

Cajune Boats Podcast Transcript

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boat, building, drift, fiberglass, river, dory, flip, wooden boat, big, bottom, panel, frames, design, skiff, fiberglass boats, plywood, advantages, feet, recurve, materials

SPEAKERS

Dave S, Jason, unknown speaker...



Jason 00:01

And so I want something with some lower sides but the oarlocks have to be high. And I thought, you know, I think I can do this in a really aesthetic way and curved these sides and instead of having like a straight raised or lock, because at the time people had low sided boats with that raised or locked but it was just kind of a blocky affair. And so I built that first boat with for john and call it the recurve. And from there it was, it's been almost the only hole that I make anymore.



Dave S 00:32

That was Jason cajon sharing the recurve story, a feature that has helped him stand out from the crowd. This and how he flipped over a drift boat and whitewater today on the wet fly swing fly fishing show.



unknown speaker... 00:46

Welcome to the wet fly swing fly fishing show where you discover tips, tricks and tools from the leading names in fly fishing. Today, we'll help you on your fly fishing journey with classic stories covering steelhead fishing, fly tying and much more.



Dave S 01:02

Hey, how's it going today? Thanks for stopping by the fly fishing show. If you can, let's take a quick stop right now and just share this great episode. I know you're going to love it. And I'd love to get the word out to somebody who isn't aware of the drift boat series we have gone. This one is loaded with some good content, including how you can how you can build your own boat build something that looks like what Jason has going here. So let's stop and share this one out. And then we'll get back to the intro. Jason could June is here today to provide the story of how he started building boats and getting into boats as a kid up at Glacier National Park. We find out who his big influences were along the way why his boat looks so much like an ocean going vessel and the story of building a specific boat so we can run the Grand Canyon. Before we get started, let's hear from our sponsors. Turtle box is a new company I've been working with this year. They build an amazing portable speaker that is louder and more rugged than anything I've ever encountered. Unlike most other portable speakers out there. The turtle box was specifically built with a sportsman in mind the quality of the speaker is truly unreal. I've talked with the guys at turtle box saw dudes by the way. They love the outdoors and are all avid sportsman. This is a product I can truly say does not disappoint. Go ahead and check the guys out at turtle box audio.com so without further ado, here is Jason June from cocoon boats.com how's it going Jason?



Jason 02:40

It's going great Dave thanks for Thanks for having me. Yeah,



Dave S 02:43

yeah, thanks for thanks for coming on here I've been wanting to get you on for a while now as we've been doing this drift boat season and your your boats when I first saw them I didn't know much about the stitch and glue so I we're gonna dig into what that's all about and why your boats look. So you know, amazing out there. They look different than a lot of other things you see. But before we get into all that, can you just take us back to you know, I'm not sure where you got started with boats. But how did you get into it? And then how did you come to own a company now? Sure.



Jason 03:13

Yeah, it's a it's kind of it's kind of a strange story in a way because growing up in Montana, obviously, not the biggest boat building community. But strangely, I grew up in in the boat community. My folks ran a boat called the center pa which was a 45 foot wood, Carvel

planked, you know, fully wood boat built in 1927 on a lake called to Madison, like inside Glacier National Park. And so from the time I was a very small kid, I was up working on boats in Glacier Park, you know, alongside my, my folks, and they did that for about 35 years. And as part of what's called the Glacier Park boat company, and the boat company, dates back to the 30s and operates all of the excursion boats or tour boats in Glacier Park. So all of the big lakes have boats on them. And four of them date back to the 20s. And were commissioned by the Great Northern Railway. And so, you know, it's a little bit of a strange upbringing, you know, in the summertime, for, you know, anywhere from three to five months, I was up in Glacier Park, and was, you know, kind of the boat boy and the dock kid. We had a fleet of rental boats and, and then eventually I learned a fair amount about working on these, these old Carvel planked boats. Carvel just means plank on frame, you have ribs, and then big planks. And, you know, by the time I got into my late teens, I was driving the boats and became a boat captain up there on these in the lakes. And so that was kind of an interesting, an interesting way to grow up. And before I knew it, you know, it's kind of one of the only things I knew how to do.



Dave S 05:30

Right? Right, right. This is this is awesome. I love you know, this start here because, you know, I've been digging into the history of the boats, and we had an episode with Roger. back let's see, I can't remember what episode it was but is near the start where he talked about the history of drift boats but you're talking about now these cargo boats? Can you describe is this more of? Like, this is not a drift boat, right? This is more like a sailing type boat, or what is it exactly?



Jason 05:56

Well, it's a motorboat. And the the smallest one up there is 45 feet. The largest one is 90 feet, which is up on waterton Lake and goes across the border. And there's a there's two sister ships that's in a pot, and the little chief and, and then on a boat kind of in between the dismount, which is 65 feet, they'll carry the smallest ones carry 49 passengers, the largest ones carry 90. And they're they're just very unique, very narrow beam boats, like I said 45 feet to 90 feet in length. Usually powered by like a 50 250 horsepower motor and they're very old, and they're taken out of the water every every year. You know, we pull them out and pull them into the boathouse get a lot of work done on them in the fall and in the spring and then dunk a man and carry 1000s of passengers a year up and down these lakes and drop them off into the backcountry glacier.



Dave S 07:02

Okay, and And where would you if you just wanted to look at these boats? Where would you Is there a place you can go just to take a look what they look like?



Jason 07:09

Sure, yeah, Glacier Park boat company has a website. And then Glacier National Park features the boats, you know, in some of their literature, because they're, the boats are at this point on the historic registry. Since they're so old, and you know, the cinephile the boat that I grew up on is is nearing 100 years old here in a few years. So yeah, really unique. It's getting a complete overhaul right now up in the Flathead Valley. So yeah, it was a really interesting kind of childhood. For sure. during the summers were when we were up there, you know, I didn't play Little League Baseball, I was inside a national park. And, you know, we had a fleet of little wooden robots that would go out on the lake and canoes and later some, some kayaks and things like that motor boats. And so kind of a real, not quite a marina setting, but, you know, kind of a unique boating experience there.



