



Miss

BUDWEISER

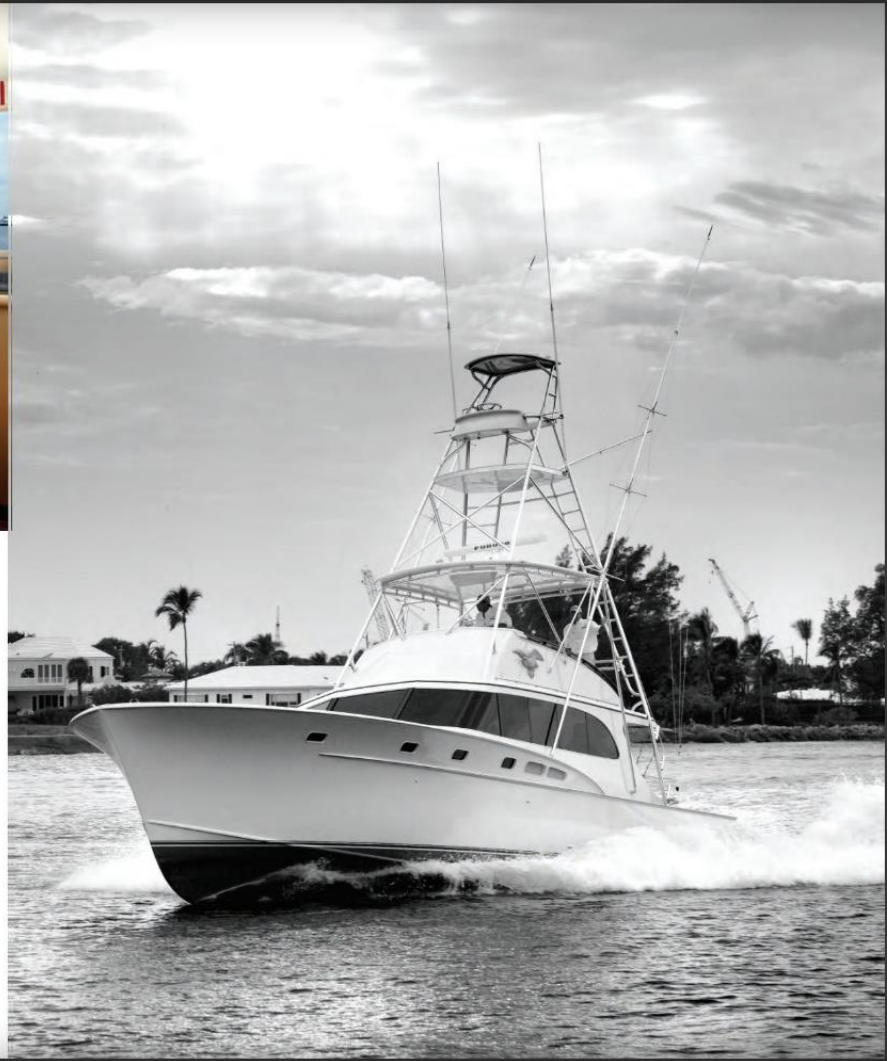
BOAT PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL NEWCOMB

Anheuser-Busch heir Michael Flanigan reunites with the historic sport fishing boat that has been in his family for generations BY LINDA MARX

Cheri Flanigan was cooking in her northern California kitchen when her husband, Michael, walked in, shaking with excitement. *Miss Budweiser* was back.

The lady of the hour was a historic family vessel since 1962, when Michael's grandfather, August Gussie Busch Jr., purchased it from the late Kimberly-Clark Kleenex heir Jim Kimberly of Palm Beach. The boat was originally called *The Blue Fox*, but Michael's grandfather renamed it to fit the family company it would serve, Anheuser-Busch.

Michael, a fifth-generation Anheuser-Busch heir, is a seasonal Palm Beacher who has fond memories of *Miss Budweiser*. As former Anheuser-Busch wholesalers, the Flanigans regularly took clients, friends and family fishing aboard the boat. They sold their business in 2004, and four years later



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FAR LEFT: MMDDESIGNS OF PALM BEACH CREATED PILLOWS, CURTAINS AND OTHER ACCENTS USING FABRIC FROM PIZCARNALI'S 'GEEZ LOUISE' COLLECTION. 'THE COLORS ARE ABOUT THE SEA, AND THE DESIGN IS A BEACH-SIDE STRIPE,' MARY MASRI SAYS.



