

# BOAT REPORT ISLAND GYPSY 36

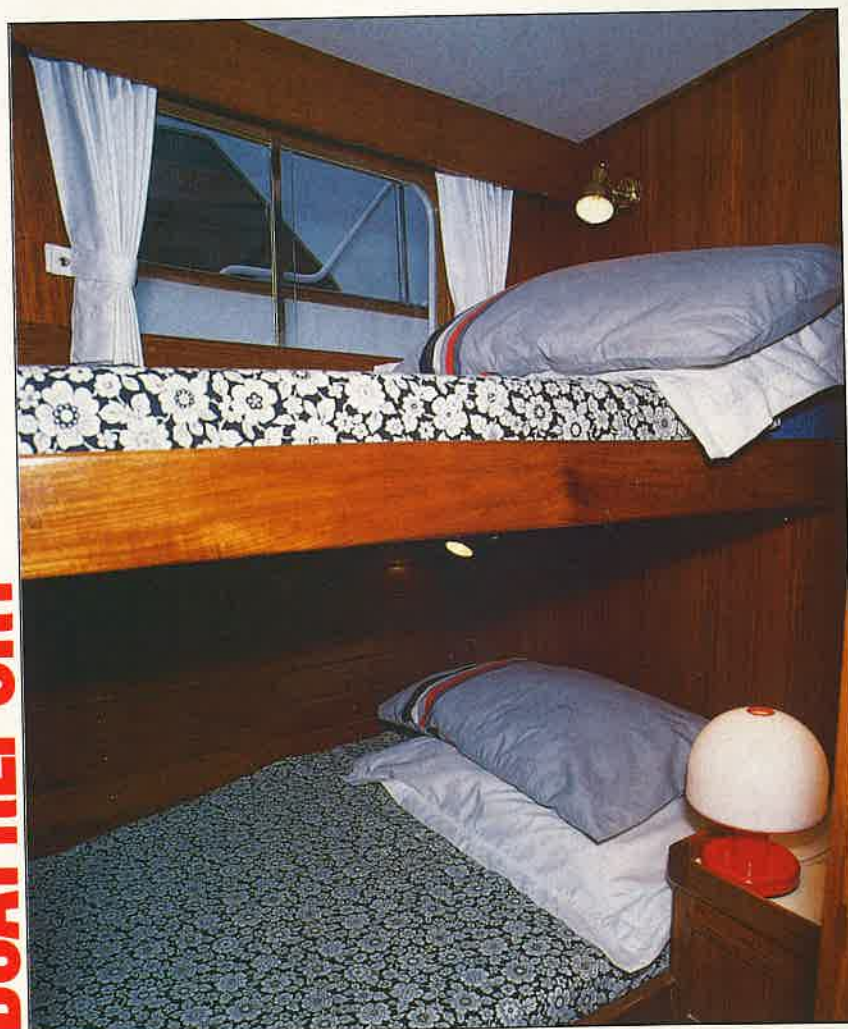
Of Norwegian parentage and Chinese birth, the 'Quad-Cab' version of Island Gypsy's traditional 36ft trawler yacht marks the UK renaissance of this established marque.







The master cabin's double berth (left) is offset to port, with a large dressing table alongside and an en-suite WC in the corner, while the midships cabin (below left) has twin bunks. Both toilet compartments (below centre) include a stainless steel sink, shower, extractor fan and copious storage. Hinge-down cupboards in the galley (right) allow the stowage of more than seems possible at first sight, and the well-finished teak-clad wheelhouse/saloon (below) features a central grabrail.



THE Island Gypsy range of trawler yachts from the Far East first appeared in the UK back in the mid-1980s, but fluctuations on the currency markets put paid to the initial importing effort. Harleyford Marine have now stepped in as agents, and took the opportunity to reintroduce the line-up at last year's Southampton Boat Show.

The builders Halvorsen Marine have their roots in Norway, as the name would suggest, but came by way of Australia (where they built the country's first America's Cup challenger) to set up a manufacturing facility in mainland China.

Here, with design and technical support, they







produce upward of 40 boats a year. Completed craft are motored to Halvorsen's own yard in Hong Kong, where shipping takes place.

## Design

The range extends up to an 80-footer, and includes some 30 different combinations on half-a-dozen basic hull forms. The 36 comes in four different styles, from the Europa, an extended flybridge and cockpit model for those who require a greater exterior entertaining area, to the Quad-Cab we tried, where the onus is more on accommodation.

The basic hull form is fairly traditional 'trawler yacht' in style. A deep run of keel gives a draught of high on 4ft (1.2m), emerging from well forward but cut back at the stern, having protected the props, to give less area to be pushed around in a following sea. The flared underwater forward sections are finer than some, culminating in a chine flat which then eases into the more fully formed medium-vee sections on their run aft.

