



# SELECTING AND PURCHASING AN OCEAN CRUISING SAILBOAT



by John Neal

# **Selecting and Purchasing an Ocean Cruising Sailboat**

An indispensable  
guide to choosing and  
purchasing a sailboat  
for your ocean  
cruising adventures!

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## Acknowledgements

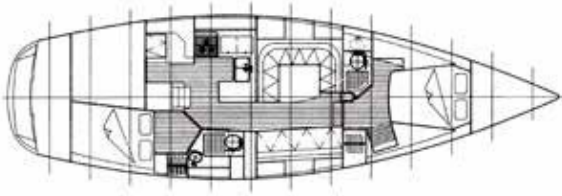
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# Selecting and Purchasing an Ocean Cruising Sailboat



The dream of purchasing a boat and sailing to exotic islands and countries is a powerful and exciting one. And an important part of achieving that dream is in selecting the right boat to take you over the horizon in safety and comfort. By keeping the boat in top condition while you're cruising, you'll find a line of fellow dreamers waiting to purchase it when you've completed your cruise allowing you to recoup most, if not all of your initial outlay. If you wish to succeed in this venture, here's how to do the necessary homework to make your cruising dreams a reality.

## It's All About Sailing

One of the first things you'll need to do is to ensure that you enjoy and are comfortable sailing and living on a boat, and unless you plan on single handing, that your partner does as well. If you're new to sailing or self-taught, sailing and navigation lessons are an important starting point. To discover if you're comfortable living aboard, try a weeklong live aboard cruising/learning experience such as Offshore Sailing School's Fast Track to Cruising or Fast Track to Coastal Passagemaking. Even better, consider a course in an area you're interested in eventually cruising on your own. If the Caribbean is a possible destination on your own boat, you could select a Fast Track to Cruising course in the British Virgin Islands.

## When to Purchase

Time, money, health and energy are the four factors that need to be present to buy a boat and realize your dream of cruising. Following is a summary of these factors and some tips for you to consider.

**Time:** There are several reasons why you should purchase your boat a minimum of one year before your planned departure.

- It may take 6-12 months of serious shopping to find a boat that meets your criteria.
- If the boat you purchase is over 15 years old and in need of a refit it can easily take 6-12 months or longer to get it offshore ready.
- You will be upgrading old equipment for new and sourcing refit options, both of which take considerable time.
- You'll want to allow time to become familiar with sailing your boat and getting accustomed to living in a much smaller space than normal.

**Your Age vs Boat Age:** The older you are, the newer the boat you purchase should be if you actually want to go cruising.

If you're in your 20's, you may feel like you have more time and energy than money. You probably won't consider it necessary that your cruising boat is outfitted with a freezer, powerful windlass, or satellite communications. You'll have the energy and motivation to work hard on a bare bones boat and then be keen to set sail, with or without a lot of gear that older people frequently deem necessary.

If you are over 60 and inexperienced, you should consider a boat less than ten years old. If you purchase a 30-year-old boat needing a refit, the chance of you having the energy to complete a refit and actually depart on an extended cruise is considerably less than 50%.

**Cruising Timeframe:** You may be looking at boats thinking you will be cruising for 5-10 years. However, I see very few people cruising for longer than 2-3 years. Take time to consider your cruising plan; where you buy the boat and start cruising, where you plan to sail and for how long and where you think you may sell the boat. It is good to be flexible in your planning but it's also prudent to establish a Plan B, in the event your health, family or other factors change.

## **Boat Cost, Size and Age**

If you're cruising as a couple, each of you must be prepared to singlehand your boat, being conscious of your abilities and limitations. Seasickness or illness may incapacitate either of you, leaving the other person to handle everything. Safety dictates a boat with manageable sails, a dependable windvane self-steering system and one or two powerful, dependable autopilots for extended ocean passagemaking.

If you're planning on purchasing a boat over 42' and aren't as strong as you used to be, consider increasing your level of fitness and the option of selecting a boat with or adding a furling mainsail, bow thruster and possibly electric winches. This equipment adds cost, maintenance, weight and complexity but being able to easily handle your boat is important and certainly adds to the enjoyment of cruising.

**Crew:** Crew difficulties are frequently a common and persistent problem. It's easy to find friends and family members excited about sailing with you when you first leave your homeport. As you get further away it becomes time consuming coordinating the logistics of crew arrival and departure points, and the timing of your passages.

You might also find that you may not be comfortable trusting your boat and life to people whom you don't know well and that pick-up crew can be more of a burden than help.

**Go Newer and Smaller:** To purchase a newer yacht that isn't going to need an expensive, time-consuming refit, you may need to downsize your ideal size requirements.

If this means purchasing a 12-year-old 38' boat instead of a 20–30-year-old 45'–50' boat, you will be far ahead; having more time to cruise and reducing your overall cost of ownership. Also, maintenance, insurance and moorage costs go up exponentially with the length of boat.

**Age of Boat vs Time and Cost of Ownership:** The older your boat is, the more time and money it will take to prepare it for offshore cruising.

On a boat 20+ years old, you can easily spend an additional 50% to 100% of the purchase price replacing rigging, sails, tanks, engine, and electronics and upgrading the electrical system. This refitting process frequently takes one to two years. With a boat that is new or less than ten years old much of the refit time and cost is saved.

Another good option is to purchase an older boat that has recently been refit by a knowledgeable seller and is ready to go. It will likely cost more than comparable boats of the same age but will cost far less than outfitting an older boat that has only coastal equipment aboard.

## Overall Budget for Boat Purchase:

Boat Purchase: 60%

Outfitting: 40%

Outfitting Cost: You'll likely need an additional \$20,000 to \$50,000 for necessary offshore equipment including standing rigging replacement, storm sails, liferaft, windvane or an additional autopilot, tender and motor, heavier and additional ground tackle, charts and spare parts. This cost excludes non-essential items such as watermaker, generator, solar panels, bow thruster, refrigeration, chart plotter and SCUBA compressor which are detailed in the Optional Equipment chapter.

## Where to Purchase

It is wise to spend considerable amounts of time researching and deciding where you most want to cruise and just as importantly, where will be an easy place to purchase, refit and outfit a vessel. Perhaps charter in your preferred cruising grounds first, at the same time research the selection and prices of boats available, boat yards and outfitting services.

If you're interested in cruising specific areas before planning long passages, purchasing a boat on location may be a good choice.

Mediterranean: research Spain, Portugal, France, Palma, Italy, Croatia, Turkey, and Greece. Turkey has excellent yachting services and marinas and is the least expensive country in the Med. As it isn't an EU member, VAT and Schengen time limits do not apply.

Caribbean: it is best to purchase on the East Coast or possibly in Florida where there is a large selection of potential cruising boats and excellent refit services. Although there are many boats for sale in the Caribbean, the condition, logistics of purchasing and outfitting make this option somewhat less attractive.

Purchasing in Europe allows the opportunity of a downwind Atlantic crossing before enjoying cruising the Caribbean. Vessels in Northern Europe and Scandinavia often represent the best overall values.

Mexico and the South Pacific: starting out anywhere on the West Coast works well.

Cruising Boats in Foreign Countries: In your search for boats, you'll see listings of cruising boats that appear to be real bargains in foreign, frequently downwind tropical locations. Example locations include the Med, Florida, Mexico, Panama, Caribbean, Tahiti, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia and Thailand. Occasionally these boats are good value, but frequently they are tired and require extensive repairs and upgrades to be passage ready. As with the outfitting process, the owners have run out of time, money, energy or health and have walked away from their boat, leaving it listed with a local broker. On the other hand, if the owners are present and have conscientiously maintained the boat, it may represent true value and savings of time.

High Latitude vs Tropical Locations: Boats that have spent most of their lives in higher latitudes where they are frequently only in the water for six months then stored ashore or inside a building during winters appear newer than sisterships in warmer, saltier water. Examples: Great Lakes and New England vs. Florida, and Scandinavia vs. Mediterranean.

## How to Find Your Boat

Sites like Yachtworld.com are invaluable as they cover most of the world. Moderately priced boats under \$50,000 may be easier to find on FSBO sites. If you are within six months of purchasing and have your finances in order, you may consider using a buyer's broker. They will have connections to potential boats that you may

not be aware of and save you time by cutting through the "broker babble". Ideally your buyer's broker will have personal experience offshore cruising or delivering yachts. They should be truly interested in finding the most appropriate boat for you at the best price, not just encouraging you to purchase one of their own listings.

This service shouldn't cost you any additional money as the listing broker will split the selling commission with your buyer's broker. It is rare to find knowledgeable buyer's brokers interested in working with clients having a budget of under \$200,000.

## Selecting the Right Boat

There are a wide variety of boats on the market so it's up to you to decide on what is going to be the best boat for your budget and plans.

Educate Yourself: Read boat reviews, scan owner's group websites for troublesome problems specific to certain makes or models, learn about yacht design and safety. A great resource to learn specifications, years and number of examples built plus see sail plan and layout drawings is [www.sailboatdata.com](http://www.sailboatdata.com). Go sailing on as many different types of vessels as possible and consider crewing on local races. Take two-day courses on Safety at Sea, navigation, offshore passage making, marine weather, sail & rig repair, electrical systems and diesel engine maintenance. The Annapolis Boat Show's Cruisers University offers many of these courses. If your cruising plans include ocean crossings, consider signing up for a sail-training passage where you'll be standing watch and learning 24 hours per day. The more time and energy you've put into obtaining skills important to cruising, the better yacht selection choice you're likely to make and the more self-sufficient you'll likely be once you're cruising. You may go into your boat search thinking you absolutely must have a heavy displacement double-ender with a long bowsprit and a centerline queen berth, for example. After educating yourself and completing an ocean passage you may decide that these are not necessarily criteria that add to the comfort or safety at sea.

