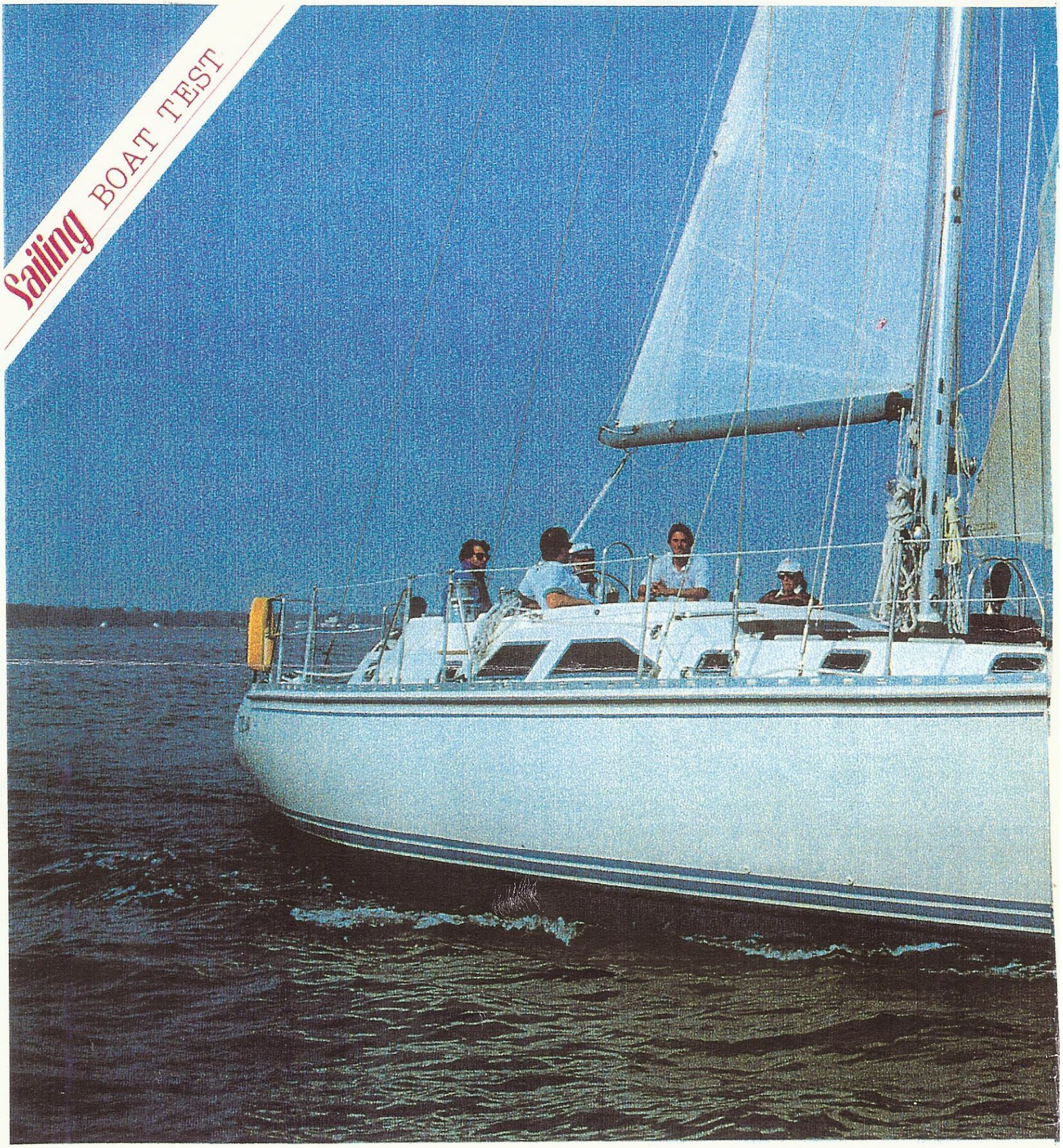
