Photo by Brian Coyle

Bargain Voyagers

PS *picks a few recession-proof cruisers worthy of sweat equity.*

Let's say you're looking to buy a boat for summer cruising along the coastal U.S. or on the Great Lakes, one that, when the time is right, is also capable of taking you safely and efficiently to Baja or the Bahamas, and perhaps even island-hopping from Miami to the West Indies. Like most of us, your budget is limited, so a new boat is out of the question. Let's set more specifics:

- Passes a thorough survey by a respected surveyor and has been upgraded to meet current equipment and safety standards. (These are old boats, after all, prone to all sorts of potentially serious problems.)
- Fun to sail inshore (which means not too heavy and not too big).
- Sufficient accommodations and stowage to cruise four people for two weeks.
- Popular model (active owners' support group for help and camaraderie) with decent resale value.
- Under $75,000.
- Monohull (multihulls violate the price cap, anyway).
- Draft of less than 6 feet (for the islands, mon).

In the February 2008 issue, we examined 30-footers from the 1970s, which is just above the minimum length for the Big Three: standing headroom, enclosed head, and inboard engine. Too small, however, to satisfy our new criteria. So we need to jump up in size. As we culled through the possibilities, we found a fairly narrow range of boat lengths and vintages that satisfy the criteria. Of course, there always are exceptions, but basically it is this: 35- to 38-footers built between 1978 and 1984. Bigger or newer boats that meet our criteria cost more than $75,000.

Here's the list of nine models we came up with: Allied Princess 36, Bristol 35.5C, C&C Landfall 38, Endeavour 37, Freedom 36, Niagara 35, O'Day 37, S2 11.0, and the Tartan 37. All were built by reputable companies in the U.S. or Canada, with underwater configurations ranging from full keels with attached rudders to fin keels and spade rudders. Displacements are mostly moderate.

Below we present notes on six of the finalists, and in the following pages, we'll look at the three favorites: the Niagara 35 (page 10), the Landfall 38 (page 12), and the Tartan 37 (page 14).

ALLIED PRINCESS 36

Allied Yachts developed an excellent line of cruising sailboats in the 1960s, including the first fiberglass boat to circumnavigate, the Seawind 30 ketch, which later was expanded to the 32-foot Seawind II.

The Endeavour 37 was based on a Lee Creekmore hull that was cut in half and extended.

The handsome Luders 33 was the boat in which teenager Robin Lee Graham completed his historic circumnavigation. Arthur Edmunds designed the full-keel Princess 36 aft-cockpit ketch and the larger Mistress 39 center-cockpit ketch. None of these boats are fancily finished, but the fiberglass work is solid and well executed. They're ocean-worthy, and affordable. The Princess 36 was in production from roughly 1972 to 1982. We'd look for a later model year; prices are under $50,000.

BRISTOL 35.5C

Bristol Yachts was founded by Clint Pearson, after he left Pearson Yachts in 1964. His early boats were Ford and Chevy quality, good but plainly finished, like the Allieds. Over the years this changed, so that by the late 1970s and early 1980s, his boats were between Buicks and Cadillacs in overall quality. This includes the Ted Hood-designed 35.5C. It's a centerboarder with a draft from 3 feet, 9 inches board up to 9 feet, 6 inches board down; a keel version also was available (named without the "C"). The solid fiberglass hull was laid up in two halves and then joined on centerline. It had an inward-turning flange on the hull, superior to the more common shoebox hull-to-deck joint. The 35.5C is very good in light air, but tender in a breeze. Pick one up for around $60,000.