Dave S 08:07

Gotcha. Okay, cool. Yeah, this is this is awesome. So basically, you know, I mean, you grew up around boat building. And that makes sense where we're at now, how did you take it to so you have all that, and then eventually, you've got these drift boats? What was that? Like? When did you get into the drift boat building?



Jason 08:25

Well, the Middle Fork of the Flathead is the southern boundary of Glacier Park. And so even today, there's a lot of boats on that, on that stretch of river. And I think there's two or three raft companies. And there were a few wooden dories on that river that I was familiar with just a few kind of old timers out of West glacier. And so that was the first time I was in a drift boat was on the Middle Fork of the Flathead. And so I knew what this Dory was, it was different in a way from the boats that I grew up with, because obviously, the lake boats are different with keels and, you know, you still roll them. But it was my first experience with that. By the time when I got out of high school. I went to college for engineering initially architecture did a few years doing that didn't do very well and pretty much just messed around and not academically doing well. And then I ended up going out to the coast and getting a job. First I was doing some logging out there just trying to make money and then ended up getting a job with a with a boat builder, south of Olympia Washington. And that's where I was introduced to fiberglass and epoxy resin and he was

doing a sort of hybrid. We call it wood composite type of boat building. You can call it stitch and glue but it's a little stitching glue is a little simplified for what it is. Instead of having a Carvel planked boat where you have big, you know, say 15 to 20 foot long planks or longer and you screw these into frames the the sides of the boat are made out of plywood and then she's done fiberglass usually and so I worked for for that boat builder for not for very long actually under a year but it was long enough to go like wow okay this epoxy and fiberglass just a little bit of it in conjunction with you know, really high quality plywood gets you some really unique advantages compared to a standard framed river Dory. And when I came back to Montana, that was my idea was to start making these boats specifically for fly fishing in a way that that was just different from the the framed river doors that you find in you know, the Mackenzie River and Rogue River boats. And so that was my idea was just like, okay, let's start making this type of, of Dori plywood. You know, what we call a, you know, plywood and composite? And it just kind of took off? Huh?



Dave S 11:17

Cool. And and Who was that? The South? Olympia Washington. Who was that boat though? Did it? Was that a big company or a small company?



Jason 11:25

Yeah, great guy named Sam Devlin. And he's still going today does he's a he's a designer and does just some amazing boat designs, you know, has a catalogue of plans for for boats from small pulling boats to you know, almost a trawler style liveaboard boats in the Pacific Northwest very salty, you know, really, really nice boats. And And so yeah, taught taught me a lot in multiple ways about about this type of construction.



Dave S 12:03

Gotcha. So not necessarily a drift boat builder, but just a boat builder of different right, just



Jason 12:08

a boat builder. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, my whole, you know, kind of upbringing and experiences just in, in just boat building in general. Previous to previous to river doors.



Dave S 12:21

Gotcha. Okay. And I and I had some questions, you know, we're gonna dig into some of the advantages of what you do versus some of the other types of boats but I want to talk about you know, the, the boat itself and kind of where you again, you're getting into this boat boating, where does that design come from? You know, I mean, you've got this drift boat. How do you get you know, the thing you have actually your boats look different than a lot of the other boats? But did you have somebody that you kind of learned the actual drift boat background? And you know, design and specs on?



Jason 12:51

No, I really didn't, you know, when I came back from, from Washington State move back went back to work for the Glacier Park boat company, I was in the Flathead Valley. And there really weren't a lot of drift boats in the Flathead Valley at that time. And you know, I became a fishing guide and you in once you do that, obviously, you you see all of the all of the different drift boats out there. And at that time, there was clack, ucraft labro. And hide were pretty much this the main three drift boat builders, all fiberglass and of course the Willie both the aluminum boats, but Ray heater was still was still building his kids. And there was a couple other wooden boat kit companies. So I was aware of the Mackenzie River style of boat. And every once in a while you'd see one in the flood pit Valley. And there you know, most of them were made with the, you know, the 48 inch bottom from a standard piece of plywood. And so that's what I did it at first as well just took a 48 inch bottom and you know, basically just made a model like a cardboard model and tried to do my version of the Mackenzie River style with a constant rocker. And so that was my first boat it was you know, probably a fifth 14 and a half to 15 foot long drift boat with a you know, real real narrow beam 48 inch bottom. And very simple just kind of bench seats, you know, just three inch seats completely open inside. And so that was my first one and I you know, I was just like, well, this is, here's Here I go, I'm just gonna try it. Yeah. And that's what came out and then later on, just built on that made them wider. And then it just kind of morphed from there over almost 25 years now into what it is.



Dave S 14:47

Well, so yeah, 25 years and that, you know, and now I'm not sure if we could find that I'd love to see the original picture. I've just pictured it. In fact, I have Ray heater, he's coming on here, probably in a month or so to talk about History as well. But I mean, now when you look at your boats, these things look like, I mean, they look like a work of art, they look what they look like is not just a drift, but it looks like a mix between a drift boat and something you'd see on the ocean. You know, I mean, because you've got these, you got

these compartments, at least the boats that I've seen are compartments on the side, which are kind of like the Colorado compartments, you know, that same sort of thing, but you still have the open area for fishing. Right? So it seems like is that was that your thought was kind of bridging the gap between making this thing look like this beautiful wooden, like almost like a sailboat mixed with a you know, I



15:34

mean, yeah,



Dave S 15:35

how'd that come? Yeah.



