REPRINTED FROM Popular Boating NOVEMBER 1965
AMERICA'S MOST WIDELY READ BOATING MAGAZINE

POPULAR BOATING SAILS

THE CAPRI 26

BY MOULTON H. FARNHAM

A lively new fiberglass auxiliary sailer with accommodations for cruising in a hull that races well under MORC rules

Some people go to sea in small sailboats for fun, others to test their endurance under a mild form of torture known as racing; both groups will find much to interest them in the new Capri 26′ fiberglass auxiliary sailboat. For this latest addition to the Chris-Craft sailing line has been expertly designed by Sparkman & Stephens to give the owner a generous helping of the best of both worlds.

She has excellent ease-of-handling for day sailing, comfortably adequate accommodations to cruise four people, and a hull and rig that have already shown ability to compete successfully in the Midget Ocean Racing Club (MORC) circuit.

With this combination of virtues, and her basic price tag of $5,395 (less sails and power), the Capri 26 seems quite likely to fulfill her builder's hope and equal or outdistance her popular sisters—the 35′ Capri motor sailer and the Capri 30′ auxiliary sailboat—both of which have made reputations as family cruisers and race winners.

My favorable impression of the boat began as I approached *Tryin'*—Hull No. 3—tied up at her berth off the Key Biscayne Yacht Club in Florida. The strong beveled lines of the Capri's molded deckhouse combine gracefully with her jaunty sheer line to give the boat a salty air of being able to take care of herself at sea.

This impression is reinforced the instant you step aboard. The wide deck space looks clean—free of clutter and obstructions, easy to work under sail. Cleats, chocks, and blocks are placed to provide fair leads without tripping the crew. All deck surfaces, as well as the cabin top, have a molded non-skid finish. And mahogany handrails on the cabin top both amidships and forward give additional security for going forward in a rough sea.

The boat's owner, Jim Brown, of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was already on board with the third member of our crew, Dave Hunt, Chris-Craft's Sales Promotion Manager. Jim lifted the hatch over the outboard engine well, aft of the cockpit, turned on the gas and started the 6 hp long-shaft Evinrude that provides the boat's auxiliary power. While the engine warmed up, Bruce and I let go the lines and we got under way for the open water.

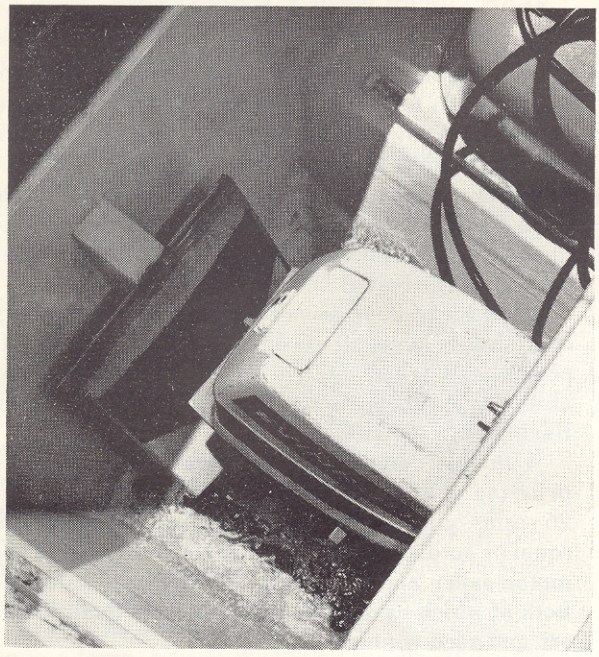
As we threaded our way out of the channel under

power, I was impressed by how easily the small outboard pushed along the Capri's fin-keel hull. With the boat's basic displacement of nearly two tons, plus three adults, the Morcee Kenyon log in the cockpit registered a steady 5½ knots with the throttle about three-quarters open. Full throttle brought it up to 6 knots.

Conditions for sailing were ideal. A brisk southeast breeze was blowing outside the harbor, with enough sea running to give some motion, and the sun was bright in a blue sky laced with cumulus clouds.