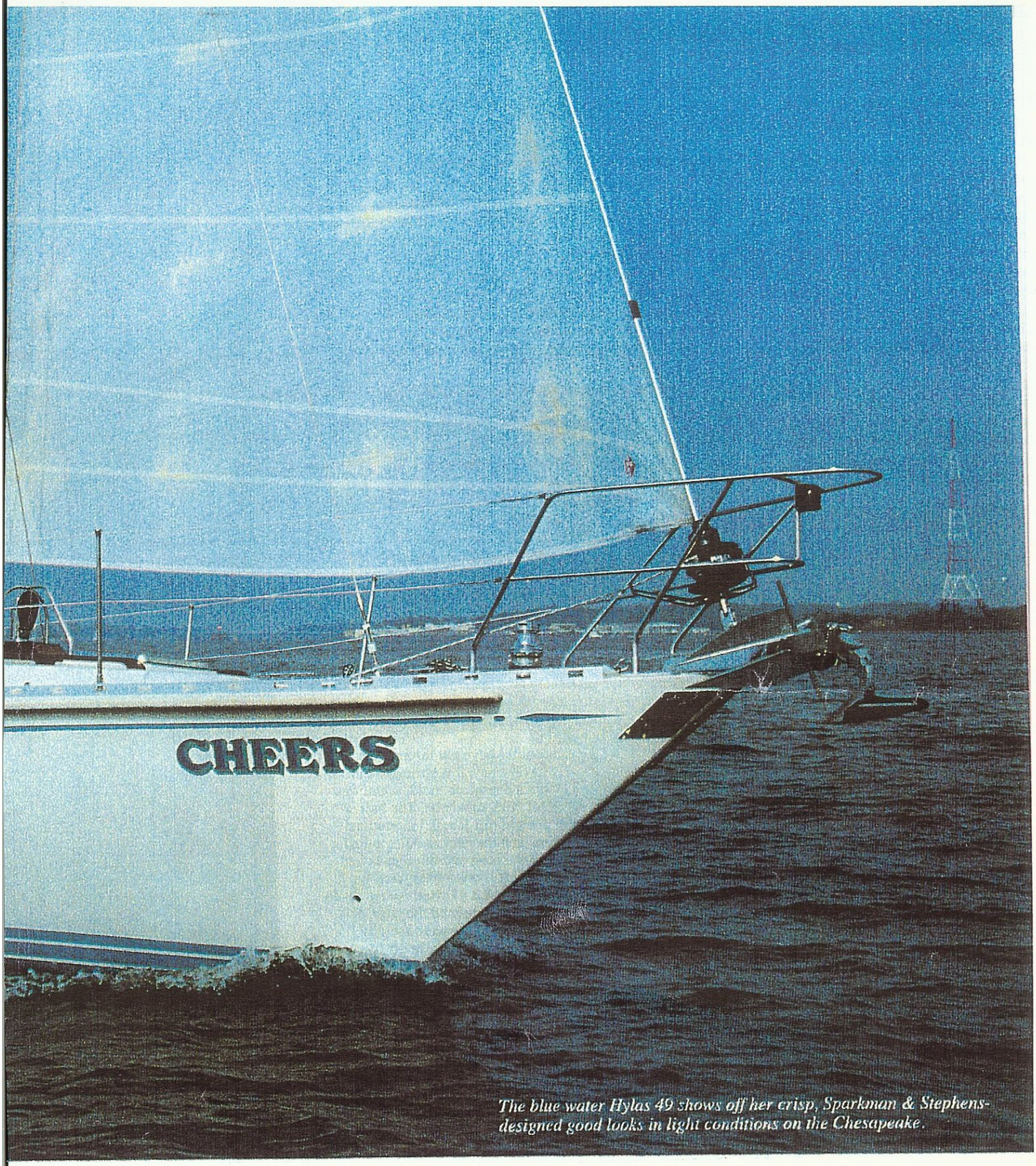


