



FINISTERRE's shape was unconventional for a winning ocean racer: She's beamy, shallow, and firm bilged. While critics complained after her initial Bermuda victory that she was a rule-beater, she lost some of her advantage when the CCA rule was revised—and still won two more Bermuda Races.

deep-keeled designs are at their best close-hauled, but shallow centerboarders with their centerboards pulled up are favored when the wind is aft—and this breeze held that way for three days. FINISTERRE tore through the 120-boat fleet, catching many bigger boats with longer waterlines. The wind died, then piped up, but FINISTERRE managed to hold her own and, to everyone's amazement, won the race. The legend was born. A sea-change in racing-yacht design was confirmed.

Two years later, Mitchell would describe the 1960 event as two races. The first was a foggy and windless creep through the New York shipping lanes during which they felt "like turtles crossing a highway." When a large number of the 135 entrants found themselves in a cluster, FINISTERRE and the others enjoyed a second start. The light, fitful air did not favor the small, heavy

boats such as FINISTERRE, however, and a lesser crew might have become discouraged, but not this one. FINISTERRE crossed the Gulf Stream west of the rhumb line, just as Mitchell intended. When the wind was light they sailed tactically against nearby competitors. When the wind rose they reverted to Mitchell's basic strategy of sailing the shortest course the wind allowed. At last, during the fifth night the wind began to show some strength; with it came torrents of rain driving down on them like buckshot. They changed from their largest genoa to the No. 2 and reefed the main. They brought out the No. 3, and reduced the roller-reefing main a few more turns: still too much canvas. They located the No. 4 jib among the 27 sails they had onboard, hanked it on, and began to drive through the mix of rain, blown spray, and 50-knot wind. In Mitchell's words, "At such times seamanship is a primary factor in a boat's performance, and as skipper I would like to pay the highest tribute to the crew. They, in turn, have complete confidence in the boat and her gear. There is even a peculiar psychology aboard which welcomes such conditions: 'FINISTERRE weather,' it is happily called."

He goes on to say, "Dawn was awesome. Great gray seas came rushing out of the murk, cresting savagely. Driving along to windward, FINISTERRE at times porpoised



It wasn't all competition for Carleton Mitchell: FINISTERRE was meant to be a cruiser as well as a racer, and Mitchell made numerous trips in her to the Caribbean and Bahamas. Her shallow draft allows her to nose nearly right up to the beach.