

## BOATBUILDING TERMS

Not necessarily useful ever again, but fun to know, and to use to impress.

**Aft:** This is a term pertaining to movement toward the stern of the boat. It can also mean that the boat is moving “backward” (however, never use the phrase “move the boat backward” - very unsalty).

**Athwartships:** Means “across the boat” perpendicular to the longest axis of the boat.

**Beam:** The width of the boat at its’ widest part. Generally applied to the width at the gunwales.

**Bow:** The forward part of the boat.

**Butt Joint:** A joint formed by abutting the ends of two squared pieces of wood.

**Buttblock:** A piece of wood used to reinforce a joint between two pieces of wood.

**Chine:** A sharp angle in the hull of a boat. A “hard” chine means a distinct, sharp meeting of two planes in the hull. A “soft” chine refers to a rounded meeting. There is no quantitative measure defining the difference.

**Chine Log:** The piece of wood or other material inside the hull running along the chine that provides support to the hull at the chine and which provides a surface upon which to join the hull planking.

**Countersink:** A drilling technique used to enlarge the upper portion of a hole drilled in wood so as to accept the head of the screw so it is below the surface of the wood.

**Deadrise:** Looking at the hull in cross-section, the angle the bottom rises from the horizontal.

**Fairing:** The process of removing bumps, dips, etc., from the longitudinal lines of the hull. Generally a “fair” hull is one with smooth, uninterrupted curves. Always involves lots of sanding, swearing (using salty terms of course), and either internal arguing with yourself or verbal disagreement with your building partner(s).

**Fillet:** A cove shape at the internal corner of a joint (such as a chine) made with putty or epoxy. Tongue depressors and popsicle sticks are ideal tools for filleting.

**Frame:** The athwart ships members of the hull framework. Can be bent, sawn, laminated, or a combination. Frames provide the beam.

**Gunwale/Gunnel:** The upper edges of the boat rails along the top of the hull (see “sheer”). A wonderful point of confusion. The gunwale usually refers to the physical structure of the top rail. “Sheer” refers to the curvature of the rail and is a line in space, not a physical structure.

Platos’ “Object”

**Gusset:** An internal, shaped structure used to join hull shapes at the chine.

- Harpin:** A “sheer” sawn to shape rather than bent around a frame. The Pirogue sheer is harpined.
- Hull:** The part of the structure of the boat that keeps the water out and the air in. Usually includes the bottom and the sides (think Bathtub)
- Inboard:** Not a motor for our purposes. Refers to the inside of the hull structure.
- Longitudinals:** Hull framing members that run the length of the boat – keel, chine logs, sheer clamps, etc.
- Offsets:** Measurements supplied by the designer for laying down the sides of the hull.
- Outboard:** Also not a motor in our case. Refers to the outside of the hull.
- Port:** The left side of the boat when it is viewed from the stern in the forward direction.
- Rocker:** The fore/aft curve of the keel or bottom of the boat from the horizontal. Akin to “deadrise”.  
  
If you place a boat with rocker on a flat, level surface, the bow and stern of the boat will not touch the surface. If you push down on either the bow or stern the opposite end will rise and the boat will “rock”.
- Scarf (Scarph) Joint:** A joint formed by fastening the two ends of pieces of wood that have been tapered to form sloping plane surfaces of the same length in both pieces. Also a verb as in “to scarf”.
- Scantlings:** The dimensions of building lumber; the dimensions of structural parts of the boat.
- Sheer/Sheer Line:** The longitudinal sweep of the intersection of deck or gunwales to the hull. Should be a smooth, fair curve, pleasing to the eye  
  
Platos’ “Form”
- Sheer Clamp:** A beam running longitudinally along the sheer connecting the upper ends of the frames. A part of the structure for attaching the deck to the hull.
- Spiling Batten:** A batten used to transfer the required shape of a boat to a piece of wood to be cut to that shape..
- Starboard:** The right side of the boat when viewed from the stern looking forward.
- Starved Joint:** A glued joint that is weakly bonded due to insufficient epoxy in the joint. Often caused by excess clamping pressure which forced the epoxy out of the joint and/or by insufficient viscosity of the epoxy.
- Stations:** A series of equally spaced transverse sections of the hull. Frames may or may not be located at each station. Stations are used for lofting.
- Stem:** The structural member at the bow of the boat to which the planking attaches.
- Stern:** The aftmost portion of the boat.