

ALBIN BALLAD

A well tried Half Tonner with cruising comfort

THE Ballad is a cruiser racer of Half Ton size constructed by Albin Marine of Sweden and imported into this country by the British firm of the same name at Sarisbury Green. Considerably detailed thought has gone into her general arrangement and the yacht has many interesting features which distinguish her from most other production cruisers.

Hull and Construction

The hull is a single skin glassfibre moulding with a deck and coachroof of sandwich construction. A short fin keel weighing 3,400lb gives her a ballast ratio in excess of 50% with a draught of 5ft 1in. The most notable features of her design are the full sections aft and the turn of the bilge well above the waterline. This, combined with the high ballast ratio, undoubtedly contributes to her ability to carry her sail well.

Decks and Cockpit

The coachroof slopes gently to the foredeck to give a large and clear working area with all fittings mounted well forward. These comprise a stemhead fitting, a large mooring cleat, a chain pipe and a pair of fairleads. A high stainless steel pulpit carries properly angled navigation lights. Chocks for the spinnaker pole are not provided as standard.

The sidedecks are wide and the shrouds are set well inboard against the coachroof so that movement fore and aft is easy under all conditions. Five stanchions fitted each side mean that the lifelines are kept well outboard. The coachroof carries full length grab rails but the brass runners of the main hatchway are rather sharp.

The large cockpit has all round seating and there is ample room for a full crew of six for gentle sailing, although fewer would obviously be desirable when racing. The short tiller rising out of the aft end of the well has an extension. The coamings are deep and rise forward to the full height of the coachroof to provide protection. The side lockers are exceptionally large and deep, one being sufficient to stow three headsails and a spinnaker. Provision is made for mounting two pairs of sheet winches on the coamings, though one pair of Lewmar 40s are fitted as standard.

The minor engine controls are mounted under the bridge deck and the throttle and gear levers on the side of the well. The four-part mainsheet is secured to a length of track on the bridge deck; limiting stops are fitted for the slide. The vestigial stern deck

carries two ventilators — one for the stern locker and the other connected to a powered ventilation system for the engine compartment and bilges. A stainless steel aft pulpit carrying the sternlight is standard. There are adequate fairleads and cleats.

Rigging

The mast is keel stepped with provision for limited fore and aft adjustment at the heel. Halyards are internal stainless steel with Terylene tails. A single halyard winch is fitted for the headsails and a very powerful kicking strap and roller reefing gear are standard. The gooseneck on the boat tested has not proved man enough for the job

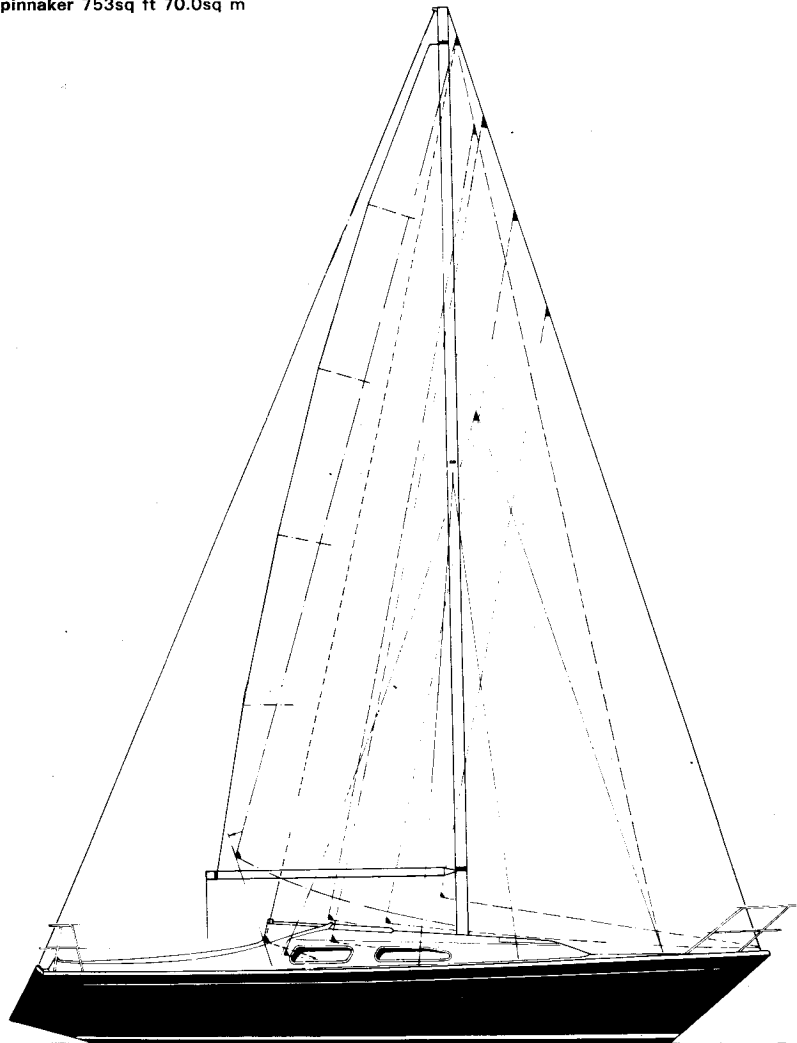
and has been strengthened on subsequent boats. A steaming light is standard.

