

Boats for offshore sailing

Want to go further afield? Duncan Kent looks at some of the most suitable second-hand sail and motor boats for cruising offshore

Offshore yachts need to exhibit a comfortable, controlled, and well-balanced motion at sea, such that the crew can sail, cook, eat, and sleep without suffering too much discomfort. Second only to the yacht being soundly constructed, the crew is what turns it into a means of crossing oceans safely and enjoyably. A tired and irritable crew is one that'll make mistakes when the going gets rough.

First and foremost is its motion through or over the waves. Many modern, lightweight production yachts are prone to slam into the oncoming waves rather than gently slicing through them, which not only jars the crew's nerves and throws everything around below, but also puts relentless strain on the hull and rig.

As with most aspects of sailing, there are several schools of thought concerning offshore yacht design, but it's generally accepted that ocean-going boats should be of a higher displacement than a coastal cruiser with a deeper forefoot to part the waves silently.

The 'quicker you can go, the quicker you're out of it' motto is often quoted by those who believe the extra speed of a light displacement, performance yacht will enable you to avoid bad weather by sailing around it. Though this might be true of a thoroughbred Open 60 averaging 20-knots, with most production boats the result is usually a more uncomfortable and much wetter ride through the storm.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Duncan Kent

A well-known and widely respected yachting journalist, Duncan Kent has sailed hundreds of new and used yachts over four decades, and has amassed a wealth of practical and technical knowledge on boats of all types and sizes.



A large proportion of the Hurley 22s sold had twin keels, drawing 2ft 6in

20-25ft LOA

Sailing yachts

First launched in 1966, the ubiquitous **Hurley 22** was heavily built and reinforced with laminated beams and double-thickness GRP in high-stress areas. She was available with a long fin or bilge keels, with the ballast encapsulated within the hull moulding.

Owing to her narrow beam, accommodation is limited. There are berths for four, but she's more suited to a couple, particularly as the boat was open plan with a toilet under the vee berth. An interior moulding provides a smooth finish to the interior, and teak veneer trims lessen the 'plasticity' feel. The two narrow quarter berths stretch back under the cockpit seats and are ideal for use on passage. The pointed vee-berth forward is very compact and just 1.8m/5ft 9in long. There are open lockers above, while underneath is the freshwater tank.

The galley is small and basic, but adequate for short trips. For longer cruises you'd need to create more workspace, although the slide-out chart

table above the quarter berth can be used if needed. Stowage for provisions is limited and, due to the meagre 1.46m/4ft 9in headroom, the galley must be used for seating.

The majority of Hurley 22s had a 5/6hp outboard in a lazarette well behind the tiller, putting the prop on the centreline and keeping it submerged when motorsailing. Some had a small inboard engine, which is undoubtedly a better solution for long-term cruising.

The self-draining cockpit seats four and the high coamings are comfortably angled. Visibility is good over the low coachroof, but the narrow side decks are tricky to negotiate so a furling headsail is preferable.

The masthead rig is straightforward, the deck-stepped mast on a hinged tabernacle, while all the sheets are within reach of the helm.

The original **Nordic Folkboat** was conceived in 1942. Described as minimalist, even in its heyday, it had a clinker-planked wooden hull with a full-length keel, raked transom and a Bermuda sloop rig. A generous 54% ballast ratio made her extremely stiff

Nick Burnham



The Trusty T23 sleeps up to four people, making her ideal for solo sailing

under sail and the attention of local adventurers. The most famous is the pioneer **Blonde Jester**, which has been used many times, once as the **OSTAR**, in which

The **Folkboat** cruiser/racer was built under license and was usually custom-built, smooth, more comfortable, and featured a long keel. The companionway

In 1967 a **Gull** which became the **International** named the **Ma** yard in Sweden. Almost immediately it boasted a self-stowing outboard well. It also offered comfortable and fairly sparse interior

All **Folkboats** enable them to international markets spawned a variety of the **Folksong**, 27, and influenced

The most popular 26, was sailed in 1985 by 18-year-old Aebi. Her even years and, like before her, she which to naviga

Motorboats

Often referred to as the 'little ship', she did indeed make a pint pot! This was designed with flared bows to plough its way

Inside the w

Carolyne Jenkinson/Alamy

Jake Kavanagh



The Trusty T23 has an enclosed wheelhouse, sleeps up to four and is easy to handle, making her ideal for solid offshore cruising

under sail and soon began to attract the attention of long-distance racers and adventurers for its seaworthiness. The most famous of the original 'Folkies' was pioneer Blondie Hasler's junk-rigged *Jester*, which crossed the Atlantic 15 times, once as an entrant in the original OSTAR, in which he came second.