ENDEAVOUR 37

The Endeavour Yacht Corp. was founded in 1974, and its first model was a 32-footer, built in molds given to it by Ted Irwin. Yup, the Endeavour 32 has the same hull as the Irwin 32. Its second model was the Endeavour 37, based on a smaller, little known Lee Creekmore hull that was cut in half and extended. It's not the prettiest boat in the world, and not very fast, but heavily built. Owners report no

MODEL	LOA	LWL	BEAM	DRAFT	BALLAST	DISPLACEMENT	SAIL AREA	D/L	SA/D
ALLIED PRINCESS	36′ 0″	27′ 6″	11′ 0″	4′ 6″	5,000 lbs.	14,400 lbs.	604 sq. ft.	309	16.3
BRISTOL 35.5C	35′ 6″	27′ 6″	10′ 10″	3′ 9/9′ 6″	7,000 lbs.	15,000 lbs.	589 sq. ft.	322	15.5
ENDEAVOUR 37	37′ 5″	30′ 0″	11′ 7″	4′ 6″	8,000 lbs.	21,000 lbs.	580 sq. ft.	347	12.2
FREEDOM 36	36′ 5″	30′ 7″	12′ 6″	4′ 6″ or 6′ 0″	6,500 lbs.	14,370 lbs.	685 sq. ft.	224	18.6
O'DAY 37	37′ 0″	30′ 4″	11′ 2″	4′ 9″	5,370 lbs.	14,000 lbs.	594 sq. ft.	226	16.4
S2 11.0	36′ 0″	28′ 3″	11′ 11″	5′ 6″ or 4′ 8″	6,000 lbs.	15,000 lbs.	632 sq. ft.	297	17.2
C&C LANDFALL 38	37′ 7″	30′ 2″	12′ 0″	4′ 11″	6,500 lbs.	16,700 lbs.	648 sq. ft.	272	15.9
NIAGARA 35	35′ 1″	26′ 8″	11′ 5″	5′ 2″	5,500 lbs.	14,000 lbs.	598 sq. ft.	329	16.5
TARTAN 37 (CB)	37′ 4″	28′ 6″	11′ 9″	4′ 2″/7′ 9″	7,500 lbs.	15,500 lbs.	625 sq. ft.	298	16.1

structural problems with the single-skin laminate hull. It has a long, shoal-draft keel and spade rudder. What helped popularize the Endeavour 37 was the choice of layouts: an aft cabin with a quarter berth, a V-berth and quarterberth, and a (rare) two aft-cabin model. Production ended after 1983. Prices are around $50,000.

FREEDOM 36

After the Halsey Herreshoff-designed Freedom 40 that reintroduced the idea of unstayed spars, several other designers were commissioned to develop the model line-up. These included David Pedrick and Gary Mull; the latter drew the Freedom 36, in production from about 1986 to 1989. While the early and larger Freedoms were ketch rigged, models like the 36 were sloops, which were less costly to build and easier to handle. To improve upwind performance, a vestigial, self-tacking jib was added. That's the main appeal of these boats: tacking is as easy as turning the wheel. The 36's hull is balsa-cored, as is the deck. Balsa adds tremendous stiffness, and reduces weight, which improves performance. The downside: Core rot near the partners on this boat could lead to a dismasting and costly hull damage. Interior finishing is above average. These boats sell right at our price break: low to mid-$70s.

O'DAY 37

This low-profile family sloop was second only to the O'Day 40 in size of boats built by O'Day under its various owners. Founded by Olympic gold-medalist George O'Day to build one-designs and family daysailers, subsequent ownership expanded into trailer sailers and small- to medium-size coastal cruisers. Like the others, the 37 was designed by C. Raymond Hunt Associates. The center-cockpit is a bit unusual but some prefer it. The cruising fin keel and skeg-mounted rudder are well suited to shallow-water cruising, and the generous beam provides good form stability. The hull is solid fiberglass, and the deck is cored with balsa. Owners report it is well balanced and forgiving. Early 1980s models are on the market for less than $40,000.

