

PERHAPS it is their severe winters – so cold that the sea freezes over – that makes the Finns so good at producing boats. After all, if you have to install triple glazing, insulation, and powerful heating systems simply to keep working, it is only a short step to assume the complete control of workshop temperature, ventilation and humidity required to produce high-quality laminates.

Siltala Yachts launched their first ten-metre motor sailer over 30 years ago. It eventually developed into the Nauticat 33 (still in production over 1,000 boats later) and the range has expanded to include the 44, 38, and 36. Sailing yachts, however, are now being fitted with engines of comparable size to those of motor sailers, so in order to compete, Siltala engaged a firm of racing yacht designers to produce the lines of their 52-foot flagship. The 52 marked a definite turning point, and was quickly followed by a 43 and a 40, all with greater emphasis on sailing performance and featuring more up-to-date fin and skeg hull shapes, lower roof lines, and increased sail areas.

With the introduction of the 35, seen alongside the 33 at the Southampton Boat Show last year, Siltala have come almost a full circle, and now offer two parallel but distinctly different ranges: the traditional, and the modern.

HULL FORM

Sparkman & Stephens, the designers of the modern Nauticats, enjoy a solid reputation among sailing yachtsmen.

It would be misleading to even pretend that the Nauticat 35 is in quite the same league as their more usual ocean greyhounds, but she does have some features in common with them. Her sections are deep and gently rounded, and the keel is, by today's standards, a low aspect-ratio fin. The rudder, too, is shorter and broader than the most up-to-date racing sailor might like, but the end result is a slippery and sea-kindly hull, which should be able to handle a wide range of conditions with ease yet maintain good cruising speeds.

The hull's internal depth leaves plenty of room for accommodation, requiring only a low coachroof over the forward cabin and a well-proportioned deckhouse to give full 6ft 4in (1.93m) headroom in the saloon and fore cabin. At the stern, the deck is almost a foot above the sheerline, to give standing headroom below, and has the added virtue that raising the cockpit ensures that the saloon roof does not obscure the view forward.

CONSTRUCTION

To go with a pedigree hull design, Siltala build to very high standards, using conventional methods in the controlled environment of their Turku workshops. The construction specification meets Lloyd's standards, and Lloyd's Hull Construction Certificates are available ▶

Inside and out, the Nauticat 35 has a high standard of construction and finish.



BOAT REPORT

NAUTICAT 35

Not one boat, but two: Siltala's latest 35ft motor sailer is equally at home under sail or under power. We test a good-natured and sea-kindly boat that has been built to last



BOAT REPORT

NAUTICAT 35

CONTINUED

(if ordered in advance) for any Nauticat.

Hulls are laid up by hand, using alternate layers of chopped strand mat and woven roving, with foam-filled stringers and marine-ply frames. Despite the substantial lay-up weights and the inherent strength of their curved shape, the topsides and decks are further stiffened with a 22mm (3/4-inch) balsa core.

ACCOMMODATION

Apart from the raised saloon roof, the external appearance of the Nauticat 35 is very much that of a sailing boat, but below decks she has the kind of accommodation one would expect of a displacement motor cruiser. A spacious double cabin and ensuite toilet occupy the stern, with

a smaller three-berth cabin, toilet, and galley forward, and wheelhouse saloon amidships.

Access to the accommodation is by a necessarily-steep companionway from the cockpit. The saloon, though restricted in width by the breadth of the sidedecks, is well-lit by side and forward windows and two large skylights, and immaculately fitted-out.



The aft cabin (left) is spacious, occupying the full width of the hull. The galley (right), on the other hand, is compact but has plenty of locker space.

The style is unashamedly traditional – teak-faced panelling, varnished teak-faced sole boards with holly splines, and even teak battens to secure the white PVC head lining.

On the port side, a carpeted platform is devoted to a C-shaped dinette, seating five or six people around an extending oval table. For occasional guests, the table can be lowered to form a long but slightly narrow (8ft 4in x 3ft 3in/2.54m x 0.99m) double berth, with stowage space under the seats.

