The Boatbuilders Apprentice: The Ins and Outs of Building Lapstrake, Carvel, Stitch-and-Glue, Strip-Planked, and Other Wooden Boats by Greg Rossel

Succinct Information For Planning Your First Boat

Learn the Ins and Outs of Building Lapstrake, Carvel, Stitch-and-Glue, Strip-Planked, and Other Wooden Boats

Whether you are contemplating your first-ever boatbuilding project or trying to decide what design you'd like to build next, Greg Rössel can help. Here's just a glimpse of what's inside this complete overview of wooden boatbuilding:

- How rowing, sailing, paddling, and powerboat designs perform, and how they compare in cost, time, and necessary skills for building
- How wooden boats are built, including the pros and cons of carvel, lapstrake, dory lap, stitch and glue, strip plank, and other methods
- How to choose the best boat and building method for your next project
- How to loft a hull, steam bend frames, scarf a joint, cut a rabbet, laminate stems, and splice planks
- How to take the lines off an old classic whose plans have been lost
- How to make oars, spars, coamings, knees, gaff jaws, cleats, and more

Greg Rössel writes with warmth, wit, and an engaging style. The Boatbuilders Apprentice is a must guide for anyone planning or even dreaming about building a wooden boat.

“Greg Rössel is a Renaissance man. While there are many talented boatbuilders in the world, only a handful are also good teachers. Even fewer can write or illustrate effectively. Yet this author is highly skilled in each of these areas. . . . The Boatbuilders Apprentice is a successful blend of technique and wisdom, and is, I believe, destined to become a classic.” - Karen Wales, WoodenBoat Review
My Personal Review:
All too often, first-time boat builders select a design mainly because they like the looks of it (often making their decision based on a small-scale profile plan or photo that they see on a magazine or online), order the plans, and then start trying to figure out how to build the thing. Then they discover that the design is intended for a certain method of construction (lapstrake, cold-molding, whatever) and they buy a book that explains how to do it. At that point, they may find that they've bitten off more than they're willing to chew and just chuck it, or they may actually begin building the boat before reaching that conclusion and ending up chucking considerably more in terms of time and money. Maybe they even finish the boat, and then find out that, while it looks nice, it doesn't really suit their needs.

This is the book that every aspiring boatbuilder should read first -- before choosing the design, before deciding what construction method to use. It assumes very little knowledge on the reader's part and proceeds to explain just about everything that the first time boatbuilder should know before he spends money on plans or planks. Like: how to figure out what kind of boat is suitable to your needs. Like: how to assess the performance characteristics any given boat design and determine whether they will satisfy said needs. Like: what are the differences between carvel, lapstrake, cold-molding, strip-building (etc.)? How difficult are they? What do they require in the way of special tools, time, skills, money, maintenance? Once you know the answers to these questions, *then* you'll be ready to decide what boat to build and how to build it.

Author Rossel gives the ins and outs of tools and materials. He explains how to set up a good, cheap, workable, "portable" boatshed. He recommends specific boat types as good projects for beginners. He covers just about everything you should know before you buy your first set of plans.

What Rossel doesn't cover here are many of the step-by-step procedures needed to actually build a boat. But that's OK, since that's not the purpose of this book, and he covers step-by-step procedures very well indeed in his other book, "Building Small Boats" (WoodenBoat Books). That said, there is plenty of red meat here for even relatively experienced builders. Anyone who has built, say, a stitch-and-glue boat will find much useful advice in his discussion of techniques for the other construction methods (and vice versa), and his discussions of lofting and lines-taking are superbly clear and of value to anyone who is intimidated by these often confusing subjects.

So my recommendation is: buy this one if you need help deciding where to start, and then go on to "Building Small Boats" or one of dozens of other books for specific how-to advice when you're ready to build.