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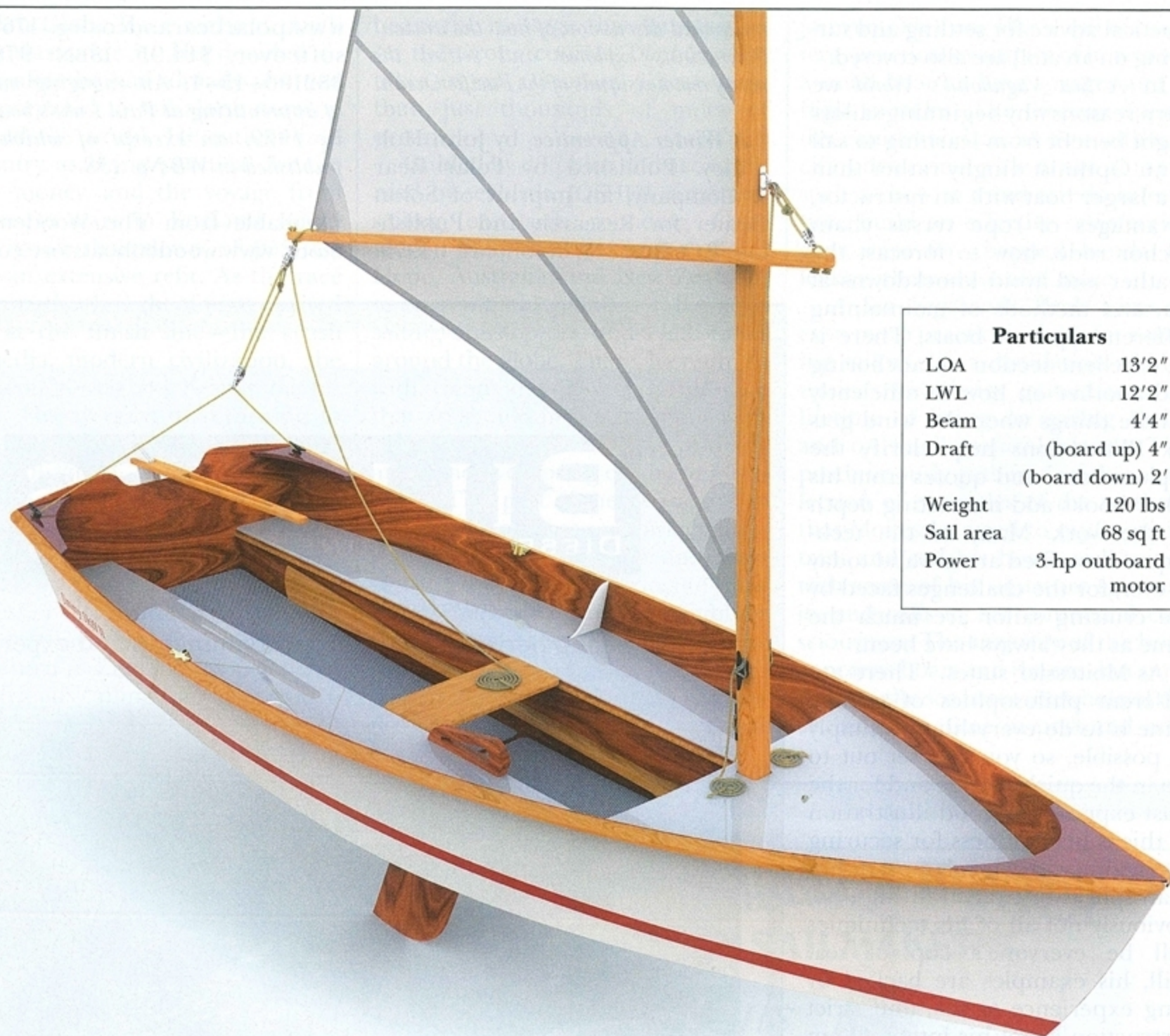
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020  
NUMBER 272

\$7.95

\$8.95 in Canada



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### Particulars

LOA	13'2"
LWL	12'2"
Beam	4'4"
Draft	(board up) 4" (board down) 2'
Weight	120 lbs
Sail area	68 sq ft
Power	3-hp outboard motor

# Jimmy Skiff II

*For sail, power, and oar*

Design by John C. Harris  
Commentary by Mike O'Brien

**W**e can propel the striking Jimmy Skiff II with oars, a sail, or a small outboard motor. As the Roman numeral in its name suggests, this design has a direct predecessor.

