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**N.Y. National
Boat Show Preview**

Christmas Cruise

**Sail Report—
the Fiberglass Folkboat**

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The Fiberglass Folkboat

Sweden's famous Folkboat in fiberglass—
all the traditional virtues and performance, too.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY
LARRY KEAN AND DICK RATH

IN THIS DAY of fin keels, spade rudders, rocket ship profiles, mini mainsails, giant jibs, and all the other IOR amenities, it's oddly exciting to encounter a modern fiberglass racing/cruising sloop that embodies the traditional virtues—long keel, conventional outboard rudder, seven-eighths rig, and a pretty sheerline. It's even more exciting when you encounter a pretty little paragon that can really *sail*.

We had the experience recently in Sweden, when we sailed an IF-boat out of the Jönköping marina on Lake Vättern, one of Sweden's two big inland seas. With Göran Helmar of Mariefholms Bruk, we warped the boat out of her slip (Folkboats are available with inboard diesels, or with an outboard well—this one, an outboard version, had no engine), then made sail, and tacked out through the marina's inlet.

In a light breeze the IF-boat showed herself to be stiff, weatherly, and able to foot right along with a larger, more "modern" sloop that happened conve-

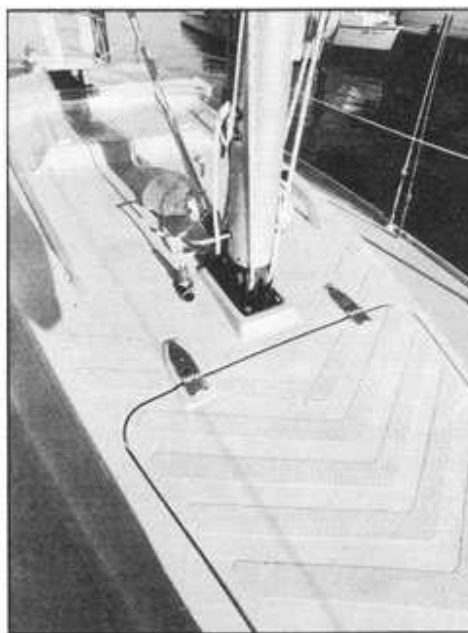
niently along. But more important, at least for the cruising sailor, she asked very little effort on the part of her crew. Going upwind, with a little judicious balancing of sheets, she seemed willing to sail herself, and going downwind she steered steadily and reliably, showing no inclination to punish a moment's inattention with an accidental jibe. In light air, of course. Though we wished and whistled for more wind, Lake Vättern had no more than six to eight knots all afternoon.

We found the boat's nonslip deck surface to be very good—even the cockpit seats and sole are nonslip—but we suspected that in a heavier breeze crew members might wish for nonslip on the cabin top too. The hatch at the forward end of the cabin does have a nonslip pattern molded in, and this is convenient for halyard handlers, but the rest of the cabin top is shiny smooth, and potentially dangerous.

The cockpit is comfortable and well laid out for two—or four in light air. The helmsman sits abaft the mainsheet traveler, which spans the cockpit at seat level, and once he cracks his shins on this necessary nuisance two or three times, he should learn to live with it. Winch hands sit forward, and have ample room for cranking the IF's standard-equipment No. 8 Lewmars.

Left: IF No. 1234 shows off her light air form on Sweden's Lake Vättern. Top: IF-boat sports pair of V-berths forward, pair of lockers, with optional marine head in starboard space, and two semi-quarter berths a full eight feet long. Fold-down galley, with alcohol range, is located to port above berth.





Top left: IF's cockpit is spanned by 46" traveller separating skipper and winch hands. Pair of Lewmar No. 8 sheet winches are part of standard equipment package along with jib halyard winch mounted on mast. Top right: Heel of IF's aluminum mast is fitted with sheave box for main and jib halyards. Although hatch cover has non-slip pattern, balance of cabin trunk suffers by omission.

