

# 1956 Evinrude "Lark" Concept Boat by Ken Kirk

Perhaps the most exciting outboard boat and motor combo at the Clayton, N.Y. Antique & Classic Boat Show this summer was the 1956 Evinrude "Lark" concept boat, recreation.

Leading up to the 1956 model year, OMC hired renowned industrial designer Brooks Stevens to design the shrouds for their new Evinrude "Lark" and Johnson "Javelin" outboard motors. In addition...Stevens was also asked by OMC to design a futuristic, "over the top" concept boat that would "WOW" audiences and attract attention to the new Evinrude "Lark" outboard at major Boat Shows. A similar strategy to that used by auto makers presenting "concept cars" or "dream cars".

Stevens was well qualified for this task. He was connected to the auto industry and was engaged in extensive design work for various manufacturers including Studebaker, Kaiser, Jeep and the Chrysler Corp. He had also designed the 1949 Harley Davidson Hydra-Glide motorcycle. Considered a classic today.



For 1956, two Brooks Stevens designed Evinrude "Lark" concept boats were built. They not only created enormous interest in the Evinrude brand at Boat Shows but also were a Public Relations bonanza. The Evinrude "Lark" boat was featured in Evinrude advertising and also got extensive free exposure in the print and television media of the day. It even appeared on the cover of Newsweek magazine. Needless to say boating magazine editors were fascinated by the Evinrude "Lark" boat. It was featured, at one time or another, in virtually every boating magazine published during the mid to late 1950's.

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Ken Kirk with the Evinrude "Lark" Concept Boat Recreation at the Clayton Antique Boat Show.

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The "Lark" concept boats were such a success, Evinrude continued to use them at Boat Shows thru 1957 & 58. Then, like many "concept cars", the two "Lark" boats just disappeared. Neither of the original two boats has ever been found.

In an effort to ensure that this important chapter in outboard boating history be preserved, collectors Jeff Turner and Shannon Steele commissioned the recreation of the Evinrude "Lark" concept boat. They engaged noted boat builder/restorer Gary MacNorius of Hollywood Florida for the task. Gary is skilled with wood and with fiberglass and with boats that use a combination of the two materials. He is well known for his restorations of Switzer and other '50's "tail fin" boats.

Working with the original patent drawings and a multitude of publicity photos, MacNorius hand made virtually every component of the "Lark", making

it a nearly exact recreation of the originals. It took more than four years to complete the job.

At one of North America's leading Antique and Classic Boat Shows held at the world class Clayton Antique Boat Museum, surrounded by more than 175 high quality vintage watercraft, Brooks Stevens Evinrude "Lark" concept boat proved that it could still attract a crowd and "WOW" audiences.

(Authors Supplement: Brooks Stevens design of the 1956 Johnson Javelin introduced "Holiday Bronze" as the new signature colour for the entire Johnson outboard line. Stevens "Holiday Bronze" replaced the Johnson Sea Horse Green that had been the brands signature colour for their post World War II motors thru the 1955 model year.)

## 1956 Ad Introducing the new Evinrude "Lark" outboard & featuring the "Lark" Concept Boat.



**DREAMSHIP!** . . . the spectacular Lark "Sportster"! A gifted designer's concept of a hull to fittingly complement the dramatic beauty and brilliant performance of Evinrude's premier model, the fabulous new Lark. From coast to coast this is the motor being chosen for smartest runabouts of every make. See your Evinrude dealer. Look for his name under "Outboard Motors" in your phone book. Catalog free. **EVINRUDE MOTORS,** 4281 N. 27th St., Milwaukee 16, Wisconsin.

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