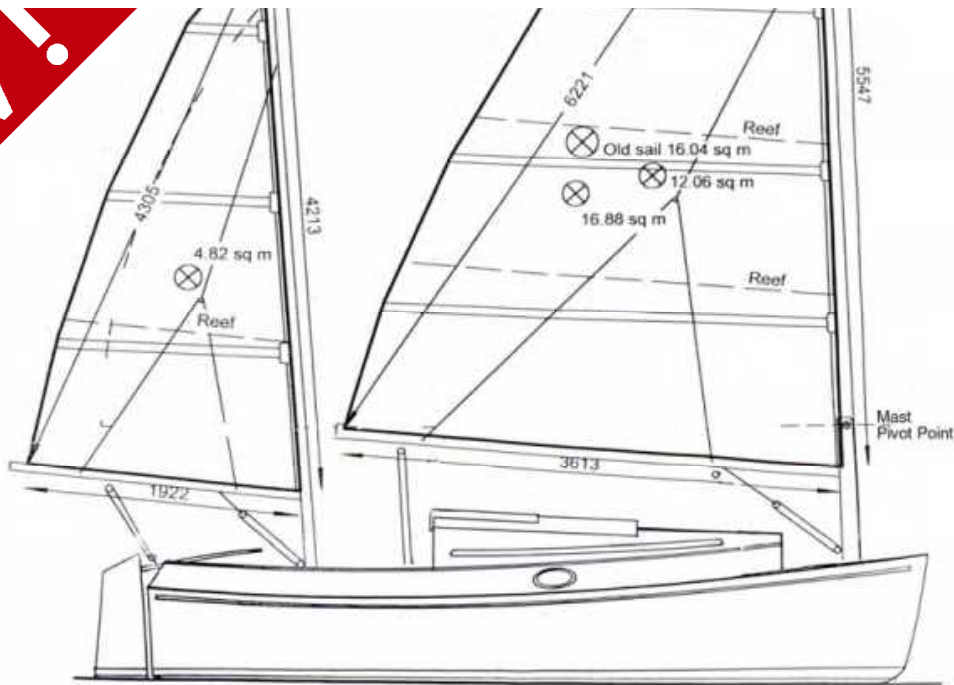


new!



NIS18 Ketch

Designed by Bruce Kirby. Plans, materials packs and special equipment from:

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by ROBERT AYLIFFE

I first sailed the NIS18 in Darwin. My friend, Greg Henderson built this boat around 12 years ago. His has the original fully battened marconi catboat rig, tall too, nearly nine metres above the water. Add lots of roach and a slippery hull and you have a witch in light air, her agility belying her shorter length.

As does her accommodation.

Lots of cockpit length, combined with that long cockpit tent making boom, and you can sleep al fresco.

Down below, a real double berth. So many smaller trailer sailers have a really jammy fore peak, where you really only have wriggle room for your feet in the forward part of the vee berth. Not this wee ship. The clever rounded cabin top avoids the block of flats look, while allowing comfortable lounging space right up into the eyes of the boat. Better still, these boats have self tacking rigs and the free standing mast means that there are no rigging wires to get in the way of swinging the boom out, allowing the sail to act like a spinnaker down and just off the wind. No sails down below, EVER!

The cabin also boasts a comfortable, if not very private head. The privacy issue is overcome to some extent because the cabin may be closed while the head is in session during the day or on a cruise. While at anchor, at night a Porta Potti can easily and discreetly be placed out in the cockpit.

The centre board is slightly off centre, unnerving at first, but only the fish seem to be able to spot any performance difference from tack to tack and the side of the case does make for a natural front for the galley, and permits a nice open feeling in the cabin.

Greg has lived aboard his NIS18 from time to time and at least once spent a fortnight aboard with a companion, cruising Lake Argyle in Australia's wild north west. He tells me that it all worked, it was enough boat for most people's needs and very capable. His fire engine red *Avalon Dream* is well known in the waters around the north, especially Darwin, where he has had success in casual races and a lot of fun simply cruising around.

I have come to really like this wee ship, too. Bruce Kirby told me I would, all those years ago in Connecticut. I wasn't sure, because it seemed to me that putting that tall mast up would frighten people; looking back, I think I am still right. Mast raising jitters put people off trailer sailing. Our tabernacle system would be useful, in fact Greg is about to retro fit one to his, but there are still a couple of problems inherent with the big cat rig.

You need a longer storage space for the boat than is suggested by the hull's length. By over 50%! For more and more people this is important.

In practice the sail raising is a bit of a hassle single handed, because with the single sail the boat won't lie to windward while raising the sail. This means that the slugs tend to gripe in the track a bit as the sail is raised, which can be quite irritating.

The ketch rig allows several advantages.

The components are smaller and easier to handle, blindingly so with the tabernacles.

The whole boat may be stored in an under 7m long shelter, including the trailer drawbar.

The mizzen will hold the boat to windward while raising and lowering sail.

The cat rigged 18 already self-steers with the wind anywhere forward of the beam adequately, it will be really sharp with the mizzen. Tie the tiller straight ahead, trim the mizzen and set and forget!



Greg Henderson sailing Avalon Dream at Fanny Bay, Darwin.



NIS18, brilliant interior space.

As the wind builds, while reaching, weather helm will build too. Strike the mizzen as it gets too willing, and the effect of lower rig height and the efficient fully battened sail will kick in, making for a more placid ride and easy maintenance of full hull speed and as you will find, often beyond.

Like her sisters, the NIS18 and the NIS18 Ketch have all the self righting capabilities, Fastnet inspired hatch placings and design, quiet dry progress when lightly heeled in chop and fabulous light air and windward witchery that mark all of the Bruce Kirby designs.

These boats, with their self tacking, easily managed sailplans are among the easiest boats to get sailing in, yet are sophisticated enough to reward the sailor who knows enough to tweak the strings and sail shapes to a race winning edge.

Easy and rewarding building, distinctive and practical looks, real weekendering and performance capability. Scratch kits now ready for all stages or as a complete pack. World wide building support from the Norwalk Islands Sharpies community and info@nisboats.com

Coming soon. Precut kits, from a basic hull only pack to a complete pack with sails, spars, Bote Cote Epoxy Resins, Harken running rig, soft furnishing etc, etc. Will be available in stages! ■

All this, and so easily trailed.

CD and Study pack for the NIS range:
Au\$30.00 incl pack and post.
nisboats.com