

Easy access

Following on from playing a successful part in the launch of the ORC's GP26 Class, Nicolas Goldenberg of GYacht Design in Argentina now offers a new option for sailors looking for a competitive Mini 6.50 Proto design on an affordable budget



The escalation in singlehanded racing in general and the Mini 6.50 Class in particular has been dramatic recently. The 2007 Mini Transat was a good example: 89 boats, of which 43 were series-builds and 46 protos, and a huge waiting list of those unable to make the cut.

Responding to this growth in interest, particularly from a widening geographic marketplace, quite a number of new production Mini projects have been announced in the past few months. But while this increase in supply for the production division has helped control prices, costs in the proto division have continued to increase with a comparative decline in demand as sailors switch their attention to the cheaper production class.

Because of this trend we felt that something should be done to create a new concept within the prototype class, with the aim of making a Mini 6.50 Proto campaign more affordable.

The NK2

Named after our recently launched Proto Mini *No Concept*, we believe the NK2 is a revolutionary idea in the Mini world: a semi-custom prototype.

This concept originates in the automobile industry, where clients can choose different aspects of their car to personalise an otherwise rather uniform and bland product. Personalising a boat is not a new idea, nowadays almost every boat can be personalised to some extent, but this has more traditionally applied to cruising yachts rather than full-on raceboats.

As a young and growing design office we feel committed to innovate, not only in design but in new concepts and revolutionary ideas. Because of this, the NK2 will be the first 'highly customisable' racing boat of its type. And this customisation has very little to do with aesthetics, rather with the sailing fundamentals of rigs, appendage configurations, material options and finish requirements.

And in keeping with supporting those skippers on more modest budgets, the NK2 can be ordered to almost any state of completion, from a bare hull, deck and internal structure to a complete kit including rudders, keel, daggerboards and everything needed to achieve the desired interior/exterior finish. Finally, a complete ready-to-sail boat can also be supplied, including standing rigging, running rigging, basic deck hardware, cradle and sails.

Start customising

The process begins with a simple but fundamental choice, the hull. At this point we offer two alternatives: classic or chine hull. The classic hull, rounded and fair, is a fast all-round performer, while the chine hull offers a flat-bottomed, high-power reaching boat. With cost in mind, this choice is also linked to material choice and we are offering a range of options for the hull skins and internal structure including E-glass, E-glass/carbon and pure carbon.

Then we look at the deck geometry that will be the same for either hull; but the deck materials can be changed in the same way as those for the hull. In addition there

are some limited layout options; for example, the traveller supporting beam can be supplied curved, straight or it can be omitted altogether, plus some clients may prefer a traditional fixed hatch on the coachroof top rather than the increasingly popular bulkhead-porthole.

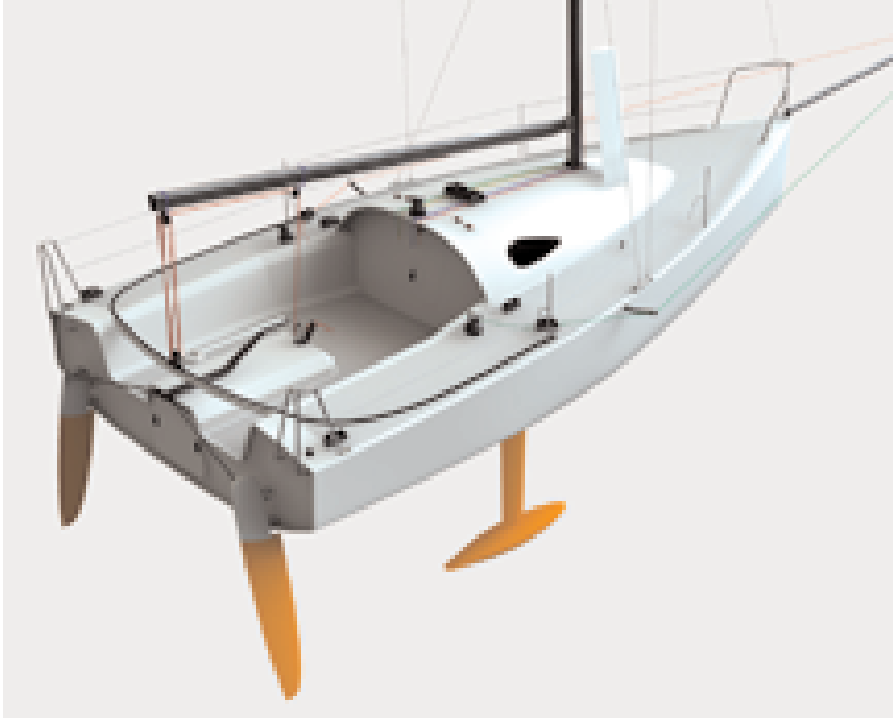
After deciding on which of the two hull options is to be purchased it is time for the appendages and movable ballast system. The keel can be chosen from two principal options, fixed or canting; there is also the additional possibility of a more complex system such as a sliding and canting keel.

Following the keel, the water ballast tank layout and capacity are the next items to be selected. The tank capacity will depend upon the keel system chosen to comply with Classe Mini stability requirements. The different water-ballast options are lateral, inertia, or a combination of lateral/inertia system.

