

Plans of *Malabar VII*, winner of this year's Bermuda Race. Designed by J. G. Alden.

### The Winning *Malabar VII*

WE are glad to be able to present herewith the plans of *Malabar VII*, the latest creation of John G. Alden, of Boston, and the winner of this year's 660-mile race to Bermuda. The new flyer, while showing many of the characteristics of her older sisters, is a bit longer over

6-8 h.p. Kermath, is installed aft behind a bulkhead, and drives her 4-5 miles per hour with a Thompson feathering wheel, the shaft running out through the port quarter.

*Malabar* was built by Reed-Cook, Boothbay Harbor, Maine, and she is canvassed with Cousens and Pratt sails. A 3-burner Protane gas stove in the galley has given excellent satisfaction all season.

### We Would All Like to Hear from Commodore Munroe

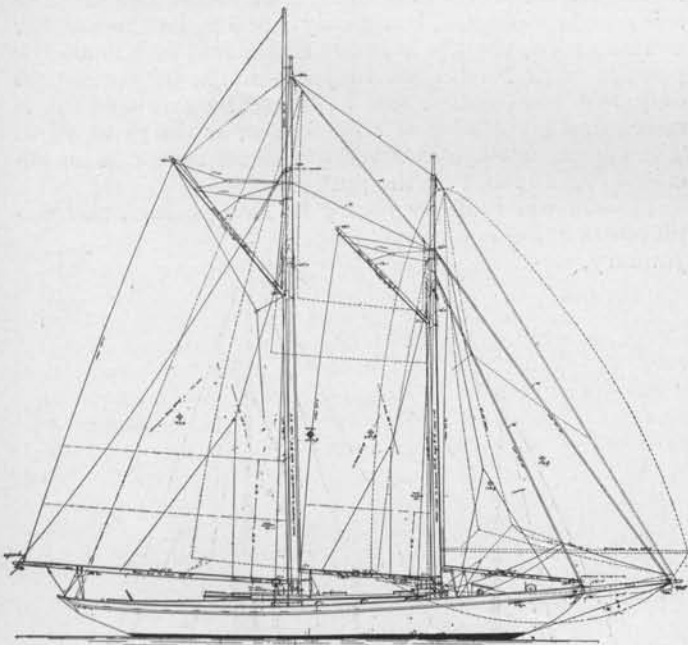
Editor, YACHTING:

On the subject of shallow draft boats for cruising, I doubt whether there is anybody alive whose opinion and experience is of more interest than that of Commodore Ralph M. Munroe, of Coconut Grove, Florida. In a recent letter he writes me as follows:

"I thank you for, and much appreciate, the Junk book (*Chinese Junks*, by I. A. Donnelly, Published by Kelly & Walsh, Ltd., Shanghai, China). It is a fine addition to my growing library on the light-draft subject, which by the way has, through Howard's article in YACHTING, been taken up by the Cruising Club and others, and somewhat adversely, so it seems. These comments and criticisms are fairly well stated, but they have not arrived at the basis of the proposition, and know not all of what they are talking of, and naturally lapse into the old ideas and phases of the skimming dish, which is easily understood, and thus dismissed from further consideration. Possibly some day I will take a day off and see if it can be elucidated. It can hardly be reduced to mathematics except to a limited degree, and is where its opponents usually down it, and under fanciful stresses. The hollows and crests of ocean waves have never been figured out and probably never will be. Only practical experience — and who has had more of it than a coast Chinaman? The mouths of their great rivers with inordinate tides and treacherous sand bars afford a supreme test in bad weather."

I wish YACHTING would invite him to write us more on the above subject, which is of intense interest to anyone who loves the sport of cruising more than mere jazz-races.

L. H. BAEKELAND.



Sail plan of *Malabar VII*.

all, with a bit less freeboard, and a little more sail. Her dimensions are: l.o.a., 53' 9"; l.w.l., 38'; beam, 12' 5"; draft, 7' 3"; sail area, 1,406 sq. ft. Both the foremast and mainmast are a bit taller than on previous boats, giving a better chance to spread light canvas, and a jib topsail is carried besides.

The accommodation plan is quite similar to other *Malabars*, with a large double stateroom aft, toilet room and large locker space, main cabin amidships, and large galley and forecabin forward. The motor, a 2-cylinder,

## Letters and Correspondence

### More Light on the Centerboard Controversy

YOUR challenge to centerboard advocates to "upset Fenger's dope" should not go unanswered; yet it is a discussion which I enter with reluctance, since my personal experience in heavy weather at sea is slight. On the other hand, I have known Commodore Munroe, designer of *Alice*, for many years, and this spring spent a month with him, during which we discussed Mr. Fenger's article in your May issue; and for nineteen years I have sailed one of his boats, *Wabun*, mainly single-handed, all over Florida, to the Bahamas and to Cape Cod.

First, let me say that Mr. Fenger's article stands out by long odds as the best contribution to the centerboard discussion. It is fair-minded, and based on ample experience of weather. I would give much to get him and Com. Munroe together and hear them thrash it out. Unfortunately, the latter is much occupied by other affairs, and cannot reopen on paper a discussion over which he has gone several times in the 35 years since he originated his *Presto* type. Therefore I will try to pass on what I have learned from *Wabun* and from him, in favor of a properly designed centerboard boat. In doing this I will disregard the advantages of being able to navigate shallow water, though an instructive volume might be written on this subject. The Atlantic coast — indeed most coasts — has many shallow inlets, closed to keel boats, and often full of interest to the cruiser, more so, in fact, than the larger and better known harbors. But this discussion bears on ability, weatherliness and safety at sea in heavy weather.