Although the boat we tested was powered for running in displacement mode, the hull readily generates lift and suits being pushed harder, up to semi-planing speeds of around 20 knots with a pair of 300hp Caterpillar engines.

The topsides are moulded with a planked finish with the sheerline, the prominent profile line, stepped near amidships to give a heightened bulwark forward but a lowered gunwale run to the transom. It gives the boat an attractive, purposeful look.

## Exterior

An aspect of trawler-style motor cruisers that always heartens us are safe deck areas, and the Island Gypsy is no exception. The teak-clad 12in (30cm) sidedecks being surrounded by a good depth of gunwale, topped off with a solid guardrail arrangement. The gunwales themselves have a useful array of Panama-type

fairleads let into them, leading to adequate 12in (30cm) cleats.

The foredeck is clear of obstructions, the electric windlass being situated on a flattened area of bulwark abaft the anchor platform, with the chain spilling down into a readily accessed locker beneath. The windlass is listed as an option over and above the basic price, as are the bathing platform and the mast arrangement (which can be supplied with a steadying sail).

The usefully sized lazaret beneath the aft deck is accessed via a rather cumbersome, loose hatch, which would benefit from being fitted on hinges with a gas strut to lend support. The storage area is boarded off from the bilge, with the rudder stocks and quadrants (the 36 has cable steering) also free from obstruction. Whilst we were pleased to see an emergency tiller arrangement, the considerable associated hardware should have some dedicated lashing point rather than being left loose to slide around.

A central solid door leads through the transom, while the teak-topped siderails are provided with hinged openings. A number of wooden treads lead up and over the aft coachroof to starboard, and up to the flybridge. A stainless steel guardrail



Above: surrounded by a good depth of gunwale and coaming, and by solid guardrails, the deck and flybridge areas are safe as well as roomy. Below: the engine compartment is spacious too, with access all around the Sabre 135L diesels fitted to our test boat.

provided here for those going up and down, while further handrails are fitted along the superstructure for those using the side decks.

The 10ft x 8ft (3m x 2.4m) flybridge area is protected by a substantial bulk of coaming forward, cut back to stainless steel guardrails for aft portion. Seating here is plentiful, with a triple back-to-back settee running beside the central helm and a single further seat. Lockers beneath these (some vented and fashioned to take gas bottles) and doors through to the huge hold in the main coaming provide plenty of storage. Their interior gratings, fitted to the test boat although provided only as an option, are always a welcome sight.

The helm console is simple, with just the engine instrument panels set in an angled fascia. Further navigational instrumentation, in this case from Autohelm, have to be mounted on the vertical bulkhead adjacent to the pleasant-to-handle wooden ship's wheel. The win-lever Morse engine controls are clearly marked and consequently foolproof.

## Interior

Access to the teak-clad wheelhouse/saloon is by either of two sliding pilothouse doors, the starboard one being adjacent to the interior helm.

As with the exterior helm, the layout here is basic, with the main engine instruments taking up the fascia directly in front of the helmsman. Further electronics have to be located on the overhead panel, but this is not the usual cricked-neck affair because the helm seat is high (with a drawer unit beneath it), and although the skipper sits rather tight to the wheel he can view the instruments with the merest upward glance.

Larger nav aids, such as a radar, can be mounted on the flat area towards the windscreen, without cluttering up the chart position. Ready-use switches are kept to a minimum, the nearby main breaker panel being the preferred method of activating everything from the engines through to the navigation lights. This is not the handiest of arrangements, with just the three windscreen wiper switches to hand.

Opposite the helm is a further flat nav station area, with storage for almanacs and charts and a neat cocktail cabinet beneath it.

Abaft the helm is a well appointed galley with a full gas hob and oven, a large fridge with small freezer compartment and a single stainless steel sink. The hob is partially covered by a drop-down counter top when not in use.

Storage looks cramped at first glance, until you realise that crockery, condiments and other foodstuffs can find a home in two segmented drop-down cupboards at eye-level. The rest of the joinery is finished with an extractor over the hob, and another neat idea is the counter-top garbage receptacle which can be emptied through a small exterior door. A gas tap is located on the deckhead.

The rest of the pilothouse area is taken up by a good-sized L-dinette with a folding-leaf table, which converts into a decent double berth. The seat bases providing storage, through hatches and draws where feasible.

The joinery throughout the vessel, including the parquet flooring, is to a commendably high standard with hidden areas finished properly and given a lick of paint. The fabric-covered saloon

## Island Gypsy 36

Engine: twin Sabre 135L diesels, 135hp at 2600rpm, 6cyl, 6220cc.

