LB Takes the Helm

The Schucker 440 Motorsailer

Dependable and Easy

by Dave Kitz

WHO WOULDN'T THRILL to the excitement of cruising under sail, the freedom and challenge of the sea? The mere mention of places where sailors cruise quickens the pulse — Clapperton, Cabbage Key, Cape Fear, the Benjamins, Sister Bay, Arcadia, Thousand Islands, Ten Thousand Islands. Cruising means bright summer skies, a broad wake trailing astern, the sextant gleaming in the sun, nautical almanac, sight reduction tables, Fort Collins . . .

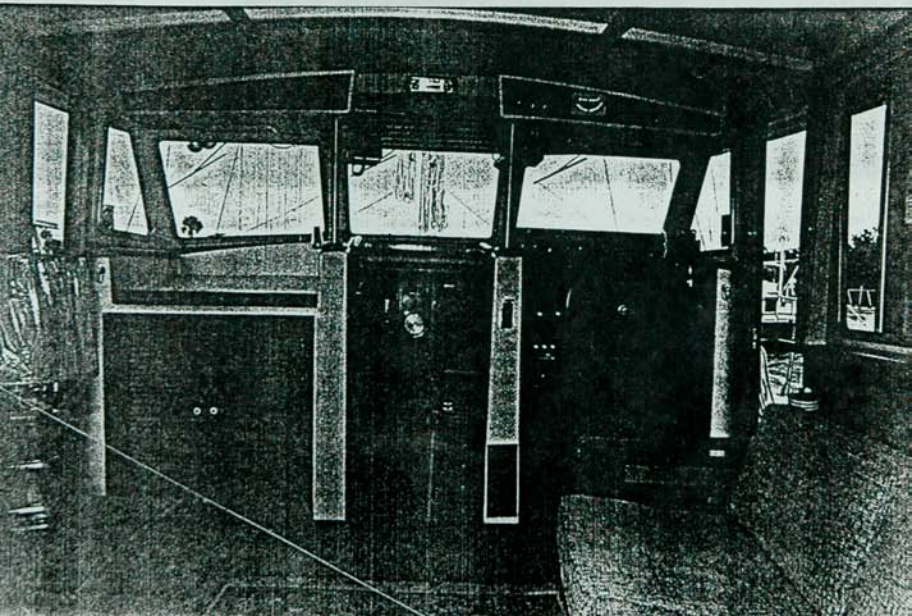
But, fortunately or unfortunately, there's another side — like the digital sounder reading a chilling 3, then a 4. Ah! A 5, back to 3 (cross your fingers!) Like clawing your way forward on slippery decks, take one down, put a smaller one back up, clawing your way back to the cockpit. Raindrops keepfalling. Wish I had contact lenses. Cabin looks so warm and inviting. But it's off limits until 0400. It's cold.