Explore Boat Options: monohulls, multihulls and long-range displacement powerboats each have different merits.

Monohulls are frequently better suited for cruising temperate or high latitude waters and most are better suited to maintain performance when

additional cruising gear is added. If you'll be cruising with kids or frequent visitors, a center cockpit design with a bunk cabin works well.

Multihulls advantages include little heeling or rolling and tremendous interior volume and deck space making them very attractive for tropical downwind cruising or cruising with children. Disadvantages include weight sensitivity, uncomfortable motion upwind, challenges in finding moorage and haul-out facilities. Multi-hulls are ever increasing in popularity in tropical cruising destinations. An excellent book on multihulls is Gregor Tarjan's *Catamarans, Complete Guide for Cruising Sailors*.

Long-range displacement powerboats such as Nordhavn, Kady Krogen, Fleming and Selene provide a very comfortable ride and spacious living area.

**Be Realistic:** Many people searching for their dream boat have unrealistic expectations or get fixated on specific design issues. If your plans are for serious offshore cruising, ensure that safety and seaworthiness rate higher on your priority list than in-port comfort and interior volume. Compromise is important when selecting any boat. Chances are you will not find any boat in your price range that exactly meets all your criteria, so be prepared to be flexible and keep an open mind.

**Market Appeal:** As most couples cruise for a 2–3-year period, it is prudent to purchase a boat that will hold as much of its value as possible. If you buy a boat with little market appeal, you may end up having it on the market for several years only to finally sell it at a substantially reduced price.

**One Way Downwind Cruise Option:** Some cruisers buy a boat with the anticipation that they will take advantage of strong economies and market for cruising boats in certain foreign countries. By purchasing an appropriate boat in Europe or North America, sailing downwind through the South Pacific, they then plan to sell their yachts in either Noumea, New Caledonia, or Queensland, Australia. There are yacht brokers in both Noumea and Queensland specializing in the importation and selling of foreign-flagged cruising boats.

**Ex-Charter Boat Option:** Purchasing a recent (5–8-year-old) charter boat for shorter-term seasonal cruising or a one-way voyage from the Med to

Florida via the Caribbean or from the Med, Florida or the Caribbean to Australia is a viable option. New Zealand's economy hasn't recovered from COVID, making selling there unattractive compared to Australia.

**Well known Builder:** If you're considering purchasing a boat overseas and plan to eventually sail it back to North America or Australia to sell, if possible, select a well-known boat builder that ideally has dealers in the country you plan to sell in. You'll find it much easier to sell a well-known boat quickly and for a reasonable price.

**Is the Boat Builder in Business?:** With so few of the quality builders of offshore cruising boats still in business, this has become less of an issue, but it can save you time and money if you can get replacement parts and technical information from the original builder and it may make selling the boat easier.

## **Boat Purchasing Options**

### **Four Purchasing Options:**

1. **New Production Boat.** Because of a shortage of quality ocean cruising boats under 20 years of age, plus the high cost of and amount of time required to upgrade a quality 20+ year older vessel, purchasing a quality new production boat is more attractive than ever. The problem is there are only a handful of boatyards worldwide still in business producing quality offshore boats. Here's an example: If you purchase a 35-year-old boat for \$80,000 and then spend \$80,000 replacing the engine, rigging, dodger, sails, wiring, tanks, electronics and having the bottom stripped, dried and barrier coated, using up 1-2 years of your cruising time, you will end up with a 37-year-old boat worth perhaps \$90,000.

A better choice might be a new or nearly new (less than 5-10 years old) boat that initially costs more but returns much closer to 100% of your outlay. Your cost of ownership will be substantially less and hopefully you'll be out cruising 1-2 years earlier with far less time spent dealing with mechanical breakdowns and failures and waiting for replacement parts.

2. **Custom Build.** Choosing to have a boat semi-custom or custom built always takes considerably more time and money than planned and there are

inevitably “bugs” to work out that would only occur on hull #1 or #2 of a production boat. Resale value on a custom boat is usually substantially lower than on a well-known quality production boat. Custom boats only make sense if you are the second owner. However, keep in mind that they will nearly always be more difficult to sell.

3. Used Boat. Cruising equipment generally adds little to the selling price of used boats, so if you can find a boat that has already been outfitted and lightly cruised, you may save tens of thousands of dollars. Conversely, if you are considering a boat that has circumnavigated or cruised extensively, you may discover that much of the gear is worn out and needs replacing.

4. Home Built. Home building a cruising vessel makes the least sense unless you are an unemployed boat builder, unconcerned with time and expenses. It generally costs considerably more to build a boat than to purchase a well-built used boat and is nearly always more difficult to sell.

Market Trends: Currently it is a neutral market worldwide, neither a buyers’ nor a sellers’ market, but the inventory of quality, offshore-capable boats in the under \$100,000 and under \$200,000 category is tight worldwide. In the over \$400,000 category there are currently good values available on recent high-quality boats. This is true in Europe, North America and Australia/New Zealand.

The few remaining yards building quality new cruising boats frequently have 1-3 year waiting lists for popular models. Since there have been a very limited number of new boats built in the past 15 years, there is a low inventory for buyers searching for a relatively newer vessel.

Pete McGonagle, co-founder of Swiftsure Yachts in Seattle shares this: For the past ten years, we’ve seen logarithmic depreciation on new boats. Due to the lack of new boat buyers, few yards have a backlog of orders, and many are willing to provide discounts and swiftly build to order. A new boat loses 20% of its value as soon as it’s delivered. It then loses about 5% of value per year for the first five years and the value loss tapers off to zero as the boats get to be 20-25 years old. By then maintenance costs will be higher and refit, maintenance and upgrade differences make values quite variable from one sistership to another. This is why an extremely well

maintained, frequently updated timeless design will have the best chance of value retention.

**Distress Sales:** If you've been shopping for a cruising boat you've probably come across several vessels that have recently had substantial and expensive upgrades yet haven't gone anywhere. Many times, these boats are the result of people who during the refit and preparation process have had health or family issues arise. If the sellers have done their homework, selecting quality equipment and assistance on the refit, these distress sales can represent an excellent savings of time and money for you.

Another common scenario is to find a boat advertised at a low price in an exotic downwind location. Examples of these locations are SE Asia and the South Pacific, Panama, Central America, Mexico, Southern Caribbean, Southern Med (Italy, Greece, Turkey). Frequently the owners of these yachts have run out of time, health, money or energy and have left their vessels in the water, unattended for years before deciding to sell. These boats are rarely good value and unless there are quality refit facilities nearby, they can become a frustrating trap, consuming an inordinate amount of time and money.

Here's a nugget of Pete McGonagle's wisdom:  
"It is still imperative to get the right boat for your intended plans. A great deal on the wrong boat is still the wrong boat".

**Shipping and Commissioning:** When trying to decide whether it is logical to purchase a boat out of your area, make sure to factor in all shipping and commissioning costs if you don't plan on sailing your new vessel home.

The cost of trucking a sailboat with a beam greater than 12' and a trailer height of over 14' rises significantly as a pilot car at \$1.00 per mile is required in some areas. Add approximately \$200 for trucking insurance rider, and \$10,000 – 20,000 for decommissioning and recommissioning, depending on how much of the work you do yourself. Here are 2026 examples of trucking prices:

Outbound 46 from San Diego to Seattle ..... \$14,233

Outbound 46 Fort Lauderdale to Seattle..... \$27,223

The cost of shipping a 40' boat from Sweden to Tacoma, WA is \$60,000. Sevenstar Yacht Transport, [www.sevenstar-yacht-transport.com](http://www.sevenstar-yacht-transport.com) does an excellent job of shipping yachts worldwide, frequently with the masts up.

## Purchase Process

Broker: Purchasing from a licensed yacht broker, particularly if they are a member of a professional oversight organization such as CPYB (Certified Professional Yacht Broker-[cpyb.net](http://cpyb.net)) is often safest and simplest. If you're purchasing from a private seller, you have little protection once you've turned over your deposit (frequently 10% of your offering price). If the seller decides to keep your deposit, even if your conditions for purchase are not met, you have limited recourse. A knowledgeable broker can provide invaluable assistance with boat selection, survey, sea trial, closing, registration and post sales service and logistics.

Initial Offer: I used to advise my boat purchase consultation clients to make their initial offer 18% less than the asking price unless the boat is exceptionally clean and well-equipped, new to market or there are other customers seriously interested. Because of the limited number of quality vessels currently available, a full price offer has become required more frequently.

Factors used to determine how much your initial offer include:

1. Comp selling prices and length of time sisterships have taken to sell. (Available at [soldboats.com](http://soldboats.com) - a broker-only subscription site)
2. Amount of time the vessel has been on the market.
3. If there have been any offers to date, and if so, for what price.
4. If there are any known or disclosed extenuating factors, i.e. winter about to start, seller has health issues, estate sale, etc.
5. Initial impression of the boat. Does it look neglected? If so, the seller won't be getting any full price offers.
6. Are there any known defects (osmotic blisters, soggy deck or

hull core material, non-working equipment, etc.)?)

7. Engine age, hours and condition. Repowering costs \$40,000+ but generally adds less than \$10,000 to value. An original engine on a 30-year-old boat is frequently a dealbreaker.

Any offer to purchase should have the following terms and conditions:

1. Subject to acceptable survey and sea trial.
2. Subject to buyer finding acceptable financing. (This can always be an "out" for you if needed).
3. An inventory of all included and excluded gear and equipment.
4. A requirement for the seller to provide a completed disclosure form revealing if the vessel has ever suffered a grounding, fire, sinking, lightning strike, blisters, etc.
5. A specific time frame for acceptance of the offer, acceptance of the yacht after survey and sea trial, and a final closing date.

