

# Walter Greene Inducted Boat Builder's Hall of Fame

YARMOUTH – Boatbuilding on the Maine coast is usually associated with traditional boats, power or sail, built with either wood or fiberglass. However, there are those that choose to use high-tech methods when building their boats. One such person is Walter Greene of Yarmouth, who over the years as a designer and builder, especially of multihulls, has become renowned for his creations world-wide and this has earned him a place in the Maine Boatbuilder's Hall of Fame.

Greene grew up in Guilford, Connecticut, on Long Island Sound. He said, "It was a pretty good place to sail. We had a boat called the *Zip*, which was kind of a neat old keelboat that was about 16 or 17 feet long."

Before entering high school Greene built himself a Blue Jay. After high school he attended the University of Vermont. After graduation he called on Allan Vaitses, a well-known boatbuilder from Mattapoisett, Massachusetts, looking for a job. Vaitses said that he asked him what he could do and he said, 'nothing.' He then asked what him what he was willing to do and he said 'anything.' With that answer Vaitses told him to come on up.

During the early 1970s Greene worked with Vaitses learning all aspects of boatbuilding. During his time there they built all sorts of boats out of fiberglass.

Greene said, "Actually the most interesting project was *Cascade*, the IOR cat-ketch. Another interesting boat for me was *Gulf Stream*, the first boat for Phil Weld. However, I left in the middle of that because Vaitses had sold the business.

"I was there until '73," continued Greene. "My wife got a job working with Harvard medical school and we moved to

Marblehead and I went to work for the Hoods. Was mostly sailing on *Robin* and when I wasn't doing that I was working in the boat yard."

Ted Hood built two or three boats a year and Greene stayed on for about three years. Greene had started sailing in multihulls with Phil Weld in 1972 and built *Friends*, a Newick design, at Hood's yard in 1976. That same year he entered her in the single-handed transatlantic race and placed eighth.

That same year he left Hoods and went to work for Merle Hallett at Handy Boat in Falmouth, Maine. They built a two tonner right off and then *Moxie*, a Freedom 33 prototype and a 56-trimaran. Greene added, "We never did two the same or anything very racy except for *Moxie*. We did build a boat called *Goulois IV* (named for a French cigarette company) that I designed. It led the OSTAR and was a head of Phil Weld when it broke the wing deck in a storm."

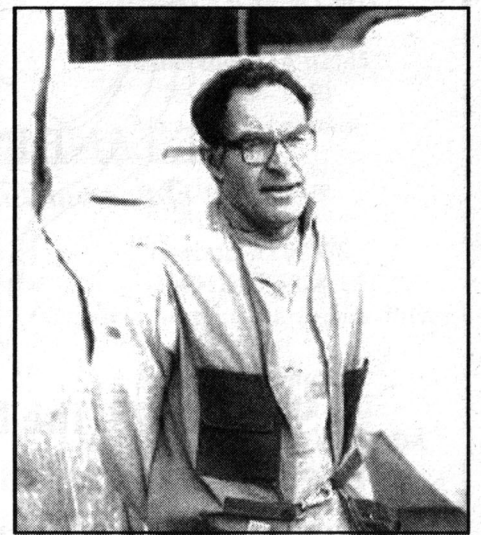
When Mike Birch won the single-handed transatlantic race with a Greene designed racer in 1978, Greene sold some designs in Europe.

In 1980 he left Handy Boat and opened his own shop next to Even Keel Boat Shop in Yarmouth, down behind the Muddy Rudder. They built two 53 footers that winter. They started them in October and launched them in April. Greene added, "Both those broke because we had trouble with the klegecell in the hulls. The one I was sailing on broke 600 miles from Nova Scotia and we limped in there. The other boat won its class, but it was broken at the finish. We spent about six months rebuilding those boats."

Following this there was a dry spell.

They built a couple of 35-footers and a few monohulls. In 1983/4 they built the 45-foot *Sebago*, which was later extended to 50 feet. Greene explained, "She was somewhat under powered for upwind racing and maybe it didn't carry its displacement well enough. The best thing we ever did was win our class in the Round Britain Race. The boat is still sailing today in the Keys as a day charter boat. It has gotten a lot more use that way than it ever did as a racing boat."

In 1994, Greene built a 57-foot day charter multihull for a customer from Newport, Rhode Island, who worked her out of Newport that summer.



Walter Greene

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Over the years Greene continued building and repairing at his yard.

In 1998 they built a floating Dockside deck shoe for Sebago, Inc. This was not an easy feat when one considers all the details, like the laces. That same year Greene Marine built a wave piercing cat, powered with twin 115-hp Johnson outboards, for Jeff Anderson of New Hampshire.

In 2001 he built a 43-foot powered passenger-carrying catamaran for a customer from South Carolina, which he designed.

Greene Marine's next big project will be building another trimaran like Scout,

which the built two years ago for a local customer. They will begin this project this coming winter.

During the winter of 2002 they were refurbishing a five-year-old 22-foot Mini-Transit race boat, and building a 31-foot Dick Newick designed trimaran. That same year they began construction of a 38-foot trimaran designed by Greene for a customer from Deer Isle. One very interesting aspect of this boat is her A-frame rig, which is held up with a fore and backstay.

This winter Greene Marine is refurbishing the first Formula 40, a major project and they are going over *Great American II*, before she competes in the singlehanded trans-Atlantic race.

As for a high-tech builder, Greene said, "May be for Maine, but not the nation. Goetz builds more high tech stuff and uses more carbon than we do. We know how to use it all and would like to but it is not that big a market."

Whether he will admit it or not, Walter Greene is one of the premier boatbuilders on the coast of Maine, especially in the use of high tech materials. He is also one of the most practical builders, knowing exactly what it takes to do the job for the least amount of time and money. He is a wealth of knowledge, which he loves to pass on to anyone interested. So, when you are looking to build, especially a multihull, make sure you consult with Walter Greene, the newest member of the Maine's Boatbuilder's Hall of Fame.

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