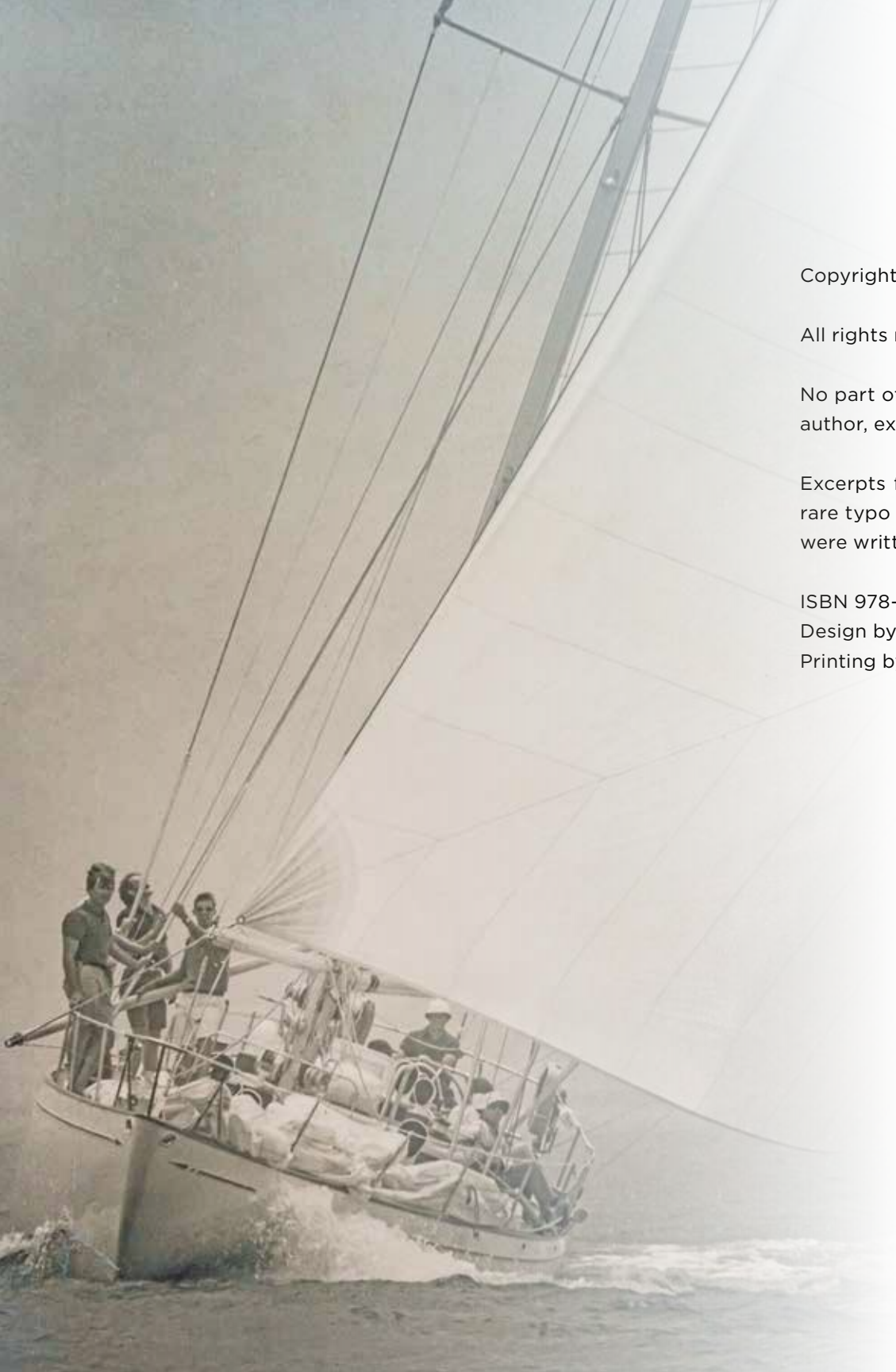


The Heart of HOUND



A large sailboat with a massive white sail is shown on the water. The sail is the dominant feature, filling much of the left and center of the frame. Several crew members are visible on the deck, and the boat is moving through the water, creating a wake. The background is a clear, light sky.

