

DESPERATE LARK



Although more than 80 years have passed since the Bar Harbor 31-footers were built, *Desperate Lark* still moors within a few hours sail of Bar Harbor. She's been especially lucky to have attracted caring owners after her hull type went out of fashion, because her shape is not what one would call practical in today's world. She's nearly 50' long with only four built-in berths located in the single space that also serves as a main cabin. And there's her deep draft to consider, too.

Luckily for her, she was given a small,

A lovely, lucky Herreshoff survivor from the Edwardian era, *Desperate Lark* shows the long overhangs that U.S. yacht-racing measurement rules encouraged until 1904, a year after she was built, when



easily handled marconi yawl rig by L. Francis Herreshoff in 1939, after which she was "turned out to pasture" in Maine waters. The short northern season, consistent — although by no means lavish — professional care and easy sailing have done much to prolong her life.

Desperate Lark has been given a new lease on life lately by a new owner. Among other things, she's been reframed and refastened; her joinerwork — nearly all of it original — was stripped and refinished while out of the boat; the topsides have been refaired and refinished; she has new sails.



Altogether, this work should make her good for another 80 years.

What's most amazing about *Desperate Lark* is how her sheerline has stayed perfectly fair in spite of the long, overhanging bow and stern. Herreshoff hulls, unlike most others, can usually be depended upon to hold their shape. Metal hull strapping, double-planked topsides, and plenty of strength at the deck edge have surely proven themselves in this boat.

Being aboard the *Lark* is like being on a big daysailer; I suppose it's her low freeboard and simple deck layout. She steers

Nat Herreshoff developed the Universal Rule. And she shows a bright, efficient interior, typically finished in white paint and varnished wood.

LOA: 48'10"
LWL: 32'2"
Beam: 10'6"
Draft: 7'6"
Sail Area: 1047 sq. ft.
Built: 1903
Owner: Michael Stubbs
Home Port: Brooksville, ME



with a tiller, and although I've only sailed her in light weather, a quick look at her underbody would convince you how very responsive she'd be in other conditions. Below deck, as the photos show, the feeling is one of classic but restful symmetry; the layout on one side is nearly identical with that on the other and the cabin is very light and airy because of the many windows and opening skylights. The white-painted interior was standard Herreshoff; it was practical, and it showed off the raised-panel joinerwork to advantage.

— Maynard Bray