IF's wooden tiller swings up from deck level to vertical (tension can be adjusted at the rudderstock) and this is a boon to a helmsman who wishes to stand while conning his vessel through narrow passages. The big outboard rudder gives excellent steering, in spite of the boat's long keel. She won't spin around like a fin keeler, of course, but she's very handy.

Our lazy Lake Vättern sail aroused our curiosity. IF is obviously a great boat in light air; what would she do with a bit more wind? Back in the States, we arranged with Atkins Oxford Yacht Sales, IF's East Coast importer, for a sail out of Oxford, Md., in mid-October when, we hoped, there might be a good sailing breeze. There was—on the appointed day the entire Chesapeake sparkled clear and cool with a 12 to 15-knot southwesterly, with occasional higher gusts.

The IF for this sail had the 10 hp Volvo Penta MD-1B inboard rather than the outboard. After stowing gear and bending on the genny, we cranked up the diesel, cast off, and backed out of the slip. A pleasant surprise: IF's barndoor rudder affords truly positive steering in reverse, once she has some way on. She'll back to port or starboard, or straight astern. Fascinated, we backed halfway across the harbor in an absolutely straight line. The engine controls are double lever and handy to the helmsman's right foot, but the longer shift lever hits the latch on the starboard seat locker unless this latch is closed, making it impossible to go from forward to reverse or vice versa. This won't be a problem as long as every helmsman is aware of it, and careful to close the latch, but it would be better if either the shift lever or the locker latch were redesigned or relocated—there's always the chance that someone, sometime, may be unable to go quickly into reverse to avoid trouble.

We powered out into the Tred Avon with the little Volvo chugging away with that healthy diesel sound sailors find so reassuring. At full throttle we checked her speed with our hand-held Davis knotmeter—just under six knots. We soon hoisted the main, noting that the absence of a topping lift makes this operation more trouble than it should be. The boom is suspended from a backstay pennant when the sail is furled, and this of course must be unhooked before the sail is hoisted. This leaves the helmsman holding the end of the boom and steering with his feet, while a crew member goes forward to handle the halyard, unless of course the boom is simply dropped down into the cockpit. It would be simpler, and in many cases safer, to have a topping lift, and if this were our boat we'd surely add one.

With the luff of the main properly tightened by the downhaul tackle and the clew adjusted by the internal outhaul, we turned our attention to the genny. It went up smartly, but just as we began cranking the mast-mounted winch it came down again, not quite so smartly. And the halyard didn't come with it. Looking aloft, we could see the open snap shackle at the sheave—we found later that a malfunctioning pin had allowed it to open—so we began considering how best to retrieve it. Jim Atkins pulled alongside in his Marieholm 32, which we were using as a camera boat, and suggested we return to the dock and go aloft in a bosun's chair, but that would have cost us a couple of hours of sailing time. Instead, we rigged a bosun's stirrup on the main halyard, and made our way aloft to retrieve the halyard. Then, with a couple of shackles substituting for the defective snap shackle, we made sail.

The IF-boat came to life in this breeze. She's stiff, specifications, overleaf; text continues on page 121



Left: In impromptu race on Tred Avon, basic boat (l.) with standard equipment main and jib, brushes with sistership fitted with optional genoa.

INTERNATIONAL 26' FOLKBOAT SPECIFICATIONS

Dimensions:	
Overall length	25'9"
Waterline length	19'9"
Beam	7'5"
Draft	4'0"
Freeboard forward	3'1"
Freeboard aft	2'3"
Bridge clearance*	29'7½"
Cabin headroom	4'7½"

*Waterline to top of mast.

Displacement: 4300 lbs. **Ballast:** 2750 lbs. (cast iron).

Ballast/displacement ratio: .64

Displacement/length ratio: 249.35

Sail Area: Main plus working jib: 280 sq. ft.

Sail area/displacement ratio: 16.94

Accommodations: Sleeps four adults or two adults and four children—V-berths forward and two 8' berths in main cabin. Head compartment with space for marine w/c. Foldaway galley with two burner alcohol stove. Interior lights.

