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His work has turned the weathered vessel into something of a luxury cruise experience, complete with a heated cabin and a restroom people actually want to use. He's still timid about some unfinished details, but the overwhelming demand for tours this summer stunted the progress on his to-do list.

"It's kind of a working museum, just because this boat did so much, and was kind of a figure on the Astoria waterfront," Schächer said.

The history tours center on Astoria's maritime history, but adapt to each new set of passengers. Schächer finds that some people climb aboard to learn more about shipping history on the lower Columbia River, while others are content looking for signs of wildlife and relish the thrill of being out on the water.

In some cases, it's his passengers' first experience on a boat.

"There's a ton of people who have lived in Astoria, or this area their whole life, who have never been out on the water," said Schächer. "It's something else to do in Astoria. Astoria's history is all about maritime history, and there's no interpretation of it without actually getting out on the river. It's a completely different perspective."

Passengers on the restored Arrow 2 have witnessed everything from whales, sea lions and river otters to pilot transfers on big ships working on the Columbia River.

Schächer is quick to point out that no two tours are the same, and he can't make promises about exactly what people might experience. His dedication to making the trip memorable is clear, as he remembers nearly every guest that's ridden aboard the vessel.

"I have had a lot of people who have enjoyed tough waters," Schächer said. "You just don't know, you get a family with little kids and you think they're going to be scared when water starts bouncing off the windows, but they think it's so fun."



Andy Cameron

The Arrow 2 departs from the same marina in which the bar pilots house their sleek new vessels.



Nikki Davidson

Capt. Mark Schächer gave the Arrow 2 tugboat a new engine.



Scott Holmstead

The Arrow 2 in the 1980s when it was owned by Knappton Towboat Co. of Portland.



Andy Cameron

The meticulously restored interior of the Arrow 2 illustrates the care Capt. Mark Schächer has for the vessel.



Andy Cameron

From the well-maintained engine room of the Arrow 2, guests can gaze through port holes at a variety of pleasure craft and working boats of the North Coast.



Andy Cameron

The Arrow 2 motors past another passenger vessel of the lower Columbia.



The Arrow 2 when it first went into service for Arrow Launch Co., owned by Arrow Tug and Barge Co. of Astoria in 1962.