Frequently there will be adjustments made to the accepted offer price to account for structural or safety deficiencies outlined in the survey(s). Assume the seller will negotiate until they say otherwise. During the final phases of initial negotiation or post survey negotiations, do not ruin a seller's goodwill by being overly aggressive and demanding. Squeezing the last few hundred dollars from a seller is not worth losing the value of them sharing their extensive knowledge of the boat and removing non-inventoried spare parts, charts and other gear that is often left aboard.

Loans and Insurance: At this time, you will want to secure a quote or verbal assurance that the boat you're considering can be insured for your intended purpose. If you are planning an international cruise, note that many countries including Mexico, all the EU and most marinas require at least liability, or third-party insurance.

If you are planning on financing your purchase, you'll want to have be pre-approved for a loan before you make an offer. All lenders will require comprehensive insurance, not just liability, to protect their collateral. Very few lenders will allow you to take your vessel into foreign waters with a marine mortgage, so a HELOC presents a better option if you're keeping a home that

you have equity in.

Insurance may be difficult to obtain if you cannot document three years of prior boat ownership and operating experience with a similar type of vessel within 12' in length. In some instances, insurance companies require 40+ hours of instruction on your boat from a licensed skipper/instructor with a sign-off from them before their underwriter will agree to insure your boat. This is a very sensible policy that reduces risk. Only a handful of insurance underwriters worldwide now cover ocean passagemaking and nearly all want most or all aboard to have passage experience. No reputable insurance companies will insure singlehanded sailors offshore for passages longer than 24-48 hours.

Change of ownership and registration: Frequently, particularly when purchasing a federally documented or foreign vessel, a vessel documentation service, like a real estate escrow company will be used. This company may hold your deposit in an escrow account and will search for and discharge any liens and will handle dispersal of funds and payment of taxes. You will want to determine what company will be used before signing final acceptance papers. If you are using a buyer's broker, they can recommend a documentation service. Otherwise, the selling broker will frequently recommend one.

Marine Survey: Here are some valuable points to remember:

Be cautious about hiring a surveyor recommended by the selling broker. Some surveyors are more interested in frequent referrals from brokers than in doing a thorough and complete survey for the purchaser. Contact other local yacht brokers, boatyard managers or marine lenders or insurers for a list of honest, unbiased surveyors.

1. Don't hesitate to ask the surveyor for examples of previous survey reports.
2. Ensure the surveyor is a member of a professional group such as SAMS or NAMS.
3. Top quality surveyors may have a 2-4-week backlog of work, so don't expect next-day service.
4. Plan on paying \$15-\$25 per foot for a survey plus travel time and expenses.
5. Buyers pay the cost of survey haulout, regardless of whether a deal is reached.

There are four types of surveys available: Pre-purchase, Insurance, Acceptance (for a new boat) and Damage.

On vessels priced over \$100,000 it is common for the purchaser to request and pay for additional engine/mechanical and possibly rig and sail surveys. Some surveyors will do a cursory check of the engine dockside and on sea trial, others may present you with an option for a more in-depth engine survey for an additional fee. Still others will simply recommend another company or surveyor specializing in engine and rig surveys.

It is very important that you, the buyer, be present and attentive during the survey, taking pictures of everything and asking the surveyor to point out any areas of deficiency or interest as they go about the survey. Expect the survey to find some deficiencies. Quickly separate the findings into structural, safety and cosmetic categories. If the structural problems are substantial (i.e. large areas of serious osmotic blistering below the waterline) be prepared to collect your deposit and resume your search. "Project" boats very rarely prove worthwhile. If there are easily repairable deficiencies that were not disclosed in the listing, it is normal for the buyer to ask the seller to either have the problems repaired or adjust the price to cover the quoted cost of repairs. The seller has no legal obligation to remedy deficiencies. Certainly, ask for remedy but realize that not all sellers will agree to repair, reduce the price or share the cost of repair of deficiencies, particularly if your offer was substantially less than their original asking price. If the agreed purchase price plus the cost of repairs is still good value, it may be advisable for you to pay for the entire amount of repairs vs. start looking for another boat and incur more search and survey costs.

Sea Trial: A sea trial is where the seller or their agent provides an underway demonstration, hopefully with you and your surveyor aboard to test and operate all systems. This should include running the engine up to maximum rated RPMs for two minutes while checking for overheating, vibration and smoke. All ancillary systems and equipment should be demonstrated including raising sails, operating anchor windlass, all pumps, radios and electronics, generator, cabin heater, air conditioning, lights, inverter/charger and stove. If the boat is hauled out for winter storage and it isn't possible to have a sea trial and engine test until spring, it is normal for a "hold back" amount to be set aside to cover any possible problems

discovered in the sea trial.

## Regroup, Repair and Outfit

After your transaction is complete it is time to complete your insurance application (you should have an insurance binder before closing on the boat), find moorage and assess the list of deficiencies outlined by the survey. The sooner you get these items repaired; the better chance necessary repairs won't be put off indefinitely. Start with structural and safety issues, next inventory items that may need to be replaced or reconditioned.

**Engine:** Most surveys will turn up at least a few items in the engine room needing attention. If you're unfamiliar with marine diesels, hire a mechanic to show you how to make the needed repairs plus how to change the raw water impeller, replace the raw water pump, change the fuel, oil and transmission filters and how to bleed the fuel system. Ask the mechanic what known, recurring problems affect your model of engine and consider replacing any components prone to failure, i.e. water injection elbow on Yanmars, transmission oil coolers on older Perkins, etc.

**Rigging:** Most insurance companies ask to have the standing rigging replaced every 10-12 years if the boat is headed offshore. As this generally runs \$10,000 - \$15,000, remember to factor this into your budget. If you have a rig inspection or quote for new rigging, hire the rigger to show you how to service the winches and furler(s). Furlers that are old, undersized or from companies no longer in business should be replaced. It is an excellent idea to hire a rigger to go sailing with you for two hours showing you how to inspect and tune your rigging and suggesting any modifications for easier offshore sail handling.

**Sails:** The existing sails can be inspected and repaired, but if you are setting out on an extensive cruise, it is wise to consider replacing the working sails that are older than five years before departure.

**Refit Evaluation:** After you've completed your purchase, take a close look at how much money remains for repairs and outfitting and what your potential departure dates are to utilize the best seasonal weather windows. Percent of original purchase price to prepare a stock 20+ year old boat for

extended cruising: 30 - 100% depending on quality and condition of vessel. You'll find that quality boatyards in North America, Europe and New Zealand/Australia generally charge the equivalent of US\$100-\$180 per hour. It is easy to spend \$10,000 per month having work done in a boatyard. Repairing and replacing gear if you don't know what you're doing can be a safety issue - best to get some help in planning repairs and possibly executing repairs and installing new gear. If you have more time than money, one option is to hire pros to quickly show you the ropes and then to supervise you doing as much of the refit, repair and installation of new gear as possible.

Although it will be slower, the savings can be substantial, and you will continually be gaining important skills. Nigel Calder's Boat Owners Electrical and Mechanical Handbook and Don Casey's Complete Illustrated Sailboat Maintenance Manual are two excellent resources.

## 5. Ongoing Maintenance Costs

Epoxy bottom job every 8 -10 years, depending if blisters are present	15,000 - 20,000
Replace main engine at 5000 to 20,000 hours depending on age and condition	30,000 - 40,000
Pull mast, replace standing rigging and lifelines every 10 years	15,000- 30,000
Stripping and repainting a painted, non-anodized mast every 10-15 yrs	8,000 - 15,000
Replace sails every 20,000 - 30,000 miles	25,000 - 40,000
Replace batteries every 2-6 years	2,000 - 20,000
Repack liferaft (1-3 years), replace at 12-15 yrs	1,500 - 6,000
Regalvanize chain every two years (tropical waters)	500 - 800
Replace chain every 4-6 years in tropical waters	1,500 - 3,000
Replace windlass every 4-8 years	2000 -4,000
Drop rudder for inspection & repair initially then every 5 years	3000 -5,000
Replace tender and motor every 5-10 years	4,000 - 15,000
Replace failed or outdated electronics every 3-5 years	2,000 - 30,000
Replace fresh water and head hoses every 5 yrs	200 - 1,500
Replace thru-hulls and ball valves every 8-10 yrs	2,000 - 10,000

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Replace solar panels and regulator every 4-8 years	3,000 - 10,000
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Maintenance Costs while cruising, assuming a substantial refit before departure

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First 1-4 years:	3-5% of purchase price annually
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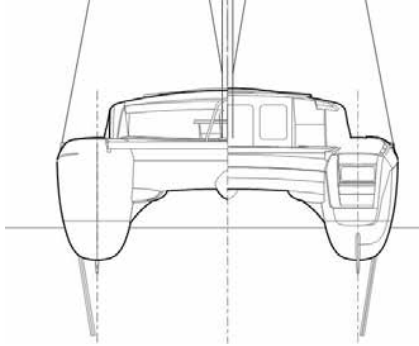
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5-10 years:	6-8
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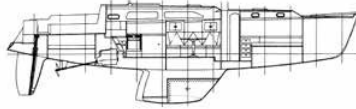
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I budget for a 10% of purchase price refit every 5-10 years.

