

JOHN NEAL'S

BOATS TO CONSIDER FOR OCEAN CRUISING

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Through Offshore Cruising Seminars and Boat Selection Consultations I have helped more than 12,000 sailors locate the best ocean cruising boats for their planned voyages and budget. If you need knowledgeable, experienced (400,000 ocean miles, 50 years) and unbiased advice from someone who has no financial interest in the boat you select, I can help. Details on www.mahina.com/consult.html or contact me at Mahina Expeditions, sailing@mahina.com, tel 360.378.7344. v4.23

Boat Model Overall Value, 1 – 5, 5 being best value and highest quality

Able 32, 42, 48	3	Superb quality, expensive, but old. Chuck Paine designs.
Alajuela 33, 38	1	33 is a good design, 38 is a classic dinosaur with long bowsprit and boomkin.
Alberg 30,35, 37	1	Proven, but ancient, narrow, short waterlines, limited interior volume.
Alden 38, 43, 44, 46, 48, 54, 58	3	Classy, well built, beautiful. Because of age, teak decks may be an issue.
Allied 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 42	1	Good value. Functional, practical but very old now.
Alubat (Ovni, Cigale) 36-58	5	Builders of innovative but simple lifting-keel aluminum cruising boats
Allures 40, 45, 51	5	Top quality, innovative, aluminum hulls/lifting keel design with fiberglass decks and house on newer models (a brilliant construction technique).
Amel 36-64	4	Strong, well designed passage makers, great value, but systems-rich and AC generator-dependent. Rare serious blister problems on older models.
Amazon 29, 37, 44	3	Steel boats, attractive modern designs, some corrosion issues.
Amphitrite 43	3	Wauquiez built, strong & roomy with good storage. Odd deck design, but solid boat and good value. Avoid teak deck models as teak is super thin.
Bayfield 29, 30-32, 40	1	Only moderate quality and interiors are a bit "plasticity" interiors.
Bianca 36-52	3	Quality Danish yard, now a winter refit and storage facility.
Bluewater 60	2	Modern, top quality Chuck Paine design, only a few built.
Boreal 44, 47, 50, 53, 63	4	Innovative design suitable for high latitude cruising, late delivery problems.
Bowman 36-58	2	Strong boats, good passagemakers, but shortish waterlines.
Brewer 42, 44	3	Improved version of Whitby 42.
Bristol 27-45	3	Good boats. Later models were better quality. Long since out of production.
Bristol Channel Cutter 28	2	Well built, but cockpit and cabin not comfortable.
Bruckmann 42, 480, 50, 65	3	Solid, roomy Mark Ellis designs, perfect for inclement weather
Cabot 36	2	Ted Brewer design. Very limited production a long time ago.
Caliber 28, 33, 35, 38, 40.	3	Fairly well-built. Michael McCreary designs. LRC models have substantial tankage but smallish interiors. The 47 is not an attractive boat.
Cambria 40, 44, 46	3	Fast, well-built, gorgeous and have held their value well, but getting old.
Camper Nicholson 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 40, 43, 47, 56, 58, 70	2	Famous yard, long out of business now. Very seaworthy but watch for consistent serious blister problems on all models once in warm waters.
Cabo Rico 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 45, 47	2	Crealock & Paine designs. Some problems with water absorption into balsa-cored decks. Newer Paine-designed models are substantially better.
Cape Dory - all models	1	Classic design, quality, but narrow and small interiors w/short WL.
Cape George Cutters 31, 36, 38	2	Many owner-completed, quality varies. Surprisingly fast, but look for deck rot.
Cascade 36, 42	1	1965-67 design. Narrow-beamed and sturdy, many owner-completed.
Catalina 385, 425, 445	3	Later models are impressive and keep getting better. These are not boats for Cape Horn but are totally adequate for low to mid-latitude cruising.
Cavalier 32, 39	2	Limited production, fairly good quality vessels, but narrow, dated designs.
Centurion 36, 38, 40/41, 42/45 47/49	3	Fast, attractive solid boats with very modest tankage and limited storage. Avoid any with teak decks as removal will cost \$60k!
Cherubini 44, 48, 62	3	Semi-custom, absolutely gorgeous, great sailing & expensive. Limited interior space compared to modern designs.
Contessa 26 & 32	1	Tania Aebi & B.J. Caldwell both circumnavigated in 26's, but these are TINY boats. The 32 is small and sturdy and truly a classic.
Contest 31, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 48, 55, 60	4	Newer models are very attractive and expensive. Wide wing keels on some models, think Bruce anchor. Yard continues to build top-quality boats.

