

12½-FOOTERS



Between 1914, when the first of these Buzzards Bay Boys Boats were built, and 1943, when the last one came out (the boats were then called Bullseyes), the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company produced about 450 of these little boats, making them by far its most popular one-design class. Prices, completely outfitted, ranged from \$420 in 1914 to a high of \$1100 in the late 1920s, then back down to \$755 for the last one.

Without question, this is the most loved design of any of the hundreds that Nat Herreshoff created, and it's easy to see why. Here you have a 16' boat that's safe because of her outside ballast and flotation compartment, and a boat that can seat more people in her cockpit than most 30-footers. The 12½-footers are good sailers, too, but it is their lovely hull shape and the detailing that make them truly little gems.

Several good things have happened since 1943 to keep this design going. Starting shortly after the war, the Quincy Adams yard in Massachusetts built a number of them under license from Herreshoff, after which the exclusive rights to the design were sold, along with jigs, fixtures, etc., to Cape Cod Shipbuilding Co. of Wareham, MA, which kept on with wooden construction a few more years until fiberglass came along. Since that time in the early 1950s, hundreds of fiberglass Bullseyes have been produced, and new ones can still be purchased. Besides Cape Cod's two versions, Edey and Duff of Mattapoisett, MA, offer a similar model, also in fiberglass, called the DoughDish.

Even the wooden 12½-footers are getting a new lease on life through rebuilding and restoration (Ballentine's Boatyard in Cataumet, MA, specializes in this), or by being given completely new hulls. Often these are

boats that have been so long in the same family that sentiment prevails in spite of the near-new-boat cost.

It's too bad that folks who want brand-new wooden 12½s can't get permission to

build them; but Cape Cod Shipbuilding jealously guards its legal right to this design, apparently fearing a competitive threat to its fiberglass production boats.

— Maynard Bray

Built by the Herreshoff Mfg. Co. for 30 years, the great little 12½s have been collected and venerated by sailors since 1914.

LOA: 15'6"
LWL: 12'6"
Beam: 6'0"
Draft: 2'6"
Sail Area: 140 sq. ft.
Built: 1914-43 (by HMCo)
Owners and Ports: various

