



West Marine founder Randy Repass takes Hull No. 1 for a spin in anticipation of the launch of his Hull No. 2.  
Tom Barrett/West Marine photo

**W**hat happens when you take the proven KISS theory of sailboat design and add owners looking for a boat that can both cruise the world and provide a platform for oceanic research? You end up with the Wylie 65.

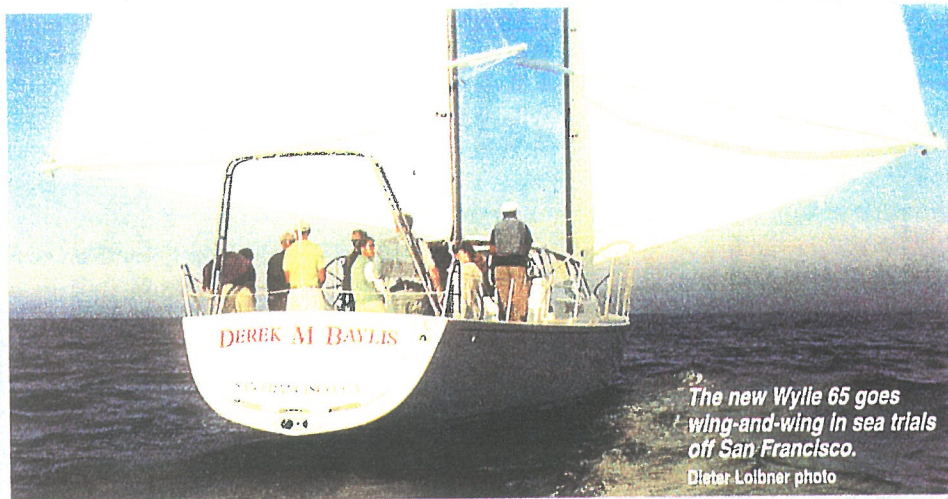
The designer behind the catboat-rigged Wyliecats, Tom Wylie, took his concept of fast, easy-to-sail catboats and created a new kind of research/offshore cruiser. *Derek M Baylis* is the latest Wyliecat, a series of boats between 17 and 65 feet with efficient hulls and carbon fiber cat rigs without jibs and standing rigging. Only four lines and four winches control the sail plan. At 64 feet, 11 inches, *DMB* is the largest Wyliecat and the first one with a ketch configuration.

Built by Santa Cruz boatbuilder David Wahle, *DMB* complies to Coast Guard Chapter T for charter vessels and can take on 49 passengers for daysails, or 12 plus 2 crew for longer trips. The boat is also

designed to take marine scientists off the coast to drop ROVs or other scientific equipment over the stern, using a light and strong titanium A-frame.

Hull No. 1 is named after Derek Baylis, a marine scientist and father of the women's World Match Racing champ and Rolex Yachtswoman of the Year Liz Baylis and her brother Trevor Baylis, last year's world champion in the International 14 and 18-foot skiff. Hull No. 2, currently under construction, is being built for Randy Repass, the founder of West Marine, who intends to take his custom Wylie 65 world cruising.

"Someone pointed out that the rigs holding world speed records are single sail rigs without jibs," said Repass, who is also a financial partner in the project. "With today's materials, standing rigging is not needed. After all, they stopped using wires to hold up airplane wings over 60 years ago. And Bob Perry observed that things usually look more normal once they are proven successful."  
--Dieter Loibner



The new Wylie 65 goes wing-and-wing in sea trials off San Francisco.  
Dieter Loibner photo

# Wylie Workboat



## Outside the box: A new boat for Randy Repass



Dieter Loibner

West Marine founder Randy Repass is getting ready for a new boat, an unusual one that will fulfill his dream of leisure-cruising in beautiful and fun places. The chosen platform is a 65-foot Wyliecat ketch with no headsails or standing rigging. That's right. No shrouds, forestays, backstays or runners. And no straight booms either, but two curved wishbones, like on a tandem sailboard rig. While Repass' boat is being built at Westerly Marine in Santa Ana, Calif., and is expected to be launched later this year, the vessel's prototype, *Derek M. Baylis*, has been sailing on Monterey Bay. *Baylis*, outfitted as a working boat for marine biology and research, was built by the Wyliecat shop in Watsonville, Calif., under the watchful eyes of master boatbuilder Dave Wahle. After a few leisure sails, Repass, who is also a financial partner in the project, talked about the boat, his decision to go with something that fits the out-of-the-box platitude and his own cruising plans.