John C. Harris, owner of Chesapeake Light Craft, tells us that CLC introduced the original Jimmy Skiff in 1998. That design came from a committee, which had included Harris,

who wasn't completely satisfied with the results. However, the old Jimmy Skiff proved quite popular with customers, and about 800 of these light skiffs went together. Amateur builders assembled most of them from kits. This commercial success, along with the skiff's good qualities, delayed attempts at redesign for several years.

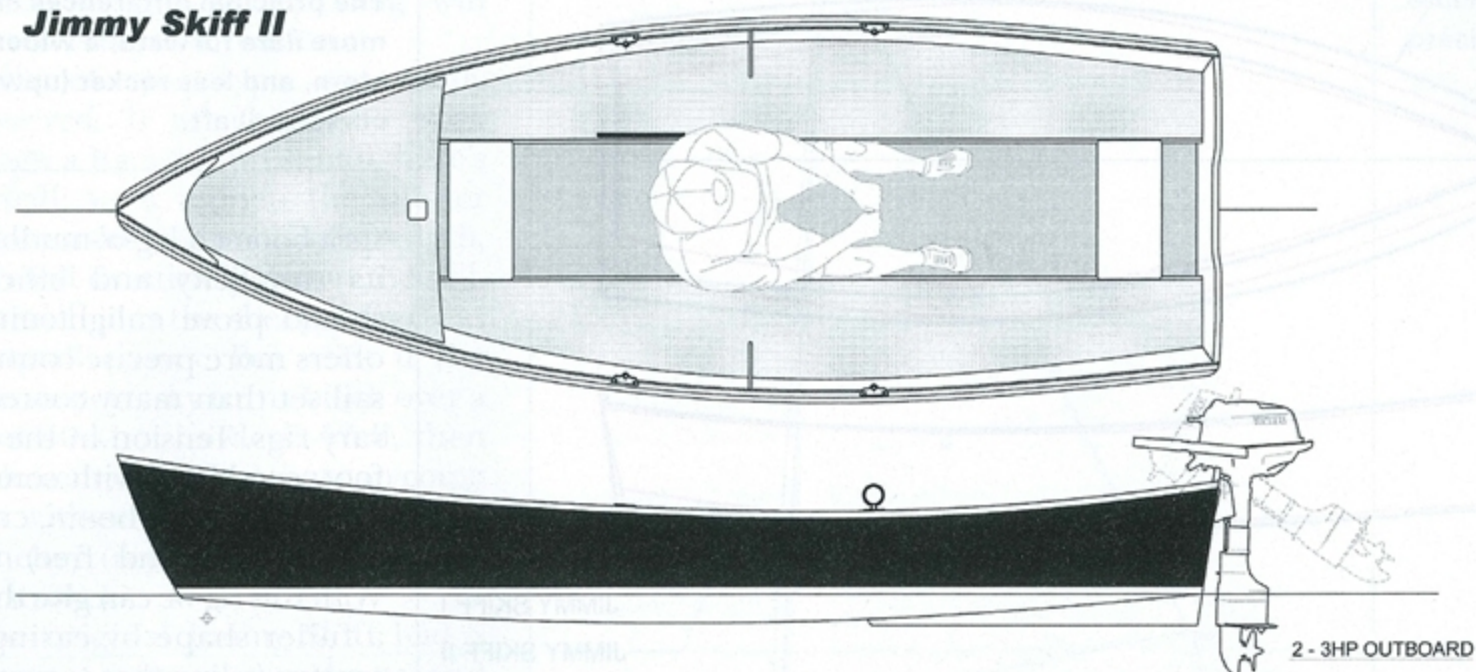
The original Jimmy was a traditional skiff indeed. Back aft, the

breadth of the hull decreased and its bottom swept upward to clear the run for efficient rowing and light-air sailing. The designers had not intended that this skiff should work as a powerboat: "In 1998 we were still purists. Even the thought of an engine made us queasy, and a dragging transom was considered profanity."