Anheuser-Busch was sold to Belgian brewer Inbev for \$52 million. Since then, the Flanigans have lost contact with *Miss Budweiser*, and they missed her.

"Gussie, my father, mother, uncle and many friends have enjoyed her," Michael says. "She is the Ferrari of boats, a one-of-a-kind hand-built masterpiece with simple and clean lines—very sexy, the epitome of a fishing boat. I had to have her."

Michael finalized the purchase of *Miss Budweiser*, who is docked at the Sailfish Marina on Singer Island, through a broker in early 2010. He spent the next two years rebuilding her with Mike Rybovich and Sons in West Palm Beach, the same esteemed boat-building family that created the vessel for Kimberly in the 1960s. Mary Masri of MMDesigns in Palm Beach redesigned the interior, giving nods to Budweiser in red, white and blue accents, including Budweiser-monogrammed 600-thread count sheets from Lanvin.

Fourteen-feet wide with the same white ash-wood interior as the original, *Miss Budweiser* now has a top-of-the-line Furuno radar,

Cummins QSM 11 engines, Murray fighting chairs, a stunning salon, granite countertops from Brazil and L-shaped banquettes designed with striped azure Perennials outdoor fabric. Michael and Cheri were very involved in the interior redesign, helping select fabric samples and the color palette. They loved feeling the boat glide across the sea during the months leading up to the relaunch.

"Michael was so excited," Masri says. "His mother told me that he has been given the present of his life with this boat. He loves being on the sea and would spend 365 days a year onboard if he could."

To Michael, *Miss Budweiser* is a perfect fishing boat, outfitted with six bunk beds, two showers and toilets, and no fancy staterooms. Joined by a captain and mate, great friends and family members, the Flanigans can fish for a few days and enjoy another world at sea. "I have the thrill of my Busch heritage memories coming alive and also taking my family out on her and making new memories," Michael says.

Indeed, Cheri and their 22-year-old twins, John and Kerly, love their time aboard *Miss Budweiser*. As part-time Palm Beachers, they

grew up on the water. Ever since the Flanigans acquired the boat, the family's trips to the island have become more frequent.

"Our first real ride on the finished product was in December of 2012," Cheri says. "Since we live in the mountains near Lake Tahoe, coming to Palm Beach and riding the waters on *Miss Budweiser* was exhilarating. The fish we caught were gorgeous, and we all had a Pirates of the Caribbean feeling while onboard. It was totally amazing."

While Cheri and her children enjoy the boat seasonally, Michael comes to Palm Beach every two weeks year-round and spends the majority of the time on the water. He charts *Miss Budweiser* for sightseeing and other tropical jaunts, exploring the Florida and Bahamian waters. He wants to form a tournament fishing team that could travel to New Jersey waters, fish for Atlantic blue marlin in St. Thomas, reel in dorado in the lower keys or catch sailfish off Palm Beach.

With the sun bouncing off the water, Michael's day is perfect when he is fishing aboard *Miss Budweiser*. "I love to catch a 400-pound fish after the fight of my life, put the marlin on the head and watch him majestically swim away," Michael says with a smile. "And seeing a pack of excited striped marlins balling thousands of sardines and feasting is unbelievable. These are some of the reasons I love the *Miss Budweiser*. I couldn't be happier, and so is my family." <<

Jim Kimberly and *The Blue Fox*

Designed and built by Rybovich and Sons in West Palm Beach, *Miss Budweiser*, originally called *The Blue Fox*, was the second boat ever built using the revolutionary cold-mold method. This is a lightweight process in which layers of wood with opposing grain patterns are glued to each other. Palm Beach sport fisherman-bon vivant Jim Kimberly was so impressed with the first successful cold-mold experiment that he gave Tommy Rybovich, a World War II pilot and designer with an artist's flair, the \$150,000 order to build a 50-foot sport fisherman using the same technique. He also commissioned Rybovich to create this boat with a mezzanine-style cockpit. Lighter and faster than conventionally planked boats, *The Blue Fox* was launched in late 1961 and set the stage for the eventual conversion of all-new hulls.

The following year, Kimberly, who owned another boat, sold *The Blue Fox* to Anheuser-Busch's Gussie Bush. It was renamed *Miss Budweiser* and eventually hosted many business bigwigs and celebrities like Frank Sinatra, who owned the Long Beach, California, Anheuser-Busch branch; Tim McCarver of the St. Louis Cardinals; and Bertie Little, head of the *Miss Budweiser* hydroplane team. Over the years, hundreds of people have enjoyed fishing aboard *Miss Budweiser* in Florida, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. —LM