Jason 15:37

Well, you know, with my involvement with the boats in Glacier, all of the guys, all of the boat builders and the pilots up there in Glacier Park, in a way we're all historians as well, you sort of have to be a historian to work on wooden boats. And, you know, Montana has this, this huge history of boats, basically from from the time that the steam boats came up the Missouri. And so there's this, there's this real connection for me with my boats to, you know, the older wooden boats in the history of that, and I just love that history will and you know, probably, if you talk to any wooden boat guy for very long, you know, a not a non Dory guy. Coastal boats are they go back to several designers mostly on the east coast. And one of them was that as a Harish off was Nathaniel Harris Shut up. And, and I Francis Harish off and so that was a father son team. And well not really a team actually, they came one before the other but their designs were just so sleek and beautiful. Almost all sailboats and you know, this yacht quality where a lot of smooth round edges and you know, in general just a little bit different than you know, kind of boxy is the wrong word but just sort of straight angled sides, straight angled benches and compartments of Mackenzie River or Rogue River boat and I thought I can do that with this kind of process where you don't have frames, I can incorporate all these things. So I sorted it tried to have this almost kind of an old 1800 sailboat ethic as far as design ethic and aesthetic to go into my boats and that's where the rounded stem you know, the curves stem came from which creates a little bit of reverse curve at the bow and that's very that's a very Harish off type of detail. So you know kind of paying tribute to some of these designers that were you know, pre 1800s and way predated any any other river gory.



Dave S 17:47

That's cool. Let's go and I guess when you look back into history and again Roger mentioned some of this where you know, drift boats he noted how they actually did start and you know, kind of in Oregon in the the rogue or the McKenzie but you know, the guys that came over you know, they brought they came over from the east and you know, obviously brought their design so it's cool you've kind of brought this old school thing and it doesn't seem like there's anybody else out there doing anything close Are there other boat builders either doing stitching glue or something similar to what you have going



Jason 18:18

Not to my knowledge you know, there's there's a lot of guys that are building them from plans and there are some guys which will now in the internet age they can look online and look at a bunch of photos and then just start going so there are a few guys that are out there doing it kind of in their garage and in selling a few but to my knowledge there's not not like a dedicated boat shop that that isn't a plank or a frame style drift boat.



Dave S 18:49

Yeah, gotcha. Okay, well let's dig into some of the you know, it's interesting because we we've talked now I've had a few fiberglass boat companies and some aluminum we've talked a little bit about this you know, there's advantages and disadvantages of all of them. But looking at your your design and the stitching glue maybe starts off with a stitching glue and you talked a little bit about it but but what is first of all, what is stitching glue and how is that different from just your normal like raised river Dory



Jason 19:14

wooden boat? Sure, well, you know, traditionally all wooden boats are are fastened together, they have mechanical fasteners, you know, screws. And so traditional rubber door is no different. You have the frames on the inside, and you screw the panels on and the bottom panel onto these frames, and that it's a great method if they if they're done right, they can last forever. But you do have several 100 ways for water to enter into the hull and into the frames. And so if you if they're not done correctly if you're not using the right materials, for instance, a lot of the kit boats that you see And one of the reasons that, that drift boats have kind of or wind drift boats have kind of bad reputation is because a lot of them have been made with, you know, say pine frames, and really cheap for plywood. And even sometimes just iron fasteners, or not brought bronze fasteners. And so they can, you know, they, they get water going in there and they can rot with, with the

fiberglass technology, you essentially can remove the frames from the inside of the boat, you can still have a plywood Hull, you can have the plywood bottom panel on the plywood sides, but they're joined together by five, you know, strips of fiberglass at the inside and outside and in what's called affiliate, which essentially replaces the chain log on a frame drift boat. And that's essentially kind of a joint made of epoxy filled with a very fine sawdust we call wood flour and then fiberglass laid over that and that, that creates this very smooth joint on the inside chain. And when you do that, you get rid of all the fasteners. And so once you get rid of the fasteners, you get rid of the the water entering into the hole, and essentially you have a monocoque Hull, it's much, it's much stiffer, it's it can be lighter, that because you get rid of the frames, you do add some weight with the fiberglass. So there are some advantages from that standpoint. But you still have the strength to weight ratio of wood, which is very high and quite good. You know, the side panel of a of a wooden drift boat with you know, a good quality plywood is is very lightweight, if you compare it to really any other material, aluminum or fiberglass. So those are some of the advantages of that that kind of stitching glue process in the stitching refers to taking wire, and literally putting a stitch between the side panel and the bottom panel at the shine. And that temporarily holds this the the panels together and then you go in there and fasten them with the the fiberglass and epoxy. And so yeah, that's that's in a nutshell is the difference between a, you know, a stitching glue or a and a framed drift boat.



Dave S 22:29

Gotcha. Okay, so, so yeah, and the advantages are basically like you said, some of them that this boat is pretty lightweight. And it's it's lighter than your typical, say, a wooden, like a raised river Dory type boat?



Jason 22:41

Well, again, it depends on depends on the materials you use, but typically, it would be much lighter. And it also depends on what you want to put in it. You know, at this point, you know, I'm putting all sorts of stuff right boats, which do not contribute to being a lightweight boat goes the other way. But if you were to take just a standard one, you know, of the same size and shape with three bench seats. Yeah, that it would be much lighter than almost any boat out there.



Dave S 23:07

Okay. Yeah. And I think it's one of the things you're adding that make it look pretty

spectacular. I mean, just the compartments. I mean, that's something you don't see on a drift boat, you got the side compartments, right, which I'm assuming are completely dry. Is that what what do you typically in those things? Is that what do you store in there just to kind of miscellaneous stuff? Or is that kind of where all your gear knows?

 Jason 23:29

Yeah, no, it could be for anything. It's funny guys that are from you know, not the drift boat world. They look at him and they go. They think that's where you put your fish.

 23:39

Yeah, that's right.

 Jason 23:40

They're like, Oh, live wells. All right. Well, why don't you sign like, Yeah,

 23:43

no.

 Jason 23:46

But yeah, you know, once, once they built the first boat with kind of the bench seats, the first thing that you think of is like, Oh, I can now I got a step over these bench seats. So I thought I wanted to be able to walk from one end to the other. And at that time, that really, there were no boats, there were no drift boats, where you could do that walk from one to the other. So that was my main idea. In order to do that I needed to add this longitudinal support member to the side of the boat. And so I added 210 foot longitudinals, one on either side. And those help stiffen the boat, and then also act as a shelf where you can then build what we call dry storage compartments to that longitudinal. And then the other added benefit is that it's a great place to store a fly rod. So all those things kind of work together. And that's how I started doing the the dry storage. And, you know, being able to walk from one end to the boat, and literally step out on a dry ground is a pretty nice feature. And that's how that whole design evolution went down for me. Gotcha.



