

The Ultimate Hobie 16 North American Sail Pattern Guide



In the beginning, all sails were white.

In the late 1960's, only a few boat manufacturers offered colored sails. Hobie Cats seemed made for color, and Hobie tried to distinguish themselves by offering a myriad of hull and deck colors. From a distance though, you still couldn't tell a Hobie Cat from any other sailboat. Hobie needed something to make their product unique and with any luck, sell more boats. The fully battened sails were a natural canvas, so Hobie started introducing colored panels. The rest is history. Hobie Cats and colored sails were forever connected.

The first experiments with color were tentative – a single panel in the main and jib. Then alternating color panels were introduced and ultimately, whole sails of a solid color. In 1974, someone had a brilliant idea: package a full-color sail pattern with special hull and tramp colors, use the relatively new black anodized aluminum and give the scheme a name. Thus, the first named “package boats” – Banana, Orchid and the popular Flamer designs – were born in 1975.

In the late '70s, named package boats really took off. Who can forget the Tequila Sunrise, the most popular pattern ever? In 1977, Hobie Cat began providing boats for the World and US National Championships. In some cases, these had the new sail patterns for the coming year, but often, they would be custom patterns not available otherwise. Large, sail numbers in an ornate font replaced the plain identification numbers of the early sails. Eventually, the package names became associated with just the sails.

In the 1980's, the number of color patterns exploded, driven by sailcloth dyed with multiple colored stripes. The popular Prism and Blue Hawaii patterns would not have been possible without this innovation. The dyed sailcloth was extremely versatile. It could be used in a single panel, with as many as eight different color stripes, or combined with a reversed second panel to create the “double” patterns. It could be moved around to different panels, but did not work well in the higher panels due to their increasing wedge shape. As boat production numbers waned in the late '80s, the dyed material became harder to get in smaller quantities. The last pattern made with it was the All American in 1990.

But while the sail patterns were becoming more numerous, hull colors were being phased out. Sun fading and discoloration were real problems with some colors, so by the end of the 1980's, hulls were limited to white, blue and yellow. The exceptions to this were the Stars & Stripes special edition of 1987 with gun-metal blue-gray hulls and its special commemorative sails and some of the 1989 Nationals boats had light gray hulls. Colored hulls are now only made in limited runs, like the red boats produced by the Australian factory in 2011.

In the early 90's Hobie began to experiment with some completely different technologies to set their products apart. Sail window material became a design element in the ill-fated Formula 1 package. These sails were unlike anything seen before or since. They were teamed up with white powder-coated aluminum to create a striking look. Unfortunately, they didn't wear well – the powder coating chipped easily and the sails stretched in odd ways, making them old before their time. They were quickly phased out.

1970 – 1972



1973



Lt. Blue / Dk. Blue



Red / Gold

1974



1975



Banana



Flamer



Orchid



1976



Spirit of '76



1977



Goldfinger



White Knight

1978



Tequila Sunrise (yellow hulls)



'77 Nationals Yellow



'77 Nationals Red



Cat Fever (yellow hulls)



Chunky Banana



Keoke



Orange Crusher



Blue Streak



Red Rocket

1979



Tequila Sunrise (blue hulls)



Emerald Blue



'79 Nationals



'79 Nationals Blue



'79 Nationals Yellow



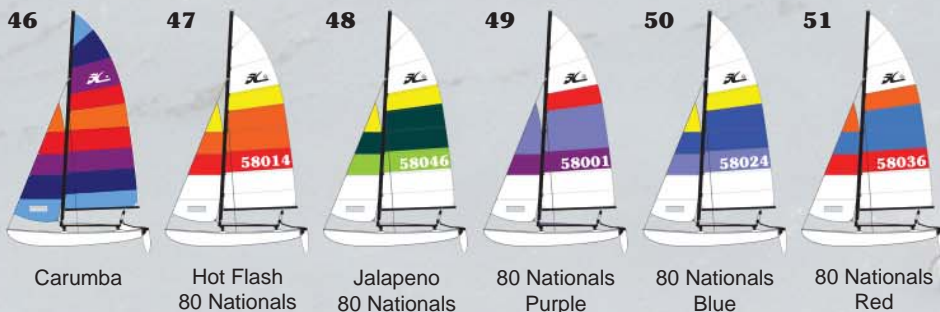
'79 Nationals Green



'79 Nationals Orange



1980



Carumba

Hot Flash
80 Nationals

Jalapeno
80 Nationals

80 Nationals
Purple

80 Nationals
Blue

80 Nationals
Red

1981



Flasher

Cat Fever
(blue hulls)
81 Nationals

Boomer
81 Nationals

81 Nationals

Smokin'

Gonzo
81 Nationals

Orange
Crusher
81 Nationals

1982



82 Nationals
Red

82 Nationals
Orange

82 Nationals
Yellow

82 Nationals
Lt. Blue

82 Nationals
Dk. Blue

1983



Blue Hawaii

Blue Hawaii
(reversed)