Accommodation

Ballad's wide beam of 9ft 8in allows six berths to be installed without undue overcrowding and still leave ample room for adequate navigation and domestic facilities. Some space pinching in the areas of the fo'c's'le and toilet compartment is evident however. Of the six permanent berths, two are in the fo'c's'le, two are settee berths and two are pilot berths.

The two fo'c's'le berths are both over six feet long with reasonable space in between and stowage below. The

Mainsail 171sq ft 15.9sq m
Genoa 346sq ft 32.2sq m
Spinnaker 753sq ft 70.0sq m



only ventilation is provided by the fore-hatch. This is translucent and is secured by a single toggle catch pulling down on to a rubber seal. If this is tightened down too much, however, the hatch distorts and a watertight seal is not achieved.

Aft of the fo'c's'le there is a toilet compartment to starboard and a good hanging locker to port. Space here is very restricted and the toilet unit itself would be better mounted further inboard for practical use. A wash basin over it pulls out and is provided with its own pumped water supply. The screening arrangements for the toilet are somewhat messy. A double door shuts off the compartment when not in use and divides it from the fo'c's'le when opened. There are curtains between the toilet area and the saloon. Restricting the space allocated to the fo'c's'le and toilet compartment allows for a first class saloon and excellent navigation and galley facilities are provided instead.

In the saloon, the galley and navigation table are separated from the living area by a part bulkhead and the top of the engine casing can be used to increase the working area of either. Both are carefully thought out and are eminently practical. The galley is provided with a properly gimbaled and fiddled two-burner gas stove, although on the boat tested there was no regulator on the Camping Gaz bottle which we feel is unsatisfactory. There is a good stainless steel sink with both fresh and sea water supplied by foot pump and ample stowage space in cupboards and well made drawers. An opening in the aft bulkhead has a paper waste bin hung in the starboard cockpit locker thus ridding the saloon of any offensive smells from this source.

Opposite the galley and partly projecting under the bridge deck is a first class chart table facing aft, with an aft facing seat for the navigator. The table is large enough to accept about three-quarters of a standard chart and has stowage for a fair number beneath the working surface. There are three good, deep drawers beneath the table and a large cupboard under the side-deck.

In the saloon, the backs of the two settee berths fold down to reveal ample stowage space for bedding. The width of the two settees can be extended under the pilot berths at night. Unfortunately the frames of the pilot berths are too low to permit full advantage to be taken of this arrangement. However, the width of the berths is quite adequate and well fitted draw-

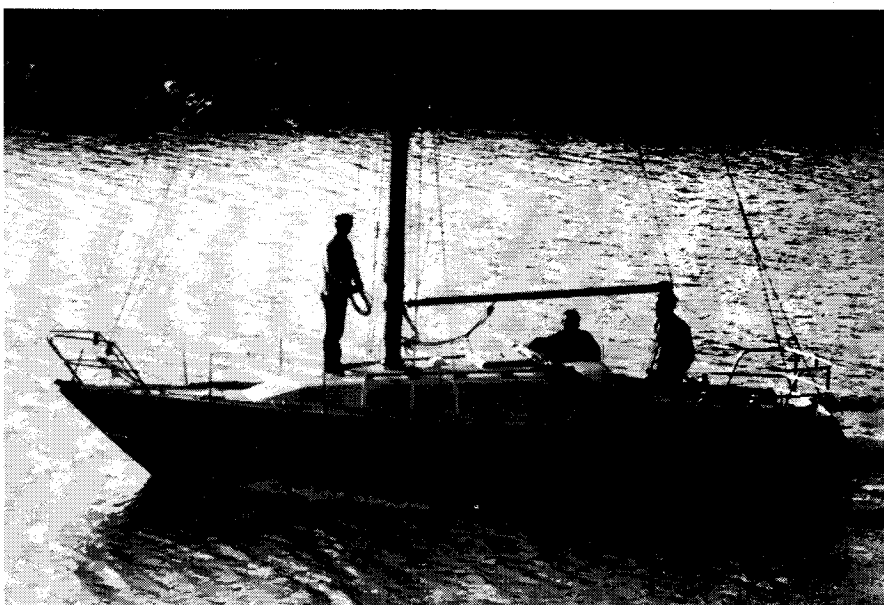
ers are installed beneath. Below decks every available nook and cranny has been used for stowage space.

A removable folding table which can also be mounted in the cockpit is provided as standard. The advantage of this arrangement is to some extent nullified by the lack of rigidity in the table mounting. Perhaps a less portable but more rigid arrangement would be of greater value in our climate.

