

## 38' CRUISING YACHT *JESSICA*

### DIMENSIONS

LOA:	38' 5"
LWL:	32' 1"
BEAM:	11' 10.5"
DRAFT:	5' 5"
DISPLACEMENT, 1/2 load:	16,158 lbs
BALLAST (lead):	7,000 lbs
SAIL AREA (100% foretriangle):	707 sq ft
SAIL AREA/DISP RATIO:	19.63
DISPLACEMENT/LENGTH RATIO:	219



*JESSICA during sea trials in 1983. Hood sails of Marblehead built the beautiful crosscut Dacron sails in 1983. They were still being used in 2008!*

I call *JESSICA* the "family boat." Not blood family- my parents died years ago and they feared and hated the water all their days. *JESSICA* was, in a way, a wedding gift. Shortly after I met Debby her father Frank commissioned the design of his ultimate 38 footer. *JESSICA* was built in Maine by Roger Morse, with a glassed over plywood deck on a one-off fiberglass hull. It was my earliest design with any racing pretensions and luckily, turned out to be a fabulous yacht. In fact I can say I have had more damned fun in that boat than a man has any right to. Frank left us on Christmas day 2005 and he and his beloved Nancy now sail together on some celestial shore.

During his time on this earth he became, on account of his daughter and that boat, my best friend. Great boats, as opposed to the consumer craft you see so much of at boat shows, can become things that tie generations together and create memories that live forever.

When he'd just retired Frank got infected by the ocean racing bug. So we raced *JESSICA* in three successive Marion-Bermuda races. Every one was memorable., Like so many of my designs, *JESSICA* was bloody stiff. Of course stability is measured and so is sail area, and *JESSICA* had a lot of both, so she carried a handicap rating that was hard to sail up to. But we weren't expecting to

win silverware- we were there for the fun of pushing a great sailing boat as hard in the black hours of the morning as at midday, and of finding that dangerous little reef fringed paradise after four days using nothing but a sextant and the stars. One race started off with very little wind but just as the fleet drifted past Cuttyhunk a dry cold front came down on us like a runaway train in Prussian blue, knocking down unsuspecting boats as it passed. We figured out pretty quick that we could carry the most sail by running two genoas up the headstay and stowing the main. It blew like the clappers from dead astern for four straight days but it was so dry we never even closed the ports though the Shipmate stove chewed away constantly on anything we had aboard that would burn.



*Chuck tying up JESSICA in Bermuda, 1983.*

As Frank got older he gave up racing and cooked up the “men’s cruise.” He’d gather a bunch of his doctor friends and spend two weeks sailing the boat as far into Canada as he could, and back. There was often at least one “token male” aboard, usually his incomparable Nancy who’d be the only one capable of cooking dinner and deliver a running commentary on pelagic birds while everyone else was communing with the rail gods. One crew would sail up the southern coast of Nova Scotia to Baddeck; the other would drive up and replace them for the long lumpy slog back against the wind. I got to go along on the downwind part, since I was working and on a schedule and most of the rest were retired. We’d do two overnights if there was a breeze, three or four if there wasn’t. There are not a lot of East Coast sailors who sail east of Halifax. It’s a foreboding rock strewn fog-enshrouded land that anyone who ever got together bus fare, left.

We’d grope their way dog-tired after two or three nights at sea into something that passed for shelter, running wing and wing into an invisible narrow gash between granite ledges that passed for a channel if you could find it. Once safely at anchor it was a lesson in the history of a continent’s march westward, our own personal version of Annie Proulx’s “Shipping News”. While “real” yachtsmen from New York City and its environs outbid each other to speculate the prices of houses and land into the stratosphere, we hiked spectacular hillsides strewn with stunted wildflowers to abandoned farmhouses you could move into for a year or two with nobody within miles who’d care. I often tell people, “I’ve sailed the coast of Nova Scotia every year for ten years. But I ain’t SEEN it yet.”

You can buy for very little money some wimpy fat boat-shaped object comprised mostly of three or four molded fiberglass parts designed by cost engineers and glued together by the teeming exploited



masses of a third world country we'd rather trade with than engage in war. If you do, it will soon telegraph to anyone with two brain cells to rub together the fact that it was intended to spend its life in a marina. And that is not altogether a bad thing, don't get me wrong. But if you aspire to sail across the big scary ocean to tiny low islands with fascinating cultures, or to knock around the murky granite fringed verges of mysterious lands that the imperatives of survival have plowed under and left behind for generations, you'd want a yacht of real character. *JESSICA* is one of these.



*Her straight-forward interior - in a pinch she could sleep seven.*



*JESSICA after a recent restoration with green Awlgrip topsides and varnished teak.*

