

Ideal 18



The Ideal 18 has had the markings of a winner since it first appeared as a gleam in Frank Shumway's eye. Shumway, of Rochester, N.Y., took it upon himself to fill a void that is today only partially filled by small, traditional keelboats like the Herreshoff-designed Bullseye he has sailed so extensively.

Shumway wanted a boat that could be raced or daysailed by two people who could weigh what they pleased, or single-handed, or left safely on a mooring; a family boat that was a nice combination of fun, excitement, and safety. (Remember the Winslow Homer painting of the kid in the straw hat, steering from the weather quarter with a rope tied to the tiller? That kind of boat.)

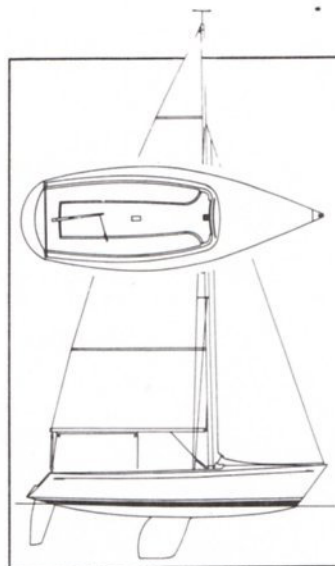
Small keelboats have traditionally been a wellspring for the sport — they bring people in and make them sailors for life. Carl Alberg's Typhoon springs to mind as maybe the last of this ilk to succeed the old-fashioned way, and that design is now almost a generation old — full-keeled and a warp speed slower than the one-design ranks will accept these days. To build such a boat for profit now, you need to make it

fast, with angular good looks, and at the same time keep it simple. You have to make all the decisions about building specs and hardware at the beginning in order to give the boat a fighting chance in the world of one-design racing, whence cometh your growth.

Shumway recognized all this, and once he'd set his goals he went to Bruce Kirby, certainly the designer of choice when you want to plant the seeds for a one-design class with strong, widespread fleets. The builders, Ontario Yachts in Canada, were sought out because of their excellent track record with one-designs such as the Etchells, Sonar, and Albacore.

The result, the Ideal 18, turned out pleasing to the eye and the tiller hand. It comes out of the box built and fitted out according to a rigid set of class rules, right down to the type of bottom paint allowed. If you want to race the boat, you need only labor over your own skills.

We got to sail the Ideal in conditions that separate the wheat from the chaff, beating upwind and jibing downwind on a narrow river in a puffy, shifty breeze of 8 to 15 knots. The boat was all wheat; it



LOA	17'10"
LWL	14'4"
Beam	6'2"
Draft	3'3"
DSPL	1200 lbs.
SA (class jib) ..	165.25 sq. ft.
DSPL/length	182
SA/DSPL	23.68

tacked and accelerated well with minimal slideslipping; it went fast and was very stable. Even with 650 pounds in the elliptical keel the helm was so light and the boat so responsive that it could easily be feathered upwind. The self-bailing cockpit was big, unobstructed, and comfortable at any angle of heel.

The three-quarter rig carries a big, full-battened main and a roller-furling, self-tacking class jib (spinnaker optional). Sailtrim is basic, with the mainsheet led from a bridle on the transom through a few blocks, forward along the boom, and down to a cam cleat on a mid-cockpit barney post. The mast carries swept spreaders and no backstay; the step is fitted with a hinge so that one person can rig the boat from scratch. It all adds up to a powerful, versatile, and simple sailplan that fits the concept of the boat well.

The Ideal can live on a mooring, but it's meant to travel to regattas behind the family car, and comes standard with a cra-

Construction: Hull of hand-laid E glass over Core-mat core, with positive flotation molded in. Deck, seats and seat backs, and cockpit well are one piece, laminated to hull with shoebox flange. One opening at forward end of cockpit for stowage under foredeck. Structural members are tied together with "spider pan" of fiberglass/foam-core stringers, with additional plywood bulkhead bonding keelbolts and chainplates to pan. Elliptical keel of glass-encased lead casting, shaped and faired at factory; no further fairing allowed by class rules. Rudder is fiberglass with foam core, hung inboard.

Rigging/Sails/Hardware: Mast is box-sectioned 3/4 rig, tapered above hounds; fixed-position step with hinge for singlehanded rigging. Class rules specify fully-battened mainsail of 4.5-oz. Dacron, with single slab reef, cunningham, outhaul, and boom vang; jib of same cloth weight, self-tacking, and roller-furling with drum inset in foredeck. Sails to be built by Haarstick or North. All standard fittings, including blocks, cleats, and jib traveler, are by Harken. Hardware for optional spinnaker comes installed.

dle and trailer. It can be ramp-launched or lowered by a hoist attached to an eyebolt on the keel.

It would be nice to see a bunch of these Ideals around. They should content a wide range of racers and messers-about, including the kid, now in an MTV baseball cap, out taking the waves and spray, feeling stoked about this handful of family boat, and how he's got its number, and about the sailing life in general.

— Douglas Logan

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