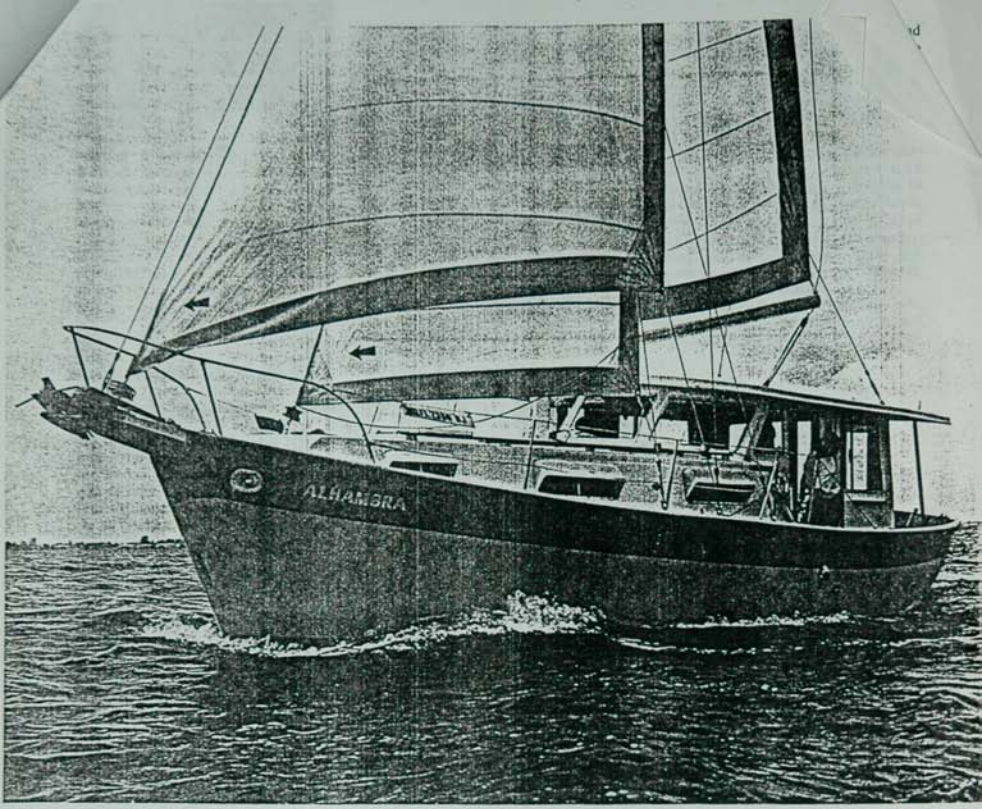
This is all solved by the motorsailer.

Until very recently, the motorsailer was not taken all that seriously. Oh! There were the Stoningtons, the Newporters and similar vintage craft, but these boats, you understand, were for — well — for older people. When you talked cruising sailboats, you were really talking about the hauteur of preened yawls, cutters and ketches. Not motorsailers. In the beautiful family of sailing, the motorsailer was the schlepp.

That is changing — fast.

I had my first inkling that the Schucker 440 might be a revealing experience when I was escorted through the firm's plant at Cape Coral, Florida, by Jim Schucker himself, president and founder of the company. It's not an extremely large facility, but it's up-to-date and efficient looking, and I had the opportunity to see at first hand the craft's sturdy, hand-laid construction. The hull has six pairs of 1-½ oz. mat and 24 oz. woven roving over ¾ oz. mat and gel-





coat. From the waterline to the turn of the keel are four more pairs, for a total of 20 layers. The firm is content with a production of 30 boats a year which allows ample time for custom quality in each boat.

Heading out the narrow channel from the Yacht Club at Cape Coral into the Caloosahatchee River, I found immediately that although the Schucker is a very beefy 26,000 lbs., it is responsive when maneuvering in tight quarters. A burst from the 85-hp Perkins diesel nudged the stern smartly, and once underway, the helm was surprisingly sensitive.

Instantly, I was aware of the first of the motorsailer's many operating advantages. The fathometer flashed 4, then 3, then 4, 5, 3, 4, steadied at 4. But this doesn't mean you have four feet under the keel. Subtracting a foot and a half, the distance of the transducer from the bottom of the boat, you get not over two and a half feet between your keel and the bottom of the Caloosahatchee.

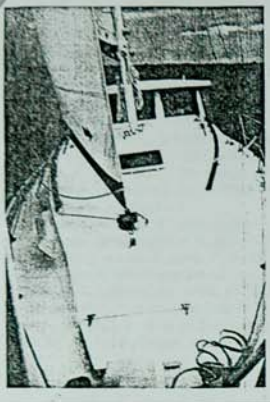
This is the kind of boating that many of us do, really. Those deep water passages are great, but how many of us plan to follow Mitchell, Jones, Hiscock or Slocum? We deal mostly with mischievous currents that crowd vessels off course or inopportune winds that drive bay waters to sea, exposing small reefs that normally are awash. The very term "coastwise cruising" implies shoal draft waters fraught with perils. The Shucker 440, however, draws but 3' 2", about the same as a 25-footer.