For the new Jimmy Skiff II, which Harris designed alone, he increased

*Above*—Jimmy Skiff II is the updated design of a boat introduced by kit-boat manufacturer Chesapeake Light Craft in 1998.

## Jimmy Skiff II



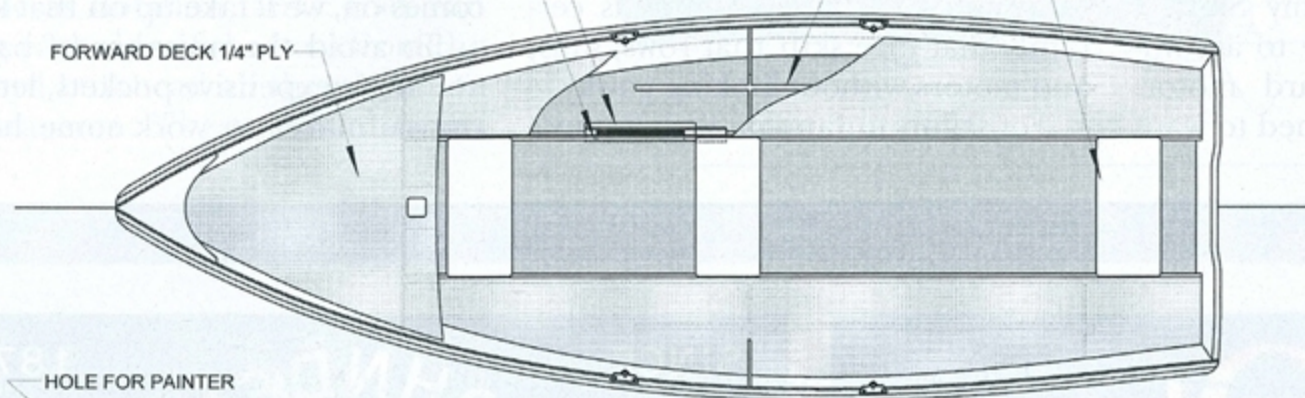
DAGGERBOARD TRUNK INSTALLED  
INSIDE TANK DURING CONSTRUCTION...

