

GOOD OLD BOAT

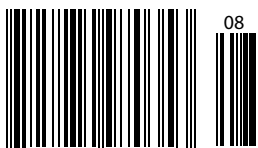
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MEMORY FAILS. MIKE AND Nancy Serozi can remember the highlights of their life together, of course. There were two sons, Reid and Brent, now 26 and 23. There were moves around the country from Connecticut to New York to California and back to Connecticut as a part of Mike's work in information systems, primarily with Xerox. Then there was a final move to North Carolina. And interspersed over the years there were boats. Almost always there were boats.

But which ones when? Mike discovered sailing with a leaky wooden Lightning. Mike and Nancy are sure of that. "I had a ball that summer," he says. Another leaky Lightning followed a bit later. A Sea Ox powerboat was in there toward the beginning. And a Catalina 25 was followed by a 21-foot Grady-White powerboat. There was a Chesapeake daysailer... more powerboats (for water-skiing when the boys were the right age for that activity)... and then more recently a 1978 Bristol 29.9.

Always their home was near a body of water. And usually there were boats. On this point Mike and Nancy agree. Absolutely. They may not have been in agreement on the purchase of some of these boats. In the Serozi family history, the story goes that Nancy had flown home to Michigan when Mike got it into his mind that they really should buy a sailboat. So without discussing it with his wife, Mike became the owner of *The Moody Blue*, a Catalina 25 in need of a new home and caretaker.

As he drove to the airport to greet his returning wife, Mike's conscience was working overtime, aided by two small voices from the back seat that pointed out, "Mom's going to kill you." She didn't, of course. Instead she was pleasantly surprised and enjoyed overnights around the Norwalk Islands of Long Island Sound.

But that was then, and this is now, or so they say. The Serozi union survived a few minor indiscretions of the boating variety.



Bristol

Ongoing makeover
Herreshoff

Got the urge

"Two years ago, I got the urge again," Mike says with a sweeping gesture that encompasses the spacious cabin of *Wind Drift*, their Bristol 29.9. "We found a sad-looking Bristol in Oriental. It had been sitting for more than two years as a part of an estate settlement. It was structurally good. It just needed some cosmetic work."

Oriental, North Carolina, is a lovely town on the Intracoastal Waterway, a real sailors' paradise. The Serozis, whose home is about

two and a half hours away in Cary, North Carolina, adopted a boat, a community of sailors in the Sea Harbour Yacht Club, and a small sailing-oriented town for their weekend getaways. (For more on the town of Oriental, particularly its sailors and visiting boats, visit <<http://www.towndock.net>>. The website's harbor cam is of particular interest. You can see what the weather's doing right now, or you can have a look at a shot of Hurricane Isabel, tropical storm Gustav, and other significant events archived there. Keith Smith and his wife, Melinda Penkava, co-host the site.)

“We found a sad-looking Bristol in Oriental. It had been sitting for more than two years as a part of an estate settlement.”

29.9

for a Halsey racer/cruiser

by Karen Larson

Mike, Nancy, and Brent Serozi take *Wind Drift*, their Bristol 29.9, at left, for a lively trot on a

breezy spring day near Oriental, North Carolina. The interior of the Bristol 29.9 has the usual layout with plenty of teak accents and lots of storage, at right. The Serozis had their 15-hp Yanmar overhauled and they soundproofed the engine compartment, also at right.



In some ways, Bristol Yachts is an offspring of Pearson Yachts, founded by Clint and Everett Pearson in 1956 (see *Good Old Boat*, November 1999). After Pearson Yachts was purchased by Grumman Allied Industries in 1966 and the inevitable conflicts of founder and new owner occurred, Clint went north to Bristol, Rhode Island, and started a new boat-building operation. The earliest models were the keel-centerboard designs: Bristol 27, designed by Carl Alberg; the 35, designed by John Alden; and the 32 and 39, both designed by Ted Hood. The Bristol 29.9, drawn by Halsey Herreshoff, was introduced in 1977. More than 200 were produced before they were discontinued in 1985 or 1986. Bristol Yachts went into receivership in 1998 and the assets purchased by H. F. Lenfest. The new company, a full-services boatyard located on the site, is called Bristol Marine.

