

LOFT LINES

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A NEWSLETTER FROM HAARSTICK SAILMAKERS

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OUR FREEDOM SAILS ARE THE POPULAR CHOICE! By Steve Haarstick

We would like to thank our customers for the tremendous support you have given us over the years, but especially for the past three years, as we have received over 130 orders for Freedom sails and sail covers within this period! As Freedom no longer builds their line of unique sail boats, all these orders have been for replacement sails. After a lull in the mid nineties, our Freedom business has steadily increased over the past several years, as “word of mouth” of the quality, durability, and performance of our Freedom sails has spread. This many replacement orders for a single site, independent sail loft over the past three years have been especially gratifying.

Our entry to the design and construction of our unique Freedom sails began in 1982, when we were asked to develop a completely new Main and Mizzen concept for a Freedom 44 Cat Ketch to replace the “2-ply wrap around sails” that were the original equipment on all previous Freedoms. Freedom had decided to replace the wishbone booms with a conventional boom attached to the mast with a gooseneck fitting, complete with lazy jacks, and a track on the mast for luff slides. Freedom wanted to try a single ply main with a very large roach that would be supported with full length non-tapered or “exotic” cored battens. The design challenge for us was to compute the proper luff curve to match the limited bend of the free standing Carbon masts, select the proper cloth, and design that would carry the very large leech roach without distortion, or leech “fall-off” without the use of “exotic” laminated, or tapered battens.

Quite an engineering challenge for a relatively young and small independent sail loft! When we delivered our first sails for the initial sailing trials, I must admit that the butter flies in my stomach were churning as we motored out to the bay. It was a gray day, with the wind in the high teens, as we hoisted the sails, bore off and sheeted in. There were quite a few skeptics on board, expecting the worst. While I thought I had done my homework on the design and cloth selection, there is always an air of uncertainty, and I was almost afraid to look up as the boat accelerated into the breeze. To my relief, as we sheeted in, the sails flatted out evenly from top to bottom. With each gust of wind the top two battens would twist off to leeward, and the leech was perfect! No distortion, no “floppy”, or tight leech, in short, the sails looked great! The boat tracked as if it were on rails, with almost no helm, or tendency to round up in the gusts. There were compliments from all on board! I was relieved as my apprehension quickly dissipated! When we tied up to the dock, I was told the performance of our sails on the new rig was so exceptional, compared with the previous “2-ply wrap-around mains”, that they would be changing all their new boats over to this new rig, and would strongly recommend our sails for all their subsequent boats. I was thrilled! Was it the result of solid engineering or just blind luck? With all the variables involved, I think it is fair to say there was an element of luck involved, but the unusual approach we took with the panel layouts, the design of the sails, and the choice of cloth were based on some pretty solid structural engineering.

Throughout the eighties and early nineties, we built sails for every version of yacht that Freedom developed, from the Freedom 20 and 21, all the way up to the Freedom 40-40 and 45. We have shipped sails throughout the US, including the west coast, and overseas to Bermuda, the Caribbean, and England. We have been Freedom’s preferred sail maker for the past 25 years, and have probably made more Freedom sails than any other sail maker. For a single site sail maker to achieve this kind of world wide acceptance of our Freedom sails is very gratifying!

We have not rested on our laurels. Every Freedom customer is extremely important to us, and I personally handle all aspects of the order, from initial contact, to the design of each sail, to the selection

of the cloth for every sails we make. Each sail is custom designed by me personally, using our proven design program inputs to each owner's specific needs and rig details. There are no short cuts in the manufacturing, no sourcing of any materials other than the best available. All our Freedom sails are cut here in Rochester on the world's most accurate and durable cutting machine: our Gerber cutter. All the panels are cut from fully tested cloth (see our unique Flutter Test program on our web site), and fit together perfectly to form the three dimensional shape without ANY "adjustments" or hand fairing of the assembled sails. In short, we do whatever it takes to make the absolutely best Freedom sail possible, and, hopefully, our pricing, while far from the cheapest, reflect the best value on the market.

Thanks again to all our Freedom customers for allowing us to build our sails for these fine yachts for so many years!

