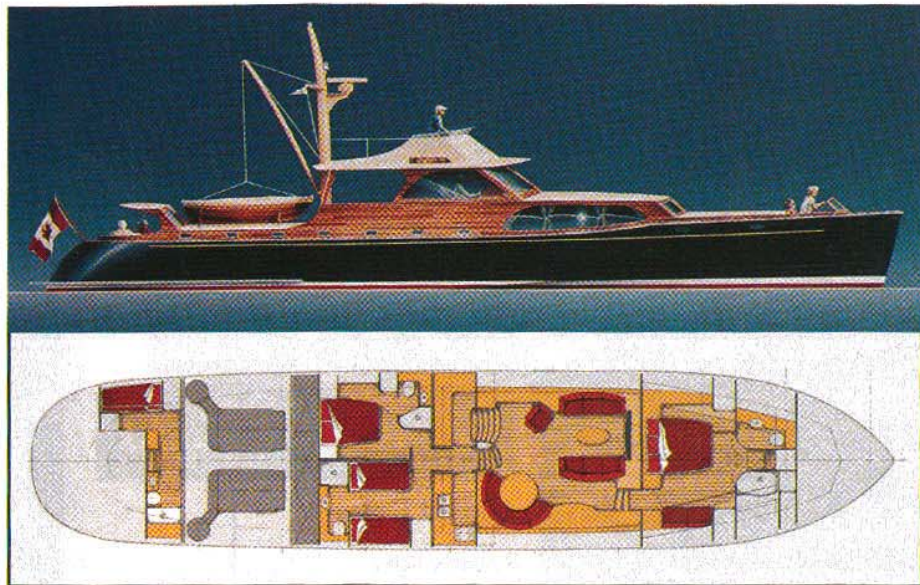


DESIGN



ROBERTS EXPRESS 92

BY DENNIS CAPRIO/dennis.caprio@time4.com

If I stare long enough at the profile of Tad Roberts' Express 92, I see a painted cover of a 1935 issue of *YACHTING*. The image would have been perfect for an old January "Motor Boat Show Number." The magazine sold for 35 cents a copy then, and this 92-foot gentleman's express, or commuter, would not have stood out as much as it does now, so many ads in *YACHTING* featured some iteration of the commuter style.

Roberts developed the Express 92 from *Liberty*, an 80-footer he designed toward the end of a 14-year stint at Bruce King Yacht Design. Built in cold-molded wood by Hodgdon Yachts, she launched in 1996 ("Rush Hour Royalty," June 1997). Although Roberts scaled up *Liberty* to arrive at the Express 92, significant differences separate these siblings.

In the process of scaling up, the pro-

portions remain the same as the boat grows exponentially in volume. For example, *Liberty's* length-to-beam ratio is 5.32 (beam is 18 percent of her length); the Express has a ratio of 4.8 (beam is 20 percent of her length). These numbers seem fairly close, belying the considerable increase of interior volume the larger yacht enjoys. *Liberty's* owner cared little for interior volume, but Roberts wanted to provide accommodations closer to what a yachtsman would get from a 92-footer of conventional proportions. A typical 92-foot motoryacht would have a beam of 20 to 22 feet.

The real size of a boat, though, shows in her displacement. The half-load displacement of *Liberty* is 75,000 pounds. At 114,000 pounds, the half-load displacement of the Express 92 is 1½ times greater. All this for what appears on the surface to be a 12-foot increase in length.

Longer, wider and heavier than

Liberty, the Express 92 will cut a svelte path through the water. Roberts predicts a top speed of 33 knots and a cruise of 25 to 30. In addition to being easily driven, this hull won't suffer the extreme rise at the bow (as much as 8 degrees) during acceleration from rest that wider boats exhibit. She'll trim out at about 2 degrees as she lifts onto plane because the bottom's area of maximum lift is farther aft than that of a wide boat. Her normal running angle will stay at about 2 degrees, whereas a wider hull will trim out at 4 degrees during planing speeds.

Length always adds to the aesthetic success of a design. A long boat allows space for graceful transitions and visually low profiles. In the case of the Express 92, Roberts was able to add a graceful flying bridge, one that doesn't stick out like a sore thumb. Yes, this is damning by faint praise, but I've no doubt she'd look better without the extra height, at least on paper.

The rest of the profile is lovely. All of the raking surfaces appear to do so at the same angle. The French curve at the after end of the trunk cabin's windows finds its echo in the side windows of the bridge deck. The cutaway in the sheerline right forward of the trunk cabin windows appears in the terminus of the bridge deck and flying bridge.

I envy the client who commissions this design to completion. If I were that yachtsman, I would build her as drawn and bask in the attention she attracted in every harbor. □

Contact: TR Design, (250) 247-9315; tadroberts@shaw.ca; www.tadroberts.com.

LOA	92'0"
LWL	89'7"
BEAM	18'6"
DRAFT	5'4"
DISPL.	114,000 lb. (half-load)
FUEL	2,000 gal.
WATER	400 gal.
POWER	2x 1,500 hp
	DDC/MTU 12V 2000 M91s
DESIGN	Tad Roberts