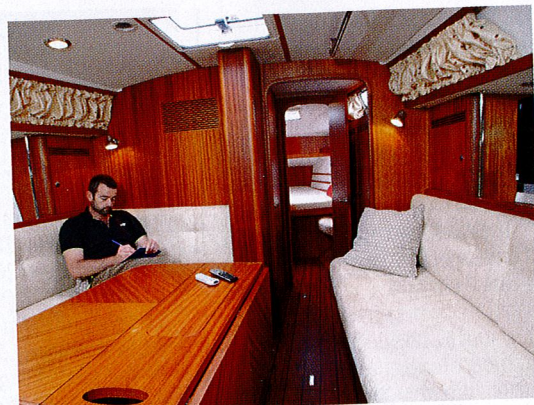


# Saare 41



If you're looking for a centre-cockpit 40-footer, the Saare 41 should definitely be on your list. Chris Beeson steps aboard 'an excellent luxury cruiser'



The saloon table is foam cored to save weight

## NEW BOATS TRIED & TESTED

**S**aare – Estonian for 'island' – is probably not a name you'll be familiar with. Saare's 41 is designed by Karl-Johan Stråhlmann, Finnulf's long-time designer, and built on Saaremaa, a Baltic island, by a company formed in 1991. Before anyone starts twitching about Estonian builders, our test boat was very well built – Arcona and Finnulf also have yards on the island. She's not quite up to Scandinavian standards but neither is the price. She's packed with options and still 20% cheaper than her Nordic rivals.

### Performance

Once the morning's rain-laden, scudding skies had cleared, we

took her out to find a blustery Force 5 bowling up the western Solent. After leaving Hamble, we hoisted the mainsail in Southampton Water and bore away to the south-east. She heeled regally and surged ahead with surprising enthusiasm.

Once past Calshot Spit, we rolled out half the genoa and beat eagerly along, making 6.7-8 knots in 18-25 knots of apparent wind. The coachroof-mounted genoa tracks allowed us to sail at 30° to the apparent wind and tack through 70° on the compass – very impressive.

She fetched along at 7.6-8.6 knots in 15-20 knots apparent and, with a touch more genoa, she made 8-9.5 knots on a beam reach. Broad reaching back to Calshot, she clocked 5.8-7.1 knots in 12-17 knots of apparent wind. Despite the complicated cable run from wheel to quadrant, the

helm feels good – tight, responsive and well weighted.

### Living below

The main hatch handrails lead down to hand-holds cut into the five-step companionway and a handrail runs the length of the saloon. You'll be safe moving around below, and the light switch to starboard of the hatch saves you groping for illumination.

Headroom is more than 6ft throughout the saloon. There's plenty of light and ventilation, and floor-level LEDs create a pleasant ambience. The table, foam-cored like the doors to save weight, has two folding leaves but you need to perch on the edge of the settees to eat. You can slouch to watch the pop-up TV to starboard. Fuel and water tanks are below the starboard and port settees. There's some stowage behind the seat backs, along with

