time just now. But my two sons are not going away to sea with me tonight, so we're going away with six."

Fishing mainly prawns and groundfish, they're also catching some monk and with "a wee bit of squid on the ground just now" as well, there's been a nice mix of fish really, said Sandy.

Working mostly 6 day trips and hauling 4 times a day, for the Fraserburgh skipper the future of the industry is all about quality.

"We've got to try and catch the product as quick as we can and get it back to the market in as good a condition as we possibly can and just try and do that with the

"We knew what would work and what wouldn't work, and a lot of things we fancied doing we just went and did them."

boat. Obviously, if the boat's not moving about so much, the crew are able to do their work faster.

"We're definitely managing to clear the deck in this boat faster than we have in any other boat we've had before. Definitely, the product is coming out of the sea and going into cold storage a lot quicker than it did before."

Passionate about fishing

Landing into Fraserburgh, most of their catch goes to Europe. I asked Sandy if he was apprehensive about how those markets might change in the future. "To be quite honest with you," he said, "we're not very worried about that. Because we all know that although Brexit has to come sometime, people over here have got to keep buying German cars because they like them. And then people on the continent are going to keep buying the fish and prawns from us because they like fish and prawns."

"We just recently struck up a relationship with EK Marine," he said. "We're not going to stop using Eunan and his machinery because of Brexit. We're going to keep buying stuff off Eunan because I like his stuff."

"So that's that. I like to be optimistic about things."

True to form and unperturbed by the outcome of the December Councils that were upcoming at the time *The Skipper* was going to print Sandy said: "We know that probably any fish that gets cut will get cut from us before it gets cuts from the whitefish lads. While we've been doing quite a bit of whitefish as well. But what we tend to see is that the years where there's big quotas on the go the price of fish comes down.

"So hopefully the prices will be a wee bit more buoyant next year. In particular, the cod this year has never really hit any big heights for any length of time and has probably been threading quite cheap on the markets all year really, or most of the year, compared to the years where there was less of it on the go. So although there may be a wee bit less to catch, hopefully, the prices will be a wee bit better."

In terms of the longer term

outlook, with stocks looking "very healthy, through a mixture of stocks" Sandy was equally optimistic. It would, he said, however, be nice to see some younger lads coming into the industry. The last number of years there have been a few more coming through in Fraserburgh, he said, "but maybe just half of them will stick it out once they get a week or two at sea they change their mind."

With fishing on both sides of the family, and 32 years fishing under his own belt, there's little changing Sandy's mind, however. "It's been a wee while now," he said, "but we've got a wee while to go yet." Having started on the then brand new seiner, the *Renown* when he first went to sea, today Sandy has two sons coming up and fishing with him on the new *Virtuous*. Sandy's eldest son Alex works with him as relief skipper. Keen to get out onto the North Sea, Aidan, who'll be 17 next year, started last spring.

"Having someone coming up, it gives you something to work for. If these two boys hadn't been here, there's no way we would have been building a new boat. It's as simple as that. Because they're here and they're going to fish in it, it's just something for me to keep working for," said Sandy. "Keep a good boat below their feet."

"We're quite passionate about the fishing industry. We've been here a wee while now. And we knew what would work and what wouldn't work, and a lot of things we fancied doing we just went and did them."

Working alongside the West's is a mostly Filipino crew, a number who have been fishing with the family with more than a decade. The crew includes another father and son duo, with a cousin joining them in the New Year. "It's turning out to be a real family affair," said Sandy.

"We're going away to sea tonight. The wind's blowing into the south-west here now, so we'll get away tonight and get the last trip before Christmas and then that'll be us. Then we'll be home. Home for Christmas and away for New Year again. That'll be fine."

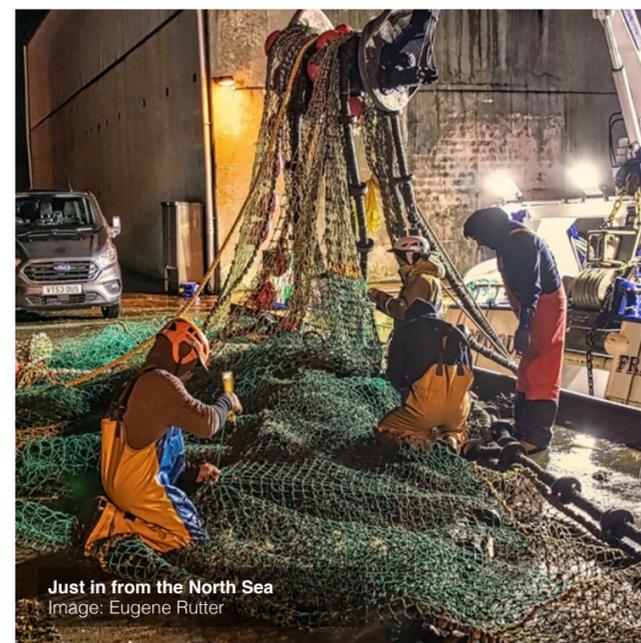
Best of luck and safe fishing in the Virtuous Sandy, Alex and crew from The Skipper team.



Skipper Sandy West and his crew, including sons Alex and Aidan on board the Virtuous. Image: Eugene Rutter



Skipper Sandy West, landing into Fraserburgh. Image: Eugene Rutter



Just in from the North Sea. Image: Eugene Rutter