Offshore-able



The blue water Hylas 49 shows off her crisp, Sparkman & Stephens-designed good looks in light conditions on the Chesapeake.

Hylas 49, swift, comfortable sea boat

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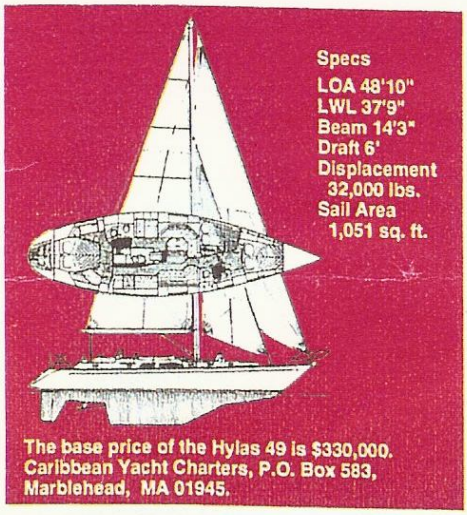
By John Kretschmer with pictures by Michael Wootton

There are test drives, and then there are test drives. I recently had the unique opportunity to combine a *SAILING* Magazine boat test with an offshore delivery. Nothing reveals a boat's strengths and weaknesses like a six-day, 800-mile passage.

We came to know the new Hylas 49 intimately while sailing from Ft. Lauderdale to Annapolis. We experienced a variety of sailing conditions, ranging from Gulf Stream calms to a brush with tropical storm Daniel off Cape Hatteras. The 49 met my high expectations and proved to be a swift and comfortable sea boat, able to stand up and make headway in a real blow.

The Hylas 49, built by Queen Long in Taiwan, is a logical evolution from the successful Sparkman & Stephens designed Hylas 47. Her long fin keel and full skeg hull shape are nearly unchanged. She maintains her relatively long overhangs and a 45 percent ballast-to-displacement ratio. The additional LOA comes from a sleek, molded transom swim platform, and her lines are even sweeter



Specs
LOA 48'10"
LWL 37'9"
Beam 14'3"
Draft 6'
Displacement 32,000 lbs.
Sail Area 1,051 sq. ft.

The base price of the Hylas 49 is $330,000. Caribbean Yacht Charters, P.O. Box 583, Marblehead, MA 01945.

A revamped stern incorporates handsome steps with drop down step.

with slightly increased sheer. The major differences between the 47 and the 49 are on deck and down below.

Although the Hylas 49 has a Sparkman & Stephens pedigree, the inspiration for the new deck and interior styling came from Tony Seibert, a Hylas 47 owner, and Dick Jachney of Caribbean Yacht Charters. Jachney's St. Thomas-based charter fleet consists almost exclusively of Hylas 44s, 47s, 49s, and 51s.

The most obvious change from the 47 is a raised trunk cabin, allowing for additional forward facing port lights which brighten the saloon considerably, without detracting from her rakish good looks. The cockpit was extended with the result that the seats are wide and long enough to sleep on, and the back supports are less severe. The new deck design is filled with innovative standard features. There is a separate locker for outboard engine fuel; easily accessed coaming cooler boxes; storage for scuba tanks, inflatable dinghy and life raft under the swim platform steps; hot and cold shower in the swim platform; a saltwater washdown in the bow; a watertight chain locker compartment, and the list goes on.

