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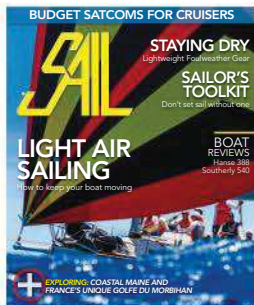
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ON THE COVER

Big seas are all part of the fun at Les Voiles de Saint Barth.
Photo by Christophe Jouany



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Safety and Sense

The loss of Team Scallywag crewman John Fisher in the Southern Ocean during the Volvo Ocean Race (see page 18) was yet another tragic reminder, if one were needed, of the unforgiving nature of the sea and the dangers inherent in top-level ocean racing, a game of calculated risks whose dramas are played out in some of the remotest, most hostile regions on the planet.

At this level, sailing is indeed an extreme sport in which any number of scenarios could lead to injury or death. You might, therefore, be surprised to hear that such occurrences are actually quite rare, though inevitably highly publicized. In fact, Fisher was the sixth person to lose his life over the 45-year history of the Whitbread/Volvo race, the first since Hans Horrovoets in 2006. Before that, there were fatalities in 1973 and 1989. In the only other crewed round-the-world contest, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston's pay-to-play Clipper race, there have been three deaths in the last few years.

Singlehanded ocean races like the Vendée Globe, where the need to sleep means boats sailing unattended at breakneck speeds, seem quite sedate by comparison; despite some close calls and a handful of amazing rescues, the solo-sailing contingent has suffered few casualties. I can think of two in the Globe, and two more in the now-defunct BOC Challenge/Velux 5 Oceans race.

There's more, of course: 15 sailors were lost in the 1979 Fastnet Race; another four in the 1989 Sydney-Hobart; eight more drowned in 2012 in two races off California.

Sounds like a long litany of disaster, doesn't it? And yet, sad as these incidents were, they mask the fact that sailboat racing in general—and sailing in general—is quite safe. If the statistics existed to calculate the number of deaths or injuries against the total number of

hours or miles sailed worldwide in a typical year, you'd find that you are far more likely to meet your maker by slipping in the shower, falling out of bed, choking on a hot dog or being struck by a falling tree.

A look into the boating accident statistics compiled by the U.S. Coast Guard will tell you that of the 700-odd boating deaths in 2016, only 15 involved sailing craft of any type, from dinghies to large yachts. That's 2 percent. Yes, there are fewer sailboats on the water than powerboats or kayaks, but even adjusted, those figures look good. I put it down to the fact that we sailors are keenly aware of our relationship to our watery environment, and respectful of it, as opposed to the kind of boat operator who is deluded by horsepower into thinking that nothing else is needed.

As for what kills us, forces of nature are a long way down the list. Forget about foundering in a storm. You don't need to be in the depths of the Southern Ocean to be sent flying by the boom in an unplanned gybe, or to fall overboard in a careless moment. It's the small things that tend to get us—falling out of the dinghy, missing a handhold, being caught out by the current while taking an evening dip off the back of the boat, all completely avoidable if you take basic precautions. I am reminded of the words of British author Arthur Ransome: "If not duffer, won't drown." **S**



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FEEDBACK

From the SAIL community

The SAILING SCENE

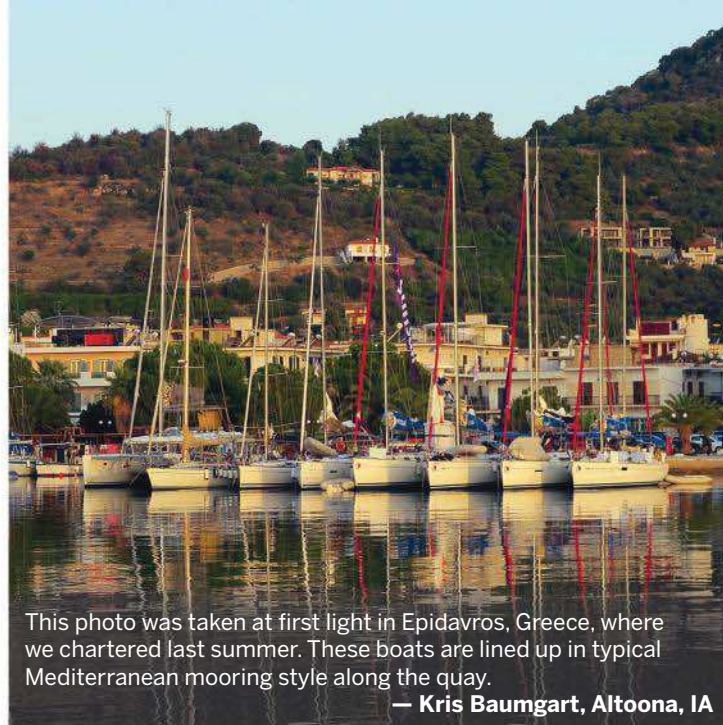
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Under Sail, via our website sailmagazine.com



This photo was taken at first light in Epidavros, Greece, where we chartered last summer. These boats are lined up in typical Mediterranean mooring style along the quay.

— Kris Baumgart, Altoona, IA

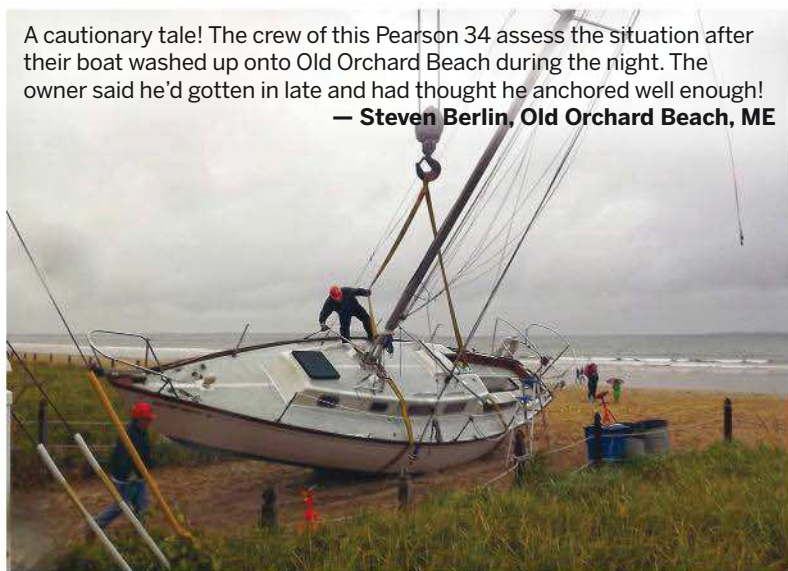
I snapped this photo during a beautiful evening at Hope Town, Elbow Cay, Abacos. The clouds were close enough to touch!

— Carol O'Donovan, San Francisco, CA



A cautionary tale! The crew of this Pearson 34 assess the situation after their boat washed up onto Old Orchard Beach during the night. The owner said he'd gotten in late and had thought he anchored well enough!

— Steven Berlin, Old Orchard Beach, ME



In over 60 years of sailing, this has to be the favorite photo I've taken. My granddaughter, Maggie, and her friend Roxie are helping out by "trimming" the jib on our Catalina 25, *Solemate*, on Lake Hopatcong, NJ.

— George Damerel, Jefferson, NJ

 **LETTERS****FROM A DIFFERENT WORLD**

Thank you for the letter from James A. Haught (*High Rollers*, March 2018). It spoke to my heart because my wife and I also sailed a Flying Scot, and like James and his wife, we donated ours. Since then for over 20 years we have sailed a wonderful Beneteau 351, *Boo*, on the Chesapeake Bay and up to Maine and down to Florida.

James's letter also caught my attention because of his comparison of his small-boat experience to "the world-class sailing in your magazine." Why did this catch my eye? Well, I had just read the review of the J/121 and told my wife, "It's only \$475,000." Then I turned the page and saw that the Hanse 588 is only \$800,000. But wait! I was stunned by the price of another yacht advertised later in the issue: \$2,450,000. Just think, if you sailed 2,450,000 miles you'd be having fun at only \$1.00 per mile (plus expenses). Like James, I'm in a different world of sailing.

— Dave Crowner, Gettysburg, PA

NOSTALGIA FOR THE GOLDEN REGATTA

Adam Cort's article *Yachting's Golden Regatta* (April 2018) issue was déjà vu for me. I too live just north of Boston now, I too came of age sailing on Lake Erie, and I too followed the Newport America's Cup with a feeling that it was a million miles away. I started sailing on Erie Bay, and these days I live just north of Beverly and race my Farr 30 out of the Jubilee Yacht Club.



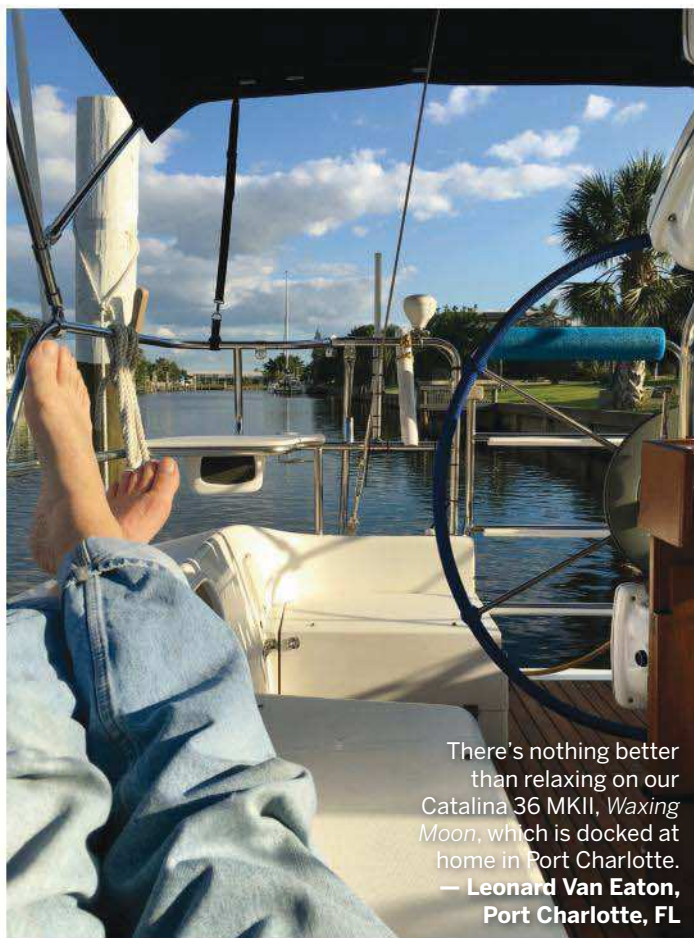
— Roger Kuebel, Beverly, MA

IF YOU LIKED AUBREY...

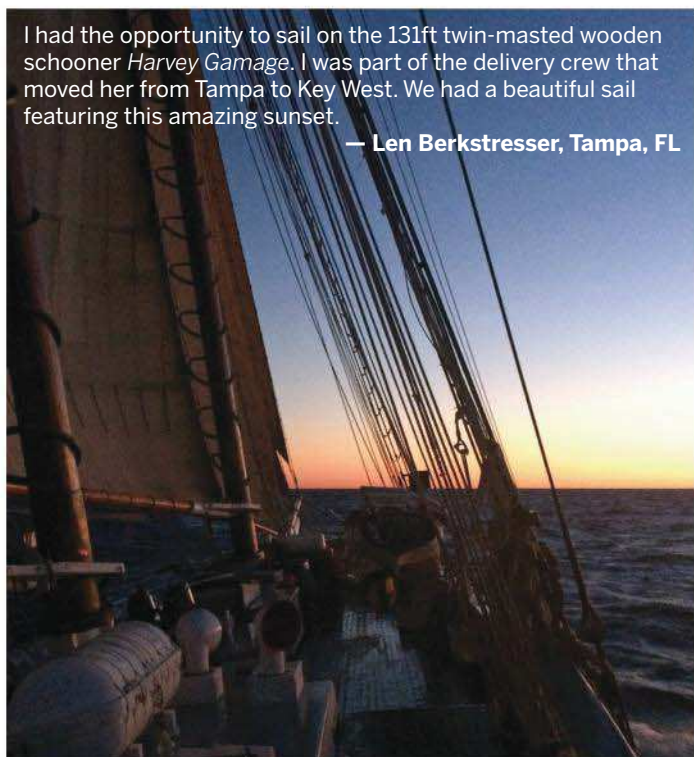
I thoroughly enjoyed Jeffrey McCarthy's article *Taken By Surprise* (February 2018). Having read all Patrick O'Brian's Jack Aubrey/Stephen Maturin adventures, I needed something to fill the hours I spent with Aubrey and Maturin. A salty friend recommended I read the Kidd series by Julian Stockwin. To date, I've read 20 of them. There are many similarities between the two series, including the historically correct accounts of the time period, captivating battles and compelling personal relationships, to name a few. Perhaps the best part is that Stockwin is still writing wonderful Kidd adventures. I devour them as soon as they are published.

— Capt. Charlie Hentges, Marina Del Ray, CA

Want to share something with other readers?
Write to us at sailmail@sailmagazine.com.
Letters may be edited for brevity.



There's nothing better than relaxing on our Catalina 36 MKII, *Waxing Moon*, which is docked at home in Port Charlotte.
— Leonard Van Eaton, Port Charlotte, FL



I had the opportunity to sail on the 131ft twin-masted wooden schooner *Harvey Gamage*. I was part of the delivery crew that moved her from Tampa to Key West. We had a beautiful sail featuring this amazing sunset.
— Len Berkstresser, Tampa, FL

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UNDER SAIL

Airborne

Photo by Christophe Jouany

The Voiles de St. Barth regatta, held each April around the shores of the French island of St. Barthelemy, attracts all kinds of boats, but is best known for the high-end racing machines whose owners take part in the series of regattas held in the Caribbean between February and the end of spring. The sun beats down, the wind blows hard, there's a party every night and the usually boisterous seas make for some tough but hugely enjoyable racing. Here, Jim Vos's HH66 catamaran, *Nala*, flies a hull during one of her battles with her sisterships, *R-Six* and *Flash*, and a handful of other Gunboats that all contested a strong multihull class.





RICHARD MILLE

Risk and Reward

Is it worth being a good Samaritan? *By Joan Wenner*

Many sailors have found themselves needing on-the-water assistance from another sailor, whether it's something as simple as borrowing a jug of fuel or as serious as a rescue from a foundering vessel or a grounding. But will (or should) that person volunteer to help you, if doing so puts him or her in legal peril? And

what if you are the person offering to help out? Is a vessel's master obligated by law to provide assistance to any person in danger at sea, or any boat in danger of being lost?

This is what is known as the "Law of the Sea," and it sets a model of moral behavior by mariners. However, while this centuries-old maritime tradition remains very much alive,

admiralty law also stipulates that assistance be rendered only if it can be done without serious damage to either of the vessels or the individuals aboard—in other words, safely performed depending upon the existing conditions.

You are a "Good Samaritan" if you arrive first on the scene when another skipper has a problem and render voluntary aid without compensation to a person or vessel in distress.

With this in mind, the Federal Boating Safety Act contains the following Good Samaritan provision: "Any person... who gratuitously and in good faith renders assistance at the scene of a vessel collision, accident or other casualty without objection of any person assisted, shall not be held liable for any act or omission in providing or arranging salvage, towage, medical treatment or other assistance where the assisting person(s) acts as an ordinary, reasonable prudent person would have acted under the same or similar circumstances."

A second rule to keep in mind could be said to be the "Do No Harm" rule. In fact, numerous state laws applying to recreational boaters contain a "standard of care"—i.e., reasonable care to avoid "grossly negligent or reckless and wanton" conduct that worsens the situation, according to the U.S. Naval Institute.

Joe Carro of the United States Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division says that technically, for a pleasure boater to be required to render aid under federal law, it is necessary to have found the distressed boater at sea and in danger of being lost—so most boaters would not be obligated to attempt assistance to someone in trouble inshore or having run aground.

Reasonable care must be exercised when coming to another sailor's aid



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOAT U.S.

Should you encounter someone in U.S. territorial waters in need of assistance, Carro recommends you call in an alert giving the disabled boat's position, estimating the ability of its captain or crew to operate the boat and their willingness to take on a boarding officer upon Coast Guard arrival.

Beyond that, what about the simple act of throwing a tow rope to a disabled craft in, say, the absence of an accident or collision? For towing, virtually every state boating guide emphasizes that special care is required when doing so: towlines can get tangled around prop shafts, another boat could hit the line and reduced visibility or bad weather, particularly at night or in areas shared with heavy commercial traffic, would be hazardous.

Unfortunately, in today's world many boat owners are concerned with possible litigation and insurance issues should either vessel sustain damage. From a longtime marine insurance underwriter: "In the situation where a Good Samaritan provides help to a boater in need and damages their boat in doing so, the liability coverage will come into play if damages are sought after by the boater in need. If the Good Samaritan is found to be at fault for damages, or legally liable, the insurance premium would most likely be affected at their renewal. Whether the renewal is at risk in general would depend on the extent of damage and other claims."

In other words, if the Good Samaritan's vessel sustains damage, and the Good Samaritan's insurance pays, the policyholder could be in for a loss surcharge at renewal time.

