

FAMILY FUN *Continued*

CAPE DORY 26

On Bill Hardy's wall is a blow-up blueprint of the boat that turned him into a sailor, a 40-foot ketch from a catalog of plans. Although he hasn't sailed the ketch, much less built it, that was the one. "I was hooked on full-keel boats," he recalls. "They looked proper, they looked right."

From dreaming to acting on a dream, Hardy bought a 19-foot Sailstar and raced it on a lake; moved up to a Catalina 22 and raced it, too; and, when he moved to Jacksonville, Fla., near the ocean at last, finally got his first full-keel Cape Dory, a 22-footer. "That was a real good boat –

every time I walk past it on the dock I still miss it," he says.

But when his wife Chappell had a second child, Mary, now 2, to go with Daniel, 5, the Hardy family needed more space. "The 26 has headroom for me, I'm 6'1". On the 22 my head and shoulders were out of the hatch. To move to the 26 is like going from an efficiency apartment to your own house."

Dealer Barbara Williams of Amity Anchorage in St. Petersburg helped Bill Hardy move up to the 26, which cost \$42,000 with the diesel auxiliary, a feature Hardy prefers to an outboard. The boat gets plenty of use, whether making

the 20-mile trip to the St. John's River or to Cumberland Island. "Cumberland is a wildlife refuge," says Hardy, "and if you go by boat you have to be off by sundown. There's a fairly well protected anchorage we use. You see blue herons, white egrets, ospreys, bald eagles, pelicans – and deer and wild horses. It's a fascinating place to go for sea life, too. I've seen a pod of porpoises working with the pelicans over a school of fish."

Chappell Hardy began sailing as a student in Scotland and encouraged Bill to take the Red Cross course when he bought his 19-footer. Now he plans his trips to include at least one offshore leg; he's particularly proud of the passage he made recently. "We left Jacksonville and got on port tack, on a broad reach, and never even turned on the engine on a six-hour trip – that was a milestone for us. We finally ran the engine at anchor to charge up the battery."

The children have adopted the sea as a second home as well. "Our little girl spent the whole trip in the V-berth playing with toys and with our son. Once we almost dipped a rail in the water, and our boy got nervous, so we put him in the harness, on deck, and once he saw the waves he was fine. He ended up in the cockpit singing every song he knew at us, for an hour."

The Hardy's Cape Dory 26 is one of the first to be made without an inner liner. Bill Hardy has found this to be an improvement: "You have more room, and easier access. You do miss some sound insulation, and there's the possibility of more dampness. But I'm sold on the new look. Having the water next to my ear makes it easier to get to sleep at night." In fact, he so enjoys listening to the sound of waves that he made a 90-minute cassette for his days on land. "It's of gurgling water going by the hull."

"I picked the Cape Dory for its offshore capability. This boat will take care of me long after I can take care of it."

Photos by Peter Langone



Cape Dory 26

LOA	25'11"
LWL	19'3"
Beam	8'
Draft	3'7"
Displacement	5,300 lbs.
Ballast	2,400 lbs.
Sail area	304 sq. ft.
Power	10-hp diesel
Price	\$42,000
Cape Dory Yachts, 160 Middleboro Ave., East Taunton, Massachusetts 02178.	
617-823-6776	