Corbin 39	2	Roomy and strong but blisters if taken to warm water. Some owner completed.
Crealock 31, PH 32, 34, 37, 40, 44 by Pacific Seacraft	3	Good value and well built. Graceful overhangs, canoe sterns, short waterlines means these boats can hobbyhorse upwind.
CS 33, 36	2	Modern, fairly well built. Occasional blister problems.
CSY 37, 44	1	Sturdy, roomy & reasonably priced but very old now.
Dana 24 by Pacific Seacraft	2	Attractive solid, expensive and slooow miniature pocket ocean cruiser.
Deerfoot Yachts	3	Fast & innovative, aluminum & fiberglass hulls.
Dickerson 36, 37, 40, 41, 50	1	Nicely proportioned & well-built but ancient. Earlier 36's are very reasonably priced but lack interior space and are truly ancient.
Discovery 42, 48, 54, 55, 58, 68	3	Fairly high-quality yard, now sadly bankrupt.
Dufour 31, 35 - 45	2	1964-84 models had solid hulls & balsa cored-decks. Later models not brilliant.
Endurance 35, 38, 40	1	Peter Ibold design, some owner completed. Built by various yards.
Esprit 37 or Valiant 37, 39	2	Comfortable, well proven, good value but some have blisters.
Exploration 45, 52 (Garcia)	5	Innovative, impressive aluminum lifting keel designs with protected steering positions.
F & C 44	2	Semi-modern Frers designed cruising ketch built in Argentina.
Fantasi 37, 50	4	High quality attractive pilothouse boats built on Orust Island, Sweden.
Farr Pilot House 50, 56, 60, 63	4	Powerful, fast, good quality. Hold value very well.
Fast Passage 39	1	Some built in Canada, some by Tollycraft. WA. Canadian models better.
Fisher 30-46	1	Sturdy and slow classic motorsailers. OK for high latitude cruising.
Fraser 41, 46, 50	2	Good, sturdy, fairly modern cruisers.
Freya 39	2	Stiff and fast, but many owner-completed, so quality varies greatly.
Garcia 46-115	5	Strong, semi-custom, highest quality aluminum lifting keel designs built in France
Gladiateur 33	1	Sturdy, short on tankage, Wauquiez-built.
Goderich 35, 37,41	2	Attractive Brewer semi-custom steel boat but small production run and rare.
Gozzard 31, 36, 44	3	Good design & quality construction. Totally committed quality company.
Hallberg-Rassy, 31 - 69	5	Stiff, strong, fast, comfortable, good tankage & systems integration. Newer Frers designs faster than earlier models. Teak deck issues on some older models.
Halmatic 30	1	Similar to Nicholson 31. Watch for blisters.
Hinkley 30-64	3	Attractive classic lines, highest quality construction. Modest tankage & storage, shortish waterlines.
Hood 38	3	Hood design, Wauquiez-built, attractive but short on tankage. Solid choice.
Hylas 46,49, 54, 54 raised Saloon, 56, 70	4	Good performance, tankage & storage. Substantially better quality & fewer deck leaks on newer models.
Island Packet 32, 35, 350, 37,38, 380, 40, 420, 44, 45	4	Roomy & comfortable, good tankage & storage but some unusual features. Only consider IP's built after 1998 when chainplate issue was addressed.
Jason 35 from Miller Marine	1	Many owner-completed. Several have cruised extensively.
Jongert 50, 55, 60, 67, 73	3	Quality, heavy, expensive, semi-custom steel and aluminum yachts.
Justine 36	2	Gorgeous Paine design, Morris built cruiser. Rare.
Kaiser Gale Force 34	2	Well designed and built, good sailing qualities.
Kaiulani 34, 38	2	Lovely steel Brewer & Yohe designs. Semi-custom, very limited production.
Kanter 42, 45, 60, 65	2	Semi-custom steel & alu boats. Later alum. models much better than early steel ones. Chuck Paine & Ted Brewer designs. Some have serious corrosion issues.
LM 30, 315, 32, 380	2	Some have inside steering. Well-built and impressive pocket cruisers.
Little Harbor 42 - 90	2	Hood designed heavy displacement; semi-custom, very high maintenance means these are expensive to own. Strange pinched Ted Hood sterns.
Malo 36, 38, 39, 45	5	High quality offshore boats with good sailing performance. Multiple instances of skeg failure reported on 45.
Mariah 31	1	At least one circumnavigation. Pacific Seacraft-built. Slow and small.
Mason 33, 43, 44, 53, 54, 63	2	Handsome Ta-Shing boats, short waterlines and high maintenance.
Moody 38, 42, 47, 54, 64	3	Good designs of only modest quality. Compare to Catalina.
Morgan 382, 383, 384	3	Ted Brewer design for around \$45-55K. Good value if they've been repowered
Morris 26, 28, 30, 32, 34,36, 42, 44, 45, 454, 46, 48.6, 52	4	Chuck Paine designs, superb quality, highest quality US yard building cruising boats. Semi-custom and expensive.
Mystic 57, 60	3	Dubois design, Bowman built, beautiful. Very limited production run.