Setting the mainsail on the aluminum mast and

MONK FARNHAM



The hatch against the motor well's after bulkhead drops down and is pinned in place to make the well watertight.

boom was expedited by the integral sail tracks. Both spars, we noticed, are oval section, and the boom is equipped with roller reefing.

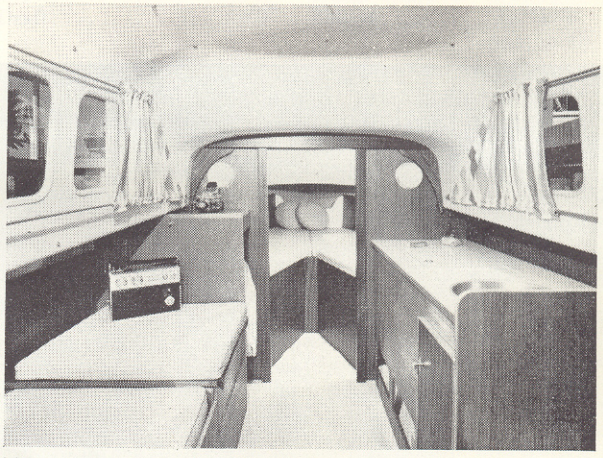
We hoisted the mainsail and masthead No. 1 genoa jib, a racing combination that gives the Capri 366 sq. ft. of sail, as opposed to 285 sq. ft. with main (145 sq. ft.) and working jib (140 sq. ft.). With engine cut, we put *Tryin'* through her paces, beating, reaching, running.

She was lively and lovely.

On the wind, her overlapping jenny gives her power and drive. In tacking, the clean foredeck and a plastic roller on the lower portion of the upper shroud of her single-spreader rig, help the sail sweep smoothly across, without fouling. Aft, along the cockpit rail, sheet winches and cleats are placed for maximum speed in sail handling, without the crew getting in the helmsman's way.

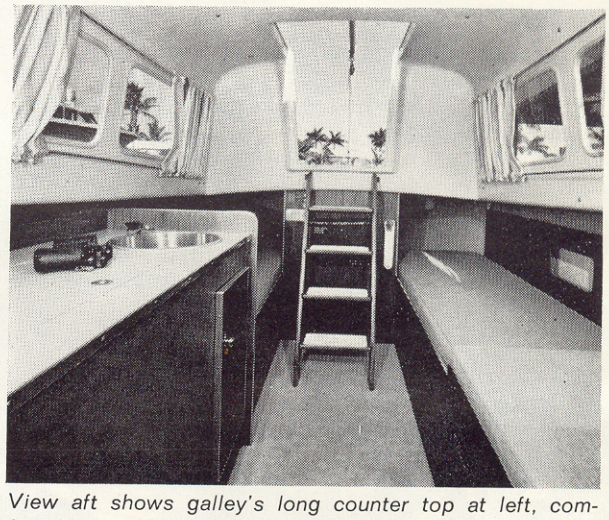
The helmsman himself has ready control of the mainsail with a three-part mainsheet leading through a combination swivel block and cam cleat fitting located amidships at the after end of the cockpit. A sliding car for the mainsheet block on the traveler permits trimming the boom to any desired angle on the wind, and locking it in place. This, it should be noted, is a good rig so long as the car is kept well-lubricated and the track straight. But if these conditions are not maintained, the car can stick and hang up on the track when tacking, hooking the mainsail and allowing the leech to fall off to leeward, an embarrassing situation when racing.

Under working jib and mainsail, this boat could be sailed single-handed in light and moderate airs. And two people could sail it easily in most weather, though a third hand might be welcome for standby in heavy going. For racing, even wearing her spinnaker of maximum MORC size, a crew of four good men should be able to capture their share of silver.



INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCHWARM AND SHELDON

View forward on Hull No. 3 shows two V-berths, hanging locker with shelf on top, galley counter to starboard.



View aft shows galley's long counter top at left, comfortable quarter berths, large Plexiglass side windows.