We claim superiority for the shoal draft boat under these conditions in all respects save one: that the keel boat may be *driven harder* and made to go *faster to windward*, in heavy winds and rough water. If you want a racer, therefore, you must build deep. But the *Presto* type, of which *Alice* is a slight variant, will, on the other hand, keep on going to windward against any wind and sea that it is good for man to oppose, will do it at a good pace, and will do it with much greater comfort to her crew and less strain on hull and gear; she will keep dryer and will live longer than the "lead mine," and she will show equal or better speed in reaching or running.

For brevity, let us admit, with slight reservations, all that Mr. Fenger so aptly says, down to the sentence, "If we remove the keel, with its dollop of outside weight, we must increase the beam for stability's sake." That is not true of the *Presto* type. This is notably narrow, with slight initial stability, but with ample ballast, albeit inside, to give extreme firmness on the sailing lines — in conjunction, of course, with the characteristic flare above the water-line. She does not roll out when knocked down nor offer a high-standing, hard, weather bilge to the next sea, which Mr. Fenger properly states are the weaknesses of some shoal boats.

What she *does* do, which no heavily ballasted boat can, is to lift quickly and easily over any sea, even the most abrupt, instead of going through it, keeping herself dry and comfortable, and avoiding the racking strains between buoyancy and ballast, and between the deep-set keel and the exposed topsides, which are often responsible for leaks after a severe hammering.

She does not need large sail area to drive increased beam, nor width to carry sail; that easily becomes a vicious circle. There is no more easily driven type of hull, as is shown by its surprising speed under moderate auxiliary power. With cruising rig about equivalent to the average cruiser single-reefed, they have uniformly held their own with boats of their type and size; they carry this sail after the others are reefed, and the harder it blows the better they show up in comparison.

For example, *Micco* (50' o.a.) on joining an Atlantic Y. C. fleet cruise, was offered 15 minutes' start of the racers, because of her obvious heavy type and small rig. But on the first day a thunder squall stripped the fleet of kites and threw it into confusion, while *Micco* carried full sail, finished second in a fleet of all sizes, and had her handicap at once revoked. She also finished second in her class in a recent Bermuda race, at 33 years of age, in spite of carrying away a doted masthead and rigging at sea.

The original *Carib* I saw building at Coconut Grove, and often heard the story of her trial trip. A supposedly crack sloop of her size had been "laying for her," and they started across the Bay close-hauled, in a fresh summer northeaster, the sloop single-reefed, *Carib* whole sail. She covered the 11 miles while the sloop was doing 8, and the latter turned back in disgust. So much for speed to windward. *Carib* then proceeded out of the Bay and across Cape Florida bar into the Straits, through solid breakers, "as easy as an old shoe," as the Commodore expressed it. Then up stick and back across the bar, half a gale on the quarter, and she went through that boiling mess as though it were still water, steered with one hand all the time on one spoke. So much for balance and comfort. She spent years with Mr. Haigh at Cat Cay, in the Bahamas, knocking about across the Stream and through the West Indies in all seasons; afterwards a fisherman kept her many summers at moorings off the beach at Asbury Park, taking off fishing parties in a surfboat. When heavy weather stopped business he sometimes ran out to sea and hove to, for comfort.

One of the smallest of the *Presto*-boats, *Utilis*, 33' o.a. 22" draft, remained for twelve years the Commodore's own boat. She was an open boat (summer cabin, with canvas curtains at sides and rear) yet she took to the confused chop of the Gulf Stream in the Straits with perfect serenity, and made many trips to the Bahamas, never taking a drop aboard. She was 9' beam, and so tender that she heeled considerably when one stepped on deck, and she sailed at a considerable angle; but beyond her sailing lines she would not go, and she would carry whole sail, and go to windward with it, until the cows came home. Even the Commodore calls her a paradox.

There was scarcely a boat of this type built which did not make many converts to a belief in the ability of *good* shoal draft boats, and they were all favorites with their owners. My own *Wabun* I will not speak of, for I would talk too long. The *Presto*-boats are honest, comfortable cruising ships, heavily built, reliable, easily handled, comfortable, both to themselves and their crews, and with a very surprising turn of speed, to windward as well as free. An unusual feature of their construction which has some bearing on their performance is the weight of their centerboards, which are in marked contrast to the old skimming-dish ideal of a thin, limber board. They are of massive oak, with many heavy drift-bolts, and their trunks are of the same construction, which makes it feasible to carry them in the roughest water without strain. *Wabun's* is unusually large and heavy, 10 feet long and about 900 pounds, and constitutes an appreciable item of ballast, while for 34 years it has been unmercifully banged on coral heads, driven deep into mud and sand, used as a handy mooring at shoal wharves, and subjected to every form of unreasonable strain, without damage.

Perhaps the true answer to the keel advocates — certainly so to many of them — is simply: "You do not know what a *good* centerboard boat is, or what she can do. If you did, you would want to enjoy their greater comfort, safety and range."

VINCENT GILPIN.