

Bring Boating To Life: Ship A Build-A-Boat Kit To Your Home, Build It With Your Kids

By Clint Chase, Owner, Chase Small Craft

Malcolm and his boy did it, finally. It was not easy, it was sometimes dirty, and it took a long time. But, they were here, finally, sitting on varnished, wood seats that they made, with fishing poles in hand and smiling big. They still had glue in their hair and paint on their clothes. The smell of the spruce and pine was still on them. The feeling of accomplishment and joy coursed through their veins. Together, they had built a boat; together, they were fishing; and there was nothing else that could match this feeling. They had built their own boat, together...

There are a world of boats to build, many of them small skiffs for sail, motor, and oars that are built using the stitch-and-glue method. The boats are made of thin, plywood panels that are stitched together with wire, or even zip ties. Epoxy, an advanced adhesive, is mixed in two parts and applied to the seams. When the epoxy cures, the wires are removed and the boat becomes nearly monocoque, a fancy term for "one piece". But, the method requires an enormous amount of glue and fiberglass needed to reinforce the joints structurally. The method is a great one, but makes for a great degree of exposure to epoxy and there is very little woodworking involved.

Alternatively, the Easy-to-Build line of boats at Chase Small Craft uses a different approach called the Tab-n-Lock method. It also uses epoxy to hold it all together but demands much less of it. Even better, there is much more fun in woodworking. Instead of wires, there are tabs that fit into slots in the hull held with small wedges. The tabs are cut away after the glue cures. And, there is hardly any fiberglass required because the boats use a chine log, a 3/4" x 1-1/2" piece of wood that runs the length of the boat along its chine. This wood is the structure and adds to the aesthetic beauty of the boat. These boats are *real wooden boats*, made to last. One of the skiffs I built from the Easy-to-Build line has gone almost 10 years without needing any repainting!

The featured boats in the Easy-to-Build lineup are the Compass Skiff, Echo Bay Dory Skiff, Caravelle, and the Goat Island Skiff. The Compass and Echo Bay are, by far, the favorites. **The Compass Skiff** is a 10-foot outboard skiff made with 3/8" thick plywood hull and can take up to a 6hp motor. The Compass is a favorite for





those who want a motor skiff as a tender to a larger boat, for fisherman, and for kids who are new to boating. The wide, stable bottom of the Compass and the high freeboard make it a secure and dry boat. **The Echo Bay Dory Skiff** (and larger sister, the Caravelle) is a 12-foot sailing and rowing skiff. They are small and lightweight, easily car-top-able, and easy enough to store in the yard on a pair of



sawhorses. Yet, these are capable small boats that can handle oceans, lakes, and rivers alike. The Echo Bay is not as stable as the Compass initially, but as it leans over, it gains a great degree of "secondary" stability. As a result, she's swift to row and sails like a witch. The custom oars stow easily while sailing and are at the ready for coming into the dock or rowing in when the wind dies. One of the most striking qualities of *both* skiffs is their tremendous capacity. Load the boats with kids, pets, and coolers and there is still capacity for you!

While these boats can be built from plans alone, the best way to build them is from the

complete kits that we make in the shop. All the plywood comes precut and labelled, while the solid wood pieces, used to build the interior, all arrive already cut to dimensions. The only tools needed are a block plane, a saw, chisel, drills and bits, measuring tools, and a few clamps. The specialty adhesives and supplies come in the kit, as does the marine hardware for fitting out. A thorough instruction manual, plans, and all the customer support you need are a crucial part of the package. I am always available to take a question or help you through the sticky points.

Find out more or order your kit today at www.chase-small-craft.com.

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