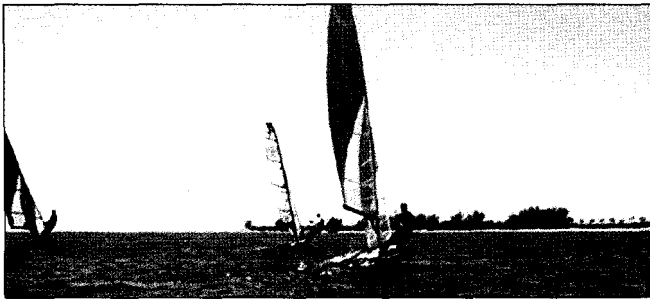
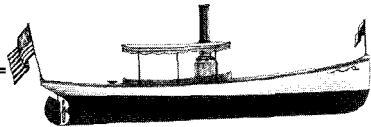


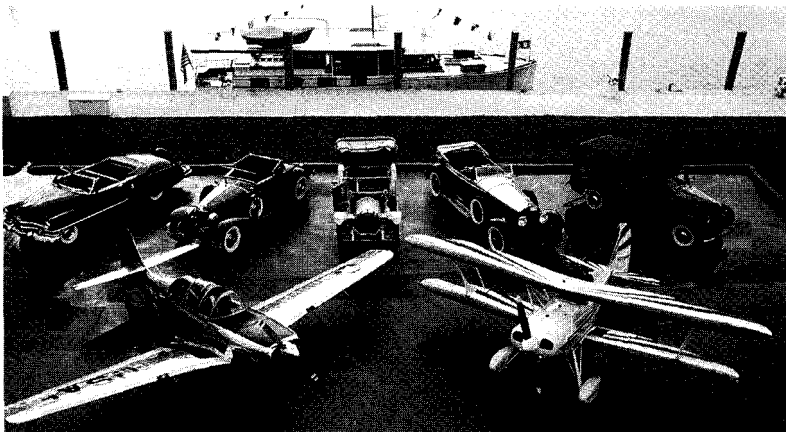
COURTESY BRAM DALLY



Ten boats in the new Swift Solo class gathered at a Florida lake in March for a sailing clinic and races.



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In the two years since the Swift Solo made its appearance in WB No. 173 (July/August 2003), more than 65 of the boats have either been built or are under construction in nine countries. The boat, a 14'4" racing dinghy that flies enough sail to keep any singlehanded racer's heart rate jumping, was designed by Bram Dally of Puyallup, Washington, with a unique sheeting system giving one-line control over both main and jib. Greg Ryan, a New Jersey-based skiff sailor, writes that on February 13–20, ten owners brought their boats to Fort DeSoto Park, Florida, for the first of what will likely become an annual midwinter clinic led by Dally, followed by racing. Half a dozen more skippers—Ryan being one of them—were there to pick up pointers while their boats are still under construction, and Ryan was able to sail a borrowed boat. "The camaraderie and easygoing atmosphere were remarkable in comparison to the anxiety generated by other, often high-stakes, skiff regattas I have attended, and the quirky personality of the Swift builders was well in display," Ryan writes. "Mike Jocelyn towed his Solo VELOCITYMADE BAD from British Columbia behind his Corvette. Ever seen a 'Vette with a tow hitch? Robert Harper's FUGU was most prominently decorated with pennants and flags, confidently, and not so quietly, representing the hopes of the Great Salt Lake Yacht Club, and, it seemed, Capt. Hook. A crowd of onlookers around Christian Rasmussen's Hampton, Virginia-based SWEET CAROLINE supported his observation that 'the boat almost always stops the conversation of passers-by.' In a light Sunday breeze, sailing got underway in the first of two pre-race clinics that covered basic skiff techniques, rigging, power control, and personal sailing equipment. The second coached clinic covered more advanced boat handling and setup, as well as problems and bad habits discovered earlier. The confidence and boat handling of even the novice sailors improved markedly during the two-day skills clinics. Most of the skippers who had never set foot in their boats were tacking and jibing with comfort, if not always with grace. By the end of the second race, I was completely addicted. Racing the Swift Solo proved to be an incredibly pleasant and gratifying experience. It tacks like a dinghy and is responsive and nimble. A light touch on the balanced helm is all that's required to maintain perfect control at any speed. Grins were wall-to-wall when we returned to the beach." An International Swift Solo Association has been formed to support the class. *Bram Dally, 11223 136th Ave. E., Puyallup, WA 98374; 253-848-4732; <www.swiftsolo.org>.*

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