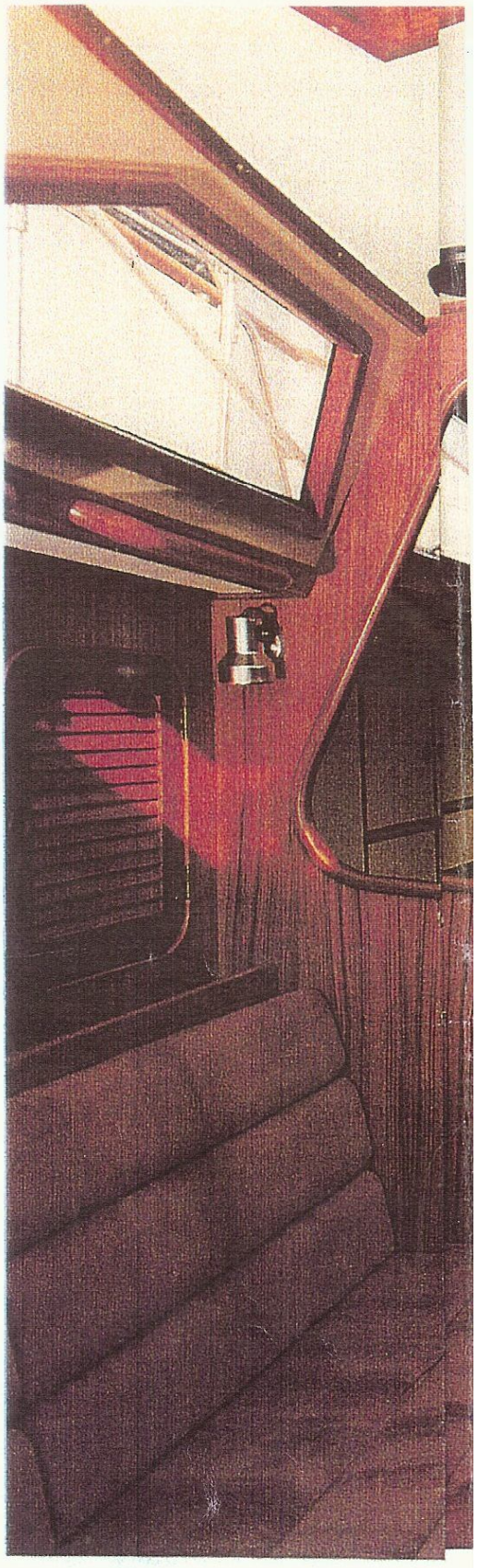
I know the sailing characteristics of the Hylas 47 quite well as I have delivered several up and down the East Coast between St. Thomas and Newport. I was pleased to learn that the rig of the 49 is essentially unchanged from the 47. She has a stout, double spreader spar from Kemp of England, and her stainless standing rigging is from Sweden. Our test boat was fitted with a Harken mainsheet traveler arrangement, Barient 24s self-tailing primary winches and Furlex headsail roller furling. We had a main with jiffy reefing, and 110 percent and 135 percent genoas from Johnson Sails. Interestingly, the mast height was kept at 64'6", technically allowing the boat to pass under the many fixed bridges on the Intracoastal Waterway. I think you need nerves of steel to clear a concrete bridge by six inches —and a pretty flexible masthead whip antenna as well!

This is one hull I have put through the paces, and I have to say, it is strong. Hand laminated from a one-piece mold, scantlings are in excess of ABS standards. The hull is stiffened with eight full-length longitudinal stringers, and the deck is Airex cored, except in the mast and through-bolted areas where it is solid fiberglass. In 1991 I delivered a 47 from Annapolis to Nassau and encountered the edge of Hurricane Grace. We were literally surfing for hours on end, in 20-foot swells, and the boat never moaned or groaned.

The interior of the 49 is elegant with legendary oriental joinery work throughout. Queen Long has built more than 80 Hylas 47s so the transition to the 49, despite considerable interior styling changes, was painless. There are three private double cabins which invariably results in a slightly cramped saloon. However, the light and airy atmosphere and double walkway design opens up the saloon. A rounded, L-shaped settee drapes a drop leaf table with seating for six.

On stepping below, the galley is to starboard, concentrated in the walk-through to the aft cabin. The galley is loaded with storage and comes standard with engine-driven refrigeration. Two deep, double sinks are neatly tucked behind the companionway steps and include foot pumps for salt and fresh water, backing up the pressure system. The boat carries 220 gallons of fresh water in four stainless steel tanks with a superb tank manifold system.

The aft cabin has a queen size centerline berth with a private head and shower, a vanity/desk and a dressing or reading seat. I've never liked centerline bunks for going to sea, but for lounging at anchor, this is a tough cabin to beat for comfort. Two-piece cushions



ıe lavish use of teak and beautiful joinerwork highlight the bright interior, here looking aft from the sa-on, with its seamanlike passage-long galley.

ith leecloths are a necessity for using the aft erth offshore.

The two forward cabins include a tradition-, spacious V berth and a side cabin with a ull-out double. This is an ideal arrangement r three couples when chartering and works ırprisingly well offshore. Although the side ıbin is definitely cozy, there is ample stor-ge, and the bunk proved to be a good sea berth. The forward head and shower is on the port side, opposite of the aft head, allowing for a usable head on either tack. The navigation station is in the starboard walkway. The desk is forward facing and convenient to the electrical panel.