...OUTSIDE TANK IF RETROFITTED

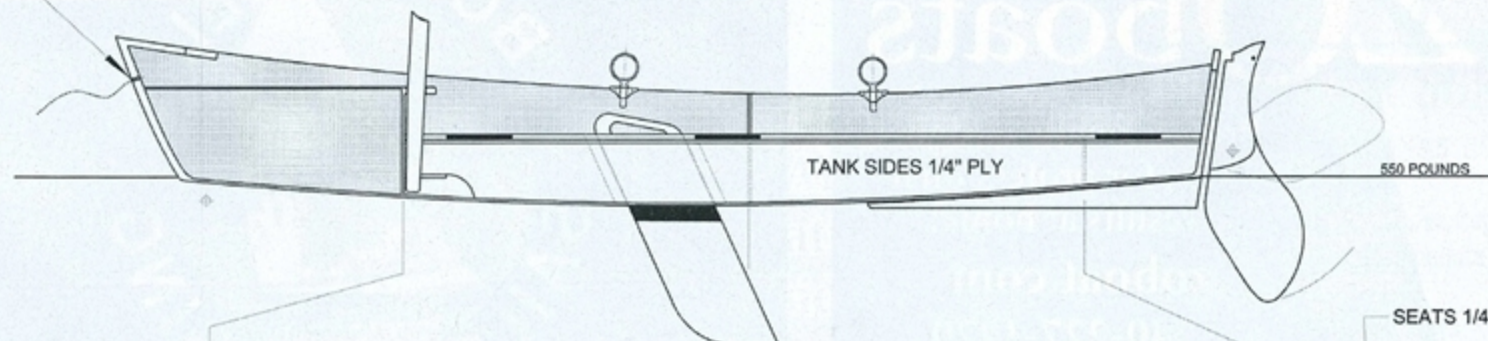
3/4" X 1" STRINGER

THWARTS MAY BE SCREWED DOWN  
OR SLIDE FORE AND AFT

FORWARD DECK 1/4" PLY

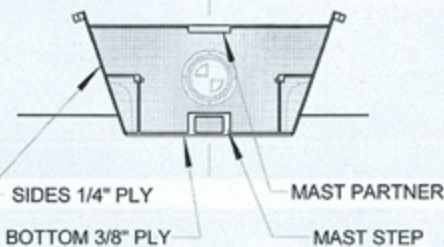


HOLE FOR PAINTER



TANK SIDES 1/4" PLY

550 POUNDS



SIDES 1/4" PLY

MAST PARTNER

BOTTOM 3/8" PLY

MAST STEP



THWART FROM 3/4" X 9-3/8"

3/4" X 1" CARLIN

RAILS DOUBLE 3/4" X 1"

