

THE FIRST FIBERGLASS CLASSIC

Proud owners report on the Glasspar G-3

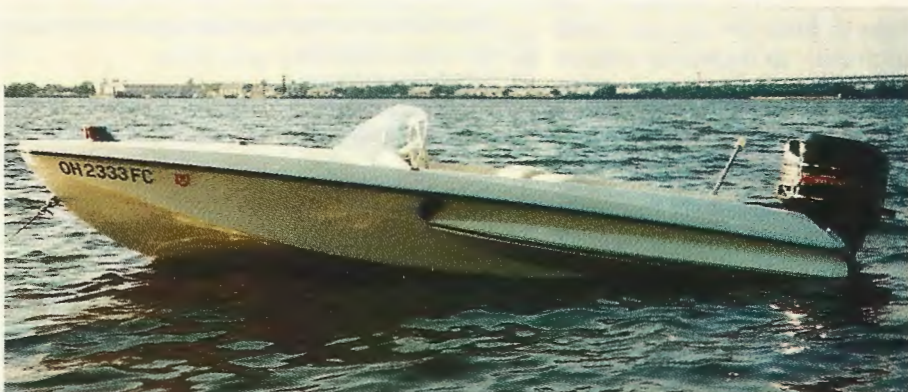
BY KARL BEISEL

Some old wooden boats have long been considered classics, but a few well-remembered fiberglass models have also been aged a considerable amount of time, and have reached a vintage stage.

The April 1990 issue of *Trailer Boats* featured a story on restoring a Glasspar G-3. The story obviously stirred many emotions and memories. It produced more than 80 letters with a vast assortment of both comical and heart-felt tales. All remembered the early 1960s boat in a similar fashion. But the astounding part is that more than 50 people who wrote are still proud Glasspar owners. The stories range from disasters to dusty, rediscovered showroom gems. Some of them are worth re-telling. But first, a little background.

Fiberglass lends itself to low-cost, mass production. The material was used in thousands of small, outboard models manufactured during the early days of fiberglass. The G-3 was produced during the late 1950s through the mid-1960s. It incorporates a rare and characteristic sponson design that is stylish even today. The hull shape remained constant, but the boat evolved through one deck redesign (eliminating its center deck).

The Glasspar Company was an early leader in fiberglass technology. It manufactured the G-3, plus many other models. For a period during the 1960s, this one company produced nearly half of all fiberglass boats made in the United States. It sounds incredible, but, in some regions, the name became synonymous with fiberglass boats. For a short time, it was the only nationally manufactured brand name. The company captured a huge market share using unmatched styling and the newest building material. Demand for the name and, in particular, the sporty skiboat was so strong that there was even a waiting list. At one point, dealer orders of 25 units could include only one G-3 model. Glasspar merged with Larson Boats in the late 1960s. Both names were continued for a time, but Glasspar disappeared after the 1975 model year.



This 1965 model was stored in a garage and was not used for 16 years.



This 29-year-old boat can still jump a wave in a heartbeat.

These are stories from the more than 70 members of the G-3 Owners Association—a group that still appreciates the boat's classic and ageless styling. Even youthful admirers who are totally unaware of the boat's history often recognize the styling as classic, sporty or unique. The smooth, flowing lines of the Glasspar G-3 have endured like few others—it's much more than just an old boat!

For information on new reproductions of the Classic G-3 skiboat, write Barron Boats, Dept. TBM, 1000 Covington St., Baltimore, MD 21230; or the G-3 Owners Association, Dept. TBM, 2205 Russet Leaf Lane, Virginia Beach, VA 23456.

Massachusetts—On recently launching my 1965 model (purchased new), I was accosted by a group of laughing, young waterskiers. They huddled together in muffled hilarity while pointing at my boat. "What's

that—the Bat Boat?" I maturely explained that they had missed it all—boating evolution, that is—and I pointed out my craft's unique styling. "What do you have there," I asked, them "another one of those open-bow jobs?"

New York—I purchased my 1961 model in the aftermarket and had no idea of its history. One day on the lake, a large cruiser waved me alongside. A man in his 50s leaned over the rail and asked, "Do you know what you have there? That's a Glasspar G-3 skiboat. It's as classic as they come." Since then, I have learned that Glasspar boats have a following—me included.

Wyoming—I purchased a 1960 model new. After 10 years of use, I totally restored the boat, only to sell it soon after. Years later, I wondered what had become of it. I was stunned to see it on a used-car lot in horrible

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shape. I purchased and restored it a second time. I, my son and, now, my grandson have learned to ski behind it.

British Columbia—We discovered our 1959 model stored in a barn. Most damage was done over a period of years by the barn's bird population. But, after days of scrubbing and polishing, the boat is again like new. We love the classic styling, and it still turns heads after 32 years.


Pennsylvania—My boat was given to me in three separate pieces. I admired its lines for some time, but never imagined them disjointed. After much work, the boat is totally restored, with a little customizing to suit my own tastes. It runs 48 mph with a 70-hp Evinrude.

Virginia—I'm often asked, "Is that a G-3?" Many people remember these boats. Mine was a rough restoration project, and the transom was rebuilt from the bottom up. With the engine quiet and the Beach Boys on the radio, it's 1965 all over again (at least for an afternoon)!

Virginia—My rig always attracts attention at the launch ramp. People are astounded that the boat is 29 years old. It will jump a wave in a heartbeat, and I have done a lot of exploring with it.

New Jersey—I owned a new G-3 when I was younger. It was "the boat" to have at the time, and I sometimes reminisce about those days. When the opportunity arose to buy a mint 1965 model, I jumped. This boat and engine had been garaged and unused since 1974. I traveled to Ohio, and trailered it back. It's a collector's item, so I use it sparingly.

Minnesota—My 1965 model is totally restored, and even improved. The deck is blue metalflake and the hull is white. The boat truly looks new. I'm often asked where one can be purchased. My response is always the same: "Only in the Twilight Zone."

New Hampshire—I remember the G-3 from my boyhood. Some Sundays, I would watch several of them roar across the lake together. I had told my children of one with a shark's mouth, so when I purchased a 1960 model recently, I duplicated the shark. The boat received a lot of attention at a recent Classic Boat Society show. 

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