The 49 is powered by a 62 horsepower freshwater cooled Yanmar diesel. As we later learned, motoring at five knots into a fierce Chesapeake Bay chop, this engine provides plenty of power. Fuel capacity is 150 gallons in three stainless tanks. Queen Long provides two pre-wired 60 amp alternators, typical of their penchant for backup systems.

It was a beautiful September afternoon as we cleared Port Everglades and headed toward the Gulf Stream. There were six aboard, including Tony Seibert, who was interested in

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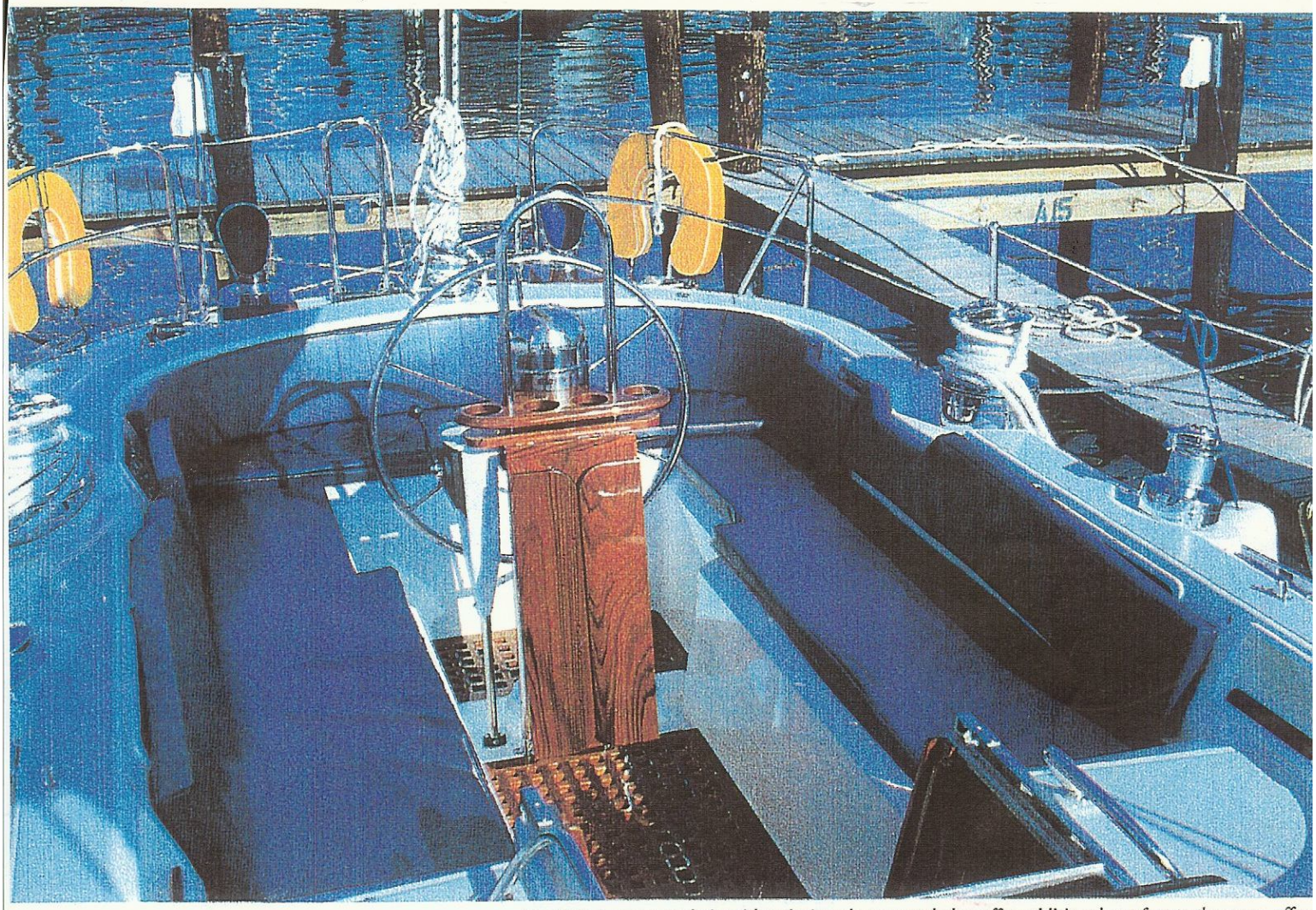


