

Before There Was Hobie Cats There Were Aqua Cats

We published some information on Hobie Alter's life and the great creations and designs early this week, shortly thereafter we received an email from Ned Cook, enlightening us on what appears to be the predecessor to the Hobie Cat, upon further review and some internet sleuthing, we have found numerous images backing up Ned's info. And look, is that the 1st commercially available winged cat?





This is about your article that you got from Fortune Magazine.

First, and foremost, I do not in any way wish to denigrate Hobie Alter. I met him on at least two occasions while racing a Hobie 14 in California in the late 60s - he was a gentleman.

The story about catamarans goes awry in its facts. Art Javes designed a catamaran called the Aqua Cat in about 1961. He and Billy Mills built this in South Norwalk as American Fiberglas. (in 1964 I met them and used one of their boats to teach sailing at Roton Point, in Rowayton). In about 1961, Hobie, still a surfboard builder, met them at the Anaheim Boat Show. He was enthralled by the idea of catamarans. He developed and built..later a different design called the Hobie 14 (I bought one in about 1968 from Coast Catamaran and sailed it in Northern California.....met Hobie twice after that).

The Aqua Cat was a "beach cat" in every sense of the word. It was also the grandfather of the boats in the 2013 America's Cup.

Tony DeMauro was developing an Aqua Cat fleet at Roton Point Tennis Club when I met him in 1964. He mentored me with Billy Mills and developing Aqua Cats there. Aqua Cats were an active racing class at that time in that area. Tony, of course, went on to be the guiding factor in C-Class Catamarans with names that are still active in

that class.

Skip and Duncan MacLane were both doing Aqua Cats then. Over time, those sailors evolved into C-Class with Tony DeMauro and his famous "Lady" series. As I believe, a great many C-Class sailors were in San Francisco last summer. Tony DeMauro was a moving force in establishing the Little America's Cup (plus being a great guy)

Hobie Alter was a great guy. He should not be placed above those great sailors who were in the trenches far more than he, however.





