

# NEITH

**P**erhaps Lazarus would be a better name for *Neith*, because this boat was raised from near-dead to become an astonishingly authentic representation of Herreshoff work. Much of her is not original; but the deck, topside planking, and interior were put back using copies of the original drawings as well as a good understanding of how the work would have been done.

Around 1904, when the yachting establishment adopted Nat Herreshoff's proposal for a new measurement rule (the so-called Universal Rule of Yacht Measurement), there came an abrupt change in the nature of sailing yachts. Gone were the long-ended, scow-like hulls carrying huge spreads of sail. In their place came more "wholesome" boats like *Neith*. A boat's displacement now figured into the formula as the denominator, meaning that the greater a hull's volume below the waterline, the more sail area and waterline length she could have for a given rating. Herreshoff had always been a proponent of good, practical boats, yet his success depended on winning races no matter what the measurement rule. Under earlier formulas, Herreshoff boats had been as extreme as any. That's the main reason so few survive from that era. His designs after 1904 are generally of more practical boats; yet they were boats that would still win races.

For yachts whose hulls were deep enough, Nat preferred flush decks rather than trunk cabins, which he claimed weakened the overall structure. And if, as appears true in *Neith*'s design, it meant adding to the freeboard for under-deck headroom in the living spaces, he'd unhesitatingly do it.

*Neith* was sailed to Europe in 1921, and while there was altered in rig from gaff to marconi. Shabby and far from yachtlike, *Neith* returned to the states some 50 years later, again on her own bottom, and remained somewhat ragtag until she was rescued from what nearly became her final resting place: the Connecticut River. From badly chafed and sunken condition *Neith* has been reborn. This lucky vessel has been worked on by many devoted people — boat-builder/engineer Ed McClave outstanding among them — and the financial burden of restoring her, at first shouldered by Doug and Betty Hersant, now rests with Van Brown. It's taken time and money — a lot of each — but there are few owners who can boast of a *Neith* in their stable, and there are few boats that have contributed as much in recent years to an appreciation of the name Herreshoff. — *Maynard Bray*







**M**uch of what you see in these photos is not original — but it might as well be. A triumph of accurate and exquisite re-creation as well as restoration, *Neith* is much as she was the day she was launched in 1907. She is perhaps the finest example of a

restored Herreshoff yacht, and an inspiration for other restoration projects as well as for connoisseurs of Herreshoff Manufacturing Company workmanship.

**LOA:** 52'10"  
**LWL:** 38'6"  
**Beam:** 10'0"  
**Draft:** 7'6"  
**Sail Area:** 1600 sq. ft. (original rig)  
**Built:** 1907  
**Owner:** Van Brown  
**Home Port:** Mystic, CT