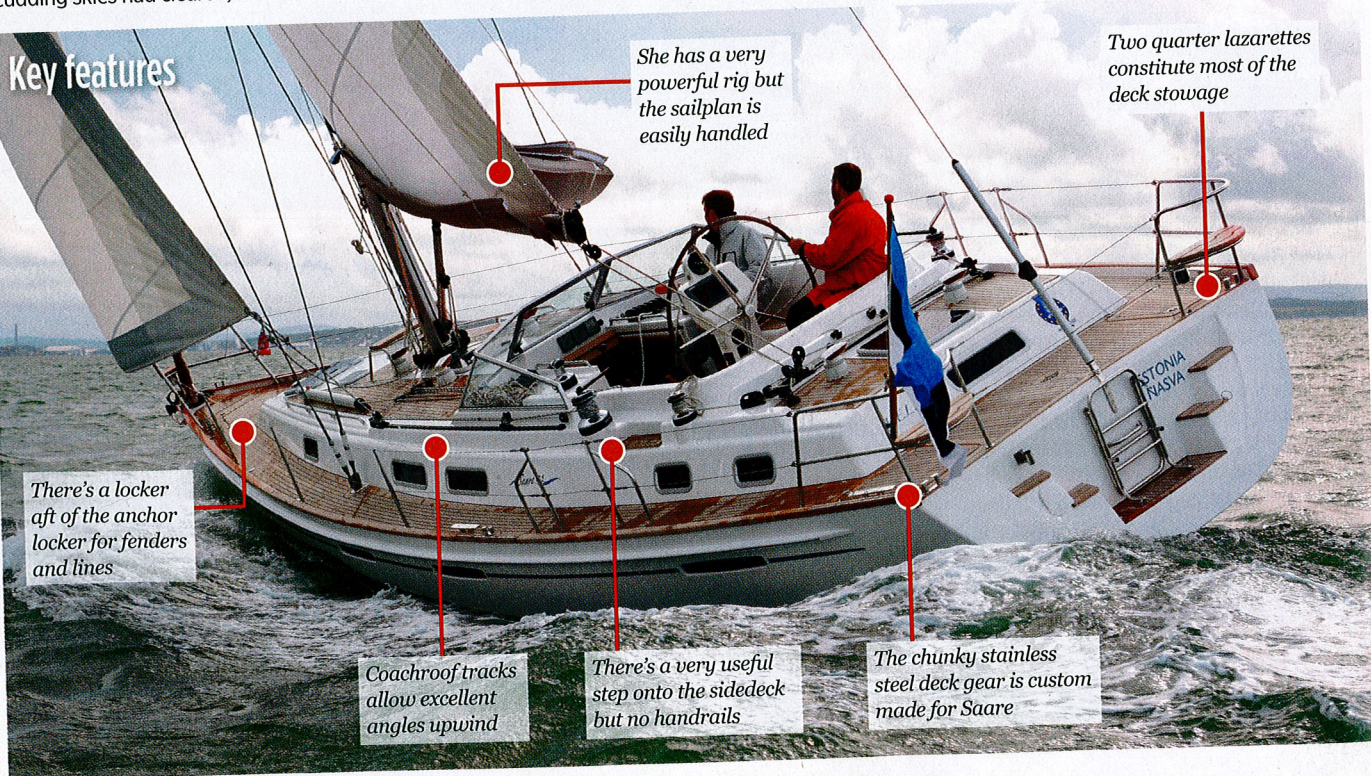
excellent tie-rod access, in lockers outboard, in drawers behind the companionway steps, in the table and below the sole – the deep keel sump should keep the space dry.

The aft cabin has no less than five opening hatches and two hull ports. Headroom is 5ft 8in at the door and 5ft 11in at best – very respectable for a 41ft centre-cockpit yacht. The 6ft 8in by 5ft island double berth has a two-part, pocket-sprung mattress with quadrant access, stowage and drawers below. There's lots of locker space but only one for hanging and none shelved, and the engine blower fan is audible.

Unlike more expensive rivals, the aft cabin has an en suite heads with 5ft 8in-6ft headroom, an electric toilet, an opening port and a hand shower but no protection for the woodwork. Between the aft heads and the chart table is a big utility room. Blue-water cruisers

