

H HERRESHOFF ALERION 26

HERRESHOFF DESIGNS, INC. & BRION RIEFF BOATBUILDER



DAYSAILOR



"Alerion"
No 718.

Capt. Nat's 1912 design model and title script
from his hand written design notes.



RACER

Clint Clemens

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EVOLUTION OF DESIGN

By Dieter Loibner

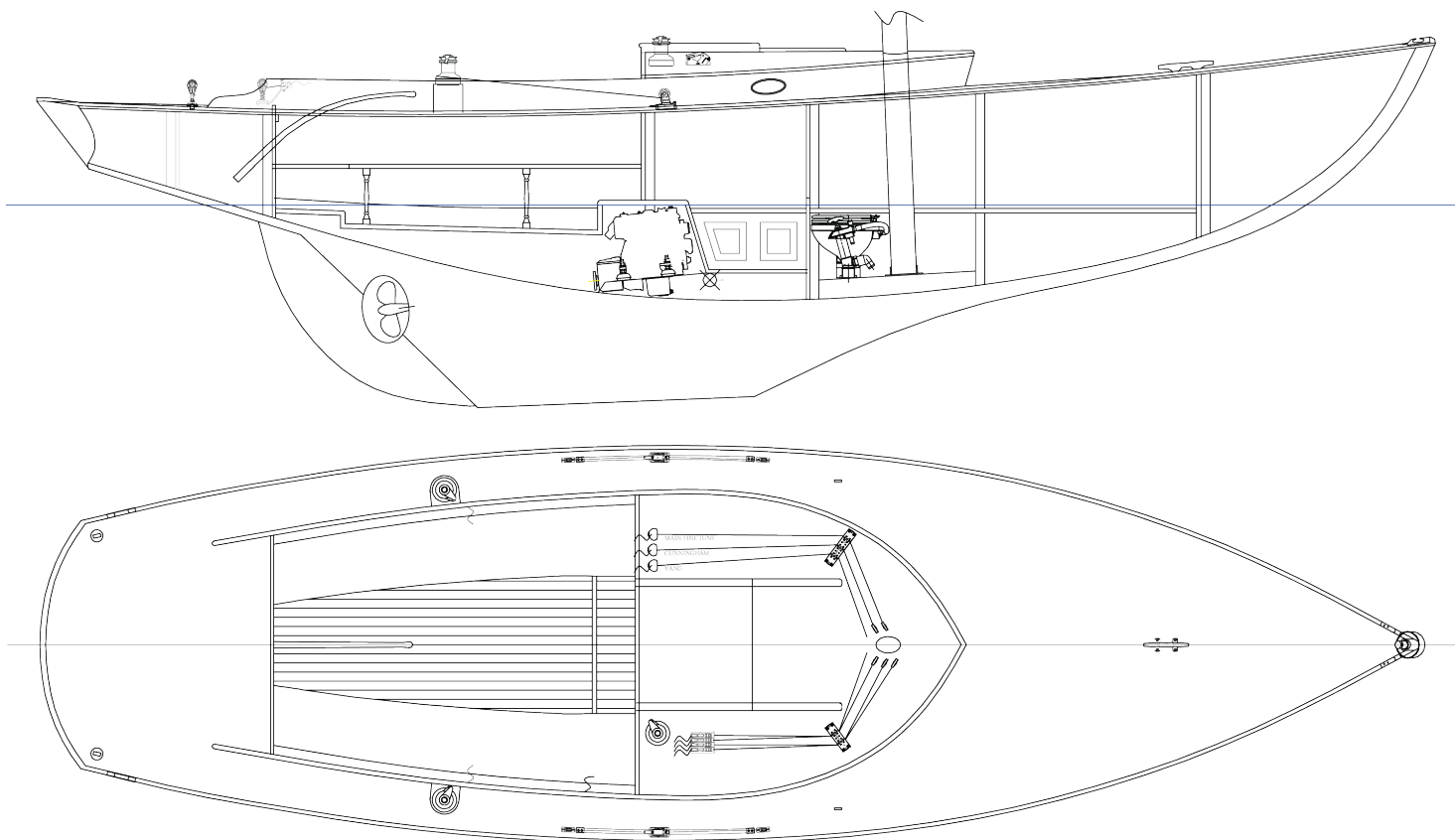
The Herreshoff Alerion 26 evolved from some logical sources and one serendipitous incident. First, it possesses the genes of Capt. Nat's personal daysailer, the Alerion III, which was built in 1912 (he had two others before). "Right around that time my grandfather started spending winters in Bermuda, so he designed a boat that he could sail there," says Halsey Herreshoff. "My father, Sidney, had worked on Alerion III, so he asked Capt. Nat how he liked it. My grandfather expressed satisfaction with the sailing abilities, but found it a touch too tender and wet in choppy conditions."

So Capt. Nat added some ballast to Alerion and modified the half-model to increase beam, forward volume and overall length by about 1 foot. This boat was built in 1914 (No. 732S) for Elias Cornelius Benedict, a Wall Street investor who named it Sadie. It was one of Herreshoff's most beloved designs, with a long and successful career under various owners.

At the end of her sailing career, Sadie was donated to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, but eventually found its way back to the Herreshoff Museum where she was restored to mint condition and is taken out to sail again.

