

Boat Report

# BROOM 36

*To test the theory that good boatbuilders will succeed in meeting the requirements of choosy buyers, we appraise a craft which has already been cruised downriver and cross-Channel by its enthusiastic owners.*





Above: the owners of *Pretty B* opted not to have an interior helm position, which frees some extra space to port in the saloon. An extra seat and sideboard stowage make practical use of this. Below: forward on a lower level is the galley, in this case with the gas cooking appliances replaced in an all-electric installation, which includes a microwave oven.



When faced with upgrading their well-cruised Broom 10.70, readers Colin and Judy Blamey were faced with a quandary. Whilst they wanted more luxury, they did not want to lose their enviable mooring at Henley-on-Thames, which is constrained on length, let alone reduce their cruising options by having more air draught. On the other hand, they did require a useful sea boat for extended forays into and across the English Channel.

The answer lay in another Broom, the 36, tweaked here and there as only owners with 30 years of motorboating experience know how, and in ways which, in some cases, have since been incorporated into production by the factory.

We caught up with *Pretty B* during her sojourn in the Solent last summer, to find out whether she was living up to the Blameys' stringent demands.

### Design

Andrew Wolstenholme, who is responsible for nearly all C J Broom's current models, designed a medium-to-deep-vee hull which nevertheless culminates in a shallow keel running for much of its length. Three sets of sprayrails are incorporated into the underwater sections, which pan out from 22° amidships to 16° at the transom, with down-angled chine-flats defining the edge of the planing surface.

The drivetrain uses conventional shafts, without tunnels, whilst the rudders are transom-hung.

Keeping air draught under control was clearly a priority, and the 36 benefits from a two-stage method reducing its overall height for getting under river bridges. In most instances simply hinging back the stainless steel light and antenna hoop will suffice, bringing the figure down to around 12ft 3in (3.73m), but the GRP arch can also be dropped to reduce this to 9ft 3in (2.82m).

Aesthetically, the boat is primly proportioned in a design that will not date too rapidly. Topside and superstructure lines are soft but not over-stylised, although in profile the wedge of the transom is neatly mirrored by the rake of the solid dodger that wraps itself around the aft deck.

The transom is finished with a moulded bathing platform that extends to the full beam of the hull, but this is not the place to board from. The raised aft deck mitigates against this, and anyway Broom have managed to incorporate a step in the scalloped engine vent moulding within the topsides, just below the break in the guardrails. Other manufacturers please note!



### Exterior

Getting around the decks safely is important on a boat destined to spend much of its time negotiating river locks. The 36 meets this brief with 10in (25cm) wide side decks, clear of obstructions, guardrails with an intermediate-height solid rail, and a good run of handrail inboard along the superstructure. There is a moulded-in non-slip surface, which also extends over the coachroof, but Colin has had Treadmaster added to most deck areas.

The standard deck hardware looks most adequate in size and number, comprising 10in (25cm) bar cleats aft, amidships and forward, plus a further bollard type cleat next to the bow roller, but Colin has had a further pair fitted to the break of the bow to help with lockwork. Ground tackle comprises

a Bruce anchor and 90ft (27m) of chain, handled as standard by a manual rather than electric windlass, which we thought odd on a boat of this quality.

The coachroof has a couple of cleverly moulded-in flush-fitting dorade boxes, to provide ventilation to the cabins.

Aft, it is a couple of gentle steps up to the cleverly thought-out raised cockpit and helm area. Rather than leaving this devoid of seating, as we find on many aft-cabin boats, Broom have done an excellent job of providing a comfortable seating arrangement. The bench across the transom is split to provide a walkthrough to the ladder down to the bathing platform, while the two- or three-seater settee at the helm has a flip-over backrest which will turn it into a very sociable L-arrangement facing aft.

Plenty of storage space is available within their

Above: the helm position is extremely well protected, with the GRP arch and a stainless steel hoop holding a canvas canopy which effectively creates a fully enclosed wheelhouse. Below: the forward cabin has vee-berths and a hanging locker but no en-suite WC, whereas the master cabin aft is a grander affair with an angled double bed.



moulded bases, and in any case *Pretty B* has more than the usual amount thanks to Colin's decision to fit a generator and do away with the need for gas bottles. A further auxiliary locker has been set within the void in the port coaming that supports the arch, a location which is especially handy for stowing flares and other safety gear.

