



NorseBoat 17.5

Excerpt from “**The Great Unveiling** of 20 new cruising boats for 2005” by George Day - *Blue Water Sailing* September 2004

The fall boat show season is a great time to check out the new cruising boats, fantasize about the cruising life and make the decisions that can set you free to fulfill those cruising dreams. We hope the previews of boats to be introduced this fall that follow will help you along the way.

Under 40 feet

Nine of the boats that we have selected to preview this year fall into the under-40 category, which is more than we have had in several years. To our minds, that augurs well for the cruising scene because this new crop of boats are all great coastal and offshore boats that will make the cruising life accessible to a wide cross-section of sailors.

One of the most interesting little boats to come along in the past year is the **NorseBoat 17.5**, conceived by veteran cruiser Kevin Jeffrey and designed by

Chuck Paine. Designed as a rowing and sailing cruiser for coastal cruise camping, the new little sloop has an unusual cat rig with a carbon fiber mast and a full-battened main that rides on traditional wood hoops (properly known as parrels). The sail hoists and furls easily. No boom has been designed into the rig, and the boat sails fine without it; however, Jeffrey did conceive that one of the oars could double as a boom, a system that works well, too. With the little reacher flying the boat slips along very nicely, and because the hull is finely balanced it leaves little wake even at hull speed. The centerboard aids in windward performance while, in the up position, allows the boat to be beached.

The NorseBoat has two rowing stations. One person can keep the boat moving fine from the aft seat, but two rowers really add to the average speed. The boat carries a dodger and a Bimini, and in the first sail trials last winter Jeffrey noted that the boat rows fine with the mast standing and the dodger and Bimini in place.

Unless you are Webb Chiles you probably won't head offshore in the NorseBoat 17.5, but this is a sweet little boat (easily trailerable) that would be perfect for exploring big inland lakes or great coastal cruising grounds such as the Florida Keys, the coast of Maine or the Thousand Islands. The boat is built in Prince Edward Island, Canada.