

INTRODUCTION

ew things are as exhilarating in life as learning. When one can couple it with personal passions, such as sailing and travel, the exultation is all the greater. No wonder, then, that surveying the world's best sailboat yards throughout Europe and North America seemed to me like a series of strung-together Christmas mornings. The presents I found were all beautiful, most very creative, and some truly amazing and ingenious.

Vast changes have occurred to sailboats in the decade and a half since *Volume I* was published. Quality has soared. The technology has evolved so much that it often seems like a brand-new world. The designs have been refined—not just in hull shapes, underbodies, and their appendages, but also in the fastidiousness of details. The emphasis seems to be on 'comfort,' followed by 'ease of handling' and 'speed.'

You will find on these pages all the new boats—many dramatically different—of builders covered in the first book; I also warmly welcome the big group of 'new' builders. Some you will recognize as established names who have leapt to the forefront in both design and quality; others, more recent entries, but with

such fine achievements in a relatively short time that they cannot be overlooked.

One huge change, I'm rather sad to say, is size. Boats are becoming forever larger, grander, infinitely more complex—no longer the little magic carpets that could whisk us away from our accumulated burdens; instead, they seem to be the very embodiment of the burdens we tried so hard to leave behind.

I tried, as before, to achieve a balance. Apart from the ultramoderns, I have included a few classics for the romantics among us. But, as in *Volume I*, I chose only builders who truly have their hearts and souls in sailboats, who continue to contribute and invent, while never losing sight of practicality, quality, and beauty; their works are ones you could safely and proudly pass down to your children.

But please remember that, just as *Volume I*, this book is not a shopping list, not a catalogue of a limited number of boats from which to choose. It is, as best as I could make it, a book of *best ideas*—a collection of ever-blossoming, ever-evolving design concepts and construction methods—all of them tried and true—most of which you would do well to remember when evaluating a sailboat of any kind, any make, any design.

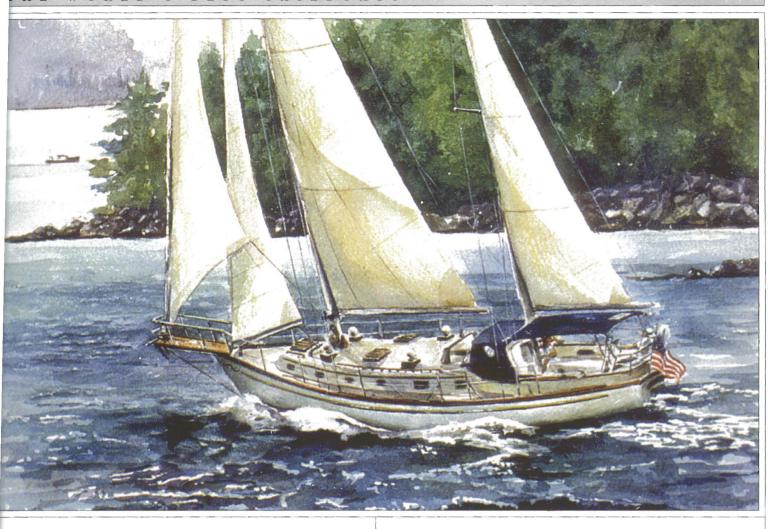
Ferenc Máté, Tuscany, 2003

REPRINTED FROM The World's best sailboats/volume ii by ferenc máté

SHANNON YACHTS



alter Schulz is one of the last of a wonderful breed—the complete boatbuilder. He designs boats, invents rigs, invents hull shapes, and then, unlike most others who work only on paper or computer, he takes saw and rasp and builds a half-model. And then he builds the real boat—always interesting and invariably one of the world's best yachts.



alter could not look any more like the salty mariner even if Hollywood were to reinvent him. His great gray beard, his saucer-size intense eyes, big seagoing hands, and a voice that sounds like it's coming at you through a layer of shifting gravel, along with the ever-present, seldom-lit pipe, give you the indelible impression that God invented the seas and boats just for him. He is sailboats. He builds them, loses sleep at night worrying over them, and when he talks about them, he does so with enough passion to make any gale crawl away humbled. But at heart he's as gentle as a lamb.