Somewhat unusually for a boat cruising in northern climes, the Blameys have not bothered with the optional interior helm position, finding the protection offered to the exterior one suitable for their needs. Indeed, the GRP arch with its separate stainless steel hoop is there principally to provide a sturdy landing for the infill canopy that stretches between it and the raked screen. If you really need to batten-down, a further section of canvas can be dropped right across the rear of the arch to create what to all intents and purposes is a fully enclosed wheelhouse.

All-in-all, the helm is extremely well protected, being tucked behind a substantial screen served by a pair of pantograph wipers. Between the angled engine instrument fascia and the wheel is a useful-sized chart area, together with an array of ready-use switches. Also located here are the standard log and echo-sounder heads, while pricier electronics will find a home within a lockable console just to the left.

## Interior

A good-sized companionway hatch, bordered right around with a stainless steel handrail, leads on to a short run of

curved stairs with its own steadying banister.

Not having an interior helm position frees a lot of space to port, allowing for an extension to the already considerable run of sideboard and an extra bucket seat at the head of the saloon. Throughout the boat, the joinery is to Broom's usual uncompromising standards. But none of this is to

providing it with separate water and cooled exhaust outlets in an effort to reduce the intrusiveness of the usual pulsing exhaust emissions. Also here are the calorifier, a manual bilge pump and the holding tank, with room to spare for loose storage.

Although very much in touch with the saloon, the galley is almost hidden from view. An excellent array of cupboards are spun round its U-shaped layout, with a double sink facing outboard, and ventilation is courtesy of an extractor fan and an opening port.

In the standard fit-out, a three-burner gas hob and built-in oven/grill are provided,

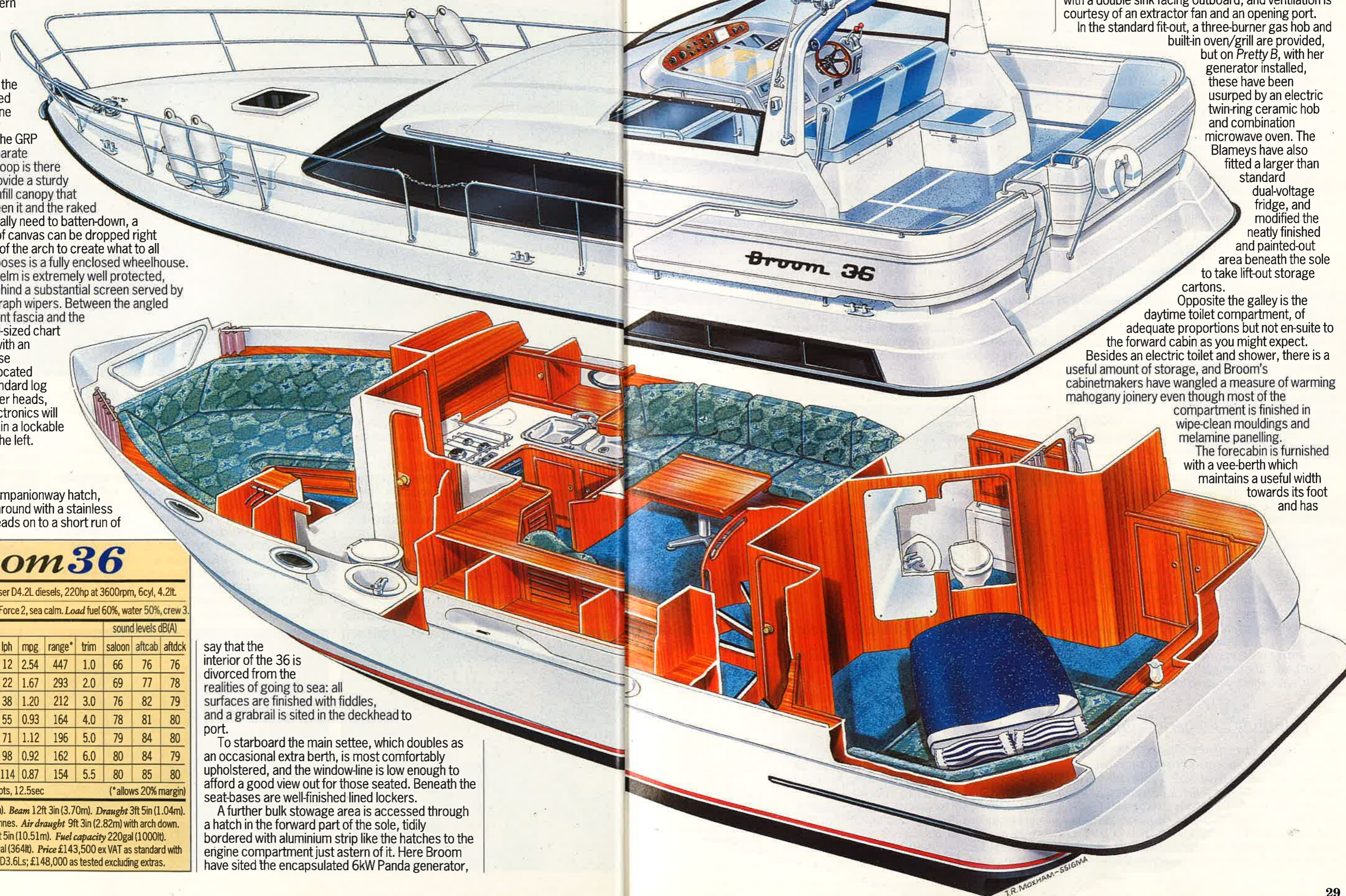
but on *Pretty B*, with her generator installed, these have been usurped by an electric twin-ring ceramic hob and combination microwave oven. The Blameys have also fitted a larger than standard

