

FINISTERRE
Sparkman & Stephens Design No. 1054

LOA 38'6", LWL 27'6", beam 11'6", draught 3'11", sail area 713 sq.ft., displacement 22,330 lbs.

FINISTERRE launched in 1954 was the most famous of the Sparkman & Stephens centre board yawls which lead to the building of a modified production series of very similar dimensions known as the type A yawl or Nevins 40, where the centre board was moved slightly forward of the position on FINISTERRE. The origins of this type of relatively broad beamed, shallow draught centre board yawl went back to the immediately pre-war period when the type was made popular by Philip Roe, early CARINA. FINISTERRE was built by the master craftsman Seth Persson of Saybrooke, Connecticut, double planked of Cedar & mahogany while the mast was wood and heavy bronze floors stiffened the hull to allow considerable tension to the forestay. She was no light displacement vessel for her size with an 8 man racing crew and full provisions, FINISTERRE weighed in at almost double what a modern vessel of similar size would displace. The lines plan gives a clear idea how her extreme beam is carried well forward and well aft of the amidships section yet the heavily V'ed and flared bow manages to look graceful and make for a dry boat in a seaway while the tucked up U-shape counter provides stability aft when the boat is hard pressed broad reaching. The stub ballast keel carries the length well forward.

The main deck and beam framing plan shows how strongly built these small vessels were while the deck plan shows a modern style of deck house with lexan translucent hatches with all deck gear neatly stowed, well thought out winches and cleating arrangements and wheel steering, unusual at this date on such a small yacht.

FINISTERRE is a direct descendent of the larger REVONOC (design 602) built in 1946 for Harvey Conover. This type of shallow draught yacht had the advantage of not only proving remarkably successful in racing, (FINISTERRE holds an unbeaten record of three straight Bermuda Race wins) but proved exceedingly comfortable for cruising and ideal for exploring shallow waters. The designs spawned a number of developments on a larger scale, including REVONOC III (lost without trace in an unexpected January storm off the Florida Keys in 1958 one year after her launching). Aage Nielsen who worked after the war in the S&S studio is renowned for his 'FINISTERRE type' centre board yawls built in Maine or Denmark.

For offshore use, it is often suggested that a full keel boat provides better stability for safety in extreme conditions. Certainly the broad beam of the centre board of the type A yawls provides enormous initial stability and under most normal conditions an adequate range of safety though in extreme conditions down wind there can be a danger of rolling the rudder out of the water and a consequent loss of control. The type A yawls that have been built have weathered many tempests at sea and have an outstanding racing record, largely thanks to FINISTERRE's owner, the famed Carlton Mitchell, but there is a record of DOUBLOON, a type A yawl being rolled over twice in the Gulf Stream and it has been suggested that had her centre board been retracted and had she run before the seas then this might not have happened. On account of their heavy displacement, type A yawls do not compete down wind or in light airs

with more modern vessels but they are still able to give a respectable account of themselves to windward.

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