

longer thanks to modified forward windows, and a double berth in the guest cabin.

What hasn't changed much are materials and construction. Speaking of the Swift trawlers, Bruno Belmont, sailing development manager, says, "We have not made big changes in our composite process on these models, although most of our decks are now injected." Most Bénéteau boats are built with E-glass, isophthalic polyester resin, and a vinyl ester barrier coat.

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Making It in Maine



STEVEN WEISS YACHT DESIGN (ALL)



Before starting his own office in Trenton, Maine, last year, designer Steven Weiss worked for Lazarra Yachts, The Hinckley Company, Oyster Marine, and Morris Yachts. His line of fuel-efficient, semi-planing powerboats includes this PC52 (15.8m).

Hanging out one's own shingle following a successful career serving others is a daunting prospect, and must lead to a certain giddiness. "Hey, I just quit my job! I'm going solo!" But recognition—and a big paycheck—are seldom waiting around the corner.

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Following completion of the Small Craft Naval Architecture program from the Yacht Design Institute in 1983, Weiss landed a good job at Lazarra Marine in Tampa, Florida, as production engineer. Later he moved back to Maine to work in the design office of The Hinckley Company in Southwest Harbor. There he produced drawings for numerous models, sail and power, ranging from 36' to 61' (11m to 19m), and worked on a number of large custom projects as well. Not the least of his credits was serving as project engineer for the Hinckley Picnic Boat, a trendsetter in the industry.

In 1997 he took an engineering position with Oyster Marine in the United Kingdom, developing the Oyster 53 and 66 (16.1m and 20.1m) sailboats. He returned to the U.S. in 2000 to work for Morris Yachts (Bass Harbor, Maine), again as an engineer, and to assist in the firm's merger with Able Custom Yachts.

"After more than 20 years working as a designer and engineer for several of the world's most respected yacht builders, I have now taken the next step of opening my own yacht design studio," he wrote PBB last year. "I've long felt that I had the experience, the passion, and the aesthetic sensibility to make a strong statement in the realm of yacht design, and now is the time to put my energy and accumulated knowledge to work as an independent designer."

Weiss went on to acknowledge the "current economic climate," well aware of the challenges, and believing that "new approaches both in construction and design" would be necessary to succeed in the new order that's materializing in the post-recession wake.

Curious how Steven Weiss Yacht Design was faring a year later, I recently checked in with him, and am pleased to report that he has found a variety of ways to occupy his time. Last spring he consulted with the John Williams Boat Yard (Mount Desert, Maine) to design new connecting beams for the Polynesian Voyaging Society's sailing canoe, called *Hōkūle'a*, in which the Society's members are planning a circumnavigation. The nine new beams were required to widen the boat by 2' (0.6m). He's also picked up work at several Maine yards involved in remodels and rehabbing boats; partnered with a custom cabinet company designing and drawing parts; worked with PBB contributor Steve Callahan on a folding row/sail/powered RIB; and is designing a 52' (15.8m) daysailer for a client.

In the summer he's often on the water, managing yachts for several local clients—a position he describes as "daysailing-captain/sail-coach/delivery-skipper."

But most of his creative energy is going into new designs. These past few years, I've received almost weekly computer renderings from idle yacht designers hoping to generate interest from a builder or client, and Weiss is among them. "I have taken advantage of 'non-billable' time to develop a series of semi-planing 'powered cruising boats,'" he wrote last fall. The four models designed so far have in common long waterlines, narrow beam, and efficient, electronically controlled single diesel engines. To save weight, specified construction incorporates carbon and Kevlar fibers, latest-generation foam cores, and infused



STEVEN WEISS YACHT DESIGN

Steven Weiss's folding RIB, developed in conjunction with Steve Callahan, is designed for rowing, motoring, or sailing. With the addition of a full-length canopy, it functions as a survival craft that can take its crew to land.

epoxy resins. Twin-engine motoryachts, he notes, are fuel hogs; semi-planing hullforms, such as the Downeast lobster yacht, do not incorporate the latest efficiencies in design and construction; and trawlers, while miserly on fuel, are slow and might require some sort of active stabilization.

For his line of what he calls PC powerboats, Weiss cites several sources of inspiration: observing how people use their boats; the speed and effortlessness of sailboats like the Open 60 and Volvo 70; and Euro-styled powerboats. The synthesis is a boat with a pilothouse that's open aft so crew can "enjoy the sensory pleasures of sun and wind, the call of a seabird," but that closes up with canvas when weather dictates. All have single engines, for fuel economy and reduced noise and vibration. He estimates that with a six-cylinder diesel, the PC42 will cruise at a respectable 14 knots burning 4 gph (15 lph). Others in the line: PC29, PC48, PC52, and PC62 (8.8m, 14.6m, 15.8m, and 19m).

Steven Weiss Yacht Design, 648 Oak Point Rd., Trenton, ME 04605 USA, tel. 207-667-1189, on the Web at www.weissyachtdesign.com.

Pay as You Go

The concept of generating electricity using the flow of water on a water-based turbine while sailing is not new. Fifty years ago some cruising sailors rigged generators to their freewheeling propeller shafts by mounting two different-size sprockets, like a bicycle's, with a small one on the shaft connected by a belt or chain to a larger, hull-mounted sprocket that spun the generator.

Yacht designer Hugh Wellborn remembers employing this scheme. He commented: "We had a controllable-pitch Hundestadt prop that could be declutched and then clutched into an alternator for power. This did work, but the speed kill was significant until we had 8+ knots on the go. Otherwise it would take off 2 knots upwind, so we wouldn't use it."

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