

**DORADE**  
*Sparkman & Stephens Design No. 7*

LOA 52' 3", LWL 37' 3", beam 10' 3", draught 7' 8", sail area 1209 sq.ft.  
Builder Minneford Yacht Yard, City Island, New York, 1929

DORADE, present in Imperia, was designed by the twenty-year-old Olin Stephens for his father and has often been claimed as the first modern off-shore racing yacht. Compared to the English, very heavy displacement, Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter type or the more modern Alden Fisherman's Schooner type racing yacht, DORADE at first appears as a slim and graceful and perhaps fragile-looking craft. Olin, drawing on his experience of designing international six metre class racing yachts, produced here a stronger, heavier and more robust metre class type off-shore yacht which, despite contemporary scepticism, proved more than adequate in meeting anything that the high seas could throw at it . . . and win each and ever race in which she competed in her early years. She was strongly built to Nevins' scantlings, and the drawings show the extent of her bronze deck and hull strapping, which distributed the loads across the traditional plank construction. The keel is heavily rockered in the tradition of some contemporary eight meter racing yachts, the entry extremely fine and V-shaped, and the bilges totally flat with little turn to cut down the wetted area. This made DORADE particularly fast to windward but with one notable drawback – a tendency to roll severely [see video film] in certain sea conditions. This vice was cured in the design for STORMY WEATHER which was given more beam and firmer bilge sections.

Of particular interest is the detail to the stem to keel scarf, which is exceptionally strongly built, and the detailed drawings of the DORADE type ventilator boxes, invented on this vessel, which are universally found since that date and are known as 'Dorade Vents' preventing the ingress of water into the cabin during heavy weather. Prior to these vents, the cowls had to be removed and caps screwed down, restricting ventilation to the interior during heavy weather. The construction plan shows the very small size of the deck house and the numerous (four) skylights and hatches to allow access and light and ventilation; thus, ensuring that the traditionally built decks were not weakened by unnecessarily large cut-outs, thus allowing the cross beams to spread the loads to enormous lodging knees at the hull's outer extremities to the clamp and beam shelf.

When compared to more modern vessels, one will remark upon the tiller steering rather than the more usual wheel steering for such a large vessel and the safety factor of the aft sloping floor to the cockpit, high above the water line to restrict the amount of weight caused by a pooping and to allow rapid drainage.

The DORADE sail plan was revised several times. The plan shown follows the 1931 revision, with the all in-board triple head sail rig, double runners and a complicated main sheet arrangements which before the days of vang's helped to prevent the boom from lifting off the wind.

DORADE's sweeping sheerline delights the eye and makes her one of the most elegant yachts in Imperia.

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