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on the cover page





Sailcrafter 28, a popular light-displacement racer, is available as a prefabricated kit or in various stages of completion, from hull and cradle at \$1590, to a nearly completed yacht.



Kits aren't limited to big boats—the rowing dory above is only one of many types of small boats offered in kit form. Here a gunwale is being clamped onto a 16½-foot Dreadnought. Cost? \$185.

Build It Yourself

World cruising? The Westsail 32 at left can do it. A kit costs from \$2063 up, depending on how much of the building and assembly you're willing to do yourself.



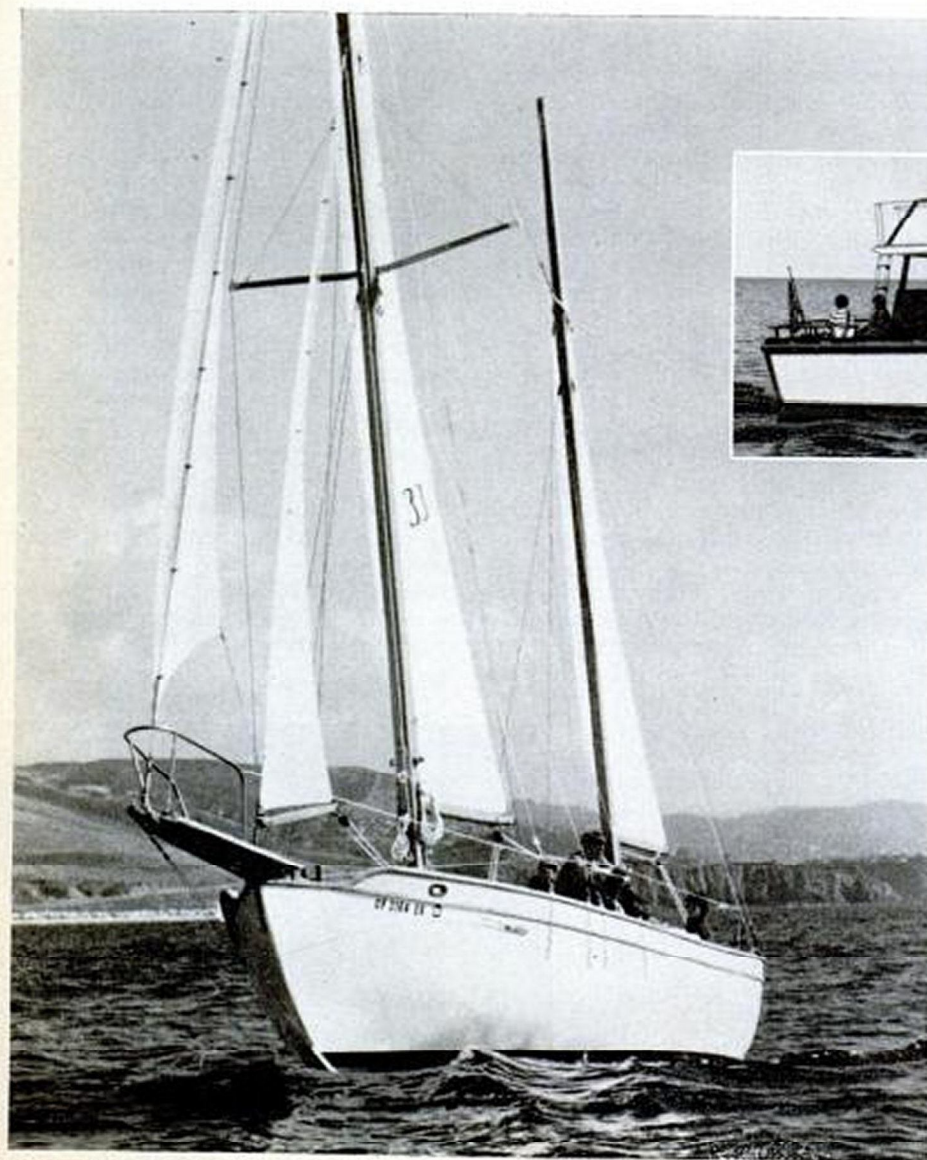
Basic kit for 32-foot Coronado, above, costs \$3995 (minus engine and accessories). Luger makes it, and can supply engine kits and accessories to go with it.