Our test boat was Jim Schucker's own boat; in fact, he lives aboard. There is no better way, he believes, to find out what is needed, what could be better and, presumably, what doesn't work. This boat seemed to have an aura of self-reliance, having proudly proved itself in gale force winds when the family returned from Mexico to Florida.

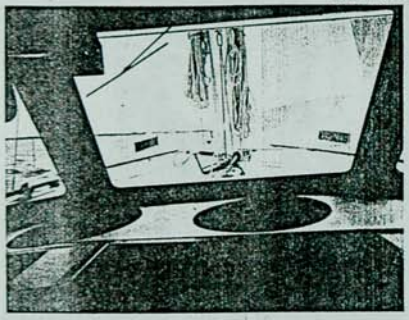
"It blew 75 knots," Jim recalled wryly. "There was no time to get anything down. But nothing parted, and nothing gave way!"

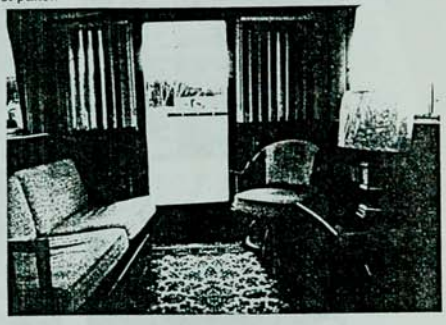
The huge deckhouse (opposite page) is comfortable and inviting from whence the craft is controlled at all times, whether under power or sail. In the photo above, the bow sections of the Schucker are full and mighty, with a look of authority. The lines have a definite flow and balance that creates a solid feel.

At first glance, the Schucker appears to differ greatly in appearance from her more conventional counterparts. There is no open cockpit, and although she gives the impression of not having the low, sleek profile of modern designs, this, doubtless, is due to the large deckhouse aft. Cover up the deckhouse, and perhaps you'll agree her profile couldn't be much lower. The bow sections of the Schucker are full and mighty, with a look of authority, and its lines have a definite flow and balance that creates a solid feel.



Almost hidden by the flat-trimmed staysail, (left) Jim Schucker, in tie and business suit, stands in the comfort and protection of the deep side decks as he trims the sheets effortlessly and safely. (Below left) Visibility through the large windshield of the deckhouse is excellent. (Below right) It is hard to believe this is the deckhouse of a motorsailer. Looking aft, it has the same soft, inviting look of a posh, express cruiser. (Opposite page) The larger photo shows the forward bulkhead of the galley area and gives a good sense of the spacious owner's cabin with queen-sized bed. The upper of the two small photos is a view looking into the starboard side of the galley showing the strong appeal of this huge, efficient area. The lower one shows the portside of the galley/dining area; at left is washer-dryer and at extreme left is the efficient dual-mode control panel.





BELOW THE WATERLINE, differences are even more pronounced. The Schucker has round bilges, but is definitely not a fin-keel, spade-rudder, a Friendship sloop or even a *Wanderer III*. The keel is 18" and carries the same depth throughout the entire length of the hull. Running the full length of this keel from stem to stern there are 7000 lbs. of steel reinforcing rod. No muss, no fuss.

The Schucker 440 appears to be an outstanding design with some special features worth noting. The hull is a beamy 14' which is certainly not excessive and, logically, would give the boat some desirable characteristics such as stiffness, stability and skads of room belowdecks. No aft cockpit; in its stead is a huge deckhouse, comfortable and inviting, from whence the craft is controlled at all times, whether under power or sail. There is, additionally, a wide, protected aft deck that defies even the thought of comparison with a stern pulpit. The foredeck is spacious and efficient within safe, high bulwarks and stanchions that run the entire length of the boat.

Mast height of the Schucker is 47' above DWL, not precisely what is called high aspect ratio. The 750 sq. ft. of sail area are spread over a loose-footed, roller furling main and roller furling jib and staysail. This is a cruising boat and hardly fits the description of a dark horse hopeful that's going to make a shambles of the SORC.