The Folkboat became a very popular cruiser/racer worldwide, where they were built under licence. The British version was usually carvel-planked, giving her a smooth, more watertight hull. She also featured a longer coachroof, raised above the companionway for better headroom.

In 1967 a GRP model was introduced, which became known unofficially as the International Folkboat (IF). Some were named the Marieholm Folkboat after the yard in Sweden where some 3,488 were built. Almost identical to the original, it boasted a self-draining cockpit with an outboard well and a 7/8ths fractional rig. It also offered more in the way of home comforts and space below, which was fairly sparse in the Mk1s.

All Folkboat rigs were identical, to enable them to compete equally in international races, but the design spawned a variety of lookalikes, including the *Folksong*, *Contessa 26* and the *Varne 27*, and influenced countless more.

The most prolific of these, the *Contessa 26*, was sailed solo around the world in 1985 by 18-year-old American sailor Tania Aebi. Her eventful journey took three years and, like thousands of ocean sailors before her, she carried only a sextant with which to navigate.

Motorboats

Often referred to as a 'marine Tardis', or 'little ship', the builders of the **Trusty T23** did indeed manage to squeeze a quart into a pint pot! This chunky little motorboat was designed with high freeboard and tall, flared bows to shrug off heavy weather as it ploughs its way through the waves.

Inside the wheelhouse, it feels little



Small headsails make the rig of the Folkboat easy to handle. The boat is also stiff and well balanced

different from its bigger sister, the T28. Beautifully fitted out, there's a twin helm seat, a comprehensive instrument console and an excellent view all around through the large windows. Opposite is a four-person dinette, also with panoramic views outside, plus a decently proportioned galley behind the helm seat.

A couple of steps down leads you past the heads and hanging locker, into the open forecabin where a huge double berth occupies the entire space. Three portlights on each side and a large forehatch keep it bright and airy, although there's little in the way of easy access stowage.

Moving through the wheelhouse rear doors leads you into a really spacious cockpit with ample fixed seating, a removable table, a small wet bar and access to the single Yanmar 54hp inboard diesel engine via a sole trap. A full cockpit tent encloses this area nicely and expands the useable interior volume considerably. An additional helm station here was an

option, although not often taken up as the view forward is limited.

Being a displacement hull with shallow bilge keels she's no sprinter. Cruising at 6 knots is more her bag, but she has the sheer driving power of a much bigger boat.

26-30ft LOA

Sailing yachts

The Alan Buchanan-designed **Halcyon 27** was built by Offshore Yachts in the early 1970s and is a profoundly seaworthy offshore yacht that's easily handled by a small crew. She's a pretty boat with a gently rising sheer, narrow shoulders and overhanging bows.

Care is needed going below as the companionway steps are precariously small. The accommodation is typical of most 1970s boats: compact galley, chart table, two long and straight saloon settees, heads and hanging locker ahead of the main bulkhead and a 'cosy'

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Jake Kavanagh

Carolyne Jenkins/Alamy

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The Halcyon 27 can tack reasonably quickly due to a cut-away in her long keel

forecabin. The saloon headroom is 1.83m/6ft.

The self-draining cockpit is narrow but long, making bracing easy, and the tiller hinges up when moored. The mainsheet track runs along the bridge deck and the headsail winches are within reach of the helm. Visibility over the coachroof is limited but it's possible to look along the side decks from the helm.

Her standard masthead rig originally had hanked-on headsails and a roller-reefing boom, but by now most will likely sport a furling jib and slab-reefed mainsail.

Getting into stride

Being a relatively heavy boat with a ballast ratio of 45% means she stands up to her sail well despite her narrow beam, and offers a respectable performance, even when driven hard upwind. The low freeboard means she's a bit wet on a beat, but she's no slouch and keeps a driving momentum through heavy seas.

In tests the Halcyon 27 quickly gets into her stride, powering into a short chop at a resolute 6-knots when close reaching with 16-knots of apparent wind. She slows a little when pinched but points well close-hauled. A cut-away in her long keel enables her to tack reasonably quickly, and her helm remains surprisingly light, even when pressed.



The modern planing underbody on the Hardy Mariner 26 delivers around 22 knots



The generous sail area on the Hallberg-Rassy 29 offers good light weather performance

The 1982-launched **Hallberg-Rassy 29** is a pretty boat with a pleasant sheer and a coachroof that blends neatly into the foredeck behind her tall bow.

