

ROBERT HARRIS

TRACKS

ON THE

WATER

To Mike and Verona
with all best
wishes and great
sailing on Rainbow.

Bob Harris

Jan 9, '11

17 CHAPTER PAN PACIFIC

Prior to settling in Vancouver, I had designed the Tiki, a 12-foot catamaran sloop for the late David Halperin, a former TWA senior pilot from Tarzana, CA. One may ponder the wisdom of offering so small a catamaran for production sale, but he believed that it would be a popular model for well-protected waters such as lakes and inlets. What really convinced him, however, was that he had an aircraft builder acquaintance in Olathe, Kansas who could produce a very light catamaran in cold molded wood similar to aircraft construction. With a beam of less than eight feet, it was trailerable, a much sought after feature for the inland boater.

Sailing trials proved her capable of performance above her size, but the public wanted a simpler, more easily maintained arrangement and were gravitating toward the new fiberglass models coming on the market. Consequently, the sales David expected never materialized. The association with him on that project led to his request for consultation to reduce weather helm (a steering imbalance) on Fantasia, a 36-foot sloop his company, Pan Pacific Yachts, was producing in Taiwan. This job turned out very satisfactorily with substantial improvement in steering balance of the yacht and led to new design work for his company and, fortuitously, to subsequent association with several other companies in Taiwan.

The builder, Chung Hwa Ltd. was located in Ping Tung, a rural district village east of Kaohsiung where I roomed in the Tzu Chi Hotel during a month-long stay. Each morning I was driven to work by an older Taiwanese man whose forebears had come to the island from northern Malaysia centuries before. I learned enough Chinese to order breakfast which was



understood even though it was in the aboriginal dialect. The waitresses at the Tzu Chi took great pleasure in making coffee for me, especially when I asked for it in Chinese that resulted in much giggling and fanfare. Every cup was made individually like a now popular espresso; everyone else drank tea. The best cappuccino in Vancouver fails to give the same essence. S.T. Ning, the manager of the yard, and his family very kindly took Pat and me to the well-known Kenting Park in the southeastern tip of Taiwan, a coral-formed headland that was once under the sea. We were cautioned about the "100-step snake" in the area whose name meant that if it bit you, you would only make 100 steps before dying! An unusual practice by local men was netting a specie of small birds for eating. We did not knowingly eat any, but because the Japanese had occupied Taiwan for 20 years, there were some unusual dishes. Our favorite one in which yellow fin tuna was marinated and broiled called mitsu yaki.



S T Ning

But Taiwan was not all tourism and gastronomy; there was work to be done and Halperin had given me plenty to do while I was there.

A RUGGED POCKET, BLUE WATER SAILER

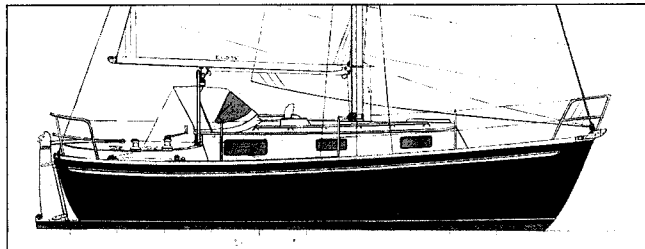
Satisfied by the work I had done on Fantasia and Tiki, and prompted by the very successful production of the Vancouver 27; entrepreneur David Halperin, under the name of his company, Pan Pacific Yachts, ordered the design of a 25-foot molded fiberglass auxiliary sloop for production by the Victory Yacht Company in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Class named the Vancouver 25, she was a finely produced but rugged offshore pocket cruiser with a long keel giving her the same excellent course keeping characteristics and general balance of the Vancouver 27. Even with the low cost of Taiwanese labor, the exquisite teak wood joiner work, high quality construction and external finish and fairing on the Van 25 resulted in a cost too high for a 25-foot sloop on the U.S. market. Production was stopped after a dozen units were delivered.



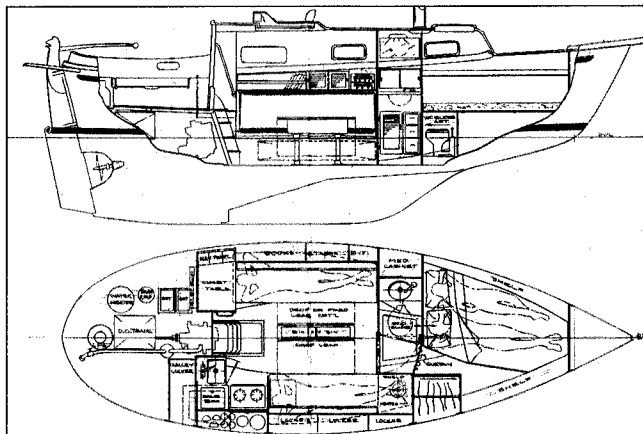
Vancouver 25



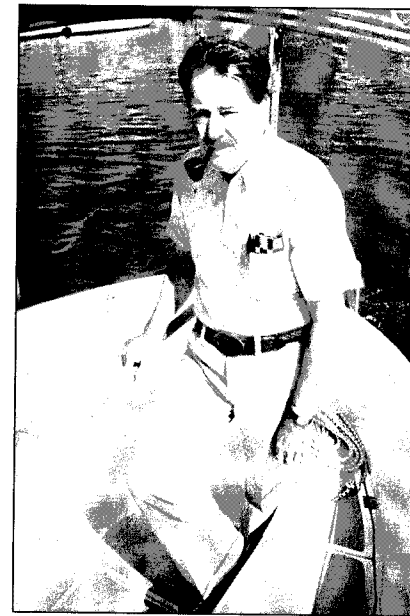
I recall sailing a Van 25 the 30 kilometers back to Vancouver from Schooner Cove on Vancouver Island. It was blowing 25 knots, gusting 30 out of the Northwest. Since it was a downwind run all the way, we ran under full sail with the jib poled out: I found that I could leave the tiller as she continued straight on, the knot meter climbing up to the 10 knot limit when we slid down a big comber.



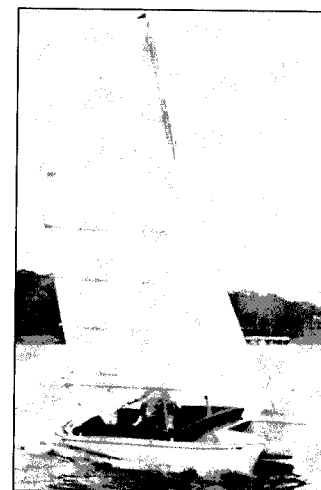
Vancouver 25



Vancouver 25 Arrgt



David Halperin



Tiki