The Schucker 440 is a delight to sail. In 10- to 14-knot breezes that gently ruffled the Caloosahatchee basin, the craft was alive and sensitive, stiff but not ponderous. She came about deftly, without even the suggestion of a stall. With no weather helm, I relished what seemed to be perfect balance. For a change, it was fun indulging in some "hands off" sailing. Close hauled or reaching, she would stay put for long intervals which in some small way, seemed part of the package.

The Schucker embodies all the advantages of the motorsailer. We have mentioned previously her shoal draft capabilities. More important, sail changes and sail trim are made on either side of the cabin, just outside the cabin doorway, in the sure-footed comfort of the side decks. Tailing sheets is no less traumatic than reaching outside the front door for the newspaper on a quiet Sunday morning. When any sail trim or change is finished, go inside, stow the winch handle, pour yourself a drink and let it blow. This kind of sailing is going to make sense to those who seek escape from the brutal rays of the sun, the weather and the rigors of "Normal" sailing — without giving up any of the benefits.

The economy of motorsailing certainly makes sense. On a close reach, we rarely went under 5 knots, according to the Combi and six knots on a broad reach. Not bad, when you calculate hull speed to be 7.8 knots. Under power, Jim Schucker claims six nautical miles per gallon, but he states some owners are swearing to 10 statute miles to the gallon.

One of the routine tests we make is to check tacking angle. Now with a hull shape as husky as the Schucker, it's illogical to expect the same kind of windward performance you would get in a Soling. But here's exactly what happened:

WE SETTLED DOWN on a course of 195° per ship's compass, very close-hauled on a starboard tack, but not pinching. I gave Jim the command to go about, but somewhere in the process a sheet fouled, and we had to abort the tack. As soon as the line was freed, we hauled up hard on the new (port) tack, and I read the compass. I called to Jim and explained that somewhere in the process we might have picked up a lift, because the new heading read about 260°, or a tacking angle of only 65°. So we did it again, And again. And again.

We tried it any number of times. The breeze was gradually swinging north, but never did we go over a tacking angle of 70°. Our speed on the Combi at one point measured 5.9 knots. This isn't remarkable; it's unbelievable, especially when you realize throughout the whole business, we were towing the "photo" boat, an inflatable dinghy with an outboard motor!

The fine performance is explained in part, perhaps, by a deep entry forward, a

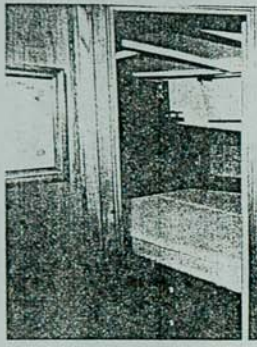
keel that runs virtually the entire length of the boat, and what seems to be a highly efficient roller furling rig. However, for a boat with such shallow draft, we were understandably skeptical. We suggested there might be serious compass deviation, and so we went forward to try it once again with a very reliable hand held compass. Results were the same, no greater than 70° tacking angle. This is impressive, to say the least.

For those interested in the nitty gritty, the Schucker firm reported to us a Sail Area to Displacement ratio of 22.88, which indicates maximum power, but a Ballast to Displacement ratio of .26, which would not indicate the boat to be overly stiff. We also checked the tacking angle without the staysail and arrived with the same excellent results. Speeds of 5.3 knots, incidentally, were reached without the staysail.

Belowdecks, I can only say I am reminded of the line from *Porgy and Bess* — "where the livin' is easy." Maybe if folks knew there were comforts like these attainable, there would be more cruising. A huge shower provides for both saltwater and fresh, either one, and there is a pump for hosing down with saltwater on deck. What a boon to cruising the Great Lakes! There is a huge queen-size bed with a mattress that hinges in the middle to provide access to caverns of storage underneath. Speaking of storage, it is absolutely everywhere. No way to enumerate it here, except to say, for example, there are *nine* drawers beneath the bed, each drawer measuring 30" deep. There were hanging lockers throughout the boat, "wet" lockers I believe some of them are called, and that's a joke, because on this boat you don't get wet.