A maritime technical expert with extensive sailing experience weighs in: "The Golden Rule has always been one about freedom as well as helping one another through challenges whether or not an emergency situation exists. If there were no Good Samaritan laws, some people might not assist a boater, fearing a lawsuit if unintentionally the predicament worsens."

It is true that generally sailors are afforded some measure of legal protection, so long as actions are reasonable and prudent, but sometimes courts must decide in assessing damages. As one judge remarked in an oft-quoted case, "A rescue attempt must be considered in the light of the circumstance that faced the rescuers when they acted and not with the wisdom of an 'armchair admiral' after the fact."

A particular case comes to mind where liability did attach. A new and inexperienced operator of a large boat encountered a smaller, grounded craft. Both parties agreed on a pull. Things did not go as planned, and there was significant damage to both boats. The helper here was not capable of rendering "prudent aid," and lost in a later court case.

Today we feel that all our hailing devices and technology make us safe, but we also know there are times out on the water when you or a fellow mariner is having a problem. If you decide to step up and help, act reasonably and don't put your boat or yourself or others at risk. **S**

Joan Wenner is a widely published boating safety writer and also has a law degree

Towing can be a tricky, dangerous business, and is sometimes best left to a professional

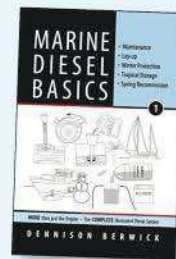


BOOK REVIEW

MARINE DIESEL BASICS

By **Dennison Berwick** (Voyage Press, \$15.99)

If you're not mechanically inclined, even the simplest maintenance tasks on a diesel engine and its associated paraphernalia can be daunting. There are plenty of books on the subject, but many of them assume a certain level of knowledge and others are poorly illustrated. Dennison Berwick literally starts with the basics and leads the reader through the process of understanding how engines and drive trains work, and what's needed to keep them working. Step-by-step instructions accompanied by excellent drawings take you through winterizing and commissioning procedures and much more. The best guide on the subject I've seen, this book has a place on every diesel-equipped boat. — *Peter Nielsen*



IN BRIEF

GAMMING IT UP

The Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA)'s largest Gam (gathering) of the year will be held in Truxton Park, Annapolis, Maryland, on September 29 and 30, just before the start of the United States Sailboat show. The Gam gets underway with a dinghy raft-up on Friday, followed by a full roster of presentations and seminars on Saturday and Sunday. If Annapolis won't work for you, there are other SSCA Gams this year in Essex, Connecticut, in June; Rockland, Maine, in July; and Melbourne, Florida, in November. For more information, visit ssca.org.

HOW TO BE SAFE

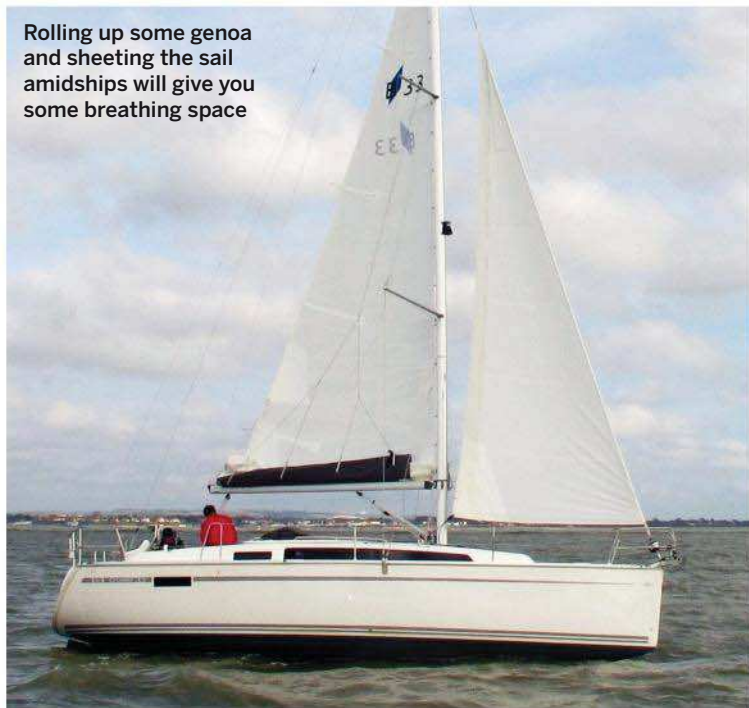
There's nothing as important on the water as keeping yourself and your crew safe, which is why the latest online course from Boater's University is no-brainer. The goal of the *Safety and Rescue at Sea* course is to prepare you to be as safe as possible when heading offshore. Compiled and presented by former USCG rescue swimmer Mario Vittone, the course is full of practical tips for dealing with on-water emergencies and prepare yourself and your boat for when trouble strikes. It's the latest in a series of online courses from Boater's University. Others include *Marine Diesel Maintenance & Troubleshooting* and *Fundamentals of Seamanship: Navigation Rules*. For details, go to boatersuniversity.com.



CRUISING TIPS

with Tom Cunliffe

Rolling up some genoa and sheeting the sail amidships will give you some breathing space



EASY RIDER ↑

I learned this trick back in 1973 from the boss of the first cruising school I worked for. It still succeeds nearly every time. When you need a break from sailing hard to windward, or if you just want to settle things down to visit the head or brew some coffee, try fore-reaching. There's no requirement to reef the main to slow down. All you need is a roller headsail and a working jib or a staysail.

- Set up the mainsheet so the sail is in a close-reaching attitude
 - Roll in the headsail so the clew is clear forward of the mast
 - Sheet the headsail on both sheets, centering the clew around amidships
 - Walk away from the helm: there's no need to lash it
- Any well-balanced yacht will now sail slowly upwind, looking

after herself while you attend to other matters or just take a well-earned rest.

PLOTTING WITHOUT GPS ↓

If you are splashing out on new nav software this winter, how about rejecting any that don't allow you to "draw" at least two

lines on the chart? Often the feature comes in the form of virtual "dividers" or "rulers." My laptop charting software uses raster-scan charts and encourages me to plot as many as I like. This means that if my GPS goes down for any reason, I can still use my electronic charts for plotting. I just take bearings with my magnetic compass (or even my surprisingly good iPhone compass) and plot them with electronic lines on the electronic chart. All the features you expect for recognizing shore objects are on raster charts, although they may be missing from the vector equivalent. The resulting plot is quicker and more accurate than paper navigation, and is as reliable as the batteries in the laptop.

DON'T IGNORE THE SIGNS ↗

It's always interesting when visiting a marina to note what the locals have done to ensure a quiet night. The classic is rubber stretchers in the shorelines or, in the case above, car tires. The message is clear. The place suffers from surge, wash or something else, and whatever the cause, it isn't always calm in there. When I arrive in a slip and find the permanent incumbent has left tires and chains behind,

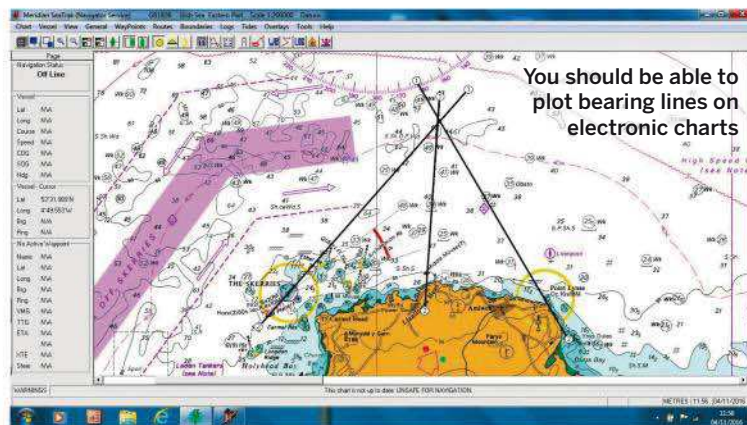


This sight could portend a sleepless night

I use these to tie up rather than leading my lines directly to the shoreside cleats. The spring supplied by Goodyear Tire and Rubber's finest is remarkable, and it doesn't even matter if the tread is worn smooth.

GPS AND GREAT CIRCLE COURSES FOR OCEAN NAVIGATORS

Most chartplotters are capable of delivering the course to a waypoint as either a rhumb line or a great circle. Along the coast or on brief offshore passages, such as across the Gulf of Maine or Down Islands, the two are synonymous for all practical purposes. On an east-west ocean passage well away from the equator, however, following a great circle course so far as wind and wave permit can save a day or more. Gone is the need to bury oneself in tortuous calculations involving spherical trigonometry or plotting new courses repeatedly from a gnomonic chart. Now we have only to place a waypoint at the destination, hit the "go to" button and read off the course. So long as we did the right thing on the setup page, the figure given will be the great circle heading from the current position. **S**



You should be able to plot bearing lines on electronic charts

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Racing sleds need not apply: the Golden Globe 2018 is all about sturdy designs from the past



A Golden Challenge

A score of sailors plans to recreate Knox-Johnston's historic circumnavigation

By *Brian Hancock*

One of the most exciting events on this year's sailing calendar starts July 1 from Les Sables-d'Olonne, France. The Golden Globe Race 2018 is neither fast nor glamorous. Instead, it's a throwback to a simpler time when adventure was man-against-the-sea, and the sea usually won. It is a re-creation of the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race, an event that took place 50 years ago and remains one of the true watershed moments in offshore racing.

The original Golden Globe was the very first around-the-world yacht race, a singlehanded, nonstop lap of the planet at a time when in the minds of many the very idea that you could sail around the planet without stopping was nothing less than preposterous. However, British naval reserve officer Robin Knox-Johnston (now "Sir" Robin Knox-Johnston) proved the naysayers wrong when he arrived back in Falmouth, a small seaside town on the south coast of England, 313 days after he set off, claiming he had done it "for Queen and Country."

Five decades later, 18 men and one woman from all walks of life will embark on a similar voyage, a solo, nonstop circumnavigation. Not only that,

but they will do so in a way that seems caught in a time warp, since they will carry out their voyage in similar boats to the ones used back in 1968. As the race rules state: if it wasn't available then you can't use it now.

In terms of boat design, the competitors will have to sail aboard vessels that are between 32ft and 36ft in length overall; they must have a full-length keel with the rudder attached to the trailing edge; and the hulls must be made out of fiberglass. No electronics allowed. In other words, no GPS, no satphone, no autopilot, no fancy instruments and definitely no iPad loaded with books and the latest blockbuster movies. Books are allowed: the old print and paper variety. Freeze-dried food is allowed, but in an oddly ironic way, since you may take as much of the stuff as you like, but you are not allowed a watermaker. There will, therefore, be some hard number crunching to be done to decide if taking the water to rehydrate your dinner weighs less than food in cans.

And that's only the first of the many tough decision competitors will have to make, since there will also be no weather information piped to them via satellite or even by fax. Instead, they will have to use a barometer and watch as the glass rises or falls to predict what the wind will be.

As you may have noticed, I love the idea of this race. But at the same



time, I can't help wondering if it isn't going to be even harder for these competitors than it was for the sailors doing it 50 years ago. The simple reason for this is that these modern-day sailors know better, and that's going to make it a more difficult challenge, both mentally and emotionally.

They know, for example, about GPS and satellite weather. They also know about autopilots that can steer a boat far better than most people, even as they will have to continually tweak and adjust their wind vanes to stay on the best course they can.

When Robin Knox-Johnston pulled the sun down to the horizon with his sextant, he was likely amazed and probably content that a sextant was a pretty cool instrument for navigation, because he couldn't foresee a day where a phone could also be used to not only navigate but watch movies. These modern-day adventurers, however, know all this, and I fear hanging off the back of their boats trying to find a glimmer of sun to navigate by is going to get pretty old pretty quickly.

Organizers of the Golden Globe 2018 had originally hoped to start and finish off Falmouth, England, the same as the original race. However, there was little interest on the part of local authorities to fund or help organize the event, so the decision was made to move it to France.

One event that will take place in Falmouth is a parade of sail. After that the skippers will embark on a "friendly" race to the start at Les Sables-d'Olonne. Joining them will be Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, sailing aboard *Suhaili*, the same yacht on which he became the first person in history to solo circumnavigate without once setting foot on land.

It will be mid-summer when the race starts, planned that way so that most of the boats will sail the southern waters in the antipodean spring and summer. Once leaving Les Sables-d'Olonne, the fleet will sail south toward the equator and then down the length of the South Atlantic, under Africa and Australia before a mandatory stop in Tasmania.

The latter serves to commemorate the time Sir Robin pulled into Storm Bay, a small inlet on the approach to Hobart in the course of his own voy-

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RACING UNDER SAIL



Full keels and healthy bow overhangs are the order of the day for this solo race

age. While there he exchanged film and letters and then continued racing. In the same spirit, the competitors in the 2018 race will make the same stop to hand over video footage and, presumably, any letters and film they may have.

While there they will also have to wait a minimum of 90 minutes, during which time race officials will check to see that their safety pack has not been opened. Competitors are all required to carry this bit of kit, which includes a portable GPS that may be used in an emergency. However, if the seal to said pack is found to be broken, the competitor will face a penalty. After its brief Hobart stopover, the fleet will sail a long Southern Ocean leg to Cape Horn before turning its bows north toward France and the finish.

The interest surrounding the Golden Globe has been steadily increasing due in part to the newly released movie, *The Mercy*. The film is about Donald Crowhurst, one of the other competitors who sailed in the original race in 1968. Crowhurst realized not long after he set off that his boat was unseaworthy and likely would not make it around the world intact. He therefore decided to fake his voyage by sending false position reports at the same time he kept two logbooks: one of his actual journey, one of his fictitious "circumnav." After months of

being alone at sea engulfed in a stressful lie, Crowhurst slowly began slipping into dementia. His logbook entries are those of a man rapidly losing touch with reality before finally ending it all by stepping off the back of his boat believing he could literally walk on water. His catamaran, *Teignmouth Electron*, was later found, and the two logbooks and fake voyage revealed.

When the Golden Globe 2018 was first announced two years ago, a waiting list quickly formed, as the total number of competitors has been capped at 30. Since then, as with many big sailing events, there has been some attrition. However, the remaining 19 sailors represent one of the most diverse groups ever assembled for a circumnavigation, with sailors from 13 different countries taking part: including two, Istvan Kopar and Palestinian-born Nabil Amra, from the United States.

All the competitors seem to be doing the race for similar reasons: a love of adventure and a longing for simpler times. And you can be sure that they will all find more than enough of both. There is no time limit, but the rules are strict: the voyage is to be done without stopping or outside assistance any kind, two ingredients that mark the very essence of a true sailing adventure. For the latest, visit goldenglobrace.com. **S**

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RACING UNDER SAIL

Eight Bells: John Fisher

Another sailor is lost in the Volvo Ocean Race

By Adam Cort

"This is the worst situation you can imagine happening to your team," said Sun Hung Kai/Scallywag team manager Tim Newton late last March, and he wasn't exaggerating. Mere hours earlier, he'd been informed by skipper David Witt



Sailor John Fisher

that crewman John Fisher of Southampton, England, had been lost overboard about 1,400 miles west of Cape Horn as the boat was battling through the Southern Ocean as part of Leg 7 of the Volvo Ocean Race.

According to reports, the sun was just coming up following a stormy night. Apparently, Fisher had temporarily unclipped his harness to help tidy up the rigging forward, when the boat unexpectedly gybed and the mainsheet swept him overboard.

The crew immediately stopped racing and did its best to motor back to where Fisher was lost. Unfortunately, they were never able to find any sign of either the two rescue buoys they'd deployed or Fisher, and with the conditions rapidly deteriorating, they had no choice but to continue on to Chile. It is believed Fisher was also knocked unconscious when he was swept overboard.


Afterward, Newton said that his team would do everything it could to ensure any lessons that can be learned from what happened to John are incorporated by the rest of the fleet going forward, adding: "That would be a tremendous legacy for John."

However, while it's important that everything that can be done is done to ensure the safety of the sailors in the VOR—and with all due respect to Newton—John Fisher's "legacy" hardly needs any further burnishing.

For the rest of us, the extreme nature of the VOR is all part of the fun. However, for the competitors, it's also deadly serious, and they know full well what they're getting themselves into before they cast off. Fisher is not the first competitor to have lost his life in the course of a VOR or its predecessor, the Whitbread. In fact, he is the sixth.

Which is not to say the Volvo Ocean Race is some kind of death cult. Just the opposite. With its challenges, its teamwork, its physical hardships and, yes, even its danger, it's a celebration of life at its very best—not just for those taking part, but also for those of us privileged enough to look on and watch what these sailors are up to with nothing less than awe. There's no need to somehow justify Fisher's end, no matter how tragic. His own actions speak louder than words.

Bottom line: while anything "positive" that can be gained from Fisher's passing should be applauded, it's not really necessary. At the end of the day, he was a brave sailor and by all accounts a fine shipmate, doing what he loved best and competing at the absolutely highest levels of the game: a game that is among the noblest endeavors ever devised by man. Not to minimize the sadness of his loss or in any way trivialize the pain being experienced by his friends and family, but what better legacy could anyone hope for than that?

For more the latest on the VOR, which concludes this month in the Netherlands, visit sailmagazine.com/racing/volvo-ocean-race. 