S2 11.0

Built in Holland, Mich., the S2 sailboat line emerged in 1973 when owner Leon Slikkers sold his powerboat company, Slickcraft, to AMF and had to sign a no-compete agreement. The 11.0 was the largest model, introduced in 1977. The designer was Arthur Edmunds, who also drew the Allied Princess 36, though the two are very different. Edmunds resisted some of the bumps and bulges indicative of the International Offshore Rule (IOR), but still gave the 11.0 fine ends, and a large foretriangle. Two accommodation plans were offered: an aft cockpit with conventional layout of V-berth, saloon, and quarter berth and galley flanking the companionway; and an unusual center-cockpit layout with V-berth forward immediately followed by opposing settees, and then galley and head more or less under the cockpit. The master suite is in the aft cabin, of course. The hull is solid fiberglass and includes the molded keel cavity for internal ballast; the deck is balsa-cored. Overall construction quality is rated above average. Prices range from about $30,000 to $50,000.

Capt. John Bailey's Niagara 35, Segel, *does a brisk bareboat charter trade on the Chesapeake.*

Photo by John Bailey

The Niagara 35 is a handsome cruiser with Hinterhoeller quality.

Austria-born George Hinterhoeller emigrated to Canada in the 1950s and began doing what he did all his life: build boats, first out of wood, then fiberglass composites. He was one of four partners who formed C&C Yachts in 1969. He left in 1975 to again form his own company, Hinterhoeller Yachts. The company built two distinct model lines: the better known Nonsuch line of cruising boats with unstayed catboat rigs, and the Niagara line. About 300 Niagara 35s were built between 1978 and 1995.

DESIGN

Canadian naval architect Mark Ellis designed the Niagara 35 as well as all of the Nonsuch models. He gave the 35 a beautiful, classic sheer with generous freeboard in the bow, swooping aft to a low point roughly at the forward end of the cockpit, and then rising slightly to the stern. The classic influence also is seen in the relatively long overhangs; today's trend is to lengthen the waterline as much as possible, with near plumb bows, discounting the old belief that overhangs were necessary for reserve buoyancy. So the Niagara 35 has a somewhat shorter waterline than the others in our group of nine, but as the hull heels, the overhangs immerse and sailing length increases. The short waterline also accounts for the 35's moderately high displacement/length ratio of 329. There is a direct correlation between the D/L and volume in the hull, and for a cruising boat, there must be sufficient space for tanks and provisions. Unfortunately, tankage in the 35 isn't that much: 80 gallons water, 30 gallons diesel fuel, and 25 gallons holding tank.

The cruising fin keel is long enough for the boat to dry out on its own bottom should the need arise, like drying out against a seawall in Bali to paint the bottom. (Sorry—just dreaming!) The spade rudder seems a little unusual for a cruiser. When asked about it, Ellis said that it provides superior control to a skeg-mounted rudder, and that skegs, which are supposed to protect the rudder, often aren't built strong enough to do the job. Circumnavigator and designer/builder/developer Steve Dashew agrees that offshore, in nasty conditions, spade rudders are the way to go.

CONSTRUCTION

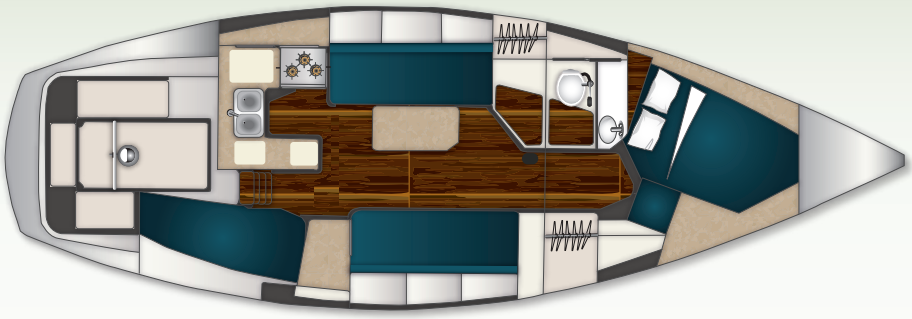
George Hinterhoeller and his associates at C&C Yachts were early advocates of balsa-cored hull construction, because it reduces weight, increases panel stiffness, and lowers costs. The worry, of course, is delamination of the core to the inner and outer skins should water penetrate through to the core. This is why quality builders remove balsa coring wherever through-hulls or bolts pass through the hull or deck, and fill the area with a mix of resin and reinforcements. Hinterhoeller was such a builder, but core integrity still deserves close inspection during a pre-purchase survey.

