



1931 Wood Bodied Speedster Takes Shape In Port Moody

Dec 5, 2004, Port Moody --

A customer at Orca Boats is building a wood boat tail speedster body for his 1931 Model A Ford chassis. The body is built using BC yellow and red cedar strips supplied by Great Northern Craft in Vancouver.

Rod Tait, owner of Orca Boats, helps many people build beautiful canoes and kayaks. He teaches classes on strip building, sells plans/kits, and helps people build their boats in his Port Moody shop.



This winter John Black is building a strip built boat tail speedster body with Rod's help.

John got interested in wood bodied cars after seeing two cars : the Tulipwood Torpedo, a 1924 Hispano Suiza, at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, CA,



and a 1939 Lagonda V12 Rapide in New York



These cars were built to race. The wood bodies weighed less so the cars could accelerate faster. In 1936 there was a race for wood bodied cars at LeMans near Paris. One of the cars in this race was a Model A Ford. It inspired John to build this unique boat tailed speedster. "I figure that if Epoxy and Strips had been available in the 30's, the coach builders would certainly have used this great boat building technology for their car bodies." says John

John designed the boat tailed body using a computer aided design (CAD) program called Rhino. A computer controlled router cut the plywood shapes that made the mold which shaped the body. The body is built by edge gluing cedar strips $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick and $\frac{7}{8}$ " wide over the mold and then applying fiberglass and epoxy inside and outside. The resulting body weighs less than 100 pounds.



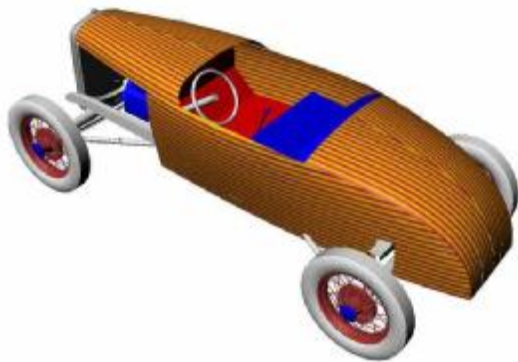
John met Rod at the Cloverdale Woodworkers show where he admired the strip built kayaks that Rod builds. "I knew I'd have to build the boat tail 4 times if I didn't get some experienced coaching" says John. "Rod gave me the help and tips that I needed to make this project successful in just one build." Construction started September 15th. Look for the car on the streets this spring.



The car is powered by a balanced 1931 model A Ford engine with 4to1 exhaust, Weber downdraft carburetion, electronic ignition, oil filter, 1990 Borg Warner T5 five speed transmission with overdrive, open driveline, model A rear end, and 1936 Ford hydraulic brakes. John expects it to cruise comfortably at 100 km/hr. It will have a windshield.



John says "I've had so much fun building this that I may come back next year to build a Roadster Body"



Orca Boats is located at 3005 Murray St. in Port Moody. (604) 312-4784
www.orcaboats.ca

Northwest Vintage Speedsters, www.nwvs.org, annually hosts several events for speedsters powered by pre 1934 four cylinder engines.

John Black is documenting the construction of the car on his website
www.jcblack.com.

Wood from Great Northern Craft
(604) 812 4949

