



Working Cats of the Caribbean

For the past quarter-century, St. Kitts designer-builder Doug Brookes has specialized in fast, good-looking, durable sailing cats for the lucrative (and very competitive) day-charter trade.

**Text and photographs
by Aaron Porter
(except where noted)**

*There's a tradition of working sailboats on the Caribbean island of Saint Christopher (also called St. Kitts). In his book *Clean Sweet Wind: Sailing Craft of the Lesser Antilles* (Easy Reach Press, 1981), author Douglas Pyle notes that during his visit there in the early 1970s numerous sailing lighters serviced the*

sugar-driven economy of St. Kitts and neighboring Nevis, since there was no deepwater pier. Modest, locally built sailboats were relied on for transporting goods and passengers between the islands and from ship to shore. As recently as 1991, I watched the crew of a weathered sailing lighter unloading cases of soda and