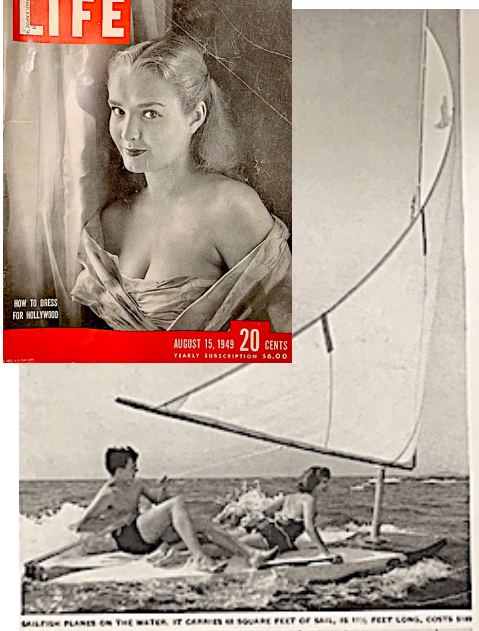
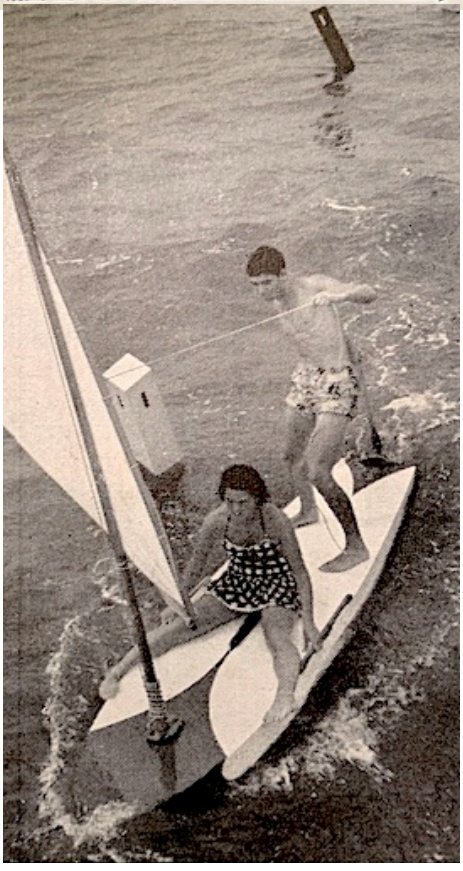


SAILFISH PLANES ON THE WATER. IT CARRIES 65 SQUARE FEET OF SAIL, IS 17½ FEET LONG, COSTS $1[illegible]

SAILFISH WEIGHS 90 POUNDS, CAN BE DRAWN UP ON BEACH WHILE SKIPPERS RELAX BETWEEN RACES

TUGGING HARD AT HELM OF SAILFISH, SKIPPER GETS AN UNEXPECTED FACEFUL OF SALT SPRAY →



WORLD'S WETTEST, SPORTIEST BOAT

The crews of the new Sailfish are in the water as much as out

In 1947 a small Connecticut iceboat building company called Alcort Inc. decided that its business depended on a market that was far too slim to be profitable. So it turned to the summer trade and invented the nearest thing to an iceboat that would sail in water. The result is the new Sailfish, by all odds the sportiest little sailing craft afloat.

This summer wherever it has been tried out the Sailfish has caught on instantly, as these pictures taken at Madison, Conn. show. Built for speed, the Sailfish has been clocked at better than 15 knots. It is sensitive to the slightest breath of wind and unless handled correctly will capsize before the skipper can say Sailfish. But with a hull shaped like a surfboard, it is designed for capsizing and can be righted in a jiffy (*right*). In fact Sailfish skippers, expecting to spend as much cruising time in the water as out of it, venture out into stiff blows that keep the captains of more imposing yachts safe on the shore. After a day's dunking, the Sailfish can be dismantled and taken home on the top of a car like a pair of skis.

So far Alcort Inc. has built 136 Sailfish in its Waterbury shop, and the demand is growing fast. The only criticism yet offered of the boat is the sandpapery, nonskid seating surface of its deck. This creates so much friction that the seat of many a swim suit has worn right through.

BOAT IS RIGHTED BY LEANING ON CENTERBOARD

LIFE Magazine - August 15, 1949

Mark that date! That's when this feature appeared in America's leading photographic magazine of the time, and is credited with introducing what was to become in the 1960's, the popular, nationwide, recreational craze of the Baby Boomer Generation: Sailing off the beach on planing, surfboard-like craft in a bathing suit. The article was the idea of an Alcort employee's date. She was a Music Editor at LIFE; had gone for a fun ride on a Sailfish in Madison CT; thought "Alcort" was a good story; and persuaded the Publisher to send up a camera crew to get these photos and run it. Alcort was given new "life".

Legible text of the LIFE article below:

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