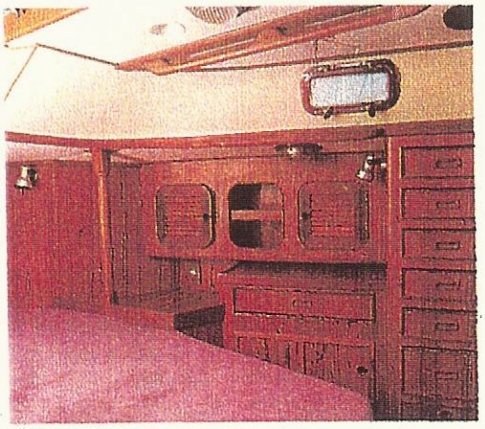
The Hylas' center cockpit, with redesigned seats angled to offer additional comfort to the crew, offers commodious setting with most controls within easy reach, and excellent visibility.

a firsthand look at the new design he inspired. A Force 3 easterly propelled us toward darkness on a gentle reach. A quick check of the handheld GPS revealed that we were making nine knots over the ground! Even with a generous drift, we were still easing along at six knots in about 10 knots of breeze.

The wind gradually backed, forcing us to tighten the sheets. The shrouds are placed well inboard and, with the 135 percent genoa trimmed, we were able to maintain course and speed at about 40 degrees off the apparent wind. Unfortunately, the wind eventually died out altogether, and we were forced to motor to maintain a tight schedule. Rumbling along at 1,800 rpms, the Hylas managed six knots, and we were pleased to discover that the Yanmar burned less than one gallon an hour.

The new cockpit was quite comfortable for the six of us, and, with the mild weather, we found ourselves sprawling around the deck. Jackie Montgomery, Tony's sailing partner, was delighted with the new galley arrangement as was the rest of the crew, and we ate like we were on a Virgin Islands charter, not an offshore delivery. However, with Cape Hatteras looming ahead and the forecast calling for a cold front to pass through, we knew the picnic would soon be over.

Luckily, we avoided the worst of the weather until after we rounded Diamond Shoals, and our course diverged from the Gulf Stream. We also had time to prepare for the blow. We slapped two reefs in the main and changed the 135 percent genny for the 110 percent. Interestingly, a tropical storm, Daniel, sprang to life just 50 miles south of Hatteras and collided with the cold front coming down from the north. Suddenly we had 40 knots on the nose.



The owner's stateroom is aft, and features centered double berth, opening portholes and elaborate storage.

Trying to lay the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay, we made an offshore tack first. The boat had no tendency to pound. Frequent checks of the reliable GPS proved that she was tracking true. As we came through the wind, the gale really hit home. On the radio, we heard that Daniel was likely to strengthen and was also on course for the Bay. We needed all speed p sible. We shook out one reef, unveiled a more headsail and charged toward the Ba eight knots.

Gales are revealing, and when Tony emerged from the aft cabin, calmly rema ing, "We have a problem," I went below vestigate. We did have a problem or, mo propriately, a leak. We quickly traced the source to the aft lazarettes. They were de signed to be water tight, but an electrical wiring conduit cut into the locker and ev ally into the aft cabin. Once we sealed th off, we solved the problem. Considering was the first 49 afloat, I was surprised th this was the only serious problem.

We entered the Bay, but the wind didn up and, in fact, came howling straight ou the north. I decided to see if the boat had power to motor against the wind and sea was again pleasantly surprised. We were and wet sailors when we finally eased th into her berth on the Magothy River, no Annapolis, but we were all impressed by design, sailing characteristics and overa struction of the new Hylas 49.

The Hylas 49 is poised to become a l in 50-foot boat market. Attractively pric $330,000, the Hylas 49 is an excellent c for anyone considering a serious, perfor mance cruising boat, with comfort to sp

John Kretschmer is SAILING*'s Southea Regional Editor.*