

# The Boating News

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## BAHAMIAN TRADITION COMES STATESIDE

### Albury Brothers Boats Now Built In The USA

By Suzi DuRant

**Man** O'War Cay is a quiet place with the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the Sea of Abaco on the other. Colonists who remained loyal to the British Crown settled it during the American Revolution. The soil was poor so the settlers had to make their living from the sea.

Among those original settlers was the Albury family, a clan that seems to have taken over the island. Of the 300 some year-round residents, about half are Alburys. When we first cruised the Abacos, we were totally into sailing so, while we knew the Alburys built boats,

we were more familiar with the boatyard where we hauled out on the railway to replace a shaft, the sailing sloops they built, and "Uncle Norman" Albury's Sail Shop where sailors have been purchasing handmade canvas bags for about 50 years.

We knew most of the runabouts were built locally but didn't pay much attention since we had a dinghy. My eyes really opened at the Charleston Coliseum Boat Show last January when I walked by a very attractive, small sportfishing boat that had "Albury Brothers" on the sides. I did a

double take and stopped to chat with Jon Shattuck from Charleston Yacht Sales.

Since then, that boat has preyed on my mind. I finally gave in and called Charleston Yacht Sales. Greg Miller, the broker handling Albury Brothers boats sales, was brimming with enthusiasm and gave me quite an education.

The Alburys have been building boats for what seems like forever. The present branch of the family started when Maurice Albury built small boats for sponging in the 1920s. His son, Willard, joined him and took over in

Albury Boats continues on A-8



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## Albury Boats (continued from cover)

1960. That was also the year the builders got their first power tools. The boats were, and are, custom built. The wooden boats were made with frames of Abaco Madeira and native pine planking. The switch to fiberglass came in 1984. The Man O'War boat shop builds one boat a month.

For those who don't want to get put on a waiting list for a Bahamian-built hull, there is good news. Florida boat dealer Jeff Lichterman has made an agreement with the Alburys to manufacture the 20' and 23' runabouts in Riviera Beach, FL and is now building 2-3 boats per month, to the same building specifications as the Man O'War facility.

Miller said that Willard

Albury actually made the molds being used in Florida. The boats, Miller explained, "are the general purpose everything in the islands boat—lobster boat, mail boat...". He continued, "It's a super strong boat. In the Bahamas, people buy them for life; it's their prize possession."

The strength comes from the heavily hand-laid fiberglass in the hull and solid fiberglass stringers. "It is a very labor intensive boat," Miller said. "You order the base boat then just about everything is an option so you can set it up for whatever you want."

Miller's comments were continually punctuated with "The ride is incredible!" or "Once you get on the boat, you fall in love with it." Okay, salesman hype, I figured. But, I took him up on his invitation and soon

we were boarding a 23-footer with a single 225 HP Yamaha and hydraulic steering. This model had a T-top with rod holders and a 50-gallon round live well. Since it belongs to Teddy Turner, Jr., it also had wind instruments on the console.

Charleston Harbor had a light chop of about one foot. The boat went up on plane easily, cruising through it at 22-25 knots, then topped out at 38 knots. The hull is rated for 250 HP and does 40-44 knots with twin engines. The easy motion over the chop and other boat wakes made it a pleasure to steer and I was impressed with the turning radius. Even into the chop, the boat was remarkably dry, taking very little spray.

The Alburys attribute the comfortable ride to the fact that the boat "has a fine entry to slice through short chop and a keel to keep her tracking straight. When she jumps ocean waves, she has a soft reentry coming down on her round bilge aft section first. She is very full forward above the waterline which keeps the bow above the waves and green water out."

In fact, Miller told me that when someone asked Willard Albury why there was no drain in the anchor locker, he replied, "All you need is a sponge to get out any water that gets there."

Back at the dock, the boat's simplicity had other benefits. A quick freshwater rinse and that was all the clean up needed.

Both models include a white hull and interior, fish box, non skid on the deck, sole and splash well, stainless steel bow and stern cleats, a forward anchor locker, stainless fuel fills, a sealed bilge, self-bailing cockpit, Paneltronics 6 switch electrical panel, cold tar epoxy-coated centerline fuel tank (90 gallons for the 20; 99 gallons for the 23), piano hinges on lockers, fuel filter/water separator, Corecell-cored hull topsides and deck, a rub rail and a console.

Options include a blue interior, spray rails, a fresh water washdown system, a T-top, a bimini top, windshield, console doors various cushion options, docking lights and compass, among many others.

"This boat is not meant to compete with production boats," said Miller. Base price for the smaller hull is about \$22,000 and about \$28,000 for the other but, fully tricked out, the boats can range from \$40,000 to \$70,000.

And Miller was right about the ride. I could easily visualize the Albury Brothers runabout flying across the brilliant greens and blues of the Abaco Sea, cresting the waves to enter deep water. I could just as easily see it flying up and down the Lowcountry creeks. It would be a great boat for fishing, diving or just a family exploratory day trip. I found myself wishing I could have one in time for my husband's birthday this month.

You can see if you wish for one also by calling (561) 863-7006 or visiting [www.alburyboats.com](http://www.alburyboats.com).



Albury Brothers Boats 23	Albury Brothers Boats 20	
LOA	23'2"	20'5"
Beam	8'3"	7'3"
Weight	2,900 lb.	2,300 lb.
Max HP	250 HP (est)	175 HP (est)
Hull Draft	16"	14"