All bulkheads are tabbed to the hull and deck with strips of fiberglass, and this is an important detail for an offshore boat. Many mass-produced boats have molded fiberglass headliners that prevent tabbing bulkheads to the deck; rather, the bulkheads simply fit into molded channels in the headliner, which do not prevent them from moving slightly as the boat flexes in waves.

Hardware quality is good. One owner described the chocks and cleats on his Niagara as "massive." Hatches are Atkins & Hoyle cast aluminum, which are about as good as you can buy. And the original rigging was Navtec rod. Owners report no structural problems.

PERFORMANCE

With its moderately heavy displacement, conservative sailplan, and relatively large keel, the Ni-



The Niagara's long keel (left) gives it directional stability, helping to relieve the strain on the helmsman (or autopilot as the case may be) when steering for long periods. Mark Ellis gave the boat a spade rudder, favoring performance advantage over the traditional skeg-mounted rudder. Two layouts were available: the Encore (above) features a double berth forward. The Classic option offers a workbench, shelves, and a seat in the forepeak.

agara 35 is not a speed demon, and does not point as high as a boat with a deep, narrow fin keel. But that's not what we're after here. The 35's specs are just about what we want for a versatile cruising boat. Owners say performance picks up quickly as the breeze fills in. If the sailplan were larger, for improved light-air performance, you'd have to reef sooner, and reefing is work.

The long keel has another advantage, and that is improved directional stability over shorter keels, which means less effort at the helm. We tend to think that a powerful below-deck autopilot can steer any boat, but autopilots struggle, too. A boat that's easy for the crew to hand steer also is easy for the autopilot to maintain course.

A lot of Niagara 35s were equipped with Volvo saildrives rather than conventional inboard diesel engines. Advantages of the saildrive: improved handling in reverse and lower cost. Disadvantages: potential corrosion of aluminum housing and not as much power. Various inboard diesels were fitted: Westerbeke 27-, 33-, and 40-horsepower models, and a Universal M35D, all with V-drives. Owners rate access somewhat difficult.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Two interior layouts were offered: the Classic, in which the forepeak has a workbench, shelves, seat, and stowage instead of the usual V-berth; and the Encore, which has an offset double berth forward, and quarter berth and U-shaped galley aft. The saloon in the Classic, with settees and dining table, is farther forward than usual; the head and owner's stateroom, with single and double berths, is aft. Both plans have their fans.

Headroom is 6 feet, 4 inches in the main cabin and 6 feet, 2 inches in the aft cabin. Berths are 6 feet, 7 inches long; a few owners say berth widths are a bit tight. A couple of thoughts on the double berths offered in these two plans: V-berths are subject to a lot of motion underway and so do not make great sea berths, but at anchor, ventilation via the forward hatch makes them far more comfortable than a stuffy aft cabin, where it's much more difficult to introduce air flow. Offset double berths do not waste outboard space like V-berths do, but the person sleeping outboard must crawl over his/her partner to get out of bed.

CONCERNS

Thirty-year-old boats should be surveyed thoroughly. Nothing lasts forever, but boats well maintained last a lot longer. Pay particular attention to the balsa-cored hull and deck. If either has large areas of delamination, give the boat a pass, because the cost to repair could exceed the value of the boat.

A few owners expressed concern about the boat's handling off the wind, which surprises us somewhat. A test sail in lively conditions should answer that question.

We much prefer the inboard. If you prefer the saildrive, look for signs of corrosion and get a repair estimate.

CONCLUSION

The Niagara 35 is a handsome, classically proportioned cruising sloop from one of the best builders of production boats in North America. It is not considered big enough these days to be a circumnavigator, but certainly large enough for a couple to leisurely cruise the Bahamas, Caribbean Sea, and South Pacific. We found asking prices ranging from around $54,000 to $89,000, with most in the $60,000 range.