It's more than saving money—you end up with a boat crafted to match your dreams

By JACK WILEY

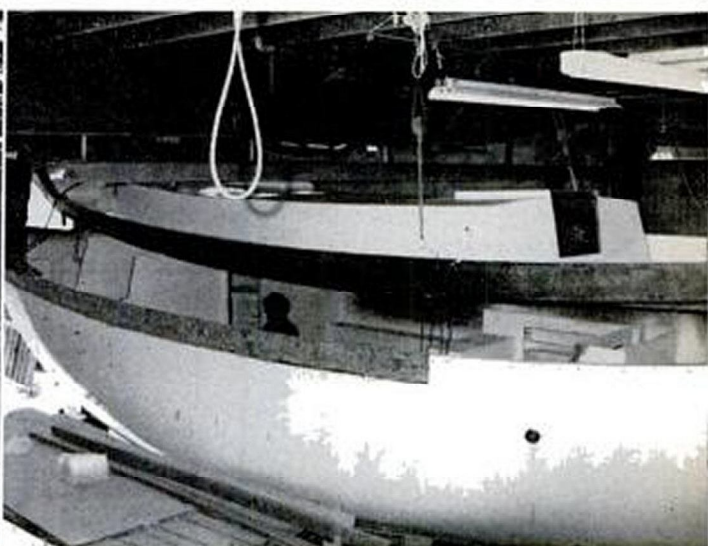
From a small dinghy to a world cruiser—power, sail, or combination—today you can get it in kit form. Fiberglass boat kits are not new. What is new are the number and types and designs available, in completely prefabricated packages and off the drawing boards of such designers as Lapworth, Crealock, McGlasson, Hanna, and Tripp.

Leading companies like Morgan, Columbia, Coronado, Islander, and





Hull for 32-foot Dreadnought is a tight fit in this driveway. If you plan to put your boat together in your driveway, before you buy it take careful measurements to make sure it'll fit.



Deck and cabin structure are separate from the hull when you buy a basic kit. Before you assemble, read the instruction manual thoroughly to make sure you do everything in the right sequence.

and Get Twice As Much Boat

Spencer, to name a few, have gotten into the kit field, and will now sell you parts for a complete boat, built to the same standards (and often from the same molds) as their finished boats.

Even two world-famous sailboats (both ideal for living aboard and world cruising) are now available in fiberglass and in kits: the Westsail 32, a trunk-cabin descendant of the Colin Archer design with a modern sail plan and interior accommodations, and the Dreadnought 32, a modern version of John Hanna's famed Tahiti ketch.

Within a year from the time the first Dreadnought 32 hull came out of the mold, 17 builders had started work on this dreamboat. The first of these, launched not long ago in San Francisco, has already made an ocean passage to Hawaii.

Why the big boom? Two things bring popularity to kit fiberglass boats. Money—a saving of from 30 to 60 percent of the price of a factory-completed equivalent—and the possibility of custom-tailoring a boat to your needs. This is particularly true of the interior, where you'll have the freedom to build accommodations the way you want them, without changing the performance or safety of the vessel. It's an opportunity to get away from the typical berth-stuffed factory model.

And, of course, a kit has it all over building a boat from scratch, in several ways.

First, time: You can spend several years doing it all yourself. And at

some point, often with the end nowhere in sight, the amateur may give up. Not so with the kit builder. The hardest part of any boat to build, the hull, is already completed, and all guesswork for finishing the boat has been eliminated. A large boat built from the ground up often ends in disaster. The one built from a modern prefabricated kit almost never does. Your second benefit: price.

How much can you save? Let's look at some examples:

Trailcraft offers a 13½-foot molded fiberglass kayak in kit form for \$89. The factory-finished equivalent would be about \$180. Also available is a 14-foot canoe kit for \$129, an 18-footer for \$144, and a 12-foot cross-breed canoe boat for \$119. All these are complete kits and you even get your choice of colors. In each case, by doing your own assembly and finishing, you save about 50 percent.

A complete kit for assembling the Flying Cloud, a 14-foot sailboat from Luger Industries, is \$299.50. And this includes an aluminum mast and dacron sail. A factory-finished equal costs over \$500. Even larger savings are possible on Luger's 15-, 17-, and 20-foot sailboats.

Luger Industries also offers a complete line of powerboats, starting with the 14-foot Jamaican, which comes as a complete kit (less outboard motor). About \$400, it is comparable to factory-finished craft priced at \$800 and up.

For the really ambitious, Luger also has a number of larger fiberglass powerboats, all in prefabricated kits,

up to the 32-foot Coronado, for which the basic kit (less engine) is a healthy \$3995.50. Still, that's less than half the cost of a factory-completed equivalent.

For a larger-size boat, a basic hull kit usually costs less than the down payment on a boat off the ways. Then you can purchase the other component packages as you need them and can afford them. (Except for very small boats, most manufacturers divide their kits into a dozen or more separate packages.)

Got any skills? You don't have to buy all of the component packages. You can supply your own materials and use any special skills you have (woodworking, machining, upholstery, or whatever) in place of one or more component kits.

Continued



Yachtcraft rigging, shown being installed, comes in one of the more than a dozen component packages that Yachtcraft can supply to go with their boat kits.