PHOTOS: GRAHAM SNOOK (2) PHOTOS

### Key features



She has a very powerful rig but the sailplan is easily handled

Two quarter lazarettes constitute most of the deck stowage

There's a locker aft of the anchor locker for fenders and lines

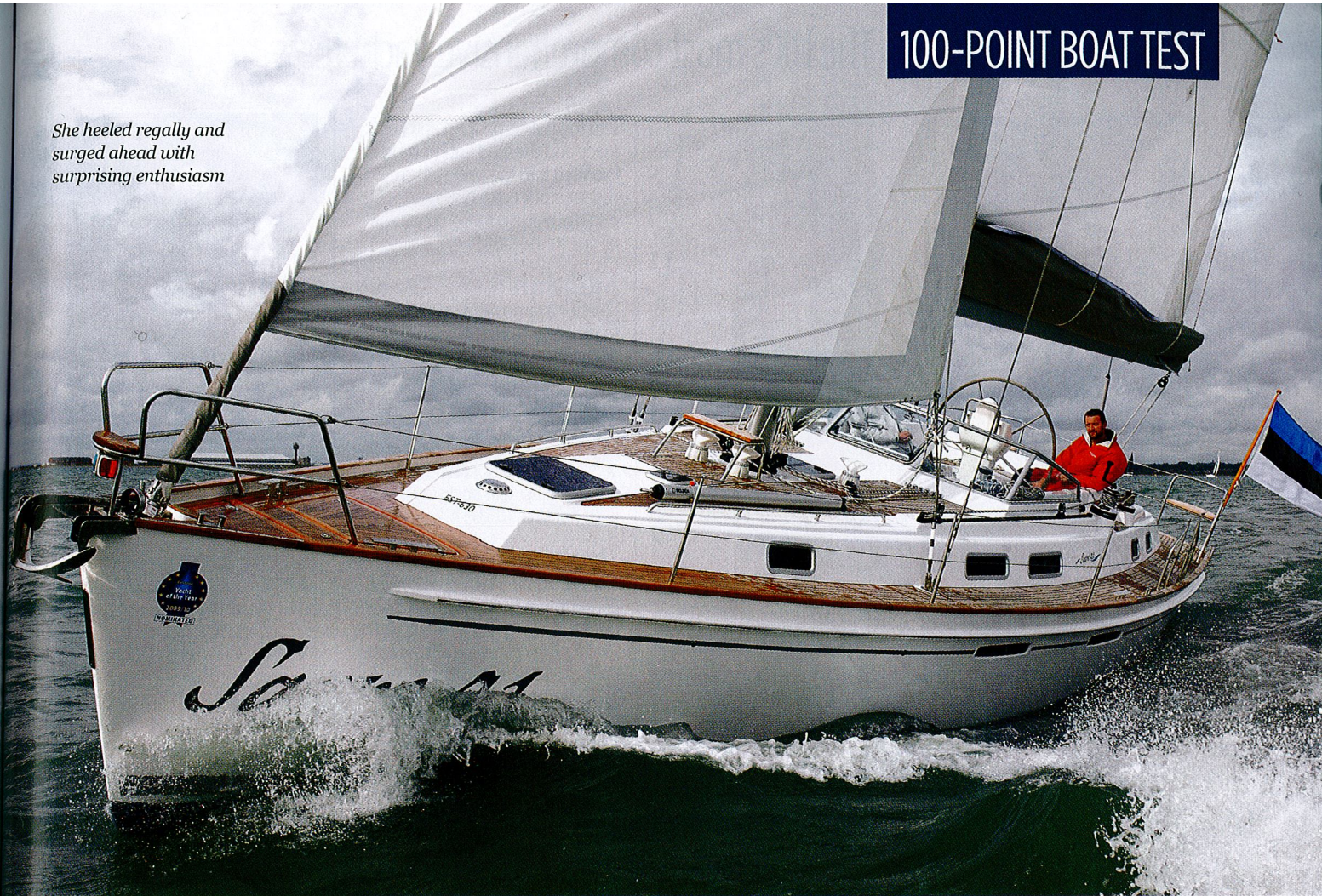
Coachroof tracks allow excellent angles upwind

There's a very useful step onto the sidedeck but no handrails

The chunky stainless steel deck gear is custom made for Saare



*She heeled regally and surged ahead with surprising enthusiasm*

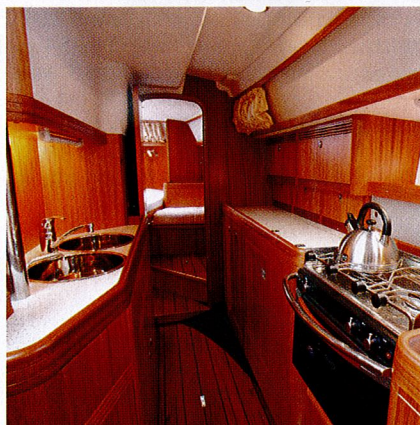


## *'Packed with options, she's still 20% cheaper than her Nordic rivals'*

could install extra systems, or use it for cockpit stowage as there's a hatch in the cockpit seating, but for coastal use I'd consider extending the en suite heads to make a separate shower cubicle.

There's 6ft 2in headroom in the forward cabin and the white hull cladding makes the most of the available light, but why no hull ports? Stowage is OK, with more locker space opposite the heads. The 6ft 10in by 5ft 5in mattress is split athwartships – making it easy to get at the stowage, water tank and bow thruster below the berth. The en suite heads has 6ft 3in headroom, good bracing, two opening ports, a separate shower and some stowage. A removable bar creates a big wet locker.

