

North Wind 36 Sailboatby **JIM
ONORATO**

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High-quality, semi-scale cruiser

For more than 40 years, I've been involved with radio control and have tried most aspects of the hobby from powerboats to cars and planes, but never sailboats. When Gerry Yarrish asked if I would like to try out ABC Hobby's North Wind 36 sailboat, I was happy to oblige!

The North Wind 36 is essentially a prebuilt, America's Cup 36-600-class sailing yacht. The hull, deck, keel and fittings are made of white ABS plastic, and the two-piece mast is made of aircraft-grade aluminum. The kit includes everything you need to sail except a radio and water. The one-piece deck and hull are superbly made and require no painting. All the deck fittings are molded in white plastic and come on two parts trees. A 16-page instruction manual uses exploded diagrams—but no written instructions—to guide you through assembly and rigging. Materials are also provided to construct a convenient wooden stand. Miscellaneous fittings are grouped according to the various subassemblies and packaged in small bags. Each bag contains a picture, name and quantity of each part, which makes parts identification extremely easy. I was really impressed with this kit's quality and with how well-organized everything was.

I built the stand first so that I would have a convenient way to hold the model once I attached the keel and weighted bulb to the hull. The parts for the stand were cut to size, and all that I had to do was to put them together with some epoxy and the provided hardware. Then I worked on the model itself.

The sleeves for the rudder and keel are brass tubes that I epoxied into place in the hull; I made sure there was a watertight seal at both ends of each tube. The keel is weighted with lead that's encased inside a molded plastic bulb at the bottom of the keel fin. I attached the plastic bulb's two halves with sheet-metal screws since this assembly didn't have to be watertight. I then cut out the opening for the radio box and glued it into the hull with medium CA. It took many parts to install the servos, control horns and

Model: North Wind 36

Type: semi-scale sailing yacht

Manufacturer: ABC Hobby Co. Ltd.

Distributor: Horizon Hobby

Length: 36 in.

Beam: 6.7 in.

Mast height: 48.5 in.

Total height: 65.5 in.

Weight: 5.45 lb.

Main sail area: 309.1 sq. in.

Jib sail area: 238.4 sq. in.

Total sail area: 547.5 sq. in.

Radio req'd: 2-channel w/two standard servos

Price: \$124.95

Features: hydrodynamically designed hull, keel and bulb for maximum performance; one-piece deck and hull needs no painting; watertight radio compartment; scale, detailed deck fittings; two-piece aircraft-grade aluminum mast; detailed instruction manual with exploded diagrams; includes wooden stand.

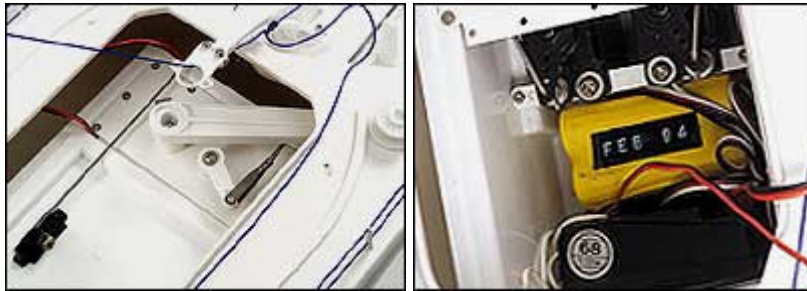
Hits

- High-quality materials.
- Great-looking scale appearance.
- Simple 2-channel operation with standard servos.
- Convenient wooden stand.

Misses

- Minimal rigging instructions.
- Some steps out of sequence.

