

1926 Herreshoff Arrives



A rare work of art blew into Sara Creek at Gloucester Point with the arrival last week of a 1926 Herreshoff sailboat. The name is famous as the manufacturer of America's Cup boats going back a century or more. The **Herreshoff Marine Museum** in Bristol, Rhode Island, heralds the sailboats and the Cup. Herreshoff still builds classic boats in all lengths.

The boat here is 27 feet long and owned by Chuck Shaffner, seen lately fitting out new lines in his slip on G Dock at **York River Yacht Haven**.



He's been working on the boat since 1975. He retired from Newport News Shipyard after 40 years, most recently as deputy chief engineer after a tour as manufacturing planning director. "Having done the reconstruction of my boat gives me new appreciation of those shipbuilders who did the overhauls."

“I’ve completely rebuilt it over the years with a new deck, new sheer strake, new frames, new transom, new transom, new strongback, new sternpost, new brass portals and new plank keel. The boat has been completely rebuilt, only better without any iron. 75 percent of the original hull planking is original. The boat is built to the original plans. This is the second rebuild, actually. I wanted to do it to last the rest of my lifetime. The boat is listed in the **Herreshoff Registry as Hull 1015.**”



The wooden mast was hand-made by a private company. It is considerably raked and assembled in several parts. “It’s hollow inside, for cable to run. The pieces were glued up on a profile with West System to get the rake effect, and then varnished eight times.”

A thin stick attached to the base of the mast serves as a spinnaker pole. “The rig originally had a smaller chute. The boat had two [spinnaker] chutes for two different classes. A 25-foot halyard was for the Bristol class in Rhode Island while a 28-foot halyard was for the Long Island class.”

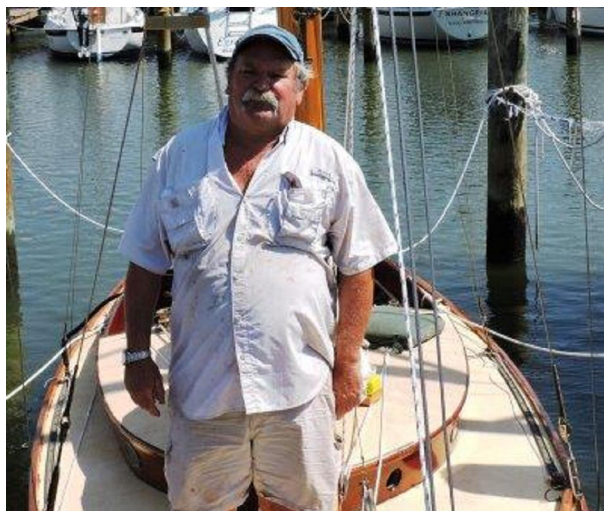
“The boat was damaged in 1978 during an ice storm when it dragged 200 yards in Chisman Creek. I replaced some of the sheer strake (molding).”

The boat has come a long way locally. “You know Harry Barritt?” he asked, referring to the boat broker with **Bluewater Yachts**. Harry works 100 feet down G Dock. “I bought the boat from a guy in Annapolis, and he bought from a guy in Hampton. Harry traced the lineage back to him, where he raced it out of Hampton Yacht Club. If he’s still alive I’d like to take him out sailing.”

The Hampton owner had the boat during the 1950s and has since died. Harry said, “His name was Dr. E.V. Siegel. But there are still plenty of people at Hampton Yacht Club who know that boat. It was on a mooring and was named Sea Gull.” The name today is Dolcefariante, or Sweet Nothings.

Over the years, Chuck has moored the boat on Chisman Creek, at Cook’s Marina, and in Norfolk. Why Gloucester Point now? “I live a mile from here.”

The boat is tucked into a slip that makes it difficult for an amateur to maneuver without power. "I have an outboard but don't use it. I'm anxious to see if I can sail in and out of here. The sails are so big and the boat so small



that it can sail anywhere, on any wind. In fact, I sailed in here a couple of times years ago to get beer. I wreak havoc.

John Brooks has his own classic sailboat on the same dock, and it just marked 50 years. "In New England, most of these boats (if sailed without engines) are kept on moorings. That makes it easy to get out sailing, and also reduces the risk of damage by accidentally hitting a piling or dock. The yacht club or municipal harbor launch provides transportation out to the mooring, or folks dinghy out from their club or landing. Boom tents keep the rain water out of the non- self bailing cockpit. It is fresh water that rots a wood boat."

"The boat has no concept of hull speed," Chuck said, referring to a sailboat's top speed based on its length. "It can easily sail four to six knots. But on an east wind heading downwind, it will surf on the water and reach 18 knots. White spray shoots up over the bow," he said, throwing his arms up to show the height.

The boat originally cost \$4,600, according to the registry. I wasn't crass enough to ask the value today, restored. But I looked up similar Herreshoffs of current model years and found they run around \$100,000. Harry said Dolcefariante is worth much more than that, and I found a 33-footer from 1926 listed by Yachtworld for \$175,000. My guess is that the value to Chuck is more like priceless.



Source: Anon (Bill O'Donovan?). "1926 Herreshoff Arrives." September 6, 2017. <https://williamsburgchartersails.com/captains-log/1926-herreshoff-arrives>, retrieved December 15, 2017.