

CORSAIR



This striking gasoline launch was built in 1939 as powerboat hull #409 from the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company, and she must have been one of the last of scores of gas-engine launches built at Bristol since early in the century for service to large yachts, to yacht clubs and as day boats for coastal excursions.

Not many gas-engine displacement launches have survived, considering the numbers of them that were built by the likes of Lozier, Lawley, Racine and Herreshoff, and it may be because these boats were so often replaced in the 'twenties and 'thirties by the new speedboats and utilities.

This one has survived nicely because she was an artifact almost from the beginning.

She was built to replace an older Herreshoff launch that had burned, and she was to take her place as the starboard launch aboard J. P. (Jack) Morgan's liner-like fourth *Corsair*. But *Corsair* joined the U.S. Navy and went to the West Coast in 1939-40, and this launch, named for the Morgan family's great steam and diesel yachts, passed to new owners — fortunately, to careful ones.

She was owned for many years by a yachtsman in Martha's Vineyard, and six years ago she was acquired by James P. Lewis, who keeps her near his summer home in the Thousand Islands. "We just use her as a launch for running around the St. Lawrence," he says. Jim Lewis also uses her to delight boat-watchers at antique boat shows in the U.S. and Canada. She's



Built to hang in the starboard davits of the Morgan family's fourth *Corsair*, the *Corsair* launch now serves Jim Lewis and his family as a day boat in the Thousand Islands. Typical of a Herreshoff "owner's launch," she has upholstered seats in a roomy cockpit forward, more upholstered seats and a sink in the little



cabin and an after cockpit with wicker chairs. The engine is under the forward cockpit and spins a shaft more than half the length of the boat. The engine is not original, nor are a few other details such as the flare and profile of the bow.

LOA: 35'
Beam: 7'6"
Draft: 2'6"
Power: 140-hp Chrysler Royal straight eight
Built: 1939
Owner: James P. Lewis
Home Port: Clayton, N.Y.



won awards at Clayton, N.Y., at Ottawa and Port Carling in Canada and at the Antique and Classic Boat Society's annual show in Sanford, Florida.

Corsair has changed a bit from her original form, which was similar to that of George Lauder's 30' Herreshoff launch shown in NQ23. The sheerline was raised forward and some flare given to the bow for better looks and drier running, and the originally high profile of the house was lowered about 6". She now has a Chrysler Royal engine, and Herreshoff records indicate her original engine was a Kermath. Otherwise she's a classic "owner's launch," with cushioned seats and a sink in the little day cabin, a big forward control cockpit and an after cockpit with wicker chairs.