C



## 20 Qualities of an Ideal Cruising Boat



1. Comfortable Motion on the Ocean  
Without excessive pitching, slamming or rolling.
2. Quality Construction  
With quality components (tanks, steering system, rig, etc)  
\*See Boat Construction Chapter
3. Ability to Withstand 6 knot grounding  
With no or minimal structural damage.
4. Sailing Performance - Upwind and downwind in 10-50 knots.  
Windward sailing performance is not high on most boat shoppers' minds, as most cruisers go to great lengths to avoid having to sail upwind, but the ability to sail or motorsail off a lee shore in a blow could be critical. It's simple to design a boat that has fast downwind sailing performance, but a modern, light displacement boat with a flat entry may pound severely when sailing upwind and may lack directional stability when sailing downwind with large quartering seas.
5. Moderately Stiff & Fast Enough to Sail 150-180 Miles a Day  
Few potential cruisers think of passage-making speed as important criteria in choosing an ocean cruising boat. After 52 years and 410,000 miles of ocean cruising, it is high on my personal list of priorities. The shorter the passages, the less exposure there is to heavy weather conditions. A boat with good sailing performance requires less motoring and fuel, is faster, more responsive and fun to sail in the light to moderate wind conditions so common worldwide
6. Protected Helm Position  
Providing protection from sun, wind, spray and rain and having good 360° visibility. The ultimate is a rigid dodger for watch standing or inside steering as found on the Garcia Exploration boats.
7. Ability to Carry Substantial Payload

A moderate displacement boat will handle the additional weight that ocean cruising requires including additional anchor and chain, liferaft, additional batteries and fuel better than lightweight designs.

8. Helm that is Responsive and Maintains Directional Stability

Making steering by hand, autopilot or windvane easy.

9. A Comfortable Interior

Both at sea and in port with sufficient handholds for safe movement. As most cruisers are at sea less than a quarter of the time, comfort at anchor is also important. Being able to look out while belowdecks is a substantial advantage that deck salon and multihulls offer.

10 Simple Rig and Sail Plan

Easily singlehanded without severely swept back spreaders.

11. Good Engine Access

From all sides and access allowing for easy engine removal.

12. Fuel tankage sufficient for 800-1000 miles under power

13. Moderate draft

Of around less than 7' without T or wing keel.

14. Keel, Prop and Rudder that Won't Snag Lines

15. Deep bilge sump

Ideally with substantial tankage located below the waterline and cabin sole. All interior areas of the boat should drain to the bilge.

16. Adequate Interior and Accessible Deck Storage Capacity

Ideally space under most of the main salon settee should be available for storage and not taken up with tankage. Lockers provide much more efficient storage than open shelves.

17. Comfortable Cockpit

With room to relax and entertain and seatbacks high enough for good back support.

18. Low Exterior and Interior Maintenance

Oiled teak interiors grow mold in the tropics and lots of exterior brightwork is difficult to maintain in any climate. Dark-colored

hulls are hot, get salt-stained and fade fairly quickly in the tropics. Anodized, unpainted aluminum spars are much better than painted spars.

#### 19. Swim Step

A built-in swim step on a slightly reversed transom stern makes getting in and out of the water and dinghy or mooring stern-to easy. A swim step can be added fairly easily utilizing a stainless steel radiused frame with teak slats and a drop down swim ladder.

#### 20 . Good Resale Appeal and Value

### Suggested Reading

- The Modern Cruising Sailboat, Charles Doane, International Marine, 2010.
- The Best Used Boat Notebook, by John Kretschmer, Sheridan House, 2007.
- The Voyager's Handbook, 2nd ed, Beth Leonard, International Marine 2006
- Twenty Affordable Sailboats to Take You Anywhere, Nestor, Paradise Cay, 2007.
- Inspecting the Aging Sailboat, Casey, International Marine, 2004.
- The Boat Repair Bible, Adlard Coles Nautical, 2012
- Don Casey's Sailboat Maintenance Manual, International Marine, 2006.
- Practical Sailor's Practical Boat Buying, Volumes 1 & 2 from Belvoir Publications, P.O. Box 2626, Greenwich, CT 06836-2626
- Surveying Yachts and Small Craft, Paul Stevens, Adlard Coles Nautical, 2010.
- Surveying Fiberglass Sailboats, Henry C. Mustin, International Marine, 1994.
- Desirable and Undesirable Characteristics of Offshore Yachts, John Rousmaniere, 1987.
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## 6. Boat Design

### Design

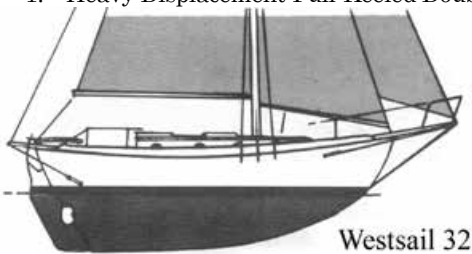
If possible, contact the designer before purchasing. Often the broker may be unaware or unwilling to share knowledge problems that have occurred with sisterships. The designer can tell you if the builder accurately followed the construction plans and may be able to tell you of any issues that have arisen, including problems with blisters, mast step, rudder, keel, etc. Some designs have structural issues that only appear after a period of time and ocean sailing. When first approaching a designer offer to pay a consultation fee out of courtesy for their time.

### Underbody Design

In the distant past, cruisers assumed a full-keel design with attached rudder was optimum for ocean voyaging. I have cruised on four different modern full-keel boats, plus on a boat with a longish keel and separate full-skeg and rudder. My last boat, a Hallberg-Rassy 46, had a semi-balanced rudder with partial skeg and for me the tradeoff of less protection is worth the ease of steering and added maneuverability.

### Ten Types of Cruising Boats - Evolution of Yacht Design

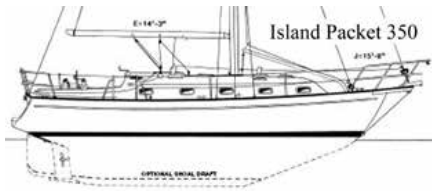
1. Heavy Displacement Full-Keeled Double-Enders based on Norwegian



lifeboat or Tahiti ketch lines used to be a nearly automatic choice for long distance voyaging. However, yacht design has made great advances in the past 60 years, and you may choose to take advantage of these

improvements which make for faster, more comfortable passages, and smaller, more easily handled sail plans without resorting to bowsprits and boomkins. Having said that, there are still a few folks happily cruising on their Westsail 32s and Hans Christian's content that they have the best design for their cruising lifestyle. Remember that there is not one design or style of cruising that suits everyone.

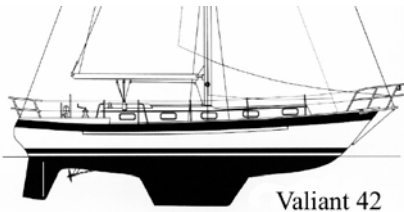
2. Modern, with attached rudder and moderate displacement is another



good choice for cruising in isolated areas where groundings or scrapes are common and the nearest shipyard may be thousands of miles away.

The cutaway forefoot is a faster, more maneuverable design that will have fewer tendencies to trip or broach when running under storm conditions than a more traditional type of full keel boat. Having the rudder mounted slightly above and protected by the full length of the keel and the propeller enclosed in an aperture offers the best protection against damage from collision with submerged or floating objects. Careening or hauling out in primitive boatyards is easy with this type of design. Examples include: Island Packet (still in business), Rustler, Mason and Cape Dory.

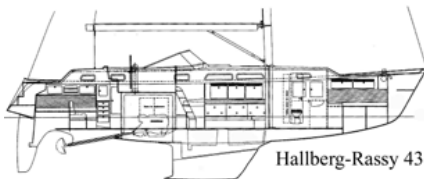
2. Skeg Protected Rudder, detached from the keel is well suited for



long distance cruising. The skeg protects the rudder to some degree, and may increase directional stability. Examples of this type of design: Valiants, Pacific Seacraft 37, 40, 44, Rustlers, Morgan 384 & 462 and

older Amels and Oysters. There are many suitable, well-built boats of this design type and they are a popular choice for long distance ocean cruising.

3. Partial-Skeg Rudders are semi-balanced, reducing the required effort whether



steering by hand, windvane or steering. This type of rudder generally has three bearings, making it

sturdier than a free-standing spade rudder which generally has only two bearings. The partial skeg provides some protection from

logs and debris and importantly provides directional stability if the rudder is lost. The downside is that the top of the rudder balance area is prone to catching lines and weed. Examples include Morris, Najad, Malo and the Frers-designed Hallberg-Rassy's.



4. Long Keel/Spade Rudder is another viable cruising design. The longer keel provides more stability and importantly can easily withstand a 6-knot grounding that a narrower, higher aspect keel. The unprotected spade rudder is more vulnerable to being damaged by grounding or a hard impact with an object.

There are several very successful cruising designs that have a longer, substantially supported keel (not a thin, high-aspect keel) and strong rudderstocks. Some examples of this type of design appropriate for offshore voyaging are Outbound 44, 46, 52, Niagara 31, 35, 42, Sundeer, Deerfoot. If your cruise plans involve high latitude sailing or gunkholing in remote areas, you will need to be more cautious with this type of design.

5. Fin Keel/Spade Rudder is by far the most common type of sailboats built today. Disadvantages for serious cruising include inability to survive a 6-knot grounding without substantial damage, high loading in a very small area of the hull which has resulted in sinkings due to loss of keels, and inability to track in a straight line if rudder is lost plus tendency to pound



when sailing upwind. These designs are frequently designed and built for bareboat charter market so generally have limited fuel tankage, deck and interior storage for extended cruising. It is possible to cruise on these types of boats as long as you understand the limitations. Some examples of this type of design that you might want to consider include Beneteau 40CC, 42CC, 423, 44CC, 461, 473, 47.7, 50, 523.



6. Centerboard/Lifting Keel is a design that French yards have popularized with the ubiquitous Ovni series and now the popular Garcia, Allures and Boreal designs.