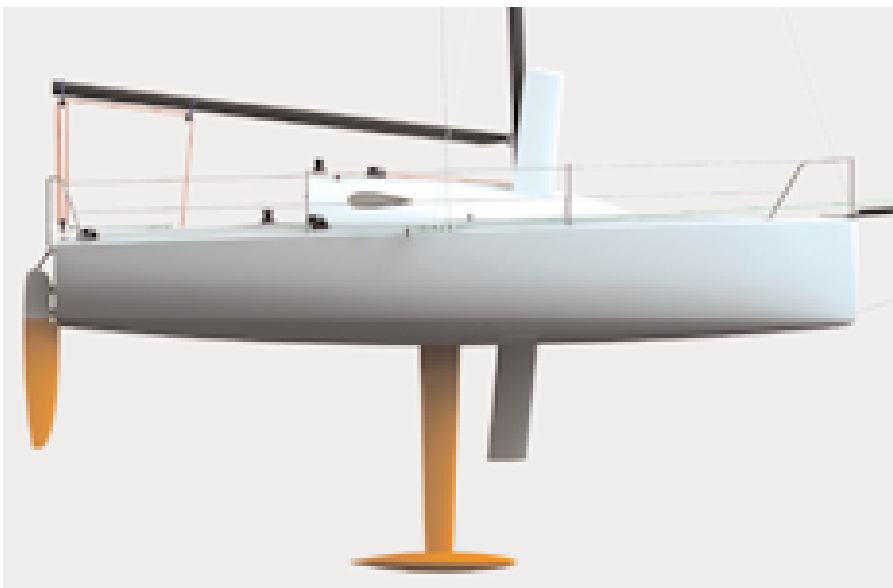
Then it is time for the rudders and daggerboards. The choices are simple: for the rudders, fixed or kick-up, and for the daggerboards, single 'fixed', single tacking or twin asymmetrical.

One point of interest to highlight is that every option demands a further selection in terms of material choice; in this way every single element is customised to the maximum within the scope of a multiplicity of semi-stock options.

Some other basic options still remain; should the rig be deck or keel-stepped? And which material should it be made of (this decision is required at an early stage to define the boat's stability properly)?



The proto that prompted the NK2 (far left), the well named *No Konzept*, displays an excellent standard of finish compared to some of its current Mini 6.50 rivals. How competitive the new NK2 is against the pick of the current crop remains to be seen, but on paper at least there is no reason why GYacht's latest creation should not, as intended, offer an excellent and affordable route into this incredibly popular but now increasingly expensive shorthanded class



The last choice is the desired interior and exterior finish, which can range from bare hull to a simple white finish to a complex custom paint job.

Building

Building high-quality protos is not new to us, as our recently launched *No Konzept* demonstrated, involving a strict programme of designer-led quality control. The key to the project is the production of affordable protos, but this does not mean quality or materials have to be unduly compromised!

The NK2's build will be closely monitored at an excellent local facility. Similar quality stipulations go for all materials, the carbon or E-glass, the different core materials, the epoxy resins and consumables. Every NK2 in whatever configuration also incorporates standard items in several key areas, such as carbon chainplates, runner attachments, attachment points for keel tackles and the sealed buoyancy tanks.

Why a semi-custom Proto?

The best Minis have enjoyed long, competitive lives. We feel this suggests that there is a good understanding of what is needed to

make for a fast boat, with ultimate success then depending upon the skipper's ability and knowledge of his or her boat and of how to exploit that knowledge to the maximum advantage.

We believe that the NK2 offers a means to create a top-quality customised proto for a lower price than any other Mini package of which we are aware; this is a clear advantage in a sailing class which is all about training and knowing your boat!

How to get one

An innovative project needs an innovative route to market, particularly if we are to cut out as much as possible of the intermediary cost that so frequently escalates the price of the delivered product.

In the case of the NK2 we have chosen to market the boat through its own micro website; there you will find more information about our new boat's characteristics, the build, the aesthetics of the design and the different options and possibilities.

Most importantly, you will also be able to customise your boat online and obtain a preliminary quotation.

This feature will allow prospective

clients to play around with the possible options while producing a clear idea of the boat's costs. After you decide how you want your design configured the preliminary quote is then sent on to us and to your local agent; this will provide a fast and easy way to communicate changes in specification as they develop between client, architect and boatbuilder.

Our agents in the US and the EU will be responsible for the final quotation, shipping information and any other material or information you require to make your NK2 a new and pleasing experience!

Pricing

We will use the example of mid-tech choices using an E-glass primary structure with carbon reinforced internal structure and including:

- Composite canting keel
- Twin E-glass daggerboards
- Two E-glass fixed rudders
- Metalwork including canting-keel attachment, pulpits and stanchions
- White hull finish and anti-slip deck finish
- Laminated carbon chainplates and runner attachments

The price in this specification is 36,000 euros ex-shipping and any import taxes. The same kit built entirely in carbon would cost 52,000 euros.

Given the range of potential options this price is only a guide; but we hope we have demonstrated that we have met our principal objective of creating the opportunity to own a top custom Mini 6.50 at a price that is more typical of a production design.

For more information about the NK2 go to: nk2.gyachtdesign.com
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www.gyachtdesign.com □