Walter's Scutter Rig

'I don't care what a sailmaker tells you,' he growls, 'you can't reef a sail by furling it more than 33 percent and still have a sail form. This myth that has been generated, that you can have a 150 percent genoa on furling gear and it can become whatever sail you want it to be by reefing down is, pardon the expression, bullshit. When you furl up more than 33 percent of a sail, it's not a sail anymore; it's a bedsheet. You ever try going to windward with a bedsheet?'

Rising from this immutable observation, Walter went and invented a new rig; neither sloop nor cutter, it's aptly called the 'Scutter.'

'I can't take credit for that,' he declines. 'Boats in the last century used the same idea. And all the singlehanded around-the-world race people use versions of it too. So what is it? Well let me tell you first why it is. The single biggest reason we went to

it was to keep people in the cockpit without having to go and do sail changes in bad weather, in dire conditions, and still have a good variety of sail combinations at their disposal. With this rig, the genoa is two sails and the Yankee jib is two sails, so you have four sails forward of the mast to keep you going safely. The average Shannon owner is fifty-six years old, while some are in their seventies, so I want to give them whatever I possibly can to keep them from getting overfatigued—to keep sailing, and keep sailing safely. I have middle-aged people going all over the world in my boats, so I can't be jerking around, putting them on a single-headstay sloop.

'Then there's the cutter. On a conventional cutter, the genoa is just too much of a pain to use when you're tacking back and forth in a real blow. It wraps on the staysail stay, plus you have all that sheet to haul. And then if you furl it too much, forget trying to sail to weather. If you get rid of the genny, what have you got left? A bitty staysail where the top of the stay is halfway down to the spreaders and the tack is too far back, hence a luff that is just too short to make the boat go. You just can't claw off a lee shore once you're over 30 knots—not with a staysail on any cutter. Our inner forestay is almost 40 percent longer than a traditional staysail stay. That's a hell of a lot more luff to drive you.

'What you need way out on the headstay, the outer stay, is a good-size, sturdy Yankee jib with a long luff, one that'll pull and pull until the world blows away. Now most people say, When the wind picks up, get that headsail far back into the boat. That's nonsense. A traditional staysail well inboard toward the center, when you're hard on the wind in 50 knots, will give weather helm, which in that much wind is the last thing you



need, either for the helmsman or the autopilot. That's when they both are likely to break down. The autopilot simply gets overwhelmed. And then what do you do? You steer by hand. If you're a middle-aged couple in weather like that, how long are you going to be able to sit out there and have your arms cranking? I mean, I have been out there for eighteen to twenty hours in serious grief; you get so tired you can't recall your name, never mind navigate and handle the boat well.

'So on our Scutter rig, we put a Yankee on the headstay at the tip of the bowsprit, and then about four feet back, at the stemhead, we put a nice big, fat genny. Both of them on roller furlers, of course. We have a third removable inner stay by Spectra that attaches to a ring in the deck right where the old staysail used to be. This is for a hank-on storm jib. A survival sail. That's for 80 knots of wind.

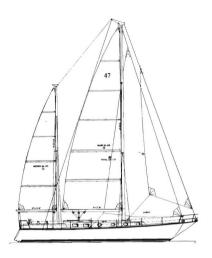
'I get as much sailing time on my boats as I can, to see if all this stuff really works. Everything seems like a great idea standing on a concrete floor inside a nice warm building, but at sea? Some years back, I was sailing off Ireland with Monk Farnham—he's seventy-five, and I'm cold and wet. We're beating past Fastnet Rock, wind right on the nose, seas like I've never seen—craziest, wildest, weirdest seas. One sea comes over the bow and hits me in the face, bam. The next one comes and hits me in the back of the head; there was no pattern that you could steer to. Having a powerful Yankee up there pulling for us saved the day. A sloop or a cutter with a rolled-up genny and a bitty staysail would not have done it. It simply cannot go within 50 degrees of the wind; no way. You're just not going to get off a lee shore.

'Another time, I was out on one of our 47s in 65 knots. Here's

how that went. We left Newport in 15 knots, with the main and genoa out, for the 400-mile jaunt to Annapolis. Just me and a couple of kids from the shop with not much sailing experience. In a few hours, the weather deteriorated. I first reefed the main, then reefed the genoa. Then, as it got worse, I got rid of the genoa, pulled out the working jib, the Yankee on the foremost stay, and carried that and a double-reefed main well into the 40s all that night. Wind kept up, even at dawn as we were beating off Montauk. Then it kept climbing. Here I am, one of the kids flat on his back sick, the other glassy-eyed staring, so here's me, basically alone. Well, I'll be damned if I hove to. I just doused the main completely and reef-furled that Yankee jib. Handled all those sail changes, the whole thing, from the cockpit. And we were tacking back and forth, too; not just hanging on. So we kept on going, sometimes at 3 knots with the damn seas so big. One old man in the cockpit steering and pulling on lines.