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Excerpts from source material preserve original underlining and capitalization. The very rare typo has been corrected, except when the intent was unclear. Dates are when letters were written; most also noted a date of receipt, about three days later.

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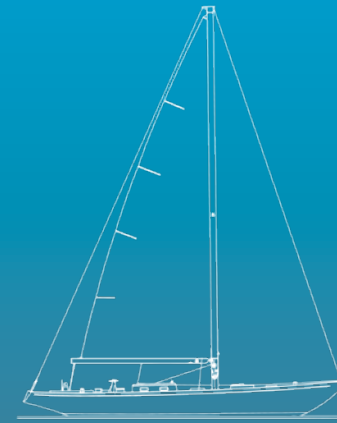
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I



THE SANTRY ERA





This unique yacht was first launched as Pleione in 1970. (DC)

A Stormy Birth


Over five and a half decades, the sturdy hull now known as *Hound* has logged hundreds of thousands of ocean miles, survived several hurricanes—and posted four class victories from Newport to Bermuda. Under the stewardship of three owners, she’s also helped raise three generations of kids, led to at least two marriages, and collected a loyal following of both amateur and professional crews who all have lasting memories of their time onboard.

She boasts an impressive pedigree: designed by K. Aage Nielsen, built by Abeking & Rasmussen (A&R)—but now it seems like a minor miracle that the boat ever got built. Reading through what historian Maynard Bray calls “those smoking letters”—two years of cables and airmail between designer, builder, and owner—brings back to life the dramatic birth of this one-of-a-kind yacht. They also reveal how the project, complicated by both twentieth-century communication delays and an endless quest for perfection, might have never made it to any starting line at all.

DESIGN N-333

By the late 1960s, when Arthur Santry, Jr., decided to replace his wood *Temptation* (a Nielsen design built in 1951) with a more modern boat, Aage Nielsen’s trademark plank-on-frame keel/centerboarders were posting excellent race results under the Cruising Club of America (CCA) rule. But what Arthur wanted was a state-of-the-art aluminum boat that could both win bluewater races and be cruised with his growing family. And because he was a “Marblehead guy,” he never considered another designer; he wanted Aage—another Marblehead guy, and one of the era’s best naval architects—to draw his new boat.





*According to Maynard Bray,
Aage “moved into new territory”
with this particular design.*

In *Worthy of the Sea: K. Aage Nielsen and His Legacy of Yacht Design*, authors Maynard Bray and Tom Jackson wrote that Aage “moved into new territory” with this particular design—and they devoted four pages to it. At 58'11" overall, N-333 was the largest hull Aage had drawn to date, and one of only a few built in aluminum over his entire career. Even to an untrained eye, the lines differed from his previous work: above the waterline, the most distinctive change was a reverse-sheer transom. Below the waterline, there was a deep keel with a trim tab on the after edge, and a separate rudder. Bray and Jackson call it a “decidedly different underwater shape than the type of yacht Nielsen usually favored . . . he seems to have struggled with these lines more than for any other single yacht in the Nielsen archives.”

Part of the struggle may have been the unfamiliar material. Long before Arthur’s commission was a sure thing, Aage asked a former colleague at Sparkman & Stephens (S&S) for guidance on aluminum scantlings. When the colleague responded with a “rule of thumb,” Aage saved the letter—and also copied the text out onto one of his yellow pads (where he made all his handwritten notes and drawings) and filed that away for reference as well. Later, reviewing A&R’s initial proposal, he would ask for their “experienced advice” about whether the “Electric Shore Connection” should even be used in an aluminum yacht. He also requested clarification about “Protection Against Electrolysis,” a “very important department . . . if the electrical matters are done correctly, there should be no need for any ‘cathodic’ devices in the hull itself??” (This would later prove a very prescient, though unanswered, question.)