WEB RESOURCES

NIAGARA 35 SAILNET FORUM
www.sailnet.com/forums/niagara

Descended from the C&C 38, the Landfall 38 featured a longer deckhouse that boosted interior volume.

Photo by Lee Miller

C&C's emphasis on performance is clearly evident in the Landfall 38.

As noted, George Hinterhoeller was one of four partners who formed C&C Yachts in 1969, at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. The others were Belleville Marine, Bruckmann Manufacturing, and the design firm of George Cuthbertson and George Cassian. From the beginning, the emphasis was on performance. Indeed, the 40-foot *Red Jacket* won the 1968 Southern Ocean Racing Circuit (SORC).

In 1973, Cuthbertson retired to his Ontario farm, citing burn-out. Eight months later, he was back as president of C&C Yachts, telling staff that they ought to pursue more multi-purpose racer/cruiser models. C&C became the dominant boatbuilder in North America, with models ranging from the C&C 24 to the C&C 46, with models just about every 2 feet in between. The Landfall cruiser series was introduced in 1977, with the Landfall 42. It was followed by the Landfall 35, 38, and 48. Production of the 38 ran from 1977 to 1985, with about 180 built.

DESIGN

The C&C Landfall 38 is directly related to the earlier C&C 38. We wrote in our original 1983 review that the older hull design was "…modified with slightly fuller sections forward, a slightly raked transom rather than an IOR reversed transom, a longer, shoaler keel, and a longer deckhouse for increased interior volume." The spade rudder is not everyone's first choice on a serious cruising boat, but it does provide superior control. And the Landfalls have a higher degree of finish inside, along with layouts more suited to family cruising.

The Landfalls perform very well, thanks to lightweight construction and speedy hull forms. The Landfall 38's displacement/length ratio of 272 is the lowest of the three compared in this review.

Notable drawbacks: a V-berth that becomes quite narrow forward, and as noted in the 1983 review, "a hull that rises so quickly aft that C&C's normal gas bottle stowage at the end of the cockpit is eliminated." This on a cruising boat no less, where a hot meal is often the highlight.

Like nearly all the C&C designs, the Landfall 38 is attractively proportioned with sleek lines and a modern look, even several decades later. It appears most dated in the raked bow, but this better suits the anchoring duties on a cruising boat anyway.

CONSTRUCTION

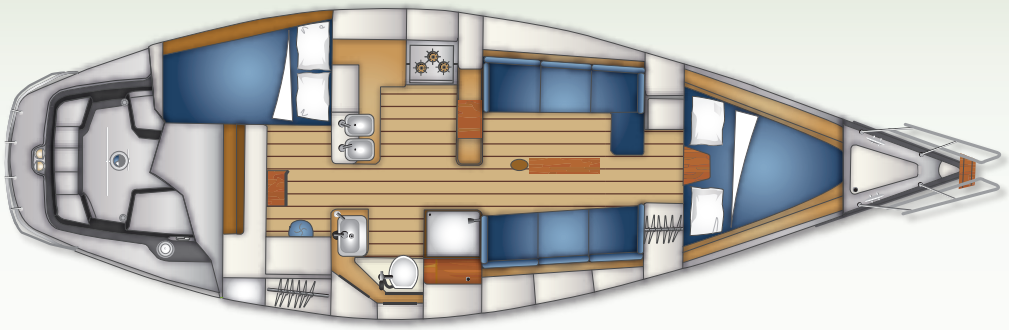
Materials and building processes used in C&C Yachts are very similar to those of the Niagara 35, namely because of Hinterhoeller. Practices he established at C&C continued after he left, at least for the short-term. So what we said about the Niagara 35's balsa-core construction also applies to the Landfall 38, where it is found in the hull, deck, and cabintop.

The hull-deck joint is through-bolted on 6-inch centers, through the teak toerail, which gaves the Landfall series a more traditional look than the distinctive L-shaped anodized aluminum toerail Cuthbertson designed and employed on the rest of the C&C models. The joint is bedded with a butyl tape, which does a good job of keeping out water, but doesn't have the adhesive properties of, say, 3M 5200. On the other hand, if you ever had to remove the deck—heaven forbid!—it would be a lot easier.