'We had one guy with a Scutter rig on a 39, never owned a sailboat before, almost no experience. He picks up the boat, spends two weeks shaking it down, then takes off for Bermuda. I mean, my heart was in my throat when he left. Well, he got there in three days, twenty hours. Averaged 7.4 knots on a boat with a 32-foot waterline. The rig is just so easy to get used to.

'Morgan Freeman, best damned actor in America and the world's nicest guy, owned a *Shannon 38* for ten or eleven years, sailed a lot by himself in that ketch. He flew in one night from making a movie, and I start explaining to him how simple this new rig is to work and what a great new invention it is, and he looks at me and he says, *What the hell took you so long?* We ended up building a *43* with the Sketch rig variation for him



and his wife, Myrna. On the Sketch rig, we get eighteen different, perfectly functioning sail combinations. All from the cockpit. No wear and tear on body or nerves. The real issue to me is fatigue; you have to be attentive to every aspect of sailing when you design and build a boat. I don't mean just the sails and rig; I mean how easy the galley is to use, how easy it is to move around the boat, hell, even to go to the head. In bad conditions, just getting into your foul-weather gear, is a major undertaking. Fatigue. The Coast Guard keeps records of all the major accidents and fatalities that happen on boats. Ninety-five percent of them are related to fatigue.

'I think that one of the big reasons why so many of our boats are doing long voyages is that they simply don't beat up their owners. When they get into a bad storm, they know they can trust the boat. There is no fatigue from anxiety. If you get a boat that's fast but tires the crew so much that they haven't the strength left to get the maximum out of the boat, then where is your gain? Where is the advantage?

'We often have average doctors and accountants in offshore races beat a crew of sailmakers just because they don't get tired out, can make better judgments, remain inventive, remain alert to change, and have the strength left to react to it optimally.'

The Shoalsailer

While Walt has earned his reputation designing and building boats for the extreme rigors of ocean sailing, he has always been enamored with cruising in shallow coastal waters. 'I love gunkholing. Getting away from crowded anchorages when I am on a boat with Janet, my wife of thirty-one years. While the keel/centerboard hulls of my Shannons draw a lot less than the fixed-draft fin keels of most premium offshore yachts, I still found myself looking for a boat that I could actually sail in only a couple of feet of water. That led to my Shoalsailer, which I envisioned as the ultimate coastal cruiser. I am embarrassed to admit it, but it took me seven years to work out the design problems. But I felt a little better when the Shoalsailer's hull turned out to be so innovative that the U.S. Patent Office gave me a patent. That's almost unheard-of for a hull shape. The benchmark for shoal-draft boats was set by Ralph Munroe in 1885. He was the man who opened up Florida tourism at the turn of the 20th century. He developed the Presto Ketch. Someone gave me one of these old centerboard ketches, 37 feet, berthed in Greenport, New York. Half a wreck; I sailed it up here. We tried to get up to this narrow cut—Plumb Guttrying to beat toward it with this huge shoal beside us. We took four or five runs at it and kept getting pushed onto the shoal. So

one of the guys says, Why don't we just cut over the shoal; with the board up, we only draw 28 inches. Well, I said, we can't put the board up because then we'll get blown sideways.

'We're in a bar that night and one of the guys says to me, What the hell good is a shallow boat when it's only shallow downwind? That night I didn't sleep; I started my seven-year saga that became the Shoalsailer.'

The Shoalsailer's massive 12-foot-9-inch beam keeps the boat almost completely upright when beating; its VMG is close to a *J/35*'s; and it can sail in just over 30 inches of water with daggerboards up or down—and that's the depth of an old-fashioned bathtub.

'The amazing thing is that the hull shape alone gives you lift going to weather. The boat will sail 35 degrees relative to the apparent wind, with no leeway with the boards up. The boat is so wide that it doesn't heel much—5 to 10 degrees of heel is all. I designed the sections for each heel increment.