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Gear

BY LYDIA MULLAN

STAYING DRY

Get the right gear for the kind of sailing you do

Just because you're not planning on braving the Southern Ocean this summer doesn't mean that you won't have some dicey days out on the water. If you haven't got the right gear, a little rain or humidity can make things miserable. As with all safety equipment, "it's always better to have protection you don't need than need it and not have it," cautions gear expert and former Olympic and America's Cup sailor Jerry Richards. On the other hand, if you over do things, you'll be sweating it out in bulky, heavy (not to mention expensive) gear that you don't need. Here's what you should know to select summer gear that's just right.

Light jackets, like these models from (clockwise from top) Helly Hansen, North Sails and Gill, would all work well sailing inshore

HELLY HA



For more info on the latest sailing equipment go to sailbuyersguide.com



Note the shoulder coverage on the salopette from North Sails (right) versus these Gill trousers (left)



A zippered jacket, like this one from Musto, allows you to open up for better ventilation



SMOCKS AND JACKETS

When it comes to tops, you'll have to choose between a smock and a jacket. Jackets are more popular and usually more comfortable, but if you do a lot of racing, you might consider a smock. Because smocks don't have a full zipper, they can be more effective at keeping water out, a good option for anyone expecting to get the occasional drenching while doing bow work or dinghy sailing. They're also cut shorter for increased mobility. The longer length of a jacket, however, may keep you warmer. That said, on a warm day a smock may be too hot, whereas a jacket can be unzipped to cool down. With this in mind Richards recommends that, "On a nice day if it's not going to rain, the jacket you would want might be a crew jacket. The collar wouldn't be so tall, it might not even have fleece inside, but that's a jacket you can wear over or under your bibs." The versatility of a crew jacket makes it a good lightweight option for casual sailing. If you're looking for a little more protection, remember this rule of thumb: the higher the collar, the more the jacket is aimed at offshore sailing (and usually the higher the price). Inshore jackets will also be shorter than their heavy-duty offshore counterparts.

SALOPETTES AND TROUSERS

Richards says many new sailors don't realize they'll probably spend far more time in their bibs than they do their jacket. In fact, he recommends always starting the day in pants; it's much easier to take them off if it gets too warm than it is to dry off if you're chilly and sitting on a wet deck without them.

You have two main options when choosing pants: salopettes and trousers. Salopettes are higher cut around the neckline, which will help keep your upper body dry, especially when you're wearing them without a jacket, as Richards predicts you often will. Because they provide full coverage, however, you may find yourself overheating. If that sounds like a deal breaker, Richards says, "You can wear chest-high trousers and you probably won't be so hot because the waterproof breathable fabric isn't all the way up over your shoulders like it would be on the salopette." Note that salopettes are designed with wider shoulder straps which won't slip down, adding to the coverage. They usually stretch but cannot be adjusted. If you're worried about fit, it's another reason to turn to high-waisted trousers as these typically have

Gear

Fluorescent yellow hoods, like the one on this Salt Light jacket from Helly Hansen, are easier to spot if you go overboard



The neck, waist and wrist seals on this Henri Lloyd smock will keep out even the worst spray

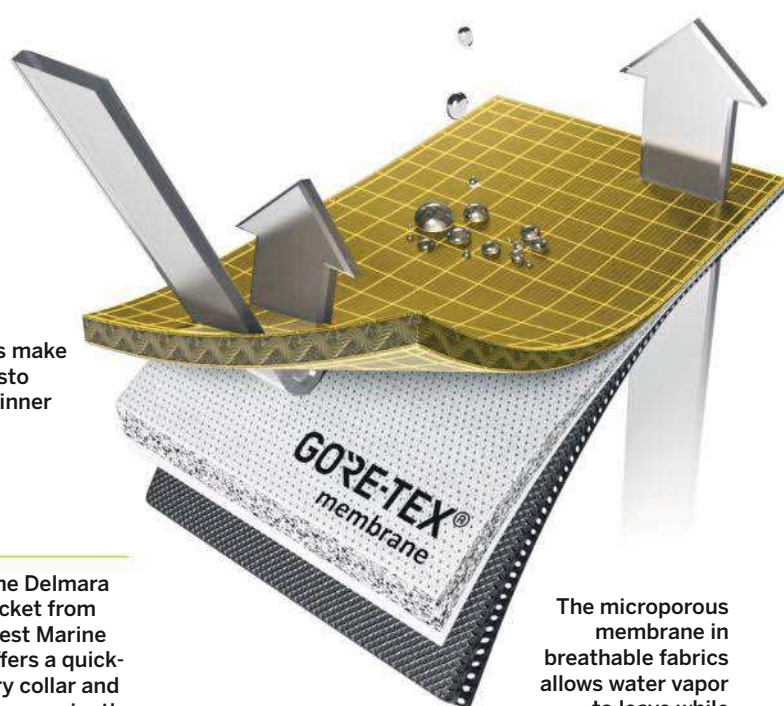
adjustable Velcro straps. Unfortunately, female sailors, beware—you probably won't have much of a choice, as most manufacturers don't make salopettes designed for women. Helly Hansen is an exception, so you might want to try looking there.



The Delmara jacket from West Marine offers a quick-dry collar and a conveniently stored hood



Velcro closures make this Musto cuff a winner



The microporous membrane in breathable fabrics allows water vapor to leave while keeping water droplets out

kind of sailing that actually requires the extra protection. Most true inshore gear will have two-layer construction, since you only need a three-layer laminate if you're doing some serious racing or going offshore.

You also might run into coated hydrophilic fabrics, which employ a different method for waterproofing than the microporous membranes. Instead of having pores, the coating itself chemically facilitates the transfer of water molecules from warm moist areas to cooler, drier areas. These are less breathable than microporous fabric but still much better than a normal raincoat.

OTHER FEATURES

Once you've decided what style and construction best suits your needs, there are a few final things to consider before investing in your gear. **How do you pick a size?** Richards recommends going for a bigger size when in doubt. It's hard to anticipate just how many layers you'll want underneath, and there are few things worse than the straightjacket sensation of overstuffed gear.

Do you need pockets for your tools? I sail with a woman who likes to have a spare sail tie handy at all times. Whether it's a radio, sunblock or snacks, think about what you'll want within arm's reach and make sure your gear has a place for it.

Does it have taped seams? These days most gear on the market has taped seams, but it's worth confirming before you buy. Leaky or ripped seams undermine the whole point of a waterproof garment and will make for some miserable sailing.

Do you need reinforced patches over high abrasion areas? If you're just trying to stay dry when a sudden shower blows up during a lazy afternoon on the water, probably not. If you're planning on spending a lot of time grinding, then yes, you'll definitely want those patches.

Do you want a reflective, fluorescent-yellow hood, a two-way zip or adjustable cuffs? Gear that's properly cared for can last for five or more years, so consider all your options and choose carefully. If you do your research now, it will pay dividends later when you're warm and safe out on the water. **S**

RESOURCES

Gill gillmarine.com

Helly Hansen hellyhansen.com

Henri Lloyd henrilloyd.com

Musto musto.com

North Sails webstore.northsails.com

West Marine westmarine.com

CONSTRUCTION

Once you've decided what style gear suits your needs, you need to look at construction. You're probably familiar with names like GORE-TEX but how do these waterproof, breathable materials actually work? The key is a thin membrane with microscopic pores in it. They're so small that liquid water droplets cannot fit through, but water vapor can. Because this layer is so thin, it has to be protected with other fabrics. Richards says that most damage to foul weather gear is actually due to chafe from the inside, not wear and tear on the outside, which leads you to your next decision: two- or three-layer laminate? Two-layer constructions will include an outer layer, the microporous membrane and a mesh lining on the inside to protect the membrane from abrasion. Three-layer fabrics consist of an outer layer, the membrane and a solid inner layer, or scrim, which are all glued together so that it feels like a single layer. Three-layer fabrics tend to be more expensive but also more durable. Consider whether you're doing the



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Home Grown

New signs of activity in American boatbuilding

By Peter Nielsen

Heaven knows there hasn't been much in the way of good news from American boatbuilders for quite some time, so a burst of new-model announcements in the spring was welcome indeed.

If you've been wondering what **Hinckley** has been up to, check out the rendering on this page. The new **Sou'Wester 53** is a welcome return to big cruising yachts for the iconic brand, and it's an interesting combination of traditional and up-to-the-minute styling and design.

Naval architects Tripp Design have drawn a bluff-bowed hull with its beam carried well aft to a generous stern overhang. Construction is a vacuum-infused epoxy resin/carbon fiber/Kevlar/Corecell foam composite, akin to that used in high-end raceboats. A powerful triple-spreader carbon fiber rig should do justice to the fast-looking hull.

The open transom and large pilothouse sound like an incongruous pairing, but the effect works well. The intention was to maximize both interior and exterior socializing spaces, and to that end the large cockpit and deck saloon are separated by sliding doors. There are panoramic views from the dinette, a raised galley and an interior helm station. Descend a short companionway and you find two large staterooms; there's a third, single cabin aft and to port. Due to be launched next year, the Sou'Wester 53 is sure to create a stir.

Meanwhile, since Hinckley purchased **Morris Yachts** a couple of years back, things have been quiet, but no more. The line of gorgeous



The Sou'Wester 53 is the first new cruising boat from Hinckley in many years

S&S-designed M-series daysailers is now being built in epoxy resin and carbon fiber, shaving weight and adding strength to these modern classics. Expect a performance boost from that and from the revised rudder, rig and deck layouts.

Down Florida way, **Catalina Yachts** has been producing a steady stream of its 5-series cruisers, with the 425 in particular having hit a sweet spot in the market. Catalina VP and chief designer Gerry Douglas had for some time been pondering a larger boat, and when he produced the preliminary drawings of the **Catalina 525** at last year's Annapolis show the response was gratifying. Enough commitments were signed for work to commence.

When I visited Catalina's Seminole, Florida, plant in March, hand-fairing was just about complete on the plug, which looked massive. The 525 is essentially a larger version of the 425—a capable all-round cruising yacht—with an aft cockpit and mast-head rig, but with enough interior volume to have Douglas playing with lots of options for final deck plan and accommodation layouts. The boat

CONTACTS

Alerion Yachts
alerionyachts.com

Catalina Yachts
catalinayachts.com

Hinckley Yachts
hinckleyyachts.com

Island Packet Yachts
ipy.com



Gerry Douglas shows off the plug for the new Catalina 525



Island Packet owners gathered for a factory open house in March



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JUST LAUNCHED

should make its debut at next year's Miami show.

Just around the corner in Largo, Florida, is another long-established American builder, **Island Packet Yachts**. The lengthy recession and drop in new-boat sales took its toll on the company; to cut a long story short, owner Bob Johnson sold the company two years ago to Hake Marine, builders of Seaward Yachts, which is now in the hands of longtime San Diego IP dealers Darrell and Leslie Allen.

Taking over a struggling boatbuilding company is always a brave move, but it looks like it's paying off for the Allens. They are planning to develop new boats, but for the time being are tweaking some of the established models in the range, adding new features including—gasp—the option of different colors than the traditional mustard-hued gelcoat. Along with the upgrades come new model names. The range starts at 35ft and goes up to 52ft. The SP Cruiser (now the North Star 44) and Blue Jacket 40 remain in the range, and the company is also building the Seaward 36 and 32 variable draft cruisers.

Going by the reactions of a group of IP dealers, owners and prospective customers I met during an open house day at the factory in March the moves are popular, and at time of writing the Allens had sold 15 boats. As longtime Island Packet dealers they have a great feel for their market, and the future looks good for Island Packet, which turns 40 next year.

Speaking of long-established builders, Rhode Island-based **Alerion Yachts**, founded by Garry Hoyt in 1991, has also risen from the ashes of a bankruptcy. The company and its assets were purchased late last year by



Peter Johnstone, late of Gunboat and a member of the J/Boats family, and the line of pretty modern daysailers and weekenders will be produced in a new factory in North Kingstown.

The new team's first project was to modernize the Alerion Express 28 to mark the 30th anniversary of this classic design, touted by many as the ideal daysailer. There's now more room belowdecks and the build process has been refined to decrease weight.

Aside from the 28, the lineup consists of the Alerion Express 20, 30, 33 and 41. Johnstone says the focus will be on building boats of the highest quality rather than aiming at a broader market. **S**

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Hanse 388

A smart, elegantly simple design from Germany

By Sam Fortescue

Hanse Yachts is currently updating its entire line, and the latest model to get the treatment is its mid-range 388, previously known as the 385. As you might guess, the hull of the new boat is very similar to its predecessor, being built in the same mold. However, the improvements that have gone into creating the 388 are more than just skin-deep.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Although Hanse is based in Germany, its hulls are built at a dedicated factory just over the border in Poland. Layup there is much as it has always been—good old-fashioned manual work with a roller in one hand and a laminate plan in the other. That said, Hanse's extremely efficient production line system has got this process down to a fine art, with boats typically needing around 10 days in the mold before they are shipped to Germany, where the rest of the boat is assembled.

The hull of the 388 has a first layer of more expensive vinylester resin, in the interest of blister resistance, as well as a balsa foam core for supe-

rior stiffness and lighter weight. Around the chainplates, there is some carbon reinforcing, and an integral bulwark/toerail both stiffens the hull-to-deck joint and provides additional safety when going forward.

Although the boat's plumb bow and stern remain the same—the better to scrape every available inch of waterline length out of the design—naval architects Judel/Vrolijk have also made a few tweaks. For example, they have replaced the bulky helm seats that previously closed off most of the transom with folding thwarts that can be clipped up vertically whenever you want full access to the water. The drop-down transom also now includes a built-in telescopic bathing ladder in gleaming stainless.

Up at the bow, the stem fitting includes a pair of twin rollers, as well as a useful teak step (handy for Scandinavian-style mooring) and an integral tack point for a Code 0 reaching sail. Keeping the boat upright is a hefty 5,247lb L-shaped keel, which is 400lb heavier and 3in deeper than the previous model to help counterbalance the 13in taller mast. There is also a shoal-draft option.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The sheer acreage of glass in this new boat is immediately noticeable. For what is—let's face it—a smaller design by today's lavish standards, this boat has packed in six hull lights, three flush hatches and, in a major update to the 385, glass panels on either side of the companionway. It all gives the boat a very modern look and lets the light simply flood in below, a key part of the boat's appeal.

Beyond that, the configuration has changed little since the 385. The

main choices below are whether you want two or three cabins, and a short or extended L-shaped galley to starboard. You sacrifice a hanging locker with the bigger galley, but both versions offer a good-sized refrigerator, with top and side access, plus a two-burner cooktop and oven. Whether you choose two or three cabins, there is a single head with a shower to port just aft of the chart table.

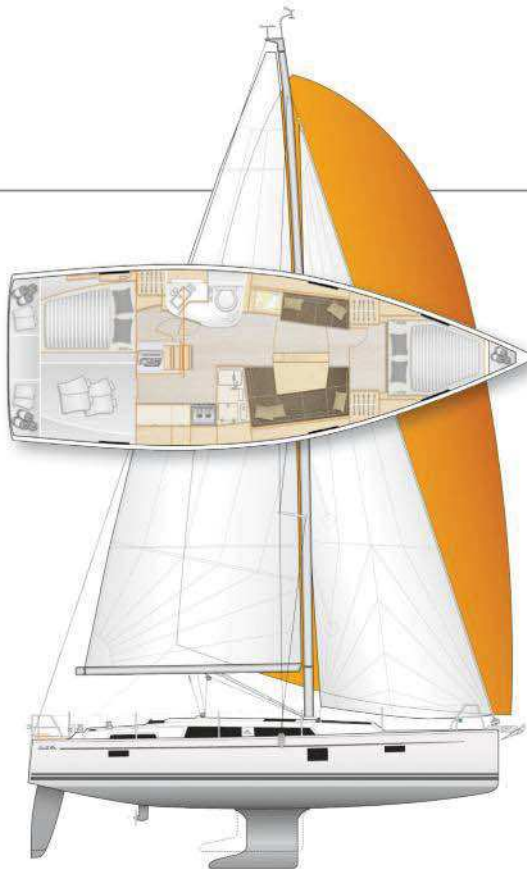
The main cabin is in the forepeak, where Hanse has brought the head of the V-berth slightly out from the hull, to give a hint of it being an island with some side access. All berths are good and deep, with the saloon settees offering two additional sea berths if necessary.

Finish quality throughout is good, and Hanse recently expanded the number of options available for internal joinery and upholstery, so that there are now four wood and three carpet choices for the sole, five woods for cabinets, 22 fabrics and nine leathers—surely enough to keep even the most finicky owner happy.

The design team has also been busy with the interior lighting and the installation of digital switching throughout the boat, which allows you to control things via a proprietary touchscreen. Select from different moods in each cabin, or reprogram the system to suit your own particular preferences. Hanse also specs some good-quality red/white lighting to help preserve night vision while on passage.

UNDER SAIL

Like all Hanses, ease of handling is part of this boat's DNA. With that in mind, all sail controls come back to the helm, with a German mainsheet system providing stress-free trimming on either tack. For once on a production boat, the helmsman can also get a good purchase on the twin Lewmar 40 primaries from behind the wheel for trimming the headsail.