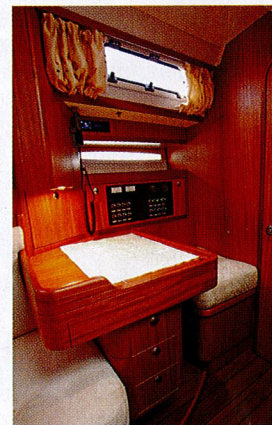
At the cost of cockpit stowage, the galley has at least 5ft 10in headroom. Light, ventilation and stowage are good but a striplight above the worktop, outboard aft, would be useful. The chart table to starboard is about half-Admiralty chart size with decent stowage. Bracing is good and the white-and-red chart light is excellent. But there's no almanac-sized shelving and the switches are lit, so at night you can see the switch but not its function. An icon on each switch would help.



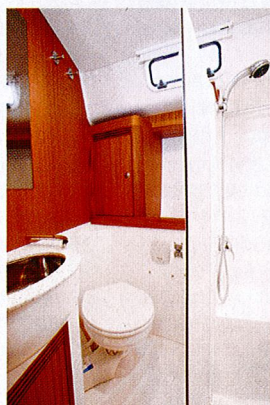
*Light, ventilation and stowage in the galley are good. A worktop striplight would help*



*There's 6ft 2in headroom in the bright cladded forecabin*



*The chart table has plenty of instrument space*



*The forward heads has a separate shower cubicle*



*With five opening hatches and two hull ports, the aft cabin has excellent light...*



*... and an en suite heads, unlike more expensive rivals*



# 100-POINT BOAT TEST The UK's most comprehensive yacht tests



ABOVE: A step up to the mast is useful.  
LEFT: The rig is powerful but everything can be managed from the cockpit

## Design

She's powerful: the Moody 41 and Westerly Oceanlord 41 have 20% and 15% less sail area respectively than the Saare's 86.4m<sup>2</sup> (930sq ft). Her 11.2m (36ft 9in) waterline length is 0.45m (1ft 6in) longer than the Oceanlord and 0.84m (2ft 9in) longer than the Moody. At 10,500kg (23,150 lb), she's about 10% heavier than either, displacing more even than the Bowman 42, but at least 10% less than the

Regina 40 and Najad 410. Her ballast ratio of 37 is less than the Oceanlord's 38 and the Moody's 41, but her fin-and-bulb lead keel makes her stiffer than she appears.

## Construction

Hull and deck are end-grain balsa-cored GRP sandwiches infused with isophthalic resin, with solid laminate around through-hull fittings and deck strong points. A structural GRP grid is laminated

into the hull to bear rig and keel loads and the lead antimony keel is bolted into the keel stub. The rudder stock is stainless steel and the blade is foam-cored and epoxy-infused GRP.

## Sailplan

She has a large 48m<sup>2</sup> (517sq ft) mainsail by North Sails Finland and a 38m<sup>2</sup> (409sq ft) 140% genoa that, as we were well reefed, we sheeted through the Dyform shrouds of the 19/20 fractional Seldén mast. The mast has two sets of sweptback spreaders and has an adjustable backstay. There is an optional 105% jib.

## Deck layout

The windscreen improves cockpit comfort, but the sprayhood covers none of the seating in the rain. The seating is long but, as with most centre-cockpit designs, there's no backrest so you can't stretch out and keep watch. Whether it's a utility room or a cockpit locker, I'd want a better seal around the locker lid and a bulletproof latch – from below I could see daylight through the seal, so water would come through, too.

Two electric Harken 40 winches deal with halyards, 53s handle the genoa and 40s handle the main, sheeted on a track just aft of the cockpit with a 4:1 traveller. The mainsheet and primary winches are within easy reach of the 3ft 10in wheel. There are lipped teak steps outside the cockpit, but because of the coachroof tracks there are no grabrails aft of the mast, so you have to hang onto jib sheets or lifelines.

