



The Sardine Woodstove

Reviewed by Russell Manheimer

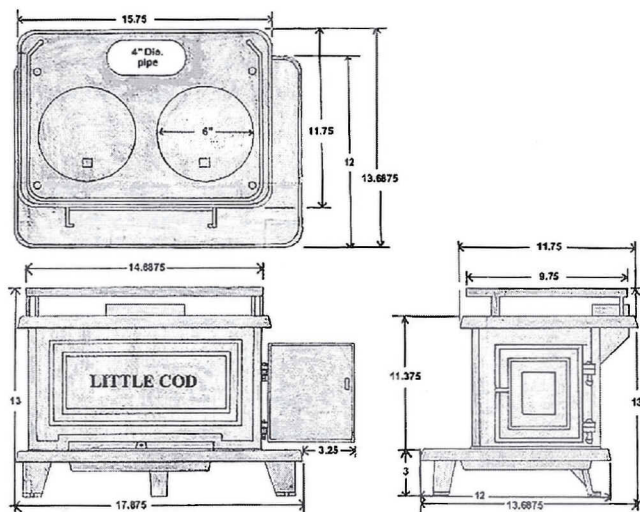
Sometimes, when hove-to off Swan Point on Barnegat Bay, New Jersey, on a brisk off-season morning, the crackling woodstove at my elbow reminds me of all those fishermen in all those small boats that were kept warm by the likes of my little Sardine stove. Wood-fired heaters were originally built to this design by the Lunenburg Foundry starting in 1891, and used by fishermen and sailors in Nova Scotia and other cold-water fisheries. These solid-fuel cabin stoves were often the only thing that kept those frozen-fingered fishermen alive, hauling cod and halibut from winter waters in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Solid comfort indeed. Lunenburg Foundry ceased production of these stoves in 1993.

Navigator Stove Works on Orcas Island, Washington, made my Sardine stove. Andrew Moore founded the company to revive several of the discontinued ship stoves of the Lunenburg Foundry. His operation started in 1999, first in Brooklyn, New York, and now in Washington. In addition to the Sardine, he offers the

larger Little Cod and Halibut models. The Little Cod is a "two-hole" woodstove suitable for larger boats and rooms up to 300 sq ft. The wood- or coal-burning Halibut model is the largest; it has an oven, and is big enough for a large boat or small cottage. All models come standard with a stove-polish finish or with a porcelain coating. My Sardine has the green porcelain coating. I recently learned that it's now offered in red, too.

The stove is compact enough, at about a cubic foot, to fit into SJOGIN's quite-small cabin. SJOGIN is our 45-year-old Swedish koster. She's 22' overall, double-ended, with lapstrake construction in the Baltic fashion. Her provenance is still up for grabs, though, as we have no clear idea of her designer or true type. She has minimal furniture below (a few boxes and seats) but lots of sprawling space. We've had her for more than 20 years, most of the time spent in commission in coastal New Jersey. We lay her up for the month of August each year to perform the yearly maintenance, so most of my sailing is done in the off-season. In a way our sailing season has a climate matching a location a lot farther north than coastal New Jersey.

For the first 15 years (save for one season with a Shipmate stove) we sailed SJOGIN at the mercy of the elements. The last four years with the Sardine stove have made off-season sailing a real treat. Even when occasionally iced in and dock bound, a trip down to SJOGIN for a fire and a cup of tea, while snug down below, is a treat. There is a certain comfort in ritual as well: using the ship's knife to carve shavings, the splitting of cedar scraps into kindling, the laying of the fire, the occasional whiff of burning wood, and the comforting roar when the fire takes hold all contribute to the sense of well-being. I find that it takes only a few minutes from getting on board until the fire can look after itself while I get underway. The stoves are useful in my waters as late as early June when northeasters bring in chilled ocean air across the barrier beach and as early as late September



The Little Cod, also from Navigator, is larger than the Sardine.



The Sardine can be finished in one of several colors of porcelain (as is the author's stove, opposite page) or painted black (as is the stove above, on an Atkin Ingrid).

when the first northwesterly cold front comes through. Our little Sardine is large enough for a small skillet or kettle, though not at the same time.

Navigator provides all of the gear required to install and use their stoves, from deck irons to smoke heads to shielding material. They also can supply bronze alcohol burner inserts that fit into the stove openings for warm-weather cooking. (In a pinch, you could also fashion a wire basket for a can of Sterno.) Navigator maintains a comprehensive web site that covers all needed specifications and installation instructions. There is even a forum where customers can discuss all things stove related—and share photographs of stove installations. Mr. Moore has made a significant contribution to the marine community by resurrecting these comforting stoves and their attendant gear. Although the cost of a new Sardine stove, especially with the porcelain finish, is somewhat dear (\$699 for a plain iron finish, and \$1,364 for red porcelain), they are practically indestructible, even with indifferent care.

What a joy this little stove has proven to be. The Sardine makes the off-season sailing I've adapted to that much more pleasurable. If you have a spot on board that could fit one of these, consider extending your season and your well-being by bringing one onboard for solid comfort. To lightly paraphrase L. Francis Herreshoff, "A good solid fuel stove can be the best inorganic thing on a boat."

Russ Manheimer can usually be found hove-to near Beatons Boatyard in West Mantoloking, New Jersey, or tending his gardens in Manasquan. Any help in identifying the provenance of SJOGIN would be appreciated. He can be reached through his website <www.Sjogin.com>.

Contact Navigator Stove Works, 360-376-5161; <www.marine.stove.com>.

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