Her Lloyds-certified hull is solid GRP with a foam-sandwich deck and coachroof for reduced weight and improved insulation. The hull/deck joint overlaps and is teak capped, while her cast-iron ballast is encapsulated in her fin keel.

Below, she is unexpectedly spacious with 1.83m/6ft headroom and oodles of teak to make her feel cosy. The L-shaped dinette surrounds a twin-leaf table and the settee backs lift, increasing the width

and providing bedding stowage behind. Above are deep lockers and a bookshelf, with further stowage in lined bins underneath.

The quarter berth option was popular, although the forecabin has a comfy vee-berth too, despite limited headroom.

The L-shaped galley houses a full-size cooker, cool box and a deep sink. The food prep area is minimal, but the engine box doubles up as a worktop. Opposite is an outboard-facing chart table above a four-drawer cabinet, designed to be stood at. The heads is ahead of the saloon, and can be enclosed by shutting the saloon and forecabin doors.

The cockpit is narrow and safe with high coamings, but more than three crew members is a crowd. In port, with the tiller raised, there's room for three more. The long tiller enables the helm to reach the primaries and the mainsheet easily.

A fully battened mainsail and furling genoa were standard. Her longish keel keeps her resolutely on course, with the cutaway forefoot enabling her to be tacked reasonably swiftly. Her hull is relatively narrow and tapers aft, keeping her on track in following seas.

She is well-balanced, if slightly slow, but her ample displacement and deep-vee bow enable her to cover the miles easily and comfortably.

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Motorboats

First launched in 1998, the **Hardy Mariner 26** is a classically attractive cruiser combining the best features of a traditional Hardy with a modern, hybrid semi-displacement planing hull capable of 25-knots.

Shaft-driven, most came with the reliable and powerful 230hp Yanmar diesel, a combination ideal for offshore cruising. She is pleasantly economical too at 16-knots cruising speed, consuming around 12lt/h with an 18hr/280-mile range. The 170hp Yanmar option was more suited to inland waterways, where directional stability at slow speed is aided by a long, shallow keel.

She has high, flared bows that keep the decks dry in choppy seas. The wheelhouse offers full-standing headroom and can be enclosed or opened up by folding back the teak-framed companionway doors. She has comfy helm and navigator seats with a good chart table and a clearly laid-out instrument console.

The cockpit is well protected and has fixed seating for four aft plus a removable table. It isn't huge, as the space has been utilised to increase the cabin and wheelhouse, so she's more suited to cruising than sport fishing. A half-height transom gate and step lead to the teak-planked swimming platform and backup outboard motor bracket.

On deck, she has easy-to-access side decks with tall gunwales and solidly mounted, stainless steel guardrails.

The cabin is a step down forward and contains a good size and well-equipped galley with ample stowage, a spacious, moulded heads compartment and a large dinette with a solid wood table that acts as an infill to create a very roomy double berth. Stowage is above average for a small boat with most small spaces utilised.

31-35ft LOA**Sailing yachts**

In 1997 the Swedish-built aft-cockpit **Najad 331** was introduced to inject a little more sparkle into the performance of the original 330. A new retroussé stern extended the waterline, and her underwater lines were streamlined. A spade rudder was also fitted, plus a foiled keel with ballast bulb.

Hand laid up using isophthalic resins, the 331 features solid, epoxy-coated laminate beneath the waterline, with cored topsides and decks. For extra rigidity, a reinforcing grid below the floor is bonded in place, as are the bulkheads.

An abundance of warm wood exudes an air of luxury, and the quality of the joinery is excellent. The saloon is spacious, headroom reasonable (1.85m/6ft 1in), and myriad lockers provide easily accessed

stowage. Six can dine comfortably around the drop leaf table, while the settees make good sea berths too. Water tanks and batteries fill the cavities beneath them.

The L-shaped galley is comprehensive and secure for use at sea. The nav station opposite is equally well appointed, with its large forward-facing chart table. Directly behind, the heads have a moulded liner for easy cleaning plus a wet locker.

The forecabin is warm and inviting with a roomy vee-berth and generous stowage. The aft cabin is also a good size with a spacious double berth and a tall locker.

With her gently rising sheerline, teak-capped bulwarks, unobtrusive coachroof and raked windscreen the 331 really looks the

business. Tiller steering was standard, although there was a wheel option (standard on the later 332 model).

The 330's traditional staid masthead rig was replaced with a tweakable 9/10ths fractional, along with twin swept spreaders and adjustable backstay. This gave her a good turn of speed while retaining good balance and stability.