Deck hardware is through-bolted with backing plates or large washers, although some of the fasteners come through on the underside, where the core transitions into the core-less flange. We also saw this on our old 1975 C&C 33 test boat. It means two things: water migrating down the fastener after the bedding fails can contact a little bit of balsa, and uneven stresses are placed on the fastener, which above deck can cause gelcoat cracks.

Proper bronze seacocks protect the through-hulls, and hoses are double-clamped for added security. The mast butt is not deep in the bilge where it can corrode in bilge water, but rests on two floor timbers in the sump, above any water that would typically collect.

The external lead-ballast keel is bolted through the keel sump in the hull. Its run is flat, and the boat can sit on its keel, allowing it be careened against a seawall for bottom painting, prop repairs, or other work in locales where boatyards are rare.



Like the Niagara, the Landfall 38 featured a fairly long, shallowish fin keel and a spade rudder. The long, flat run of the keel is handy for careening and offers good directional stability. The boat's horsepower relied greatly on an overlapping genoa. The small, double aft cabin set it apart from many boats of its size. Space for the cabin was gained by moving the companionway slightly to starboard, which makes it more vulnerable to down-flooding when heeled.

In our earlier review, we noted that the engine compartment has no sound insulation, despite its proximity to the owner's berth, but gluing in some lead-lined foam is within the capability of most owners.

PERFORMANCE

Despite being 2,000 pounds heavier than the C&C 38, the Landfall 38 is still a quick boat. Its old PHRF rating of 120 is just a little higher than the Cal 39 at 114, and less than the Tartan 37 we'll look at next.

The mast is a little shorter than that of the C&C 38, but as with most boats of the IOR era, the Landfall 38 has a large foretriangle of 385 square feet. A 150-percent genoa measures 580 square feet, which is a handful for older crew. Roller furling with maybe a 135 percent genoa would be a logical way to minimize the effort required to tack this boat.

Strangely, the Landfall 38 did not come standard with self-tailing winches; a highly recommended upgrade. The main halyard, Cunningham, and reefing lines are led aft to the cockpit, while the headsail halyards run to winches on deck near the mast.

The boat is stiff and well balanced. Owners like the way it handles and appreciate its speed.

The standard engine was a 30-hp Yanmar diesel. The early Yanmar Q series had a reputation for being noisy and vibrating a lot. At some point, C&C began installing the Yanmar 3HM which replaced the 3QM. Power is adequate. The standard prop was a solid two-blade. Engine access leaves a lot to be desired.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The interior is pushed well into the ends of the boat to achieve a legitimate three-cabin accommodation plan. The standard layout was a V-berth forward with cedar-lined hanging locker. The berth narrows quickly forward so that tall people might not find enough foot room. Moving aft, there is a dinette and settees in the saloon, U-shaped galley and large head with shower amidships, and a double berth in the port quarter, opposite a navigation station. In rainy or wild weather, you'll want to close the companionway hatch and keep weather boards in place so that water doesn't spill into the nav station. Installing Plexiglas screens on either side of the ladder will help.

Oddly, there is no place to install fixed-mount instruments outboard of the nav table; that space is given to a hanging locker, but could be modified. Other than this, about the only other shortcoming is that the toilet is positioned so far under the side deck that persons of average size cannot sit upright. And, the head door is louvered, which compromises privacy.

CONCERNS

There is not a lot to complain about with the Landfall 38 that we haven't already said: the V-berth forward is tight, there's no sitting upright on the toilet, there's no place to install electronics at the nav station, and the nav station and aft berth invite a good soaking through the companionway.

Construction is above average, but have a surveyor sound the hull and decks for signs that the fiberglass skins have delaminated from the balsa core. Small areas can be repaired, but our advice is not to buy a boat with widespread delamination.