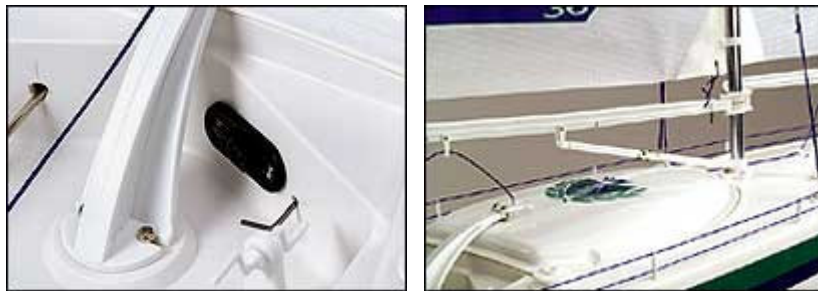
linkages, but the excellent exploded drawings in the manual helped a lot. Having good parts identification really paid off.



Left: The large sail control arm and rudder servo extension are shown here.

Right: The radio box is a tight fit, but there's room for all the gear you need.

Next, I installed all of the deck parts, and once again, there were quite a few. Most parts were on one of the two parts trees, and all were clearly marked and identified on the drawings. The parts' locations were indicated by small indentations in the deck. I drilled pilot holes and attached most parts with medium CA. Some were attached with small, round-head sheet-metal screws, but I thought countersunk, flat-head screws would have looked better. [CONTINUED](#)



Left: A convenient location for the receiver charge jack and the on/off switch extension wire is at the forward cockpit bulkhead.

Right: The deck detail is neat. The domed hatch cover keeps the water out.

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When I had finished attaching the deck parts, I assembled the mast and booms according to the manual. The mast comes in two pieces and is fastened with a mast joiner. My kit contained a steel joiner in addition to the plastic one on the parts tree. Make sure you use the steel joiner, or at least a hardwood dowel, because the plastic one is not strong enough. You must assemble the various parts that go onto the mast in a specific sequence, and you'll have to install some as you attach the sails. The manual shows some parts that were installed on the mast in the wrong sequence, so make sure you study the drawings carefully before you glue any of the parts into place. If you glue the spreaders in place too soon, you won't be able to attach the main sail.



Above: the large high aspect ratio rudder is very responsive.



A nice, wooden stand comes with the kit. Note the exposed rudder pushrod. Adjustments to the clevis are easy.

Not having had any experience modeling sailboats, I was a little apprehensive about preparing the sails and rigging. After I studied the drawings for quite a while, however, I became familiar with some strange terms, such as "luff tape," "luff rings" and "battens," to name a few. Ultimately, I persevered, and the result was just fine. Having numbered steps was a big help, and I figured that if I could do it, then it must have been easy! I think the manual could be improved by providing written instructions to guide the builder through the proper sequence for installing the sails and mast parts. Perhaps experienced boat builders won't have a problem, but beginners may.

To finish the assembly, I installed the rest of the radio equipment, sealed the radio box with the provided tape and added the rudder and its pushrod. I then applied the North Wind decals to the hull as a final touch.

I very much enjoyed the North Wind 36—a project that gave me a taste of a new aspect of radio control. The quality of the materials included in this kit is outstanding, and the finished product is very pleasing to the eye. It will provide many hours of relaxing activity on the lake.

ABC Hobby, 4105 Fieldstone Rd., Champaign, IL 61821; (217) 355-9511.
Horizon Hobby Inc., 4105 Fieldstone Rd., Champaign, IL 61822;
 (217) 355-9511; www.horizonhobby.com.

ON THE WATER

I must admit: I felt as if I had forgotten something as I gently set the North Wind into the water. I hadn't started an engine or turned on a motor, and suddenly, the model was heading away from the dock on its own! I thought, "This is great—no stress, no mess." The slight breeze quickly filled the sails, and the North Wind was on its way, gliding silently over the water. The sail control servo was set up to let out or take in the main sail and the jib sail simultaneously. According to the North Wind's ads, the boat is capable of handling 18mph winds, but the day I sailed didn't have anything even approaching that. Once the sails were let out, however, it was difficult for the standard servo to pull them back against the wind's pressure. I kicked the rudder

over to relieve the pressure on the sails, pulled them in and got set for the next tack. Though standard servos are adequate, I intend to replace the standard servo with one that's the same size but with higher torque to provide snappier sail control. Overall, I was very pleased with my first experience with RC sailboats!