Capri 26 is a surprisingly stiff boat, a tribute to her 8′ 2″ beam and the 1,900-lb. cast iron keel bolted to her hull. Her sea motion is pleasant, and she parts the waves with little fuss.

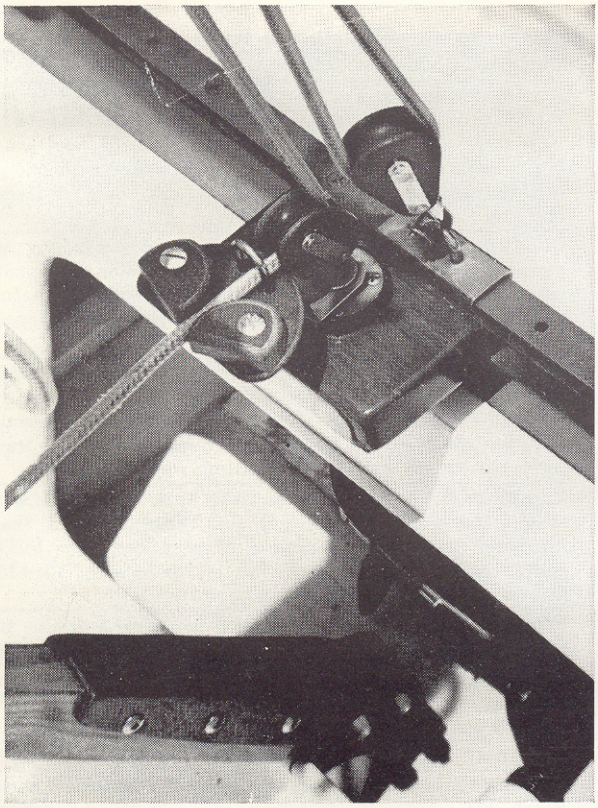
On a reach, she really stretches her legs and takes off. In a breeze of 10-12 knots, our Kenyon consistently logged over 6 knots, an excellent performance for a boat of 19′ waterline length. Off the wind, she runs clean and fast, with little apparent tendency to build a quarter wave. *Tryin'* did not have her spinnaker gear on board, so our running was limited to well-eased mainsail and jenny. But her behavior under these two sails made it easy to see that her spinnaker

could be a billowing tower of strength in her racing inventory.

Hull No. 3, we learned, with an MORC rating of 21.5, was campaigned last spring by Bruce Donaldson, Chris-Craft's Sailboat Division Sales Manager. In four races run by the Gulfstream Sailing Club under MORC rules he took three first places. He also captured a second with her in the Miami to Fort Lauderdale Race, and another second in the Miami to Bimini Race sponsored by the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club.

Lunch time gave us a chance to get acquainted with the galley on *Tryin'* and to examine her belowdecks

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONK FARNHAM



A fixed swivel block-cam cleat fitting and three-part mainsheet gives the helmsman good control of the mainsail.

layout and accommodations for cruising.

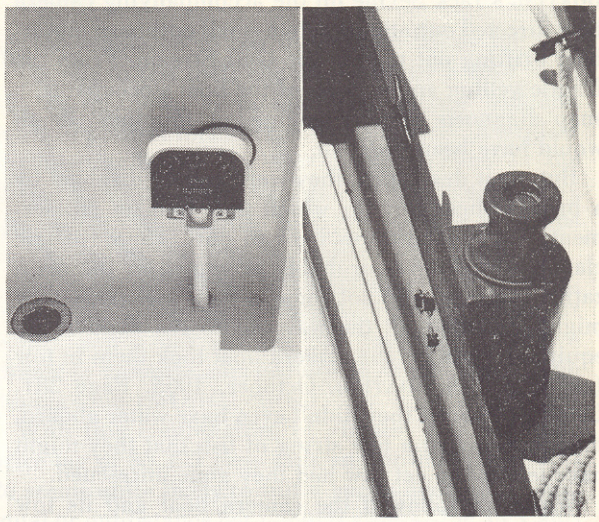
The galley is located amidships to starboard in the main cabin. It features a fine, long, turquoise-colored counter top made of high-pressure laminate, with a circular stainless steel sink equipped with chrome-plated fresh water pump, at the after end. A lift-up lid gives easy access to the 50-lb. insulated fiberglass ice-box underneath. Pots are stored in a closed locker directly below the sink. Cups and dishes stow handily in a varnished compartment that runs the full length of the counter, outboard under the deck.