Dave S 24:54

Gotcha. Okay. Yeah. And so again, just looking at it, you've got I mean, there's a Other little features like the seats are pretty unique. You've got I mean, it's all wood. For the most part the boat is all wood except for the fiberglass you use when you stitch it together is that correct? There's there's no other like the whole outside of the boat isn't fiberglass, right? It's mostly wood.



Jason 25:16

Well actually know about gs 15, almost 20 years ago now, I started working with a honeycomb material called plastic or there's a bunch of different chord panels. And some people were experimenting with a foam filled panel. And this, this company came out with a honeycomb material. And it's not exactly new. If you remember, the old hex I skis would have instead of having a wooden core, they had a hex core for for a pair of downhill skis. And this is the same type of material, it's basically a sheet that is three quarters of an inch thick with extruded polypropylene in a honeycomb shape. And if you were to take a section of it out, it looks exactly like a beehive about pencil sized cores in this honeycomb shape is so it's airfield. So instead of having a bottom panel that's made out of, you know, half inch to in some cases, three quarter inch plywood, you have a bottom panel, which is three quarters of an inch thick, and it's airfield. And it's super lightweight, it has extremely good compression strength, because of all of the the honeycomb structure. And then on the inside and outside of that panel. What I do now is I vacuum bag, Kevlar, and some kind of strategic carbon fiber into into that panel. So it's the bottom panel, that boats actually has no wood in it, and hasn't for like, I'm going on 20 years now from my boats. And so just the side panels are made out of okuma plywood. So you have a really light side panel, a really light bottom panel that's also extremely strong with the Kevlar and carbon fiber vacuum bag inside and out. So you have just a really super light, super strong rigid haul with that method.



Dave S 27:19

Gotcha. Okay, so, so basically and you say bottom versus the top so that like the bottom third, is that that Kevlar or that mix, and then the upper two thirds is wood. Is that kind of how it is on your side panels?



Jason 27:31

No, no, the side panel is is all is all wood. It's so it's a Okay, mahogany side panel, just like just like a normal, you know, framed river door. Yes. But the bottom panel is what is that

honeycomb material?



Dave S 27:46

Oh, though, in the bottom, the bottom panel being the bottom of the boat?



Jason 27:50

Exactly. Yep. The whole bottom panel with the whole football shaped. You know, bottom panel, is that plastic or honeycomb? Yep. And it's Yeah, it's a really great method makes it super lightweight, very strong, takes tremendous hits and abuse. Because this is, you know, one of the few boats where the job description is okay, you have to hit rocks all day long. Yeah. You know, I mean, most most boats don't have that there's very few boats, where you the job description is to just pummel into rocks on a daily basis, even though you really try not to.



Dave S 28:22

Yeah, actually. Gotcha. Cool. Cool. And, and so on the bottom though, I'm just curious about this, because I just had a I'm not sure if you've heard of the company. wetlander. They make like a bottom slick coating thing? And,



Jason 28:35

yeah, yeah, I've used it. You have great stuff.



Dave S 28:37

Yeah. Good. So you've used that? Is it? So on the bottom of your boat, you have this? Do you need something like that? Or is your boat good to go just with the honeycomb product?



Jason 28:46

Well, anything adds to the bottom. So you know, just depends on how much you want to sacrifice for weight. What I've done for years is have line x spray on, it's really the only thing that we don't do ourselves at the shop. And we we've used line x, I think we were one of the first people one of the first books to do it. I'd never heard of anybody else doing it

before. And we put line x on the bottom. And they have the capability to spray that very smooth. And, you know, there's a ton of different truck bedliners out there nowadays. And they're all some sort of, you know, kind of polyethylene or that you can spray on, but some are more rubbery than others. And, you know, years ago, like Rhino linings were kind of a more rubbery bottom. And lionex was much more of what kind of a hard plastic lining and so that's what we've used with really good results for many years now. And then I have also used that wetlander over the top of that. And that's another really good layer to have on there and just makes them extremely slippery. I mean, they will just slide right off the trailer at the boat ramp with that wetlander So yeah, a lot of good products now I mean the technology just keeps getting better all the time and you know I'm always on the lookout for something I can improve the performance of the boat while still you know obviously keeping within the the one boat is static as much as I want as I can. Yeah.



Dave S 30:14

Okay. Now this is good. I think this gives us a perspective on what you have gone and I think back a couple you know, we had a couple of skiff you know, we had adipose boats and boulder boat works on and they talked about, you know, the skiff was a big thing they have gone. It's interesting because you mentioned you had this open thing back when you did this 20 years ago and you opened up the walk around, so were there any of those skips around or what was that? not there yet? Okay, that's called a reverse gift. Right? You've seen that with the flat? Yeah, yeah.



Jason 30:44

Yeah. The only skip around was the the southfork skiff and the Southwark skiff was a really popular boat for a while amongst guides in in Idaho and and down around Jackson Hole. And then I don't know why they quit making them but then that that mold came up north, and I believe that that was the basis for adipose when they started making their skiff and I started making skiffs also, probably about 15 years ago, we started making one which we call the Freestone skiff, and it was the first boat that had the the straight line rod storage on the side and the three pedestals in the middle. And it was a punt. So it had a flat transom on the front and then my little rounded transom that I do, aft. And so made quite a few of those boats. And in fact, that's one of the boats that I got it out of and I would to this day prefer to fish out of his is that skiff I and I still have one. And so and then I made another skiff. About 10 years ago, I have another model of skiff that I started which has the kind of recurve sides so that the oarlocks are a little bit higher and almost double Ender with two of the round ransoms and and only made a few of those but probably one of my favorite boats. So yeah, big fan of the skiff and compared to a stand up, you know, river Dory. That's what I prefer to fish out of whenever I go fishing. And, you know, there's a

couple of buddies and you know, it's usually guides or former guides, and everybody knows how to fish really well. You know, it's like okay, who's got the skiff? That's that's what we're using.



