

THE RAIDER TURBO

By Dave Ellis
Photos by Scott Norman.

The Raider Turbo sailing with asymmetrical spinnaker.



Dave's first impression was one of surprising comfort. "Sailors are not supposed to be comfortable on a 16-foot dinghy, are they? Yet here was a sailing lounge chair, where my feet didn't stick out and the tiller extension and mainsheet were within comfortable reach."



While the boat was originally designed to sail alone, it has so much room that a crew is quite comfortable. Dave found that in winds above 12 knots, the boat is faster with a crew.

"What a cool-looking boat," I thought to myself as I perused the toys at the 2003 St. Petersburg Boat Show. Here was a 16-footer that looked as if it was flying through the clouds while sitting there on the trailer.

I just had to sail it.

The first impression was one of surprising comfort. Sailors are not supposed to be comfortable on a 16-foot dinghy, are they? Yet here was a sailing lounge chair, where my feet didn't stick out and the tiller extension and mainsheet were within comfortable reach.

After reluctantly returning to the boat show dock, I mentioned to the representative that the boat needed a stiffer mast and, for experienced sailors, a jib and an asymmetrical spinnaker.

Almost a hundred Raiders were built and an asymmetrical spinnaker was added, tacked to the bow, as there still were no shrouds or forestay. Those who owned a Raider loved it.

Johannsen Boat Works of Vero Beach, FL, became the builder after hull #25. Johannsen, owned by Mark Johannsen, also builds the quality yacht dinghy, the Trinka.

Out of the blue, in the autumn of 2009, I got an e-mail asking if I was interested in helping to develop the Raider with a jib. Hey, "Other People's Boats" has long been my favorite. So arrangements were made for me to have a used Raider, along with a jib supplied by Joe Waters of Waters Sails in South Carolina.

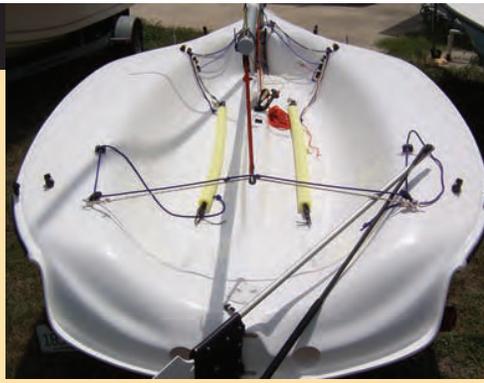
It is obvious to any sailor worth his salt that just to add a jib is not going to make for a balanced boat. The mast was now a nice aluminum section with spreaders, shrouds and a jib stay. So I lengthened the jib stay and shortened the shrouds to rake the mast back two feet at the top. A grommet six inches higher on the clew got the boom out of my lap.

Then a belt sander was used to shave the back of the dagger board top area so that the board could be angled slightly forward under the boat toward the bow, as many racing boats do for windward work.

The Raider had a handy built-in cooler forward of the dagger board slot to keep beverages and sandwiches. The turbo has eliminated that feature to give more crew room. I lash a little cooler aft of the traveler.

The original Raider with its two-piece unstayed carbon mast was really and truly self-righting. The geometry of the hull's wings would pop the boat upright. Now with a longer aluminum mast and rigging, it does not quite do that alone. But if a sailor managed to capsize—not at all easy to do on this boat—just a slight hand pressure on the dagger

LOA: 16'2"
 Beam: 7'4"
 Draft, board
 down: 37"
 Hull Weight: 200 pounds
 Sail area (sq ft):
 Mainsail: 124
 Jib: 40
 Spinnaker: 126
 Crew max
 weight: 400 pounds



John Drawe designed the Raider when he got tired of being uncomfortable in order to go fast on a small boat.



When author Dave Ellis, sailing here, first saw the raider, he thought it "looked as if it was flying through the clouds while sitting there on the trailer."

board quickly rights the boat. I get back aboard over the low, wide transom area.

The US SAILING Portsmouth Handicap for the Raider Sport, as the boat with asymmetrical spinnaker is called, is 91.4, about the same as a Snipe. With the jib correction, it is 89.1, a little faster than the Windmill. Racing at Davis Island Yacht Club, near Tampa, FL, on Thursday evenings, proved that this handicap was pretty close to accurate. The Raider with jib and asymmetrical managed to win the spring series in the dinghy class. Much experimenting was done thereafter with the rake, jib lead position, spinnaker launch and retrieval systems, etc. The results showed inconsistency as some things worked and some not so much. That's research

and development for you.

After many test sails in various conditions it was time to make recommendations for changes to make this boat approach its great potential.

Johannsen took the hull plug to master shaper, Paul Keller, of Georgia, who gave the hull that little bit of rocker that water likes. The dagger board trunk was moved forward a couple of inches to balance the jib. The big change, however, was to the bow area. The original Raider hull had the forward section really narrow, almost catamaran-like, for the first three feet, then gently sweeping back and up to the hull form and the wings. It looked great.

In smooth conditions, the boat slipped through the water so quietly that the speed was not noticed until another boat was near to compare. But wave action of any note was a problem. That bow pierced the wave like a multihull. But the wings then served as a barrier, and the stopping action was marked.

The new shape has the bow area angling straight back to the widest part of the boat progressively to each height of the topsides. Gone is the "destroyer bow" shape. As it turns out, there is less wetted surface and much more buoyancy for wave action.

Sailing the new hull is a pleasure in waves. The boat turns quicker, too, as the bow and stern don't tend to dig in like a modern catamaran when tacking.

John Drawe designed the Raider when he got tired of being uncomfortable in order to go fast on a small boat. It was conceived as a high performance single-handed sailboat that does not take an expert to sail. With his background in automotive engineering, he knows how to design comfort. Exotic construction, the type that similar European boats have embraced, was avoided for cost-effectiveness and ruggedness. This allows the Raider to be—ready to sail—about half the price of the overseas counterparts.

While the boat was originally designed for John to sail alone, it has so much room that a crew is quite comfortable. I found that in winds above 12 knots the boat is faster with a crew! It planes readily upwind with a crew but must be de-powered enough to not plane as easily when sailing alone. I tried a trapeze, but with the wings already getting the sailor way out there, I found it didn't make enough difference to make up for the hassle.

I've sailed many kinds of sailing craft, and I like the Raider so much that I bought the test boat.

For more on the Raider, go to www.raidersailboats.com.

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Gulfport, FL

Call or go to our Web site for more information



The Raider Turbo with spinnaker

Visit our Web site for a great demo video, photos and more:
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