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Capt. Nathanael Greene Herreshoff



March 18, 1848 - June 2, 1938  
Birthplace: Bristol, Rhode Island

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***“There are only two colors to paint a boat - black or white. And only a fool would paint a boat bla***

There are few names in the yachting world that rival “Herreshoff” for recognition. This family of esteemed yacht designers began with “Captain Nat,” a naval architect and mechanical engineer (MIT, 1870) of the highest rank, an innovator who gave us sail tracks and slides, bulb and fin keels, hollow aluminum masts, and who was designing catamarans long before advances in materials technology made them practical. He built his boats upside down, with a mold for every frame, using the lightest possible materials. His influence on yacht design is unrivaled. His customers were the elite of the day.

Nat Herreshoff also had an artist’s eye for a yacht’s lines, producing scores of lovely, satisfying boats that are still being sailed and treasured, including the Twelve-and-a-halves, the S-Boats, the Fish and E- Classes, and the Alerion. Many of his designs, the acclaimed New York 30

racer/cruiser in particular, had the uncanny gift of putting their rails down upwind, then accelerating in the puffs instead of being knocked down.

The grandest, most powerful creations that came out of Nat Herreshoff's yard in Bristol, Rhode Island, successfully defended the America's Cup six times: *Vigilant*, 1893, which he also steered; *Defender*, 1895; *Columbia*, 1899, 1901; *Reliance*, 1903; and *Resolute*, 1920. He sailed on all six boats.

A man of strong will and unshakable precepts, Herreshoff once designed and built a custom yacht for a man whose only requirement was that it had to be under a certain length to fit into his shed. The finished product was several inches too long.

- Roger Vaughan

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**Video:**

"How Herreshoff Made Boats" - by his grandson, Halsey Herreshoff

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**Links of Interest:**

[America's Cup Hall of Fame Bio of Nathanael G. Herreshoff](#)

[Database of sailboat designs of Nathanael Herreshoff - sailboatdata.com](#)

[Cruiserlog discussion of Nathanael Herreshoff's catamaran, which he designed and built in 1876](#)

[Dec. 19, 906 New York Times article - Nathaniel G. Herreshoff Better](#)

[Wikipedia page for Nathanael Herreshoff](#)

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