

PARTY CRASHERS

Imagine that! The wooden-boat snobs forgot to invite us.

IT SAT THERE, LIKE A GLOB OF MERINGUE floating on a sea of Godiva chocolate. My tiny Donzi F-14 Fisherman was tied up amidst a flotilla of elegant old mahogany speedboats, glistening in fresh slatherings of varnish and fittings of polished brass. Suddenly, I wondered if this was a good idea—the notion of entering a fiber-

glass speedboat in an antique boat show traditionally reserved for ancient craft fabricated out of God's own wood.

Me and my pal, the outrageous Bruce Amsterdam, had devised the plan to enter the Donzi in northern New York State's annual Alexandria Bay Antique Boat Show to prove a point: that old boats are old boats, be they made from hardwood, fiberglass, ferro-cement or scrap Burma Shave signs.

When we made our move, the Alex Bay show in many ways rivalled the larger, more elegant old speedboat show held downriver at the famed Clayton Antique Boat Museum. In that heady atmosphere, fiberglass is verboten. A 'glass boat in those hallowed surroundings would be akin to hanging a velvet Elvis in the National Portrait Gallery.

But our logic was simple. The Donzi is 30 years old. It is a significant example of boatbuilding in the 1960s—which was this century's most dynamic decade of boat design. The Donzi was created by Don Aronow, who with guys like Jim Wynne, Elton Carey and Dick Bertram, used fiberglass, I/O power and the new deep-V hull to revolutionize the marine world. That in itself, Bruce and I figured, was sufficient for us to poke our way into the Brahmin realm of mahogany—a field, by the way, that had remained rather static in terms of design for 50 years.

Face it, wooden powerboats were driven off the market not only because fiberglass was more durable, but also because it could be molded easily into the modern hull designs.

While mahogany boats are aesthetic treats, they're little more than floating Chippendale Highboys. They remind me of the grand automobiles of

the 1930s—the Duesenbergs and Bugattis that are drop-dead beautiful to look at, but drive like trucks. They deserve to be revered, but only in the context of how they relate to the overall history of the automobile.

So, too, for wooden speedboats. They are magnificent examples of the shipwright's art, but now the time has come to recognize that a younger,

more creative breed of boatbuilders arrived in the '60s to literally sink their wooden forerunners.

As an example, the little Donzi was pound-for-pound, foot-for-foot, stronger, tougher, faster and more stable than any other boat in the show.

As far as Bruce Amsterdam and I are concerned, that deserved recognition. After all, the Donzi was older than several late '60s Lymans that had been accepted, and far more authentic than the entered replica boats created from old Chris-Craft and Gar Wood designs. Were these counterfeits more thoroughbred than the Donzi—or were they more acceptable simply because they were made out of wood? (Actually make that West System cryptowood.) Understanding our severe handicap with the judges, we tried the sleazy ploy of placing Amsterdam's wonderfully cute seven-year-old daughter Catie on the Donzi, hoping that a little girl might soften their hearts. It didn't.

Our only pay-off came, in a symbolic moment of high humor, when the only blowbote in the show, a pretty Penn Yan sailing dinghy, sank at its dock.

But the pecksniffs won in the end, rejecting our dreaded little interloper. No doubt next year the rules will specify "wooden boats," which will only amplify the myopia of the antique-boat community.

As I have said before, it's time we begin to recognize the great fiberglass boats of the past that are the new classics.

It may not happen at places like Alexandria Bay and Clayton, but perhaps a show will be created to celebrate the Brave New World of fiberglass. Maybe it should be called "Glass Trash" to keep the purists happy. ↓



Now, yachtsmen wanting the maximum open spaces of an express yacht and the bulletproof performance of a champion sportfisherman can have both in the new Viking 43' Sportfish/Express. This bold new style statement will look equally at home, sportfishing 100 miles offshore or cruising the sun-drenched Mediterranean. It features the very same advanced marine engineering and build quality that have earned Viking its revered reputation among the most knowledgeable yachtsmen. And, as such, she will deliver the same ultra-reliable performance and maximum resale value as her sisterships.

This new Viking 43' is available in two styles: the cruising *Express* or the tournament-ready *Sportfish*, both utilizing Viking's renowned 43' modified V-hull, and powered by twin turbo diesels capable of speeds

in excess of 30 knots.

INTRODUCING: THE VIKING OF EXPRESS YACHTS.

The 43's are designed with the helm station

placed centerline (the preferred line of sight for fishing and cruising) so when a fish strikes, it's just two steps down from the helm to the cockpit.

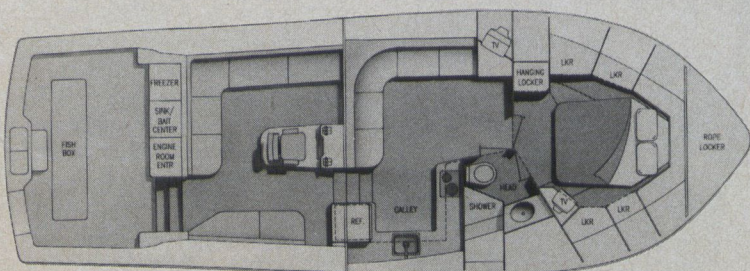
The 43's feature a 15'3" beam, a spacious 107 sq. ft. cockpit with direct engine room access and a step-up command bridge with lounge seating. The bridge accommodates up to a dozen guests with



ample storage virtually everywhere. Either model features a spacious open interior layout with abundant headroom. Access to below is starboard of the helm station just three steps down.

The one stateroom layout features an open lounge, and a dinette with a fully equipped U-shaped galley to starboard. The two stateroom model offers an optional guest stateroom layout. The Sportfish

model can be delivered turnkey tournament-ready with everything from a hardtop to outriggers and cockpit freezer. Whichever model you choose, you can be sure of one thing: the new 43' Sportfish/Express is every inch a pure Viking.



THE VIKING 43' SPORTFISH/EXPRESS LAYOUT FEATURES A SPACIOUS 107 SQ. FT. COCKPIT WITH DIRECT ENGINE ROOM ACCESS; A STEP UP COMMAND BRIDGE SEATING 12 AND PRIVATE MASTER STATEROOM.


viking
yachts
 Truly world class.