

## 12' SCAMP

**A sturdy, stable, big little boat for minimalist cruising or just enjoying a day sail on the bay.**

**By Richard Hazelton**

Usually our boat reviews are of boats whose cockpits are as big as this entire boat. So, when we got a chance to go to Gig Harbor and sail the 12' Micro Cruiser, we didn't know what to expect; 12' and cruiser are hardly ever used in the same sentence.

The name SCAMP comes from Small Craft Magazine Project. The Port Townsend publication, dedicated to "all things small-boat and sailing, while constantly advocating and promoting the minimalist lifestyle," collaborated

with New Zealand-based designer, John Welsford to make CNC plywood kit available. Gig Harbor Boat Works was then asked to create a fiberglass version. The first fiberglass SCAMP hit the water July, 2013.

Gig Harbor Boat Works, known for their strong, esthetically pleasing rowing boats, has already shipped a number of the new SCAMPS all over the country and overseas. "The kit boat has a lot of intricate details that the home builder may not have the

*The balanced lug sail is simple to rig, needs minimal adjustment, other than the sheet, powers the boat well in light air, and can be reefed quickly.*

talent or tools to build," says Dave Robertson, owner of GHB. "With the fiberglass version, they can enjoy using the boat right away." The GHB boat is truly sail-away complete; from oars to sails. There's a basic and "fancy" version, which has wood trim, brass ports, folding cleats and colored hull stripe. The trailer is additional.

There are many innovations designed into the SCAMP that make it truly a big little boat. One thing that usually takes up a lot of cockpit room of most small boats is the centerboard. The SCAMP's centerboard, very heavy but swings up easily for trailer or grounding, is offset to starboard so that it doesn't intrude into the cockpit. I'll let you call Dave to explain the physics of the offset. Suffice it to say that we didn't notice a difference on either tack. The result is it opens up the cockpit which feels more like that of a San Juan 24.

A metal strip beneath the bow says this boat was meant to be beached. Two "grounding skegs," allow the boat to sit level on a beach.

Numerous deck plates provide plenty of stowage space, combined with the lockers up front. There's a nice locker in the cockpit sole which is a good place to stow batteries if you use an electric motor. Another interesting option, along with a standard gas outboard, would be to use a propane outboard.

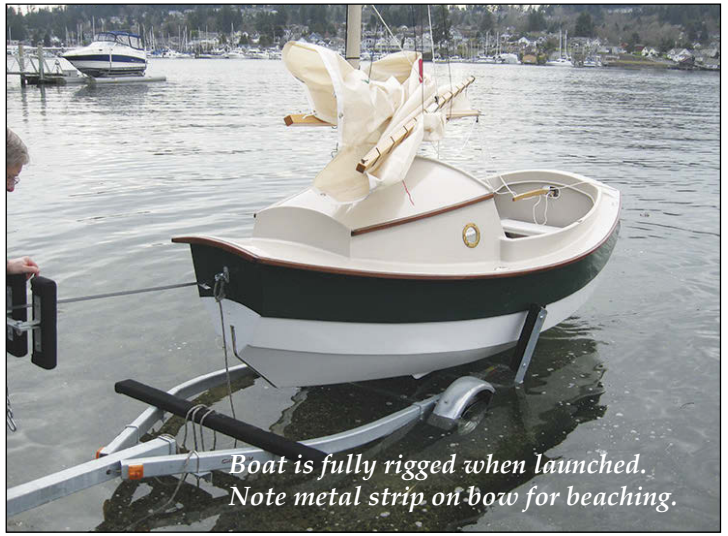


*Above: Doors lead to more stowage up forward. Note how large the cockpit becomes because the offset centerboard is not taking up any space.*

*Left: , The water ballast tank fills automatically with 172 pounds of water. Dave Robertson adds a few cups of water to top off the tank so there's no sloshing from tack to tack.*



Two "grounding skegs" allow the boat to set level when beached and sit solidly on the trailer.



Boat is fully rigged when launched. Note metal strip on bow for beaching.

The rig is 12' tall, balanced lug rig, which not many are familiar, but after setting it up once, is actually quite simple and easily done by one person. Rig the boat on the trailer and you're ready launch.

After launching, 172 pounds of water ballast fills the tank, which is topped off by a hand so that there's no slop while sailing. This only took a couple minutes and we were ready to go.

Having never sailed a balanced lug rig, it took a few minutes to get used to trimming it, but soon we were moving briskly and easily across Gig Harbor. The boat was surprisingly quick and very stable. "This boat can't be just 12' long," I thought. I stood up and rocked it side to side with minimal affect. It felt like 20-footer.

Sailing the SCAMP made me a believer that it actually would be a safe and enjoyable way to explore the San

Juan, as well as just knocking around the bay for a fun day of sailing. The SCAMP had lots of surprises, all good. I have to say it's the biggest little boat I've ever sailed.

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