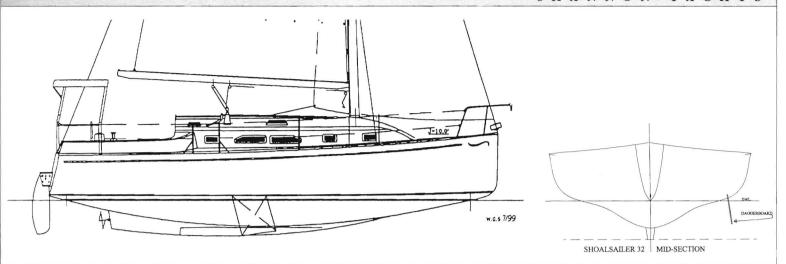
'It has a living-room-sized cockpit, with dual steering wheels. We have Kevlar for abrasion in the hull laminates, plus a crash sole that has watertight integrity if the hull is holed. So you can calmly beach this boat. We even designed a double roof with airflow between the skins to keep the belowdecks cool while you're sitting at the shore where there's less wind.'

Besides the big items, like rigs and hulls, Walt and his crew also stay on top of the small details, such as the interior woodwork fit and finish. 'A few years ago, I got bored with people judging boats based solely on how glossy the varnish was, so we put in a state-of-the-art, pressurized, air-conditioned varnish room, and now we are doing varnish work as well as anybody in the world. Building most of the interior out of solid hardwoods means that these boats will keep looking good even after my grandkids are gone. And my finish carpenters know that they'll have to fix any sloppy joints, as I am a real pain in the ass if I ever find anything crooked.

'I feel especially good about our boats' popularity with boatyard workers around the world. I love it when a boatyard guy with grease under his fingernails comes up to me and says that Shannons are his favorite boats. I worked my way through college as a boatyard mechanic, so I know how aggravating it can be when you can't get to something essential like a filter or a starter motor without ripping the boat apart. Our systems installations are clean, simple, and accessible. And if an owner or somebody in a boatyard is working on one of our boats and has a question, all he has to do is call and he can talk to the person who actually did the installation, sometimes even on a twenty-five-year-old Shannon. Holding onto my key people over the years gives a continuity to the company.

'Our customers seem ever more knowledgeable and demanding, so we have to engineer special systems for their needs. They really force me to stay on the leading edge of everything, from desalinators to fuel polishing systems. The hot area lately has been in interfaced systems—you know, the daylight-viewable laptops with raster chart nav systems overlaid on the radar image. On the first Shannon that I took to Bermuda in 1976, we found the island with a sextant and an RDF. I wonder how many sailors today even know how to hold a sextant. Now, with WAAS GPS hooked to the laptop, you can watch your boat on the computer screen pull out of its slip in the marina.

'And we've utilized the latest technology in interior design. The first generation of CAD software was useless for doing yacht interiors because of the compound curves of a hull. Once



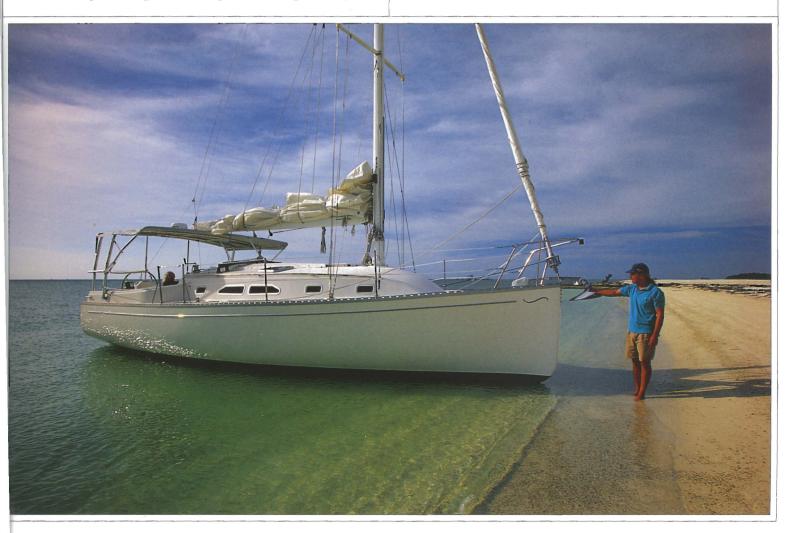
they came out with programs for hull shapes, I knew this was the tool for designing the one-off interior that goes into every Shannon. I can move bulkheads now and not have to worry if a bunk is going to want to stick out of the hull by 6 inches when we build it. That used to happen more than any yacht designer is willing to tell you. It's been great, except for the headaches of teaching myself another software program.'

