



## CRUSADER

### *A Centerboard Fishers Island 23*

Like most designers and builders during the Great Depression, the Herreshoff yard downsized its 1930s offerings to match the slimmer wallets of its clients. This, in combination with the Scandinavian scharenkreuzer concept, brought forth a slim-lined racing class known as Fishers Island 23s which took their name from the southern New England resort where the fleet was first adopted. The initial design created 15 full-keel boats with a 7' beam. One centerboarder, 9" wider for the same sail-carrying ability, was built. That special boat, named CRUSADER and featured here, draws only 3' of water while her near-sisters require a foot-and-a-half more.

Both keel and centerboard versions are lovely and sleek, with the same gorgeous, molded sheerstrakes that Herreshoff used on 12 1/2-footers, S-boats, and other all-time favorites. Fishers Island 23s, also known as H-23s, are so easily driven that they get by with unusually small sails. As designed, the jib is self-tending so there's no shifting of sheets when changing tacks. With a permanent backstay, tending the runners is optional, their only purpose being to reduce headsail sag. So you sit and steer and enjoy the rush and the view.

The long and pointed trunk cabin echoes the hull's elegant shape and allows spartan cruising. Seating, because of the deep cockpit, is exceptionally comfortable. CRUSADER's low centerboard trunk (interestingly, made of bronze instead of wood) intrudes only slightly into the cockpit and cabin.

CRUSADER has been in the same family for nearly 30 years but hasn't been overboard since 1992. According to the owner, a professional boatbuilder who knows whereof he speaks, CRUSADER needs a full restoration—not surprising, given her 75-year age and the H-23's propensity to break frames. Speaking to the latter, in building the H-23s Herreshoff adopted the Scandinavian planking method in that conventional cotton caulking was dispensed with. In its place, to make the seams tight, the planks were laid wood-to-wood. Brand new, these hulls were bottle-smooth and spectacular—especially when varnished as CRUSADER was. But as they swelled and shrank (and were puttied and caulked year after year), the dense mahogany planks overstressed the frames—and the frames snapped.

Ah, hindsight!

So there's substantial (and perhaps beefier) reframing ahead. And more work besides, some of which shows in Ed McClave's articles on sailboat restoration in WB Nos. 184 through 190, in which another H-23 named PRINCESS was featured.

Unlike so many needy boats I hear about, CRUSADER is original and complete. Luckily, minimal plank-riddling refastening has taken place. She's all ready to have her deteriorated

#### Particulars


LOA	34' 0"
LWL	23' 0"
Beam	7' 9"
Draft	3' 0"

Designed by A. Sidney DeW. Herreshoff.

Built as Hull #1225 by Herreshoff Mfg. Co., Bristol, Rhode Island, 1932.



**CRUSADER, a Herreshoff Fishers Island 23 launched in 1932, is a great candidate for restoration: she has pedigree, mostly intact planking, and original hardware.**

structure renewed in kind and her paint and varnish work rejuvenated to look good again with that indescribably beautiful, three-quarter-century's patina that only the passage of time can create. 

*To inspect and learn more, contact owner Douglas Cooper of Eldred Cooper Boatbuilders, P.O. Box 611, Falmouth, MA 02541. dougcooper61@comcast.net; 508-548-2297 or 5036.*

*Send candidates for "Save a Classic" to Maynard Bray, WoodenBoat, P.O. Box 78, Brooklin, ME 04616.*