

KIT SELECTION

This is one of the most difficult but enjoyable areas you are likely to encounter, which ship to select for your first build. There are endless kits in the marketplace of various designs, categories and most confusing of all, levels of difficulty. In fact there is so much information that it can be overwhelming for the novice. With the aid of this short essay and other more detailed tutorials we hope to make your decision on what to buy and later on how to build it marginally less perplexing.

Unfortunately kit manufacturer's recommendations are not the same from one manufacturer to another and this makes selection very difficult for the newcomer. There are no hard and fast rules to say; this kit is in the beginner's range and this one is in the advanced range but there are some general points to consider for selecting that first kit.

We recommend that you choose a kit with;

1. No more than two masts.
2. A single deck level or two at most.
3. Rigging which is simple in form.
4. A clipper like hull i.e. no bluff or apple shaped bows.
5. A ship which only has a few decorations at the bow or stern.
6. If you must have cannons then its best to only have a very limited number.
7. Some personal interest whether it be historical, geographical or simply visually appealing.

It is very important that your choice satisfies some personal desire. This is not a hobby suited to those with a short attention span; it requires dedication and attention to detail to build an attractive model. By choosing a model which has personal appeal it is far more likely to be completed and positioned in a place of pride for all to admire.

The costs of taking up any type of modelling hobby can be inhibitive. If you're not sure whether ship building is really for you there are ways for you to test your interest and not spend hundreds of dollars doing so. The models pictured below are Pinta (a) and Catalina (b) both by Mamoli. Both are available for less than \$50 US and are advertised as taking approx 15-20 hours to build. While the final result may not be of "museum quality" they will allow you to test your skills and determine if ship building is for you. Hopefully you'll be inspired to greater things.



(a)



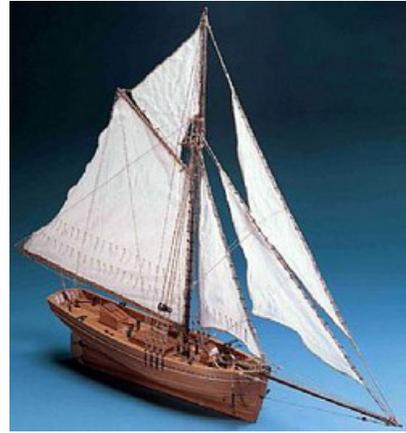
(b)

If cost is not so much of an issue then perhaps your main concern is your skill level when it comes to woodworking. Then we suggest that you again start off with something relatively simple such as the; Flattie (a) by Corel or Shenandoah (b) also by Corel but slightly more advanced.

As is the case with many models there is more than one manufacturer of the same ship. This is the case with the Flattie and Midwest also produces a range of inexpensive well made kits of very similar vessels.



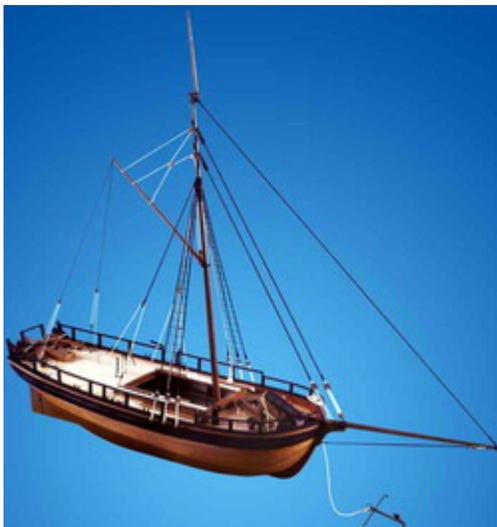
(a)



(b)

The two attractive models pictured below fit most of the criteria listed above and would be a good choice as a first or second build.

HM William Gunboat (a) by JoTika is a POB hull kit and Lady Nelson (b) from Amati also a POB kit.



(a)



(b)

The four models pictured below are all rated as beginner's kits by the manufacturers. However they are probably more suited to those with some woodworking or previous modelling experience; they have been included for various reasons.

The Harriet Lane (a) by Model Shipways is a solid hull construction with building instructions which have been compiled by the renowned author and model shipwright Ben Lankford.

The Resolution (b) by Corel satisfies many of the beginner's criteria and for those who love the sight of cannon she is well armed.

HMS Bounty's Jolly Boat (c) by Artesania Latina has great historical significance and is a beginner's kit which uses a POF construction technique.

The Palamos (d) by OcCre is a traditional Spanish fishing boat.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

In regard to having clear and precise instructions along with a good quality kit we feel it would be remiss of us to omit the following vessels and the accompanying practicums which are available as downloads from Model Ship World.

