

STORMY WEATHER
Sparkman & Stephens Design No. 27

LOA 53'11", LWL 39'9", Beam 12'6", Draught 7'10", Sail Area 1332 Sq. Ft.,
Displacement 44,800 lbs.
Designed in 1933/34

Together with DORADE, STORMY WEATHER represents Sparkman & Stephens most acclaimed early design after DORADE. Designed 5 years after DORADE for Philip Le Boutillier, STORMY WEATHER was intended to improve on the earlier boat's line and cure her tendency to roll, but the increased beam (22% greater!) also resulted from a decision by the Cruising Cup of America to penalise fast, narrow, meter type boats. Olin managed to keep STORMY WEATHER within the rule actually increasing her draught and even her sail area by almost 30%. Olin refined the design after comparative tests of a DORADE model and a STORMY WEATHER model in the Stephens Institute tank.

The story is often told of rival naval architect, John Alden seeing STORMY hauled out under covers at the Nevins Yard without knowing her identity and commenting, "in my opinion a better design would be impossible to achieve".

Comparison of the model exhibited here shows that STORMY had comparatively moderate overhangs for the period and indeed proportionally one foot less than DORADE, but her above the water profile and sheerline are somewhat similar, and both have a short closed roof so that the deck strength, particularly in the way of the mast, was not compromised by a large cutout.

In 1935, STORMY and DORADE competed against each other in Long Island Sound in Force 5 conditions. The boats proved to be extremely evenly matched, though once fully tuned, STORMY turned out to be the better boat under almost every point of sailing except to windward in light winds with a ground swell running when DORADE's narrow shape allowed her to knife through the waves and outsail STORMY.

Uffa Fox writing in 1935 in his inimitable style stated, "To us, in this steady and stately country (Great Britain), it comes as a great shock to see youngsters like Olin Stephens and his brother Rod taking every ocean race in their stride, for Olin is somewhere around 24 years of age and Rod is his little brother, yet in 1931, the two aboard DORADE won the Transatlantic Race... and then after that the Fastnet Race. In 1932, DORADE won the Bermuda Race, then Rod sailed her across the Atlantic and after winning the Fastnet Race 1933, sailed her back again. Next year, 1934, the EDLU, designed by Olin, won the Bermuda Race and now this year, 1935, STORMY WEATHER with Rod looking after her won both the Transatlantic and the Fastnet Races." This was just the beginning of a long racing career for STORMY for she was to win Silver consistently, winning Class A in the Bermuda Race in 1936 and many other events. Uffa became so enthusiastic about STORMY that he even suggested the formation of a one design class of ocean racers built to her line. It is hard to improve upon Uffa's lyrical description of this classic Sparkman & Stephens design which was to spawn a whole series of imitations and refinements over the next 30 years. From the New York 32 down to late 50s and early 60s designs such as INVERNESS,

STELLA POLARE and CORSARO – they can all be called the grandchildren of STORMY WEATHER. Uffa, writing in his second book, published in 1935, describes STORMY as follows, “STORMY WEATHER is one of Olin Stephen’s favourite designs and her lines show her to be beamy and powerful, yet very easily driven, and therefore fast. She has moderate overhangs, and is exactly the type of vessel favoured by the new American rule for ocean racing, a type that should gladden the hearts of those who go down to the sea in such small ships. Her diagonals are very fair and sweet and her buttocks have the easy sweep that speaks of speed easily obtained and maintained. STORMY WEATHER should glide along with the effortless grace of a bird soaring through the air, totally different to the clumsy, brutal way in which the ‘wholesome sturdy cruiser’ smashes her way along at half of STORMY WEATHER’s speed. The sections show her high, easy, yet powerful bilge, which tells of easiness in a seaway, for though STORMY WEATHER will sail fairly upright, she will not be stiff and jerky in her movement. The waterlines, it will be noticed, are sharp at their fore-ends above and below the waterline, gradually getting fuller as they get lower, until the lowest, through the keel, is virtually a true streamline.” From 1937-1948, STORMY WEATHER all but dominated the winter time southern ocean racing circuit. As late as 1954, she was a class runner up in the Bermuda Race. Together with DORADE she is one of the all time historic great designs, a monument to her creators, the Stephens brothers.

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