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Ms Lynne G, a Sea Sprite 23

Restored to order,
she's a daysailing delight

BY BILL JACOBS



“Bill, you really ought to come over to Yacht Works this morning. There's a sleek, small boat being rigged right now and her owner is from New York,” said my friend Bob, whose beautiful Pacific Seacraft 34, *Dalliance*, was featured in *Good Old Boat*'s September 2012 issue.

That brief description was all I had when I pulled into the yard in Sister Bay. On the face of it, this is not such an unusual event, but when the sailor hails from Saugerties, New York, along the banks of the Hudson River, it's a bit of a stretch. Why launch here on the shores of Wisconsin's Green Bay?

The mast had just been lowered into the hull, which looked brand-new even though it was obvious the boat had been designed in another era. Moments later, I was joined on the dock by her proud owner, Joel Schuman.

“She's an Alberg design, you know,” he said.

“I thought she was,” I replied, “but what class?”

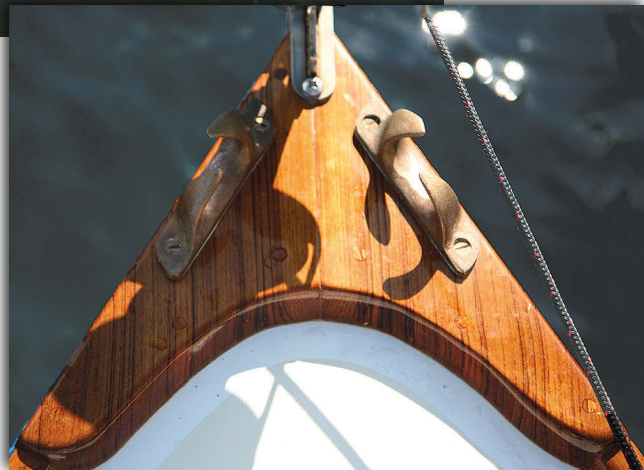
“Well, she's not a Pearson Commander, which is what I was looking for.”

The fairy's tale

You might say the story really began in 1900, the year Carl Alberg was born in Gothenberg, Sweden. Before moving to the United States in 1925, he studied yacht design for two years. He first took a job as a rigger, and was then hired by the John Alden firm as a designer. Over the next 60 years, he designed 47 boats, including the Pearson Triton, the Alberg 30, the Ensign, and most of the Cape Dory line . . . all extremely successful designs. Among his earliest designs was the Sea Sprite 23. She was first produced by the American Boat Building Company and offered in two versions, the Daysailer and the Weekender. The hull and rig dimensions are identical.

The Daysailer has a large non-self-bailing cockpit and a small cuddy cabin with two bunks. The Weekender, the subject boat here, has a self-bailing cockpit, a larger cabin trunk, a V-berth, two quarter berths, a small galley, and a space for a head under the forward berth. Both have a built-in well for an outboard motor located to starboard of the rudder below the aft deck.

A number of small boatbuilders in the Bristol, Rhode Island, area continued to produce the Sea Sprite 23 for the next 25 years. The final builder was Clarke E. Ryder, who acquired the rights to the design in 1974 and built new molds for the boat that encapsulated a lead keel, created a new



While essentially a simple boat, the Sea Sprite 23 does have some classic details, like the toerails and stem plate, which Tim Lackey faithfully reproduced when he restored *Ms Lynne G*.



Although they live in New York, Joel and Lynne Schuman, above, keep *Ms Lynne G*, at left, in Door County, Wisconsin, and sail her there during their summer visits.

self-bailing cockpit, and introduced a full interior liner. According to records kept by the Sea Sprite Association, C.E. Ryder built hull numbers 525 to 768, including *Ms Lynne G*.

A family of sailors

Joel grew up on the East Coast and learned to sail in a 14-foot wooden Aykroyd dinghy while in summer camp in Canada. He loved sailing and actively raced during his high-school and college years in the Lightning and Flying Dutchman class one-design

fleets. He met and married his wife, Lynne, and they settled in Saugerties to raise their family. Business and other interests precluded boat ownership, but the family regularly spent vacations in the winter months on charter boats in the British Virgin Islands.

Lynne's family has a summer home in Ephraim, Wisconsin, so each summer they spent time there with the children, who enrolled in summer sail-training classes at the Ephraim Yacht Club. After the kids left home, Lynne and Joel continued to go to Wisconsin, where

they became involved in sailing and racing Flying Scots at the club. They purchased their own boat and sailed it actively for 10 years in Wisconsin and New York. While on the East Coast, they raced on an inland lake with a fleet of Flying Scots after first sailing their boat on the Hudson River. "Too much traffic, too much current, and not enough water," says Joel.

