

The Vanguard 24 Runabout is a classically styled, well-built fiberglass boat built in upstate New York.



## N.Y. BUILDER HOPES TO CREATE A CLASSIC

*The Vanguard 24 is equal parts technology and classic design, says Vanguard Powerboats owner*

By Michael Hauenstein  
STAFF WRITER

Vanguard Powerboats owner Adam Harden says he has your next family heirloom in the Vanguard 24 Runabout and Vanguard 24 Center Console. The 2-year-old company out of Wellesley Island, N.Y., on the St. Lawrence River, builds classically inspired boats with modern technologies and rigging expertise.

Harden, 40, says he spent his childhood on a 50-foot Alden-designed schooner on Lake Ontario. After growing up on and around boats — his father was an avid sailor — Harden became a Mercury Marine dealer in 1985.

Harden sold Mako, Eliminator and Eagle boats. "I used to rig a lot of high-performance boats," Harden says,

adding that he brings that experience into the Vanguard 24. "My taste in boats has just changed."

Harden spent some time on wooden boats owned by friends, and says he really liked the feel. He also liked the inboard power, which would become a flagship characteristic of the Vanguard line. He went on to own a 26-foot Lyman and a 22-foot Hutchinson before building his own with Vanguard Powerboats.

Harden attempted to replace his Lyman with a classically styled, well-built fiberglass boat, but he found there was virtually nothing out there with inboard propulsion.

"There wasn't really much on the market in that size category," Harden says. About two years ago Harden re-

searched and found there might be a market for a boat meeting his requirements: classic, elegant, practical, tough, and employing inboard power.

Harden says he knew about Douglas Zurn, of Zurn Yacht Design, and really liked his work, notably the Shelter Island Runabout and Gloucester 20. After many conversations over several months, Harden and Zurn came out with the design for the Vanguard 24.

The 24 is available as a runabout or a center console, and features a sharp entry, flared bow, lifting strakes and 16 degrees of deadrise at the transom. A prop pocket reduces the propeller shaft angle and keeps the draft to 19 inches. The Vanguard 24's subtle, nearly level sheer line leads to tumblehome aft and a reverse transom.

"I wanted a boat that, when you looked at it, there'd be a real product identification," says Harden, who adds that his market is the boater who wants something out of the ordinary.

The hull and deck are fully cored and contain no wood. North End Compos-

ites of Rockland, Maine, manufactures the molds and tooling, the fiberglass components come from a separate company, and Vanguard assembles the boats in New York.

Power for the Vanguard 24 comes from a standard 300-hp MerCruiser 350 MAG MPI which pushes the boat to about 40 mph. Additional engine options include the 320-hp MerCruiser 6.2 or the 370-hp MerCruiser 8.1; however, as a semi-custom boatbuilder, Vanguard can make available other engines, including diesels. The boat reaches a top speed approaching 45 mph with the MerCruiser 6.2. The Vanguard 24 also features a fiberglass muffler and hydraulic steering.

The runabout version has a stainless steel windshield frame and a padded and upholstered engine box just abaft amidships. The engine box is set up so that the engine can be removed in 15 minutes, according to Harden, and the 60-gallon fuel tank simply slides out from there if necessary.

In addition to the captain and passen-

ger seats, there is seating on the front of the engine box, and a transom bench. The interior comes standard with pleated vinyl and there is also an "ultra leather" option. With a moderate beam of 8 feet and an overall length — including swim platform — of 25 feet, 9 inches, the layout leaves plenty of room for moving around.

The center console version places the helm over the engine box, with a leaning post for the captain. The transom bench and double seats on the front of the engine box remain; however, the captain and passenger seats of the runabout make way for an optional U-shaped settee. A T-top option for the

center console should be available soon. A canvas dodger is available for both the runabout and the center console.

"I can do basically whatever a customer wants with the interior and power packages," Harden says. Vanguard Powerboats hope to produce between 12 and 15 of their semi-custom boats per year, he says. A 31-foot boat is also being planned.

Harden says most interest in the Vanguard 24 — and its \$79,500 base price — is coming from experienced boaters. "[It] is not the kind of boat you'd have to replace every five years because it's out of style," he says. "I think it's a timeless design." ■



The Vanguard 24 is also available in a center console model.

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