Standard Equipment: Complete International Rule navigation lights; deck hardware includes two 5" base chocks forward, 10" mooring cleats, two 10" quarter cleats—all through-bolted; 5" cleats on mast for main and jib halyards; jib halyard winch on mast; boom downhaul; internal main outhaul; boom vang; main sheet traveller; four part main sheet arrangement; mainsail and working jib; two Lewmar No. 8 sheet winches with cam cleats; 15" jib tracks with blocks; 3' 11" genoa tracks with cars; 2' 10" x 2' 8" lazarette hatch; 20" x 26" foredeck hatch; self-bailing cockpit; twin cockpit lockers; sliding companionway hatch with teak ply-

wood hatch board; non-slip deck and cockpit sole surfaces. Antifouling bottom paint.

Spars and Rigging: Single spreader rig with aluminum spars; mast section—5" x 3.6" x .009" wall with bolt rope groove; boom section—3.08" x 2.37" x .008" wall with bolt rope groove; standing rigging consists of headstay, backstay, and upper and lower shrouds — headstay-13/64" dia., backstay-¼" dia., uppers-15/64" dia., lowers-5/32" dia.—all 1 x 19 s.s. wire rope; main and jib halyards-5/32" 7 x 19 wire with rope tails.

Auxiliary Power: Outboard version has built-in well for 4 to 6 hp motors with 20" shafts or transom bracket for outboards up to 10 hp. Inboard version powered by 10 hp Volvo Penta MD1 diesel.

Construction: Fiberglass hull and deck. Six-ply hull, average thickness .29" (five plies of 1.5 oz. mat plus one ply of 21 oz. woven roving). Hull stiffened fore and aft with two longitudinals of ¾" x 2" marine plywood taped in with three plies of 1.5 oz. mat. Deck of mat and fiberglass cloth with marine plywood core as required.

Price: With above equipment, \$10,700, delivered at Oxford, Md. Boat sailed had a number of extras including diesel engine, fresh water system, marine head, pulpits and life lines, sprayhood, etc., and had a retail value of about \$14,250 delivered at Oxford, Md.

Designer: Tord Sundén

Builder: Marieholms Bruk, 330 34 Hillerstorp, Sweden.
East Coast U.S. importer is Atkins Oxford Yacht Sales, Oxford, Md. 21654

DESIGNER'S COMMENTS

The Nordic Folkboat was designed in 1941, and quickly became the biggest keel-boat racing class in Scandinavia. More than 2000 were built, and many of the earlier, lapstrake Folkboats are still active in class racing.

In 1967 we approached Marieholms Bruk with the idea of building a fiberglass version of this boat. The fiberglass Folkboat, called the International Folkboat, had been redesigned to give her a somewhat higher freeboard and thus more space below. And, because the fiberglass construction makes the hull lighter, the new boat would have a heavier ballast keel. The bow and transom were redesigned for aesthetic reasons.

The management of Marieholm believed in this boat and accepted to build it. The first boat was ready in 1967. She was a lucky strike: the International Folkboat proved to exceed the wooden Folkboat in performance. She's faster, stiffer, more spacious, and—to my eye—more beautiful.

It was soon obvious that the market wanted such a boat of classical design with a conventional long keel and the traditional seven-eighths rig. The traditional wooden Folkboat had proven the advantages of these features for 25 years.

When the International Folkboat was approved as a One Design Class boat by the Swedish Sailing Association, the name was changed to the "IF-boat."

Today the IF-boat is approved as a One Design Class boat not only in Sweden but also in Denmark, Norway, and Germany. Since 1973 the IF-boat is also approved a Scandinavian One Design Class.

Extensive class racing is carried out by IFRA (IF Racing Association) not only in Europe but also in the U.S. where local IF fleets have been established. In Berlin alone there are 130 boats on Lake Wannsee. Other big fleets are in Denmark (over 200 boats) and on San Francisco Bay (over 50 boats.)

More than 2000 IF-boats have been built so far, and Marieholm is increasing production capacity each year to keep up with demand. Present production is two and a half boats per day.