A row of lockers on the starboard side extends under the side decks to provide a generous amount of stowage, including one locker specifically intended for wellies and foul-weather gear. Almost essential on a sailing yacht, this is a useful idea on any boat intended to cope with our less-than-perfect climate, but we felt that a locker destined to be filled with dripping oilskins was hardly the best place for the circuit breakers controlling the boat's 240V shore power supply.

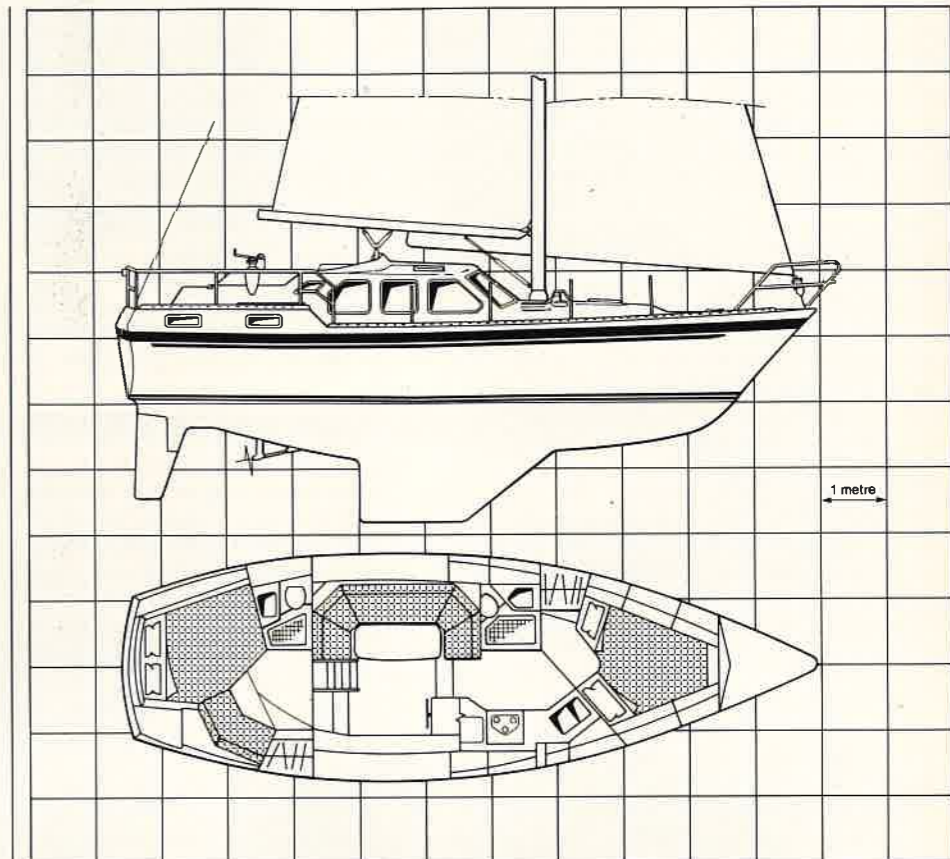
The lower helm position, also on the starboard side, has a large spoked wheel and single-lever Morse engine control. A skylight immediately over the helmsman's head enables him to keep an eye on the mainsail, and the instrument panel is mounted above the windscreen, to leave the space in front of the helmsman as an unobstructed chart table. This has stowage for charts under its lift-up top, but at 2ft 1in x 1ft 9in (0.64m x 0.55m) it is unfortunately just a shade too small for a folded Admiralty chart.

A couple of steps lead down from the forward end of the saloon to the galley – a compact and simple layout, with a gimbaled three-burner gas cooker flanked by a 1½-bowl sink and a top-access fridge of about 3½ft³ (100lt) capacity. What appears to be a huge locker under the sink is partly obstructed by plumbing, but even so there is no shortage of stowage space: five drawers alongside the cooker, a pan locker below it, and an array of lockers and shelves above the worktop. Opposite the galley, an almost full-height locker has sliding wire racks for vegetables or dry stores.

We were pleased to find that all doors and drawers fitted perfectly, and were fitted with positive catches.