CONCLUSION

The Landfall 38 is an excellent family boat and coastal cruiser. It's popularity in the Great Lakes region is not surprising. Island hopping to the Caribbean is also within reach, but any longer cruises will likely require more tank capacity and stowage. Standard tankage is 104 gallons water and 32 gallons of fuel. Prices range from around $55,000 to $65,000.

WEB RESOURCES

C&C PHOTO ALBUM
www.cncphotoalbum.com

Tom Wells' Higher Porpoise is right at home in the shoal waters of Chesapeake Bay.

Photo by Tom Wells

Tartan 37 offers shoal draft and S&S styling.

In the early years of fiberglass boat construction, the major builders—Columbia, Cal, Morgan, Tartan, and others—commissioned well-known naval architects to design their models. Today, this work is more often done by a no-name in-house team over which the company has more control. Tartan Yachts of Grand River, Ohio, relied almost exclusively on the prestigious New York firm of Sparkman & Stephens; they'd drawn the Tartan 27 for the company's antecedent, Douglass & McLeod, and were called on again to design the Tartan 37, which had a very successful production run from 1976 to 1988.

DESIGN

The Tartan 37 has the modern, clean, strong lines that typified S&S designs. The bow is raked, and the angle of the reverse transom is in line with the backstay—an easily missed detail that nevertheless affects the viewer's impression of the boat. Freeboard is moderate and the sheer is gentle. In an early review, we wrote: "Underwater, the boat has a fairly long, low-aspect ratio fin keel, and a high-aspect ratio rudder faired into the hull with a substantial skeg." In addition to the deep fin keel, a keel/centerboard also was offered. A distinctive feature is how the cockpit coamings fair into the cabin trunk. Its displacement/length ratio of 299 and sail area/displacement ratio of 16.1 rank it in the middle of the 9-model group (see table, page 9), so while it looks racy, it's not going to smoke the other nine.

CONSTRUCTION

From its beginning, Tartan Yachts set out to build boats of above average quality, and this can be seen in both the finish and fiberglass work. Some unidirectional rovings were incorporated in the hull laminate to better carry loads; like the vast majority of boats of this era, the resin was polyester. Vinylester skin coats, which better prevent osmotic blistering, had yet to appear. Some printthrough is noticeable, more on dark-color hulls. The hull and deck are cored with end-grain balsa, which brings with it our usual warnings about possible delamination. The hull-deck joint is bolted through the toerail and bedded in butyl and polysulfide. Taping of bulkheads to the hull is neatly executed with no raw fiberglass edges visible anywhere in the interior. Seacocks have proper bronze ball valves. One owner advises checking the complex stainless-steel chainplate/tie rod assembly, especially if it's a saltwater boat.

Shortcomings: Pulpit fasteners lack backing plates. Scuppers and bilge pump outlets have no shutoffs.

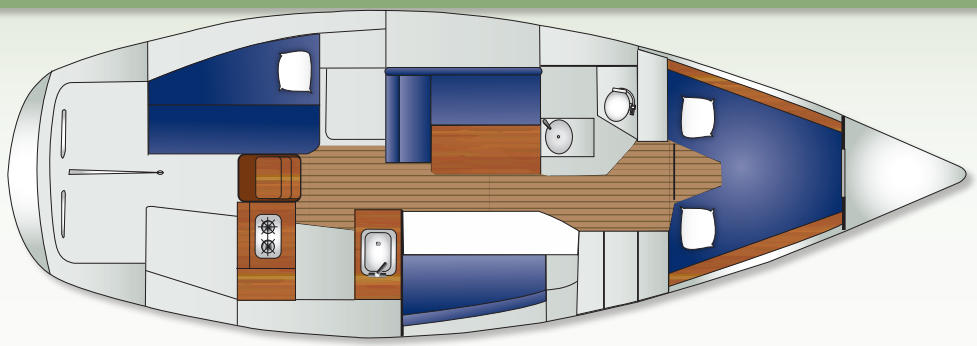
PERFORMANCE

Under sail, the Tartan 37 balances and tracks well. As noted earlier, it's not a fireburner, but not a slug either. It's no longer widely raced, but the few participating in PHRF races around the country have handicaps ranging from 135-177 seconds per mile. The Niagara 35 now rates 150-165, and the C&C 38 126-138.

