

MICRO

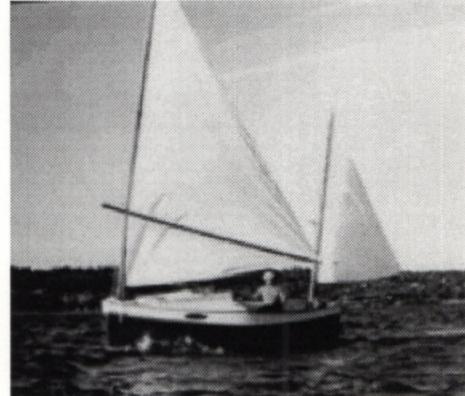
WORLDS ONLY SMALL TRUE CRUISING SAILBOAT

DESCRIPTION:

SIZE: 15'4" X 6'; SAIL: 153 sq. ft.; DRAFT: 1'9"; EMPTY WEIGHT: 875 lbs.; BALLAST: 420 lbs.; DISPLACEMENT: 1650 lbs.; SLEEPS: 2 adults in 6'6" berths; DAY SAILS: up to six adults; POWER: 2-6 hp. ; MATERIAL: 1/4" ply (12 sheets), framing lumber, lead ballast; PLANS: Six 18" X 22" blueprints, Numbered Building Key, key expansion, Building Tips, Mast and Spar Making, Keel Building booklet.

MICRO'S Lines

EDITORIAL



Early in 1982 Elrow LaRowe, a seventy two year old adventurer, wrote world famous yacht designer Philip Bolger a letter asking; "why small boats couldn't be comfortable for large senior citizens and still be good performers." Bolger's reply was **MICRO**. From this auspicious beginning came the best and possibly the only true vest pocket cruiser. Bolger calls **MICRO** "one of the best proposals I ever came up with!" **MICRO** deserves her position as the ruling monarch of the **COMMON SENSE** fleet.

Why is **MICRO** so special? It's hard to list her virtues without sounding like a rabid Madison Avenue pitch-man but here goes. She is quick, easy and inexpensive to build, even by first time builders. More **MICRO**'s are completed than any other small cruising boat, with boats sailing from Tasmania to Finland and most points between. She is a comfortable cruiser for two adults, able to carry plenty of gear and supplies (even a porta potti) and has two comfortable berths. She is a great day-sailor for six yet is easy to single hand for those who prefer solitude. She is such a powerful sailor, on all points, that she continually embarrasses many, much larger, yachts. She can be trimmed to sail hands off with the wind anywhere before the beam. **MICRO** is confident in conditions that most small boats are reluctant to sail in and if worst comes to worst won't bite you if caught out in a hard chance. She has incredible initial and reserve stability and is self righting and rescuing. Of course she is self bailing. The anchor has its own free flooding well, keeping 'anchor gunk' out of the cockpit and cabin. Gas and outboard motor oil is confined outside the watertight envelope, reducing the risk of fire and explosion. There is full sitting head room in the cabin for six foot plus adults. She is easy to trailer and can be pulled by a four cylinder compact car. She is easy to power and dock. All of this is wrapped up in a small package that can only be described as 'cute'.

MICRO will take about 150-300 hours and 12 sheets of plywood to build; total cost is about \$1500. This, of course, can be spread out over the building period, adding only spare change to the grocery budget. There are five sheets of plans, a 'keyed' how to instruction set (start at #1, when you get to #63 you have a boat), directions for beginners and **COMMON SENSE DESIGNS** to offer help and encouragement. All this makes it easy to join the **MICRO** fellowship. At the rate we are going soon the waters of the world will be black with **MICRO**'s and happy **MICRO** builder/owners! Join us.

PLANS PRICE \$75.00

To order plans

BOAT DESCRIPTIONS BY PHIL BOLGER

Description from Phil Bolger's article *Six Cruising Scenarios*, published in *WoodenBoat Magazine*, Jan./Feb. 1989.

The Lovers (MICRO)

An April sun is rising over Italy, far out of sight over the lee quarter of the tiny cat-yawl making her way toward France. The little boat has been bobbing along at 4 knots, close hauled in a gentle westerly breeze, all night and since dawn the day before. The mountains of Corsica went under the horizon about noon. A very small inflatable boat is in tow. The young woman at the tiller is sitting on the weather side, her weight reducing the angle of heel. If the wind were much lighter she would move to the other lee side, since the flat bottom is noisy and bumpy if the boat is sailed bolt upright.