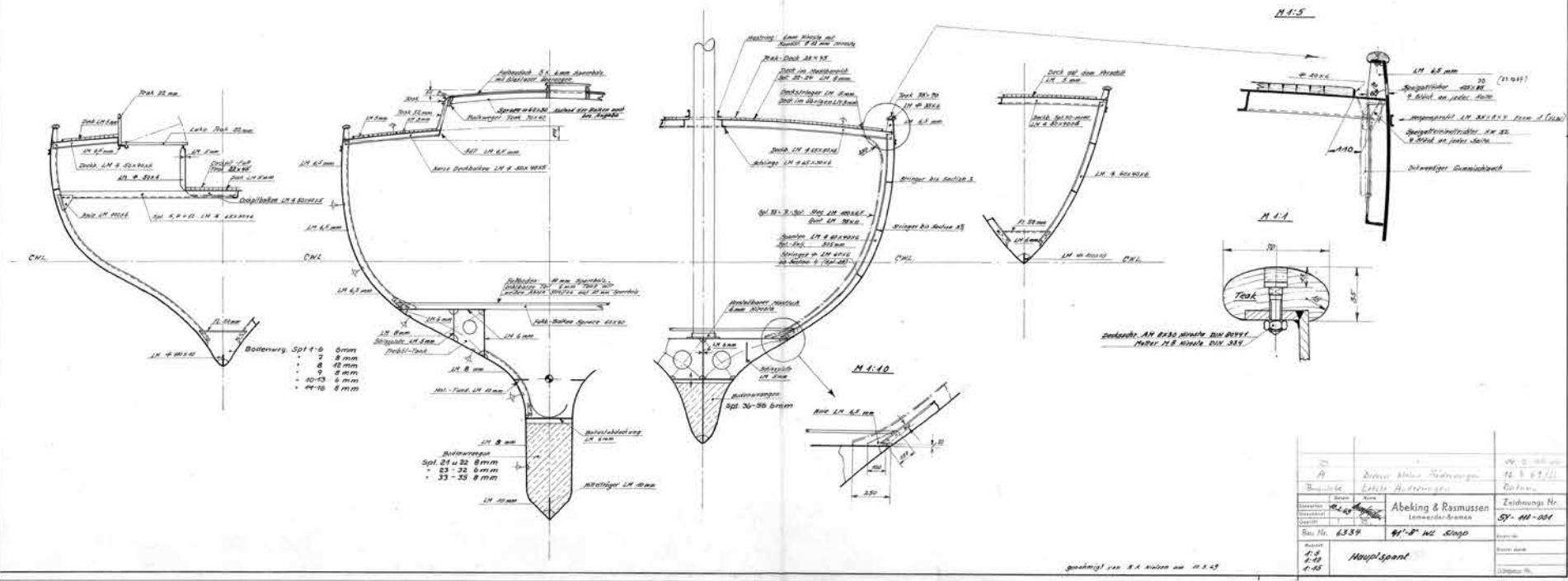
Another part of his struggle with the lines may have stemmed from recent revolutions in yacht design. By the late 1960s, separate keels and rudders had become the standard for race boats. And the International Offshore Rule (IOR) was replacing the CCA rule; though the early days of IOR still produced what Olin J. Stephens would later call “good boats,” Aage’s traditional design sense must’ve battled with new trends favored by the IOR, like reduced wetted surface and trim tabs.

And then there was the guy paying the bills. “My dad never considered another designer,” says Arthur J. Santry III (Art). “Aage was his guy, and the lines of the boat are fantastic. But my dad decided aluminum was the way to go. He had strong ideas about how he wanted the boat designed—and if he wanted to do it, it was happening that way. If he’d let Aage do his thing, they’d probably have done some things differently.”