Better cruiser

The 29.9 was designed to race under the International Offshore Rule (IOR) and Midget Ocean Racing Club (MORC) rules, but people soon realized that it made a better cruiser than racer. At 29 feet 11 inches with a 10-foot 2-inch beam and displacing 8,650 pounds with 3,600 pounds of ballast, it was called “less-than-sprightly” by *Practical Sailor*. The waterline is 24 feet, and it spreads 391 square feet of sail.

As a group, the Bristols are known for their quality construction, and the 29.9 is representative, with superior

Feature boat



The port bunk on the Bristol 29.9 makes into a very adequate double, above. The stove cover, above right, adds a bit more counter space when the stovetop is not in use; the Serozis replaced the old pressure alcohol burners with the Origo non-pressurized alcohol ones shown here. The sink to starboard of the companionway, at right, is not well located, but sailors for centuries have learned to adapt to unfortunate compromises made by designers.



interior construction and hull-to-deck joints. A few were built with a centerboard, offering drafts of 3 feet 6 inches (up) and 7 feet 6 inches (down), but *Wind Drift*, as with about 75 percent of the 29.9s, has a fixed keel of 4 feet 4 inches. Since the channel to the Neuse River from her slip at Sea Harbour is often silted, *Wind Drift's* shallow draft is an advantage. The day we went sailing, early in the season before dredging had been done, *Wind Drift's* keel dredged sand for 10 or 20 feet as the Yanmar 15 provided the necessary propulsion to move it to deeper water.

While briefly neglected, *Wind Drift* is prospering once more under Mike Serozi's care. He and Nancy list work they have done along with work that they have hired. They have replaced: hoses and clamps, the battery charger, the steel fuel tank, all lines, the knot meter and depth sounder, the interior cushions, steering cable, the head, the roller furler, and genoa. "We've been chipping away at it for a few years," Mike says.

They removed the original pressure alcohol stove and replaced it with an Origo non-pressurized alcohol stove, added a binnacle guard and cockpit table. They also had the Yanmar completely overhauled, cleaned, and painted, and they soundproofed the engine compartment. They added a second manual bilge pump. One of Mike's innovations is a Y-valve on the engine raw-water seacock that allows for pumping water from the bilge, a good way to get the antifreeze in the engine each winter. Mike also added a heating coil to the air in-

take for the diesel to make it start more easily. And they had the exterior teak shaved and now keep it bright.


There's always more to do, of course. This summer the chainplates and stanchions are on the to-do list as rebedding candidates.

"What really attracted us to this boat," Mike says, "was

the interior wood, the incredible amount of storage, and the reputation of Bristol Yachts. We love sailing this boat; we feel safe in it."

The cabin feels spacious, since the table folds away and is stowed on the bulkhead. The port bunk slides out to offer a fairly large double; there is a quarter berth to port with the typical navigation table at the head of the berth and a large cockpit locker to starboard. The galley is to starboard also. The head is to port across from a hanging locker.

Mike and Nancy rave about the capacity of the two connected water tanks: 63 gallons. The fuel tank holds 19 gallons, and the holding tank contains 20 gallons.

Wind Drift is a pretty and capable boat that Mike and Nancy Serozi are making more capable as each season passes. The plan, as they see it, is to go to the Bahamas some day. Watch for them there. 

