

CAPRERINO

MIRROR SAILING IN ITALY

by Manuel Panzera, Tuscania, Club Nautico Capodimonte, 2010

I found another mirror sailor in Italy this summer by browsing the internet and via magazines. The person I got hold of is Angelo Vernocchi and he has a very interesting story. I found him when I saw a Mirror for sale in the classified ad section of Bolina (one of Italy's most popular sailing magazines) and contacted him for some information. Angelo Vernocchi lives in Sardegna, built the boat himself and knows a lot about the Mirror history in Italy. The boat he built is not a real Mirror but follows its exact plans except of the bow that is pointed. See photos (and this link: <http://cgi.ebay.it/Dinghy-12-Deriva-tipo-Mirror-/180534748983>), he has built about 10 of these himself.



The story goes back to the early 70's when a certain Geo Fiorentini, who was in love with Jack Holt's project, formed an association in Rome called Geomar with some other young and penniless sailing enthusiasts. Geo manages to obtain from Jack himself a concession to produce and sale kits here in Italy. The ops base was in Fiumara Grande (Ostia, on the coast near Rome) while the admin office was in Via Cavour in Rome. Geo then managed to obtain a free stand at the International Boat exhibition in Genova where he showed the kits and sold them for 400k lira. This is where Angelo and some friends met him and they negotiated to buy 2 kits for the price of 370k lira each. Angelo goes back with his friend to Bologna (where his lives) and build their Mirrors. Soon some other sailing enthusiasts join them and build a few more Mirrors and start an informal club on the Adriatic. For more than 4 years they have held regattas near Rome and Marina di Ravenna. They even issued a small news print called Mirror. Angelo believes that 50 to 60 Mirrors were built until Geo modifies the traditional Mirror with a modified version with a pointed bow called the "Caprerino", which is what you see in the photo. The reason for this change was to make the Mirror prettier and commercially more desirable.



In 1980 Geo died but not before sailing a Mirror for over 200 miles in the Atlantic sea. After Geo's death Angelo and his friends, as part of the association I Compagni di Ulisse www.icompagnidiulisse.it (Odysseus' companions) continued to build Mirrors and Caprerinos and promote courses in kit building and sailing for beginners for children on a small lake near Bologna. Today the association holds the original drawings of the Mirror project with building instructions. They only have 1 original Mirror left (that is over 30 years old) and about 10 Caprerinos.