



All I Want For Christmas is a Toy Outboard Boat & Motor



By: Ken Kirk

Photos: Kris Kirk & Ken Kirk

Christmas time seems to be the most appropriate time of the year to talk about toys. What better present for a boy, no matter how old he is, than a toy outboard boat and motor. Over the years these toys have become very collectible. Here is a look at some toy boats and outboards from my collection.



This toy boat is a 20", "Lark" model produced by Scientific Airplane Models Inc. of Newark New Jersey, about 1956. The motor is a 1956 Evinrude toy electric outboard manufactured by K & O Models Inc. of Van Nuys, California. The motors however, were actually made in Japan. The K&O Evinrude was sold separately, it was not part of the boat model kit.

In 1955 Evinrude outboards hired noted industrial designer Brooke Stevens, to design a "Future Boat" to be used by Evinrude at 1956 boat shows and for public relations purposes, much the same as the auto manufacturers used "Future" or "Dream Cars", (today we refer to them as concept cars). Stevens designed the futuristic Evinrude "Sea Lark" boat and it garnered a great deal of promotional and editorial exposure.

This Scientific model boat was a copy of the Stevens design but gave no credit to either Stevens or Evinrude. They simply identified it as the "Lark" speedboat. They wouldn't get away with this today.



The most collectable of all toy outboard motors are the K&O's. They worked with most of the outboard companies to produce, with permission, very detailed and realistic die cast battery operated toy outboard motors. The logos and graphics were authentic and their use was approved by various outboard manufacturers. OMC was the first to make a deal with K&O authorizing them to replicate the 1953 Johnson and Evinrude 25 hp motors. K&O produced over 60 different die cast aluminum outboards from 1953 until the company was sold in 1962. . Each year the colours, shapes and decals were changed to reflect the real outboard brands of the day.

K&O toy outboards were sold primarily through hobby stores. They were also sold by outboard motor dealers and also used by dealers as promotional items. At one time or another K&O's were made replicating Johnson, Evinrude, Mercury, Scott Atwater, Gale Buccaneer & Oliver outboards.

After K&O was sold to Craftmaster, in 1962, these toy outboards were all made of plastic...the die cast aluminum process was discontinued.

Cont'd



The Boucher "Polly Wog" is 24" long, with white pine sides, mahogany veneer bottom and transom, aluminum deck and powered by a unique two chamber steam driven outboard motor. In 1935 "Polly Wog" sold for \$25., a very expensive toy.

The H. E. Boucher Manufacturing Co. was established in 1905 in New York City. Boucher was a naval architect and marine engineer. Bouchers' toys were very accurate in design, well made and functioned extremely well. They were more "models" than "toys" but they were made to be used. Boucher went out of business in 1943.



This toy boat and outboard from the early 1930's was made by Liberty Playthings in Niagara Falls, N.Y. The boat is wood. The outboard motor is a simple clockwork mechanism with large horizontal spring and open gears. This style of clockwork toy outboard was easy to make and relatively inexpensive. A number of toy boat makers in the U.S. and Europe made this type of toy outboard. Lindstrom was perhaps the largest U.S. maker of these clockwork toy outboards. They were somewhat disappointing to some children as they were slow & didn't travel very far.



This tin boat was made in France in the early 1950's but the maker is unknown. It is powered by a unique single chamber steam driven outboard. Steam powered toy boats were quite popular in the day but steam outboards were relatively rare.



This rare toy wood speedboat was made by Rumalu during the 1930's. The large clockwork outboard motor is totally unique and integrated with the wood hull...not a clip-on. I have never seen another one.

Cont'd



Very rare clockwork, key wound, Johnson QD toy outboard with open gears. Probably made about 1950 in Italy. The decals are very realistic. Basic shape is unmistakable QD. There are fewer than a dozen known to still exist.



King Craft 21" pressed steel boat powered by a LePage 4-coil electric outboard. The LePage battery operated outboards were the first electric toy outboards and were made in 2-coil and 4-coil sizes. The coils gave a realistic visual connection to the real outboards of the day with their exposed cylinder barrels. King Craft boats and LePage toy outboards were both made in Detroit and were sold together as a unit.



This Joustra race boat 305 was made in Strasbourg Germany about 1936. It is a 16" long tin lithographed boat with driver and riding mechanic. The outboard has a clockwork key wound mechanism.



These two outboard hydroplane tether boats are powered by fuel burning, glow plug, toy outboards. The boat on the right has an Allyn Sea Fury two-cylinder motor, the boat on the left has an Atwood single cylinder. These glow plug toy outboards are from the mid 1950's. Fuel burning motors were very fast, no comparison to the slower battery operated and clockwork toy outboards.



The fascination of boys and men with toy outboard motors is captured in this picture from a 1954 Evinrude catalogue. The toy motor is a 1953 battery operated Evinrude made by K&O