The bulletin board at Shannon is filled with postcards and photos sent in by Shannon owners from exotic locales such as Madagascar, Glacier Bay, and the Rio Dulce. Walt says, 'Everyone here in the shop lives vicariously through our boats that go to places most of us will never get to see.'

I almost forgot—all their boats, including the 39, 43, and 47/52, are 20 percent lighter and 40 percent stronger than just a

few years ago, due to the use of biaxial stitched instead of woven rovings, linear foam PVC cores, Vinylester resin, and the use of S-glass, which is a little stronger than E-glass.

On weekends, Walter relaxes: He rebuilds old wooden boats. The latest is a 1930 William Hand motorsailer. But one day he will stop building, designing, and inventing boats that kind of remake the world. Thankfully, he has taught his builders and designers well, passing down a lifetime of knowledge as carefully as he does everything else.



THE WORLD'S BEST SAILBOATS





ere are Shannon's classically pretty, nearly indestructible blue-water cruisers, and at the bottom right (and on previous page), Walter Schulz's ingenious creation, the beachable Shoalsailer, for coastal cruising even in waist-deep water. In the photo below is the 39-foot

Scutter—no spelling mistake—with the Yankee furled forward, while the genny (also rigged to the masthead) flies slightly aft. See the text for the reasoning behind this brilliant solution for a serious, ocean-sailing rig. Above is her sleek, larger sister, the *Shannon 43* Sketch—flying the same headsail





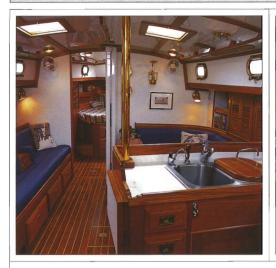
arrangement. With the addition of the mizzenmast, you get the most versatile sail combinations imaginable, and, most crucially, they all perform exceptionally well over an immense range of sea and wind conditions. Above, showing off her power, is the queen of the fleet, the 47, again with the Scutter

rig. All of the Shannon's offshore cruisers feature a choice of keel/center-board or fixed draft, classic cutter or ketch or Scutter/Sketch rigs. They also have very fine detailing, enormously strong construction, and an almostendless series of creative improvements, most of them due to the inex-

haustible dedication of their designer and builder, Walter Schulz, in photo left, pointing out his weekend passion restoring classic wooden boats.



THE WORLD'S BEST SAILBOATS







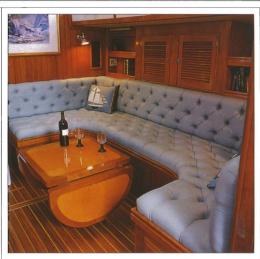
hese interiors are about as 'shippy' as you can get. Apart from their evidently excellent joinery, Shannon's fortes include their inventive layouts and sophisticated custom details. Above, in the three photos of the 43, I very much like details such as the drawers under the

settee (left) and under the double berth (center), instead of the customary drop lids that you have to deal with while wrestling with cushions. The double hatches over the saloon give excellent light, the laminated overhead is elegantly trimmed and maintenance-free. On the opposite page are photos of the 47, with the luxurious forward cabin (top, center), the intriguing classic cabinetry (left), and the beautiful burl-inlaid coffee table (right), which, when needed, rises and opens for dinner (see photo below it). In that same photo, note the grabbable searails and the V-grooved solid wood on

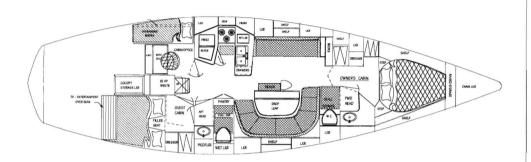








the bulkheads. The line drawing is also of the 47, with that romantic forward berth, and my favorite, the small aft cabin to port with a bunk and a desk that doubles as the navigation area and a writer's hideaway.





