

The Whitby 42

A many-faceted boat known by many names

by Ed Lawrence

EVER HAVE ONE OF THOSE CONVERSATIONS during which you wonder if you and other participants are speaking the same language or discussing the same topic? Actually, those can be fun when you're speaking with someone whose pronunciation makes "hail" sound like the place in which sinners reside.

I recently endured such an experience while discussing the attributes and merits of the Whitby 42 with several owners.

"What I really like is the bowsprit and cutter rig," one says.

"My boat doesn't have a bowsprit," another responds.

"Well, I really like the centerboard because it allows me to get into shallow anchorages and improves performance to weather," a third voice adds.

"Centerboard! *What* centerboard? My boat has a full, shallow-draft keel that only draws 5 feet," adds a fourth.

These sailors were all singing from the same songbook, but they were on different pages. This sailboat, a 42-foot ketch designed by Ted Brewer, did have a bowsprit... or didn't, depending upon an owner's preference. Though

in theory a production boat — one that initially was constructed at the Whitby Boat Works in Whitby, Ontario — if the orders were accompanied by a negotiable instrument (read: dollars), buyers were allowed some latitude in their boat's configuration.

"If you want a bowsprit, we'll build a cutter ketch," the company's marketing materials said. Doug Stephenson was a member of the company's marketing team, also consisting of builder Kurt Hansen and his wife, Doris, president of the firm. Today Doug, who specializes in reselling Whitbys, says, "Ted Brewer chafed at the term 'cutter ketch,'" preferring that it be referred to as a double-headsail ketch. (For more on this subject from Ted's point of view, see the March 2005 issue.)

Made in Canada

Of the history of the boat, Doug says, "Hulls #1 to #200 and #301 to #333 were constructed in Canada and known as Whitby 42s."

After hull #200 was completed, construction was moved to Fort Myers, Florida, where boats were built until 1990. Doug says, "Hulls #201 to #300

were built in Fort Myers, but there is some duplication in numbers. Hulls #301 to #307 were placed on boats built both in Canada and Florida, although the alpha part of the numbers differed," so owners of boats with those numbers may unknowingly have identical twins under sail.

To confound amateur historians, the moniker attached to hull #234 (or thereabouts) through #307 of the boats built in Fort Myers was Brewer 12.8. "Some were built with a modified fin keel and skeg-hung rudder. Others, with an extended transom, were called the Brewer 44," Doug notes. The latter was 2 feet longer, significantly increasing the space in the aft cabin, narrowing the stern section, and having a reverse transom. "Other modifications were also in evidence, but many of the similarities are very apparent as being from the same tooling and builder-design concept," he adds. **Right. Fort Myers**

Brian Stewart's Whitby 42, *Pilgrim*, awaits the return of her crew, above. Exterior shots of Mike Curry's boat on facing page.

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also built maybe eight yachts with the mast moved aft and a tall sloop rig for a yacht club on Long Island, New York, which raced them as one-designs.

We're not done yet. The vital statistics displayed on Page 6 are those of the original boat. Those built in Florida may have an additional foot or three of waterline and 6 inches of beam. Thankfully, the hull, deck, and accommodations of all models are essentially the same — except to the extent that an owner requested significant modifications during the building process.

Tradition and technology

There is one item of which reviewers have no doubt: the Whitby 42 (by any name) married new technology (fiberglass) to a traditional design. The result was a seaworthy yacht having a surfeit of space belowdecks that provides the offwatch with room in which to lounge or sleep and the galley slave and navigator spacious areas in which to operate.

From an aesthetic standpoint, this boat fits well in the niche occupied by the likes of Garden, Alden, and Hinckley and will never be confused with a Farr 40. However, she carried a middle-class price sticker and was, therefore, well received in the market-

place. These days used Whitbys sell for \$80,000 to \$140,000, depending upon age and condition.

When viewed from abeam she displays a sheer that tapers slightly downward to max beam. Newer boats have a dark sheer strake and two-tone decks that greatly enhance her appearance by softening an otherwise all-white shape. Ted Brewer managed to elevate the main cabin, center cockpit, and aft stateroom enough to produce voluminous space belowdecks without disrupting her appearance with an unappealingly high deck profile. To my eye, her tallish mast and mizzen balance her profile, in the process providing sections onto which 875 square feet of canvas may be hanked.

Owners were provided with the keys to a Lehman Ford 4-254 diesel that produces 67 hp, enough to power her at 7 knots at 1,800 to 2,000 rpm. She carries enough fuel — 200 to 300 gallons — to claim a range of 1,200 to 1,500 miles. This will come in handy when the wind speed drops below 5 knots, as it did during our test sail in Seattle.

