

# Provenance of Ensign #943, Ouija

1965 - Manufactured, sailed on Lake Dallas until 1991 at DCYC  
1976, August - spinnaker has measurement stamp, Houston Nationals  
1981 - Purchased by Laura's granddad, Robert Stamets  
1990, Memorial Day - Laura's dad Russell Stamets moves her to Santa Fe  
1990, Summer - 1st phase of restore, coaming, benches, sole  
1991-1992 - Russell, Kathy and Laura (toddler) sailed on Heron Lake  
1994 - Moved to Berthoud, CO  
1994-2012 - sailed on Carter Lake, raced PHRF most years  
2007 - Sailed just two races at the Dillon Open, took 1 bullet  
2012, July - sadly trailer parked in Clearwater, FL  
2013, Thanksgiving - Laura and Dan move Ouija to Houston

Ouija is a family heirloom. My dad (Robert Stamets) purchased a brand new sister ship that was probably only a few hull numbers apart from Ouija in 1965 and sailed it (don't know it's name or number) a few years on Lake Dallas at DCYC. He may have raced a little. Then he sold it and moved on to larger boats. He purchased Ouija (although her name was unknown at the time) around 1981, again at DCYC, to have a boat to sail the part of the year he was in Dallas. In 1989, he was living most of the year aboard his Morgan 43 in Tortola and decided to let me have her. I drove down from Santa Fe, found a trailer in Tyler, went to the flooded lake with a barely useable ramp to fit the trailer to her and unstep the mast without a pole (difficult).

Kathy and I spent the summer of 1990 with Ouija in our driveway in Santa Fe, restoring the mahogany benches and coaming, and the teak sole. We sailed her for two seasons on Heron Lake, a beautiful 12 mile no wake lake where we were introduced to mountain lake sailing. We lined the floor of the cabin with foam and 1-year-old Laura played with the halyard tails hanging in front of the opening. While restoring the boat that first summer, waxing the stern with the light of a setting sun, I noticed the faint outline of script lettering. Ouija had a name after all! We traced and painted the revealed "*Ouija*". The rudder was a worm eaten, delaminated fiberglass coated mess when we pulled her out of the lake in Texas. Pearson had only been out of business a couple of years and someone actually



answered the phone. They had a new original mahogany rudder left over from a cancelled order they sold to me. I tried a couple of times unsuccessfully to seal the rudder but eventually ran into a fiberglass artist of sorts from New Zealand who glassed it perfectly.

We moved to northern Colorado in 1993. Ouija had to remain on the hard in Santa Fe for a year until we found where we could sail her. Little 4 mile long Carter Lake was just 15 minutes from our Berthoud home. We used every second of each April 1 to October 31 season, requiring some snow shoveling and slick foredeck work. In addition to family casual sailing, we raced PHRF every year, usually just Kathy and I, flying the chute, driving the Catalina 25's and J22's crazy with Ouija's slow rating but increasingly stellar performance. After 10 years, we often scratched them. It was hard for them to whine about

the rating at that point. Around 2000, I tackled the soft cabin roof. I used a 2 inch keyhole saw from the inside at multiple points, dried it, and injected great gobs of resin, resealing the keyhole cutouts in place and 25 years of hardware mounting holes topside.

Ouija has been restored with a fairly minimalist approach, re-using whenever possible. The bench seat mahogany seat boards, for example, were rotted at the ends where they sit on the gel coat. We just cut off the rotted ends. All the rest, after stripping and 8 coats of varnish were good for another few decades. A number of the resin-impregnated delrin blocks are still used for spinnaker, halyard, topping lift and guy. People laugh, but we actively use a varnished wood spinnaker pole with brass end fittings. Look around the boat and you'll see other similar examples of repair vs. replace.

Kathy and I sold the house and moved aboard a Stamas 44 CC Ketch in September 2012. Rather than have Ouija sit unused until we can bring her to Annapolis, we decided she'll be much better off being sailed. We're excited to hear of her new adventures among her peers in Houston with Laura and Dan aboard.

Russell Stamets

