

[Meet Your Maker]

Adirondack Guideboat

Justin Martin couldn't shake the car tailgating him, so he pulled over and the offender followed. "What kind of boat is that?" the man asked of the craft Justin was hauling. It's a question that Justin (pictured, right) and his brother, Ian, hear frequently as owners of Adirondack Guideboat in Ferrisburgh, Vermont, and builders of unique vessels with a storied history.

The unusual craft, something of a cross between a canoe and skiff, were first used by guides catering to sportsmen visiting the wilds of upstate New York in the mid-19th century. Today, the Martins build replicas of those wide-beamed, wooden boats—which are rowed rather than paddled—but they've brought the tradition into the 21st century. Most of their guide boats are made of the synthetic material Kevlar, making for lighter, more affordable craft (\$2,400–\$4,480) than their cedar versions (\$15,000 and up). Yet even these contemporary models are fitted with fine cherry trim. Beyond pure aesthetics, guide boats have much to recommend them. "The great thing is your center of gravity is low," said Ian. "You can handle rougher water than you thought. And the wind is going to pass over you rather than carry you. In a canoe or kayak, you're fighting one side of the boat."

As sensitive as they are to the guide boats' past, the Martins have their vision fixed on the future. To that end, they have created the 14-foot Vermont Fishing Dory (\$4,480). With a wider beam and flatter bottom, the dory can carry more weight than a comparable guide boat. Plus, a dory can be rowed from any seat. "They're more versatile than the original guide boat," said Ian. "It's the guide boat of the future." —*Peter Crabtree*

DETAILS

Adirondack Guideboat

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