The deep fin-keel version points a little higher than the keel/centerboard because it has more lift, however, the deep draft of 6 feet, 7 inches is a liability for coastal cruising.

Because of the large foretriangle and relatively small mainsail, tacking a genoa requires larger winches and more muscle than if the relative areas of the two were reversed. For relaxed sailing, jiffy reefing of the main and a roller-furling headsail take the pain out of sail handling.

The 41-horsepower Westerbeke 50 diesel provides ample power. Standard prop was a 16-inch two blade. A folding or feathering propeller reduces drag, thereby im-



The S&S designed Tartan 37 combines the fairly conservative underbody of a long fin keel with a skeg-hung rudder with a long centerboard that boosts windward performance. The lines are classic S&S for that era. The accomodations are fairly conventional and best suited for a couple. The aft cabin, supposedly a double, is tight and will be stuffy in the tropics. The V-berth is also cozy for two.

proving speed. Access to the front of the engine, behind the companionway ladder, is good. Unfortunately, the oil dipstick is aft, requiring one to climb into the starboard cockpit locker—after you've removed all the gear stowed there.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The layout below is straightforward with few innovations: large V-berth forward with hanging locker and drawers; head with sink and shower; saloon with drop-down table, settee, and pilot berth; U-shaped galley to starboard; and to port, a quarterberth that can be set up as a double. To work at the navigation station one sits on the end of the quarterberth. This plan will sleep more crew than most owners will want on board, but it's nice to have the option. Pilot berths make good sea berths but often fill with gear that can't easily be stowed elsewhere.

The fold-down table, like most of its ilk, is flimsy. Underway, tables should be strong enough to grab and hold on to without fear of damaging it or falling—that's not the case here. And the cabin sole is easily marred trying to get the pins in the legs to fit into holes in the sole.

Finish work in teak is excellent, though this traditional choice of wood makes for a somewhat dark interior. Today, builders have worked up the nerve to select lighter species such as ash and maple.

Eight opening portlights, four ventilators, and three hatches provide very good ventilation.

The standard stove was alcohol, which few people want anymore, owing to low BTU content (which means it takes longer to boil water), the difficulty in lighting, and almost invisible flame. Propane is a better choice, but there is no built-in stowage on deck for the tank, which must be in a locker sealed off from the interior and vented overboard. (You could mount the tank exposed on deck, but that would not complement the boat's handsome lines.)

CONCERNS

There's not much to pick at here, but we'll try. Centerboards come with their own peculiar set of problems: slapping in the trunk while at anchor, broken pendants and pivot pins, and fouling in the trunk that inhibits operation.

Often what sets apart higher-quality boats from the rest of the fleet is the cost of materials and labor in making up the wood interior. They look better than bare fiberglass, work better because they have more drawers and stowage options, and are warmer and quieter. The unnoticed flip side is that the joinerwork tends to hide problems, like the source of a leak. When all the fasteners are neatly bunged and varnished, it takes courage to start pulling apart the interior!

Checking engine oil is unnecessarily difficult, and to operate emergency steering gear (a tiller) the lazarette hatch must be held open, which could be dangerous. Lastly, the companionway sill is low for offshore sailing; stronger drop boards would help compensate.

CONCLUSION

The enthusiasm for this boat is strong. In fact, there's a whole book written about it, put together with the help of the Tartan 37 Sailing Association (link below). You'll pay in the mid- to high-$60s, which ranks it with the Niagara 35 and Freedom 36 as the most expensive of our nine. While Tartan 37s have made impressive voyages, and are as capable as the Niagara 35 and C&C Landfall 38, like them, it's not really a blue-water design. We view it rather as a smart coastal cruiser and club racer. Good design and above-average construction give it extra long life on the used-boat market.

WEB RESOURCES

TARTAN OWNERS
www.tartanowners.org

TARTAN 37 SAILING ASSOC.
www.tartan37.com