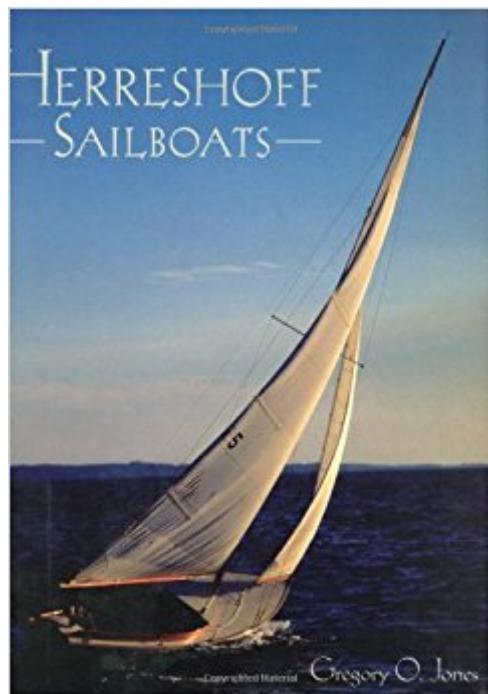


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# Herreshoff Sailboats



## Synopsis

Greg Jones. Herreshoff Manufacturing Company in Bristol, Rhode Island, produced the most technically advanced, popular, and prominent boats of their day. Today, Herreshoff boats are recognized as the most historically significant boats of their time, and command some of the highest prices. Herreshoff Sailboats covers some of the major classes of Herreshoff boats including schooners, yawls, ketches, sloops, Q, R-, and J- class yachts, and lanches. The story begins with John and Charles Herreshoff who founded the boatyard in 1832. The sale of Herreshoff to the Haeffner Corp. in the 1920s is also profiled. The epilogue explains the company's decision not to build fiberglass boats, and close its doors. Vintage black and white photos will tell the story, and modern color photography will show Herreshoff's role in yachting today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First, the cover shot of a Fish-class boat is stunning and draws you to look time and again. So too, the schooner Eleonora. Author Gregory Jones is an experienced yachting writer with other books and periodical writing experiences. The problem with this book is it is jumbled together lacking good organization and editing. There is some useful information and the quality of some pictures makes this qualified recommendation only. The topic of Herreshoff boats and the reader deserve much better. Jones, uses an interesting mechanism to provide stunningly reasonable estimates of what these boats would cost in 2004 dollars. Unfortunately, how he calculates these numbers is not discussed and leads one to question his method. For example on p. 57 he notes Cup contender

Colonia cost \$45,000 (verified in Guide to The Haffenreffer-Herreshoff Collection) or \$900,000 in 2004 dollars. It is doubtful an 85' waterline, 120' on deck cutter of composite construction, and over 100 tons displacement could be built for anywhere close to \$1 million in 2004, let alone a state of the art vessel. The author does detail the paths of two of Captain Nat's sons who became renowned designers in their own right: A. Sidney DeWitt and Lewis Francis (LFH). New to me was a believable description of why they were unable to assume leadership of the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company and perpetuate fine yacht manufacturing after the founder's death in 1915 and Nat's retirement in 1924. The final chapter, although lacking organization, is on L.F.H's work. My problem with the book comes down to factual errors and poor organization, compounded by inaccurate captioning of pictures. The factual errors both diminish the reader's enjoyment and lead one to question the veracity and understanding of context presented. In fairness to Jones, one suspects the editor and proof reader were absolutely unfamiliar with the subject or absent altogether. This is the biggest disappointment, and why I think it not worth the price to buy this new. One might guess that mismatched pictures and narrative diminishes the reading experience. For example, Chapter 3 "The Sailing Vessels 1878-1900" fails to deliver. First there were only 10 sailing vessels built by HMCo from 1878 through 1890, only two are pictured--both are Nat's personal yachts. Then 125 sailing vessels built from 1891 through 1899. There is one picture of Gloriana, the breakout boat from 1891, a picture of a James Gordon Bennett who has no significant role in the chapter, a current picture of limestone cliffs in England, then a painting of Vigilant and Valkyrie contending the 1893 Cup, Nat, and employee and a child from 1900, a BB15 from after 1900, Niagara from 1895, two modern day Alerion reproductions, and a 1930's J Class boat from another builder and designer. Twelve pictures in all in this chapter, six of which cover his yachts designed during this period. On pp. 51-52 the 1913 designed Alerion merits two photos of replicas built in the 1990's. It gets worse: on p. 47 there is a painting of the 1893 Cup defender Vigilant which is prominently displayed and described in the following chapter devoted solely to these America's Cup defenders. Saving the worst for last, the final page of the chapter (p. 53) shows the Lawley built, Paine designed, 130' J Class Yankee of 1930 but misrepresents it as the 1925 L.F. Herreshoff 34' R-boat design also, coincidentally, named Yankee. Sloppy work. Chapter 4 "Nat's Cup Boats of the Nineteenth Century" contains similar discordant pictures to the story line. On p. 54 there is a picture of the third Herreshoff cup boat "Defender" from 1895. On p. 56 there is a painting of an 1881 America's Cup race--not an Herreshoff and not discussed in the text. As John Diehl once said, "If you are going to introduce a gun, you better fire it!" Then there is a cartoon of six RYS members from 1894, for which there is little discussion of any of their characters except for the challenger Dunraven's. Why show

the caricature of the major players without a description of the importance of the major players and the reason for the challenge? Next a picture of Vigilant(the 1893 defender) on p. 58, then a portrait of the 1893 cup race p. 59, then p. 60 a cup defender race, then p. 62 while the text describes the 2nd and 3rd 1893 cup races there is a picture of the 1895 cup challenger Valkyrie III. The chapter ends thusly, "There was one more Cup race, in 1899, to close out the nineteenth century. It was the first of the Sir Thomas Lipton's series of five Shamrocks, and it is a story best told consecutively." The back and forth in the timeline will have you flipping pages back and forth and asking "now where was that picture of...". In a word it is distracting. If you want one book for the coffee table with accurate text get Maynard Bray and Carleton Pinheiro's Herreshoff of Bristol. A Herreshoff of Bristol: A Photographic History of America's Greatest Yacht and Boat Builders. If you want just the glossy picture book for the coffee table where organization comes second to history get Franco Pace's Herreshoff and his Yachts A Herreshoff and His Yachts both are better than Jones' book. If you want the history of these boats and their shops through 1905 get A Temple to the Wind: The Story of America's Greatest Naval Architect and His Masterpiece, Reliance. Finally, if you want a biography (hagiography might be a better description) get L.F. Herreshoff's A Capt. Nat Herreshoff: The Wizard of Bristol.

Great read for a sailor, also a nice "coffee table" book

real nice.

I first saw this book while having dinner on a friends boat. I liked it so much, especially since I used to sail on a Herreshoff boat when I was a kid, that I got my own copy. Its really well written, and the Herreshoff family is pretty amazing. Nat isn't ever going to make Father of the Year, but he really designed some great boats. His son Francis somehow survived his father and made his own great boats. This is a beautiful book, with lots of amazing photographs, and a great story too. I never knew about all the power boats that the Herreshoffs designed, or all the boats for the navy. I think even people who just want an interesting book to read with beautiful photographs would like this book.

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