On one of their summer trips, the Schumans chartered an Alberg 35 and enjoyed the traditional appearance and performance of the classic cruising boat. One of Joel's business associates sailed a Pearson Commander, another Alberg design. Joel crewed on the Commander several times and thought it might be an ideal daysailing boat for the two of them. They decided to sell the Flying Scot and look for a Commander in good shape or one they could consider restoring.

They searched the Internet for several seasons and, failing to find a desirable Commander, Joel decided to search for boat restorers. After several phone interviews, he called Northern Yacht Restorations in Whitefield, Maine (see *Good Old Boat*, January 2006). Tim Lackey, the owner, answered the phone — no surprise since he works alone. Tim started the business in 2004 and works on only one boat at a time. After the initial conversation, Joel knew he had found his man.



Simple also describes the Sea Sprite's interior, which Joel and Lynne simplified even further by removing cruising clutter. *Ms Lynne G* has a V-berth, at left, and a pair of settees, at right. Bronze opening ports, below, replaced plastic deadlights.



An alternative Alberg

Tim told Joel he could probably find a Commander, but suggested he come to Maine and look at a 1975 Sea Sprite 23, also designed by Alberg. In August 2014, Joel and Lynne did just that. The Sea Sprite had been brought in for restoration earlier that year, but the owner developed health problems and couldn't complete the project. Joel and Tim signed an agreement scheduling delivery for the spring of 2015. Two weeks later, Tim called Joel to say he had a sudden cancellation. The new completion date would be December of 2014. The project was under way.

An extremely detailed log on Tim's website records each step in

the renovation of *Ms Lynne G* (see "Resources" on page 19). The project began on August 21, 2014, and was completed on November 13. It involved more than 300 hours of labor. A study of Tim's website would help anyone interested in restoring his or her own boat or hiring a professional to do so. It offers great insight into what's involved in a complete restoration.

Simplify and beautify

Although some preliminary cosmetic work had already been done for the boat's prior owner, Joel and Lynne had a different vision for the finished project: they wanted the ultimate daysailer for two people with an occasional

guest. Hence the decision was made to start the renovation by removing much cruising-oriented equipment, such as unnecessary instruments and cooking facilities. They concentrated on improving the overall quality of the boat, simplifying systems, replacing fittings, and redoing all the finishes.

Some of the major projects included removing all the deck hardware, a total redo of the hull-to-deck joint, a new wooden toerail, and new cockpit coamings and handrails. Tim also refinished the spars and replaced all the running and standing rigging. He removed all the plastic through-hulls and replaced them with bronze fittings. The bottom was sanded down to the gelcoat, re-faired, primed, and painted.

Joel did not like the original deadlights with their plastic frames, so they were replaced with new bronze opening ports from Spartan Marine. Tim constructed an entirely new motor well to house a new Torqeedo Travel 103 long-shaft electric outboard. Finally, the hull was refinished with AlexSeal Topcoat Flag Blue. Joel had a new main and jib made by Dorsal Sails, a local Wisconsin sailmaker.

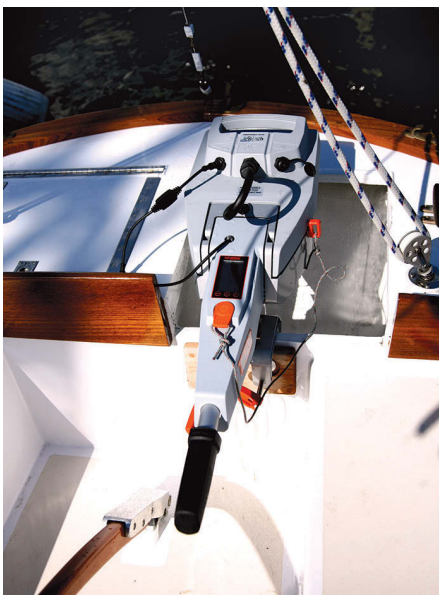
Following her refit, *Ms Lynne G* was towed to Door County and launched in the spring of 2015. Joel and Lynne spend about four weeks each summer in Door County and keep their boat on a mooring in Eagle Harbor.

A delightful sailer

By the end of the first full sailing season, they were delighted with the



***Ms Lynne G* is an ideal daysailer: easy to rig, easy to sail, easy to steer, and easy on the eye.**



Modern technology has its place in the form of a silent-running Torqueedo electric outboard in a custom-built well, at left.

cleanly through the inland sea. With a crew of three sitting comfortably in the generous cockpit, there appeared to be little pressure on the helm and plenty of smiles as she sped by.