Hanse 388

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA 37ft 5in LWL 34ft 1in BEAM 12ft 10in
 DRAFT 6ft 9in (std); 5ft 4in (shoal)
 DISPLACEMENT 18,232lb
 BALLAST 5,247lb
 SAIL AREA 775ft²
 AIR DRAFT 57ft 9in
 FUEL/WATER (GAL) 42/77
 ENGINE Yanmar 27hp
 BALLAST RATIO 29 SA/D RATIO 18 D/L RATIO 204

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DESIGNER Judel/Vrolijk & Co.

BUILDER Hanse Yachts, Greifswald, Germany,
hanseyachts.com

U.S. DISTRIBUTOR Hanse North & South
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PRICE \$225,000 (sailaway)

Our test boat came equipped with the “performance pack,” which includes secondary winches on the cockpit coaming, positioned with a clear run aft to the spinnaker blocks on the quarter. You won't find any spare halyards or barber-haulers on this boat, since the rig, with its self-tacking jib, is designed to be a minimal one. However, the boat works well in its simplicity, and “Fast Cruising” laminated sails are available for those in search of a speed edge.

With a top breeze of around 6 knots, the boat fell into an easy slot around 40-45 degrees off the true wind, keeping up an effortless 4 to 5 knots. The polars suggest she can cruise upwind at 6.5 knots, and broad reach at close to 8.5 knots, but we weren't able to verify this. That said, when I sailed her larger sister, the 418, she managed an easy 6.5 knots in similar reaching conditions under gennaker. Since the hulls between these two boats are almost identical, my expectation is that the 388 would prove a decent passagemaker, and very much toward the faster end of the cruising spectrum.

UNDER POWER

The 27hp Yanmar engine is ample for everyday requirements. There is also an option for a larger 38hp engine, which would make a decent investment if you are planning to cruise intensively. In our chop-free waters, the boat managed an easy 6 knots under power, with some throttle to spare. The saildrive, combined with a nice deep single rudder, means that she responds quickly ahead and astern, without discernible prop-walk. That same nice big rudder makes backing into a tight berth about as easy as parallel parking. Access to the engine is good.

CONCLUSION

Hanses are built with limited options using a very efficient industrial technique. The finish below is good, with some really stylish design touches and great functionality, borne of years of solid seamanship. The 388's hull is slippery enough for good passage times, while handling is fantastically simple, with sails easy to launch, trim and recover. She would make a great boat for family cruising. **S**





Southerly 540

A swing-keel cruiser that offers both bluewater performance and thin-water freedom

By Zuzana Prochazka

For anyone wrestling with the tradeoffs between deep-draft sailing performance and shallow gunkholing cruising capability, the Southerly 540, with its lifting keel, may be the perfect solution.

The Ed Dubois-designed 54-footer is now part of the Discovery Yachts Group Line and is built in Southampton, England. We went aboard to see just how this big boat can be managed shorthanded and venture virtually anywhere in the world.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

The hand-laminated, vacuum-bagged vinylester/foam core sandwich hull (solid glass below the waterline) has a fine entry, which allows the boat to put her shoulder into big head seas and carve a path straight through. Despite her exceptional volume, the 540 has a low profile with a nearly flush deck and a rounded coachroof. The fixed angled windows swoop back like a shaped eyebrow wrapping around the raised saloon inside.

The keel draft varies from 3ft 5in to 11ft, which affords a lot of flexibility when sneaking into the shallow anchorages of the Caribbean or

resting alongside the dock back home. Below the waterline, the Southerly has twin canted rudders and a centerline skeg that protects the propeller and shaft. The 7,000lb iron keel retracts completely into a keel box. Both the keel, which is raised and lowered via a hydraulic ram, and the box fit into a long cast-iron grounding plate that is capable of supporting the boat's entire weight.

The tall (nearly 80ft) keel-stepped Solent rig has triple aft-swept spreaders. It carries a self-tending jib and a 145 percent genoa, both on electric Furler furlers. Between the mainsail and jib, the sail area is 1,444ft², but switch headsails to the large genoa, and you'll add another 500ft² for fast, off-the-wind passagemaking. A gennaker can also be flown from the bowsprit. In-boom furling is standard, while in-mast furling or slab reefing are available as an option.

ON DECK

Topsides, Dubois did not compromise on the essentials for safe offshore sailing. Bluewater details include clean side decks with molded-in handgrips along the coachroof and nice high lifelines: the latter a necessity when cruising offshore that is all too often overlooked. The cockpit includes a working section with twin, elevated wheels behind two enormous consoles holding Raymarine instruments. A single Lewmar 65 winch is located along the centerline between the two helms for managing the mainsheet. There is no traveler.

Lewmar electric winches and arrays of Spinlock rope clutches manage the lines and are within easy reach of the driver and mostly away from the guests. The social part of cockpit is a step down and anchored deep in the center of the boat where its occupants will be safe, comfortable

and out of the way of ropes and elbows during maneuvers. The entire cockpit is designed so that the sole can be removed in the event of a repower, thereby allowing the engine to be lifted out with relative ease.

The aft swim platform is not as large as on other vessels of this size, but there's still plenty of room to board easily from a dinghy or even get scuba gear ready. Two sets of steps lead from the deck down to the platform. They are quite steep, so it's best to hold on while in transit.

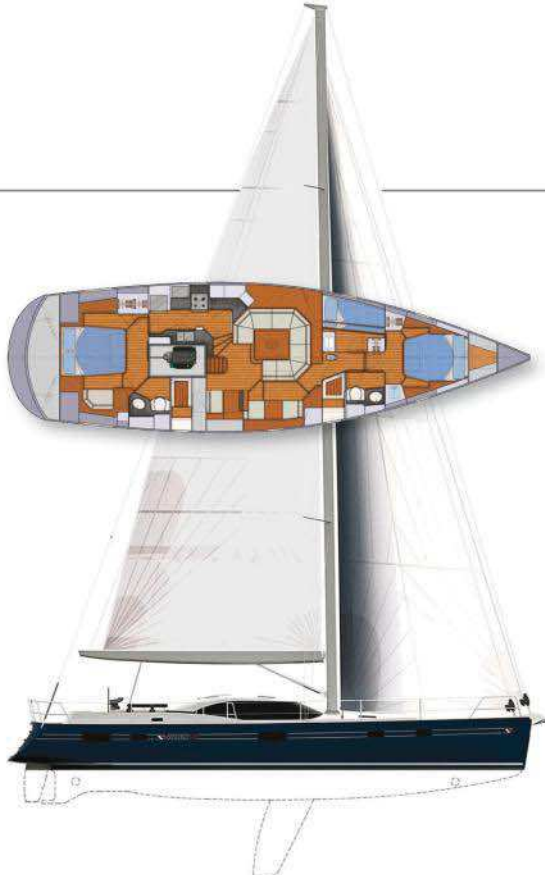
ACCOMMODATIONS

Belowdecks, the Dubois team drew on its megayacht expertise to create some truly luxurious accommodations beginning with a raised salon amidships. Not only does the raised seating there make room for the keel box below, it also provides space for a party of eight that can easily see out the large ports when seated at dinner. The standard layout includes three cabins with a VIP cabin forward, a master suite aft and an over/under cabin to port.

The galley, with a three-burner Force 10 stove/oven and refrigerator drawers, forms a portside walkthrough to the master stateroom aft that is notable for the amount and quality of the furnishings. Owners won't need to leave much behind when packing for an extended cruise. The whole suite looks more like a well-furnished hotel room than a boat cabin.

A dedicated nav station is to starboard, on the same level as the saloon seating for better visibility forward. Autopilot control here will let you steer in comfort from this same spot in inclement weather. House batteries (the 540 is a 24-volt vessel) and an Onan genset are tucked under the sole.

As expected aboard a UK-built boat, the fit and finish are exceptional throughout, and light pours in via the large fixed cabintop ports and hull ports, the latter configured as both horizontal and vertical slits, the same as aboard many superyachts. There will be no hardship in staying below, especially at the built-in starboard side chess table flanked by a pair of



Southerly 540

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA 55ft 2in LWL 49ft
BEAM 15ft 8in
DRAFT 3ft 5in (board up); 11ft (board down)
DISPLACEMENT 54,806lb
BALLAST 18,400lb (grounding plate and keel)
SAIL AREA 1,444ft² (main and self-tacking jib)
AIR DRAFT 79ft 8in
FUEL/WATER (GAL) 213/176
ENGINE Volvo Penta 150hp
BALLAST RATIO 34
SA/D RATIO 16
D/L RATIO 208

What do these ratios mean? Visit sailmagazine.com/ratios

DESIGNER Ed Dubois
BUILDER Southerly Yachts, Southampton, England, southerlyyachts.com
PRICE \$1.35 million (sailaway)

cozy seats—a welcome getaway for anyone wanting a bit of a break from the social fray topsides.

UNDER SAIL

The Southerly 540 is what you'd call a "serious" boat. No strangers to blue-water passages, over 1,100 Southerlies have crossed oceans and participated in any number of round-the-world rallies over the years, often managed by shorthanded crews or even couples. You can imagine my dismay, then, as we set out for our sea trial on Chesapeake Bay with the wind gusting to all of 6 knots. On the plus side, we did manage to scoot along at a respectable 3.5 knots at a 60 degree apparent wind angle when we (briefly) felt 7 knots of true breeze over the deck.

During our sail, the keel was about 1/3 down, just enough to keep us tracking and minimizing leeway. Beating into a snotty seaway with the keel fully lowered, the 540 should be able to point quite high (up to 30 degrees) without making too much leeway.

UNDER POWER

Our test boat was powered by a 150hp Volvo Penta diesel with a straight shaft and a four-bladed folding propeller. A 160hp Yanmar is also available. At wide-open throttle and 3,100 rpm, we motored at 9.5 knots. At a more moderate and fuel-efficient 1,900 rpm, our speed was 7.5 knots. With 213 gal of fuel and 176 gal of freshwater, the Southerly 540 will be able to not only reach far-flung destinations, but remain self-sufficient for extended periods.

CONCLUSION

The variable-draft keel was launched on the first Southerly 33 in 1978 and devotees of the concept have been many. The consensus seems to be that "Once you've gone variable, you never go back." A fixed keel is offered as an option, but who would negate the most attractive feature of this design? Add in standard features like twin rudders, powered winches, a self-tacking jib and easy handling by a couple, and you've got a globetrotter that will be at home anywhere. **S**



The raised saloon provides a magnificent view of the outside world

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CRUISING



A pair of traditional fishing boats navigate the shallow waters of the Morbihan

THE HIDDEN TREASURE OF FRANCE'S GOLFE DU MORBIHAN

BY NIGEL CALDER



Our Malo 48, *Nada*, is anchored for the night in placid water on the edge of a muddy drying shoal between two rocky islets in the Golfe du Morbihan, on the west coast of France. The tidal range here in southern Brittany is around 15ft. The gulf is large—more than 40 square miles in area—with a narrow entrance from the Bay of Quiberon, which itself leads to the Bay of Biscay. At peak flood and ebb, the tidal stream pours in and out of the gulf at 8 knots. Less than a hundred yards behind us, the ebb tide is throwing up 3ft standing waves. Boats exiting the bay are rushing by at speeds they never dreamt of, while an incoming passenger ferry, forced by its schedule to fight the tide, is bouncing up and down, creeping into the current. We are tightly positioned between swinging out into the maelstrom or going aground on the shoal at low tide.

We have been driven to seek anchorage in this somewhat marginal spot by the unbelievable number of boats and mooring buoys in the gulf, with almost every decent anchorage crammed full. I knew the French are seriously into their sailing, but had never imagined it on this scale! I am, in any case, under firm instructions from my wife, Terrie, to get us close to the island of Gavrinis to starboard, on which there is reported to be a Neolithic passage tomb dating from around 3,500 BC and containing, in the words of Wikipedia, “one of the major treasures of European megalithic art.”

Terrie is seriously into ancient rocks of any description. Southern Brittany is dotted with amazing patterns of standing stones and other artifacts. These ancient monuments are individually smaller than Stonehenge in England, but on a vastly grander scale, scattered over miles of countryside. The epicenter is at Carnac, on the mainland to the northwest of us, where the pre-Celtic people of Brittany erected more than 3,000 standing stones.

This is our third tricky anchorage driven by prehistory. A couple of days earlier we had crept into an equally precarious anchoring spot in Quiberon Bay, to the west of the Morbihan, seeking shelter from the wind and swells in the lee of a rocky headland beyond which the bay was filled with moorings. We succeeded in tucking ourselves in with barely sufficient scope and swinging room at a spot charted at 2ft depth. Luckily, it was neap tides, which meant, according to my calculations, at low tide there would be almost 6ft of water, which is our draft, above the 2ft of chart datum, so we would still be afloat. We waited until low tide



Boats that can dry out are understandably popular in Brittany

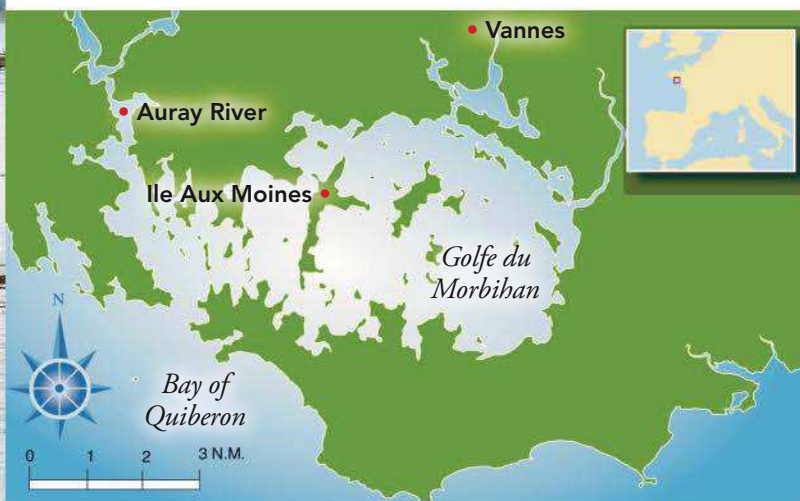


Every bay and anchorage is packed with boats

to make sure and then ran the dinghy ashore onto a wide sand beach and carried it up above the high tide line. Terrie took us on a hike toward Carnac in a blistering, energy-sapping heatwave, the result of a high pressure system that was parked over Western Europe, bringing with it light winds and record high temperatures.

We soon became lost in narrow, twisting lanes and ended up stumbling upon the tiny village of St. Columban, with a gorgeous cluster of ancient buildings around a lovely Gothic chapel, the walls painted with murals of galleons from the 15th century. The following day, while I did

PHOTOS BY NIGEL CALDER (LEFT);
BY SHUTTERSTOCK (ABOVE)



The tides run strong here, at up to 7 knots and more (inset)



rafts for raising oysters. There was no place to anchor without obstructing the channel. Luckily, we were using Navionics charts, which to date had proved to be remarkably accurate and detailed. The chart showed a narrow slot of water between a field of rafts and the shoreline shoals, terminating in an area surrounded by shoal water that, given the proximity to neaps, likely would have just enough depth and swinging room for us to anchor.

We crept up the edge of the rafts on the rising tide, not particularly concerned about running aground because there was no wave action and the tide would lift us off. In no time, we found sufficient space to anchor and dropped the hook. However, things were tight, and I was concerned about swinging into the oyster rafts when the tide turned, so I was reluctant to leave the boat. Terrie and our shipmate, Jake, however, headed ashore to explore. I was not comfortable overnighing here, so when they returned we picked our way back out

of the anchorage and headed farther into the gulf.

The Golfe du Morbihan is sprinkled with over 60 islands, between which are numerous shoals and rocky passages, with often narrow channels and strong tidal streams. The streams themselves take some getting used to. It's not as if they all flow in the same direction—inbound on a rising tide and outbound on a falling tide. Instead, there are substantial rotating currents and eddies. It is, therefore, quite possible to find tidal streams running in opposite directions at several knots on either side of the same small bay, with no current at all between them. Then there are the various narrow passages between the islands with even stronger, accelerated currents. It is easy to get confused by the myriad islands, with little time to recover your bearings before getting swept into trouble. My strategy, therefore, had been to lay down a track on the chartplotter before going anywhere and stick to it closely.

Using this same strategy we now picked our way between shoals around the top of Ile Longue and through a narrow channel, looking for a place to anchor close to the island of Gavrinis. One edge of the channel is again rimmed with moorings; the other marks the edge of a drying shoal. There is no room for us. Fortunately, at the southern end of Ile Longue, between it and Gavrinis, just to the north of a buoy marking the edge of the main

odd chores around the boat, Terrie returned to St. Columban to paint the chapel, although she did not get to see her alignment of standing stones.

The next morning we timed our entry into the Golfe du Morbihan to arrive shortly after low tide, riding the already impressive stream into the bay and up into the mouth of the Auray River, which empties into the northwest corner of the gulf. The target: another field of megalithic standing stones and *dolmen* (prehistoric tombs) near Locmariaquer. The problem: extensive shallows stretching out from the shoreline with a relatively narrow deep-water channel rimmed with moored boats and



channel into the Golfe du Morbihan, there looks to be adequate room for us to tuck into, between a spit extending from the shoal and Gavrinis. We circle cautiously, exploring and defining the edge of the shoal water, pull off the shoal just enough to not swing aground at low tide and set the hook. We take the dinghy ashore to explore the Neolithic ruins, but are rebuffed by a guardian who tells us we have to go back to the mainland and come over tomorrow on one of the hourly tour boats.