THWARTS REST ON 1/2" X 1/2" TRIM

SEATS 1/4" PLYWOOD

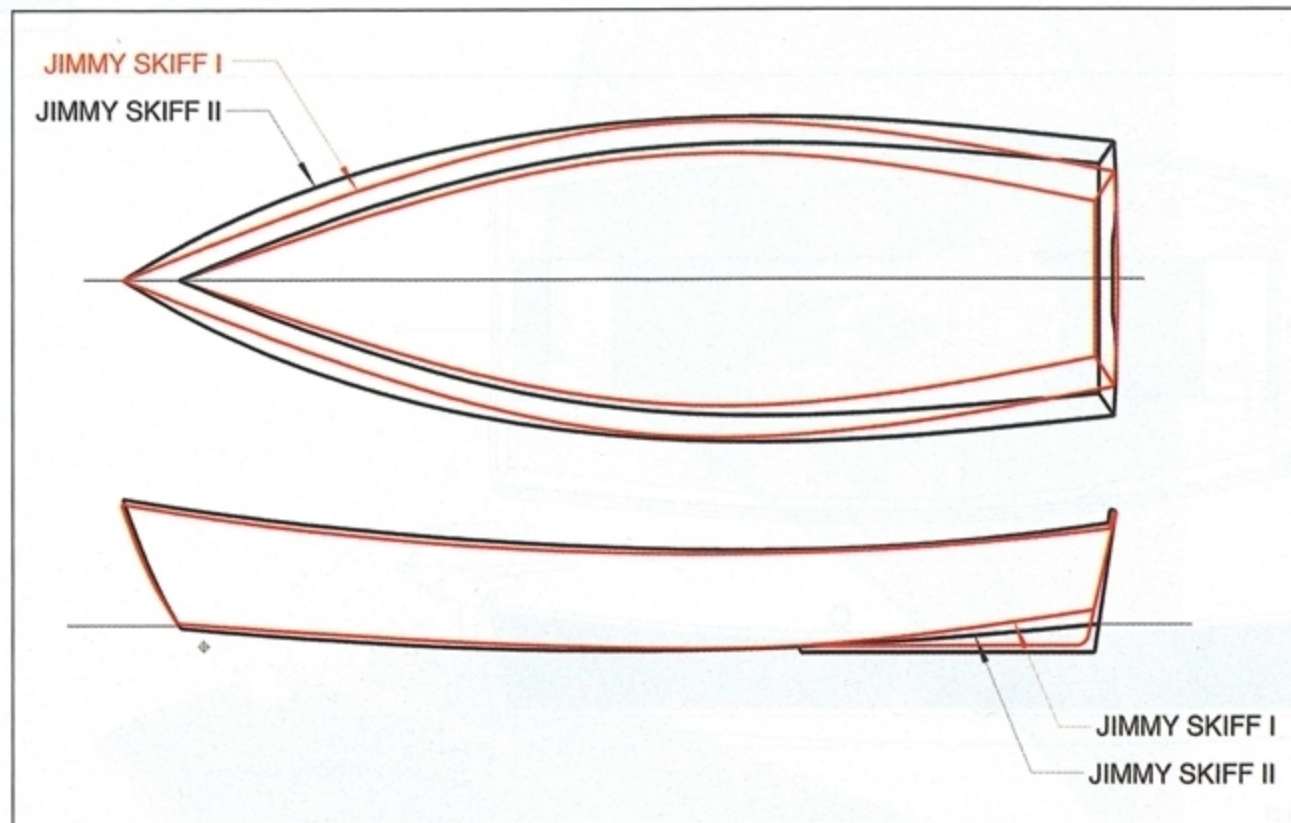


The skiff is built of high-quality marine plywood fastened together using the stitch-and glue method. Both plans and kits are available.

the beam back aft and decreased the rocker. He seems pleased with the performance tradeoffs: "Deep rocker, desirable in rowing and sailing boats, results in very nimble handling

and low wetted surface. Yet all that rocker also produces less stability for a given length and beam...and lower top speeds on windy days. A 16 percent boost in sail area easily

took care of the added wetted surface, and the Jimmy Skiff II can be induced to plane when white-caps appear. She's also a lot more stable."



Harris believes that the most popular advantage the Jimmy Skiff II holds might be its ability to accommodate a small outboard motor: "This is what people seemed to want

the most, even if they were unwilling to admit it. The new Jimmy is certainly that rare skiff that rows, sails, and motors without looking gawky."

For sailors unfamiliar with Jimmy's

The original design is shown in red; the update is in black. The principal differences are more flare forward, a wider stern, and less rocker (upward curvature) aft.

sprit-boomed leg-o'-mutton rig, its simplicity and efficiency should prove enlightening. It offers more precise control of sail set than many contemporary rigs. Tension in the sail's foot, combined with compression in the sprit boom, creates a powerful (and free) vang. With this rig we can give the sail a fuller shape by easing the snorter (a line that secures the boom to the mast). To make the sail somewhat flatter when the breeze comes on, we'll take up on that line.

To avoid the nuisance of battens and their expensive pockets, let's ask the sailmaker to work some hollow

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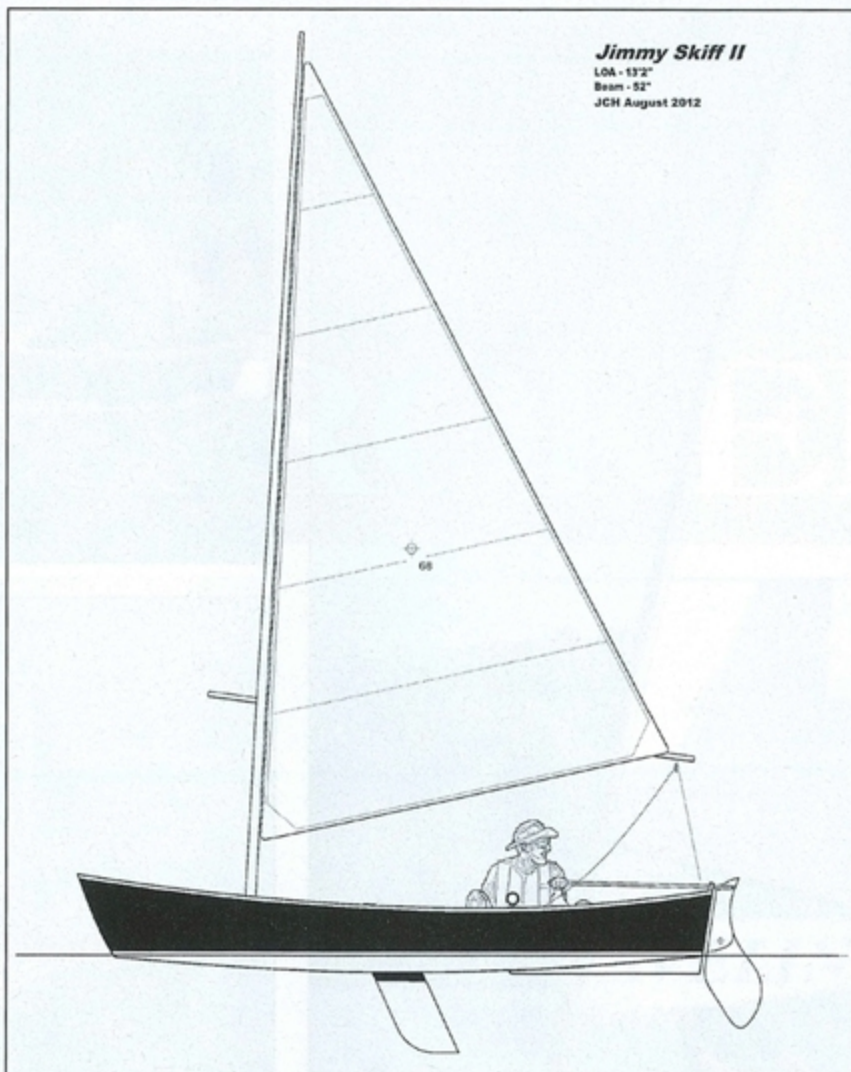
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(concave curvature) into our sail's leech. The foot of the sail should be cut dead straight, as this "vang" will suffer considerable tension.

