# AIDA



There were no racing rules constraining Captain Nat when he modeled this design, but one thing he was after was shallow draft. Actually the half model, made in 1925, was for NGH's own boat *Pleasure*, built that winter for the Florida waters where he and his wife were then spending each winter in the stimulating company of Commodore Ralph Munroe. (Shallow-draft boats were Munroe's specialty, and he had designed many of them.) The following year, in 1926, using a scale of 13 5/16 to 12 on *Pleasure*'s half model, and making a few additional changes on the mold loft floor, *Aida*'s design emerged. Being larger, she could be more of a cruiser than *Pleasure*, and she was given four berths, a galley and an enclosed head. Her hull was to be double-planked as well — in all, a first-class job.

I've heard that *Aida*'s original owner was killed in an auto crash soon after the boat was built, and that his family simply continued with inside storage at the Herreshoff yard summer and winter for nearly ten years until Henry White of Waterford, CT, came along. White changed the name from *Gee Whiz* to *Aida* after his daughter-in-law, and was as thrilled as anyone has ever been to own such a boat. White extolled her many virtues to Captain Nat and Nat's sons Sidney and L. Francis, and *Aida* appears in two of L.F.H.'s books largely because Henry White's correspondence convinced him that she was an ideal cruiser. From firsthand experience over 20 years, I can state that the enthusiastic owner was not far off the mark.

*Aida* was still in the White family when I first laid eyes on her about 30 years ago, having decided then and there that this was the boat, above all others, that I would own if I ever could. It was ten years later, in 1967, when her then-owner John Bindloss kindly offered to sell at a price we could afford. Anne and I soon had *Aida* in Maine waters, where the boat has served the Bray family ever since. Along the way, we added about 5' to the top of her mast so we could carry a smaller headsail without sacrificing

Two views of Anne and Maynard Bray's *Aida*: as Maynard says, she's the wholesome little cruiser Henry White claimed she was.

LOA: 33'6"
LWL: 27'0"
Beam: 9'2"
Draft
 (centerboard raised): 3'1"
Sail Area: 554 sq. ft.
Built: 1926
Owners:
 Anne & Maynard Bray
Home Port: Brooklin, ME



speed. Almost as much fun as sailing *Aida* is sitting in the comfort of her big cockpit or cabin and admiring the exquisite proportions of her structure and the finely crafted details. According to Anne, the cabin has full headroom (she is 5'3"). I'm 5'10", and I can nearly stand up myself.

It's curious that only one boat like this was ever built by the Herreshoffs. After *Aida* came out, others were considered; M.I.T.'s files contain the plans for several Herreshoff-created variations using this hull shape. But the Herreshoff yard's custom work was comparatively expensive so that, even in the 1930s — the booming era of 4-berth "family cruisers" — another contract for *Aida*'s design never came through.
— *Maynard Bray*