Access to the teak-panelled forecabin is through a folding door, held shut by a catch so strong and with a finger-grip handle so small that we experienced some difficulty opening it. (Better that, though, than the usual alternative of a catch so flimsy that the door flaps and bangs continuously.) Once inside, the cabin is small, due to the fine bows required for good sailing performance, but it makes good use of the space available. The 7ft x 2ft 6in (2.13m x 0.76m) twin vee-berths are joined together for so much of their length as to be almost a double, and were supplemented on our test-boat by an optional 6ft 6in x 2ft 2in (1.98m x 0.66m) pilot berth on the starboard side.

The addition of the pilot berth leaves no room for lockers above the starboard berth, but there is still adequate stowage in a hanging locker and a couple of cave lockers on the port side, and two deep drawers under the starboard bunk. Less accessible space, covered by plywood lids



which do not do justice to the otherwise impeccable joinery, is available under the bunks.

The ensuite toilet compartment on the port side of the forecabin has a second (lockable) door opening into the passageway by the galley for communal use. Its deckhead lining, like that in the rest of the boat, is of white PVC, but here the teak panelling gives way to beige laminate with teak trim. The sole is shaped to form a shower tray (although no shower is actually fitted) and is finished with small ceramic tiles.

The toilet is a manually-operated Lavac, and there is a well-placed grab-handle nearby so that it can be used and operated underway even when the boat is heeled. In the forward corner, a glassfibre moulding includes the washbasin and lockers. There is a small mirror on the aft bulkhead, but we felt it could have been more usefully fitted to the locker door over the basin.

In the stern, a couple of steps lead down from the saloon to the aft cabin, with a deep locker overhead for bits and pieces or a 'panic bag'. Headroom here is a couple of inches less than the rest of the accommodation, but it is nevertheless an attractive cabin, with masses of teak panelling, deep upholstery, and plenty of light and air from portlights in the sides and transom. Without the constraints of sidedecks, this cabin occupies the full width of the hull, so there is room for a tapered double berth (4ft 6in x 6ft 6in/1.98m x 1.37m) and a slightly curved seat.

Stowage is provided by a three-quarter-height hanging locker, no less than seven smaller lockers set into the panelling around the cabin sides, plus two cave lockers and two drawers under the berth. If you manage to fill all that lot

and are prepared to burrow under the mattress, there is yet more room under the berth.

The ensuite toilet compartment is a slightly smaller version of the forward 'heads', but with only one door and a smaller washbasin. The owner is obviously expected to be more hygiene-conscious than his crew – his toilet includes a hand-held shower.

ENGINE

Power is provided by a turbocharged Volvo 2003, driving a conventional shaft and propeller through a 2.4:1 reduction gearbox.

There is good access to the starboard side of the engine through the cabin sole, but unfortunately the dipstick and raw water filter are on the port side, under the dinette. It was only after wriggling through the gap between the engine and a bulkhead that we discovered that removing the dinette is a reasonably straightforward job.

The pipework was well clipped, but we were less happy about the wiring, secured with cable ties to the pipework. This provides adequate support, but means that if one wire or pipe needs to be replaced, the fitter might end up having to remove and refasten almost the whole installation. The Nauticat is so obviously a boat built to last that we would have thought it worth investing a little more time on securing the wiring to make long-term maintenance as simple as possible.

Electrical power is from two 160Ah batteries, properly secured in a ventilated box, and is controlled from a fused switchboard by the helm position.

BOAT REPORT

NAUTICAT 35

CONTINUED

SAILS AND RIG

Two alternative rigs are offered as standard. Both are masthead sloops, but one has the forestay attached to the end of a short bowsprit, and an enlarged foresail. Our test boat had the bowsprit, to make anchorwork and mooring easy, but the owner had chosen the smaller foresail option with the forestay leading to the stemhead.

The sailplan is tall, to give plenty of power in light weather, and is supported by a double spreader rig to keep its long mast under control. Though it has fallen from favour amongst go-faster racing sailors, this small mainsail/large genoa rig is eminently suitable for a cruising boat, combining ease of handling with good performance.