Sails of this type are easily depowered. If we choose to work through a hit-and-run squall, here's the drill: we'll tighten the snorter with all our adrenalin-fueled strength, which will drastically flatten the sail. Then we'll play the sheet gingerly as the squall passes. But what if the entire western sky turns black over a line of 40-knot howlers? Well, then we'll lower everything that can come down without an axe and row hard for shelter (repenting our sins with each stroke).

The original Jimmy Skiff had a traditional layout: sternsheets and two thwarts. For the new Jimmy, Harris drew longitudinal seats that double as flotation tanks; they run along each side of the boat from the forward bulkhead all the way aft to the transom. These lend stiffness



**Jimmy Skiff II**  
LOA - 13'2"  
Beam - 52"  
JCH August 2012

The sprit rig offers simplicity, efficiency, and precise sail control.

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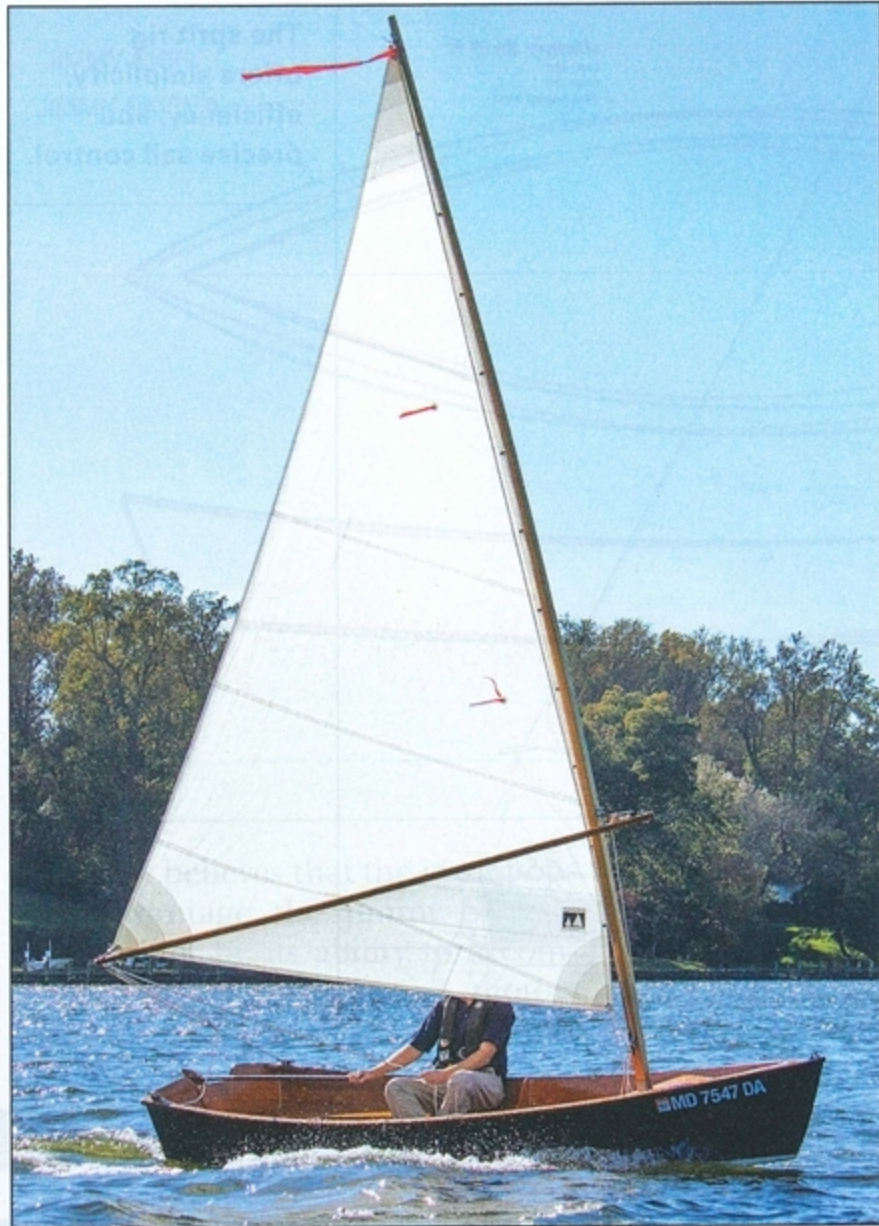


