

Summary by Mark Wisdom of Traverse City, MI.

The Morbic 12 is a small sail and oar boat that is easily built by anyone who possesses basic boat building skills or who has completed a 40 to 80 hour introduction to boat building class like those offered by the Wooden Boat School in Brooklin, Maine, or Chase Small Craft. This gem of a lapstrake boat is built off a strong back included in the kit and assembles with little fuss as all the scarfing is done by Chase Small Craft and the puzzle locking system for all joined components simplifies assembly. The boat is built upside down and Francois Vivier's unique approach to modern design and CNC software ensures that much of the boat's interior is completed prior to flipping the hull.

While expect to take around 350 to 400 hours to completely finish the boat, the hull can be planked quickly, especially if a second pair of hands are available when attaching the garboard and succeeding planks to the false stem and transom. Cliff Chase is quick to respond to questions and will help work out any problems one may encounter during construction. Cliff provides an excellent primer on boat construction with this kit as well as Vivier's construction plans. While adequate, Vivier's construction manual needs to be expanded and updated to better cover each step in the construction plan. This is not a difficult boat to build for the intermediate to advanced beginner but a clear in-depth step by step manual would be invaluable for the first time boat builder.

Overall, I cannot overstate the support I received from Chase Small Craft since only a handful of Morbics have been built in North America. The CNC software ensures tight joints and easy construction. The kit is comprehensive and includes pretty much everything you will need to complete the boat to include even paint, oars, and even sails if you want. All the work is rewarded when you take the Morbic out for its first sail. The boat feels more like a 14 footer than its 12' 2" length suggests. It stiffens up quickly and easily handles less than ideal sailing conditions. In fact, I have yet to reef it since it balances well in 10 – 12 knot winds and chop. With a crew of up to three adults, the Morbic is the perfect 12 footer for any builder looking for a small but very capable sail and oar boat.