The galley area on the starboard side is a first mate's or the skipper's dream for that matter. Again, storage and cupboard space are inexhaustible. There is a double S/S sink, 9 cu. ft. refrigerator and freezer and all-electric stove. A 9 kw generator eliminates all worry here.

The area to port, opposite the galley, concealed a Frigidaire "Skinny-Minny" wash and dryer, but is available in just about any configuration the buyer wants. The test boat had the Plan C interior which used the area for dining and storage. In other plans, it is used variously as a huge dinette area, upper and lower berths, separate cabin with upper and lower berths or whatever. The accompanying photograph gives an inkling as to the warm, comfortable feel of the deckhouse. Headroom is 6' 5" throughout, and the craft features a generous use of teak with excellent cabinetry.



Most of the features of this well thought-out boat are too numerous to cover completely, but a few include cabin roofs with a 2" thick layer of fiberglass insulation to combat summer's heat and two chain lockers each capable of storing 1,000' of ⅝ line forward for each of the double anchor rollers on deck. There are two complete air conditioning systems, one 7,000 btu in the deckhouse, the other 16,000 btu down below, each individually controllable. Both systems, with 110-v and 12-v circuitry, are controlled through two completely separated panels within a handsome Marinetics control center. The boat is bonded all the way through.

Fuel and water tanks are 200-gals., each, but an additional 400-gal. is optional, permitting up to 400 gallons of fuel! A shaft-log water pressure system through the cutlass bearing is standard, its purpose to keep out sand particles which can grind away at the shaft. The deck is chemically bonded and bolted to the hull, insuring stiff, unitized construction, and then trimmed with a heavy duty rubrail. Two No. 40 Arco winches are standard for the jib and two No. 30s for the staysail.

Base price of the 440 with hanked-on sails is $77,500. There is a less expensive version called the 430 at $63,500. But with the air, auto-pilot, Mariner roller-furling and all the rest, the price of the 440 would be more like $95,000. There is also a trawler version.

Jim Schucker has been involved in designing and building sailboats since he was a youngster, although basically he is an industrial designer. He has been involved in such diverse design projects as the Tappan micro-wave oven and the Lear jet. His boat company has been in business five years, but it's interesting to note that out of the entire fleet of boats he has manufactured, all but one are still in the hands of their original owners.

For those whose choice of a cruising boat hinges on aesthetics or genuflection for the traditional, they are without question locked into the more pure-bred forms. But for those motivated more by the insouciance that stems from functional design, Mr. Schucker has a product that needs to be looked into. ●

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	40' 0"
LWL	33' 4"
Beam	14' 0"
Draft	3' 2"
Displacement	26,000 lbs.
Ballast	7,000 lbs.
Fuel Cap.	200 gals.
Water Cap.	200 gals.
Aux. power:	85-hp Perkins
Sail Area	Main 240 sq. ft.
	Jib 312 sq. ft.
	Staysail 202 sq. ft.
Price as tested	$95,000

Manufactured by: Schucker Yacht Corp., Cape Coral, FL 33904

DECKHOUSE

DECKHOUSE

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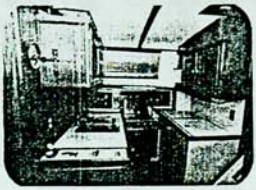
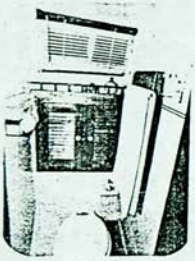


