

Why You Want a Hugh Saint Boat

By Grace Ombry

Hugh Saint is a custom boat builder in Cape Coral, Florida who specializes in fine mahogany runabouts that remind you of those built in the 1930s and '40s. His team of skilled artisans combined their backgrounds in engineering with a finely honed understanding of nautical beauty.

A retired U.S. Air Force Colonel, Hugh Saint started his boat building business more than thirty years ago. His business partner Tom Stovalk built wooden furniture and worked as an automotive computer technologist before joining forces with Saint.

All designs come from highly qualified naval architects including Charlie Jannace, Douglas Van Patten, John Hacker and Dan McCarthy. Saint offers an impressive variety of wooden power boats ranging in size from 22' to 65' (6.7 m to 19.8 m) and run anywhere from \$255,000 to \$6.5 million. Their designs incorporate all of today's technology, modern engines and drive systems, in styling so classic these boats are often mistaken for lovingly restored antiques.

Construction time is about 12 months for runabouts and 1½ to 2 years for larger boats.



The Charlie Janace designed 36' Commuter has a 9' beam and a 2' 10" draft. It will reach 50 mph thanks to twin 496hp Crusader HO engines.

Working with their crew of seven employees, they build up to three boats at a time in their 4,500-square-foot boat shop. Their most recent launch was a 65' custom commuter built with copious amounts of WEST SYSTEM® Epoxy. Saint says her top speed is over 50 mph (80 kph) and she turns like a runabout.

Saint uses only the finest marine plywood and pattern grade mahogany in all of their construction. He cold molds every boat with WEST SYSTEM Epoxy for dimensional stability, strength and low maintenance. The bottoms of their bright-finished boats are sheathed in Dynel™ fabric for outstanding durability, and their painted boat hulls are sheathed entirely in Dynel. This acrylic fabric is highly abrasion resistant.

Saint works with wood because it's more weight efficient than fiberglass and offers better strength-to-weight ratios than steel. He encapsulates all of the wood with epoxy to eliminate

shrinking, swelling and rot.

Despite their stunning retro looks, Saint's boats aren't particularly demanding in the maintenance department. The decks are varnished and he recommends keeping them out of the sun when not in use. He says that in tropical climates, his decks can go at least three years between varnish jobs and in northern climates the varnish lasts for a good five years.

Every Hugh Saint boat is fitted with specially designed stainless steel rudders which provide for outstanding handling at any speed. The convex sectioned underbodies provide a soft and stable ride.

Visit www.hughsaint.com for information and photographs of Hugh Saint's boats. ■



The 27' Sheerliner shown here is powered by a 510 hp V-12 BPM marine engine to achieve a 60 mph top speed.