TORD SUNDEN



After eleven years of fiberglass boatbuilding experience, Marieholms Bruk plant in Hillerstorp, Sweden, started producing the IF-boat. She is a modification of original lapstrake wooden Folkboat which was designed in 1941.

though in some of the gusts we did manage to get her leeward cabin trunk wet, and she points remarkably high. She's very well balanced, with an easy weather helm. She tacks smartly, or as smartly as her crew can manage. (Nora Atkins and a lady friend outsailed us on every point of sailing in a sister IF, but of course they're used to the boat.) And the IF sails and feels like a much larger boat than she is.

After some hours of good sailing and cavorting for the camera, we ran downwind, wing and wing, for the marina. In a 12-knot breeze, she registered $5\frac{1}{2}$ knots of speed, not bad at all for a 19' 9" waterline. Jim Atkins later told us that he'd been able to race the IF successfully against more "modern" boats in very light air, and in strong breezes, but that she wasn't as competitive in the mid range. The first year he'd had the IF-boat in Oxford, Jim had raced her in the winter series out of Annapolis while waiting for delivery of a modern fin keel racer. He struck it lucky with the weather—every race was either in very light air or strong winds, and when the new boat arrived he found himself in first place with the IF-boat. "Can't quit while I'm ahead," he thought, and went on to win the winter series in the Folkboat. His competitors, who'd at the outset smiled patronizingly and remarked how sporting he was to attempt to compete in "that little cruising boat," were nonplussed.

Back at the marina, we tied up and took inventory of her equipment and accommodation. IF's deck hardware, all Marimium, includes a 10" bow cleat with 5" base chocks port and starboard, big enough to take $\frac{3}{4}$ " line, a pair of 10" stern cleats, a 15" jib track port and starboard, and a 3' 11" genoa track port and starboard. Her bow pulpit, a \$122 option, is typically Scandinavian—divided in the center, with a step for easy boarding when the boat is moored bow to a quay. The single lifeline is rove through s.s. stanchions, a very

desirable \$155 option, and this particular boat was fitted with the optional \$170 pushpit. All deck hardware is properly through-bolted.

Safety on deck is further enhanced by anodized aluminum handrails port and starboard on the cabin top: She should be a reasonably comfortable boat to work in dirty weather.

Running lights are, of course, to International Rule, and they are big, well made, chrome plated affairs. Port and starboard lights are in a combination fixture in the bow pulpit, the bow light is mounted on the fore side of the mast, and the stern light is affixed to the pushpit.

IF's cockpit measures 5' 6" in length and 4' $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in width, and is self bailing. (The old wooden Folkboats, didn't have self bailing cockpits, unless they were modified, as in the case of transatlantic race winner *Jester*.) The cockpit scuppers, like every other through-hull on the IF-boat, are fitted with genuine sea-cocks. These are controlled by valve handles at the base of the companionway steps.

The companionway hatch slides into its own watertight cover, which also incorporates the curved molding to take the spray hood or dodger, a worthwhile \$104 option. This dodger would afford real protection to people in the cockpit when going to windward in heavy weather, and transparent panels in the forward portion of the dodger permit the helmsman to see where he's going. It's available in tan or blue vinyl, and is well made and even rather handsome. The single companionway slide, when not in use, stows below deck on cleats above the port quarter berth, where it's out of the way yet easily accessible. And with the dodger in the up position, the entire companionway is sufficiently shielded from the weather to permit it to remain open.

The diesel auxiliary model, we noted, does not have ventilation provisions for the engine compartment, or the lazarette, where the 5 gal. diesel tank is installed, and indeed there is no Coast Guard requirement for ventilation on diesel-powered pleasure boats. Still, if it were our boat, we'd add intake and exhaust vents—if only to help dispel the smell after we'd bled the fuel lines a couple of times (there was no odor of diesel fuel on the boat we sailed).

The outboard model, however, is a different set of conditions. The engine mounts in a well inside the lazarette, and the fuel tank will presumably be close by, also inside the lazarette. With the lazarette hatch open, legal ventilation requirements will be met, but some skippers will want to run the engine with the hatch closed, sometime: They'll be in violation of CG ventilation requirements when they do. We'd install appropriate cowls and ducting for intake and exhaust ventilation in the lazarette, if we owned the outboard model. And we'd want them with deck plates, so the compartment could be made watertight at sea.

