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# MAINE

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*Wisp's* versatile sail plan includes an easy-to-tack jib on an inner stay and a reaching sail. Both are on furlers.

# *Wisp*: A Timely Launch

BY MARK PILLSBURY

THE OLD PHRASE, “time is of the essence” would make a worthy headline for the story of *Wisp*. This stunning looking 39-foot daysailer/cruiser was designed by Stephens Waring of Belfast and built by Artisan Boatworks at a lickety-split pace that was made possible by a cadre of boatbuilders and suppliers from the four corners of Maine and beyond.

It was a project that would have normally taken 18 months had it been business as usual at the Rockport shop, founder and president Alec Brainerd said. But *Wisp's* owner, an experienced Connecticut sailor, wanted his boat much sooner, in time for sailing this past summer. And so, from start to finish, the wood-composite Spirit of Tradition design went from drawing board to delivery in just 11 months. And while most new sailboats might have multiple sea trials to shake out rigging and systems before being handed over, *Wisp* was on its way to Long Island Sound in just under a week of being splashed.

Whew!

It all happened so fast that designer Bob Stephens had mere minutes at the helm to enjoy the fruits of his labor following the August launch. But reportedly, they were sweet minutes indeed. In very light conditions, maybe 5 or 6 knots, *Wisp* danced along at windspeed and occasionally a little better. Stephens said he was favorably impressed with the boat's light-air ability.

Indeed, just about any boat will get moving in a big breeze, but light air? That's always a challenge. And light conditions are common in the summer in western Long Island Sound. Stephens said he took that into consideration when designing *Wisp* and its sail plan.

The boat is fitted out with a modern, Solent rig that includes a carbon-fiber boom and furling mandrel, and an in-boom furling mainsail, a slightly overlapping jib, and a masthead reacher that's set on a furler just forward of the inner headsail. The carbon-fiber mast is from Moore Brothers in Bristol, Rhode Island.

In light conditions, the reacher can be used even when sailing close winded, Stephens noted. The Danish-built Furler Boom and the headsail furlers are electric, as are the Harken winches, so managing sheets and halyards is a push-button chore.

Brainerd, who got to sail the boat with his family a couple of days after Stephens, on a blustery outing on the tail end of a tropical system that passed up the coast, said *Wisp* was easy to handle. “It was awesome,” he said. “We got lucky there, it was one of the better sailing days in recent memory.”

Brainerd said building *Wisp* was a true team effort, with more than 20 companies involved with fabricating parts or providing supplies. Logistics, he added, were key to meeting the compressed timeframe. Parts such as the Lyman-Morse-fabricated fiberglass cockpit tub or the Front Street Shipyard water jet-cut flat metal and G-10 components had to arrive just in time. Too early and they would take up room in the crowded Arti-



*Wisp's interior furniture is built from sipo mahogany and includes a full queen berth forward.*

san shop; too late, they would cause a delay. In the end, Artisan delivered *Wisp* two weeks early. And, Brainerd noted, despite the frenzy of activity surrounding the new boat, Artisan's crew was also able to cover the annual maintenance work for some 80 of its regular customers.

Other partners in the project included Hewes & Co., whose CNC machine cut bulkheads and molds; Buzzards Bay Boatworks, which designed and installed *Wisp's* hydraulic system, including a ram-driven main sheet; Rockport Marine, which supplied metal fabrication and

polishing; Midcoast Marine Electronics, which designed and installed the 24-volt Victron lithium electrical system; Sandhill Carpentry and Newport Yacht Builders, who constructed interior cabinetry, tables, steps, and steering pedestal; Journey's End Marina, which supplied the 40-hp Yanmar engine and saildrive; Custom Coatings, which did the Awlgrip painting; the list goes on. Sails were built by North Sails, the lead keel came from Mars Metal, and hardware and winches were supplied by the likes of Harken, Euro Marine Trading, and PYI.

*Wisp's* hull is a wood-composite structure comprised of strips of Atlantic cedar and epoxy resin, with an outer layer of vacuum-infused fiberglass and an inner skin of hand-laid glass. It's built around a Douglas fir frame. The Core-cell-cored deck has mahogany plywood top and bottom, covered by a teak skin from Teak Decking Services. Bulkheads are also made with mahogany plywood.

The hull was built on the first floor of the Artisan shop; the deck on the second floor. When the two parts were ready, the crew dismantled the end of the building, the hull was wheeled outdoors and then the deck was hoisted out and lowered into place.

Down below, *Wisp's* interior is elegant and simple, with a drop-leaf center-line table in the saloon and a full-size queen berth forward. Starboard of the companionway there's a shower and head; opposite is a simple galley area with a sink, microwave, and an espresso machine concealed in a dedicated drawer.

Brainerd said the owner has had a number of other boats and knew exactly what he wanted for layout and gear.

Although Artisan's veteran crew of about 15 employees is busy this winter with three traditional restoration projects, Brainerd admits that in the wake of *Wisp's* launch, "it was a little bittersweet; there were so many great specialists we were working with every day. I'm looking forward to the next colossal project and getting the band back together." ★

*Mark Pillsbury is MBH&H's editor.*



With a hydraulic main-sheet system and electric winches for the headsails, sheets are trimmed with the touch of a button.

### *Wisp Specifications*

LOA: 39' 6"  
 LWL: 30' 3"  
 Draft: 6'  
 Beam: 11' 0"  
 Displ.: 16,500 lbs.  
 Sail Area: 769 sq. ft.  
 Power: Yanmar 3JH40 40-hp

**DESIGNER:**  
 STEPHENS WARING DESIGN  
 Belfast, ME  
 207-338-6636; stephenswaring.com

**BUILDER:**  
 ARTISAN BOATWORKS  
 Rockport, ME  
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