Anterusrüstung:
 4 Danforth HI-Tensile Anker (Modell 60-N) 60 lbs.
 4 Danforth HI-Tensile Anker (Modell 35-N) 35 lbs.
 1 Ankerkranz $\varnothing 26"$ - $\varnothing 22$ mm, Länge 30 Faden - 55 m
 mit Kette $\varnothing 36"$ - $\varnothing 40$ mm Kurzgliederiger Kette
 Länge 20 Feet = 6 m
 1 Nylon-Trossen $\varnothing 59"$ - $\varnothing 46$ mm, Länge 45 Faden - 38 m

Leichtmetall-Material:
 Plattenmaterial AlMg 9,5 Mn F.50 (verpanzigt)
 Profile AlMg 9,5 Mn F.20 (gepreßt)
 Einzelne Bauteile:
 w/d -Gurtschäfte Beschäftigung LM 6² - 5 mm, Stoß 100 \varnothing & Seilanschl.
 Mutterschaft
 Ruder Beschäftigung und Stellen 6,5 mm

Hauptmessungen:
 Länge über alles $38' - 4 1/2"$ = 11,459 m
 Länge in der CWL $32' - 0"$ = 9,804 m
 Größte Breite $45' - 15"$ = 13,070 m
 Tiefgang $8' - 6"$ = 2,530 m



A&R drawings from March 1969 explain construction details, including the aluminum keel filled with lead and the teak cap rail. (A&R)

Zeichner	Abeking & Rasmussen	Zeichnungs-Nr.	59-11-001
Gezeichnet	Abeking & Rasmussen	Projekt-Nr.	
Rev. Nr.	6339	Objekt-Nr.	
Skizze	1-5	Skizze-Nr.	
	2-5		
	3-5		
	4-5		
	5-5		
Hauptspant			

Horst to tell him that a model was almost ready for tank testing. He added, “As you know, I want you to build this boat which must be the best.”

On 4 September, Aage sent along “Specifications” so that A&R could put together pricing for what would become build #6334. “You will note that they have been kept rather brief—also, that they refer to: ‘the Yard’s usual procedures and experience’ now and then . . . your Yard’s experience in certain points concerning Aluminum construction most certainly should be adhered to—as being the best, I am sure. I therefore hope that you will . . . use your judgment wherever perhaps not enough detail has been written in, by me.” (Nine months later, this suggestion would come back to haunt him.)


Extensive model testing took place at the Davidson Laboratory (part of the Stevens Institute of Technology), leading to a 27-page report. In late September, Arthur told Horst that they should have the final lines “in a few weeks,” and also shared some impatience to finalize the plan: “As you could perhaps gather, I am most anxious to get this new boat started. Both Aage and I are prepared to come over and work out any remaining details . . . I have sold ‘*Temptation*’ and my family keep asking me when the new boat will be ready. As I think you know, I haven’t asked anyone else to build this boat and don’t intend to. From our first meeting I decided you were the one to do it. I hope that you will let us know that you can build the boat.”

On 1 October, Horst sent a quotation for the build; the 681,000 deutschmarks (approximately \$174,000 in 1968 dollars) specifically included the two coffee grinder winches that still dominate the boat’s profile. But “By no means we can give a delivery time for 1969,” he said. “The present delivery time would be spring 1970.” There was even a threat that this date might have to be pushed back, due to a pending build for another, unnamed American client.

In the same envelope, Horst included a far more personal letter to the owner: “I feel very sorry but I do not see any other possibility right now.” By telegram, Arthur asked to know as soon as possible whether A&R could commit to a spring 1970 delivery, and the next day he received an affirmative reply. Two weeks later, the owner cabled back a “verbal commitment,” and a detailed contract arrived in mid-November that specified work deadlines, payment schedules, and a launch date of 28 February 1970—with delivery to the USA a month later.

