



JAMIE BLOOMQUIST



JEFF SCHER

## ARTISAN BOATWORKS, MAINE



## Pre-war daysailers built new

BY STEFFAN MEYRIC HUGHES

Artisan Boatworks of Rockport, Maine, one of the hundreds of exhibitors at the Maine Boatbuilders Show in March, are set to recreate a piece of maritime history when they start to build the first Buzzards Bay 18 in 108 years.

The yard offers a very full line-up of sub-30ft (9.1m) classic daysailers from American masters like NG Herreshoff, John Alden and BB Crowninshield, including boats that we never knew existed, like a 17ft (5.2m) waterline version of the famous S&S Dark Harbor 20; and a John Alden O-Boat. A visit to [www.artisanboatworks.com](http://www.artisanboatworks.com) is a short education in these classic pre-war yachts, mostly with tall, bermudan rigs, long overhangs, cuddy cabins and active racing classes.

At this year's show, they displayed a Herreshoff 12½ (originally named the Buzzard's Bay Boy's Boat) and a Buzzard's Bay 15. In the American tradition of naming boats after their waterline length, these are bigger boats than they sound: the '15' is 25ft 6in (7.8m) and the Boy's Boat is 15ft 8in (4.8m) – lucky boy. The third in Artisan's display was a 9ft (2.7m) rowing boat built in ultra-light foam sandwich with a teak veneer. It is a Stephens Waring design, and weighs just 45lb (20.4kg).

It was actually after the show that Artisan's founder Alec Brainerd caught up with us. His big news is that he's started on a commissioned build of a 29ft (8.8m) Buzzards Bay 18, also known as the Beverly K Class. Only five were built by the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company in 1903/4, and none exists today.

**Above left: A Watch Hill 15, essentially a Herreshoff Buzzards Bay 15 with bermudan rig**  
**Above right: A Dark Harbor 17 with its cuddy cabin**

"The Buzzards Bay 18 is one of the smallest designs of this type with ample cabin space for occasional overnight use, and adequate displacement to accommodate a diesel engine or electric propulsion," says Alec. "To me, the 18 is one of the most beautiful of all the Herreshoff designs, and she intrigues me, because here is an opportunity to reintroduce the world to something that has been otherwise lost forever. I'm not even aware of any photos of original Buzzards Bay 18s."

Artisan Boatworks was founded 12 years ago by Alec, who saw a gap in the growing market for small yachts. "Some of our customers might have owned a 50-60ft Oyster or similar, and had it sat at a mooring in front of the house, realising that the chances to go on long voyages are few and far between. It's often this sort of person who wants to trade down to a smaller boat for weekending, and they want something of heirloom quality so they can pass it on." Every build is bespoke, but Artisan has carved out a niche in these classic daysailers.

The Dark Harbor 17, one of the firm's most popular boats, is 25ft 10in (7.9m) with a cabin, offering basic sleeping for two. The cost, around \$160,000 (£99,400), would include just about everything – right down to the lifejackets.

**Below: Buzzards Bay 18 planking under way**



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Tel: +1 207 236 4231  
[www.artisanboatworks.com](http://www.artisanboatworks.com)