A few weeks later, Lynne and Joel sailed her back to the marina in a very stiff breeze. I had driven over to see them off and watched them as they rounded up into Sister Bay. The boat shook off the gusts and kept her hull firmly planted as they rolled the jib and doused the main. Then, powered by her Torqueedo, *Ms Lynne G* motored silently into the still waters of Yacht Works for a long winter's rest.

With the obvious quality and care she has had in restoration and her

sailing characteristics of their small yacht. I photographed her on a clear day in a northwest wind when the bay was kicking up a lively chop. As the sails filled on a new tack, she heeled quickly to rail down, then stiffened up, cutting

Resources

The Sea Sprite Association is very active. It has members all over the U.S. and posts technical and other resources on its website.

www.seaspriteassociation.com

Tim Lackey at Northern Yacht Restorations has restored a great many old boats of all types, power and sail. He posts detailed logs of his restorations on his website.

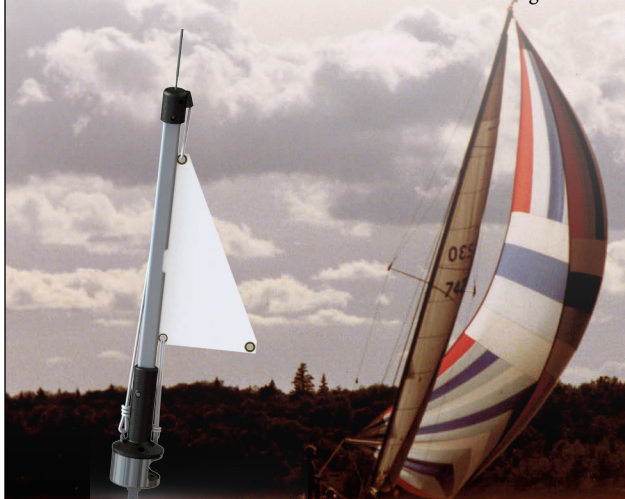
www.lackeysailing.com

planned short seasons, I predict that *Ms Lynne G* is destined to become a family heirloom and to lead a long and serendipitous life. ⚓

Bill Jacobs has been racing and cruising for 50 years and writing about boats for the last 10. He currently sails a Cape Dory Typhoon in Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin, and spends winters in Sarasota, Florida, sailing a 55-year-old wooden Luzier 27.

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The Sea Sprite 23 ...

...and two very different daysailers

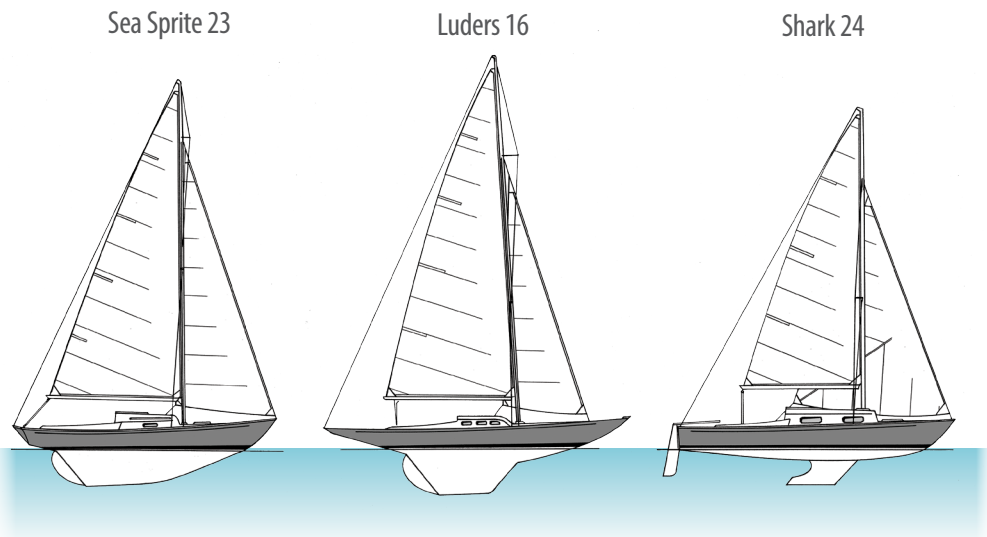
BY ROB MAZZA

Carl Alberg established his reputation as a designer with the Pearson Triton in 1958, the same year he designed the Sea Sprite 23. He used the same design concept in the equally successful Elektra and Ensign, as well as the Alberg 35 for Pearson and the Alberg 30 and 37 built by Whitby Boatworks. He also had a long and successful design relationship with Cape Dory. Over his long career, he didn't change his design "model" at all. His boats all had full keels, moderate draft, heavier displacement, narrow beam, and attractive sheers with moderate overhangs.