Mystery 35, 43	3	Top quality, fast and attractive. Good choice!
Najad 330, 361, 370, 390, 420, 490, 520	5	Quality, attractive boats. Excellent sailing performance. Good tankage, storage and high level of craftsmanship.
Nauti-Cat 351, 39, 40, 42, 515, 521	2	Later S & S designed models are much better performers than older tubby models. Newer boats are very high quality with inside steering.
Niagara 31, 35, 42	2	Well-built & roomy. Good value, but watch for soggy deck cores.
Nordborg 30-40	2	High quality but classic, narrow Elvstrom and S&S designs.
Nordic 34,37,40,44,45	2	Attractive boats, some solvable problems with mast step deflection and leaky hull to deck joint on the 40 & 44.
Norseman 400,447	2	Have held their value well but require a lot of maintenance. Rusty fuel tanks present an expensive repair issue. Attractive and good sailing characteristics.
Nordship 35, 360, 380, 430	3	High quality Danish yard. Gorgeous deck saloons models.
North Wind 43,50, 58	3	S&S designs, fairly good construction quality. Very few in NA.
Ocean 60, 71	2	Powerful boats, many have had blister problems and seriously old now.
Ocean Cruising 42	*	Only a few built by Hank Hinkley. Classy, top quality.
Outbound 44, 46 52	5	Fast, well-built boats with excellent customer service. New company owners now
Ovni 35, 395, 445, 495, 58	5	Sturdy, low maintenance excellent aluminum, lifting keel. Newer the better.
Oyster 42, 45, 485,49,53, 55, 56 61, 62, 63, 66, 70, 82, 100	4	Attractive, expensive and good quality. Weak resale value on larger models make these a good choice.
Pacific Seacraft 34, 37, 40, 44	3	Well built, classic lines with graceful overhangs & short WLs mean slow & small.
Pearson 35, 365, 385, 422, 424, 520	2	Moderate construction quality, but good value. The 385 has amazing use of space and 424 cutter is tough to beat for value.
Passport 40, 41, 415, 435, 44, 456, 470, 50	3	Modern Perry cruising design. Good storage/tankage, soggy wooden deck cores common on older models.
Pretorien 35	3	Strong, solid & attractive, built by Wauquiez. Great value. Modest tankage, many have saildrives, a negative. Later models better.
Regina of Vindo, 38, 43, 49	5	Gorgeous, exquisitely built, highest quality deck saloon. In a class of their own.
Rival 36-41, Rival Bowman 42	3	Strong, good-looking and sailing boats. RB 42 very impressive.
Rustler 36, 37, 42	4	Totally impressive, high-quality boats and excellent company.
Sabre 34, 362,38, 402, 42, 402, 425, 452	3	Built in Maine, modest quality, limited tankage and storage, but very pretty. Doctor's boats for New England.
Sadler 34	3	Unsinkable, fast, great performance. Good choice.
Santa Cruz 52, 53	3	Strong, fast is fun, but pounds upwind! Last boats were built in FL
Saturna 33	2	Attractive and roomy Bill Garden-designed pilothouse cutter.
Scanmar 33, 345, 35 & 40	3	Limited production but good design & quality construction.
Sceptre 41, 43	3	Modern quality pilothouse with good sailing performance.
Seawind 30, Seawind II 32	2	Solid old boats, good value only if they have been refit.
Seguin 44, 51 by Lyman-Morse	2	Semi-custom, Maine-built, powerful and attractive boats. Builder does refits.
Shannon 32, 36, 39, 43, 47, 53.	2	Good reliable, solid, traditional and slow boats. Some deck issues...
Skye 51	2	Similar looking to Swans. Soggy deck problems common.
Southerly 330-590	3	Quality built, attractive and innovative swing-keel yachts.
Southern Cross 28, 31, 35, 39	2	Moderate quality, limited on deck storage, old.
Spencer 35, 42, 44, 54	1	Ancient, solid boats, built in Vancouver, B.C. Quite dated now.
Stellar 52	2	Quality S&S design, well built, good detail work. Very limited production.
Sunbeam 32, 34, 37, 38, 40	3	Not bad! Built in Austria.
Sundeer 56, 64	3	Innovative design & excellent offwind performance. Good systems layout. Some need extensive refits. Built by TPI.
Swan	3	Newest models poorly suited for ocean cruising with open cockpits and limited tankage & storage. Teak deck issues on older models.
Shearwater 39, 45	2	Sturdy, traditional appearance, fairly good performance.
Sweden Yachts	2	Racer-cruisers, short on tankage and storage and having rudder loss issues.
Tartan 34, 3500, 37, 3700, 41, 4100, 4600	3	Moderate quality, some have centerboards. Modest storage and tankage. Several 37's have circumnavigated – look for ones that have been refitted
Taswell 43, 49, 56, 58, 60, 72	3	Good quality and sailing performance. Limited tankage on some models.
Tashiba 31, 36, 40	2	High maintenance Perry designs built by Ta Shing.
Topper Hermanson 40+	3	Semi custom steel or aluminum Van de Stadt designs.
Trintella 35-47	3	Roomy and well built. Newer designs are aluminum and expensive