Conditions: wind SW Force 2, sea calm. Load: fuel 75%, water 100%, crew 4.

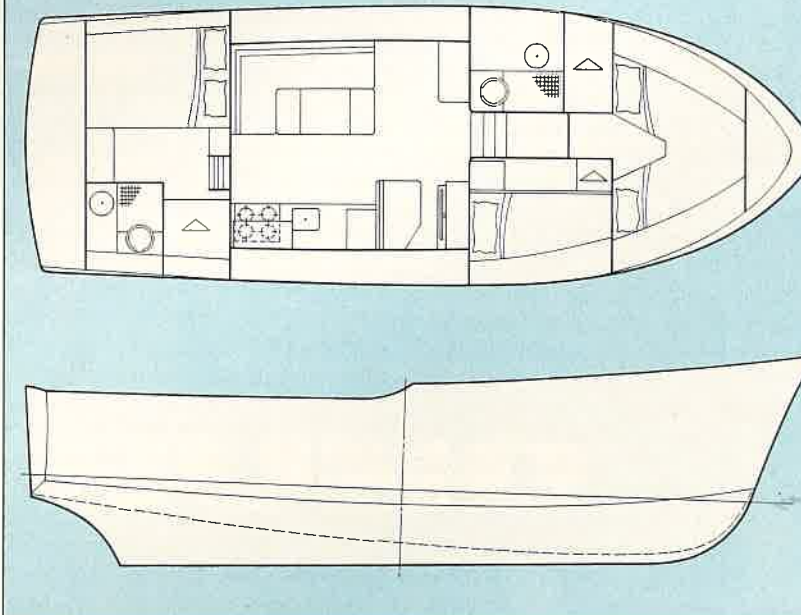
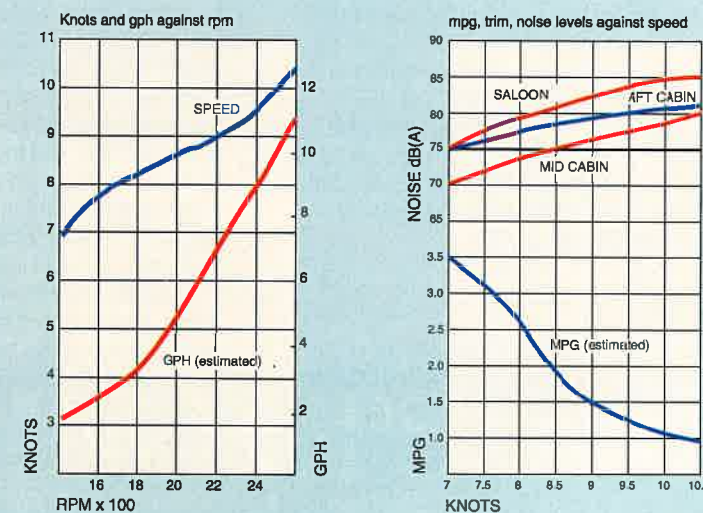
rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	trim	sound levels dB(A)			
							saloon	midcab	aftcab	flybg
1400	6.9	2.0	9	3.45	1290	—	75	70	75	75
1800	8.3	3.0	14	2.77	1037	—	79	74	78	77
2000	8.7	5.2	24	1.67	627	—	80	76	79	79
2200	9.1	7.0	32	1.30	487	—	82	77	80	80
2400	9.8	8.8	40	1.11	418	—	84	79	81	79
2600	10.4	11.0	45	0.95	354	—	85	80	81	77

Loa	40ft 0in (12.20m)	Displacement	11.5 tonnes
Hull length	36ft 0in (10.97m)	Fuel capacity	370gal (1700lt)
Beam	13ft 1in (4.00m)	Water capacity	165gal (750lt)
Draught	3ft 11in (1.19m)		

Price: from £126,787 ex VAT; £133,115 as tested but excluding electronics.

Builders: Halvorsen Marine Ltd, PO Box 79259, Mongkok, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Tel: 0800 89 0852 497 6298.

Suppliers: Harleyford Marine Ltd, Harleyford, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 2DX. Tel: 0628 471361.





deckhead, extending to a height of 6ft 3in (1.9m), is finished with a central teak grabrail.

The layout of our test boat had three sleeping cabins, the two forward ones sharing a toilet-cum-shower and the master cabin aft having similar facilities en-suite.

The master is a good size, with the 6ft 6in x 4ft (2m x 1.2m) double offset to port. The toilet/shower compartment is backed into the opposite corner, flanked by a decent-sized half-height hanging locker and large drawer/dressing table unit. A further pair of drawers is to be found inset in the bunk-base, while hatches beneath the mattress give access to the water pump and calorifier.