Also in 1914, Capt. Nat scaled up the modified Alerion by a third, which became the Newport 29 cruising class. That boat was 36 feet overall with 29 feet of waterline. It had a fixed keel while the original Alerion and Sadie had centerboards and external ballast. The yard initially built three (Dolphin, Mischief and Comet) in 1914 and a fourth one, Paddy (now known as Teaser), in 1926. Comet was lost in the Hurricane of 1938, but the three survivors still are cruising and participate in classic regattas. An updated version of the Newport 29 also is on offer by Herreshoff Designs and Brion Rieff Boatbuilders.

The last piece of the development puzzle for the Alerion 26 came in the person of Isaac B. Merriman Jr., a Herreshoff supporter and the last owner of Capt. Nat's Alerion III, which he donated to the Mystic (Conn.) Seaport.



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“It was around 1977 when he called to say that he missed Alerion and asked if we could build him a slightly smaller version of that boat in fiberglass,” Halsey says. “It was one of my father’s last projects and we used Sadie’s lines, but adjusted the size down.” (Halsey pointed out it was “11/12ths of 3/4 of the Newport 29.”) All these iterations gave the modern-day Alerion 26 its size and mien, a touch shorter than Capt. Nat’s original, but with a fixed keel.

But Merriman’s influence also was felt way past the commissioning of this retro-style daysailer: While Merriman was taking delivery of his new Alerion in Key Largo, Fla., Halsey’s mother, Rebecca, managed to convince him to donate his estate to the fledgling Herreshoff Museum, which put it to good use by acquiring some of the old buildings that once housed the operations of the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company. Merriman, Halsey remembers, was an emotional man. He liked the new Alerion very much, but sold it to one of his good friends, who took it from Florida to Nantucket. There the boat created a healthy interest that warranted the start of a production.

Subsequently, the boat received a taller Marconi rig — which improved light-air performance — a small auxiliary inboard engine and a special setup for the self-tacking club-footed jib, so it could be used with a roller-furling system.

Unlike the modern classics that combine retro looks with contemporary design and technology (i.e. fin keels, spade rudders and carbon rigs), the Herreshoff Alerion 26 sticks to its guns, with few concessions (inboard engine and aluminum rig) to the modern era. By and large, it is still informed by Capt. Nat’s original idea of a simple boat that he could sail on a moment’s notice and all by himself.

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HERRESHOFF ALERION 26 STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS*

<i>Length Overall:</i>	25'-4"
<i>Length Waterline:</i>	20'-0"
<i>Beam:</i>	7'-2"
<i>Draft:</i>	3'-7"
<i>Displacement:</i>	4,800lbs
<i>Ballast:</i>	2,525lbs
<i>Sail Area:</i>	315 sq ft

Hull & Deck

- Vacuum bagged cold-molded hull with fiberglass covering set in epoxy.
- Cedar hull skin, one layer 3/8" thick white cedar with tongue and groove edges; 3 layers 1/8" thick Spanish cedar; 10oz cloth sheathing.
- Douglas Fir backbone, framing, and floors.
- Bulkheads 1/2" mahogany plywood (1088).
- Hull painted with epoxy primer and two-part top-coat system, owner's choice of standard colors.
- External lead ballast.
- Inside skin coated with resin, visible hull varnished or painted white at owners discretion.
- Plywood deck (1/2" thick), covered with 10oz cloth, painted with non-skid, and v-grooved underside to give the impression of a planked deck from cabin. Owners choice of standard colors. Bright oak deck beams.
- Traditionally constructed mahogany cabin-trunk with brightly finished sides and painted cabin top. Coaming constructed of mahogany and finished bright. Cockpit floor oiled teak.
- Herreshoff style mahogany toe-rail, finished bright, with integrated chocks and drains.
- All bright-finished pieces are of clear grained wood and finished with 8 coats high gloss varnish.

Deck Hardware

- Herreshoff (Reineck) bronze chocks on bow
- Custom jib boom pedestal.
- Herreshoff (Reineck) bronze bow cleat.
- Herreshoff (Reineck) bronze jib traveler, sheet lead aft to cockpit cam cleats
- Herreshoff (Reineck) bronze halyard blocks (2) at foot of mast.
- Halyards control lines lead to Herreshoff (Reineck) bronze cleats and cam cleats on cabin top

- Harken mainsail traveler aft of cockpit, purchase lead to cockpit cam cleat
- Bronze pad-eyes (two) on aft deck for dock lines
- Mahogany flag pole with socket.
- Mahogany "scissor style" boom crutch.

Rig

- Aluminum spars, painted buff. Stainless steel wire standing rigging.
- Jib-boom universal deck connection to allow for roller-reefing operation. Harken roller-furling headsail foil.
- Bronze chainplates.
- Dacron running rigging

Steering

- S/S rudderstock
- Bronze rudder head
- Laminated ash tiller, varnished
- Fiberglass covered rudder blade

Interior

- Raised panel bulkheads.
- Varnished mahogany trim with Hatteras off white panels.

Electrical

- Two group 24 batteries
- 3 position battery switch
- Six breaker circuit panel with voltmeter

Bilge Pumps

- (1) Electric bilge pump (500 GPH)
- Manual bilge pump (Whale Titan)

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*All specifications are subject to change without notice.

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