Designed by Holman & Pye, creators of the Stella, Super Sovereign, Oysters and many more renowned offshore yachts, the **Barbican 35** is highly sought-after.

Built between 1979 and 1992, utilising a much-modified Super Sovereign hull, she is

a traditionally styled, heavy displacement, sea-kindly cruising yacht. Though they share the long, encapsulated lead keel, the two boats are quite different. With her high ballast ratio and conservative sail plan, the Barbican 35 is a stable yacht and well able to withstand a gale. The deep vee entry and long overhangs give her a gentle motion at sea, while the all-lead ballast enables her draught to be quite moderate while remaining stiff and stable under sail.

All-weather cruiser

The narrow cockpit is made for blue water cruising in all weathers. High coamings offer good protection, and the seating position enables easy foot-bracing when heeled. Her side decks are wide with teak-capped bulwarks, guardrails high and stanchions sturdy, making it safe to move about on deck under way.

Stepping below, the Barbican just feels like a proper offshore yacht. Wherever your hand naturally rests there is a handrail or strong point for grabbing at sea, with no risk of the furniture coming away in your hands.

She is laid out traditionally, with settees that convert easily into sea berths. Her forecabin is spacious, light, and airy, with a roomy vee berth, and most had a narrow quarter berth too.

There is a decent chart table, good galley facilities and enough stowage to store a few months' cruising provisions. Headroom is a generous 1.92m/6ft 3in ➔

'An offshore yacht needs to exhibit a comfortable and well-balanced motion'

Najad Yachts

The Najad 331 came as tiller steered as standard, although a wheel option was available



Duncan Kent

The long-keeled Barbican 35 is sea-kindly, although she's not quick by modern standards

under the raised coachroof, dropping to 1.8m/6ft in the saloon.

In all, she's a yacht in which you'd happily set off on a long, open ocean passage with little trepidation, knowing she would look after her crew in all conditions.

Motorboats

Another stoutly built, ocean-going small cruiser from Sweden, the aft cabin **Nimbus 31 Coupe** is spacious and comfortable as well as being a tough offshore cruising boat.

The interior is cosy and warm with oodles of high-gloss woodwork giving her a quality feel. A single, contoured helm seat gives full access to all controls and an uninterrupted view of the instruments, as well as 360° visibility through the very large wheelhouse windows.

The navigator's station opposite the helm has useful chart space with a second instrument console and can be stood at or the dinette seat reversed for longer stretches. Two sliding hatches in the cabin top allow plenty of light and air in. The saloon has 1.9m/6ft 3in headroom and features a spacious dinette that can be converted into an extra double berth.

There's also a well-organised galley with a full-size cooker, sink and a fridge under the helm seat, which folds forward to create extra workspace.

Steps lead down to a large heads compartment with shower; opposite is the midships cabin, with its large double berth extending beneath the wheelhouse.

The master cabin forward contains a huge island double berth and plentiful stowage in lockers, drawers and deep shelves. Light and air enter from opening ports and a large overhead hatch.

Glazed sliding doors lead into a comfortable, teak-sole cockpit where a gate leads to a wide boarding platform and two wet lockers. Engine access is simple through a large sole trap.

Moving about on deck is safe and easy, aided by solidly mounted stainless steel guardrails from midships forward.

She came with a single 200-230hp shaft-driven diesel engine, originally



The Nimbus 31 Coupe has a cruising range of around 150 miles



Bob Aylott

The Sadler Starlight 35 takes little effort to keep on track, thanks to her deep rudder and skeg

either Volvo or Yanmar. Her easily driven, medium vee hull will top out at 27-knots with the 230hp diesel, although she cruises more comfortably, quietly and economically at around 15-knots/3,000rpm, giving her a range of around 150 miles.

36-40ft LOA

Sailing yachts

The **Sadler Starlight 35** (36ft LOA) is a tough, long-legged, bluewater cruiser with above-average performance. She was built to last and her outstanding seakeeping qualities and well-balanced handling make her a delight to sail.

Designed by Stephen Jones and

launched in 1991, she has a prominent bow overhang and a noticeable sheer rising from quite low freeboard aft, to high bows. Heavy by modern standards, her generous ballast is bolted onto a GRP stub. She also sported Jones' notorious bulbed wing keel, designed to add lift upwind while keeping her draught shallow.

She was constructed using Sadler's foam-filled double-skin technique, but without the 'unsinkable' branding. The foam added considerable buoyancy and insulation, while the inner moulding formed much of the furniture.

