



**1**—Falcon's forward section shows some wear after 23 years of service. Note the elliptical box beam between bows, a Brookes departure from Spronk's square-shaped cross-members. **2**—Grinding scarfs into stringers. **3**—Brookes plans the keel scarf. **4**—A section view reveals the  $\frac{3}{8}$ "-Bruynzeel-plywood skin over Douglas-fir stringers on 6" (152mm) centers, and ring bulkheads every 4' (1.2m). The arrow points to a critical gusset in the structure.

inspection, in 2008 as it was when installed in 1985. *Falcon's* hulls were sheathed with fiberglass only below the waterline, yet the topside plywood remained remarkably sound and fair under well-applied paint.

Brookes explained that what we were seeing in the laid-bare *Falcon* was essentially Spronk design and construction: Douglas-fir stringers on about 6" (152mm) centers, and plywood ring or solid bulkheads every 4' (1.2m). Also visible were the radiused plywood gussets added to reinforce

the bulkheads that support hull attachments to the box beams and deck between hulls; particularly important structural joints in any catamaran (see photo 4, above), they have no real equivalent in monohull construction. While some catamaran designers rely on *flexibility* to weather rough conditions and keep the two hulls and rig intact, Brookes counts on *rigidity*. To that end he tests every boat he builds, before launching. Starting aft, he said, "I pick a point and begin jacking up on one hull."

Brookes lifts until the other hull begins to rise as well. "I haven't seen more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " [63.5mm] on any boat I built."

*Falcon's* exterior provided further evidence of a Brookes cat based on the Spronk tradition. *Falcon's* forward box beam was fully elliptical in cross section. And as we rounded the stern, Brookes pointed out that *Falcon* was the first of his cats with the now-signature *curved* transom—not Spronk's straight slope.

Brookes said that soon after *Falcon*