We may have been defeated on the hunt for prehistoric ruins, but Terrie is by no means out of ideas. At the head of the Golfe du Morbihan, past a tide gate and swing bridge up a mile-long canal, reportedly passable with our 6ft draft an hour or two either side of high tide, lies the medieval walled city of Vannes. The following morning we pull up the anchor, rinse off the mud and motor slowly the few yards into the incoming tidal stream, where our boatspeed accelerates from just over 3 knots to better than 10 knots! We have an exhilarating ride into the interior of the gulf, but soon rapidly decelerate and find ourselves fighting a 2 knot countercurrent. A passenger ferry that has followed us in has headed to the opposite side of the bay and is still being swept along by the current. However, between us there is

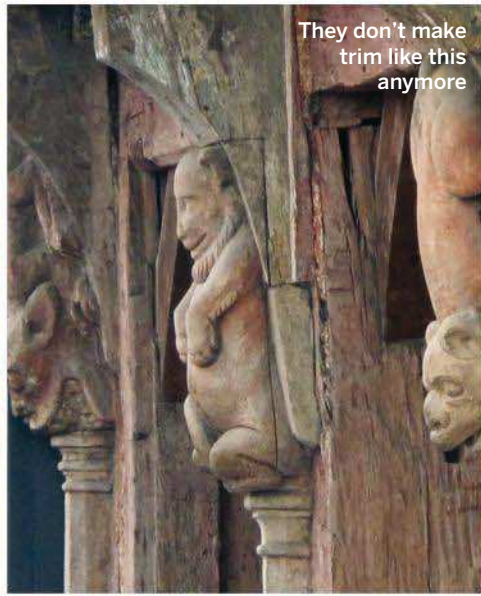
now shoal water that blocks us from joining it. Such is the nature of sailing in the Golfe du Morbihan!

Eventually, the tide reverses direction and accelerates to 5 knots, sluicing us through the slot between the mainland and Ile aux Moines, and sweeping us up the west side of Ile Irus. Here, shoal water extends well off the island while to the north is another large mooring field along the mainland shoreline, with a narrow channel that runs between the moored boats and the shoal. We need to pause for a while to give the tide time to rise in the canal to Vannes. There is also no place we could anchor overnight without either grounding well before low tide or swinging into the channel. However, we are still on a rising tide, so we motor slowly in and drop the hook for a leisurely lunch.

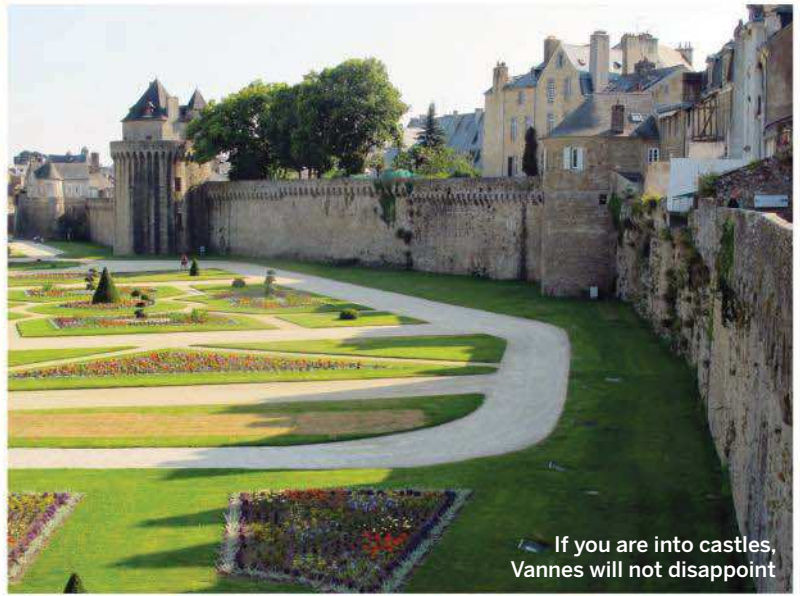
From Ile Irus we work our way around various islets and through the rocky channel at Port Anna, with the inbound tidal current now slowing as we approach high tide, around yet another substantial mooring field and into the canal to Vannes. This canal has a tide gate that traps sufficient water to maintain at least 6ft depths on the docks in Vannes, even at low water when much of the canal below the tide gate is almost dry. There is also a swing bridge close to the tide gate, which opens on demand after half tide on the rising tide,



The beautiful Auray River feeds into the Golfe du Morbihan



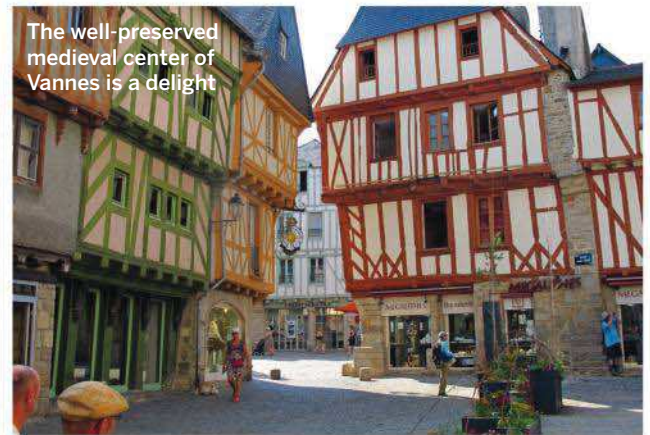
They don't make trim like this anymore



If you are into castles, Vannes will not disappoint



There was a festive mood in Vannes



The well-preserved medieval center of Vannes is a delight

and closes at half tide when it's falling. We have timed our arrival perfectly to make it over the sill for the tide gate and through the bridge. We motor slowly up to the city with some apprehension, as our 48-footer is significantly larger than most of the cruising boats that make their way up here, and we can't help wondering what we'll do if there is no dock space and no room to turn around.

In fact, the docks at Vannes prove to be crowded with no possibility of tying up alongside, so we raft up outside a trawler yacht, which itself is rafted to a restored traditional workboat. On the other side of the canal the boats are also rafted two and three deep, narrowing the channel. I am concerned the harbor master will move us on and can see no other place to go. But in the end no one seems concerned.

What an extraordinary city we find this to be. The massive medieval defensive walls are substantially intact, enclosing narrow winding streets lined with half-timbered houses from the 15th and 16th centuries. At each floor level the houses jut out toward the street until at the third story they are almost touching overhead. Over the centuries the houses have bent and changed shape in wonderful ways. There are entire streets that look as if they are from a Disney set for a Hansel and Gretel movie. Although I grew up in Europe, I had no idea there were

still places like this. Terrie has hit the jackpot!

We spend a couple of days pottering around the city. Terrie paints, while Jake and I just amble. On the second night the city is packed to bursting for a music festival, with bands in every public space and musicians in many of the restaurants. On the third day my brother joins us, and we depart at high tide, riding the stream back out to sea for a quiet passage across the Bay of Biscay to Spain. Vannes is high on the list of places to which we would like to sail again.

The Golfe du Morbihan came as a complete surprise to us. Prior to sailing there, we had never heard of it. Between the entrance from Quiberon Bay and Vannes we covered well under 20 miles (the most direct distance is only about 10 miles), but packed within this short distance we found a wealth of unique experiences on shore and afloat. Calm waters, dozens of islands, major tides, powerful currents, challenging navigation and tricky anchorages are interspersed with world-class prehistoric ruins ashore and a stunning movie-grade medieval walled city. We jammed a season's worth of experiences in any other cruising ground into less than a week. **S**

Nigel Calder and his wife, Terrie, are cruising the Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal this summer



Getting into super secure anchorages like this one in The Basin on Vinalhaven Island takes a little study, but is well worth the effort



A proper rowing dinghy can be a great tool for discovering new places

Still Water & Private Places

Perfecting the art of discovery

Story and photos by David Buckman

There's a longing among coasters to chance upon a perfectly protected eel rut of a wild anchorage, inhabit it in solitude and know the delights of discovery. Though some despair there are no unpublished truths of the sort yet to be divined, they are out there if you know where to look—for there's something of an art to fathoming still waters and private places.

Often, the only reason such treasures still exist is that they throw a challenge or two at you and demand a greater investment of self. It's the price of extraordinary experience, though most of those we've chanced upon have proven surprisingly straightforward to plumb. The little time it takes to know the truth of such matters pays handsomely and yields a richer approach to coasting.

Seeking shelter from weather has driven a few of the discoveries my wife and mate, Leigh, and I have made. One time, bullying seas bared their teeth as our 26ft Folkboat *Leight* put her shoulder to a snotty northeasterly under a Kansas tornado sky scudding low over Maine's East Penobscot Bay. The previous evening's forecast had said nothing of easterly weather, but when

Leigh pulled up the latest report, we learned we were in for a wet, windy and foggy time of it.

The mate, who is not in the least timid about making her views on such things known, broke the silence. "I don't know about you," she said with a hint of resignation in her voice. "But I'd rather be anchored in a quiet cove, drinking wine, reading and nibbling on canapes, thank you very much."

No longer a follower of the Suffering Builds Character school of cruising, I came to immediate sympathy, but the question was, where? With no secure shelter from winds out of that quarter along our trajectory, we huddled over the chart and ultimately elected to head for a teacup of a tide hole called Seal Trap on Isle au Haut. While the cruising guides had nothing to say of it, back in the day we'd spent an hour in the dinghy, charting it with a sounding lead, pencil and sketch pad.

It's only accessible at half tide or better, and it was just shy of that when we brought up under the imposing granite swell of Moore's Head. Engine on, sails fluttering down and the flood under us, we made for a slender ribbon of water in the lee of Trial Point, hugging the spruce-crowned eastern shore. Cliffs rose abruptly a couple of boatlengths to starboard, seas milked

There's a stirring drama to the wild waters of The Basin on Maine's Vinalhaven Island, and in all our years of calling there we've never shared it with another boat

and moshed, and the world closed in.

Depths declined from 20ft to 12ft rather quickly, but then held as we crept past a knuckle of ledge to port. Ten feet, nine, eight; the soundings declined and waters quieted. With a slight nudge of the helm we skirted a low-lying ledge to starboard and gained the breathtaking solitude of its inner pool with 15ft of water under us.

Anchor down, sails furled, the lantern flickering away, our circumstance couldn't have been more civil. Still as a pond, there was a comfort to the closeness of it as darkness fell, rain slanted down and the wind fretted—a particular satisfaction at being privy to the beauty and solitude of this secret place.

While a rowing dinghy is handy for charting quiet waters, we prefer

unreliable, points of land tend to continue underwater, mid-

schannel can be a reasonable place to start, and a soft and sticky landing of a lead line usually indicates mud.

Charts and plotters leave a lot of questions unanswered. A good bit of this business is speculation, and there are plenty of exceptions to the rule. Our experience in the Gulf of Maine has been that where there are tempting soundings in the 6ft to 8ft range, about half the time the actual depths are a bit deeper. The dinghy is kept on a short leash when we sniff out the possibilities, and if one of us is on deck, we signal directions with gestures, not shouting. Local knowledge can be another source of intelligence. It's been our experience you can believe about half the lies you hear at the town dock.

Most of our discoveries have offered perfectly adequate swinging room, but when space is constrained, a chain rode works best. Only occasionally have two anchors been called for. The single-digit soundings we often encounter allow for a generous scope ratio with a moderate length of rode, which limits swinging arc. *Leight's* primary anchor is a 25lb CQR.

There's a stirring drama to the wild waters of The Basin on Maine's Vinalhaven Island, and in all our years of calling there we've never shared it with another boat. While the first look gave pause, once it was in our wake, we were impressed with how straightforward threading the needle had been, to say nothing of its fabulous beauty, privacy and security.

That the waters had been used as wintering grounds for schooners gave historic reference to its accessibility. A sail-by revealed a mid-channel ledge, 20 yards or so into the rockbound gut, and opposite it, just off the south shore, a companion ledge. Between the two was an 8- or 9-yard-wide sluiceway, where at high slack the stream proved eminently navigable.

Engine ticking over, we made our way along the middle of the channel at 3 knots, the depths declining to 12ft. A small island slid by to port; beyond it was another knot of ledges. Minding them, we stayed pretty much center channel as much as we could, depths increasing to 20ft and the current evaporating.

The Basin has the look of a boreal North Country lake, with no sign of man's ambitions to be seen. A knot of small islands gathered to the east, and we turned northward into a natural channel-way. Seals hauled out on ledges port and starboard, and a scattering of lobster pot buoys confirmed the correctness of our drift. Soundings were in the teens.

Leigh explores wild Blacks Island, next to Corner Pocket Cove, Maine



to use *Leight*, which draws 4ft, for most such duty, preferably on a flooding tide. While the sloop's depthsounder is essential, we also carry a lead line for weedy bottoms, which can reflect false readings.

The nature of water, shoal and shore is reasonably predictable. Steep shores often indicate navigable depths, while lower, more gentle shores favor shallower water. Ledges showing testify to the probability of ledges unseen, and shoaling is almost always gradual. Lobster trap buoys are signs of navigable depths and indicate current flow, and an absence of them may be a sign of shoal water. Visual estimations of depths are



Leight has the quiet harbor of Seal Trap all to herself.

Soon after traversing a minor bar, with depths of 9ft, we were received in a teacup of an anchorage, with bold, spruce-crowned shores rising high above the emerald alcove. Anchoring where we'd have 10ft at low water, the stillness was pregnant. An eagle traced sweeping gestures against the sky and there was something decidedly primitive to our isolation.

We spent three days cultivating the quiet. Time melted away. We took naps, walked ashore, listened to Coltrane, washed our socks and flossed. Books, Bordeaux, birding and foot massages: we lived quietly, endowed with a certain animal awareness.

Some discoveries are so ridiculously easy, it's hard to imagine why the world doesn't know of them. Anchored in The Cows Yard on Head Harbor Island, a bit of southerly chop made it in, so I decided see what the lee of nearby Steele Harbor and Black Islands had to offer. Sniffing about on the flood I found a quiet, 7ft-deep pool, called it Corner Pocket Cove, and anchored with 10 fathoms of chain, the survey having taken 40 minutes.

Some explorations require a new way of thinking. York Island Harbor was one of them. We were slowly feeling our way in, having watched a few lobster boats working the waters, when we came upon a car-sized glacial erratic blocking the way. Twice rebuffed as we tried to get by to the west, we backed and filled, put the sloop's nose into a rock-girded slip, little more than 30ft from shore, and watched as the soundings declined to 9ft—and held. Unlocking such designs is a powerful thing, and lying in the lee with 7ft of wa-

ter under us, we were endowed of a particular sense of satisfaction for the secrets we knew.

Making a late arrival at Dix Harbor in the Muscle Ridge channel before a frisking southerly, we found a yacht club cruise in port and no room at the inn. Discussing the options, our eyes fell upon a tennis court-sized pool under the lee of Andrews Island and The Neck. The chart gave no encouragement, but for a single 8ft sounding.

The way between Birch and High Island was much obstructed by ledges, but the north shore of High Island was steep, and we slowly chanced along on the flood, skirting a shoal on the northeast corner of the island. The way proved reasonably navigable, and we soon came under shore of The Neck, circled about and dropped anchor in a pocket paradise. We could hear wind in the treetops, but our berth was still. Looking west toward the fleet at Dix Harbor, we saw their anchor lights dancing to the breeze and were possessed of a delicious sense of sanctuary.

There's a distinct energy to things new and afresh, and to learning on a grand scale. It reminds us how little we know and how much is yet to be discovered. Imagination is the currency of still water and private places. The poet Robert Frost distilled the essence of it when he wrote: "Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." **S**

David Buckman sails out of Round Pond, Maine, and has cruised from the Chesapeake to Newfoundland

LIGHT-AIR SAILING

Tips for keeping a cruising boat moving at an acceptable pace in light airs *By Rupert Holmes*

Don't give up in a drifter! Light-air sailing is some of the best sailing there is

PHOTO BY ADAM CORT

Some of the best times aboard a cruising boat are in light airs—those quiet, relaxed sunny days with gentle sailing that just wouldn't be the same if you were motoring. However, many cruising yachts are not set up to truly fulfill their potential in these kinds of conditions.

One of the problems, of course, is the sheer weight of many cruising yachts. Displacement is still valued by many thanks to the more comfortable motion at sea (and at anchor) that it can confer, not to mention the reassuring assumption that extra weight is synonymous with additional strength. For many owners it's also a byproduct of buying an older and therefore more affordable boat. Equally, for those travelling farther afield, a heavier boat is likely to have better load-carrying ability than a lightweight flyer. Of course, a downside to all this is that it can lead to a greater dependence on the engine, bigger fuel bills and arguably less time spent fully enjoying good weather.

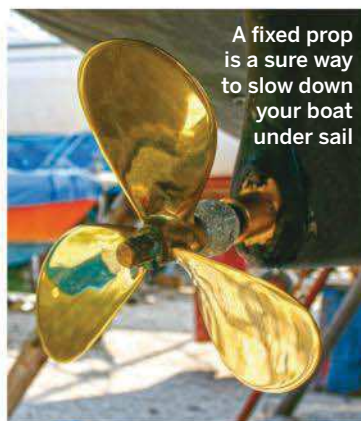
This also applies to today's beamy and broad sterned yachts, which have lots of wetted surface area and therefore a high level of frictional resistance. Nonetheless, with a few tweaks most cruisers can be coaxed to move at an acceptable pace.