Southerly Yachts in England built many somewhat sturdy lifting keel designs. Traditional centerboard designs by Bristol including their 35.5 to 53.3 and the Tartan 37 are well-proven.

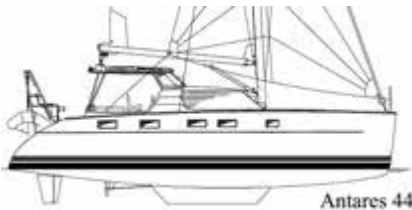
7. Charter-oriented Catamarans are very popular for tropical cruising.



Primarily designed and built for the charter trade they sport many double cabins, maximum interior volume and unimpressive sailing performance, particularly upwind, similar to or slower than a modern monohull of the

same length. Their low bridge deck clearance produces interesting noises upwind and their saildrives, unprotected spade rudders and balsa cored hulls are vulnerable to damage from groundings or impact with objects at sea. However, if you're planning downwind ocean passagemaking or are cruising with kids in the tropics, these boats are very comfortable and stable. Examples include: Leopard, Lagoon, Fontaine Pajot and Nautitech.

8. Cruising-oriented catamarans not designed or built for the charter

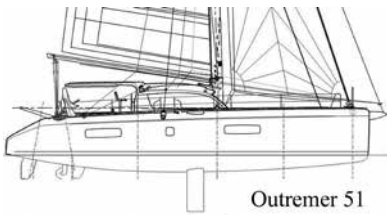


trade, present an attractive alternative. Frequently storage, tankage, engine access and overall quality (and price) are higher than on charter boats. Examples

include Garcia Explocat, Antares (in a category of its own in terms of design, construction quality and customer service), Manta, Dolphin,

Voyage/Norseman, St. Francis, Island Spirit, Admiral, Windelo and Chris White designs.

9. Performance Cruising Catamarans feature higher bridge deck



clearance (no kabooms from wave slap), substantially better sailing performance and better overall design and construction. At the more expensive high-performance end we find Outremer and Catana

and the very expensive HH and Gunboat, several of which utilize carbon fiber and composite panels instead of plywood for interior furniture and bulkheads.

## Negative Design Aspects to be Avoided

Bowsprits longer than 24" often prove to be a liability when anchoring or maneuvering in close quarters.

Low freeboard may indicate a design that will ship a lot of spray and water with the wind forward of the beam on ocean passages.

Excessive freeboard may cause poor windward performance, difficulty boarding from a dock or dinghy and the tendency to "sail" back and forth at anchor.

A small amount of weather helm as the wind increases is desirable, but an excessive amount that cannot be decreased by sail trim or rig tuning may mean that a boat will be difficult to steer by hand, windvane or autopilot.

If the design is excessively tender, you'll have to get used to living, cooking, navigating and sleeping at 25 to 30 degrees angle of heel every time you are sailing to windward, something you will find fatiguing. A comfortable motion at sea is very important.

A vessel with a short waterline and long, graceful overhangs will be slower and often tends to hobby horse or pitch when sailing upwind, making those passages uncomfortable and difficult. Another drawback is frequently a lack directional stability when sailing downwind in a large following sea.

Excessively broad sterns make for large cockpits and big interiors but can increase motion and decrease directional stability in a seaway or gusty winds.

## Keels

Some keel designs are better suited to withstanding a hard grounding without damage.

A longer keel with external lead ballast attached to a substantial stub that is an integral part of the hull absorbs groundings well. When external ballast is used, keel bolts attaching the keel to the hull must be accessible, the root of the keel (where it attaches to the hull) shouldn't be narrow and keel loading must be spread out through a substantial grid or floor system. Lead absorbs impact much better than cast iron which is less expensive and because it is a denser material, the result is stiffer (less heeling motion) boat. Preventing corrosion on a cast iron keel is an ongoing maintenance issue.

Another option is internal ballast that is lowered into the keel cavity and then fiberglassed into place. Internal lead ballast eliminates some potential problems with keel attachment but check closely during survey for any voids or water penetration in the keel area between the ballast and fiberglass. Read *Surveying Fiberglass Sailboats* for more details. Cast iron is a less desirable internal ballast material as it can corrode and results in a boat that heels more quickly and has less room for tankage above the keel.

Centerboards and lifting keels are popular with several French builders who extol the ability to lift the keel when sailing downwind and exploring shallow anchorages. The increased complexity and lowered stability are only modest drawbacks.

High aspect fin keels (deep draft but narrow fore and aft) are best suited for racing boats. Running aground can result in loss of the keel or damage to the area where the trailing edge of the keel meets the hull and can cause leaks around the keel bolts. Torpedo keel bulbs are vulnerable to groundings and inappropriate on cruising boats.

Wing keels reduce draft, but the tradeoff is that with a shape similar to some types of anchors, it can prove very difficult to get the boat off following grounding without damaging the keel. The loading on the keel when attempting to kedge or be towed off is enormous because of the extra

surface area of the wings.

## Aft vs. Center Cockpit

Nigel Calder makes a clear argument as to why he prefers aft cockpit designs. I can make a reasonable argument for either design but personally prefer a center cockpit in boats over 40'-42' if the cockpit isn't unduly high off the water. Some of the advantages I appreciate with center cockpits include more privacy, particularly with kids or guests aboard, substantially better engine access and less danger of the cockpit being filled by breaking following seas. Some designers try to maximize interior height in the aft cabin and engine room, resulting in a high cockpit sole with minimal cockpit seatbacks.

## Steering Position

The location of the steering position is important. If the wheel is mounted at the far aft end of the cockpit, it is difficult to protect the helmsperson with a sturdy cockpit dodger.

## Transom

The ideal stern for a cruising boat includes a built-in swim step on a reversed transom. This not only makes getting in and out of the water and dinghy simple but allows easy access when moored stern-to a dock or wall, common in less developed cruising areas. Double-enders may look salty, but the loss of valuable, hard-to-replace lazarette storage space and buoyancy aft must be taken into consideration. Frequently double-enders tend to "squat" in the stern and hobby horse sailing to windward when loaded with cruising gear. Valiants are the exception to this because their beam is carried well aft with little overhang.

## Rig

Sloop rig is the simplest choice and what most long-distance cruisers choose. Many yacht designers and cruisers are adding a removable inner forestay on which a very simple, hank-on storm staysail can be set after furling the headsail.

Cutter rigs work very well on vessels over 45'. On boats under 45' they add clutter and complexity.

Ketch rigs were popular before dependable roller furling. After

sailing 70,000 miles and seven years on my ketch-rigged Hallberg-Rassy 42 I was delighted to have the cockpit and aft deck free of a mizzen mast when I upgraded to my Hallberg-Rassy 46, a sloop with removable cutter stay.

## Engine

The age and condition of the engine can be a deal breaker. You don't want to set off on an extended cruise with a 30-year-old engine that you can't depend on and for which finding spare parts is a challenge if you can avoid it. Repowering a 40' boat generally costs at least \$40,000 so keep your eye open for a boat that is less than 25 years old or has been repowered. Rebuilding a 30-year-old engine makes no sense whatsoever.

The ability to maintain at least six knots under power will get you in most passes and channels at the time of least current. It's an advantage to have sufficient power to deal with currents and the ability to motorsail to windward for short distances into steep chop when necessary.

Saildrives are a negative, but not quite a deal breaker. They are substantially more vulnerable to damage from floating debris and to corrosion from stray electrical current. For many servicing points, the boat must be hauled out of the water.

### Points to Consider on an Engine:

How good is everyday access? Can the raw water pump be removed without dismantling the engine or engine mount? How easy is it to make hourly visual inspections when the engine is running?

Can the engine be removed if necessary for replacement without having to destroy the cockpit or companionway?

Is there an operational engine hour meter and logbook showing maintenance history?

What is the range under power? A very minimum of 600-800 mile range under power for long distance and remote cruising where winds may be light to non-existent and fuel may not be difficult to find is only marginal, from my experience.

Ideally the boat you purchase will have a common make of engine that will make it easy to find parts and service for in less-developed cruising areas.

Best manufactures for worldwide parts availability are Volvo, Beta, Caterpillar, and Cummins.

Next best: Yanmar, Perkins,

Most difficult to obtain parts for are Westerbeke, Universal, BMW, Isuzu, Mercedes, Pisces, Sole, Pathfinder and Bukh.

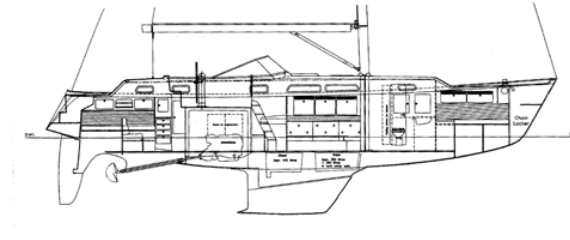
Some companies, Bukh and Beta for example, don't have parts distributors in many countries but have excellent availability and quick shipments from their headquarters. As Beta's are marinized Kubota engines, frequently the basic Kubota parts will be available.

When I bought my Hallberg-Rassy 31, I thought the 25 hp diesel engine was overkill for a displacement of only 9,500 lbs, but the top speed of 7.2 knots, cruising speed of 6.5 knots and maximum range under power at 5 knots of 1,200 proved useful.

My 42' ketch displaced 25,000 pounds and was powered with a 62 hp engine which proved very adequate in areas like Patagonia, Antarctica and Alaska where conditions dictated powering for weeks at a time, encountering strong currents and tidal rips and fierce katabatic winds daily.