Hot Flash

Prism

83 Nationals
Orange

83 Nationals
Green

83 Nationals
Purple

83 Nationals
Lt. Blue

83 Nationals
Dk. Blue

1984



Summer
Games
84 Nationals

Plum
Crazy
84 Nationals

Tsunami
84 Nationals

84 Nationals
Yellow



1985



1986



1987



1988



1989



1990

118



All American

119



Formula 1
Green

120



Formula 1
Pink

121



Neon

122



90 Nationals

123



Breezer

1991

124



Hot Fizz

125



Orange
Mylar

126



Purple
Mylar

127



Raspberry
Wedge

128



Teal
Mylar

129



Red / Yellow
Mylar

130



Mardi
Gras

1992

131



92 Nationals

132



Wild Thing

1993

133



Fiesta

134



Fiesta del Sol

135



Mint Julep

136



93 Nationals

137



Huatulco
Worlds Yellow

138



Huatulco
Worlds Blue

139



Huatulco
Worlds Purple

140



Huatulco
Worlds Red

141



Huatulco
Worlds Green

142



Blue Lagoon

143



Del Mar

144



Mimosa

1998

145



Twilight
Mylar

146



Baja Blues

147



Native Sun

1999

148



Mango Mad-
ness

149



Twilight

2000

150



Poche

151



Capo

2002

152



Islands

153



Sublime

2003

154



02
Continental

155



Playa del Sol

156



Seaside

2004

157



Riviera Maya
Worlds Red

158



Riviera Maya
Worlds Green

159



Riviera Maya
Worlds Grey

160



Misty

161



Solana

2005

162



Spirit



In 1990, Mylar sails were approved by the class for use with the Hobie 16. A whole new look was available with the vertical cut sails. The same taffeta material (one side Dacron, one side Mylar) used for the Hobie 17 sails was used for the 16. Hobie quickly found out that the taffeta material was ill-suited for the H-16 jib leech, wearing on the mast, so later versions of the sail patterns had conventional Dacron jibs. Ultimately, the Mylar sails were not as durable as the Dacron, or as fast, and the last Mylar sails, appropriately named Twilight, were made in 1995.

In 1993, an experiment was made with a vinyl appliqué pattern – the Fiesta del Sol. The look was unique, but they didn't sell very well. They weren't very durable either, so vinyl appliqué patterns were shelved.

The mid-to-late '90s were Hobie's lean years. Few new patterns were introduced and the color palette faded to somber blues, purples and greens from the hot neon colors of the '80s and early '90s. Towards the turn of the century, the palette became bolder, brighter and there was a definite shift in the names. Several of the older designs were named after cocktails – Breezer, Hot Fizz, Mint Julep and Mimosa. For Hobie's fiftieth anniversary in 2000, patterns were named after famous surfing spots – Poche, Capo and Killer Dana (a Hobie 20 pattern). Today, the trend is towards positive names emphasizing sun, sand and the sea – Playa del Sol, Seaside, Solana, Seabreeze.

The color schemes have always been greatly influenced by the availability of sailcloth. Hobie Cats use a cloth that is heavier than other small sailboat sails, so much of the colored sailcloth is custom made for Hobie Cat. This was not a problem in the '70s and '80s when thousands of boats were being sold each year and sailcloth was being consumed at a ferocious rate. Today, the color palette is limited due to the large quantity of cloth that must be purchased in custom colors.

The two world championships held in North America in recent years (1995 in Huatulco, Mexico and 2004 in Riviera Maya, Mexico) produced some striking sails. The 1995 sails are easily identified by the "reversed" class logo in the second panel

of the main (instead of its usual third panel location) and the giant "O'Neil" logo down the leech. These sails were meant to be photographed from the starboard side, whereas the sails in the pattern guide show the port side of the sail. Thus, they have the logos reversed and as if seen through the sail cloth.

The Riviera Maya patterns, in addition to showcasing the national colors of Mexico, also have the Mayan god Choc Mool on the jib.

In 2008, Hobie Cat made three retro patterns for the 40th Anniversary Regatta held in Dana Point, CA in October of that year. Those patterns were subsequently used for several major events, including the 2009 ISAF Youth Championships in Buzios, Brazil.

Finally, some disclaimers about the pattern chart:

- The year by each design is the first year of introduction. Most patterns were made for multiple years.
- There are no custom, "one-off" patterns. The patterns shown here were made available to the general public in at least limited quantities.
- There are no European patterns. Hobie Cat Europe has had their own color patterns that are much different than Hobie USA's from the early '90s onward. That's a major project for a future article.
- There are no Worlds boats from outside from the North American Region. We wanted to provide a guide to what you might see on the beach in North America.
- The Hobie 16 was chosen because the most patterns have been made for it and it spans the entire chronology of colored sails. With a few exceptions, the 14 and 18 have very similar patterns. The Hobie 17 and Hobie 20 have separate guides.

Even with these caveats, there are almost 170 publicly available sail patterns that have been identified in the nearly 45 years of Hobie 16 production. However, the pattern chart will never be complete. Lucky for us.