Interior of Sailcrafter 22 looking forward shows large stateroom, modern dinette

seating arrangement, galley with water tank and pump, four full-length berths.

Using this method, it is possible to save even more money. For example, by purchasing only the basic hull kit for a 32-foot Tahiti ketch, which sells for \$3800 (Dreadnought Boatworks), and supplying your own materials and equipment for finishing her, you can have a \$25,000-\$30,000 world-cruising yacht for \$12,000.

Or you can have a floating home, like some kit builders. Jack Wilkin of Venice, Calif., finished a Westsail 32 to the point where she could be launched. He is now living aboard with his wife and dog in Marina del Rey while he finishes the interior.

How much skill does it take? Not much, providing that you use all of the component packages for completing the boat. In fact, assembling one of the small boats that come in complete kits makes an ideal father-son project, or even a family project.

Richard Newlean of Vancouver, Wash., and his two sons, Bill and Dave, took most of a year turning their Cascade 42 hull (Yacht Constructors, Inc.) into a beautiful sloop. It was a year in which working on the boat became a way of life. But that year was only the beginning: The cruising came after that.

For larger boats, if you tackle some of the building on your own (that is, shaping parts instead of merely assembling them), considerable skill is required. And, of course, it will take longer. Certainly the savings will be greater if you do some of the building—so you'll have to decide which jobs you want to tackle completely on your own and which ones you want to use component packages for.

What tools do you need? For most assemblies, besides the basic hand tools, you'll want a portable electric drill, a sander, and perhaps a saber saw. If you bypass component packages and take on some of the construction steps, you'll need more specialized tools.

What about a building site? A good place for building a small boat is your garage; and for a large boat, your yard or driveway. But then make sure there's room to get the boat in and out. And don't forget you'll need several feet of open space all the way around the hull.

No garage, no yard? You can also borrow or rent a building site. An ideal arrangement is to rent space in a do-it-yourself boatyard. These are now found in most parts of the country and charge about 75 cents to \$1.50 per foot of boat per month. The typical yard supplies electricity, water, and compressed air, and generally tools and heavy equipment are on hand for rent also.

It's usually more convenient—and more comfortable—to build under

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WHO MAKES WHAT

The list below includes only companies that offer fiberglass moldings for a complete boat in kit form on a regular basis. Many other companies will sell bare hulls and components from their line on special request. Prices (below and in the article) are intended only as approximations at the time of writing, and, along with specifications, are subject to change. In most cases prices are F.O.B. from the factory.

Dreadnought Boatworks, P.O. Box 221, Carpinteria, Calif. 93013

- 16'6" Norwegian rowing dory (bare hull, \$185; no components available).
- 32' cruising (Tahiti ketch) sailboat (basic hull, \$3800; deck, \$2000; other components available)

Easterly Yachts, 1729 Lake Ave., Box 9104, Metairie, La. 70005

- 30' basic sailboat (hull and deck bonded together with 4 basic bulkheads in place; furnished loose are 3 hatches, 8 windows, rudder, \$4250; other components available).

Glander Boats, Inc., R.R. No. 1, Box 140, Tavernier, Fla. 33070

- 23' sailboat (hull, deck, and cabin, \$3100; other components available).
- 33' sailboat (hull, deck and cabin, \$5400; other components available)

Hughes Marine Sales (Huron Park) Limited, Huron Industrial Park, Huron Park, Ont.

- 25' sailboat (bare hull, \$1500; deck and cabin, \$700; other components available).
- 38' sailboat (bare hull, \$5000; deck and cabin, \$3000; other components available).
- 48' sailboat (bare hull, \$7850; deck and cabin, \$4550; other components available)

Lakeview Boat Co., Box 5595, Riverside, Calif. 92507

- 15' canoe (complete kit, \$130)
- 17' canoe (complete kit, \$140)
- 13' kayak (complete kit, \$100)

Luger Industries, Inc., 3800 West Highway 13, Burnsville, Minn. 55378

- 14' sailboat (complete kit, \$299)
- 14' outboard (complete kit, less motor, \$399)

- also 15', 16', and 20' sailboats and 17', 20', 22', 24', and 32' powerboats; accessories also available

McCutcheon Boat Works, Ferry Ave., Charlevoix, Mich. 49720

- 30' racing/cruising ketch (bare hull, \$3000; other components available)

Ron Rawson, Inc., 15014 N.E. 90 St., Redmond, Wash. 98052

- 30'6" sailboat (all fiberglass components, \$5200)

- 32' powerboat (write for prices)

Sailcrafter Yachts (Columbia & Coronado Yacht Corp., 275 McCormick Ave., Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626)