Up at the sharp end, the forecabin has a vee-berth arrangement, each side a full 6ft 3in (1.9m) long and 2ft 2in (0.7m) wide. Under these is drawer storage, and a painted-out fore section to take bulkier items. There is also a wardrobe.

The midships cabin has twin bunks outboard, again of good size, with drawer storage beneath the bottom one. A bedside chest and a hanging locker are provided. Space not used by the bunk drawer is accessible through a number of hatches, painted out here as elsewhere.

Full interior mouldings are rarely seen as yet on craft of Far Eastern extraction, and both toilet compartments on the 36 are finished in cream melamine, set off with teak trim. Both come equipped with stainless steel sinks with mixer taps, a shower facility over a teak grating, a pump-out toilet and plentiful storage.

All the cabins and WCs are light and well ventilated, with the majority of the side windows opening. The toilet compartments are also fitted with extractor fans, and the fore and aft cabins with deck hatches.

## Engines

Our test boat had one of the smallest twin installations listed, a pair of six-cylinder Sabres generating 135hp apiece.

On a boat of this size, twin engines must be considered the norm, but single-screw versions are available, from Volvo's four-cylinder 130hp unit through to a 375hp Caterpillar. Favoured dual engine options noted in Halvorsen's brochure are 225hp Sabres and TAMD41 Volvos, and the most potent package is a pair of 300hp Caterpillar 3116TAs.

The engine compartment runs the full length and breadth of the pilothouse and is roomy by any standards, even though it contains no fewer than five tanks: four diesel and one water. There is still plenty of room for a generator if required. Access is via a gas-strut supported hatch in the cabin sole leading straight down onto the aluminium treadplate at the forward end of the compartment.

The raw-water strainers, fuel/water separators and tank changover manifold are all directly to hand. The latter allows either engine to draw and return from any of the tanks.

The tanks themselves are of steel and, although fitted with inspection plates and sight gauges, the sump — useful for collecting foreign matter and complete with drain plug — is also the site of the take-off pipes. Whilst these are located an inch or so from the bottom of the sump, we would prefer to see a feed from the top of the tank with the pipe end well clear of the water and dirt

which inevitably accumulates at the bottom of fuel tanks over time.

Having said that, the engineering seems generally in order. There is access right around and to the top of both engines, and to the sternglands, without having to remove any further portions of the sole, although these readily lift clear if required.

An automatic bilge pump and a manual unit serve here. The latter also services the forward bilge via a Y valve situated under the forward companionway steps and this same bilge area is also equipped with a further electric unit.

Foil-faced insulation covers the bulkheads at both ends of the compartment, but none is in evidence elsewhere; the other main concession to noise-reduction are the large water mufflers in the exhaust line.

## Performance and handling

We have been lucky with boat test weather of late, finding just enough wind and wave to push most models but without conditions being too harsh. Unfortunately, for this particular trial, the Solent and its approaches could barely muster the energy for a half-hearted neap tide chop, leaving only the wash from the ever-present ferries and tugs to help us gauge any unpleasant handling traits. As it was, nothing we found in the least bit worried the Gypsy, as we motored at a comfortable 2200rpm to maintain a steady 9 knots. Running with the largest of fast-moving tug washes was the most problematic situation we could find, but the boat's run of keel and large rudders maintained steerage and the helmsman comfortably kept full control. The cable steering, with a hard-over to hard-over of around two and a half turns, proved light to handle.

Visibility from the interior helm was generally good, the height of the helm seat allowing a clear view over the bow, but this became a little awkward once we were running flat-out when the bow started to lift.

Although we chose to motor at 2200rpm, the 36's generous tankage can be put to better use if you are willing to drop another half-knot: 2000rpm gives an indicated 1.67mpg, a theoretical range on full tanks of around 600 miles.

Noise levels were reasonable even under full throttle. At 2000-2200rpm they are good, at around 80dB(A) or less throughout the saloon and cabins.

## Conclusions

We were initially surprised to find Harleyford Marine taking on the Island Gypsy agency, since they are already distributors for that most distinctive range of all trawler yachts, Grand Banks. When you look at the respective model line-ups, however, it seems a shrewd move, as they tend to interleave rather than clash.

Undoubtedly, length for length, Island Gypsies can be bought at lower prices. Having said that, whilst this 36-footer is robust and well found (apart from the fuel take-offs), it is still a matter of paying your money and taking your choice. You miss the supremely high level of finish and attention to detail associated with Grand Banks craft, but you do get a practical cruising boat which offers plenty of cabin space. □