Dave S 32:26

Yeah, exactly. That's cool. Have you designed just curious because we mentioned that Colorado stuff and we had a guest. A couple guests on that talked about that. Have you designed anything for you know, like the the deck over fully decked over boats for that?



Jason 32:41

And that really, yeah, yeah, I have. I've got a design. I haven't made it public. And it's just a design that I built for myself. In fact, it's kind of our family boat. It's an 18 foot whitewater Dory. And yeah, great boat. I really love them. took it down the Grand Canyon and took it down the Middle Fork of the salmon and also took it down the spillway as well, which is always not often used not often. gone down in a hard boat, but I took \$1 as well. Wow. And so yeah, I love love that bow.



Dave S 33:19

Was that a and I'm looking at one that's the the two medicine. It's like a painted Yeah, that's it. That's all that so that's it. Yeah, I was wondering. So. So that's it. So it looks it looks like when you first see it, you're like, Okay, that does because it's got the name you're like, that does look like a Grand Canyon. But although it looks so it has the full rocker. So it's more of a still a McKenzie style.



Jason 33:40

No, no, it's got a big flat. Oh, Dutch. And in the, in the bottom? Yeah, it's 18 feet. And it has a quite a long flat section. Yeah, it's a little bit wider than a Briggs Dory, just a little bit. You know, some of those big stories are only 50 inches, there's a few out there. Most of them now are wider, and 16 to 18 feet and this boats just right about that size. It's it's just a little bit wider than a Briggs in about 18 foot four. So it's actually slightly larger than most of them doesn't have quite as high about it's about three inches shorter at the stem. And of course the hole inside is a different design than the Briggs Dory and you know, I just it was just my take on on a whitewater Dory I wanted it to be a little more you know, just a little more of a consistent shear line. Not quite as is sitting up as high in the water. I guess that comes from my, you know, enough kind of fishing background where you you don't want

to have these boats that are like up in the wind a lot. One of the strange things about it is that it really does slice through the waves quite nicely because of that. That reverse curve and the bow and it you know really performs well on whitewater. So I've been pretty happy with it.



Dave S 35:00

Yeah, that's cool. Yeah, I was curious. I'm always for some reason I have this Grand Canyon since I haven't been down there. I'm curious on you know, taking the drift boat. I mean, what was it like when you went down? Was it pretty? You know, did you get any trouble or anything like that? No,



Jason 35:15

no had a real clean real clean run it was the water was medium high, you know, from you know, the how it is. over the year. I can't remember the exact CFS but um, didn't didn't flip anything, didn't hit anything. You know, definitely drove that boat right down through a lot of big waves and just filled it up to the gunnels with water, but it's self bailing in the cockpits except for the foot. Well, my foot well, where I wrote in, I have a manual bilge pump in there and also a little solar powered 12 volt bilge pump. Just to get that that water out of the foot. Well, uh huh. And because my foot well goes all the way to the bottom, you know, and like, a lot of those bricks are up really high, but I really like to stand sometimes. Yeah. Stand and push and I like to stand and look look ahead without you know, kind of sitting I'm standing on my feet still keeping track or so. You know, just did a few things different than the bricks. I mean, I'm a big fan of the bricks and you know, the, the lineage of them coming out of Oregon and Martin Linton and all of that history. So I'm a huge fan of those Grand Canyon river diaries. But yeah, just my take on it.



Dave S 36:31

Ya know, whitewater dork you're taking you didn't and if your boat if that boat was the flip, same deal, you could just kind of roll it back over and is that the yo?



Jason 36:39

Yeah, yo, yo. And I did flip it on the Selway. Oh, no, kid. But I didn't flip it on the grand Yeah.



Dave S 36:48

What was that experience like flipping it on the subway?



Jason 36:51

Oh, man, well, just, you know, just a mistake on my part, you know, it didn't have anything to do with it being a Dory instead of a raft. I just took a line that was probably not the right line and missed an or stroke and came up on this big pillow. And she just flipped over so quick and washed around into this little rock garden. And I was able to flip it back over I had to, you know, kind of take some stuff out of it. And luckily, I washed into this area where where I had a pretty easy current and I was able to, to flip it back over and put coolers back in and continue on downstream. did a little bit of damage to the transom on it because I have that rounded transom with the handle on that hit the bottom of the river when it flipped. And so I had to do a little repair on the on the river but overall fairly unscathed. And lesson learned on that down the line on that wrap it I can't remember exactly what happened. It was but



Dave S 37:52

wow. Wow. So you flip it over. So you're so you I mean, I've been upside down. At least what good time. But you know, I mean, once you flipped it, you know, did you pop right up? And then you're next to the boat? And then how do you flip the boat back over?



Jason 38:07

Yeah, I just popped right up, I was right next to the boat, one of the oars was in the water tethered and I grabbed the oar and was able to kind of swing the boat and direct it into a little pocket. And once it came into that pocket, I just kept moving it until I could get it into a into a section of river where I could almost use the current to my advantage to flip it back over. And yeah, and just, you know, eventually got it flipped over by myself. I you know, my partners in the, in the crew, they're all on the side of the river like signaling to me because they were going to swim out and I was like, well just, you know, I kept holding up my hand like, hang on, hang on, let me see if I can do this before you, you know, go for a swim to come out and help me. And and luckily, you know, it was in a good place. I mean, obviously, you can always get into some pretty bad situations with that. You know, you flip a boat, whether it's you know, on the ground and you go for a big swim or, or in a real rocky river like the Selway you know, in and there's no doubt get lucky about the area where it was but yeah, exactly. Yeah. That one so Yeah,



Dave S 39:17

totally. Yeah, it seems extreme that always seems like obviously the deck over boats you they're floating, so that's good, but just the fact of a hard but hard boat, especially wooden boat floating down and banging through rocks. You know what I mean? So it sounds pretty extreme. Yeah, that's cool. Well, it



Jason 39:32

is but you know, we flipped a few rafts on that trip. And I've seen a number of raft slip, you know, on the ground. And, man, you don't want to have one of those suckers upside down in the river either boy, they're just banging on rocks and all the frames and all your gear and flipping one of those things is a real ordeal you know, trying to flip an 18 footer loaded on the ground. That is no fun that takes your party. So in many ways a Dorries It's much easier to



Dave S 40:01

do yeah, I've watched some of the video there's one really oars has a really good video on this boat I can't remember if it was in lava one of the rapids it flips and it shows the whole thing it shows him going it took them three minutes but it's since they flip the boat and then they get the guy they had straps on the side they were able to flip it back over you know I think it took them you know i mean it but I can three minutes from flipping to get it back up in the high fiving you know i mean it's like that quick it's just it's pretty amazing right?