- 22', 23', 25', 28', 36', 50', and 57' sailboats (all materials are furnished for completion; any stage of completion from hull only to near-finished boat; write for prices and specifications)

Sailing Kit Kraft (Morgan Yacht Corp., P.O. Box 13247, St. Petersburg, Fla. 33733)

- 22' sailboat (bare hull, \$1254; other components also available)

- 25', 30', 33', 34', 35', 40', and 41' sailboats (write for prices and specifications)

Seafarer Fiberglass Yachts, Inc., 760 Park Ave., Huntington, N.Y. 11743

- 7'1" dinghy (rowing model, \$168; sailing model, \$297)

- 23' sailboat (hull, \$950; other components available)

- 24', 26', 28', 31', 34', 38', and 48' sailboats (write for prices, specifications)

South Coast Seacraft, Inc., P.O. Box 1674, Shreveport, La. 71102

- 21' sailboat (hull and deck assembled, \$1595; other components available)

- 22' sailboat (hull and deck assembled, \$1595; other components available)

- 23', 25' and 28' sailboats (write for prices and specifications)

Spencer Boats, Ltd., 1240 Twigg Rd., Richmond, B.C.

- 31' sailboat (hull, \$3268; hull, rudder, lead ballast in place, fuel and water tanks molded in, \$4985; other components available)

- 35', 41', 42', 44' and 51' sailboats (write for prices and specifications)

Trailcraft, Inc., P.O. Box 606, Concordia, Kans. 66901

- 13'6" kayak (complete kit, \$89)

- 12' crossbreed canoe (complete kit, \$119)

- 14' canoe (complete kit, \$129)

- 16' canoe (complete kit, \$134)

- 17' canoe (complete kit, \$139)

- 18' canoe (complete kit, \$144)

Vineyard Yachts, Inc., Beach Rd., Vineyard Haven, Mass. 02568

- 21' powerboat (basic hull, \$2000; deck and cabin, \$1100)

- 32' powerboat (basic hull, \$4200; deck and cabin, \$1900)

Westsail Corp., 177 Monrovia Ave., Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626

- 32' cruising sailboat (hull with main and engine room bulkheads, \$4200; trunk-cabin deck with cockpit, without trim or windows, \$2063; other components available)

Yacht Constructors, Inc., 7031 N.E. 42nd Ave., Portland, Ore. 97218

- 29' Cascade sailboat (bare hull, \$1775; other components available)

- 36' Cascade sailboat (bare hull, \$3650; other components available)

- 42' Cascade sailboat (bare hull, \$4950; other components available)

Yachtcraft (Islander Yachts, Inc., 1682 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, Calif. 92627)

- 23' swing-keel sailboat (hull, cradle, deck, \$1145; other components available)

- 24', 26', 27', 29', 30', 32', 33', 37', 40', 44' and 55' sailboats (write for prices and specifications)

Yorktown Yachts, 700 Henry Ford Ave., Long Beach, Calif. 90813

- 33' and 35' cruising sailboats (write for prices and specifications)

Boats You Build Yourself

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cover. But with most of these kits it's not absolutely necessary, provided that the deck and cabin are ordered along with the hull kit.

In many cases, the deck can be elevated a few feet above the hull for installing interior components. For protection against rain and cold, the space between the hull and deck can be covered with polyethylene plastic. Or you can order the kit semi-completed—finished to the point where even this will not be needed.

On the other hand, if you build from just a bare hull, a more substantial shelter is warranted. Many builders use a temporary structure consisting of a wood frame, chicken wire, and a polyethylene plastic cover.

When you write the check. Ordering a basic hull kit for a large-size boat with or without component kits) usually involves part payment with the order and the balance before delivery is made, which will usually be from two weeks to six months from the time the order is placed, depending on the backlog of orders.

In most cases, you'll have to pay for delivery of your kit. Delivery is usually made by a low-bed truck or trailer, and most companies will help you make shipping arrangements. Usually the hull is shipped on a cradle, which you also use as the building cradle.

Shipping is expensive. In selecting a kit, remember that the closer the maker is to your area, the less you spend on delivery.

A word of caution—because getting rid of an unsuitable boat can be very expensive, make a careful appraisal of your requirements before buying. After you've decided on type, size, and design, write to the manufacturers who have kits that you think might fit your requirements and ask for their brochures.

Your next step is to order an instruction manual for your tentative choice. Carefully read the instruction manual and make sure you understand and can perform every step of the assembly. (A clear, lucid manual is vital!) If everything seems okay at this point, you're ready to write out a check.

When your boat arrives and you begin putting it together, take your time, follow the instruction manual to the letter, and do each job right. Before making any changes that might affect the performance or safety of the craft, consult with the kit maker.

By following these steps, you'll end up launching a safe and satisfying prefab boat. ■