Triton 29 by Pearson	1	Earliest fiberglass production boat. Ancient, small but sturdily built.
Twister 28	1	Long production run. Sturdy but narrow, built by Tyler Yachts.
Valiant 32, 37, 39, 40, 42, 47, 50	3	Few problems with the newer, Texas built boats. Proven designs. Double ender means limited cockpit stowage and no possibility of a swim step.
Vancouver 27	2	Also built in Taiwan & England. Solid pocket circumnavigator for the patient.
Vancouver 28, 34, 36, 38	2	High quality semi-traditional yachts built by Northshore Marine.
Vanguard 32	1	Sturdy but truly ancient Phil Rhodes design, built by Pearson.
Vega 27, by Albin Marine	1	At least six have circumnavigated. Inexpensive, light and fast.
Victoria 30, 34	2	Chuck Paine design, Morris built.
Vilm 116, 117	3	Quality motorsailers, solid and good for higher latitudes
Vindo 29, 34, 38, 39	1	Attractive, well built, but very high maintenance.
Vineyard Vixen 30, 34	1	Attractive design, quality boats but rare.
Westerly 26 – 43	2	Not flashy, but moderately well-built boats. Similar to Moody or Catalina.
West sail 28, 32, 39, 42, 43	2	Sturdy boats traditional design. Watch for leaky aluminum tanks.
Whitby 42, 44	2	Brewer designs, roomy and fairly well built but slow and old.
Yamaha 33, 35CS, 37	2	Solid, no-nonsense sturdy, low maintenance.
Yankee 30, 38	2	S & S designed. Inexpensive and very capable. Great value.

Catamarans

Antares 44	5	Most impressive construction details and quality. No saildrives!
Atlantic 42, 48, 55	3	Chris White design, quality construction.
Catana 401, 431, 471, 521	4	Good design, but customer service seriously lacks at delivery, complicated systems and expensive to maintain.
Dean 400, 441	2	Fairly well built, roomy & comfy, moderate performance, good engine access.
Dolphin 46	2	Daggerboards, good performance/comfort balance.
Fontaine Pajot 38, 43, 44, Casamance 45, 46, 56, 60, 75	3	Attractive designs, quality keeps improving, so newer is better. Stick-built means stiffer and lighter than Leopard with better bridge deck clearance.
Garcia Explocat 52	5	A development of the very successful Garcia Exporation monohulls. Aluminum, go-anywhere in the world construction. Expensive with a serious waiting time.
Gunboat 48-90	4	Expensive, innovative rocketships now built in France.
Kronos 45	2	Wauquiez-Beneteau built. Study but heavy and only 13 built.
Knysna 440, 480	2	Sturdy but a little odd; poor engine access. Foam-core, no balsa
Lagoon 38, 41, 47, 57, 67	2	Beneteau built, great charter boat, not as well built and don't age as well as Leopards.
Leopard 38,42,44, 46,47, 62	4	Good designs, well built, easily maintained. Moderate bridge deck clearance. Leopard 44, & 48 breakthrough design with forward cockpit. Look for non-charter, owner 3 cabin versions.
Manta 38, 40, 42	3	Well designed and built. Great cruising boat. Slightly heavy.
Outremer 40-64	4	Fast & strong, lightweight construction, no balsa coring. Expensive and fairly high experience level required to sail these safely. Narrow hulls.
PDQ 32, 36, 42, 44	3	Long successful production run. Now called Antares 44.
Privilege 40-62	4	Good build quality & performance. The 435-465 hits the sweet spot for couples.
Prout 37, 38, 45, 50	1	Reasonably priced, well proven, long production run.
Seawind 33, 39, 41, 52	1	Marginal quality, originally built in Australia, now in Vietnam
St. Francis 50	2	Below average quality & sailing performance, low bridge deck clearance.
Soubise 46	4	Excellent, super-fast and high quality, semi-custom.
Voyage 380, 440, 500, 580	2	Lightweight, luxury-focused, low freeboard & bridge deck clearance.