There's a Seldén bowsprit stowed on the coachroof. Up at the



A second deck locker, aft of the anchor locker, is useful for fenders

bow, the electric furler is recessed and there's a shallow locker aft of the anchor locker, useful for fenders, covers and lines. A recessed windlass is optional and the custom-made stainless steel cleats and fairleads look good. At the stern, two 2ft deep lazarette lockers provide the lion's share of the deck stowage and, as the port one is also the gas locker, that's not much. The heavy lids need gas struts but the lights inside the lockers are a nice touch.

## Under power

The 55hp Volvo Penta diesel engine drives a standard three-blade folding prop on a saildrive. At 1,500rpm she logged 4.7 knots, she'll cruise comfortably at 2,500rpm making 6.3 knots and you'll get 6.9 knots flat out at 3,000rpm. She turns nimbly. ▲

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### UNDER SAIL

#### PERFORMANCE

We easily outperformed the predictions on the designer's polar diagram. For a centre-cockpit cruiser she's very quick indeed and handled her unbalanced sail area well, though this did cause her to wander somewhat.

**9**<sub>/10</sub>

#### AT THE HELM

Visibility forward is great and the helm feels positive. Having the sheet winches in reach is great for shorthanded cruising but I felt exposed perched so high with coamings a touch too low. That's centre-cockpit cruising, though.

**7**<sub>/10</sub>

### ON DECK

#### DECK LAYOUT

The sidedecks are clear, the step forward of the mast is useful and the anchor locker is good. Deck stowage is limited for long-distance cruising without converting the utility room into a cockpit locker. I'd like some grabrails between cockpit and mast.

**7**<sub>/10</sub>

#### SAILPLAN

The rig is powerful and simply arranged but, while the primary winches are up to spec, I'd have liked a beefier mainsheet winch. Everything can be managed from the cockpit, so the only reason you would have to go forward is to deploy the bowsprit.

**8**<sub>/10</sub>

### BUILD

#### DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Aesthetically, she carries off the centre-cockpit well, and she's quick, seakindly and solidly built, though a couple of rough edges scuffed the generally excellent finish. Stowage is adequate for coastal cruising but insufficient for ocean passages.

**8**<sub>/10</sub>

#### MAINTENANCE

Seacocks are easily accessible and the systems room means other utilities would be fairly easy to get at. Companionway steps, once removed, are tricky to stow. Front engine access is a bit pinched but a panel in the galley makes engine maintenance easier.

