

SIGHTINGS

first boat of the new millennium

As far as we know, that title belongs to Jeff Rutherford, who launched the lovely 17-ft daysailer *Buenos Aires* at 2 p.m. on New Year's Day. But when we pressed for the real story, he admitted he set that date as the deadline for the boat, which was actually started 13 years ago. "I had other work coming in and I needed the room!" he laughs.

Jeff acquired the Buzzard's Bay 14 (for its waterline length), a 1945 L. Francis Herreshoff design, back in 1995 from a guy up in Petaluma who had started in nine years earlier. With help from Arques' boat building teacher Bob Darr, the original owner had framed most of the boat in locally cut blue gum, attached the ballast keel and started the planking. Jeff liked the workmanship, but he especially liked the price: \$1,000, which included all the Port Orford Cedar to finish the boat! "If I'd started from scratch, it would have cost me twice that just for the wood," he says.

Jeff, a boatbuilder and wooden boat repair specialist (he's run Rutherford's Boat Shop in Richmond for the last 18 years), hoped to complete the project quickly in his off-season. But as these things often go, work started coming in and the little daysailer assumed back-burner status. Since the recession turned around, Jeff and his crew have been up to their armpits in work. Back in November, he decided it was now or never for *Buenos Aires*. "I told everybody I was busy until the 1st, and we just started working on the boat," he says. It took about six weeks to complete the job, including building the hollow round spruce mast and boom. Among the pleasant discoveries Jeff made while outfitting the boat was a company named J.M. Reinek in Massachusetts that makes blocks "that look like Herreshoff and work like Harken." Completing the vintage look was a new suit of Sutter sails. Although made of Dacron, they're dyed to look like Egyptian cotton.

Buenos Aires is Jeff's personal boat and her main missions are fun and family. He says he may enter her in the Master Mariner's Regatta this coming May, but for now the boat's main use will be to teach his growing family — wife Gladys, 11-year-old Lucas and 4-year-old Magdalena — the pleasures of sailing.

That part of the plan got off to an encouraging start on the 1st. Before a crowd of well-wishers, *Buenos Aires* (named for both its literal translation — 'fair wind' — and to honor Gladys's Brazilian heritage) ghosted into Richmond's inner harbor on her maiden voyage with Lucas Rutherford as part of the crew. It was a lovely, clear day with gentle breeze, and when Jeff pulled back to the dock, Lucas didn't want to get off. It took quite a bit of diplomacy on Dad's part — "I promise you'll get to go again" — for the youngster to relinquish his seat to another waiting passenger!

— jr



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