



Chesapeake Tartan 30 Association

ORIGO ALCOHOL STOVE

September 1998*

Q: Do I recall correctly that you replaced your Kenyon stove with an Origo? How do you find it for cooking, speed to boil, ease in lighting, etc. I got one for Xmas and am trying to see if I should keep it or go for a CNG stove. Dave Alexander, *Aja*, #201

A #1, from Rick Amirault, *Catherine*, #63: When we bought *Catherine* my wife said "I'm not cooking on that stove!" (It was the old Kenyon.) We went to Boat/US and got a double burner Origo that dropped into the same hole. Kathleen has cooked many, many meals — some underway, some at anchor — and hasn't had a problem. Someone told me that it would boil water slowly, so I timed it in comparison to my home stove — same amount of time. I'm happy, Kathleen's happy, and we both feel a lot safer every time we use the Origo.

A #2, from Brad Armendt, *Emprise*, #282: We installed an Origo Model 4000 in 1996. Origo wrote me that it was designed specifically to be a drop-in replacement for the zillion Kenyon pressurized alcohol stoves out there. After taking *Emprise* down the ICW to Florida, and living aboard her most of eight months, we are still delighted with the Origo 4000. We used it quite a lot during that time. We think it burns hotter than the old Kenyon, and we agree with Rick Amirault that it boils water about as fast as our electric range back home. It's as easy to light as gas, but you'll need a *long* match to get down to the top of the burner. Instead, we use a propane stove/grill lighter that lights up when you pull the trigger. Not all of those have a probe long enough to reach the burner; measure the length you need before buying one.

While living aboard, we fill the fuel canisters about once a week. This takes 10-15 minutes. Each of the two fuel canisters in the Origo holds one litre of alcohol. We have had no trouble buying stove alcohol between Annapolis and Daytona Beach; it seems to be widely available. We've found the best stove alcohol is that called "Soot-Free." It costs a bit more but is worth it because it doesn't blacken the bottom of pots heated on it. We carry two 1-gallon Jerry Jugs of alcohol — the red plastic ones made for carrying gasoline — but probably we could get along with one such jug.

The Origo stove has a small SS plate that slides across the burner to adjust the intensity of the flame. The position of the plate (and hence, the flame intensity) is changed between OFF and MAX by the slide control on the top of the stove next to each burner. When in the OFF position, the plate extinguishes the flame, but it does not seal the fuel canister tightly closed, so if left in that position, your alcohol will slowly evaporate from the canister. With the new stove, Origo supplies two small sheets of thin foam rubber, and instructs you to (1) let the stove cool down after finishing cooking, (2) unsnap & raise the stove top to expose the two canisters, (3) place one of the thin rubber sheets so it covers the center of each burner, and (4) close down the stove top. I.e., the thin rubber sheets form a gasket to seal the alcohol in each canister. The problem is that the thin foam rubber sheets supplied by Origo are too small & too flimsy, and they get wrinkled & doubled up, so they usually don't make a good seal. I bought a sheet of solid rubber about one-tenth inch thick, and cut out two pieces six inches square. These are easy to handle, stay flat & don't wrinkle up, and make a good seal when the stove is not in use. It's my belief that they save us a lot of alcohol that otherwise would be lost to evaporation while the stove is not in use.

Our Kenyon was originally installed (by Tartan) without gimbals. But Kenyon sold a set of gimbals for it as an aftermarket product. These are illustrated on page 12-21 of the Tartan 30 Manual. Years ago we added the gimbal set for use during overnight races, and because we occasionally found ourselves in anchorages where stinkpotters would go charging by thoughtlessly, making big wakes while we were trying to cook. Also, with the cutting board in place on the stove, it gives the cook an almost-level place to build sandwiches, etc. even while the boat is heeled under sail.

My wife loves the gimbals, and refused to consider changing to any stove without them. So I wrote Origo, who replied that the Model 4000 would fit right into the Kenyon gimbals if I cut out the little fillets welded into each corner of the Kenyon gimbals. That was easy — a few minutes with a Dremel tool. Plus,

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I had to remove (and discard) the counterweight assembly and drill new holes in the gimbal frame for the Origo mounting screws. Because of the shape of the Origo under the counter (basically, a big box), it will not turn 360° through the gimbal, but instead, it hits the frame after gimbaling about 31° (see figure below). But that's still *plenty* for the purpose. Our Kenyon gimbals also had a set of potholders, to hold a pot in the center of a burner while the stove tossed about. I was able to adapt them to the Origo stove. Origo also sells a potholder set (part #4001).