Jason 40:29

Yeah if you have your if you have together you can do it pretty quickly. Yeah. So yeah, I think that Jeff aaronson is it does a lot of videos of Grand Canyon guide I don't know him personally but you know one of the old salty guides there on the canyon and I think that he's yeah he's one of the guys that puts up these videos and you know just amazing footage of these things going through there.



Dave S 40:51

Yeah, gotcha Okay cool. And and what was on the Grand Canyon? Was there one rapide that was really the toughest one or were they all kind of similar?



Jason 40:58

Well, lava, you know, lava is always the the the one that gets your butterflies up. I mean, I the all of the other rapids I felt were fairly straightforward crystals. The other big one and and a lot of people think crystals, you know, a little scarier than lava because it has that big rock island in the middle and some really nasty holes in it. And but I was able to skate around the big holes and in you know, it's just so much more maneuverable than a than a raft. And so yeah, really didn't have any issues with it. And lava was a real clean run all the way through and just super fun. I actually did run a video on that one on the boat. So it's cool to watch. I love I love replaying those and just seeing like, oh, man, that was that was some big water.



Dave S 41:45

Nice. Did you is that video out there on YouTube or Instagram or anything?



Jason 41:50

Yeah, it's, it's on my YouTube. Yeah, my YouTube channel. I think it's Montana boat or something like that.



Dave S 41:58

Okay. Yeah,



Jason 41:59

I don't, I don't really have a big YouTube presence. I'm not I'm not hip to all of that stuff quite yet. I want to be sure.



Dave S 42:05

But as long as y'all got that video, I mean, that's that's well worth. I'll take a look at that. For sure.



Jason 42:10

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's pretty fun.



Dave S 42:12

Huh? Okay, well, I think, you know, it feels like I have a good feel for what you have going. I mean, anything else you want to touch on here as far as the boat and we've talked about the boat building? I know, I heard something about the out there. Somebody was talking about how you know, to do what you do? Or the stitching glue, you kind of need to have almost like a CAD design sort of thing? Is that is the thing with your boat? Do you need to be super engineering background to make one of these things? Or what's your take on that?



Jason 42:39

Oh, no, no, for sure, you can, you can do one with it, you know, I built my first boat, I had, I didn't even have a skill saw, I had a jigsaw and I had two clamps. And I built it in my garage. And, you know, I told my wife, I was like, Hey, I think I can make money on these drift boats and, and that's the only thing I had. And so we just went for it in the garage. And since then, you know, started selling plans and hundreds of guys have built these things all over the country. And actually, I send plans all over the world. And, and so I have guys that have built them in, you know, Argentina converting the plans and we're talking back and forth and they're about, they're out in the middle of nowhere, you know, with very limited access to tools. So you definitely don't need an engineering background. You know, I do some CAD work on my boats, I do have a CNC machine. And for repeatable parts, I do some CAD to be able to machine parts and make them be repeatable and very, you know, very uniform and consistent. But that's not necessary for the for the home builder. That's not it's not doesn't have to be part of it. But they just keep getting more and more specialized for me and you know, I keep getting requests for different things. And now I'm putting little 12 volt systems in them people want USB ports and you know, little interior, you know, kind of fairy lights, I had some customers that they they fish so much steelhead, and they're out till dark and come in sometimes going out in the dark and so they wanted to be able to, to, you know, light the inside of the boat, we put three propane heaters in there. And just all sorts of crazy stuff I'm trying to do as much of the building as I can in house to the point that we're casting hinges now you know, we're casting our bronze hinges I'm really just not happy with plastic hinges and things that you buy online. So as much as possible. That's that's the way that's the way I'm doing it. And it's uh, yeah, they're getting to be pretty specialized. So in Yeah, that's the only you know, kind of issue I get a lot of plans, builders and kits builders and they want to do the boats exactly as they see my boats on Instagram or on the website. And I'm like, Man, you can do anything you want, but just know Yeah, you know, even even with two really loaded shops, I might take four or 500 hours on a particular build with a spray booth and you know, all sorts of stuff. But I still really, you know, encourage guys to like, hey, build your own boat, I mean, you

can do it, rather than go out and buy a, you know, an off the shelf boat, build it, man.



Dave S 45:24

That's cool. So, if somebody wanted to get into building a boat like yours, you could, like you said, you can, they can buy plans just directly from you.