The tiller is held in a rack, and the boat is keeping a good course unsteered, with mizzen sheet slightly freer than the main. The woman occasionally turns a flashlight on the box compass that is chocked off against the break of the deck. Near her feet in the open hatch of the hold under the afterdeck are dry-cell navigation lights ready to show approaching ships. She used them once during her watch when a large power yacht crossed their course-bound for Genova, she guessed.

Her husband is sleeping below, his feet under her left buttock, his head on the sloping forward end of the cuddy sole. A length of canvas laid up 30cm above the inboard edge of the berth would hold him place if the boat heeled much. He sleeps on the weather side, to be live ballast-not necessary in this weather, but a great help to the boat when there's more wind. His weight is centered well back from the bow, and his wife's weight, in the cockpit, is far from the stern, keeping the ends of the boat light as well as balanced. This is especial necessary because, while the boat is nominally all of 42/3 meters long, each end is a free-flooding well, more of cutwater and stern platform than boat proper; the actual watertight envelope is barely 3 meters long. The arrangement makes certain that the outboard motor fuel, stowed aft, and muddy anchor warps, stowed forward, won't contaminate the cuddy. Some of their other supplies are also stowed in the end wells, including a 4-liter jug of red wine surrounded by life jackets.

The cuddy is reasonably clean, but it's hardly dry. The berths have the same problem that quarter berths do in more reasonably sized cruisers: they're in the way of drips and splashes from the companionway. The forward ventilator has been known to spit when there is a strong headwind. The cockpit hatch is supposed to be kept shut underway, but the couple finds it so comfortable to sit with their feet in it that they usually have it open. Through ventilation is good between the openings in the forward bulkhead and the one in front of the sternpost; the draft will work with either bow or stern to the wind, so the cuddy dries quickly whenever the air is dry. They scrub it out with fresh water when they can. On one glorious occasion they found themselves within reach of a large yacht's deck hose, with a group of amiable deck hands looking down at them. They stripped the cuddy and half filled the boat with fresh water without making any appreciable inroads on the yacht's seawater conversion capacity. They had a memorable soaking bath in the flooded cuddy, and took no offence when a voice from above was heard to say, "I knew there had to be a reason for a boat that shape!"

They normally keep their few clothes, including some large bath towels, in waterproof bags. A portable toilet lives under the forward end of the cockpit, between the feet of the berths. It is slid forward under the companionway hatch for use. They dump it furtively over the side as far offshore

as possible.

They have found that a boat with a keel drawing 53cm with the boat trimmed level and less when she's down by the head does not always have to lie in the crowded and quarrelsome ranks of Mediterranean yacht harbors. Nearly every port they've visited has a shallow place somewhere, and that has allowed them to lie out of the way and have some privacy. They motor around in search of it, frequently pursued by a harbor master trying to warn them of away from the shoals. They have arranged supports for the cuddy floorboards at the slightly higher level of the berths, to convert the cuddy into a bed almost 6' wide. A square awning shades the companionway and most of the cockpit. It rests slightly cockeyed between the mainmast and the off-center mizzen. The long sprit boom and boomkin serve as transverse spreaders.

A propane stove resides in the cockpit when they're in port. Underway the couple lives on bread, cheese, fruit and the red wine. They have two walkman cassette players and a paperback copy of "Count of Monte Cristo," the latter now almost perished. There's a dry-cell riding light, which is more often used for cabin lighting. For reading after dark they use candles, four at a time in a socketed block of wood mounted between the heads of the berths. There have been some nights when the heat of the candles was welcome.

They were lucky in their weather, and they hopped from port to port around the Gulf of Genoa with increasing confidence, fulfilling a dream by reaching Montecristo. They considered pushing on to the Strait of Bonifacio but decided they did not have time. Had they reached the strait, they would almost certainly have lost the boat. The Libeccio, a southwest gale, blew up out of a clear sky as they neared Cap Corse, and even under the lee of Corsica they got the scare of their lives and just made it into Bastia with deep-reefed mainsail and motor wide open. They came close to being blown to the Italian coast. If they'd been on the west of Corsica, they would have piled up on the lee shore.

After the fright they ventured the long jump to France with their hearts in their mouths, but they will boast later that none of their gear shifted or got wet. In truth, the shifts weren't disastrous and the wetting was limited. While waiting for the gale to blow itself out, they added some more hooks and eyes and bought some net material to improve restraint against beam-ends knockdowns.

The woman looks ahead and sees the mountains of France catch the first sunlight behind a gap that ought to be the Gulf of St.-Tropez. Her cry "Tierra!" brings her man's tousled head out of the hatch. She is still glad to look at him after a month aboard the boat, and that promises well for their marriage.

PLANS PRICE \$75.00

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