

issue, on page 7] over clear Douglas-fir stringers and plywood bulkheads, the boat weighed in at about eight tons. The hulls were low, featuring faint clipper bows and straight transoms in the Spronk tradition, with a graceful Brookes half-elliptical forward box beam that concealed two internal structural members. At 29'6" (8.9m) across, she was wider than a Spronk cat, and she had a taller rig than Spronk would have advised. Her distinctive black-and-gold paint job was inspired by the finish on the John Player Special series of Formula One racecars.

With reported top speeds around 30 knots, *Eagle* sailed famously, providing Brookes with both a livelihood and regatta honors for 11 years. During that time, the boat sailed primarily between Sint Maarten and St. Barts, made money, and held together well enough to enable Brookes to sell her in 1994 for \$350,000—so he could send his son to flight school and his daughter to college.

Brookes also took time out from sailing to design and build more cats. He arranged for another captain to run *Eagle*, starting in 1985, when he came to St. Kitts to build *Falcon*.

Brookes pulled into a dusty lot at the foot of Brimstone Hill Fortress, an 18th-century redoubt that overlooks the western shore of St. Kitts. We've arrived at Fortress Marine, a business partnership involving Brookes, Walwyn, and Patrick Ryan, another native of St. Kitts, now living in Antigua. It's also a nascent marina site being developed for large vessels, with the promise of a man-made harbor. Fortress Marine was one of the first commercial tenants.

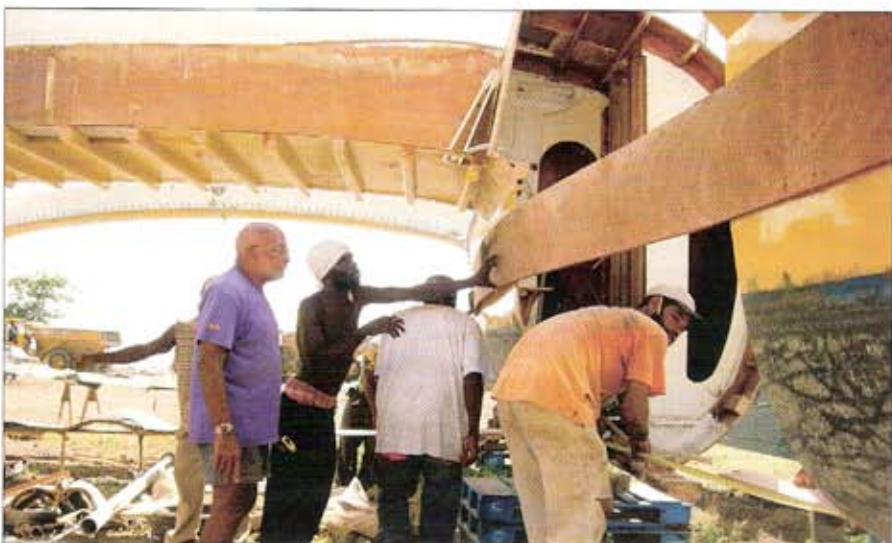
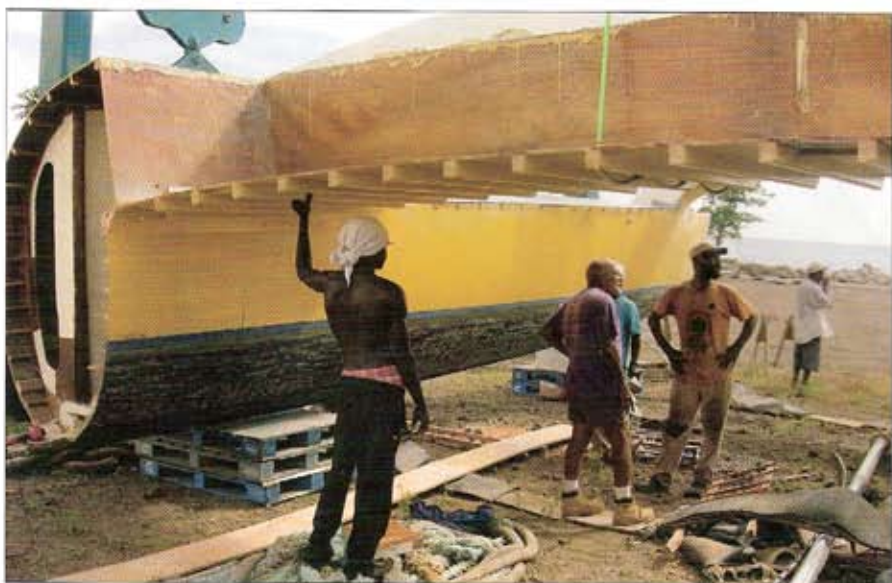
Falcon had indeed been cut in half. Brookes jumped right into the fray, trying to position the forward and after sections of the boat exactly 7' apart, on the same plane and forward-aft axis. Slung in a Travelift, the

forward section of the boat was easing away while two members of a six-man crew measured the growing gap.

When it got close to the desired distance, they held a plank across the gap to join ends of a horizontal line that had been drawn on the hull before it was sawed in half. Screwed into the aft section, the plank guided the vertical adjustment on the forward section. Out of what looked deceptively like chaos, Brookes quickly directed the lift operator and crew to raise the hull, shift the plank, and place shipping pallets and solid blocking to support the hull. With one hull lined up, the cross plank was screwed on, and the process repeated on the other hull. Then the lift picked up both forward hull sections slightly as the crew fit additional blocking. Finer tuning would be done with small hydraulic jacks.

With the Travelift gone, the crew now prepared the keels and numerous stringers that would have new material scarfed to them. It's not often, other than in drawn station plans perhaps, that you have the opportunity to view a complete cross-section of a built boat. Standing in the gap between hull bodies revealed a lot about *Falcon's* construction back in 1985. Her $\frac{3}{8}$ " Bruynzeel plywood skin seemed alarmingly thin. But the test of time has proved it ample. Brookes concedes that in his quest for speed, he built *Eagle* and *Falcon* as light as he could—lighter than he would build a charter cat today.

"The earlier charter boats I did, in my mind were *raceboats* we were going to charter," he said. He credits their strength and longevity in part to Bruynzeel's consistent quality, which he said was virtually as good, upon



Top—The 53' (16.2m) catamaran *Falcon* was sawn in half to add 7' (2.1m) to her length at Brookes's Fortress Marine facility.

Bottom—A straight plank, tape measure, and Travelift allow the crew to place the two sections of *Falcon* exactly 7' apart. Then, of course, comes the job of filling in that space.