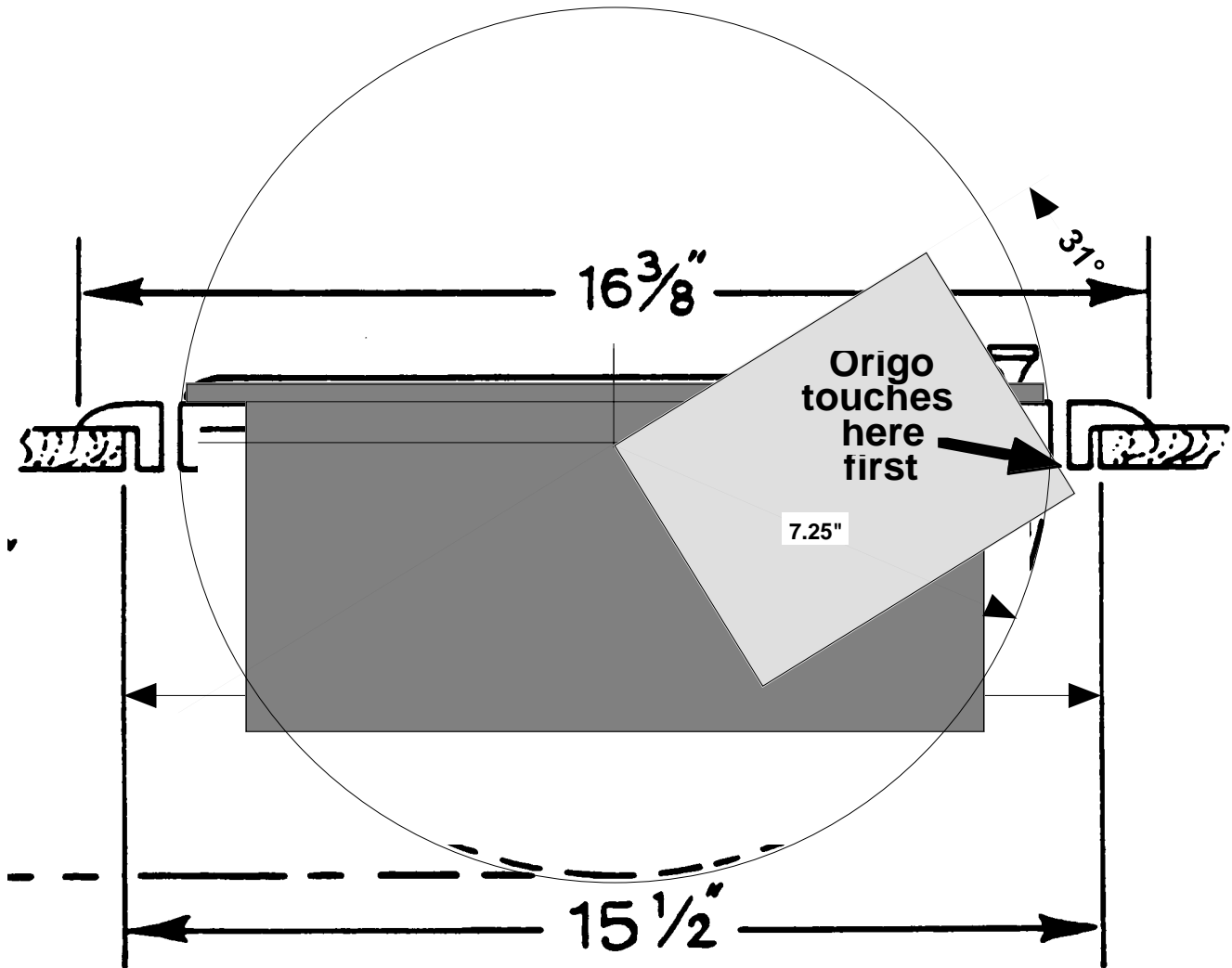


Figure 2. Origo dimensions superimposed on the original Kenyon gimbal sketch, showing that the Origo can gimbal about 30° before striking the frame.

If you do install an Origo in a gimbal frame, we predict you will not be happy with it unless you add a counterweight underneath to increase the righting moment. Long ago, when we installed the original Kenyon in a gimbal frame, Kenyon supplied a bracket to fit underneath the stove and a steel weight to screw to it — this was intended to keep the stove upright just like your keel keeps your sailboat upright. We used it for awhile, but found it inadequate. So at a plumbing supply house I got two 5-lb. pigs of lead. After I replaced the wimpy little piece of steel with 10 lbs. of lead the stove worked wonderfully. This is why my wife loved it so. When I put the new Origo 4000 into the same Kenyon gimbals, I noticed again that it would not be very stable unless a “keel” was added. So I used the same old Kenyon bracket and the 10 lbs. of lead underneath the Origo. Again, this worked wonderfully.

UPDATE: Origo made a gimbal set (part #4003) for the Model 4000, but contact with them in November 2000 disclosed that it had been discontinued. An ungimbaled Origo 4000 is not intended for use while sailing heeled, because the flame needs to rise straight up the hole to heat the pot on the stove. If the stove is heeled over very much, the flame will heat parts of the stove that shouldn't be heated instead of the pot. So if you intend to use it while heeled, you will have to devise some kind of homemade gimbal.

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