

How to Find Your Gar Wood Identification Numbers



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Gar Wood production boats were built from 1923 through 1947 in three manufacturing plants. The First factory was in Algonac, Michigan and was originally intended for limited production of racing boats, Baby Gar runabouts, and custom designs. In the late 1920s production exceeded these limited facilities and a new factory for standardized production boats was planned for Marysville, Michigan. The new factory was designed to be the most modern and efficient boat building factory in the United States and began production in 1930. The Algonac plant continued to specialize in racing boats, large cruisers and custom work. In 1946 and 1947 Gar Wood opened a third plant in Newport News, Virginia.

Identification Numbers

There are usually three identification numbers that can be found in Gar Wood boats:

- The Hull number- 1/2" digits stamped into wood parts
- The model number- 1/4" digits stamped into small metal plate
- The propeller part number- stamped into larger metal plate

Locations of Hull Numbers

The most important identification number is the hull number. This number is usually four, five, or six digits and pressed into the wood in several locations. Most frequently this hull number is found on the underside of floor hatches, backs of seats, engine stringers, aft bulkheads in utilities, on the backside of dashboards, etc. Perhaps, the most consistent location is in the keel which is also the most difficult to locate. This is the most important number since it was assigned at the time your Gar Wood actually began construction. It is also the only unique number your boat has. No other Gar Wood will have this number. It was assigned in sequence and is, in fact, a production number. We can tell from our records exactly when your Gar Wood was constructed. This number does not tell us anything else about your boat. There is no code used on hull numbers for particular models. It is a number that identifies one Gar Wood from another, and can be used to determine vintage. This number should be given to your insurance company as it may be vital to help recover your boat in case of theft.

Locations of Hull Number

The model numbers are very helpful in for Gar Wood owners to learn more specific information about their boat. From these numbers we can tell the model of the boat the size of the original engine. For example, if the numbers "28-40" appear on the metal plate of a triple cockpit runabout we know that it is the 28' model with a 200hp Scripps engine. In 1937 this same boat had a model number of 731. The first digit "7" means it is a 1937 model and the second and third digits tell us that it had a 150hp Chrysler engine as original power. These plates are usually located in the engine compartment or the engine hatch cover. However, they are easy to remove and sometimes have been lost. If they were located on the sound insulation material, they were particularly easy to remove.

Location of Propeller Part Number

This number is the least important and ironically the most prominent. It is located on a large brass plate that has an impressive statement that makes the unwary owner assume that this is the serial number of his Gar Wood. Not so. Read carefully and you will see this plate gives you the replacement part number for your propeller. If your Gar Wood has a twin engine, there will be two of these plates, one for each propeller, and there will be two different numbers.

Written courtesy of Tony Mollica