Below, the layout is traditional and suited to long-term cruising. The saloon isn't huge but is seamanlike and the long settees are ideal for sea berths, one of which has a pull-out extension to create a narrow double. The fiddled table seats six in comfort. There's a large, forward-facing chart table with ample chart stowage and instrument trays, and right behind is an oilskins locker.

The L-shaped galley is well-equipped and includes deep sinks, a fridge and a gimballed cooker. The two cabins are comfortable and have hanging lockers, shelves and standing headroom. Though the berths are doubles, they're not large by modern standards.

The self-draining cockpit is identical in size to the Starlight 39 and has a high bridge deck plus cutaways around the wheel. The coachroof melds into the foredeck with no slippery areas, while her decks are wide with effective, moulded non-slip surfaces. All lines lead back from



Nick Burnham

the mast to the... Under sail, I... keep her track... on the wheel. V... and gybes is ea... sensible deck l... Upwind she... as the headsail... light, and the d... out, even with t... favourite point... she flies along... The **Rival Bo**... Chuck Paine an... all conditions. S... displacement b... bilges and an ov... narrow shoulder... but sea-kindly v... makes life at sea... There's always... both below and... sharp edges to h... With ample ba... the keel, she's st... stands up to her... but positive and...



Bob Aylott



Nick Barnham

ABOVE The Bowman 40's stout spars, oversized rigging and powerful gas-sprung vang are built to take the worst of the weather

LEFT The large windows of the Princess 360 flybridge give excellent all-round vision

the mast to the cockpit.

Under sail, her deep rudder and skeg keep her tracking straight with little effort on the wheel. Working her through tacks and gybes is easy and safe, thanks to a sensible deck layout and strong deck gear.

Upwind she drops into a groove as soon as the headsail is trimmed. The helm is light, and the deep rudder never breaks out, even with the lee rail under. Her favourite point of sail is a close reach, when she flies along effortlessly at 7 knots plus.

The **Rival Bowman 40** was designed by Chuck Paine and built to sail anywhere, in all conditions. She's a medium/heavy displacement blue water yacht with deep bilges and an overhanging bow with narrow shoulders, making her a powerful, but sea-kindly vessel whose easy motion makes life at sea positively enjoyable.

There's always a handhold within reach, both below and above decks, and very few sharp edges to hurt yourself on.

With ample ballast, plus the engine over the keel, she's stiff under sail and easily stands up to her canvas. The helm is light, but positive and she tracks excellently

thanks to her longish keel and skeg.

The cutter rig keeps the sails small and offers flexibility in a blow, while the quality of the deck gear gives you confidence that she won't fall apart when confronted with stormy conditions.

She's no racer, but neither is she a slouch. With her momentum and ability to carve through heavy seas, she'll often arrive at a distant destination at the same time as a lighter, high-performance yacht might, only her crew will be far more relaxed!

Those more used to voluminous saloons and huge double berths might think the Bowman a little cramped, but to my mind, too much space can be undesirable under way. At anchor, she might lack family living space a little, and her cockpit isn't massive as with many modern yachts, but in heavy seas, I'll take this safe, secure and dry cockpit any day.

Sleeping accommodation is in two cabins and the saloon. In return for the lack of a second aft cabin, you get a much larger heads, a handy wet locker and a full-depth cockpit locker, all of which are highly desirable when blue water cruising.

Motorboats

The good-looking and stoutly constructed **Princess 360** flybridge is a rugged yet extremely comfortable offshore cruiser with enough grunt to get you home in a hurry if needed.

Inside, the furniture is well made and the layout is sensible and spacious. There's a big L-shaped dinette settee around a long table and plenty of stowage in cabinets opposite, unless the second settee option was chosen. You step down forward to the large, L-shaped galley.

The helm position has a double seat from which there is excellent all-round vision through the large windows, although getting to it can be a little precarious on the move due to the step down to the galley. Once there, though, all the necessary controls fall to hand easily and the instrument console, which is large enough to house a 12in display, is well laid out and easy to view.

The forecabin contains a sumptuous, queen-size island berth, surrounded by lockers and stowage. There's a sizeable heads compartment ensuite (Jack & Jill style), plus a roomy twin berth guest cabin, also with ample stowage for lengthy trips.

The flybridge is accessed via a steep ladder and has acres of seating for guests as well as decent helm and nav seats that flip over for socialising in port or at anchor.

Though a few had twin 230hp Mercruiser engines that proved to be a little underpowered in open sea conditions, most sported the more powerful 318hp Volvo TAMD63L diesels with shaft drive, which were good for around 25 knots maxed out.