

## The Perfect Sprit Remains Elusive

**A** salty Kiwi named Ross Norgrove once said that the most important tool for the owner of a wooden yawl adorned with a bowsprit is a sharp ax. To some degree, his witty comment holds true for contemporary sailors contemplating a mini-bowsprit.

**1.** Cruising sailors who revel in the light-air potential of retractable carbon sprits may be less enthusiastic about the leaks that race boat crews have come to live with.

**2.** Many designers have started adding a bow-roller “snout” that can also handle a gennaker. Unfortunately, it takes some true artistry to design a flattering dual-purpose appendage. If you go this route, it’s important to keep in mind that anchoring loads are downward and tack loads pull upward.

**3.** Custom tube fabricators are able to create exceptionally strong and aesthetically appealing structures for catamarans or monohulls, but due to the amount of custom fabrication involved, such an arrangement can run thousands of dollars.

All of these potential extensions have a downside that can be measured by degree. Extra appendages add up to more care when maneuvering and the challenge of more bits and pieces to go wrong. And if things do go wrong, an ax might not solve your problem.