MORE ABOUT THIS LATER

Aage’s design office was known for producing extremely detailed drawings. Brad Noyes, who commissioned four Nielsen designs between 1954 and 1969, said that “[Aage] would



*“As you could perhaps gather,
I am most anxious to get this
new boat started.”*



The floor at frame 8 has several important labels and cutouts to establish its location within the structure. (PEM)

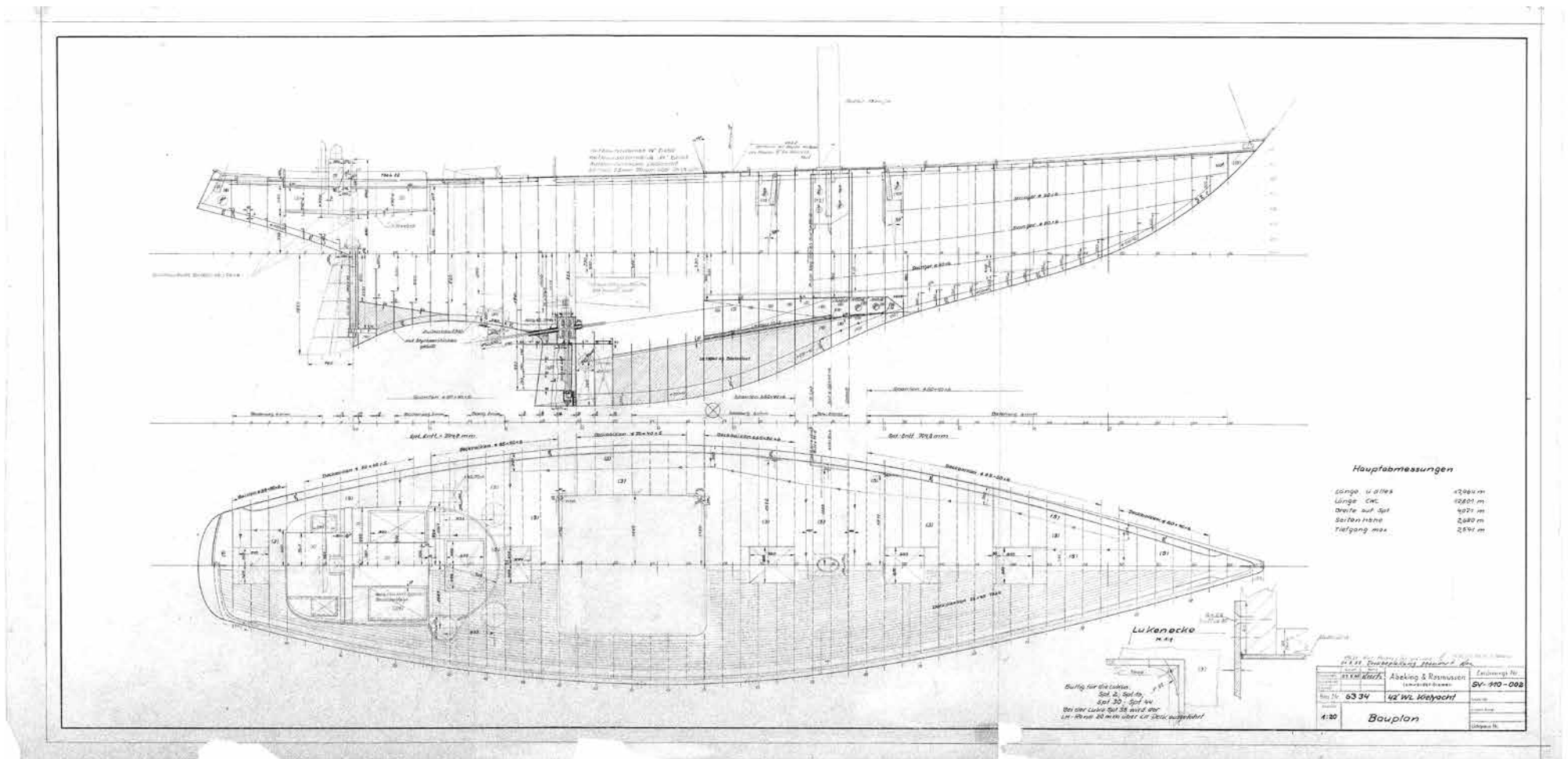
draw every bolt, its size, and exactly where it should go, and in all my sailing days in his boats, there was never any metal fatigue, no structural problems.” That said, the first set of drawings for Design #333 sent to A&R in December of 1968 were, according to Aage himself, just “pretty close to right;” that’s because they were “for ordering materials—only . . . there are apt to be small changes and variations in the finished LINES by the time I get them off to you.” Even so, he added that “I hope you will ‘sing out’ on points where I am not totally specific or detailed.”