### **AYR: Why did you get involved?**

I think there is an application for a modern working sailboat in the charter or marine research/biology field. The unstayed carbon rig makes a lot of sense regarding the

ease of sailing, the low maintenance and performance. Plus I respect designer Tom Wylie and builder Dave Wahle and wanted to help turn their dream into reality. The great thing about sailing the *Derek M. Baylis* here is that her concept and her rig are the same as on our boat, although we will have a much more cruising-oriented interior. But it is great to see how the concept works and gain some experience.

### **AYR: Why do you opt for a cat-rigged boat?**

We did quite a bit of research. We looked at Wauquiez, Oyster, Hylas, Stella, etc. before deciding on this rig, because we wanted to make the right call. We asked many respected and knowledgeable designers and sailors what was wrong with the unstayed cat-ketch rig. The only comment we got from anyone was that the rig is not traditional; it looks different. Most of the people we talked with mentioned many positives about the rig. Someone pointed out that the most efficient rig, and in fact the rigs that hold world speed records, are single-sail rigs without jibs. Someone else said, "They stopped using wires to hold up airplane wings over 60 years ago." With today's materials, standing rigging is not needed. Bob Perry observed, "Things usually look more normal once they are proven successful." After all, when it first came out, the Marconi rig looked very different than the traditional gaff rig. Today, Marconi rigs are called traditional.

### **AYR: What is your first impression of the boat?**

The boat is very easy to sail. There are only four control

lines on the entire boat: the main and mizzen sheets, and the main and mizzen chokers, which are outhauls. To tack or jibe, one only needs to turn the wheel — no jib sheets to grind. Our boat will be used with light crew, typically two. And on passages, one is normally single-handling while the off crew rests, reads or prepares a meal. In answer to one of the most-asked questions about this rig, this boat is slab-reefed, just like a stayed rig with conventional boom. But the lazy jacks are under the wishbone boom, so they catch the cloth that is reefed away.

### **AYR: You are saying that less is more. Isn't that counter-intuitive to West Marine's business?**

True, the unstayed cat rig requires less hardware; e.g., there are only four winches on our boat and no standing rigging. Most sailboats of that size need eight to 10 winches and lots of heavy standing rigging, which also needs to be maintained over the years. Less weight aloft means a more stable boat and better righting moment. Why would I want to promote a rig that uses less hardware, which is an important category of West Marine's sales? My rationale is that this boat will be easier to sail and simple to handle, which will attract sailors who otherwise may have dropped out of the sport. So it is good for sailing and — in the long run — for boatbuilders and the entire industry. Getting more people sailing is good for our business.

### **AYR: What do you like best about this particular boat's concept?**

The rig is the most obvious difference, but the layout

with a gigantic pilothouse is another important one. With this setup, you can see your surroundings while having lunch or dinner. We want to fully enjoy the beautiful places we plan to see on our cruises. Compare this to the view from most. In addition, one will be able to run the boat from the large inside steering station. The helmsperson can be inside with the rest of the crew when conditions outside are unpleasant. The galley is also up in the pilothouse, a bonus for the cook and the crew! A large pantry and area for fuel and water tankage is created below when the pilothouse is raised. With the available fuel, we can motor a distance of more than 1,000 miles at cruising speed. Yet, even with all this space down below, the hull is moderately light, an efficient performer, which is beneficial to both sailing and motoring.

### **AYR: How do you plan to use this vessel?**

We plan on cruising to fun places around the world. We will be able to get there fast under power or sail and live comfortably aboard for a few months a year. In between, we'll leave the boat in a safe marina or a safe boyard when we return home. Based on what I experienced with *Baylis*, I expect our own boat to sail very well, be easy on the crew and address the wants of sailors that otherwise would opt for trawlers or a set of golf clubs. Usually, this shift in interest occurs around the sailor's 50th birthday, plus or minus a few years.

Dieter Loibner