The excellent work surface provided by this kind of fore-and-aft galley arrangement is a delight to use at anchor or while sailing on an even keel. But, as the French would say, it has the defects of its qualities. For hard sailing or racing use, the counter should have a high fiddle rail its entire length to keep pots, pans, and dishes from sliding off. A second desirable owner-improvement would be to install pad eyes equipped with a strap and snap buckles to hold the cook up to his work when the boat is at an angle of heel on the starboard tack.

No stove is included in the Capri's standard equipment. But there is ample room for any of the usual 2-burner marine units burning alcohol or other fuels, with the owner free to choose its location.

Two large Plexiglass windows on each side flood the main cabin with light, and also give the cook and anyone else below a grandstand view of the outside world.

Directly opposite the galley, on Hull No. 3, a vinyl-upholstered settee conceals a head, which is optional.



(Left) Self-bailing cockpit has 2″ drains. Log is extra. (Right) Cleats and optional sheet winch are well-placed.

With a hinge at its after end, the settee lifts up to form a vertical partition that partially encloses the head. An overhead fold-around curtain completes the enclosure. This compromise solution for having a head without permanent sacrifice of living space in the main cabin was not popular, however, and has since been changed.

As the plan on page 61 shows, the optional head in the Capri 26 is now located forward, under the port V-berth. When the forward compartment is closed off with a draw curtain, privacy is more complete than in the Hull No. 3 arrangement.

A good-sized open hanging locker at the forward port side of the main cabin is equally handy to the forward cabin, and has a convenient turquoise laminate shelf on top. But a fiddle rail around the shelf would improve it by preventing objects from sliding off in heavy weather.

The Capri's sleeping accommodations are excellent, with two V-berths forward and two quarter berths in the main cabin. All are big and comfortable—a full 30″ wide by 6′ 3″ long. And all have large storage lockers underneath. A curtain can be rigged, as we said, to screen off the forward cabin.

Headroom, incidentally, is quite good both forward and aft, despite the boat's deceptively low profile—5′ 8″ in the main cabin, and 4′ 9″ forward. Hatches over both cabins give additional headroom when open. The curved, white, molded headliner

also helps to make the headroom seem bigger than the numbers say it is. This effect was not accidental, it is a function of intelligent design.

The same kind of intelligence dictated the boat's attractive interior trim. Mahogany plywood joiner work with clear varnish finish gives her cabins a warm feeling of comfort and livability. And the sand gray vinyl carpeting used on the cabin sole contributes an unexpected touch of luxury.

Late in the afternoon, as we were completing our series of test sailing courses, a signal from POPULAR BOATING's Jack Seville on the accompanying camera boat directed our attention to a small outboard motorboat drifting out toward the Gulf Stream. From the frantic yelling and waving of the boat's occupants, a snap diagnosis of fire, sinking, or imminent death would have been justified.

But, as it developed, they were merely disabled by a broken shear pin for which they had no replacement, and needed a tow back to port. Their frenetic clamor for help was probably prompted by the realization that if we did not come to their assistance they might well drift all the way out to sea in their ill-equipped craft. So the camera boat took them in tow (see POPULAR BOATING, October, 1965, Page 28). Later we learned they didn't even have water aboard, though they had a fine string of fish that they might have learned to eat raw had they gone unrescued.

While we followed the camera boat and its tow back to port under power, I was able to study the construction of the Capri's outboard motor well. It is built to give access to the engine both from the top—through a large, hinged mahogany hatch—and from the cockpit, through a wide port surrounding the after end of the tiller. The bottom of the well can be closed against the sea, to give the compartment watertight integrity, when the engine is retracted.