On deck

As you step aboard, your first impression will be that the cockpit is large enough that, if filled with very hot water, eight hot-tubbers could soak comfortably, with room atop the bridge deck for several wine buckets. Draining the hot tub would be a simple matter of exposing scuppers located in the corners of the foot well.

On a more conventional note, the helm station is the centerpiece of a rectangular area surrounded by teak seating that may be a magnet for visitors during happy hour. The space is large enough that a singlehander will need a wheel brake when it's necessary to trim jibsheets or the mainsheet, which is located atop the aft cabin in front of the mizzenmast. A neat touch is a hatch next to the companionway that will ventilate the galley while driving the deck crew nuts when savory aromas escape.

Cockpit storage is in a seat locker to port that could double as a doghouse for a Saint Bernard, and two propane

tanks are located in stern lockers.

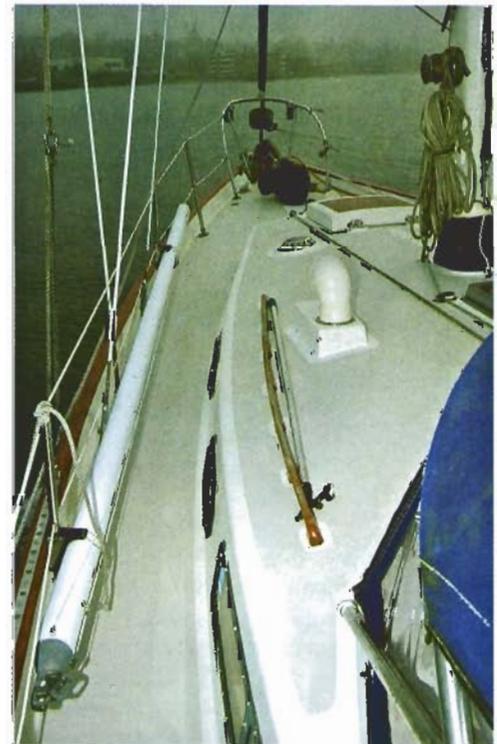
Among the advantages of a mid-cockpit ar-

rangement is the elevated view it offers the skipper, especially when docking or searching the horizon after sunset. Cruisers may be forced to tow a hard dinghy or house it on davits, since there's little storage room on deck. An inflatable that can be stowed on deck may be a better choice.

Belowdecks

Going below when heeled may be an adventure, since the five ladder steps are very vertical; the flip side of that equation is that it takes up less space in the main saloon. If you are aboard a boat with Configuration A, as I was, you may think you've entered the reading room in a gentleman's club. The combination of 13 feet of beam amidships and an elevated cabintop produces dancehall-sized space and an arena-height ceiling overhead. A teak-and-holly sole gleams below.

The space to starboard is adorned with two full-height chests of drawers with a fold-down table located at their center, a bar, two old-fashioned easy chairs, and, in some cases, a fireplace. To port is a settee large enough to comfortably seat four at a drop-



Boat review

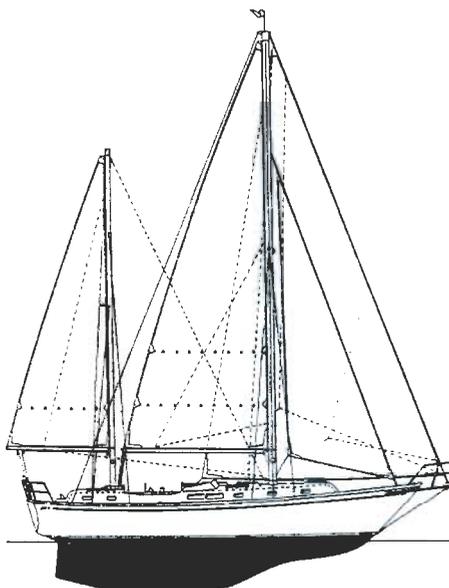


down table connected to the forward bulkhead. A cabinet on the bulkhead, which is concealed from view when the table is elevated, adds storage for dishes and cups. Brilliant!

In its other iteration, an L-shaped settee is to port and the leafed table is located in the center of the area, allowing diners on the starboard settee to rest their elbows on the table.

The aft area in the main saloon is occupied by a galley to port, opposite the nav station. The galleys were initially fitted with smallish, though deep, double stainless-steel sinks with covers, a three-burner stove, and hot-and-cold pressure water systems. Counters in the U-shaped space were covered with Formica edged in teak; they enclose a 7.5-cubic-foot refrigerator and a 5-cubic-foot freezer, built-in maple chopping board, and built-in garbage bin. The aft counter is 4 feet wide, providing a chef with room to carve a small cow.

On balance, the space is comfortably tight so that even when the boat is bouncing around, chefs will be close to their work, though a safety belt will be handy when on a port tack. A chef's only excuse for not preparing tasty meals would be a lack of raw materials or talent.