THE CHALLENGES

In many cases weight is not the only reason cruising yachts struggle to make progress in light winds. They may also have aging and badly stretched sails, inefficient controls for sail shape and a degree of underwater fouling. Older boats may also lack efficient reaching sails, Code 0s, while old-school cruising chutes are nowhere near as effective downwind as modern asymmetric spinnakers, or A-sails.

These factors often lead to owners abandoning any thought of sailing in light airs, which can result in their boats becoming such that it's next to impossible to do so. However, with enough sail even the heaviest of boats can be made to move at reasonable speeds, especially at wind angles that put the boat on anything between a broad and close reach.

Never forget that when reaching in light airs the boat's own motion increases the apparent wind strength. It also doesn't take a great deal of power to overcome the frictional resistance of a clean hull. Speeds approaching the square root of the waterline length in feet (for example,



6 knots for a 36ft waterline) are therefore reasonably easy to achieve. (Although above this speed the boat starts to create a wake and bow wave, which require much more energy to overcome than the frictional resistance that predominates at slower boatspeeds.)

WHAT LIES BENEATH

Many cruisers will accept a degree of growth on the bottom of their boats. Often there are sensible reasons for this, since it's more economical and saves the hassle of organizing mid-season scrubs. In addition, if you're not looking to win races, where the last 20th of a knot of boat-speed can make all the difference, a thin layer of slime won't have much impact on passage times.

However, as growth starts to become more firmly established, the frictional resistance of the hull rapidly increases, and will eventually reach a level at which it prevents a boat reaching speeds anywhere near its potential. In fact, in many cases a good chunk of the cost of scrub before a long passage or summer cruise can be offset by the reduction of fuel costs.

Another major source of drag on many yachts is a big three-bladed propeller. Although a more expensive option, a good feathering or folding prop will not only dramatically reduce resistance under sail, but still offer excellent efficiency under power.

SAIL SHAPE

Careful adjustment of sail shape is fundamental in light airs, especially when the wind is well forward abeam. The most



Careful steering will allow you to make the most out of the conditions

TWIN HEADSAIL ARRANGEMENTS

When setting up a boat for serious offshore use, there's a danger that adding equipment for heavy weather will have an unnecessary adverse effect in light airs. Twin headstays with furlers make lots of sense in strong winds, but in lighter airs it can become impossible to tack or gybe the genoa easily.

On boats of less than around 40ft my preference is for a removable Dyneema Solent stay that leaves the foretriangle clear in light airs. On a larger boat, the arrangement adopted by Paul and Sheryl Shard of the *Distant Shores* TV channel for their new Southerly 480 is ideal: specifically, electric furling for the fore headstay, which enables the genoa to be quickly and effortlessly two-thirds furled for a tack.

common mistake is to trim in a similar manner to stronger winds, which invariably results in flat sails and a tight leech. This all but guarantees it will be difficult to establish laminar air flow over the sail, which will, in turn, severely reduce boatspeed.

Instead, ease the main outhaul and both halyards a couple of inches to create a fuller shape that will deliver more power. It's also generally helpful to set more twist than usual by easing the vang and mainsheet, with the twist in the headsail matching that in the main. If you have a traveller for the mainsheet, haul this to windward to maintain the correct angle of attack. But as you do so be sure you don't pull the bottom batten of the sail above the boat's centerline.

In super light airs, unless you have a gas vang there may not be enough apparent wind to lift the weight of the boom, resulting in a hard, straight leech. If so, take up a little on the topping lift to achieve the correct amount of twist.

If the wind is well forward of abeam, telltales on the leech of the mainsail at the batten positions will help considerably with sail trim. Ideally the lower ones will be constantly streaming, while the upper one will stream around 50 percent of the time. If the top telltale never flies, there's not enough twist, so the sheet and/or vang should be eased to allow the leech to go outboard a bit. Conversely if it flies all the time you will gain a marginal benefit by bringing it inboard and reducing the twist.

STEER CAREFULLY

The golden rule in light airs is to minimize helm movements to avoid applying too much rudder angle. While oversteering is arguably less of an issue for a 1970s-era fin-and-skeg designs, it's *very* important for later boats with big spade rudders. When these are pulled through the water at an angle they create a huge amount of additional drag that's akin to leaving the parking brake engaged in your car.

If not close-hauled or well downwind in light airs, it's often more

efficient to leave the steering to the autopilot. In these conditions even a low-spec model will steer a straighter course than all but the most focused crewmembers. This approach also leaves more time to pay attention to trimming the sails and adjusting sail shape to suit the changing wind angles you're likely to experience.

UPWIND PROGRESS

It's often said that upwind performance doesn't matter when choosing a cruising boat. However, I tend to subscribe to a slightly different view, which is that even if you don't intend to make passages directly to windward, an efficient yacht should still be able to sail fast and comfortably at a true wind angle of 55 degrees (as opposed to a boat with a less efficient rig, sailplan and keel will be tedious, slow and uncomfortable when sailing close-hauled mode at that same angle).

Sailing directly upwind in light airs can be a slow process, thanks to the rapidly diminishing power generated by the sails and increased drag on the rig as a boat points progressively closer to the wind. Nevertheless, it's often possible to make good ground on the favored tack before finally motoring upwind to the next waypoint.

Finally, it's important to resist the temptation to point too close to the wind or to over-sheet your sails, both of which will completely kill speed. In many cases the apparent wind angle will need to be 10 or even 15 degrees lower than in a moderate breeze if you want to keep moving.

DOWNWIND

Sailing deep downwind in light airs is a recipe for going nowhere. The problem is that the faster the boat goes, the more the apparent wind speed is reduced. That's why racing boats tend to gybe downwind, often doing so through angles of up to 80 degrees. If you use routing software, the solutions it offers should reflect this fact.

Once there's 10 knots or more of true wind, this is less of a problem for



Bear away for better boatspeed

small boats with spinnakers, and a dead downwind course is often the best option for a heavy 30- or 35-footer. However, the speed potential of larger modern yachts means their most efficient course remains a series of broad reaches until the true wind speed approaches 20 knots, when a poled-out headsail is usually the best option.

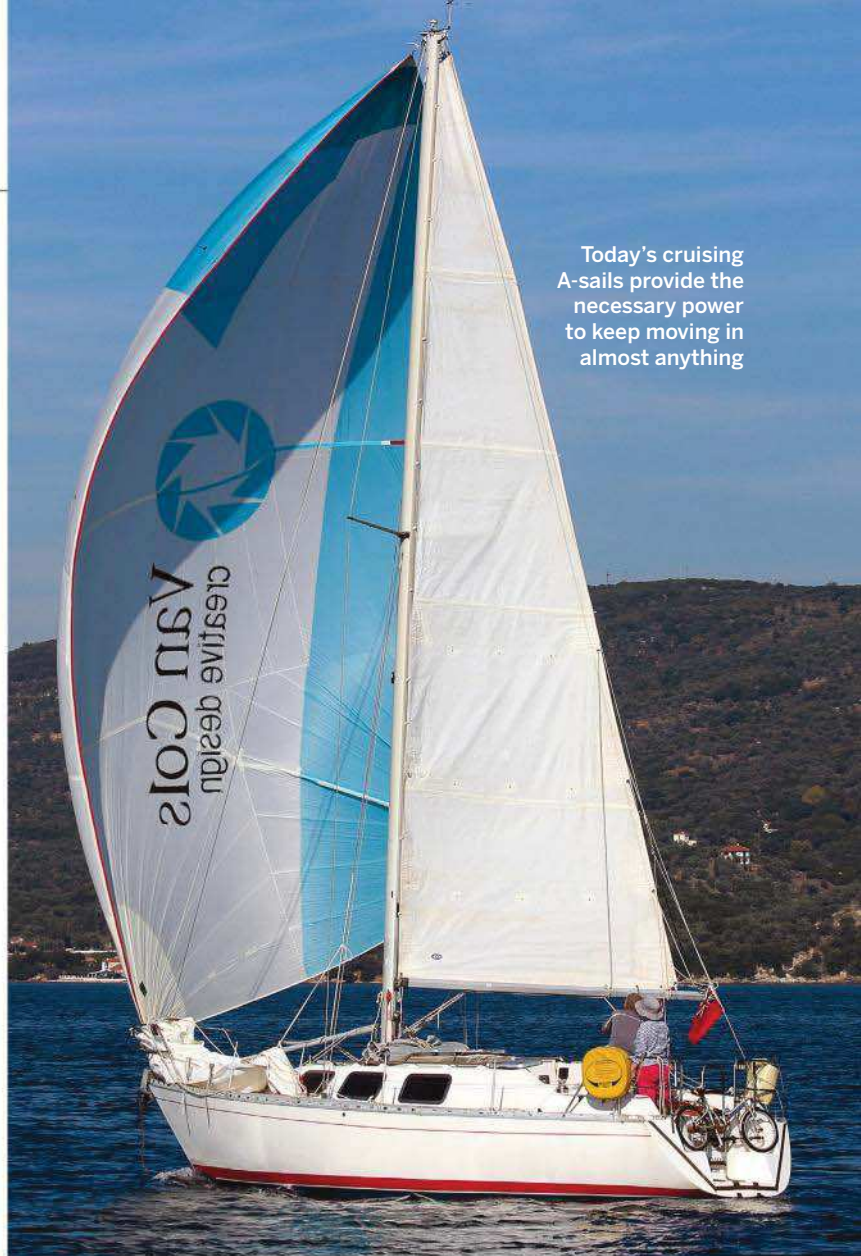
When sailing off the wind try sailing toward wherever there's breeze, although be aware that gusts, lulls and shifts are rarely uniform in strength and direction. The key signs to look for are dark patches on the water, with wavelets indicating the true wind direction. Lulls, on the other hand, appear as less disturbed areas that are lighter in color. Also watch for big wind holes and/or gusts in the lee of headlands, tall building, or even just a patch of trees. Often a wind line will be seen, signifying the border between a dead inshore zone and the edge of more reliable breeze offshore.

SAIL HANDLING SYSTEMS

So far, we've not talked about modifications to a boat or spending money on additional equipment. That's because often there are many improvements that can be made without buying more kit. However, if sailhandling systems are not slick and effective you won't be able to readily respond to changes in the wind strength and direction.

In light airs the most common problems are associated with excess friction preventing a line from paying out when eased. This can arise from a number of factors, including under-specified or seized blocks, lines that are too large in diameter for their deck hardware and deck layouts that route lines around too many unnecessary corners.

Unfortunately, all too many cruising yachts either have layouts based on outdated ideas or have low-grade hardware fitted as original equipment for the sake of economy. Paradoxically, the better systems usually fitted to performance cruisers and cruiser-racers tend to make these boats easier to handle, despite the greater power of their larger rigs when compared to most mainstream cruisers.



Today's cruising A-sails provide the necessary power to keep moving in almost anything

It might seem strange to discuss mainsail reefing systems in an article about sailing in light airs, but it is relevant. If a boat is set up in such a way that it takes five minutes to reef, you will have a tendency to drop in a precautionary reef as soon as there's a hint the wind might start increasing. While this may appear to be a prudent measure, it will often leave you floundering along in 8 knots of wind next to a big dark cloud, making little progress, yet afraid to shake the reef out. However, there's no reason why any boat under 45ft should not be set up so that one person can tuck in or shake out a reef in the mainsail within 60-90 seconds.

LIGHT AIR SAILS

Because a boat's own forward motion increases the apparent wind when reaching in light airs, any increase in the sail area sets off a beneficial circle of improvement. Bigger sails make the boat faster, which further increases the apparent wind making the boat faster still. With this in mind, sail designs that were first refined on raceboats 20 years ago have now been adapted for cruising yachts and can make a huge difference.

One of the most common of these, the asymmetric spinnaker, represents a huge step forward compared to earlier cruising chutes. In particular, the dramatically curved luff on a modern A-sail means it will not be blanketed by the mainsail until the apparent wind is aft of around

ON DECK SAIL TRIM

150 degrees. By contrast, many older cruising chutes will collapse at an angle of around 125 degrees.

Asymmetrics can also be cut to be used with a top-down furler, which hugely simplifies sail handling. However, this tends to involve a compromise with the amount of luff curve that can be incorporated into the sail, which means they won't set as far downwind as a sail with a conventional snuffer.

Another common racing sail now used by cruisers is the Code 0, which maximizes the area available for a reaching sail and can be a hugely powerful tool in light airs. On a race boat, Code 0s typically have to fulfil the requirements to measure as a spinnaker, which means they are cut with excess cloth on the leech. However, this isn't needed for a cruising Code 0. Two other advantages of Code 0s are that they are super easy to handle thanks to their furling systems, and they can't form an hourglass or wrap around the forestay, in the same way as a conventional nylon spinnaker.

Although it's possible to spend large sums of money on these sails, discarded racing sails will often do the job for budget-conscious cruisers. To be competitive, racers need to use their kites even when it's blowing hard, but the biggest gains for cruising yachts are in gentle conditions, with the apparent wind under 10 knots. The much-repaired big asymmetric spinnaker on my 30ft boat, for example, is a castoff from a J/80 sportboat that cost me less than \$200 a decade ago. Similarly, an old racing Code 0 with a damaged leech—the part that invariably fails first—can often have the weakened area cut away for use as a cruising sail.

LIGHT-AIR TIPS

- Don't pinch, oversheet or oversteer
- Keep the bottom as clean as possible
- Eliminate unnecessary friction
- Adjust your speed expectations
- Analyze the forecast carefully
- Watch for gusts and lulls
- Set up easy reefing
- Buy light airs sails




Code 0s are another great way to keep moving

I also have a similarly sized symmetric kite that makes it possible to make good speed dead downwind, with the main boom appropriately secured using a preventer, in apparent wind speeds of only 7-8 knots. These two sails mean that, even in a region with predominantly light airs, I can cover roughly 1,000 miles in a season without using more than around 15 gallons of fuel.

ROUTING SOFTWARE

Routing software can shave a significant amount of time off many passages and also help identify the optimum time to leave port. Note, though, that once your GRIB files start showing significantly less than 8 knots of breeze, the accuracy of their routing can be significantly reduced. This is especially true for boats that sail at the same speed as the true wind on a reach in light airs, but are significantly slower on other points of sail.

That said, there are now many fine-grained models that include the effects of shorelines and islands, making them a valuable resource for a passage that will include areas of light winds. This kind of software is also becoming ever more accessible, with companies such as PredictWind, SailGrib and Fast Seas all offering various low-cost, or even free options. 

Rupert Holmes has 80,000 miles of offshore experience, including racing doublehanded around Britain and across the Atlantic. He has also cruised from New Zealand around Cape Horn to the Beagle Channel and on to the Falklands



Friction is not your friend; make sure all blocks and tracks are in good order

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Budget Satcoms

If you want to stay permanently connected when sailing offshore, satellite communication is the only way to go. The options for sailors have never been better *By Duncan Kent*

Modern satcom devices and network airtime costs have dropped in price recently as more “birds” are launched and more constellations are created. This has resulted in several low-cost voice and data, or data-only, communicators being made available to the budget-conscious sailor.

Some systems allow the user to connect a smartphone or tablet to the Internet for both voice and data services; others simply transmit tracking data back to pre-determined contacts back home, via SMS or email. Either way, they are becoming a good deal more user-friendly, both in setting-up and in operation, although you need to study the small print of the service agreements carefully as there are numerous “extras” you can be charged for. Some providers offer a Pay-as-you-Go service, but many monthly airtime contracts involve signing up for a minimum of a year to get the best rates.

SHOUT NANO

The Shout Nano is a handheld, global, two-

way satellite messaging and personal tracking device that utilizes Iridium's SBD service to provide GPS location, free text messaging and emergency alerting. Being a two-way device means alerts can be confirmed and details of the emergency sent and updated in detail.

The Nano can be used to send a quick “check in” manually, with one button press. However, being equipped with a high-resolution color LCD and an on-screen keyboard, both “canned” (predesignated and stored) and free text messages can be transmitted. It can also be set to automatically “wake up” periodically and send a position report to a designated monitoring center.

Having a 1.95Ah rechargeable Li-Ion battery and ultra-low power consumption (less than 35mA asleep) means it can send a position report every 10 minutes, over more than 10 days, on one charge.

The system also has a covered emergency button at the back that, when pressed, will send a distress alert to a pre-programmed contact.

nalresearch.com

SHOUT NANO





**GARMIN
IN-REACH
EXPLORER+**



SATcase

**MAZU/SkyMate
mSeries**



MAKE	MODEL	DEVICE \$	NETWORK	PROOF	SOS	GPS	TRACK	SMS	EMAIL	VOX	WX	CHARTS	MONITOR	APP	BLOG
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Iridium	Go!	\$765.00	Iridium	IP65	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
In-Reach	Explorer+	\$450.00	Iridium	IP67	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
SPOT	Gen3	\$169.95	Globalstar	IP67	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y
SHOUT	Nano	\$895.00	Iridium	IP65	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
SATcase	SATcase	\$1799.00	Iridium	IP68	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N

MAZU/SKYMATE MSERIES

Mazu is an iPad app that, when connected wirelessly to SkyMate mSeries satcom hardware, offers a comprehensive choice of data-only features, including e-mail, SMS, SOS, weather, navigation and remote tracking. It has no voice-carrying capabilities, however, and is currently only available for the iPad.