The stout ash tiller is strongly hinged to the top of the rudder stock and, at rest, extends from the bottom of the forward port of the motor well in a slight curve a few inches off the cockpit sole. This requires the helmsman to lift the tiller in use, adjusting the upward angle to his position in the cockpit. Under power, he can sit far enough forward to keep an easy angle. But when under sail and sitting well aft to keep out of the way of sail handling, the tiller angle is more vertical and tends to be tiring. This detail could be corrected by either reversing the curve of the tiller or extending the rudder stock a few inches.

Footing for the helmsman is excellent, with the same molded non-skid sole in the cockpit as on all deck surfaces. A self-draining channel surrounds the cockpit seats. But the 2″ scuppers—placed 8″ inboard of the cockpit sides to clear the quarter berths below—won't drain completely when heeling.

All too soon, for my appetite, *Tryin'* was nosing up to her home berth again. I would have liked to have extended our testing a bit more, say to a month or so of coastwise cruising. Because this short day's outing had made it apparent that for anyone who likes to sail, the Capri 26 is strongly habit-forming—a pleasant habit, which many smart sailors will be eager to cultivate on a boat with so much to recommend it. ⚓

SPECIFICATIONS

Dimensions:

Length overall	26′3″	Freeboard forward	3′11″
Waterline length	19′0″	Freeboard aft	2′11″
Beam	8′2″	Bridge clearance*	33′10½″
Draft	4′0″	Ballast	1,900 lbs. (cast iron)

*Waterline to top of mast

Designed displacement: 3,920 lbs.

Accommodations: Four berths (30″ wide x 6′3″ long)—two quarter berths in main cabin and two V-berths forward; with large storage lockers under three berths, and fourth berth convertible to an optional head. Galley with counter top, stainless steel sink, water pump, and fiberglass icebox. Hanging locker with laminate-covered shelf.

Construction: Hull, deck, cabin top, and self-bailing one-piece cockpit of reinforced fiberglass, color-impregnated white. Bulwark and taffrails molded into hull with natural teak caps. Cockpit coamings of clear, dark, solid mahogany. All fastenings of silicon bronze and brass.

Spars and rigging: Stainless steel 1 x 19 standing rigging with swaged fittings and bronze turnbuckles; running rigging, all Power Braid lines. Extruded aluminum oval-section mast and oval-section boom with roller reefing. Sail tracks integral with spars. Turnblock fittings for working sails.

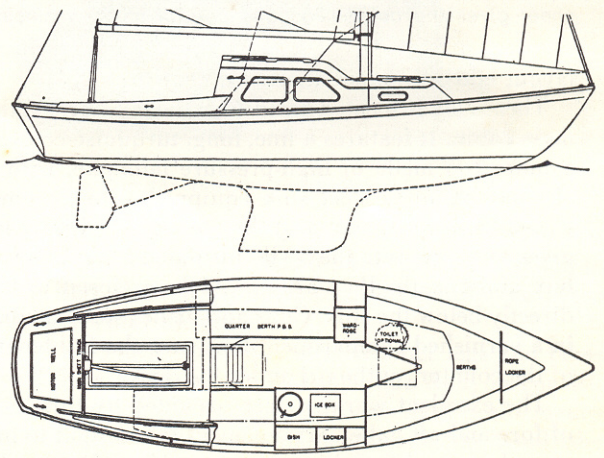
Equipment: 20-gal. galvanized fresh water tank; fresh water system; s.s. galley sink; dish locker; fiberglass-lined, foam-insulated ice chest; hanging clothes locker; rope locker; roller reefing gear; seacocks on all underwater thru-hull fittings; mahogany handrails on cabin top.

Propulsion: Watertight, ventilated motor well to take suggested maximum 6-hp outboard with low profile, long shaft.

Price: With above equipment, $5,690. FOB Algonac, Mich. The test boat, with all required equipment, furnishings for cruising and racing, sails, and engine, totalled over $7,900.

Designer: Sparkman & Stephens, Inc.

Builder: Chris-Craft Corporation, Sailboat Division, Pompano Beach, Fla.



The Capri 26's fin-keel hull gives her speed for racing; her interior provides cruising accommodations for four.