Whitby 42

Designer: Ted Brewer
LOA: 42 feet 0 inches
LWL: 32 feet 8 inches
Beam: 13 feet 0 inches
Draft: 5 feet 0 inches
Displacement: 25,000 pounds
Ballast: 8,500 pounds
Tankage: 300 gallons fuel, 300 gallons water (varies)
Sail area: 875 square feet

Nav station

On the other side of the aisle, the navigator operates at what would now be considered an old-fashioned station into which a full-figured person will fit in relative comfort. Among the pluses are that the station faces forward, cabinetry is large enough for instruments and communication gear, the chart table is large enough for chart kits, and there is storage outboard in an enclosed cabinet.

At bedtime, separating the wheat (skipper) from the chaff (crew) is a companionway to starboard that leads to the aft cabin. The companionway houses a large workbench that has two large storage compartments for tools and outboard storage. Add leeboards, and the space could double as a Pullman berth for one (tiny) person.

Headroom in the aft cabin is more than 6 feet 2 inches, and two bunks that convert to a queen are oriented athwartships. Clothing is stored in a full-sized hanging locker and clothes bureau. There are lockers port and starboard. A vanity for the skipper supplements counter space in the enclosed head, which also is fitted with a shower. A plus is that the aft stateroom can be reached from the cockpit, so the skipper can slip below for a

snooze while the offwatch believes she's tending the wheel.

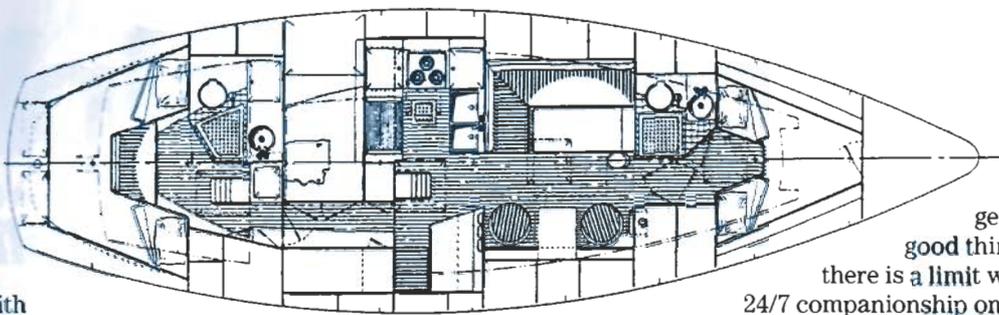
Crew quarters are in a forward stateroom lined with teak battens. It is enclosed by a solid wooden door that doubles as the cover for a full-sized hanging locker. The space houses two bunks that convert to a double and numerous storage lockers and drawers.

Ted Brewer scores Brownie points for fitting a relatively small anchor locker in the bow to increase room in the cabin. However, depending upon an owner's cruising plans and chain requirements, consideration might be given to leading the rode aft to a compartment under the berth. The rearrangement will reposition the weight lower and aft (good), though cleaning the chain before storing it is a must, lest sleepers contend with odors under their pillows (bad).

Access to a second head is via the main saloon or stateroom.

Performance

The Whitby 42 is not a downwind sled and will not beat to weather with the likes of a modern sloop. That's no surprise. During a test sail on Puget Sound arranged by Chris Tesh of



Mae West once said, "You can't get too much of a good thing," but I think

there is a limit when it comes to 24/7 companionship on a small boat, especially during those days when captain and crew have differing opinions about _____ (well, you fill in the blank). That's no problem on this boat since, in bad weather, the three spaces belowdecks are easily partitioned. When the sun's out, the end of

the bowsprit may be beyond hearing range of a voice emanating from the cockpit.

So the next time you're sitting around the keg discussing Ted

Brewer designs, it might be wise to take into consideration the birthdate or the birthplace of a boat before betting the family jewels on whether it's a ketch or cutter or has a centerboard or fixed keel. Regardless of heritage, though, the Whitby 42 is a good old boat. 

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The boat's owner, Mike Curry, made no bones about the fact that she "needs a touch of breeze to get into a groove and then produces a comfortable ride. Over 15 knots of wind, we typically sail under jib and mizzen. Her best sailing is on a broad reach in 10 to 12 knots of wind."

Based on typical performance calculations, she should produce 150-mile days, which was a benchmark in the mid- to late-20th century for cruising yachts. Any shortcomings in that area are offset by the fact that she provides comfortable working and lounging quarters.

Interior shots of the V-berth and cabin of Mike Curry's Whitby 42, on facing page and below. Also on facing page, *Celestial Sea*, owned by Scott and Cheryl Young, shows off her lines both above and below the waterline.