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Jimmy Skiff II is meant to sail, motor, and row—a rare combination of abilities.


to the hull, and they place flotation where it will add stability to a swamped Jimmy...and, of course, we can sit on them.

Three short thwarts bridge the footwell. We can fasten them in place or leave them loose and, therefore, adjustable forward and aft. With the latter option, bedding down will be a simple matter of removing these thwarts and reclining on the floorboards...provided we're not too broad of beam. If we don't fit comfortably between the tanks, let's carry a bundle of bunk boards to span the footwell and create a berth that measures nearly the full breadth of the hull.

Jimmy Skiff II goes together stitch-and-glue fashion with high-quality plywood and epoxy. Harris explains the process in his construction manual, *How to Build the Jimmy Skiff II*. This book is well illustrated, enlightening, and entertaining. It's worth a

read even if you might not build a Jimmy. The section concerning plywood selection begins: "Who will be the first to write and ask us if they can use home-center lauan to build a Jimmy Skiff? If you're on a lauan budget...we'll try to suggest some alternate designs. The Jimmy Skiff was engineered around the specific properties of marine plywood.... There are some pretty big spans where there's no framing at all—just a sandwich of marine plywood and fiberglass. That sandwich has enormous strength properties, but you might as well build the boat with wheat thins and polyester resin if you're going to use cheap plywood."

To build Jimmy Skiff II, we can start either with a set of plans or with a kit. CLC offers both. Some of us might decide to begin with sheets of drawings and the raw materials. Later we'll say (with only a hint of modesty), "I built this boat."

A long time ago, along the shores of Chesapeake Bay, I built a few wooden boats. I liked to think I had created their hulls "from scratch." In retrospect, I'm not so sure. In fact the materials didn't come directly from nature. I purchased milled lumber and sheets of plywood, stock hardware and fastenings, commercial adhesives and coatings, and... well you get the idea. Now, five decades down the road, I might be inclined to begin with a Jimmy Skiff II kit. Yet I'll probably say once again, "I built this boat!" 

*Mike O'Brien is boat design editor for WoodenBoat.*

Plans and kits for Jimmy Skiff II are available from John C. Harris, Chesapeake Light Craft, 1805 George Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401; 410-267-0137; [www.clcboats.com](http://www.clcboats.com). The original 1998 Jimmy Skiff design has been retired.