Jason 45:33

Yo, yo, I sell plans, plans and kits off my, off my website, and have for quite a while. And, you know, I have, I have so many designs I that I would love to get on on paper, it's just so hard to, to convert everything to paper, and, but I do have four designs that I offer as plans. And they're for the most part, like the ones that I build, it just depends on how much elbow grease you want to put into them. And so yeah, gotcha,



Dave S 46:03

gotcha. Okay. And on those plants. So this is interesting. I just wanted before we get out here, because I have had we've talked, you know, like I said, aluminum, fiberglass, wood, we've got all the thing when you talk about the difference between say what you have going and say, some of these fiberglass boats, I mean, what what is what is the advantage of this boat? Are there any advantages over the fiberglass other than I mean, obviously, look? Well, I



Jason 46:22

think so. Yeah, I mean, I think so I, you know, the, the, the advantages of getting rid of the frames and the wooden boat and not having that the issue of having the wood rot is is one of the main ones. The second to that there's so much lighter weight than any of the fiberglass boats. Okay. And, and I like to think that all the features that I have in them stand out as well, of course, they've almost all been, I would say, how, how should I put this honorably copied over Ayers? A lot of the boat companies? I mean, they're the curved sides in the in the recurve style sides and in my rope seats, and Yep, the even the potholes and stuff, you know, you start to see those in a bunch of other designs. And that's fine. You know, the, the industry, you know, we all can borrow from? It's not like, I didn't borrow from, you know, the hair shops and right. Yep. But there with all of that model together, I think that it, it creates a boat, which has just a tremendous advantage over any other boat, I mean, I can float down through things that no other drift boat is going through, they're just so much lighter weight, they're very durable on the inside. They're very durable

on the outside as well. But, you know, one of the other things that I like to think about them is that and I don't use this word lightly in this day and age, but it's you know, they're sustainable. You know, the, the, the plastic boats and the fiberglass boats. You know, they're at some point, they end up in a landfill and I just don't like that, you know, these, there's not one of my boats that isn't still isn't still going out there in the in the universe, they're always repairable easily repairable. The maintenance is is quite low on them compared to the old style of frame drift boat. So I think those are a lot of really good advantages to this to this method. And it's a it's a big thing to me anyway, that, you know, using the best materials, these boats can really be lifetime boats. And so that yeah, that's that's one thing that I really point to with. Yeah, but you know, I'm not really in competition with any other boat builder, I just, you know, I might only be doing one or two a year anymore. So that part doesn't really matter to me. But I do like to just use the best materials as possible so that they they just have all the advantages that are available. And,



Dave S 49:00

yeah, that's cool. That's cool. Yeah. I mean, obviously, that's one of the maybe the disadvantages that I'm not sure on the cost. But I mean, obviously, if you were to build this boat for somebody that probably cost a lot more than anything out there. I'm guessing right on the market. Oh, yeah.



Jason 49:15

Yeah. You know, when I first started building, we were pushing boats out for like, 5000 bucks. And, you know, I, I was not a businessman, you know, I mean, I started this when I was 25 years old. And, you know, 25 years later, here we are, and it took me probably 15 years before I was like, oh man, I'm just barely breaking even know how it is. You're learning how to do that kind of stuff. And and when we went over \$10,000 the first time we sold a boat for \$10,000 I was like, Oh, well that's it. No one's ever gonna buy one of these right? And, and then it went over 20 and now I mean, some I don't it's you know, a lot of the fiberglass and other boats or gosh, they're in the height. Nearly \$20,000. And then I just finally decided, like, you know, I need to be able to make a living doing this, I need to charge, you know, a good wage hourly. And, and that's so my boats are very expensive because they have a lot of hours in them. And I spend, you know, obviously, as much as I can on good materials. And I and that's another difference that you find in the woodenboat world is you typically spend more money on materials, because you want the best quality and inherently fiberglass, you know, it's so popular not because it's a better material, but because it's cheaper. And with the advent of fiberglass, you know, and gel coats and all of that. It's very cheap for a 50 gallon barrel of that stuff. And that's great,

because you can knock out a bunch of them. They're much, much cheaper entry point, and a lot of people can have them get on the water. So that's a great advantage to them. But it's, to me, it's a disadvantage. I want to use higher quality materials where I can and have these boats last forever.



Dave S 51:09

Exactly. Yeah. So basically, your boats are, like you said over, you could easily pay over 30 k for you know, one of these decked out one of these nice boats, like you see out there.



Jason 51:19

Yeah, yeah. And it's so Dave, you know, over the years, I go, I can't, you know, I'm building these boats. And I get comments all the time online about like, 30 k or more. Right? He's got both over 40 with and, and I just got, you know, some guys are, some guys just want the best. I mean, you know, they just want to be really comfortable in what they're doing. They want a custom built, it's worth more than the money to them. It's sort of a lifetime legacy project, and they might pass it down to their kids. Yeah. And so that's kind of where that comes from. But yeah, sometimes they just go Oh, my gosh, I can't believe that. What? This is what it is, you know, making both make river dories for money.



Dave S 52:04

Yeah, exactly. Yeah, it's, it's pretty crazy. And I just, you know, as I'm looking at, again, I'm looking at another boat here on your Instagram, it's a green button, I just this the way the sides are, right? It's this very narrow, you know, kind of the bow and then it goes in this low. And then it's got these curves, it almost looks like or maybe it's the stealth craft almost. Have you seen those stealth crafts? They got this really curvy? I'm just curious. I'm not sure on the history of that boat. Is that something that is a similar? similar design? To what yeah, there's our aluminum I think right? So it's different, but



Jason 52:35

Well, yeah, you know, I mean, I I don't want to I definitely want don't want to bad mouth. Anybody? other boats. But for sure, you know, any of the boats out there that you see with those curve gunnels inside, I mean, that that I'm trying to not point fingers and ensure that all came from my boats. You know, we've we even had a couple of legal encounters, oh, other boat companies were that, you know, I, you know, I said, Hey, this is you know, I have copyright copyrights on my halls and they were in people had copied some of those, and

we're selling them and in the end, I just decided, alright, there's I'm not gonna be able to stop, but I just need to build a better mousetrap and keep innovating. And that's what I try and do. But yeah, any of that stuff, you know, when you see these wooden rope seats, and you see the curve gunnels Yeah, you know, that that stuff just didn't exist. In you know, 15 years ago, it was all very flat shears, very straight profiles. And, you know, John Bailey, the son of Dan Bailey, John came out to me and, and we, you know, we wanted to build a boat. And he said, I want to be able to get in and out of this thing a lot easier. And so I want something with some lower sides, but the oarlocks have to be high. And I thought, you know, I think I can do this in a really aesthetic way and curved these sides. And instead of having like a straight raised or lock, because at the time people had low sided boats with it raised or locked, but it was just kind of a blocky affair. And so I built that first boat with for John and call it the recurve. And from there it was, it's been almost the only hole that I make anymore, because that has been really a successful boat. And, and so that's how that that came about.