Art III thinks his father created some of the design problems between builder and owner. “I wasn’t sitting in the room when my dad told Aage, ‘I want a toe rail [and bulwarks]. I want the keel poured inside the aluminum.’ I do remember him saying, ‘We’re going to build a new IOR boat, big and powerful.’ My dad was like, ‘Look, we’re doing this.’”

Before providing any feedback, A&R’s draftsmen first translated Aage’s work into their own more familiar plan format. “Lead time for the extra step of preparing shop drawings had to be squeezed in somehow,” say Bray and Jackson, which “occasionally led to a good deal of unpleasantness.” There were also delays on the western side of the Atlantic; on 6 March 1969, Aage wrote that due to a “couple of very heavy snowstorms that upset all transportation for about three days,” he had not yet sent final drawings. A few days later (as promised), he enclosed “the finished LINES and OFFSETS for Design No. 333,” adding that “Great care has been taken in tracing these LINES accurately . . . May I ask you to be most careful in laying out the keel sections from Sta. 3 ½ aft, so that they will be like I have drawn them.” He also agreed to one modification A&R had suggested, before expressing his concern about another: “I am not so happy about your eliminating ONE of the longitudinals in the forward part of the boat . . . so would you all kindly again consider this point.”

One big issue was whether frame numbering should start at the bow (Aage’s standard) or from “AFT-forward,” as A&R’s own drawings showed. “We shall have to agree on one or the other,” Aage pointed out, before graciously offering to adopt their method—and requesting “a CABLE” with their preference. Predictably, the cable asked Aage to adopt their method; the designer sent renumbered drawings back the same day, along with another request for a return letter answering other “various questions.”

There was still no reply in early April, so Aage suggested he “stop by” on his way home from an upcoming trip to Denmark. “I believe my various questions will be easily settled during discussion with you . . . I am assuming that my LINES in the meantime have been ‘converted’ to your metric measurements and that you have the FRAMES laid out, etc.,



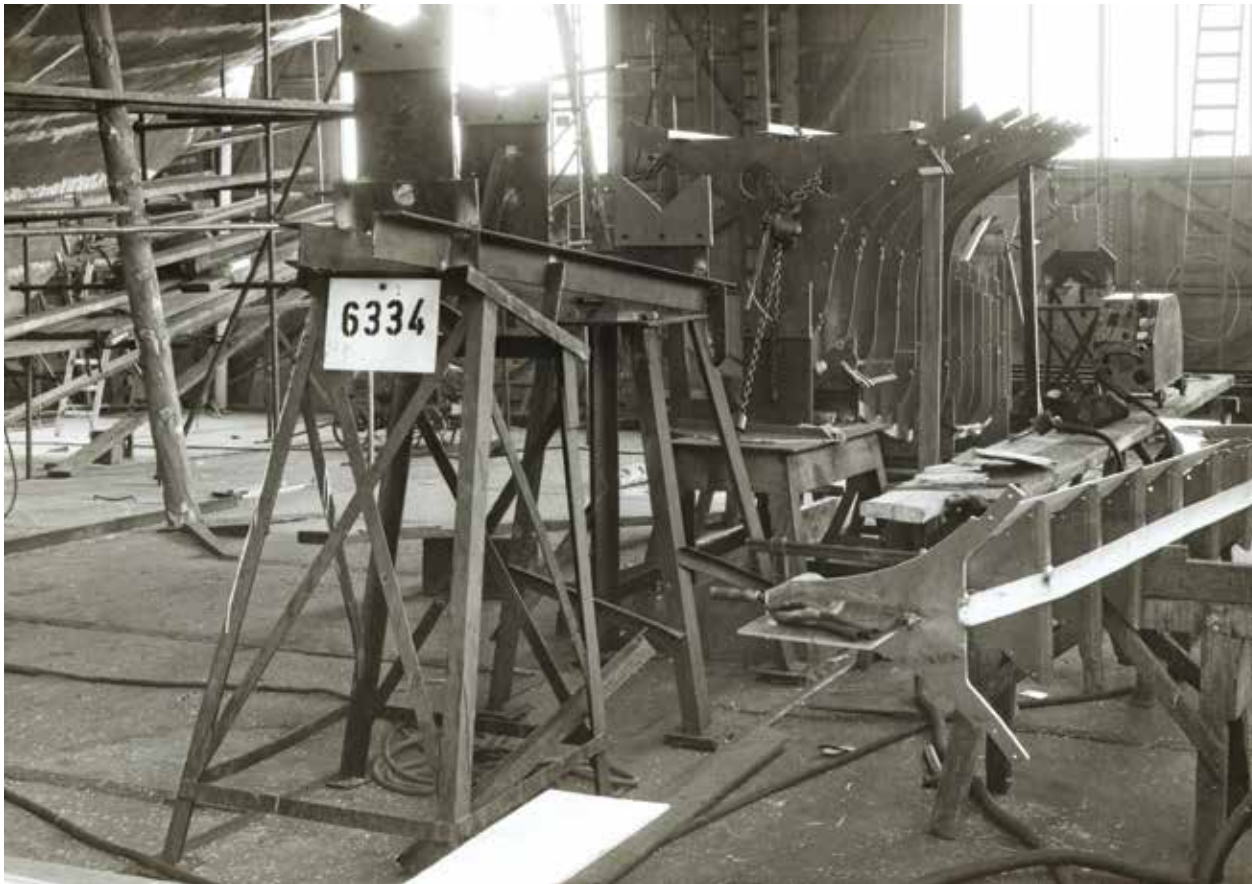
Once “various questions” were answered, Aage worked up a construction plan—though this didn’t end his communication issues with the builder. (A&R)

