

Building My First Strip-Planked Boat

By Sean Schippers

Early last spring I was working for a talented woodworker in a quaint little wood shop in Nashville, Tennessee. He showed me a strip built canoe, something I'd never seen before. The wheels in my head started turning. I was completely captivated.

Rushing home and searching the internet, I could not believe the information and pictures that took hold of my imagination. I was in utter amazement one minute, jealous the next. In my former experience as a musician, I'd had no idea this kind of craftsmanship, experience and talent existed in today's world of "fast and now."

A good friend and I bought John R. Clark's plans for an 8' Classic Dinghy. I rented a shop space, loaded in appropriate tools, purchased the wood and started ripping strips only 30 days after seeing my first wooden boat.

The plans called for 1/4" western cedar strips. I selected African mahogany with accents of Tennessee walnut and a little bit of maple in the hull, and used zebra wood for the gunwales and cocobolo for oarlock pads. I used two layers of lightweight fiberglass glass and WEST SYSTEM® 105 Epoxy Resin® with 207 Special Clear Hardener™ to seal my wooden treasure.



Schippers completes work on the oarlock of his John R. Clark designed Classic Dinghy.



The stripped dinghy hull before glassing still looks pretty good in a raw state.

This was my first time ever using epoxy on this scale to "wet out" fiberglass. I was amazed at how easy, yet strong, this boat ended up being. Building this boat was a lesson in just how much I have yet to learn. I can hardly wait to get started on my next boatbuilding project.

Sean is currently working out of his wood shop in Nashville, Tennessee, and is about to start his second boat build. ■

Left top—Bottom detail showing African mahogany with accents of Tennessee walnut and maple.

Left bottom—A detail of the transom.

Below—The finished dingy on display.

