



With a simplified construction, the project was turning out to be very inexpensive—as well as ultra-light (475 lbs, ready to finish and rig). This meant easy trailering and launching, and quick-handling performance under sail.



Welcome to the world of *WEEKENDER* builders. The *WEEKENDER* is a boat that borrows some good ideas from the golden age of working sail, as well as some new wrinkles from space-age materials and power systems. It's a project that combines the best of both worlds—the classic lines of the sea-wise sloops of the turn of the century—and the quick-to-build, lightweight, low-maintenance of modern materials.

What would one of the old master boat designers do with modern tools and materials? That was the question we set out to explore when we designed the first *WEEKENDER* as the featured boat plan for *Popular Science* magazine back in 1981.

We went with a simplified, stressed-skin plywood box-section hull that eliminated almost all the intricate inner framing of the old boats.

The result was an extremely rigid, self-aligning structure that pulls itself straight as you build. This worked great for reducing building time, but it also had some other bonuses that we weren't expecting.

Inside, there's over six feet of sleeping room for two (It's true. We got a letter from one couple who spent two summer vacations on their *WEEKENDER* without a divorce). The reason for the extra room inside is the absence of a centerboard trunk that usually sits square in the middle of where you want to be.

The very first *WEEKENDERS* had a centerboard that slipped down out of the full-length keel. But then we began to get letters from builders who were leaving the centerboard off—and wondering why we'd used it in the first place. They were still getting good performance to windward, and the boat still tacked on a dime.

We went back and retested without any board in place. They were right. The shallow full-length keel and the hard chine of the hull bottom bit into the water and kept the boat sailing well into the wind. We could find only one condition it seemed to have trouble handling: sailing to windward in very light airs. Then someone remembered to induce the same angle of heel the boat would have in a breeze by sitting on the downwind side of the cockpit, and the boat took off upwind on the spot. So, with one little sailing trick, we can forget about centerboards that take up cabin room, that get caught in the kelp, and that leak and cause drag. We can let the kick-up rudder kick up, and then sail right up on a beach without touching another line.

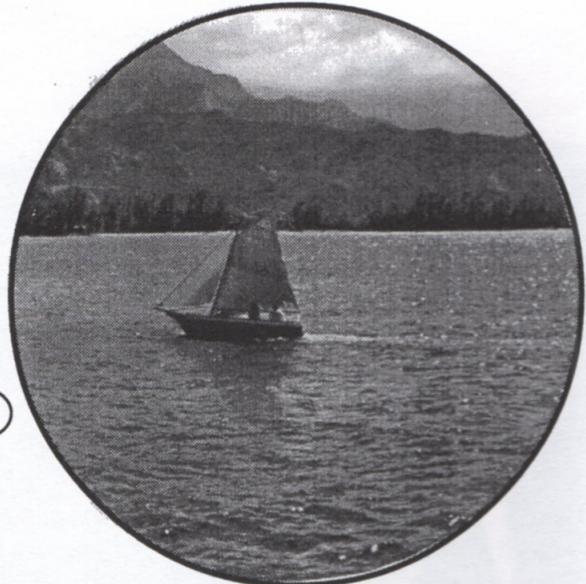
Hull-building is just like building a plywood box. In fact, it is just building a plywood box. After nailing together the keel, we cut out the deck, bottom, and bulkhead parts, assemble the deck and bottom, screw the bottom down onto the keel, then fit the bulkheads and deck down in place. If we keep the centerlines of the parts lined up, there's no way the boat can come out lop-sided. And once the side panels are screwed to the edges of the deck and bottom, the whole box-section becomes extremely rigid. Inside, parts like seat-bottoms and shelves double as side-framing. You'll find a lot of parts on the *WEEKENDER* doing double-duty. That's what keeps it light.



The *WEEKENDER'S* shape has a lot in common with one of the most seaworthy boats on the water, the Grand Banks Dory (with an added keelson and bowsprit). So she can handle some pretty nasty waves without making a big deal about it, and she's a nice, dry boat in the cockpit as well.

The salty old gaff-head sail rig also turned out to have a lot of advantages we weren't prepared for. With the mainsail held on three sides by spars, it's easy to control the shape of the sail while underway—and it's also easy for home-boat-builders to make their own durable sails that really work. And just because we usually see gaff-head rigs on slow old barges doesn't mean they can't sail. Some of the fastest sailboats in history, as well as some incredibly rapid ice-yachts have used gaff-rigs.

