

the genoa that provides a boat's serious drive. It should be noted, though, that Shaw 24 yawl owners think the Dolphin owners are "missin' a mizzen." Since waterline largely determines top speed, you might think boats with shorter waterlines would be slow. However, as soon as they heel a bit, as the wind gets up to where top speed is possible, the bow and stern overhangs enter the water, effectively lengthening the waterline. In light air, the less drag, the better.

Many sailors prize the proper feel and behavior of a boat while under way over having vast spaces inside. After all, we spend way more sailing time *on* a boat than *in* it. Romaine Corbin of Pacific Dolphin, Inc., noted, "Standing headroom is a dockside extra — one

sits down or lies down as soon as possible when moving about at sea." Chris Vandersteen, the owner of a J. J. Taylor Dolphin on Lake Ontario, wrote, "I spotted the boat the summer before I actually purchased it and remember thinking that, though she was small-ish, I really liked the shape of her. She looked sturdy and safe for my first boat, and I fell in love with the transom. She has proven to be very reliable, despite her age [45 years]."

Small *is* beautiful. Many sailors are really just dinghy sailors at heart. One of the Herreshoffs observed that the amount of use a boat receives is inversely proportional to its length. This certainly seems true — there is nothing like a boat you can arrive at and be under way in less than five

minutes. I've always felt that if you can't pull or work something with one hand, it's too big. On the other hand, if you are looking for a good old boat one size up from the Dolphin, look at the Tartan 27. This is the Dolphin enlarged by Sparkman & Stephens.

### The O'Day Dolphins

Beginning in 1959, the O'Day Dolphins came from Marscot Plastics, a division of the O'Day Corporation in Massachusetts. A few were classic transition boats. By that I mean they had glass hulls and wooden everything else, in part because a factory fire burned the deck/cabin/cockpit mold. The all-glass O'Day's hulls and decks were solid... no cores. Some had wooden masts, and some of those have since been replaced with aluminum. The O'Day interior layout mirrored *Trina's*: double V-berth, two quarter berths, head under the starboard seat, and a seat and galley to port (see illustrations on facing page). Power was provided by a gas Palmer Huskie inboard. Some boats were bought as kits — a completed glass hull and boxes of parts to be added by the owner. O'Day built 60 to 100 Dolphins.

I was a young whippersnapper racing International 14s in the Northeast when a friend and competitor, Sandy Van Zandt, announced one day that he'd be sailing 14s less because he'd be sailing a new Dolphin more. "What? A keelboat?" we cried. "How *could* you?"

We failed to comprehend. Sandy, you must understand, was the sailor who didn't like the sail shapes then made for 14s, so at first he built his own on his kitchen table and eventually became the sailmaker from whom we bought our sails. Trend leader? You bet. Did we "dinghy youngsters" understand the attraction of fast keelboats? Not then... but most of us do now. It must have been one of those first O'Day Dolphins that lured Sandy into leading the next trend.

### The Yankee Dolphin

The late 1960s (through 1972) saw the Dolphin become the Yankee Dolphin as construction shifted to Yankee Yachts in Inglewood, California. Yankee Dolphin decks, cabins, and cockpits became a one-piece fiberglass unit. The company did use considerable teak exterior trim (toerails, coamings, eyebrows, handrails, hatches,

## In their own words

- **Romaine Corbin, Pacific Dolphin, Inc.:** "*Trina*, a wooden 24-foot scaled-down *Finisterre*, beats everything in sight and proves that small yachts can handle blue water as swiftly and safely as their big brothers... (her) powerful ends and long keel will give her the feel of a much larger vessel."
- **Jim Sutro (#84):** "The Yankee Dolphin was exactly the boat my wife and I wanted. The Yankee model has lots of exterior teak and interior mahogany. It has the look of a very classy yacht but isn't so big that it's impossible to maintain. It has an adequate cabin for long weekends, is trailerable, and is a solid, seakindly vessel as well. San Francisco Bay can be a washing machine on summer afternoons, and the stability was important to us. She sails upright when reefed and maintains speed without becoming uncomfortable. She makes surprisingly good progress without a lot of fuss and spray and responds to the waves without becoming twitchy or abrupt. She has been a very forgiving platform upon which to learn to sail." 

Sutro continued, "Several years ago a Pacific Dolphin [Doug Graham sailing *Big Dot* in 1996] competed in the Singlehanded TransPac Race. The boat arrived dead last and most of the entrants were home before it finished, but it corrected out as the winner in its class." (To top that performance, Doug singlehanded her back.)
- **Brent Adams (#78):** "She's a 'big little boat.' That is, she sails truer than some boats her size (full keel and centerboard). People are always surprised at how much room there is aboard and how much weather she can take under sail."
- **Ron Breault (O'Day glass/wood Dolphin #12):** *Marionette* has won her class in Spring Off Soundings three times, the latest in 2004. "Great performer to her rating. In light air, our motto is, 'As you cross the finish line look over your shoulder. If you can see us, you lose.' Boats need crew weight to windward in a breeze in order to carry sail. Otherwise, you have to reef and go to a smaller jib and don't have the power to punch through the troughs... I cannot think of any serious faults in this well-designed boat. She is the quintessential good old boat. Yes, I would do it again and we are... in my son's boat. *Passage* (hull #10) is currently undergoing restoration. At the end of the day there are few better feelings than sitting in the cockpit of my Dolphin and watching a 40-foot goldplater motor by and hear them say, 'Pretty boat.' This all results from an Olin Stephens design philosophy paraphrased as, 'Good-looking boats sail better.'" 