437, 438, 439 & 440 GALLEY

C INTERIOR DINING AREA

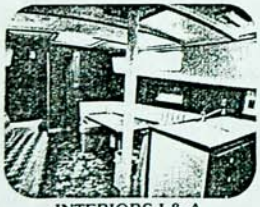


HEAD

HEAD

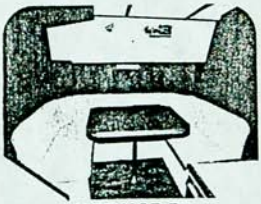
436 GALLEY

440 TRANSOM

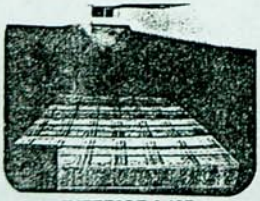


INTERIORS I & A
FORWARD SALON

437 CUTTER



INTERIOR B
DOUBLE BED/DINETTE



INTERIOR I 437
AFT STATEROOM

INTERIOR B, C, D & E
QUEEN SIZE BED

438 & 439 FLYBRIDGE

INTERIORS I & II

INTERIOR A ONLY

INTERIORS A THROUGH E

INTERIORS A THROUGH E

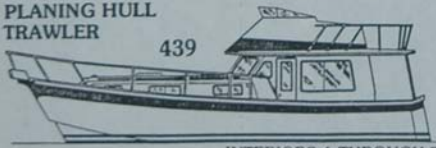
DISPLACEMENT HULL TRAWLER

438

INTERIORS A THROUGH E

PLANING HULL TRAWLER

439



INTERIORS A THROUGH E

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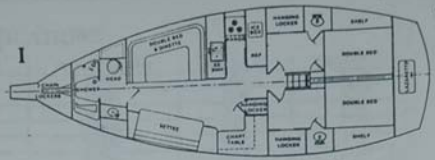

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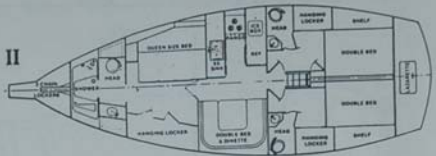

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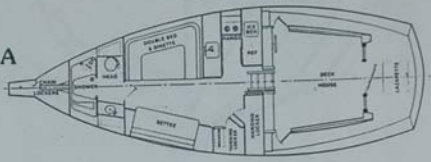

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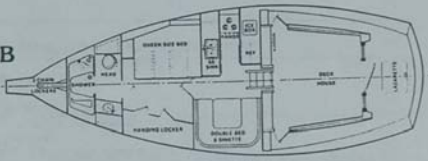

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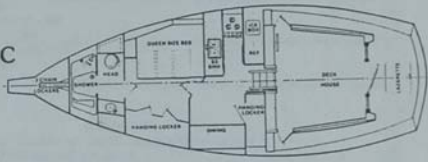

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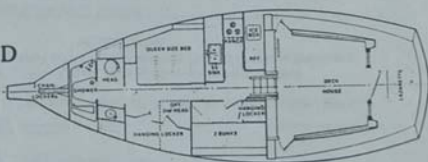

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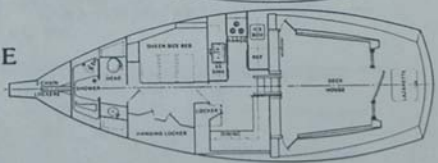


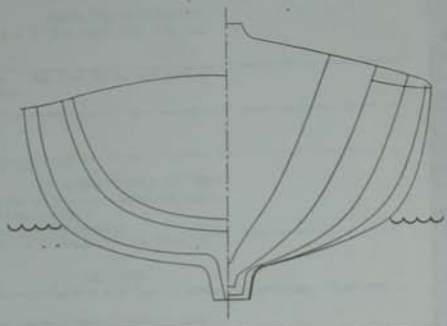
GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL	LOA	LWL	BEAM	DRAFT	DISPLACEMENT	BALLAST	HEADROOM
430 - Motorsailer	40'-0"	33'-4"	14'-0"	3'- 1"	25000	7000	6'-5"
436 - Motorsailer	40'-0"	33'-4"	14'-0"	3'- 2"	26000	7000	6'-5"
437 - Cutter	40'-0"	33'-4"	14'-0"	3'- 2"	26000	7000	6'-5"
438 - Trawler	40'-0"	33'-4"	14'-0"	3'- 2"	26000	7000	6'-5"
439 - Trawler	41'-2"	35'-4"	14'-0"	2'-10"	20000	NONE	6'-5"
440 - Motorsailer	40'-0"	33'-4"	14'-0"	3'- 2"	26000	7000	6'-5"

