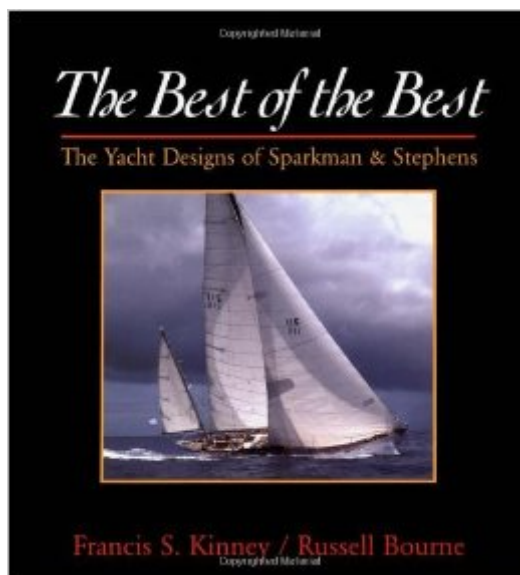


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The Best Of The Best: The Yacht Designs Of Sparkman And Stephens



Synopsis

This text presents the descriptions, histories, plans and photographs of yacht designs by Sparkman and Stephens, a major 20th-century naval architecture firm. It contains a comprehensive collection of plans for many of Sparkman and Stephens' most admired yacht designs.

Book Information

Hardcover: 279 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1st edition (August 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393024954

ISBN-13: 978-0393024951

Product Dimensions: 11.3 x 9.9 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,145,714 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Transportation > Ships > Boat Building](#) #2070 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Boating](#) #6214 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Water Sports](#)

Customer Reviews

I'm afraid this book is a bit of a disappointment. For me and, I suspect, many others, S&S is synonymous with the Stephens brothers, especially with Olin. Although, with characteristic modesty, he would probably be the first to disagree, his successors just did not live up to him. So, for me, the book should have covered designs only up to the late seventies. Besides, I would argue that to an unbiased observer (which the authors are not) the best 100 S&S boats are all from that period. It seems strange, for instance, that none of the boats from the winning Admiral's Cup teams of 1971 and 1973 is featured. What about Kialoa II and III? No disrespect intended, but most of the designs from the eighties while undoubtedly good and competent are just too uncharacteristic and bland. No sparkle. Certainly not worthy of S&S's former glories. If anyone could have taken up Olin Stephens's mantle at the helm of S&S and kept the firm true to its traditional innovation and genius, it is German Frers Jr. He is the master's true spiritual successor. Since he chose to set up on his own, S&S after the Stephens brothers' retirement became a different firm, and this book should have stopped there. Apart from those, let's say, philosophical disagreements, I also find the text somewhat boring, sycophantic in parts, and I am disappointed that there aren't more lines drawings and more detailed specifications. Having

said all that, the book is worth every penny of its price, and no-one interested in yacht design and the history of yachting will want to do without it.

This is a book for the yachting purist and technically minded. Few design offices have achieved the success of S&S. The book covers meter boats to fast cruising designs as well as out and out racers. This volume is a must for any sailor with a knowledge of the history of yacht design. One disappointment is the lack of colour photographs. It is difficult to appreciate the true beauty of "The Classic Yachts" when all are depicted with line drawings and black hulls. Generally a good read with interesting insights into the personalities and motivations of Rod and Olin Stevens. Some heartfelt commentary is woven through the pages by folk who knew the brothers well. I would recommend the book to serious sailors but not for those seeking a coffee table book.

This is a really special book for a family member or friend who is a sailing enthusiast. It is one that they will spend hours reading and going back to reference for years to come.

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