My last 46', 38,000 lb boat came with a 95 hp. engine which provided an 8.3 knot top speed, and a 1,500 mile range at more economical 6 knots. At 20 years and 200,000 nautical miles I sold the original engine which was in excellent condition and replaced it with a Volvo D2-75 motor (75 hp) that was 200 lbs. lighter, smaller, quieter and 38% more fuel efficient when coupled with a Flexofold instead of Maxprop. On each of these boats I have supplemented standard fuel tankage with jerry jugs stowed in cockpit lockers (but not on deck).

## 7. Boat Construction



### Hull Construction Material

1. Fiberglass is the second least maintenance-intensive material (following unpainted aluminum) for cruising boats, but construction quality varies greatly from one builder to the next. Most fiberglass sailboats were never designed or built for extended ocean sailing and may eventually start falling apart if pressed into this type of service. The other extreme are designs that are so heavily built and overweight and do not have the sailing performance that makes for fast, comfortable and enjoyable passages.

Pearson Vanguard, Tritons and Alberg 35's are examples of heavily-built, reasonably priced earliest fiberglass boats. After 60 years some of these boats are still going strong, although their short waterlines and low interior volume make them unattractive compared to more modern designs.

Hull thickness doesn't necessarily translate into strength. A thick hull with a high resin to glass ratio may be more brittle than a thinner hull where excess resin has been squeezed out.

Some builders have a history of serious osmotic blister problems, sometimes the result of lack of temperature and humidity control during lay-up. In some instances, blistering may be serious enough to require a bottom peel; removal and replacement of part of the hull laminate. This can be very expensive and time-consuming and may occur again later. A knowledgeable surveyor will be an excellent resource and frequently will recommend looking for a different boat if the blisters are deep and extensive.

If the hull is balsa-cored and the core material becomes saturated because

of improperly installed thru-hulls, or if the boat has "gone on the beach" you will need to consider a different boat because of the cost of repairs and potential for future problems. This is frequently an issue with ex-charter catamarans.

Closed-cell PVC foam like Divinycell provides rigidity and insulation without the water absorption and rot problems associated with less expensive and far more common balsa coring.

Read *Surveying Yachts and Small Craft* by Paul Stevens, Adlard Coles Nautical, 2010 or *Surveying Fiberglass Sailboats* by Henry C. Mustin, International Marine for a clear and concise view of hull and deck design, structure, and condition

2. Aluminum boats are generally lighter and faster than steel boats, have less impact resistance and may be slightly more difficult to have repaired in remote shipyards. Painted aluminum boats often tend to develop paint blisters after five years, requiring an expensive paint job if you want a fair and shiny hull. There are hundreds of unpainted French aluminum boats cruising the world, and although you may not find their oxidized aluminum topsides attractive, they are sturdy and practical. Aluminum suffers from electrolysis more severely than steel; if you own an aluminum boat, you'll need to be very cautious of stray electrical current within your boat as well as withing any marinas you berth in.
3. Steel used to be a popular material of choice of sailors who have done extensive offshore cruising and were planning on high-latitude voyaging. However, unpainted aluminum has far surpassed steel to the point where there may not be any production steel cruising boat builders left in the world. The impact resistance and total watertightness of the hull, deck and fittings are an advantage. With sandblasting and new epoxy coatings, steel takes less time to maintain than it used to, although it still requires more time and cost to maintain than an unpainted aluminum or fiberglass boat.

Some of the steel boats on the North American and Australian markets are owner-built hard-chine designs. Although strong and stiff, they are not fast or attractive to many people's tastes. A poorly built steel boat will have places on the inside of the hull that will trap water and rust

through from the inside out. Access to every part of the interior of the hull makes checking for corrosion and painting much easier.

Some attractive, modern steel cruising boats are the Waterline Yachts built in Sidney, BC (an excellent yard) and Amazon Yachts which were built in Vancouver, BC. Dutch and German-built steel boats are frequently of very high quality.

4. Wooden cruising boats are very rare today, but if you have a limited budget and don't mind the additional work, a well-built wooden boat could be a reasonable choice. Wooden boats built utilizing wood epoxy saturation (WEST System) technique are lighter, stronger and often faster than traditionally built boats and have a better chance of being insurable for ocean cruising. The best areas to find modern cold-molded boats are in the New Zealand and NW and NE US.

## Tank Material

Frequently builders install tanks, build the interior over them, and then install the cabin house and decks. Removal and replacement of a single tank can cost as much as \$20,000. For this reason, you'll want to ensure your surveyor checks not only the interior of metal tanks, but also, if possible, the exterior of the tank bottoms. If the bottom of a metal tank has been exposed to splashes from salty bilgewater it can cause corrosion issues. This has been a problem with the aluminum tanks found in older Island Packets as well as with the black iron tanks found in lower quality, older Taiwan yachts.

Stainless steel is the best tank material for water and fuel. Aluminum tanks are less expensive but can develop pin-hole leaks after 15 years. Chlorine, present in most municipal drinking water dissolves aluminum. Chlorine can be filtered out when filling tanks, but without a small amount of chlorine in the tropics, bacteria and algae can foul drinking water. Aluminum fuel tanks are also subject to corrosion and leaks.

Plastic tanks for both fuel and water are becoming more common and less troublesome than in the past.

## Bulkhead Attachment

On a fiberglass boat bulkheads need to be securely fiberglassed to the hull and deck on both sides with multiple layers of tape. High production builders skip this labor-intensive step, gluing bulkheads in place instead. Once these boats have had a hard grounding or made several ocean passages, bulkheads and interior wooden cabinetry frequently come unbonded from the hull and deck, allowing the hull to flex more than it should. The repair is complicated, messy and expensive, involving grinding and fiberglassing in some difficult to reach areas.

Internal stiffening systems (grid floor systems, and/or full-length and transverse glass over foam (not wooden) stringers) contribute greatly to the stiffness and rigidity of a boat. If the interior woodwork is just glued or lightly attached to a hull liner pan or to the hull, it's not uncommon to discover it breaking loose after a few thousand miles of ocean sailing. Access to hull and deck areas is generally restricted when fiberglass liners and pans are used in construction, making equipment installation and leak stopping difficult. From a manufacturing standpoint, hull liners are substantially less expensive than "stick-built" interiors, but you won't find them on top-end ocean cruising designs. This is one of the reasons for the large price difference between high-volume mass-produced French and German yards and higher quality, lower volume builders.

## Deck Construction

The deck surface must provide adequate non-skid without being overly abrasive on bare knees. If you plan on living aboard or cruising in non-tropical areas, insulated decks will reduce condensation and moisture.

Teak decks look great at the boat show, but on older boats thin or improperly laid decks will present additional leak potential and maintenance, and the cost of removal or replacement is often a deal breaker. Synthetic teak, an option on some newer designs is a better option.

In the '70's and '80's, many Taiwan yards installed teak decking over fiberglass that was cored with plywood or random bits of wood. Serious water absorption problems started occurring once these boats were 10-15 years old. If the plywood core material is not marine grade (it commonly was not) or if insufficient bedding compound was used, water follows the screw threads to the core material which becomes saturated and rots. This is a

deal breaker. Check with any marine surveyor to verify this and avoid these boats.

I would recommend having a surveyor look very carefully at any boat older than ten years with balsa-cored decks. Unless the core has been eliminated in favor of a solid laminate where stanchion bases, genoa tracks, cleats and other deck fittings are placed, water will penetrate the balsa sooner or later, and repairs may be extensive and expensive.

If the boat has foam-cored decks, the marine surveyor will check all horizontal surfaces carefully for voids or delaminating by tapping with a small hammer.

## Hull to Deck Joint

There are several methods of attaching the hull and deck of fiberglass boats. The most common method utilizes bolts or screws protruding through on the inside of the hull to the deck joint. This mechanical clamp joint is relying on the bond of a sealant adhesive (3M 5200 is often used) to provide watertight integrity. After 10 to 15 years and several thousand miles of ocean sailing the sealant/adhesive loses some of its elasticity. Due to the working of the boat and the different climatic conditions the toerail and hull expand, contract and flex at different rates eventually weakening the bond, allowing water to follow the bolt or screw threads down, and drip on the inside of your lockers.

### Two Methods of Solving Caprail Leaks

- a. Remove the teak cap rail or aluminum extruded toerail and clean and re-bed each bolt.
- b. Radius the inside of the joint with epoxy and microballoons and then lay several layers of fiberglass tape over the inside of the joint, totally sealing it and strengthening the area at the same time.

A more trouble-free hull to deck joint utilizes substantial fiberglass bonding on the interior of the joint, eliminating mechanical fasteners and leaks.

## Mast Support System

Deck stepped masts work well if proper structural members transmit the load to the keel. They have no leaks and corrosion and are simpler to pull for inspection. With keel stepped masts, inspect for leaks and corrosion

at the base of the mast. Check the mast step of any mast for settling or deformation. Check any mast for trueness.

## Chainplate Load Transmission

The loading from chain plates must be evenly transmitted to bulkheads and structural members below deck to avoid lifting or distorting the deck. Separate chainplates for forward, upper and aft shrouds provides more stability for the mast and reduces the chance of deck loading distortion.

Swept-back spreaders mean a less expensive installation for the builder and a tighter sheeting angle for the headsail but frequently present a chafe problem when easing the main out for deep downwind sailing.

External chainplates (fastened to the outside of the hull) look salty but have a much higher leak potential and restrict jib sheeting angles. Chainplates must be easily removable as crevice corrosion, particularly in warm climates can be a serious issue.

## Steering System and Position

Some sailors prefer tillers on boats under 35' as there are fewer moving parts and installing most windvane steering systems is less complicated than with wheel steering.