and that therefore you should be pretty ready to commence in the Mould Loft?” He then enumerated nine very detailed new questions, adding to one that “there will, of course, be more about this later.”

The in-person meeting apparently answered most of those questions, though one lingering disparity carried over into May’s correspondence. “May I remind you,” Aage wrote in a letter accompanying the deck plan, “that when I was at your Yard a few weeks ago, we DECIDED upon having THREE STRINGERS in the Forebody of the boat, and I trust



The hull frames were fabricated from flat aluminum. After they were bent into shape by the metal forming machine at right, flanges were welded to the curved webs. (PEM)



The hull was assembled on a strongback, fastened to the shop floor to maintain position of the designed waterline. The midship frames are already in place, while to the right the pre-assembled forward floors are still on sawhorses. (PEM)

you will remember this, and also have it corrected!” Horst assured Aage that “All changes as wanted will be carried out.”

The entire hull and keel were welded out of aluminum, with ballast lead poured inside that structure. Though it created a wider keel than adding the lead externally, builder and fellow aluminum boat owner Rives Potts says it was a common boatbuilding method in those days. “It’s a very nice way to build a boat, because you get the shape you want; and you can pour as little or as much lead in there as you want, where you want.” In the late 1970s, Potts would get to know this particular hull quite well—when he personally took a power saw to a keel deemed too fat and too slow by its owners.

K. AAGE NIELSEN, 1904-1984

A Good Eye

In 1925, a 21-year-old apprentice moved from his native Denmark to Boston, Massachusetts, after winning a *Yachting* magazine contest that offered as its prize a position in the John G. Alden design office. He worked there for six years before joining friend and fellow designer Murray G. Peterson in his new Marblehead office.

Five years later, the Manhattan-based Sparkman & Stephens hired the young designer to set up a branch design office in Boston. "In retrospect I can say that such an arrangement might have been difficult," Olin Stephens wrote in his 1999 autobiography, *All This and Sailing, Too*, "but it went very smoothly. Aage made preliminary sketches which he sent to me in New York . . . I would come back to him with suggestions. We must have thought along very similar lines, and Aage must have had more



Aage Nielsen was a well-respected yacht designer based in the Boston area. (SJC)

respect for my ideas than they may have deserved, for we never disagreed."