The Mazu app relies on other components to make it function, primarily the SkyMate ISI-2000 system interface, which also provides Wi-Fi access for the tablet. It also requires a compact, external Smart Antenna containing an Iridium SBD (Short Data Burst) transceiver and GPS receiver. Finally, the system includes a four-button keypad for alerts and SOS signaling. All these components (except the iPad) can be bought together in the mSeries package, with all necessary cables and installation instructions.

The SkyMate module collects data from your vessel's instrument network, so you can not only be tracked easily, but boat data, such as position, speed and heading, can be transmitted using SMS or e-mail via an externally-mounted satellite transceiver such as the Mazu Smart Antenna. The beauty of the Mazu app is that

it integrates SkyMate with your regular e-mail client, so once the new account has been set up you'll receive e-mail just as if you were connected directly to the Internet ashore. You can also keep a blog on SkyMate's website, for all your family and friends to follow your progress.

In an emergency, a dedicated SOS button procedure allows the user to send a distress alert directly to the GEOS rescue network, as well as alerting certain pre-designated contacts by SMS.

The app can also handle weather data, including GRIB files, for up to seven days ahead, plus seven-day point forecasts, live buoy data, NEXRAD radar images, NOAA zone forecasts, weather alerts and tropical storm information.

An additional option is the 16-channel Sentry monitoring kit (+\$250), for those who wish to remotely monitor their boat's position, and alarms such as intruder, anchor drag, bilge level and battery voltage. Power for the hardware is 12/24V and standby consumption only 4W.

Once you've bought the app and all the required hardware, you'll need to sign up to one of the many connection plans, starting at \$39.99 per month. The Sentry remote monitoring package is an additional \$10 per month.

mazu-marine.com

AIRTIME

In a similar fashion to cellphone airtime packages, working out the optimum satellite airtime package for your device is about as easy as knitting jello. There are a number of aspects you should consider carefully before you sign up to any package:

- Is the plan for global access?
- What is the initial activation fee?
- Is there an annual fee?
- Prepaid or subscription package?
- How long do the prepaid credits last?
- What is the subscription term?
- What charges for data/voice/text above your subscription limit?
- Is there an airtime rollover option?

Whatever package you choose, flexibility is key, especially if you're not sure at first how much airtime you'll actually need. Though there's often a small charge, it could be worth selecting a rollover option whereby any unused minutes get tagged onto the following month's allowance.

IRIDIUM GO!

Iridium has been providing a relatively low-cost satcom service to sailors and travelers for a couple of decades. Not only does it provide a choice of portable phones capable of voice and data transmission, but its new Wi-Fi data/voice module, Iridium Go! is also proving extremely popular. It works just like a Wi-Fi wireless router in that it provides a hotspot to which up to five devices, such as smartphones and tablets, can connect wirelessly, within a range of 100 feet. The module then enables access to the Internet via its constellation of Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites, using the SBD method to transmit data in the most economical way. It can also provide voice connection through the same terminal.

This rugged, pocket-sized, portable unit is powered by a 3.6Ah rechargeable battery pack and comes with USB, 12Vdc and 110Vac chargers.

Two levels of service are available, although the most useful to cruising sailors is the Iridium Mail and Web option, which provides fast, queued e-mail, pop-up/ad blocker and data compression to speed up transmission.



IRIDIUM GO!

Airtime is monthly with a minimum of three months, and the cost depends on whether you want data alone, or voice and data. iridium.com

GARMIN IN-REACH EXPLORER+

Originally the Delorme inReach, Garmin's inReach Explorer+ combines two-way messaging, SOS alerting and vessel tracking abilities, using the Iridium LEO satellite network. In addition, it features pre-loaded charts with onscreen GPS routing and a built-in digital compass, barometric altimeter and accelerometer.

Although the unit was originally intended as a

terrestrial location device, Garmin has expanded its capabilities to ensure it can become an essential part of a sea-going vessel's safety inventory. You can also now pair an iOS or Android device with the inReach Explorer+ and, using Garmin's EarthMate app, have access to downloadable maps and send messages using the mobile device's own keyboard.

The Explorer+ not only allows the user to automatically send tracking information to third parties via a web-based mapping facility, but it also enables data such as e-mail and SMS to be transmitted and received at any time, making it easy for those on ocean crossings to keep in touch with family, friends or work.

In an emergency the user can send a distress call to the GEOS global rescue response center by simply pressing an SOS button, in a similar fashion to an EPIRB or PLB. Once the covered SOS button is pushed and held down for five seconds your GPS co-ordinates will be automatically transmitted every two minutes until you cancel the alert.

The Explorer will also let you download weather forecasts for your current location and for your intended destination.

As with all satcom systems, an active airtime subscription is required. Depending on your usage level, you can opt for an annual contract package or flexible monthly airtime plan.

Included in the inReach subscription is access to an online account from where you can manage device settings and contacts, pre-set messages, MapShare settings and billing. You can also link to social media accounts, setup waypoints and routes

and upgrade firmware. garmin.com

SPOT GEN3

SPOT devices use the Globalstar satellite network, which is more limited in its coverage, having fewer satellites over the oceans than the Iridium network. However, as a basic, low-cost, data-only signaling and tracking device it appears to be growing in popularity among the cruising fraternity.

As with the other units, the SPOT Gen3 has an SOS button to alert the GEOS rescue authorities in an emergency. Family and friends can also



follow your progress online using a SPOT Share Page, which you can pre-set to automatically update your track every 5, 10, 30 or 60 minutes. There is also a "Check In" facility, whereby you can send up to 10 registered contacts a pre-programmed text message or e-mail with your GPS coordinates, along with a link to your GPS position, which will be retained for later reference and/or integrated into a SPOT Shared Page or social network such as Facebook, Twitter or a SPOT Adventure account. findmespot.com

SATCASE

Another method of keeping in contact while at sea is by using a GSM to Iridium cell-to-satellite converter, in the form of a simple case for your iPhone (6+) or Android smartphone.

The SATcase is similar to any ruggedized smartphone case with a hardened, clear panel on the front, through which you access the touchscreen. The big difference is this case has satcom technology built in, so not only does it protect your device from physical damage and fluids, it also converts a standard cellphone into a satphone using a Bluetooth connection, rather than plugs and/or cables.

The SATcase comes with its own Iridium SIM card, so all you have to do is sign up to your chosen Iridium airtime plan. Then you simply download the SATcase app and pair your phone with the case, after which you can operate the phone as normal with all your phone's contact details remaining the same.

Like all these devices, the SATcase has a guarded SOS button that when pressed, activates a distress call, sending a distress message and your GPS position to rescue services.

The SATcase has its own battery, and plugging a charger into it charges both the phone and case battery together. satcase.com

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Any job goes faster when you have the right tools

TOOLED UP

No boat is complete without a good toolkit *By Tom Hale*

When my wife, Christina, and I set off for fulltime cruising, we sold our house and got rid of a generation's worth of stuff. It was tough, but we got it done.

The hardest part was letting go of the tools I had gathered and used over a lifetime of building and repairing boats. Table saws, a bandsaw, planers and a drill press would not fit in a 40ft

boat. As painful as it was, we finally pared the tool collection down to the minimum. It all fits into a five-drawer toolbox and three extraneous tackleboxes. Plus, we have a few odds and ends in critical places—the tools for routine generator service, for example, are in a box near the generator, while tools for routine dinghy service are in a waterproof bag by the cabin door with the lifejackets. I'm quite sure that my onboard tools

now weigh less than 500lb—maybe!

The number and type of tools you should carry depends on what size boat you are sailing, where you are going, and what skills and abilities you have. What you need on a 30ft weekender is not the same as what you need on a 45ft ocean cruiser.

Here is a list of tools for you to consider. If you primarily daysail close to home, you need very few tools. If you do weekend cruising, you need a basic tool kit, but no more. As your skill increases and you cruise farther from home, however, you will need and acquire more tools. Among other things, any job goes faster with the proper tools, and in the end, you save money and time by buying the tools you need to do the job right.



You need a good selection of screwdrivers and nut drivers



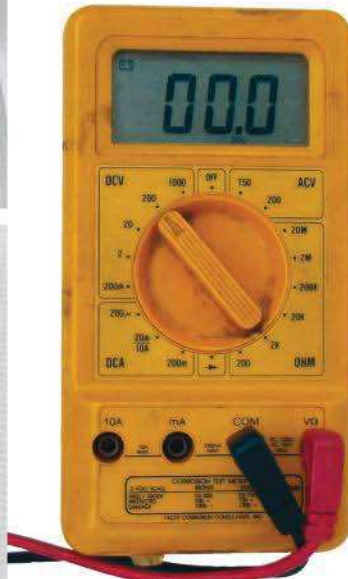
A well-stocked electrical toolbox



Seldom-used, but essential...



Buy a strong cordless drill and plenty of bits



Useful tools: multimeter, thermometer, label gun



THE BARE ESSENTIALS

Let's assume you are putting together a basic toolkit for a new-to-you boat. You're likely to have many of these items from working around your house or your vehicle.

- Three straight-slot and three Philips-head screwdrivers of different sizes; screwdriver blades are designed to fit specific screw slots; same with Philips-head screwdrivers, which fit specific sizes of screw head
- Sets of open-end and box-end wrenches and sockets in both SAE and Metric sizes
- Nut drivers (very handy when working with hose clamps)
- Hacksaw and spare blades
- Hammer (ball peen)

- Channel-locks (large and small sizes)
- Vice-grip pliers (large and small)
- Needle-nose pliers and diagonal cutters
- Crescent wrenches—two large ones to help you adjust your turnbuckles

Now you have a tool kit that will cope with most mechanical issues on your boat, and which you can build on according to your needs.

BETTER THAN BASIC

When you're going farther afield and need to be more self-sufficient, there are many tools that will not be used often, but will be invaluable when they're needed.

- Electric drill with charger, spare battery pack and a full drill index, screwdriver bits and a

countersink; since you won't use this tool too often, be sure to always keep one battery charged

- Digital volt and ohmmeter, and a copy of a basic guide to electrical systems, such as Nigel Calder's *Boat Owners Electrical and Mechanical Manual*
- Infrared pyrometer, aka laser temperature gun, to help troubleshoot engine issues by monitoring the temperature of the exhaust system and other components
- Clamp-on ammeter, a great tool for diagnosing engine-starter problems and checking for AC current leakage through your shore power cord
- Refractometer or hygrometer for checking the condition of wet cell batteries (also keep a gallon of distilled water handy)

BOAT WORKS ESSENTIAL TOOLS

- Vacuum tank for changing oil for the engine, transmission and the outboard
- Drill pump for changing oil and emptying the engine drip pan
- Camera: before you start any work on an electrical or mechanical system, take a few pictures of what the system looks like before you start removing pieces, especially if it is a complicated repair requiring substantial disassembly
- A good headlamp
- Propane/butane torch for loosening tight metal joints
- Label maker for identifying all sorts of components, wires fuses etc.; an underutilized and very important piece of kit
- Smartphone endoscope camera, which allows you to see under and around tanks and under the engine; especially handy for finding leaks in the rudder stuffing box
- Handheld vacuum cleaner for cleaning dust and debris so it does not get into the bilge

LOTIONS AND POTIONS

In addition to these tools, you will also need a



Sailors will always find a use for a hot knife

selection of fluids and greases for various applications, and to keep things running smoothly in general. Here's what's in my toolbox.

- CRC 6-56 or WD-40 for water dispersion and light lubrication
- Leak Lock for threaded fittings in non-petroleum systems
- Locktite 363 for threads in fuel and hydraulic systems where you should not use Teflon tape.
- Waterproof grease, such as trailer bearing grease or Vaseline: a light application on



Stock up on lotions and potions

the threads of your fuel tank fill will seal the threads against water intrusion and prevent the cap from becoming frozen due to corrosion

- Anti-seize Tef-Gel or Lanocote to protect against corrosion where stainless fasteners pass through aluminum parts
- Silicone grease or some other type of dielectric grease to keep exterior electrical connections and shore power cord fittings dry and corrosion-free
- Kopr Shield conductive grease for battery connections and to seal engine zincs

PHOTO BY TOM HALE

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Oil change kit and a drill pump—you'll use both

BITS AND PIECES

So you thought that was it? Not yet. No boat is complete without a set of fishing tackle boxes to help you keep small, but essential things like electrical connectors and fasteners organized. These also let you easily assess your inventory, so you can restock as needed rather than running out of parts when you are in the middle of a project. Here's what I have in my box collection.

- Electrical box: contains a selection of wire terminals, butt connectors and heat-shrink tubing along with a wire stripper and ratcheting wire crimper.
- Plumbing box: stock it with a wide variety of hose clamps and plumbing fittings to match your boat's plumbing.
- Fastener boxes: one for screws and another for nuts and bolts. You can scan your inventory and restock as needed rather than finding that you do not have the screw you need.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR TOOLS

Over time you will gradually acquire a lot of tools. The basic tools must be readily accessible, while others can be stored away or buried in a locker. As you are doing so, however, be sure that they are not going to get wet there. Remember, salt is the enemy of tools as well as boats in general.

After using your tools, spray any steel ones with WD-40 or CRC 6-56. In addition, here is a trick for taking care of your tools when changing the raw water impeller. First spray the area around the water pump with water dispersant oil spray. Change the impeller. When done, wash the entire area around the water pump and any tools used with freshwater. After that, dry the area and any tools you used with a water-dispersant oil. As a general rule, any time you have your tool box out, check all the tools and lubricate any which are showing rust.

While you're at it, be sure to keep your tools organized. A bucket of miscellaneous tools is an inefficient system, to say the least. Also, be sure to replace all broken or lost tools. If you lose your 1/2in box wrench, it might be tempting to grab a crescent wrench or a pair of pliers the next time you want to loosen a 1/2in nut. However, you may also discover, as I have, that a crescent wrench is also a great tool for rounding off a nut's shoulders. Again, replace all broken or lost tools at the first opportunity. There are few things worse than needing a tool you do not have. **S**

Full-time cruiser **Tom Hale** has spent his life around boats and boatyards

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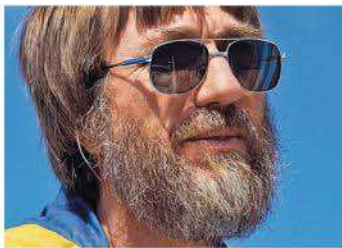
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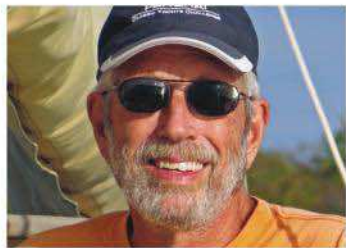
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WHY DO DIESELS LIKE HARD WORK?

Q: I keep hearing that diesel engines “like” to be worked hard. I also understand that it can be a problem only using an auxiliary for brief periods, like just going in and out of a marina, as opposed to prolonged periods. Why is this? How much should a diesel be run to keep it in good shape, and what can a daysailer like me do to make sure I get in the right amount of run time?

— Scott Henderson, Houston, TX



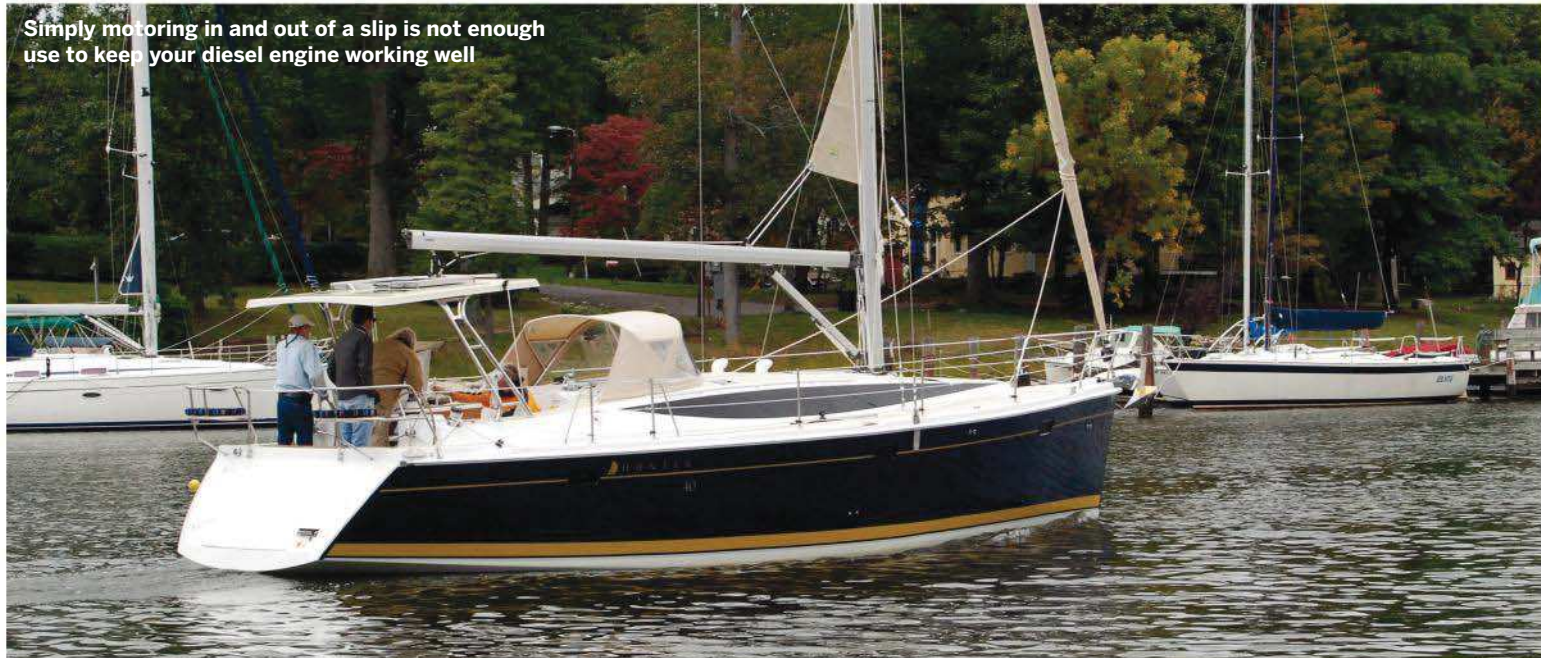
NIGEL CALDER REPLIES

When a diesel engine is first warmed up, it is considerably less efficient than when it has fully warmed, especially if run at low power levels, such as when maneuvering in harbor, battery-charging at anchor or running a generator with light loads. Less efficiency plus cool engine surfaces result in poor fuel combustion, which trans-

lates into carbon. This carbon then plugs piston rings in their grooves, lowering compression ratios, and also plates out on valves and throughout the exhaust system. Both things are really bad for the engine.