What exactly constitutes a "great" yacht designer ... or great artist for that matter? Is it doing one thing well over and over again, or is it evolving, innovating, and constantly reinventing oneself and expanding the envelope? The recent biography of C. Raymond Hunt, *A Genius at His Trade*, indicates the latter, but Carl Alberg undeniably left his mark on the sport of sailing, albeit a similar mark each time.

While thinking of "innovation," let's look at two boats that bridge the Sea Sprite 23 in time and concept. The first is the exceptionally beautiful Luders 16 (26 feet 4 inches) that dates back to 1933 but made the transition to fiberglass in the 1960s. The "16" relates to the LWL rather than the LOA used today to designate boat models. I remember as a child seeing a Luders 16 at Queen City Yacht Club in Toronto and thinking then, as I still do, that it was one of the prettiest boats I had ever seen. Its exceptionally long overhangs and narrow beam hark back to another era.

The second comparison boat is the Shark 24, designed and built by George



	Sea Sprite 23	Luders 16	Shark 24
LOA	22' 6"	26' 4"	24' 0"
LWL	16' 3"	16' 4"	20' 2"
Beam	7' 0"	5' 9"	6' 10"
Draft	3' 10"	4' 0"	3' 2"
Displacement	3,350 lb	2,950 lb	2,200 lb
Ballast	1,400 lb	1,600 lb	675 lb
LOA/LWL	1.38	1.61	1.19
Beam/LWL	0.43	0.35	0.34
Disp./LWL	349	302	123
Bal./Disp.	.42	.54	.31
Sail Area (100%)	247 sq. ft.	224 sq. ft.	190 sq. ft.
SA/Disp.	17.6	17.4	18.0
Capsize Number	1.9	1.6	2.1
Comfort Ratio	21	22.9	12.4
Year introduced	1958	1933	1959
Designer	Carl Alberg	Alfred E. (Bill) Luders	George Hinterhoeller
Builder	C.E. Ryder/ Sailstar Boats/ Seasprite Co.	Easterly Yachts	Hinterhoeller

Hinterhoeller. Although introduced only a year after the Sea Sprite, it represented a quantum shift in design thinking and heralded a new era of yacht design. The underwater configurations in the three drawings appear to show, from left to right, a logical transition in the development of a separate keel ... until you realize that the second boat, the Luders 16, predates the Sea Sprite 23 by 25 years!

When we look at the numbers, we see that the waterline lengths of the more "traditional" Luders and Sea Sprite are almost identical at 16 feet 4 inches and 16 feet 3 inches, respectively. However, the displacement of the "newer" Sea Sprite is 400 pounds greater, while its ballast is 200 pounds lighter. This results in a pretty hefty displacement/length (D/L) ratio of 349 for the Sea Sprite and a


more moderate 302 for the Luders, as well as a respectable 42 percent ballast ratio for the Sea Sprite and a substantial 54 percent for the Luders. The sail areas for each of these two boats are also similar at 247 and 224, resulting in almost identical sail area/displacement (SA/D) ratios of 17.6 and 17.4. So the 25 years separating these designs have not produced any marked improvements. If anything, the older Luders has the more competitive D/L ratio and the higher ballast ratio, which it needs to make up for its narrower beam.

With the Shark, George Hinterhoeller introduced a whole new concept of light-displacement yacht design. The waterline on the 24-foot Shark is 20 feet, almost 4 feet longer than the “older” boats, while it displaces 750 pounds less than the Luders. Yet at 2,200 pounds,

it is a full 1,150 pounds lighter than the “newer” Sea Sprite. Granted, the majority of this reduction in displacement is due to the ballast being 1,000 pounds lighter, resulting in a low 31 percent ballast ratio. The triangular bulb on the keel would go a long way to lowering the ballast CG, but probably not enough to completely make up for a 10-inch-shallower draft.

This longer waterline and lighter displacement results in a very performance-oriented D/L ratio of 123 and a slightly higher SA/D ratio of 18, despite the sail area being only 190 square feet. What the Shark *could* do was get up and plane, something it did very well on reaches and runs, often outsailing 50-footers boat for boat. Neither of the “older” boats could do that!

While the Sea Sprite 23 represents a pretty, but “conservative” design,

new materials and design concepts were about to make sailing a lot more exciting, as exemplified by the Shark. Keep in mind that a couple and their 2-year-old sailed a Shark from Canada to Australia, so the seakeeping abilities weren't bad either, despite the capsize number creeping just above 2. This is due to the light displacement but is partially compensated for by the narrow beam. The Shark's lighter displacement results in a comfort ratio of 12.4, indicating the rapid motion you'd expect with light weight. 

Rob Mazza is a Good Old Boat contributing editor who, in his long career with C&C and in other design offices, designed many boats that are now good and old. He has thus contributed enormously to the enjoyment of those who sail and own them today.



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