A small chrome spigot just below seat level to port near the companionway struck us as an unnecessary hazard. It's the outlet for the optional (\$157) 25-gal. freshwater system: The pump is a cleverly situated foot model under the port berth. The advantage of placing the outlet here is that the cockpit scuppers do double duty as sink drains, but the spigot design could be greatly improved, with considerable probable benefits to crew members' legs.

Below, she's surprisingly spacious for a 26-footer. The forward cabin sports a V-berth just abaft the rope

continued



Major Safety Features Recommended by ABYC for this class of boat

26' IF-Boat

Item	Stan- dard	Op- tional
Bilge blower	—	✓
Hand bilge pump	—	✓
Electric bilge pump	—	✓
Seacocks on through-hull fittings	✓	—
Nonslip weather decks	✓	—
Grab rails	✓	—

* This list does not include U.S. Coast Guard required equipment but reflects key recommendations of the American Boat & Yacht Council, the industry's standards-making body.

Optional dodger, which reeves into aluminum track on cabin trunk, provides weather protection for crew, allows companion hatch to be left open in foul weather.

locker, 6' 11" long and 5' 7" wide at the after end. An optional (\$17) filler cushion can be had to make it one big berth. Stowage for bedding is available in three good-sized bins under the berth, and shelves port and starboard are suitably sea-railed to keep personal gear in place. The 18" x 22" forehatch provides good light and air in fair weather, and for bad weather ventilation there's a mushroom ventilator in the overhead.

Abaft the forward V-berth are a pair of commodious hanging lockers. On the boat we sailed the starboard hanging locker had been converted to an enclosed head (\$175) with the door designed to close off the area from the main cabin when the head's in use. A sliding sink with freshwater pump can be installed over the w/c for \$52 additional. It's an unavoidably cramped arrangement, but it is reasonably private. Owners who are willing to put up with somewhat less privacy can opt for a chemical head under the forward V-berth. The main cabin has a pair of semi-quarter berths—eight feet long! Over the portions in the cabin are drop door lockers, with fold-down seat backs, a very comfortable seating arrangement. Fittings in the sole take the legs of a removable cabin table (which can also be set up in the cockpit) and the two-burner Origo alcohol stove is concealed behind a drop counter to port. Owners wishing to have a built-in ice chest can have one under the port bunk for \$53.

Virtually every detail on the IF-boat is an example of careful boatbuilding. We had the opportunity to visit Marieholms' plant in the tiny village of Hillerstorp, Sweden, about an hour's drive south of Jönkö-

ping on Lake Vättern. It's an old company—during the 19th Century Marieholms Bruk was a thriving iron foundry, and during the first part of the 20th Century it was engaged in the manufacture of farm machinery. In the early 1950s management decided to go into fiberglass boat construction, and Marieholms quickly became a leader in this field. Today, in addition to the IF-boat, the company builds a 20' motor-sailer, a 32' sloop, a 24' cruiser, a 22' cruiser, and a 16' daycruiser.

Construction is of hand laid up fiberglass, and is rigidly controlled by IF Class Rules (see Specifications). The hull-deck connection is made by epoxying the deck down to a flange in the hull, then covering the connection with three layers of ounce and a half mat, and further sealing on the exterior by a strip of silicone rubber.

Chainplates consist of 5/16 s.s. eyebolts screwed into an anchor plate molded into the deck, and the cabin top in the way of the mast step is reinforced by a stout fiberglass U section running thwartships to the sheer.

The IF-boat is a stoutly built little vessel, one we would not fear to take to sea just as she comes from the builder—and that's not something we'd say about every fiberglass sailboat on the market. And with her combination of cruising comfort, class racing potential, sweet traditional lines, and the ability to enter into serious competition with more "modern" boats, we'd guess that IF owners would be happy with their boats for a long, long time. ⚓