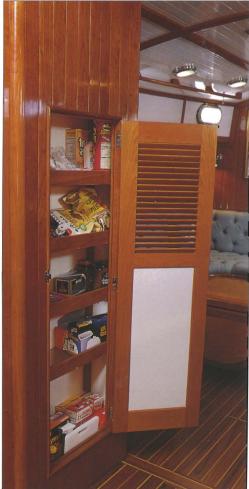




he hulls, above right, are of the Shoalsailer. Note the unusual hollowed sections bow-on, and—in the hull in profile—the slot for one of the daggerboards, which, even in the down position, does not increase the boat's draft. The other photos on this page show the offshore Shannons. The galley, below, has a well-located, accessible plate rack, and the best knife storage for a boat, set into the countertop. In the photo beside it is a perfect shallow pantry. In the upper left-hand corner is a bit of timeless cabinetry. The opposite page shows cockpits that blend classic teak

details with the modern curved helmsman's seat, nonskid seat surfaces, sheet-tail stowage below the winches, and even a predesigned space for stereo speakers. The bowsprit platform is of massive chunks of solid teak, with heavy-gauge stainless chafe preventers everywhere. In the top right corner









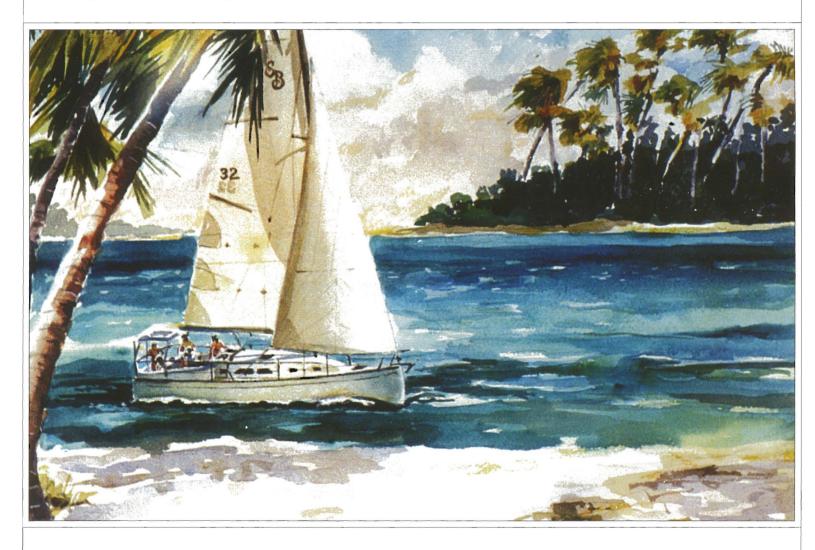
is the hefty bronze gudgeon that foots the rudder. One of the best things you can't see here: the reverse transom opens to release the life raft right into the water. No need to cart around the weighty thing on deck—a brutal task in a presumably brutal situation. First-class offshore thinking.







hen I started the company in 1975, with just a dream of building the best blue-water cruising sailboats in the world, I never imagined my life's work would turn out to be so gratifying. For our twenty-fifth anniversary here in Bristol Harbor, we had a couple of hundred people and a slew of the more than three hundred Shannons we've built so far. It brought tears to my eyes.'



THE WORLD'S BEST SAILBOATS VOLUME II

This is the companion volume to *The World's Best Sailboats Volume I*, which, with 100,000 copies in print, is an all-time nautical bestseller. With 535 color photos by the world's most respected marine photographers, and Mr. Máté's commentary, this new volume is the ultimate combination of beauty and practicality. Mr. Máté visited the leading boatbuilders of the world—from Finland to England, from Canada to California—and he surveys and evaluates the sailboats of the eighteen best yards. The text is full of technical information regarding the latest design and construction methods, while the magnificent color photos celebrate the beauty of sailboats and fine craftsmanship. His writing, as always, is both thoughtful and entertaining.



FERENC MÁTÉ is one of the most widely read and respected of sailing authors. His books From a Bare Hull, The Finely Fitted Yacht, Best Boats, Shipshape and The World's Best Sailboats Volume I are all nautical classics. He is also the author of the critically acclaimed A Reasonable Life and the international bestseller The Hills of Tuscany. He lives with his wife and son in a thirteenth-century farmhouse in the Tuscan hills. They spend their summers cruising aboard their Bruce King-designed cold-molded ketch.