Model Shipways produce two solid hull kits, the Sultana (a) and Phantom (b). Along with the inclusive instructions the builder is able to download from Model Ship World the practicums provided by Chuck Passaro. This will give the beginner possibly the best ever opportunity to build a first class model with their initial modelling attempt.

Sultana: <http://www.modelshipworld.com/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=97>

Phantom: <http://www.modelshipworld.com/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=82>



(a)



(b)

If you do not own many workshop tools suited to modelling then a hobby shop combo deal could be the way for you to go. The two beginner rated models pictured below are often both advertised as kits which can be bought as part of a combo deal; Mare Nostrum (a) by Artesian Latina and Albatross (b) by OcCre.



(a)



(b)

Many kit model retailers offer these combo deals which are well worth considering. The contents of the combo deals differ from seller to seller but can include things such as paints, glues, reference books, practicum's, hobby knives and other various things aimed at assisting the novice shipwright. The pictures below include some but not all of the items contained in a "super combo" deal currently being offered by a major online North American hobby shop.



Do not be too ambitious with your first, second or even third kit selection. Get one or two easy ones under your belt that are not too complicated in planking and rigging work. The more complex models can be long term projects sometimes taking years to complete becoming works of art or family heirlooms for future generations. Therefore it is most important that a novice chooses a kit suited to their skills. Newcomers to the hobby with woodworking experience or related modelling skills can if they so desire select a slightly more advanced design. However if you are starting out as a greenhorn then we strongly advise you to choose a basic model.

The three ships pictured below are Victory (a), Wappen Von Hamburg (b) and Endeavour (c). In our opinion these are much too difficult for a beginner to handle comfortably for various reasons. The amount and complexity of rigging required, the number of cannon and the hull shape of these vessels mean that they are best attempted by a builder with at least some experience. There would be literally thousands of these types of models sitting unfinished in cupboards around the world for these very reasons.



(a)



(b)



(c)

The following is a list of static model ship manufacturers most of whom include an entry or beginners range of kits in their catalogue. As we have mentioned before the reasoning behind what constitutes an entry level model varies between manufacturers. It is largely up to the purchaser to realistically determine what they are capable of.

The list is comprehensive but we do not claim that it includes every known manufacturer. In many instances it is simpler to order the desired kit from your local model retailer or one of the many online hobby shops rather than the manufacturer and in some cases it's also cheaper.

- Aeropicola: <http://www.aeropicola.com/>
- Artesania Latina: <http://www.artesania-latina.net/home.php>
- Amati Modellissimo: <http://www.amati-model.com/>
- Billings Boats: <http://www.billingboats.com/>
- Blue Jacket: <http://www.bluejacketinc.com/>
- Corel:
- Constructo: <http://www.bestrc.com/constructo/index.html>
- Euromodel: http://www.euromodel-ship.com/home_gb.htm
- JoTiKa: Caldercraft: http://www.jotika-ltd.com/Pages/1024768/Ccraft_Front.htm
- Nelson's Navy: http://www.jotika-ltd.com/Pages/1024768/Nelson_Front.htm
- Heritage Series: http://www.jotika-ltd.com/Pages/1024768/Heritage_Front.htm
- Krick Kits: http://www.jotika-ltd.com/Pages/1024768/Krick_Front.htm
- G.K. Modellbau: <http://www.gk-modellbau.de/>
- Mantua, Sergal, Panart: <http://www.mantuamodel.com/mantuamodel1/navimantua.htm>
- Mamoli: <http://www.mamolimodel.com/eng/modclassici.htm>
- Midwest: <http://www.midwestproducts.com/>
- Model Shipways: <http://www.modelexpo-online.com/>
- Model Slipways: <http://www.modelslipway.com/>

Ocio Creativo: <http://www.occre.com/>

Victory Models: see Euromodels

When the time comes to order your model then it always pays to shop around especially if ordering from overseas. The differences not only in kit price but also in packaging & postage between retailers can be absolutely astounding. In some cases these cost differences can be up to 150%.

You would also do well to remember that some retailers are more concerned with making a quick profit rather than ensuring that you purchase a suitable model and become a long term loyal customer. As is always the case it is a matter of "buyers beware".

Our final recommendation is to do your own research first, go the web, read and compile a short list of possibilities. Then go to the kit review sections on this and other forums to see what others have to say about your choices. The advice and experience of other more experienced modellers is invaluable. Ask a question in the General Forum or contact the owner/builder of the kit being reviewed. The vast majority of builders will be only too happy to assist anyone who shows an interest in their work.

One of the main aims of this forum is to encourage newcomers and the less experienced modellers. We were all new to this hobby sometime in our younger and not so young days. So do not hesitate to ask advice in regard to any help you may require.

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