

# SOUTHERN<sup>®</sup> BOATING

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## Bahamas Skiffs



**ONCE** you've arrived in the Bahamas, a small boat is the best way to get around, and of all the small boats in these waters, the most common type are center consoles. While you'll see plenty of U.S.-built boats, you can't help but notice that the locals have "local" boats. Designed and built in the Bahamas, these boats may not have all the flash of a Jupiter or a Contender, but they are rock-solid. The qualities a Bahamian wants in a boat – a dry, comfortable ride and durability that allows the boat to be used day in and day out for many years – also appeal to many cruisers. Because a growing number of cruisers are opting for one of these local boats, we've taken a closer look at three examples.

Albury Brothers; (242) 365-6086; [www.alburybrothers.com](http://www.alburybrothers.com)

About 200 years ago, the Albury family began a tradition of building boats on Man O'War Cay. Since the

1950s Willard Albury has been building fishing boats, one at a time at a rate of about one per month.

The modified-v hulled boats Willard and his sons Don and Jamie build are known for their strength and seakindliness. The secret comes down to three unique design features: a rounded bilge and moderate chine, an exterior keel, and a forward center of gravity. The exterior keel acts as a stabilizing force, allowing the boat to track true even in rough seas. It also comes in handy when the boat is beached, which is a normal thing while exploring remote islands. The rounded bilge is tied into a moderate chine to soften the ride. The chine delivers exceptional lateral stability in sharp turns. A sharp bow entry angle and the COG forward make the Albury ride flat up on plane.

The boat's durability is a function of how it is built, using a combination of wood and fiberglass. The sole is laid

on top of the stringers, creating air pockets for additional flotation. Lightweight foam cores are used in the deck, to keep weight low and thus enhance handling.

The layout is very basic, yet very functional. Owners can opt for a completely open hull, or can specify a forward casting deck. The aluminum fuel tanks, available in 99 or 138 gallon capacities, are coated in tar prior to installation for maximum corrosion resistance.