With slab reefing and a roller genoa, it can easily be managed by two people, while the option of a spinnaker of just a shade under 1000ft² would add interest (and speed) downwind.

DECK LAYOUT

On deck, the Nauticat 35 feels very much like a sailing yacht, with substantial deck hardware, plenty of mooring cleats, and a 22kg anchor supplied as standard. The sidedecks are wide, and surrounded by 2ft high (0.61m) wire guardrails.

Two ventilator cowls on the coachroof are pro-

tected by stainless steel cages, and in spite of three skylights nearby, there is a good working area around the base of the mast.

A distinctive feature of the boat is her cockpit. With its sole five feet (1.5m) above the waterline, it took us a little while to get used to the idea of helming a sailing boat from such a high perch. Teak-topped side benches carry self-tailing sheet winches and provide reasonable stowage for deck gear and spare sails. We would have been prepared to sacrifice some of the space, though, to the gas bottle, which we eventually tracked down to the chain locker right up in the bows.

HANDLING AND PERFORMANCE

Under power we achieved about seven knots with the engine murmuring away at only two or three revs, but it came as no surprise to find efforts to push her much beyond that provided a significant increase in noise without a corresponding gain in speed. The 43hp Volvo is no more powerful than the engines fitted to many 'pure' sailing boats, but as displacement hulls suffer a natural speed limit anyway, it is more than adequate for the job even when fitted with a propeller chosen for fuel economy rather than speed.

The single engine control lever, mounted on the starboard side of the steering pedestal, is easily reached between the spokes of the wheel,

and while there are no engine monitoring instruments in the cockpit, there is a penetrating audible alarm to warn of anything seriously amiss.

Carrying full sail in a Force 4 the 35 was a little overpressed, but creamed along at 6½ knots, and, when we reduced sail to cope with the occasional gust, picked up almost another knot. We could not assess the tacking angle accurately, but it seemed to be about 85°, with the boat footing fast and making little obvious leeway.

Apart from the slightly odd sensation of looking down at the end of the boom, all-round visibility from the raised cockpit was excellent, and the large diameter wheel made it easy to steer from either side seat, or while standing up.

CONCLUSION

The basic price of almost £79,000 for a standard Nauticat 35 was pushed up to £95,000 for our test boat by the addition of £16,000 worth of extras such as teak decks, instruments, and delivery. That high price is reflected in the superb quality of construction and finish. This, plus her ease of handling, seakindliness, and well thought-out accommodation, make it easy to see why 45 35's have already been launched.

If you then think of her as not one boat, but two, the minor faults we found fade into insignificance, and she looks very good value indeed. □

TECHNICAL DATA

Engine

Volvo 2003 turbocharged diesel driving 16in x 13in (405mm x 330mm) propeller through MS2R 2.37:1 reduction gearbox.
Capacity 1279cc
No. of cylinders 3
Max rpm 3200
Max bhp 43

Sails and rig

Mainsail 283ft² (26.3m²)
No. 1 Genoa 391ft² (36.3m²)
Deck-stepped mast with double spreader rig.

Performance

Top speed 7.4 knots
(full tanks four crew)
Under sail 7.5 knots
(reaching, Force 4)

Construction

Hand laid chopped-strand mat and woven rovings, with foam stringers and balsa sandwich deck and topsides.

Price

As tested £95,000
Standard boat £78,100

Supplier

Plain Sailing, Hamble Point Marina, School Lane, Hamble, Hants. Tel: 0703 453900.

Builder

Siltala Yachts OY SF 21870
Riihikoski, Finland. Tel: 01035821 861 500.

Designer

Sparkman and Stevens (1986).

Dimensions

L.o.a. 38ft 2in (11.63m)
Hull length 34ft 11in (10.65m)
L.w.l. 29ft 8in (9.05m)
Beam 11ft 4in (3.45m)
Draught 5ft 7in (1.70m)
Displacement 7.5tons
Ballast 2.7tons
Fuel capacity 88 gallons (350lt)
Water capacity 110 gallons (500lt)

Accommodation

Four berths in two cabins, each with ensuite toilet compartment, plus double dinette in saloon and optional third berth in forecabin.