dual-voltage fridge, and modified the neatly finished and painted-out area beneath the sole to take lift-out storage cartons.

Opposite the galley is the daytime toilet compartment, of adequate proportions but not en-suite to the forward cabin as you might expect.

Besides an electric toilet and shower, there is a useful amount of storage, and Broom's cabinetmakers have wangled a measure of warming mahogany joinery even though most of the compartment is finished in wipe-clean mouldings and melamine panelling.

The forecabin is furnished with a vee-berth which maintains a useful width towards its foot and has



## Broom 36

Engines twin Mercruiser D4.2L diesels, 220hp at 3600rpm, 6cyl, 4.2lt.

Conditions wind SW Force 2, sea calm. Load fuel 60%, water 50%, crew 3.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	sound levels dB(A)		
							saloon	aftcab	aftdck
1400	6.6	2.6	12	2.54	447	1.0	66	76	76
1800	8.0	4.8	22	1.67	293	2.0	69	77	78
2200	10.0	8.3	38	1.20	212	3.0	76	82	79
2600	11.3	12.1	55	0.93	164	4.0	78	81	80
3000	17.4	15.6	71	1.12	196	5.0	79	84	80
3400	19.8	21.5	98	0.92	162	6.0	80	84	79
3600	21.8	25.2	114	0.87	154	5.5	80	85	80

Acceleration 0-20 knots, 12.5sec (\* allows 20% margin)

Loa 36ft 6in (11.12m). Beam 12ft 3in (3.70m). Draught 3ft 5in (1.04m).

Displacement 5 tonnes. Air draught 9ft 3in (2.82m) with arch down.

Hull length 34ft 5in (10.51m). Fuel capacity 220gal (1000lt).

Water capacity 80gal (364lt). Price £143,500 ex VAT as standard with twin Mercruiser D3.6Ls; £148,000 as tested excluding extras.

say that the interior of the 36 is divorced from the realities of going to sea: all surfaces are finished with fiddles, and a grabrail is sited in the deckhead to port.

To starboard the main settee, which doubles as an occasional extra berth, is most comfortably upholstered, and the window-line is low enough to afford a good view out for those seated. Beneath the seat-bases are well-finished lined lockers.

A further bulk stowage area is accessed through a hatch in the forward part of the sole, tidily bordered with aluminium strip like the hatches to the engine compartment just astern of it. Here Broom have sited the encapsulated 6kW Panda generator,

drawers underneath. There is a hanging locker at the head of the port berth, and the mirrored forward bulkhead gives access not only to the chain locker but also to a cradle Colin has installed to take his aqualung equipment.

The master cabin aft is an altogether grander affair, with its double berth angled across the port quarter and flanked by a good array of cupboards, dressing tables and drawers. The bulkhead to the foot of the berth is similarly angled across the boat, hiding away the en-suite facilities.

Beneath the berth there are lifting panels giving access to the water tank and steering gear, while hatches in the sole allow you to get at the sternglands. The main electrical panel and battery isolators are set in a cupboard in the forward bulkhead, the 36 being equipped as standard with a mains ring, immersion heater and battery charger.

Natural light and ventilation in the cabin is provided by plenty of side and stern ports, plus a large hatch set in the deckhead.

