

Boatbuilders to debut West Pointer skiff

by Maggie Daigle

Editor

NORTH YARMOUTH – At next week’s Maine Boatbuilders Show in Portland, Chip Miller and Scott Conrad of Six River Marine, LLC, will debut their latest creation – their 18’ West Pointer skiff with its laminated cedar hull and Dynel sheathing. The North Yarmouth boatbuilders are excited to have their custom craft at their booth this year and are looking forward to talking about its features. Lend them an ear and they’re likely to tell you how their design can be customized to your needs.

Conrad and Miller say their 1,100-pound center cockpit boat is ideal for coastal waters and with its mere 7- inch draft, is great for picnicking around local islands or navigating in low-water areas. At \$26,950 for a bare boat (without a motor or trailer), the partners say for a custom boat, it’s a good price. While boaters could get themselves on the water for less, Six River Marine maintains its handmade skiff, which will easily accommodate four adults, is unique for its quality and capacity for customization.

“The sky’s the limit,” says Miller. “We’ll finish it out as you like,” he says suggesting that added seating or trim options are often areas where

customers like to make changes.

The design is loosely based on the popular Alton Wallace design, the West Point skiff.

“We changed the V up front to make it softer in a short chop,” says Conrad. “And still



BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE – Scott Conrad, left, and Chip Miller at Six River Marine in North Yarmouth are preparing to show off their new 18’ skiff design at this year’s Maine Boatbuilders Show which starts on March 18. The bow of their West Pointer skiff is shown at left among some of their other repair and restoration projects of sail and power boats. Tim Greenway photo

it’s flat back aft so it doesn’t take a lot of horsepower to push it.”

Miller had the opportunity to meet and talk about boat design with the well-known Wallace when he was enrolled in the Maine Maritime Museum Apprenticeship Program in the mid 1980s. Back then he studied the lines and made a half model. In 2004, Miller created molds for his present boat with variations on his original ideas. “It’s not a duplicate of Wallace’s boat,” says Miller, but similar

aesthetics are there for people who enjoy the classic lines of Maine skiffs.

Spend an hour in the two-story Six River Marine shop on Royal Road, and you can learn plenty about wooden boatbuild-

and their ability to customize projects to customers’ needs. If it has to do with wood, Six River Marine can handle it. They’ve even restored the wood sides and surfaces of antique “Woodie Wagons,” the classic station wagons.

“We’ll do fiberglass work, but mostly it’s wood. We both really like working with wood,” says Conrad who, before he worked on boats, was a house carpenter.

Their work won them acclaim in 1999 for repair and restoration work on a 1926 38’ Lawley Standard Cruiser named “Chautauqua.” After a three-year top-to-bottom restoration, the boat took the Best Powerboat at Show award in the Boston Antique & Classic Boat Show and the Best Powerboat Under 40’ at the Mystic Antique & Classic Boat Rendezvous.

These days most of their business comes from word-of-mouth referrals. With many boatyards catering to mostly fiberglass boat owners, Six River Marine is making a name for itself in its custom woodworking techniques. And with all of their restoration and repair experience, Miller and Conrad say they’ve learned a thing or two about what makes a good boat. “You see a lot of things that work and things that don’t work,” Miller laughs.