Resources

Bristol 29.9 Owners

Nicholas Bauer
nickbauer@iname.com

Chesapeake Bristol Club

Norm Bogarde
chessie291@netzero.net
<<http://cbclub.info>>

Bristol discussion list

<<http://list.sailnet.net/read/?forum=bristol>>

Bristol owners' website

Douglas Axtell
Bristol32@aol.com
<<http://members.aol.com/bristolyht/>>

Bristol Yachts

<<http://www.bristolyachts.com>>

Bristol 29.9 Sailing Vessel Owner's Association

<<http://www.employees.org/~b299>>

The Bristol 29.9

A designer compares four classic coastal cruisers

by Ted Brewer

THE BRISTOL 29.9 AND THREE SIMILAR YACHTS EXAMINED HERE were designed during the 1970s as coastal cruisers and club racers. I feel confident in saying that any one of the four will have given its owners much enjoyment over the years and, having raced against Catalina 30s, I will add that the serious racers amongst the skippers will have gained their share of silver.

The Bristol 29.9, with the shoalest draft and the lowest sail area/displacement ratio of the four, will prove to be the most modest of these yachts when it comes to around-the-buoy racing performance. However, it would definitely get my nod for coastal cruising and, in particular, heavy weather sailing, due to the hefty skeg-hung rudder and the strong keel-stepped mast. These are both features that I like to see on yachts intended primarily for family cruising.


The designer, Halsey Herreshoff, is very familiar with the lobster pot-choked waters of his native New England and, wisely, incorporated a propeller aperture into the generous skeg. This will eliminate a lot of the problems and the hard four-letter words that often come as the result of tangling a spade rudder or an exposed propeller in a difficult-to-see pot line. A 44-foot sloop of my

design was doing very well in its first race in Maine waters many years ago, until it picked up a lobster pot and dragged it for several miles. The owner was very unhappy, but I can just imagine the blue streak that the poor lobsterman let rip when he found his pot and its contents missing.

Looking at the figures, we can see that these boats have many similarities. All sport moderate displacement with excellent ballast ratios and generous beam. The result should be good initial stability and all-around performance. The Bristol's modest sail area puts it out of the running as a hot club racer, while the unusually deep draft of the Ericson 30+ indicates that Bruce King intended it to be a very serious contender to windward. I must add that the 30+ did have a 4-foot draft option for those who preferred gunkholing to racing, and it would be interesting to know the percentage of buyers who preferred the shoal model over the deep.

High capsizes numbers

All of these yachts have a rather high capsizes screening number as a result of their beam/displacement combination. That would tend to indicate that they are not the best choice for ocean passagemaking and would be more at home in coastal waters. Having said this, I must add that hundreds of much less seaworthy yachts, from open sailboats to

dugout canoes, have made long bluewater voyages, and many of these have survived storms, even hurricanes, that would make you think twice before going to sea again. Still, the main purpose of these four yachts is to provide comfortable family cruising and occasional racing in coastal waters. This they offer in spades. 

	Bristol 29.9	C&C 30	Catalina 30	Ericson 30+
Years built	1978–86	1971–83	1975–86	1979–?
LOA	29' 11"	30' 0"	29' 11"	30' 3"
LWL	24' 0"	24' 9"	25' 0"	25' 3"
Beam	10' 2"	10' 0"	10' 10"	10' 5"
Draft	4' 4"	5' 0"	5' 3"	5' 9"
Displacement	8,650 lb	8,000 lb	10,200 lb	8,900 lb
Ballast	3,600 lb	3,450 lb	4,200 lb	4,000 lb
LOA/LWL ratio	1.18	1.28	1.23	1.30
Beam/LWL ratio	0.424	0.404	0.433	0.413
Displ./LWL ratio	279.3	235.6	291.4	246.8
Bal./Displ. ratio	.416	.431	.412	.449
Sail area	391 sq ft	459 sq ft	505 sq ft	452 sq ft
SA/Displ. ratio	14.9	18.4	17.2	16.8
Capsizes number	1.98	2.00	2.00	2.01
Comfort ratio	25.3	23.4	26.8	24.3



Bristol 29.9



C&C 30



Catalina 30



Ericson 30+