The toilet compartment includes plenty of dry storage and a separate shower cubicle, while Colin's simple way of dealing with wet oilskins is to have some decent-sized hooks fitted to the shower stall.

## Engines

*Pretty B* is fitted with a pair of Mercruiser's 4.2lt 220hp diesels, a slight upgrade on the standard fitment of 180hp units from the same manufacturer. But there are Sabre, Volvo Penta and further Mercruiser options extending up to a pair of 318hp Volvo TAMD 63Ls.

Access to the engine compartment is via aluminium-bordered hatches in the saloon sole. A couple of small ones right over the engines allow for a quick inspection, while a larger central one gives onto a treadplate between them. From here it is easy to get at all the major service items, including the fuel/water separators on the aft bulkhead and the water strainers at the forward end.

The whole engineroom is covered in loaded-plastic insulation, including the fuel tanks outboard. The fuel manifold, found within a step-locker adjacent to the master cabin, allows either engine to draw and return from either tank.

The engineroom keel section acts as a bilge trap for the whole boat, serviced by both an electric pump and the manual one located in the adjacent stowage compartment. Given that it is the only automatic bilge pump on board, however, we thought the former was inadequate.

The installation on *Pretty B* is most tidy and accessible. Our only misgiving (echoed by her owner) is the awkward location of the batteries, which are not in the engine compartment at all but tucked behind the rear portion of the saloon seating, so you have to remove some joinery to inspect them.

## Handling and performance

With many years' experience of inland cruising, where the onus is on close-quarters manoeuvring, lockwork and mooring, the Blameys are well qualified to comment on how the 36 handles.

Colin finds *Pretty B* responds smartly and predictably to throttle and helm. He makes the point that, when speed is restricted to 5 knots or so, it is just about acceptable to leave the twin 4.2lt diesels in gear and troll, with the short run of keel ensuring

good directional stability without continuous recourse to the wheel. He has had no regrets about not fitting a bow-thruster, and we agree that the Whitlock steering system he specified gives a satisfying response to the helm.

For the mooring routine Colin and Judy have developed over the years, the deck layout gets the thumbs-up. They say the extra cleats at the break of the bow are most useful, and it is perhaps an idea other owners of river-based craft should bear in mind.

No boat owned by the Blameys lives solely on the Thames, however. Their mid-summer extended cruises have taken them to France, Belgium and the Netherlands, and when we caught up with them on the South Coast they had just returned from the Channel Islands. On this occasion they had enjoyed an uneventful time as far as the weather was concerned, unlike the previous year when the area around The Casquets had thrown up a huge steep sea which they say amply demonstrated the Broom's build quality and seakeeping.

We relate this because, on our own test day, we could find no difficult sea-state. Setting the throttles at 3400rpm, to give us 20 knots, we could happily have dozed our way to France before we knew what was happening.

At these speeds, estimated consumption was about 1mpg and sound levels an unobtrusive 80dB(A).

Pushing the taps right open, we clocked a top speed of just under 22 knots on our radar gun, not as spritely as the manufacturers' claim but perhaps appropriate given the comprehensive cruising inventory on board, and the hull's light mid-summer fouling.

Handling at speed is plain steady, although a measure of tab is always needed to maintain a reasonable level of trim. Colin makes the point that once the boat is set up on a longer run, rather than just being put through its paces on short dashes around a photoboot, he can usually back-off on the tabs slightly, which tickles up the cruising speed by a further knot.

The steering position, and indeed the whole aft-deck layout, is extremely comfortable, with all-round visibility, excellent shelter and a user-friendly layout of controls and instruments. The inset 'pod' of electronics, inboard of the wheel, is easy for the skipper's mate to use too.

## Conclusions

We came away as impressed as ever with the high standard of finish and practical detail which C J Broom continue to offer the discerning boatowner. The 36 has a somewhat traditional feel, which is not to say that Broom are at a standstill on the design front — the boat is certainly up-to-date in aesthetics, layout and performance — but that it has an appeal which will not easily drift as styles change.

Given their love of comfortable livaboard cruising, how do Colin and Judy Blamey rate the boat? Their reaction is undoubtedly positive. *Pretty B* fulfils all their most important parameters, they say, offering safe, practical family boating, both inland and offshore, whilst still lying within their self-imposed length restriction. Tellingly, their praise does not end with the model itself, but extends to the yard, which ensures its clients get the boat they want by building with them, not just for them. □

## Builders

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