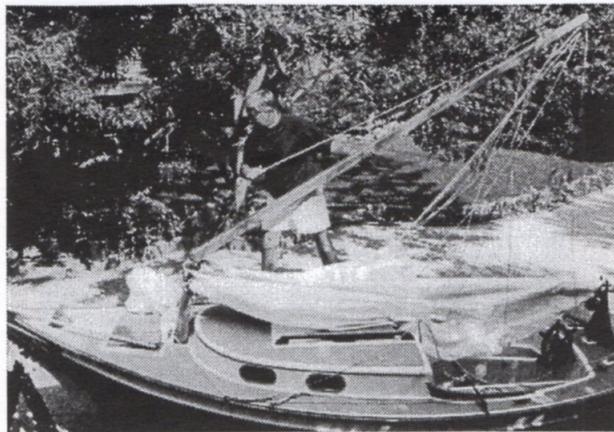
But when we launched the first *WEEKENDER*, we ran into the trade-off of the colorful gaff-headers; set-up time. The old rigs could take a lot of time to get ready to sail. Then we worked out a folding mast which solved all that. Now set-up time is just a few minutes, and all we have to do to pack the boat away for trailering after



a sail is to unhook the forestay, lay the mast back down over the lowered mainsail, and stuff the jib (still attached to the forestay) down into the forward hatch. Not a sail or line has to be removed.

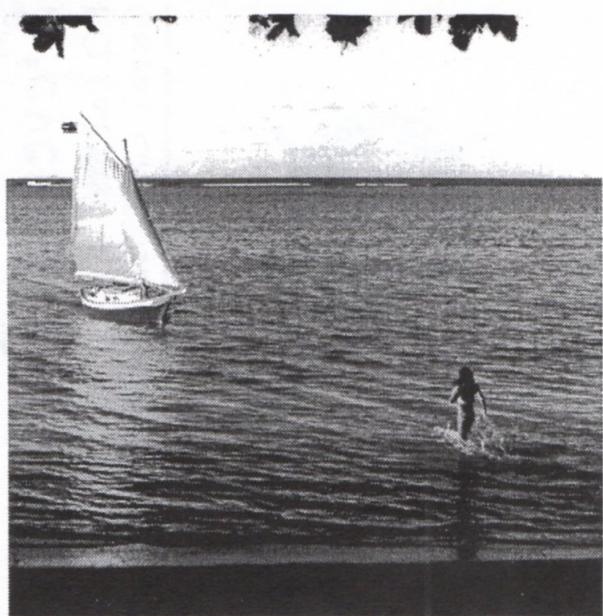
All this, including rigging and sailing speed-secrets, along with all the building steps, is covered in the new-over 3 hour Video Home Boat Building Course that goes into tool-use techniques, painting tips, even how a beginner can handle giving the boat a protective coat of fibreglass for low maintenance—even making your own steering wheel if you can't find one in a nautical shop. Although the whole boat can be built from standard lumberyard stock and hardware, using common hand tools, a lot of *WEEKENDER* builders like to upgrade their craft with the latest in racing gear and custom-made sails. So the Video goes into tips about upgrading your boat; what we think is worth the extra money, and what may not be.





Included with the Weekender Plans & Video Package are the complete building plans with progress drawings and construction photos, materials list—and access to a Builder-Hotline so if a step still seems hazy after watching it on the tape, seeing it in the plans, and reading about it in the complete step-by-step assembly guide, you can get to the sympathetic ear of an expert *WEEKENDER* builder to get the help you need. Also included in the package is a folder to protect the plans and registration papers, a Sailing Log for the boat.

We've had more letters and photos from *WEEKENDER* builders than just about all the other twenty or so boats we've designed for the nation's top magazines combined; everyone from charter schooner captains to a fifteen year-old who built and sailed his *WEEKENDER* without any adult "help". Because we deal with a lot of first-time builder-skippers, we try to stay away from too much sailing mumbo-jumbo and boaty-talk to try to impress you with how salty we are. We've sold over a third of a million DIY plans, and we know how important it is (for everybody) to try our best to answer every



question before it has to be asked. We've also found home-built boat people to be about the nicest crowd we've dealt with, and we hope you'll want join them—building your own little freedom-machine, and then sailing with us for some good, fun adventures on the water.

WEEKENDER Specifications:

LOD: 16' • LOA: 19' • Beam: 6' • Draft: 3' (1' Rudder up) • Weight: 550lbs • Sail Area: 90 sq.ft. Main, 32 sq.ft. Jib • Cost To Build: Under \$1600.

To order the 10-minute Sailing Video showing the *WEEKENDER* in action, and being built, send \$15.

To order the *WEEKENDER* Video/Plans Package, including complete plans, over 3 hours of video, materials list, folder, Sailing Log, send \$82; to order just the plans, send \$35 (by Check, Money Order, or Credit Card) to:

**WEEKENDER PACKAGE
STEVENSON PROJECTS
P.O. BOX 5986
Carmel, CA 93921
or 'phone 831-626-6088**

Check out the Stevenson Projects web site for more pictures of the *WEEKENDER*, Builder Bulletin Boards with pictures and links to builder's web sites about their *WEEKENDERS*, take a look at our other Pocket Yachts, and much more!





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