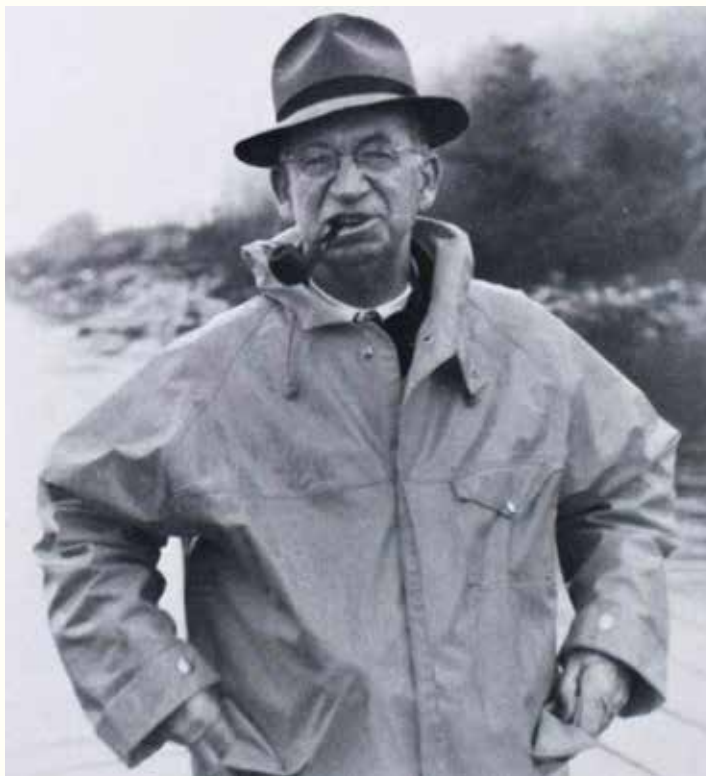
During World War II, Aage helped design naval vessels that included high-speed submarine chasers. In 1944 he set up his own firm in the old S&S office on State Street, where he designed boats for the next 36 years.

As Maynard Bray and Tom Jackson put it in *Worthy of the Sea*, their 2006 book documenting the most notable Aage Nielsen designs, "From the beginning, his plans were known for remarkable attention to form and detail. His insistence on excellent construction was legendary."

"He was a very quick and neat draftsman," Olin Stephens confirmed. "[He] had a good eye, and was conscientious in the extreme. I often thought that if I were to sit back and ask someone to provide plans for my new boat, it would be Aage Nielsen."

Aage built his reputation on keel-centerboarders that both looked good and won races. Even after fiberglass became the default choice for boatbuilders, he continued to maintain what Bray and Jackson call a “studied preference” for plank-on-frame construction. *Pleione* was the first of only a few aluminum designs he completed in his long career.

In 1980, Aage gave a lecture to students and faculty in the Ocean Engineering Department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His notes express a personal preference for the double-planked hull, though “many fine yachts are now being built out of aluminum,” which was “less costly to do, and has that advantage.” Perhaps more importantly, he noted the value of the friendships he developed with owners after working together so closely (and making many compromises); “That too is a form of compensation not measured in dollars and cents but rather a pleasure experience that cannot be achieved otherwise.”



Aage Nielsen was seldom seen without a pipe in his mouth. (SJC)

After Aage died in 1984, his will stipulated that no boats were to be built to his designs; he didn’t think modern construction quality could match his high standards. Thirty years later, Aage’s daughters authorized two yards to build new from their father’s designs—and *Worthy of the Sea* became an important design resource. “The continuing track record of Rockport Marine and Walsted’s of Denmark has convinced the Nielsen heirs that in fact such quality is available today,” a Rockport Marine employee wrote at the time, “and they have decided to grant these two yards exclusive access to the

plans. If you are interested in building or restoring a serious cruising boat as sensible as it is elegant there is no better place to start than the drawing board of K. Aage Nielsen. And you’ll get a warm welcome from the family.”