Construction of the hull has six pairs of 1½ oz. mat and 24 oz. woven roving over ¾ oz. mat and gelcoat. Under the waterline to the turn of the keel we add four more pairs, which is equivalent to 20 layers by industry standards. All of our fiberglass work is hand laid. The deck is chemically bonded and bolted to the hull, which assures a stiff, unitized construction. The joint is then caulked and trimmed with an attractive, heavy duty rub rail, which assures a water tight joint. Bulkheads are a build up of two ½" plywood panels bonded together with fiberglass to make one continuous part which is bonded to the hull with five layers of fiberglass.

Ballast is reinforced steel rods set inside of the hull, sealed with resin and bonded over with six layers of fiberglass forming a sturdy box beam for a keel.

Athwart ship bulkheads, sole and interior fiberglass parts are all bonded to the hull to add stiffness to the yacht.



MODEL IDENTIFICATION 430	436	438	439	440	437	STANDARD EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS
						DECK FITTINGS
x	x	x	x	x	x	All rails & stanchions 1" diameter SS tube.
x	x			x	x	Double life lines.
x	x	x	x	x	CR	Teak grab rails on coach roof & cabin deckhouse sides.
x	x	x	x	x	x	2 (10") mooring cleats & chocks w/2 hawse pipes forward.
x	x	x	x	x	x	2 (10") mooring cleats & chocks aft.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Divided chain locker w/hatch & 2 padeyes to secure ground tackle.
x	x	x	x	x		2 Springline cleats midship.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Aft lazarette w/access to rudder post.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Smoked acrylic 30" square hatch.
		x	x	x		SS aft deck supports w/extended roof.
x	x	x	x	x	x	4 Docking lines, 35 feet each.
				x	x	Four 4' Genoa Track with cars and blocks.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Double SS anchor roller.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Horn.
						STEERING
x	x	x	x	x	x	Hydraulic steering with 1¾" rudder shaft into SS skeg and balanced rudder.
x	x	x	x	x		28" Teak Ship's wheel and compass in Deckhouse.
					x	Binnacle with 28" SS Destroyer wheel with compass.
						PROPULSION
50	62	85	270*	85	50	Perkins (fresh water cooled) diesel engine w/oil pressure & water temperature alarms & 1 Racor filter. Warner Trans. *Volvo 270 HP Diesel Engine with Twin Disc Trans.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Engine spare parts kit: belts, filters & injector.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Engine instruments: tach, oil pressure, ammeter, fuel gauge, hour meter & ignition. Morse double lever engine control.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Engine room exhaust blower and vents.
1¼	1¼	1½	2	1½	1¼	SS prop shaft.
18*	18*	20*	24**	18*	18*	3 Bladed bronze propeller. *4 Bladed bronze propeller.
						PLUMBING & TANKAGE
200	200	200	500	200	100	Fuel tank capacity. Fuel shut-off valve.
200	200	200	300	200	225	Water tank capacity.
x	x	x	x	x	x	2 Automatic bilge pumps.
2	2	2	2	2	2	All below the water line the thru-hull fittings are bronze seacocks with raw-water strainers.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Electric 12 gallon water heater w/engine heat exchanger.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Pressure water pump.
x	x	x	x	x	x	Inlet w/pressure regulator to receive city water.
						ELECTRICAL SYSTEM
x	x	x	x	x	x	Marinetics panel w/master switch, battery test meter, polarity test, 110V 30 amp w/voltage meter & ammeter.
x	x	x	x	x	x	2 (100 amp) batteries, secured and covered.