If the boat you're considering has wheel steering, hopefully the system was built by a reputable company like Edson, Jefa or Lewmar/Whitlock where you're assured of quality components and that you'll always be able to source spare parts if needed. Many Taiwanese-built steering systems suffer from poor initial design, inferior bronze castings and rudders that aren't able to hold up to the stresses of ocean sailing. This is less of a problem on higher quality Taiwan boats like Norseman, Taswell, Mason and Little Harbor.

## Emergency Steering

Emergency steering means in best case you can steer the boat plus or minus 30 degrees. A very workable alternative if the rudder is undamaged but steering is not working is having an autopilot ram connected to a separate tiller arm bolted directly to the rudder shaft.

A Hydrovane windvane makes an excellent emergency rudder, as does the Monitor windvane if an additional part is fitted.



## 8. Boat Selection Prices

The boats on this list are a small example from the 147 builders listed on our "Boats to Consider for Offshore Cruising" list in the Offshore Cruising Companion. "Mkt" refers to the number of boats of each model currently listed on [www.yachtworld.com](http://www.yachtworld.com). This changes frequently, but gives you an idea of how common or rare each boat listed is. The number and price of listings is as of **January 6, 2026**. The selling prices are a two-year average **from January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2015 from [boatwizard.com](http://boatwizard.com). Most listings are North America only, except for certain models which include worldwide listing to give a broader market picture.**

If you are looking for a cruising boat, consider my professional Boat Purchase Consultation. The fee for this service is \$2000, with no time or geo- graphic limitations. I will forward you an extensive questionnaire, evaluate the boats you are presently considering and suggest additional boats for you to consider.

When possible, I will help with information regarding honest, unbiased buyer's broker and surveyor, making an offer, negotiating repairs following the survey, title search, arranging shipping and insurance.

Since 1976 I have consulted with thousands of clients worldwide, with budgets ranging from \$20,000 to \$3,000,000.

I am professional consultant and don't sell boats or accept commissions from anyone. My only interest is helping you find a boat which will allow you to realize your cruising dreams safely and comfortably, while maintaining as much of your investment as possible.

John Neal	P.O. Box 1596
Mahina	Friday Harbor, WA 98250
Expeditions	Tel: 360.378.7344
<a href="http://www.mahina.com">www.mahina.com</a>	
<a href="mailto:sailing@mahina.com">sailing@mahina.com</a>	

## Mahina Offshore Cruising Workshop - 2026

Featured Boats - Condensed from "Boats to Consider for Offshore Cruising" from

### OFFSHORE CRUISING COMPANION

Boat & (add'l models)	Mkt	Used	Sold	Change	Comments
Morgan 382, 383, 384	8	\$20-65	\$33,000	-\$8k	Brewer design, good value, but old
Pearson 424 (385, 422)	4	\$29-45	\$64,300	-\$33,210	Cutters most desirable, good value, old
Moody 419 & 425	9	\$64-150	\$79,800		Good value, three-cabin model exc. for kids
Island Packet 350 (380)	7	\$105-130	\$96,250	-\$22,583	Better performance than 35, well-built, good.
Beneteau Oceanis CC 44	2	\$131-159	\$118,000		A breakthrough design, ahead of its time
Beneteau 423 (393, 473)	14	\$99-172	\$118,538	-\$17,319	A modern design at a reasonable price
Catalina 42 Mk II (400)	15	\$80-169	\$139,500		Lead keel, good components & systems
Valiant 42 (39,50)	1	\$239	\$208,222	-\$36,778	Solid boats, newer the better, V-drive is a neg.
Ovni 395 (400, 435, 455)	2	\$234-293	\$209,000	+\$7,500	Proven, innovative, solid value, high resale
Amel 52, 53, 54 (50, 55)	10	\$116-287	\$246,000	-\$31,143	Unusual but good choice, SOLID!
Hallberg-Rassy 43 (39+)	7	\$316-505	\$388,285	+\$285.00	Highest quality, fast! Hardtop is excellent
Outbound 44/46	7	\$279-580	\$466,625	+\$66,475	Well-built, attractive and fast. High quality.
Allures 45.9, (45)	4	\$430-674	650,000		High quality, innovative composite decks
Hallberg-Rassy 40 (40C)	5	\$280-392	\$315,125		Highest quality, perfect for a couple
Sirius 40 DS			571,223	(New)	Highest quality, innovative deck-saloon.
Garcia Exploration 45	3	\$971-1,1	\$941,761	+\$246,761	Quality, go-anywhere SUV yacht
<b>Multihulls</b>					
Fontaine Pajot Belize43	6	\$186-293	\$238,800	-\$29,860	Newer models not as sturdy as older ones.
Manta 40, 42	6	\$209-249	\$176,333	-\$84,417	Solid, heavy boats with ok resale value.
Leopard 44 (46, 47, 48)	13	\$354-399	\$443,000	+\$11,667	Great choice, particularly non-charter models

Outremer 45	6	\$325-385	\$717,142	-\$59,258	Fast, well-built. Less volume than slower boats
Catana 471,472	2	\$410-526	\$446,000	+\$8,600	Quality, lousy customer service on new builds
Nautitech 46 Open	12	\$499-838	\$571,222		Great design and quality
Antares 44i	9	\$475-875	\$740,750	+\$49,250	One of the best constructed cats, not fast

The boats on this list are a small example from the 147 builders listed on my “Boats to Consider for Offshore Cruising” list in the Offshore Cruising Companion. “Mkt” refers to the number of boats currently listed on [www.yachtworld.com](http://www.yachtworld.com). The number and price of listings is as of January 5, 2026. The selling prices are a one-year average from soldboats.com. “Change” denotes the change in average selling price from the previous year.

If you are looking for a cruising boat, consider my professional **Boat Purchase Consultation** for \$2000, with no time or geographic limits. Complete and return the questionnaire located at [www.mahina.com/questionnaire](http://www.mahina.com/questionnaire) and I will evaluate the boats you are presently considering and suggest additional boats for you to consider. I will provide referrals to honest, unbiased brokers and surveyors, assistance in making an offer, negotiating cost of repairs following the survey, title search, flagging options, shipping, insurance, additional gear needed and overall weather and passage planning. Full details: [www.mahina.com/consult](http://www.mahina.com/consult) or by emailing: [sailing@mahina.com](mailto:sailing@mahina.com).

### Why Some Boats Are More Expensive Than Others

Component	Lower Quality/Charter/Local Cruising	Higher Quality/Offshore
Structure	No or minimal grid reinforcing system Bulkheads & decks glued in place	Substantial grid system Bulkheads & deck glassed (tabbed) in place
Ballast	Cast iron: rusts & doesn't absorb impact	Lead, which absorbs impact, more expensive
Keel	Poor impact absorption and distribution, keel may fall off with serious grounding	Able to withstand 6+kt grounding without structural damage
Sailing Ability	Great downwind	Equally good upwind & downwind performance
Bilge	Shallow & flat; <20 gallon capacity	Deep; >50 gallon capacity
Tank Material	Aluminum, plastic or black iron	Stainless steel or fiberglass
Tank Location	Under settees	Above keel, under cabin sole
Fuel Tankage	<60 gallons, <600 miles	>100 gallons, >1000 miles
Interior Storage	Space under settees taken by tankage	Substantially more storage available
Deck Storage	Minimal storage lockers	Substantial deck storage lockers
Deck Core	Balsa or non-marine ply	Inorganic closed-cell foam or none
Rig	Lower strength or complex (B&R)	Simple & strong, ideally w/ fore & aft lowers & removable cutter stay for storm staysail
Battery Capacity	<300 amp hours	>500 amp hours

Charging Output	<100 amps	>100 amps
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## Refit and Maintenance Costs

### Initial Refit and Outfit Budget:

Percent of original purchase price to prepare a stock 10+ year old 40'-46' boat for extended cruising: 30 – 100% depending on quality and condition of vessel.

### Maintenance Items to Budget For:

(Approximate prices for 40' – 46' boat)

- Replace main engine at 5000 to 20,000 hours or after 25-30 years 30,000 - 40,000
- Remove antifoul paint and epoxy bottom job every 8 -10 years 15,000 - 20,000
- Pull mast, replace rigging, repaint (if not anodized) every 10 years 15,000 - 25,000
- Replace sails every 20,000 - 30,000 miles 25,000 - 40,000
- Replace batteries every 2-6 years 2,000 - 20,000
- Repack liferaft (1-3 years), replace at 12-15 yrs 1,500 - 6,000
- Regalvanize or replace chain every two years (tropical waters) 600 - 5,000
- Rebuild or replace windlass every 4-8 years 500 - 4,000
- Drop rudder for inspection & repair every 5 years 3,000 - 5,000
- Replace tender and motor every 5-10 years 4,000 - 15,000
- Replace failed or outdated electronics every 2-12 years 2,000 - 30,000
- Replace fresh water and head hoses every 5 yrs 300 - 1,500
- Replace thru-hulls and ball valves every 8-10 yrs 2,000 - 10,000
- Replace solar panels and regulator every 4-8 years 3,000 - 10,000

### Maintenance Costs While Cruising

First 1-4 years after refit: 3-5% of purchase price annually, 5-10 years: 6-8% annually, over 10 years: 10% annually.

The older the boat, the higher the annual maintenance costs and the more time required for maintenance.