A Sailmakers Perspective on Boat Preparation

It seems like we have waited a longtime for this, but we are finally in the home stretch where launch time is near, and that first sail of the season with our new sails is upon us. It is probably safe to say that as I write this article, many of you are scrambling to remove your winter covers, wax the topsides and make sure that your boats bottom is smooth like a baby's backside. All this is pretty standard spring maintenance, but many of us (myself included) over look some of the more subtle points of spring commissioning. Particularly when it comes to all the different blocks, tracks, sheets and halyards that we use to shape and control our new sails.

I would be dishonest if I told you that for every high tech racing and cruising sail that we send out our doors goes to an owner who takes the same care and attention to detail to their boat as we do with our sailmaking. Quite often even the most savvy sailors strap on their new rags with the same tired and ratty lines, blocks and tracks that were original equipment with the boat 10, 20 or even 30 years ago, never fully realizing the full potential of today's high tech materials and panel layouts.

There is nothing new or break through about what I am trying to get at here, and countless major sailing publications have written lengthy articles complete with color pictures, but never the less it seems like proper boat prep is often overlooked. Whether it is the associated costs of marine hardware, lack of time or proper product knowledge, most boats out there sailing today are still using the old factory gear. I find this particularly perplexing when one of the very few things that we can do upgrade

the performance of our boat and not be assessed a rating penalty is to swap out those old stretchy sheets and clunky blocks for some low stretch line and free spinning ball bearing blocks.

There are a wide variety of go fast goodies for our boats these days that cover a broad spectrum of sailing levels and budgets from the club sailor to the grand prix yachtsman. Dealing with rigging and hardware upgrades can be done in such a fashion that they will not delay launch date and put an unnecessary hurting on the pocket book. It can be helpful and cost conscious to break down spring improvements into groups that can be completed over several seasons to offset cost and time constraints. An easy way to determine what should be upgraded first is to pair your upgrades with what ever new sail you purchased or are thinking of purchasing. This way as you rotate new sails through your inventory you can get a good idea what should be done if anything at all and make sure that you don't have any un-for seen problems and expenses during the sailing season. The benefits of buying an expensive Pentex or Carbon Fibre main or genoa are marginalized when the halyard that tensions the luff, stretches like a rubber band making it all but impossible to duplicate settings and change gears quickly and accurately in varying conditions. Another common problem that I have encountered is when you go to tack across the fleet or to cover the competition, because that new headsail really got you back in the game, but the bulky ½" genoa sheets gets hackled in the turning block and you wind up loosing 4 boats. These are both real common scenarios that I run into out there that can be easily avoided and would make a huge difference at the end of the year when it is time for awards night.

The conclusion that I am drawing upon is that successful sailing is similar to a recipe, where no one ingredient is no more important than the rest and in the end they all come together to contribute to the final outcome of success. I apologize to the reader if this topic has turned more into an editorial rant rather than instructional how to, but with all the time and money spent out on the water honing our skills gaining experience, it seems rather foolish that it can all be undone by overlooking something as simple as the hardware that we use to control the driving force of our boats, the sails.

By

Eric Christensen

The Season Is Upon Us

For our local sailors in Western NY the season is less than 1 month away. Although racing has begun for some, or never stopped for others (frostbiters), I have always felt that the annual J-Daze Regatta, hosted by CYC on Canandaigua Lake, marks the start of the summer sailing season.

J-Daze is scheduled for May 5-6 this year. A new event (I believe this will be the 2nd annual) is scheduled for the Sunday prior at CYC, the "Rustbuster Regatta". This year boats coming to J-Daze may be brought to CYC starting on Friday 4/27 (not before). On Sunday the 29th they will set a course and run several short races so you can practice timed starts and crew work. Skippers meeting is at 11am with races to follow.

Not everyone will have this advantage for the 2007 season. This is a great opportunity for the J/24 fleet in the area (and others that come from Oswego, Buffalo and Canada) to get a jump on the sailing season.

The season seems to come and go in a flash every year, so make the most of it. Try to get out as early as you can and stay out as late as you can. For the racers out there, get your crew together and practice, hopefully before the first race. It will give you an edge on your competitors. Get the bugs out early and do some tacks, sets, jibes, and douses.

Too many times have I seen crews fumbling about on the boat in mid-June. 2 months after that, the racing season is over. Start making calls and e-mails and get your crew together in early May for some on the water practice.

Good luck to all of our customers this year. If you feel that you would like to have a Haarstick Rep. on your boat, please call to arrange an appointment. We would be happy to come out and help you get the most out of your sails.

Doug Burtner

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