Dave S 54:30

That's it. That's it cool. Yeah, there's all sorts of, there's all sorts of little design things you see out there like the there's one, I think it's Parvati, they have aluminum, they've got like the door up on the front of the right, you know, I mean, and I always thought that was interesting, because I've kind of obviously getting out of the boat isn't that hard, but I guess if you're older, you know, having a door you know would be nice. That's not something you eat. Oh, yeah, for sure. It's



Jason 54:54

kind of an interesting innovation those guys have done and, you know, I said my knee replaced. So I can really understand how how that would be a great feature you know, it definitely gets harder as you get older to get in and out of these things. And there's a lot of those kind of cool innovations I've really wanted to build a handicap accessible skiff for quite a while and I just wanted to be able to make it almost like a landing ramp. Yeah, you know, folks can get in and out and and even even row the boat you know from a chair or from a limited mobility standpoint so that's on my drawing board and you know, maybe someday I'll I'll build one of those it's a Yeah, there's so much to do so many cool innovations that you can do with the with the Dory platform. And nowadays, man it just seems to be taking off there's more and more boat builders and guys are doing some incredible stuff out there. It's really cool to see



Dave S 55:50

ya know, I can tell you the for sure when we post this when you know we get this up there we post you know a picture of one of these boats move on our Instagram it'll probably be the most viewed post you know, I mean just because it's so now not only the drift boats get a lot of views but just the design you know, your boat is so unique. I think that's when I first saw it so yeah, it's it's really cool. Talking to you here I guess before we get out here anything in the next six months or so you want to give a shout out anything new coming up for you or your your company?



Jason 56:21

Well, you know, from a design standpoint, I'm still working on I'm always working on these plans and trying to get better plans out the door for for these home builders and do have a lot of requests for the whitewater Dory plan. So hopefully I'll get those out. I one of the things that I'm most proud of and I'm trying to, to work on is I built a boat and painted it for this warrior movement for these kids up on the Salish and Cooney reservation, where my family's from, and we painted it with this warrior logo. And so I hope to deliver that this summer to the Flathead reservation and you know, get in with you know, this an outdoor program up there and get these kids out fishing and in river doors on the Flathead river, they've got just some amazing resources up there going through the reservation and around that area that is you know, kind of the homeland for us. And so I that's one thing that I'm really hoping to to get delivered this summer and and accomplish and kind of proud of that, you know, these it's a bringing the younger generations in is I think the the best words for all of this stuff that we love to do you know fishing and boating combined. And then other than that, you know, we do have a scenic boat portion of the company called Freestone, Deluxe river trips, and we do scenic trips, you know, actually, most of them are non fishing, just to really get on the water and enjoy and not be looking at the water, you know, 10 feet 20 feet away from the boat the whole day and not looking up at the eagles and the moose and in the mountains and you sit there with a beer in your hand and people are loving those trips and we're gonna be doing trips on the Missouri River on the wild and scenic portion. And so yeah, you know, just love all that stuff. Looking forward to more trips everywhere. It's kind of my my family's the thing that we do you know, and these river trips are just the best it's one of the pleasures of life. That's cool. And I'm looking at another photo I



Dave S 58:35

got I'm not sure if this is in your garage or your your your office there but you got you got your boat. I think it's the one you took down the Colorado and you're looking out the

garage at some mountains. Is that are you kind of at the base of some mountains? I guess you're in Now where are you at exactly which town? Yeah, that's



Jason 58:53

Yeah, our my boat shop is south of Livingston in the Paradise Valley, kind of halfway towards Yellowstone National Park where the Yellowstone River course runs right through the Paradise Valley. And so I have two shops and yeah, just a really nice setting you open the front door you're looking right out at the could beartooth mountains and right on the Yellowstone. It's just Yeah, a great environment. We do a lot of you know, you got to test every boat. So that's the river out door and, and that's a great, great thing about right here.



Dave S 59:31

That's right. All right. Cool. All right, Jason. Well, hey, if anybody wants find us just could June boats calm. Yeah. Could



Jason 59:39

you in boats, calm emails the best way for me? And, and then yeah, on Instagram, we could June boats, as well. And I'm a little bit of a novice on all that stuff. But just trying to keep a presence on there. Yeah, people really love seeing photos. And so yeah, that's the best way to get ahold of me. I'll go there. That's on the river Dave



Dave S 1:00:01

Yeah, definitely Yeah. I hope to hope to run into you out there sometime down the line I it's been a lot of fun connecting with you and hearing the story I you know, obviously didn't know much about it and hopefully, you know, some people have learned what you have gone and yeah, maybe we'll see a few more custom boats based on your plans, you know, as we go. So yeah, thanks again for all your time today.



Jason 1:00:22

You bet you bet. Well, we'll do it. We'll have to do a we'll have to do a trip together.



Dave S 1:00:26

All right, sounds good.



Jason 1:00:27

I'll talk to you soon. All right, take care.



Dave S 1:00:30

So there you go. If you want to find all the shownotes all links we covered just go to wet fly swing comm slash 196 if you can, you can go to our resources page at wet fly swing comm slash resources and this is the place where I put links to some of the books and a few videos but mostly books that our guests have talked about. So if you want to check that out and see what they recommend, those are affiliate links so we get a commission here for the podcast at no additional charge to you if you purchase through those links want to thank you in advance if you have a chance to purchase so I don't have a summary for you today. I don't have a top tips. This episode I kind of I was just consumed and didn't Roy didn't really have a chance to doing that. But I hope you got some enjoyment out of it. I know. I know. I definitely love looking at boats. Something I enjoy doing just looking at a good boat. So when you see a nice drift boat that's guts, especially like this one such style and kind of history and all that stuff is pretty awesome. I hope you enjoyed it today. I think that's all we have for you. I want to thank you for stopping by the show today. I appreciate your support and hope to maybe eventually catch you on the river or maybe talk to you online.



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