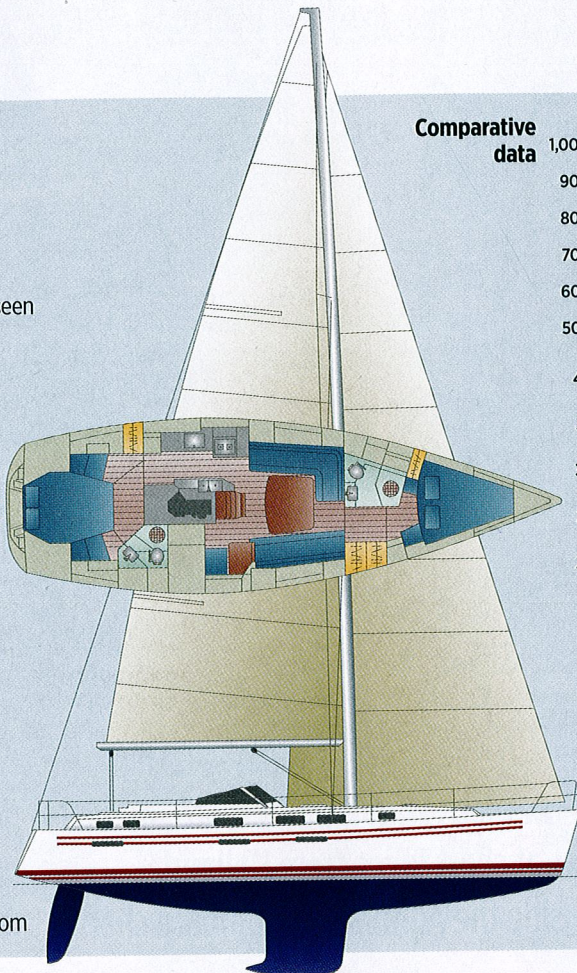
**9**<sub>/10</sub>



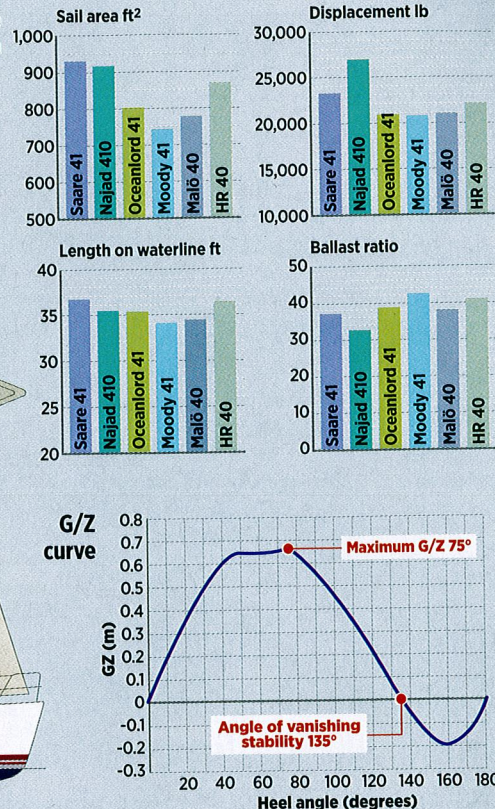
## TECHNICAL

## Saare 41

- Price £291,460 (€344,265) as seen
- LOA 12.5m (41ft)
- LWL 11.2m (36ft 9in)
- Beam 3.92m (12ft 10in)
- Draught 2m (6ft 6in)
- Displacement 10,500kg (23,148 lb)
- Ballast 3,900kg (8,598 lb)
- Sail area 86.4m<sup>2</sup> (930sq ft)
- Engine 55hp
- Diesel 300 lit (66 gal)
- Water 310 lit (68 gal)
- Displ/length 208
- Sail area/displ 18.3
- Ballast ratio (%) 37
- RCD category A
- STIX 35.5
- Designer Karl-Johan Stråhlmann
- Builder Saare Yachts
- Contact A-Board Yachts
- Tel 02380 456169
- Website www.aboardyachts.com



## Comparative data



ARTWORK &amp; GRAPHS: MAXINE HEATH

## THREE OTHERS TO CONSIDER (Priced at similar specification, inc 20% VAT)

1

## Malö 40 – £366,000

Not centre-cockpit, but aft cockpit with a small aft deck. Robust, reliable and proven, from a big-ticket Scandinavian builder



2

## Hallberg-Rassy 40 – £350,000

Centre-cockpit design with proven round-the-world credentials and plenty of awards from another big Swedish name



3

## Used (1995) Westerly Oceanlord 41 – £110,000

Dubois's centre-cockpit Sealord was extended and is now regarded as one of Westerly's highlights



PHOTO: COLIN WORKS/PISTEL.COM

## BELOW DECK

## LIVING BELOW

Stowage is the main issue. There's not enough in the saloon, which is comfortable, secure, light and well ventilated; it's eccentrically arranged in the spacious aft cabin with no shelving and a single hanging locker, and it's also a bit mean in the forecabin.

8/10

## CHART TABLE

She lacks a decent-sized bookshelf and the table could be bigger but stowage is good and we liked the chart locker below the table. It's secure, well lit and has plenty of instrument space. The other minor gripe is the switch panel, which obscures function at night.

9/10

## GALLEY

There's plenty of stowage and a saltwater foot pump as well as the mixer tap above the twin sinks. The lighting is well arranged, headroom is good throughout and it's a secure place to work. The large fridge has no freezer section, but that's about the only issue.

9/10

## HEADS

Despite its odd teak 'latch', the forward heads' separate shower cubicle gives it the edge, though I would change the utility room into a shower for the aft heads. Stowage, light and ventilation are all good and the forward heads doubles as a giant wet locker.

7/10

## TOTAL SCORE

I'm yet to be sold on any centre-cockpit design below 50ft but their popularity suggests many sailors like them – and for this boat is definitely one for their list. For the price, she's well built with very few noticeable exceptions. She's quick, stiff and easily handled. With a few caveats, deck stowage chief among them, she would make an excellent luxury cruiser for a couple with occasional guests.

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