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# John Neal's

## Boats to Consider for Ocean Cruising

Updated April 2026

Through Offshore Cruising Seminars and Boat Purchase Consultations I've helped more than 12,000 sailors locate the best cruising boats for their voyages and budget. If you need knowledgeable, experienced (410,000 ocean miles, 52 years) and unbiased advice from someone who has no financial interest in the boat you select, I can help with a flat-fee, unlimited time Boat Purchase Consultation. Details on [www.mahina.com/consult.html](http://www.mahina.com/consult.html) or contact me at Mahina Offshore Services, [sailing@mahina.com](mailto:sailing@mahina.com), tel 360.378.7344.  
v4.26

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	Functional, practical but truly ancient and likely not cost effective to refit.
Alubat (Ovni, Cigale) 36-58 (all models)	5	Builders of simple and innovative lifting-keel aluminum cruising boats
Allures 40, 45, 51 (all models)	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. Overall, a very solid choice.
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.
Beneteau 40CC, 42CC, 44CC, 423, 461, 473, 47.7, 50, 523		423, 473 and CC series are solid values, as long as one doesn't run aground. Beneteau's don't tend to have the steering systems problems as Jeanneau.
Bestevaer 36-70 (all models)	5	Highest quality Dutch aluminum cruising boats.
Bianca 36-52	3	Quality Danish yard, now a winter refit and storage facility.
Boreal 44, 47, 50, 53, 63	4	Innovative design suitable for high latitudes, consistent late delivery problems.
Bowman 36-58	2	Strong boats, good passage makers, but shortish waterlines and now old.
Brewer 42, 44	2	Improved version of Whitby 42. Old.
Bristol 27-45	3	Good boats. Later models were better quality. Long since out of production.
Bristol Channel Cutter 28	2	Solidly-built, but cockpit and cabin are not comfortable.
Bruckmann 42, 480, 50, 65	3	Solid, roomy Mark Ellis designs, perfect for inclement weather.
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. 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 waterlines.

Cape George Cutters 31, 36, 38	2	Many owner-completed, quality varies. Fast, but watch for deck & cabin rot.
Catalina 385, 400 MkII, 42 MkII, 425, 445	3	Post 2000 models are good value and quality keeps improving. 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 \$70k+!
Cherubini 44, 48, 62	3	Semi-custom, gorgeous, great sailing & expensive. Limited interior space.
Contessa 26 & 32	1	Tania Aebi & B.J. Caldwell 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 & expensive. Yard continues to build highest quality boats and sells refitted boats taken in on trade – great value.
Cooper 416, 508	3	Roomy, fairly well built with inside steering. Good PNW design and reasonable.
Crealock 31, PH 32, 34, 37, 40, 44 by Pacific Seacraft	3	Good value & solidly built but graceful overhangs, canoe sterns, short waterlines mean these boats can hobbyhorse upwind in a chop. Limited tankage.
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 designed by Steve Dashew.
Discovery 42, 48, 54, 55, 58, 68	3	Fairly high-quality yard that's been in and out of bankruptcy multiple times.
Dufour 31, 35 - 45	2	1964-84 models had solid hulls & balsa cored-decks. Later models not brilliant.
Elan 43, 434	4	Excellent design and good build quality. Very roomy.
Endurance 35, 38, 40	1	Peter Ibold design, some owner completed. Built by various yards.
Esprit 37 or Valiant 37, 39	3	Comfortable, well proven, good value but some early models may have blisters.
Exploration 45, 52 (Garcia)	5	Innovative, impressive, go-anywhere aluminum lifting keel designs with protected steering positions.
F & C 44	2	Semi-modern Frers designed cruising ketch built in Argentina.
Fantasi 37, 50	5	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.
Fraser 41, 46, 50	2	Sturdy, fairly modern cruisers.
Freya 39	2	Stiff and fast, but many owner-completed, so quality varies greatly.
Garcia 40.9-51.9 (all models)	5	Strong, semi-custom, highest quality aluminum lifting keel designs built in France
Gladiateur 33	1	Sturdy, small interior & cockpit, 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 (all models)	5	Stiff, strong, fast, comfortable, good tankage & systems integration. Newer Frers designs faster than earlier models. Incredible support through HR Parts.
Heyman 42	5	Innovative Swedish designed pilothouse built in Estonia.
Hinkley 30-64	3	Very attractive with 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 349, 350, 370, 380, 420, 440, 445, 485, SP Cruiser, 42 MS, Estero	4	Roomy & comfortable, good tankage & storage but some unusual features. Only consider IP's built after 1998 when chainplate issue was addressed.
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 but graceful.
KM Yachtbuilders (all models)	5	Highest quality semi-custom Dutch-built aluminum lifting keel designs.
Kanter 42, 45, 60, 65	1	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, 46	5	High quality offshore boats with good sailing performance. Multiple instances of skeg failure reported on 45 & 46.
Mason 33, 43, 44, 53, 54, 63	1	Traditional designs, short waterlines, deck leaks and high maintenance.
Moody 38, 42, 47, 54, 64	3	Good designs of modest quality but great value. 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, this was the 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 (all models)	5	Quality, attractive boats. Excellent sailing performance. Good tankage, storage and high level of craftsmanship.
Nauti-Cat 351, 39, 40, 42, 515, 521	2	Only consider later S & S designed models are much better performers than earlier 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 totally ancient now.
Ocean Cruising 42	2	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 to purchase used..
Pacific Seacraft 34, 37, 40, 44	3	Well built, classic lines with graceful overhangs & short WLs mean slow & small.
Pearson 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. These are plain-Jane boats.
Passport 40, 41, 415, 435, 44, 456, 470, 50	3	Modern Perry cruising design. Good storage/tankage, soggy wooden deck cores and bulkheads common on older models.
Pegasus 50	4	Innovative performance cruiser built in Slovenia.
Pretorien 35	3	Strong, solid & attractive, built by Wauquiez. Great value. Modest tankage, many have saildrives, a negative. Later models better.
Puffin 42, 50, 58	5	High quality aluminum expedition yachts built in The Netherlands.
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.
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...
Sirius 35, 40	5	Highest quality, incredibly well designed German-built cruiser
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. Very 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. Steve Dashew design 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	Latest models are impressive, earlier ones have modest quality & tankage. Several 37's have circumnavigated – ok if it has been refitted & repowered.
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.
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.
Vangard 32	1	Sturdy but ancient 1960's 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 in Maine. High quality.

Vilm 116, 117	3	Quality motorsailers, solid and good for higher latitudes
Westerly 26 – 43	2	Not flashy, but moderately well-built boats. Similar to Moody or Catalina.
Weststail 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. Several have capsized.
Balance 42-70	4	
Catana 401, 431, 471, 521	4	Good, fast design, but customer service seriously lacks upon delivery, complicated systems and expensive to maintain.
Dazcat 55	4	
Dean 400, 441	2	Fairly well built, roomy & comfy, moderate performance, good engine access.
Dolphin 46	2	Daggerboards, good performance/comfort balance.
Fountaine 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 semi-custom rocketships now built in France.
HH	5	Highest quality, performance and prices.
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. Research structural problems.
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. Research structural problems.
Manta 38, 40, 42	3	Well-designed and built. Great cruising boat. Slightly heavy.
Nautitech 40, 44, 48	4	Innovative design, good performance.
ORC 42-57	4	
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 and built in Argentina.
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, but many are truly ancient.
Seawind 33, 39, 41, 52	1	Marginal quality, originally built in Australia, now in Vietnam & Turkey. Frequently delivered long after agreed upon launch date.
St. Francis 50	2	Below average quality & sailing performance, low bridge deck clearance.
Soubise 46 - 70	4	Excellent, super-fast and high quality, semi-custom. No longer in business.
Voyage 380, 440, 500, 580	2	Lightweight, luxury-focused, low freeboard & bridge deck clearance.
Windelov 42-57	4	

## 9. Resources

### Recommended Books

The Modern Cruising Sailboat, Charles Doane, International Marine, 2010. The Best Used Boat Notebook, by John Kretschmer, Sheridan House, 2007.

The Voyager's Handbook, 2nd edition, Beth Leonard, International Marine 2006.

Twenty Affordable Sailboats to Take You Anywhere, Nestor, Paradise Cay, 2007.

Inspecting the Aging Sailboat, Casey, International Marine, 2004. The Boat Repair Bible, Adlard Coles Nautical, 2012

Don Casey's Sailboat Maintenance Manual, International Marine, 2006.

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## About the Author - John Neal



I was born on the banks of Africa's White Nile River and my ocean sailing experience started in 1974 when at age 21 I set sail from Seattle, sailing my Vega 27 sloop 15,000 miles through the South Pacific, part of the time singlehanded. *Log of the Mahina*, the book I wrote chronicling those adventures became a bestseller and I've since authored, co-authored or contributed to an additional 17 books and over 150 magazine articles.

I've also enjoyed working as a consultant, a writer or on film crews for National Geographic, Discovery Channel, Disney, NOAA and Office of Naval Research.

I've accumulated 410,000 offshore miles ranging from Australia to Africa, Antarctica, Svalbard and the Med while sharing my passion for ocean sailing. When not at sea I enjoy kayaking, flying, trail running, cycling, skiing, swimming and yoga. I currently hold USCG 100-ton master and FAA private pilot licenses.

Magazines Contributed to: *Blue Water Sailing* (contributing editor), *Yachting World* (UK), *Australian Yachting*, *Cruising World*, *Cruising Helmsman* (Australia), *48 North*, *Latitude 38*, *SAIL*, *Sailing*, *Yachting*, *Practical Sailor*, *Castoff*, *Santana* and *Bay and Delta Yachtsman*.

Books Authored: *Log of the Mahina*, *Mahina Tiare*, *Pacific Passages* (with Barbara Marrett), *Offshore Cruising Companion*, *Offshore Expedition Companion*, *Storm Survival Tactics* (with Amanda Swan).

Books Contributed to: *World Voyage Planner*, *World Cruising Survey* by Jimmy Cornell, *Surviving the Storm* by Steve Dashew, *NOAA-PVS Crew Safety Manual*, *Sharks of Tropical and Temperate Seas*, R.H. Johnson and *Fifty Places to Sail*