Any time you crank a diesel, you should aim to put a respectable load on it as soon as possible and to maintain that load until the engine is fully warmed up. Unfortunately, because it takes very little energy to move our boats at slow speeds, we can’t create much of a load until clear of a harbor. The keys are to avoid unnecessary dockside idling, get clear of the harbor as soon as possible and then, at least once every few times in and out of your slip, run the engine at around two thirds throttle or higher for at least 10 or 15 minutes. This will help to minimize any carbon formation.

If in doubt about your operating practices, pull the exhaust hose off the back of the engine and look in the exhaust elbow. If there is a carbon crust baked on in there you are not running the engine nearly hard enough.



Simply motoring in and out of a slip is not enough use to keep your diesel engine working well

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POWERING THROUGH CHOP

Q: I own a 1983 Catalina 25 with the original Evinrude 9.9 long-shaft electric-start motor. The motor has been well maintained by my local boatyard. I use the boat exclusively on Lake Erie, and the motor drives the boat quite well in one to two-foot waves. However, Lake Erie is very shallow, and when the wind picks up and the waves reach two to four feet they become very choppy and start coming from different confusing directions. Then the motor under-performs. It doesn't seem to have enough drive/thrust to power through the waves, and I lose 1-2 knots of speed accordingly on the larger waves. Would a 9.9 high-thrust outboard perform better in these conditions? Or do you have other options that might improve the performance of my boat on choppy Lake Erie?

— Ron Toivonen, Concord Township, OH



DON CASEY REPLIES

I am not sure you have a problem that has a solution. Punching a displacement hull into waves will always slow it down. Outboard kickers also suffer from the hobby-horsing motion, losing water volume to push against. If your prop is staying submerged, additional thrust can have some offsetting effect. Rather than a new outboard, determine the pitch of your existing prop and see if a lower-pitch prop is available. Better still, fit your old Evinrude with a “high thrust” four blade prop: probably a 10 x 7. This will give you more thrust to punch through waves, but at the cost of higher rpm for the same speed in smooth conditions.

A BATTERY FOR RC WORK

Q: I have a small Catalina, and I am replacing the engine starting battery. I do a lot of race committee work, too, so can I install a deep cycle battery to serve both engine starting as well as running the race committee electronics all day at anchor?

— B. Hathaway, Chicago, IL



GORDON WEST REPLIES

Yes. A starting battery may deliver hundreds of amps over a short period of time coming off the outer surface of multiple plates. But a deep-cycle bat-

tery, to keep your electronics running for a long period of time, will have thicker plates to continue to power your circuits over a longer period of time than the starting battery. Battery expert Don Ross reports, “A deep-cycle battery may be used for engine starting, but a starting battery should not be used for regular continuous deep-cycle applications.” So, go with a heavy deep-cycle battery, and you will be set for both starting and running your electronics for the regatta. As you are doing so, keep an eye on the volt meter, and when you get down to 12.2 volts DC, fire up the engine for a fast recharge.

IS MY SAIL ANY GOOD?

Q: I've been looking at the sail inventory I've accumulated over the last 20 years from sailboats I've bought. Many of these sails are still useful. However, I'm stumped on how to evaluate a laminated headsail I have. It is crinkled and has some dirt, but unlike Dacron it can't be evaluated by a needle pushed through the fabric and rotated. I would like to know how to determine the residual strength of the fabric.

— Nelson Baker, Annapolis, MD



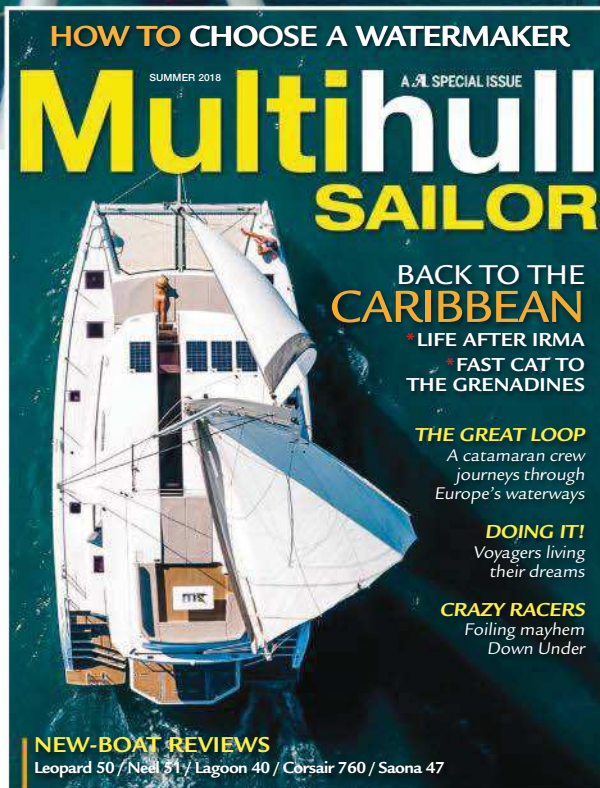
BRIAN HANCOCK REPLIES

Here is the problem with these kinds of sails. If there is some delamination, especially in high-load areas like the clew or the head, you may have a problem. However, most sails, even those that are near the end of their life, are still fine if used in fairly stable conditions. You can even press them past their upper wind range, although it may all end in tears if there is any kind of shock loading—like the sail collapsing because the helmsman is not paying attention and then the sail suddenly flogs a little, there's a big bang and then it's all over red rover. If there is delamination near the middle of the sail, then no worries. That's a low-load area. I like to say you should measure the life of a sail by how long it holds its shape and not just by how long it holds together. With that in mind, if the sail shape is blown out, chuck it out. If it still looks OK, though, then go for it until it lets you know that its time is up. Then donate the fabric to one of those companies that make cool bags out of old sails. **S**

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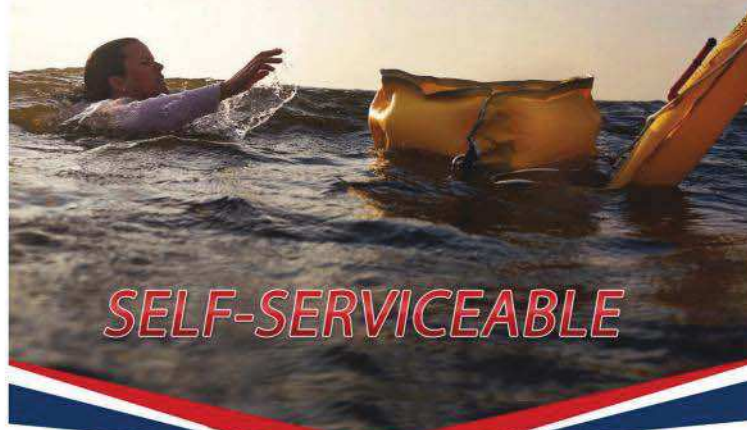


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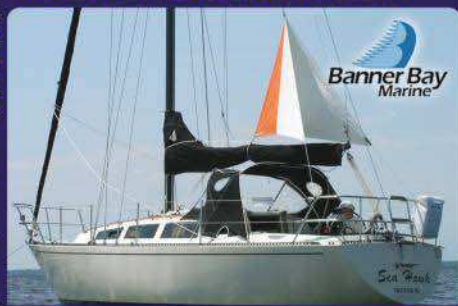
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Sparkling blue waters are just one of Tahiti's many delights (right); black pearls from Taha'a (inset)

Taha'a & Raiatea

Slow down—paradise is right here *By Zuzana Prochazka*

Ah, Tahiti! Even the sound of the word elicits thoughts of heaven on earth—a Polynesian paradise and a bucket list cruise to talk about for years. Most people are lucky to come here once in a lifetime, so I have to wonder why charterers are always in such a hurry to get their boat in Raiatea and press on to exotic Bora Bora or remote Huahine. You're here. Stop and smell the *tiare* flowers before setting sail to elsewhere.

Raiatea, the "Sacred Island," is a 50-minute flight from Papeete and the departure point for all bareboat charters from Sunsail, Tahiti Yacht Charter, The Moorings and Dream Yacht Charter. Raiatea and Taha'a Island share a fringing reef, so it's easy to stay in protected waters on the first day or two while you get your sea legs and learn the idiosyncrasies of the boat before heading out one of the many passes on all sides.

A circumnavigation of Raiatea will bring you to some hidden gems like Naonao Island at the southern tip, a perfect motu that you can kayak around, or Faaroa Bay where you can SUP on an Indiana Jones-esque river flanked by taro fields. Here, the paddling is usually calm as you float along, surrounded by bushes of exotic flowers, their scent hanging heavy in the still

air. At times, the river gets so narrow and shallow that you may have to "get out and walk," pulling the board behind you.

Nearby is Onoa Bay and Marae Tapupuatea, one of the largest spiritual sites in French Polynesia. Many of the stone temple outlines have been rebuilt, so a stroll through will give you an idea of the civilization that ruled here a thousand years ago.

Two hours north from the charter bases is Hurepiti Bay on Taha'a, the "Vanilla Island." Here, Alain and Christina Plantier run a great land tour on a 4x4. The couple sailed their 32ft plywood catamaran to Tahiti from France 45 years ago and built a Robinson Crusoe-like homestead that shows off every kind of plant and flower Tahiti has to offer—including many different colors of tiare.

Alain is a trained botanist who ran a vanilla farm for years, and his encyclopedic knowledge of the flora of Tahiti is mindboggling. His four-hour tour includes a stop to feed coconuts to chickens (they're crazy for the stuff) and an extensive lesson on vanilla pollination. In season, Alain also serves up *noni* juice, the fruit of a tree in the coffee family, purported to be a miracle cure and a fountain of youth. Beware, though, the stuff tastes like a mix of laundry

water and boiled sweat socks. Bottoms up!

Taha'a is black pearl central, so a visit to a "farm," like Champon, is a must. Nobody gets away from a pearl display case without being a few Polynesian francs lighter. These little round wonders are hypnotic and unique to this part of the world, so you can't possibly leave without one.

The western side of the long reef offers phenomenal sunset views of Bora Bora in the distance. Le Taha'a Resort, with its picturesque (and expensive) over-water bungalows, makes for great photos too. In fact, the whole place can't take a bad picture. Even the coral in the nearby pass is photogenic. Just beware the zippy current as you snorkel through the pass, and unless you have tough feet, bring your reef shoes.

In any other part of the world, Taha'a and Raiatea would be a draw in themselves, so they're worth a slow careful exploration. If you're lucky enough to tick Tahiti off the bucket list, well, you're lucky enough. So adjust your pace, look around and take in the beauty before sailing on to someplace else. I mean, what's your hurry? The bucket list is all around you. **S**



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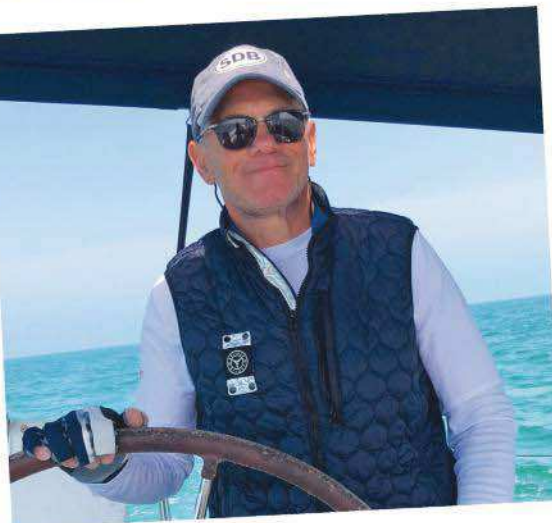

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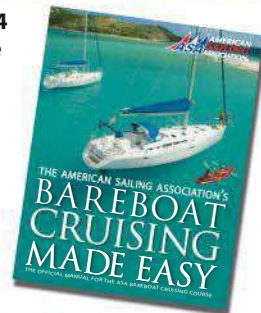
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42'	2017 Bavaria 42.....less than 100 hours.....	asking \$268,000	32'	1975 Bristol Sloop 32	\$28,000
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MODEL: EUS00015A

ITEM 63584

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Things That Go Bump in the Night

How likely are you to hit something while on passage?

This almost happened to me once. I was sailing singlehanded between Bermuda and St. Martin one fall, and one night happened to be on deck looking around at just the right time. The moon was out, the sky was clear and visibility was good. Still, when I thought I saw a large object, mostly submerged, in the water directly in front of my boat, I had no time to react. All I could do was gasp as a dark mass whooshed past within a foot of my starboard side.

I remembered that night recently while reading about the Maersk cargo ship that lost 76 containers overboard off the coast of North Carolina during a gale in March. I don't know whether my Unidentified Floating Object was a container or an abandoned boat or a random piece of debris. I also know that my aluminum boat would likely have survived a collision, even with a container. Nonetheless, there have been few times in my life when my heart rate shot up so high so quickly.

these instances are, I am sure, sleeping whales that have been unpleasantly surprised by the largely silent, super-fast Open 60s. These whales, I submit, have far more to complain about than the sailors who run them down.

It is true there have been a handful of documented container collisions, including the preposterous fictional accident in the 2013 film *All Is Lost*, where Robert Redford's Cal 39 is holed in a flat calm by a seemingly self-propelled floating container. However, I've never heard of any instance where a yacht on passage was damaged in a collision with another abandoned yacht.

During any given summer, so I've been told by SAR authorities, there are on average about a dozen abandoned boats drifting about the North Atlantic. Recent surveys by the World Shipping Council meanwhile suggest that somewhere between 300-700 containers are also lost overboard worldwide each year, excluding unusual catastrophic events. These numbers may seem large, but you must also consider the incredibly vast area over which these potential threats are deployed.

The fact is that most people abandoning yachts do not, for whatever reason, choose to scuttle them. (Curiously, it seems that British SAR authorities do urge sailors to scuttle abandoned boats, while American authorities do not.) Many modern yachts—multihulls with foam-cored hulls and no ballast—won't sink even if they are scuttled. It also makes no economic sense for the shipping industry to equip the many millions of containers in service with special safety gear to protect a very small number of sailors against a tiny threat of harm.

The good news is that it seems most lost containers spend little time on the surface. In the case of the recent accident off North Carolina, for example, only nine of the 76 lost containers could be located after many overflights of the area. Of those, only two were still afloat a week later. The exception, of course, would be lost refrigerated containers, which are both tightly sealed and heavily insulated, and thus can potentially stay afloat for long periods of time. But these fortunately only make up about 7 percent of the world's total container inventory.

The bottom line is simple. This is a risk you take when you sail offshore, and you cannot reasonably expect anyone to obviate it for you. You can obviate the risk yourself by keeping a good watch (and by sailing in a metal boat!), but as I learned that night on my way to St. Martin even this may do little good. Far better to compare it to the more mundane risks you run living ashore and consider yourself lucky. **S**

Even without transponders or self-scuttling devices, lost shipping containers are unlikely to cause damage



Many bluewater sailors seem to take it personally when they hear about lost containers and such, as if each piece of flotsam out there were a bullet pointed down a barrel directly at them. "Did you scuttle the boat?" these people will demand accusingly when confronted with fellow sailors who have abandoned their craft at sea. Similarly, they are full of proposals that shipping containers should by law all be equipped with transponders, flashing lights and self-scuttling explosive charges, just in case they ever fall overboard.

The real odds of hitting anything while on passage are, however, vanishingly small. We do often hear of Vendée Globe boats breaking off daggerboards and rudders when they hit things, but most of the UFOs in

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