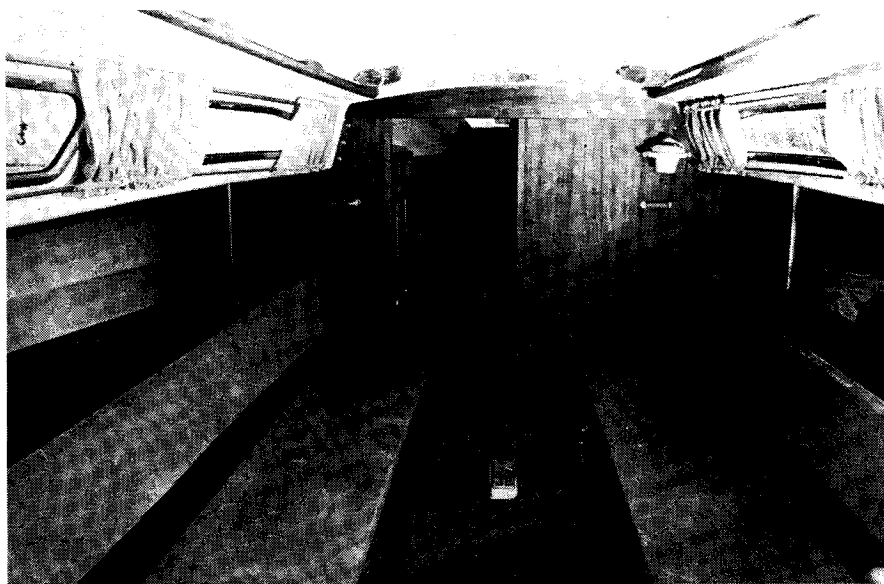
The general decor is of attractive, sapele-faced plywood and mahogany with folkweave upholstery. Curtains and curtain rails are fitted and there

is an adequate number of lights, including one for each berth. On the settee berths, however, the lights are mounted at the narrower end rather than at the head which seems a little odd.

A forty-eight hour cruise with four adults and two children showed that six can be accommodated in very fair comfort. The general arrangements and stowage space are fully capable of dealing with this number without any undue friction or overcrowding.



(above) Ballad under power showing her attractive profile. (below) interior shot looking forward. Note pilot berths port and starboard.



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Another good feature is the electric fan fitted in the engine compartment to exhaust any fumes or gases which may accumulate either there or in the bilges. Under calm conditions, the motor gave a speed of about six knots.

Performance

We were fortunate in being able to sail *Ballad* in both light airs and much heavier going and the performance in both conditions was impressive. In light airs she kept going well on all headings carrying her largest headsail. She showed her ability to point high by tacking through only about 80 degrees.

On a later occasion on a trip down the Bristol Channel in a strong easterly she made the greatest impression on us. Downwind in Force 4 to 5 under spinnaker we covered ground in impressive style, and even though fairly hard pressed in a confused sea caused by wind over tide, she remained easy to handle.

In slightly heavier conditions the next day full main and working jib were carried without difficulty and the yacht remained dry and comfortable. She steered herself happily with lashed

helm even in the very confused sea prevailing at the time. Any attempt to improve on her performance by carrying more sail to the point where the lee gunwale became immersed was ineffective since her speed was markedly reduced.

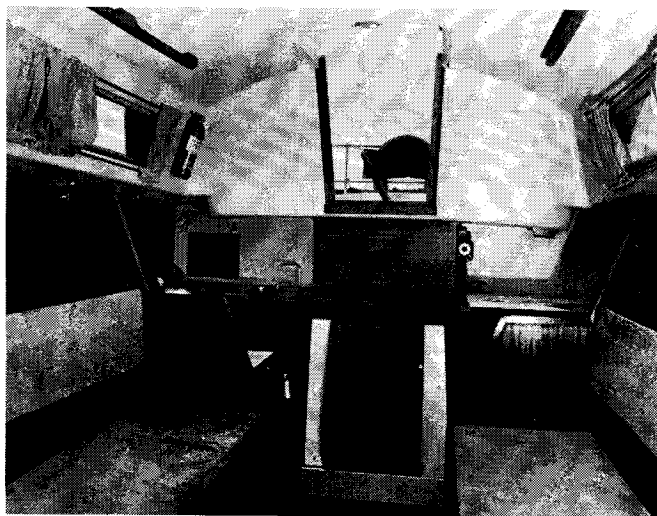
Conclusions and Price

The *Ballad* is undoubtedly a highly satisfying and exciting boat to sail and is fully capable of holding her own against other cruisers of similar size. She is fast, stable and close winded — her consistently good performances in the Half Ton Cup will speak for that. Her high standard of comfort is a bonus point making for very civilized living, with adequate accommodation for six. She should make a fine family boat and a rewarding club racer at a price on the water with a very comprehensive inventory of around £7,000.

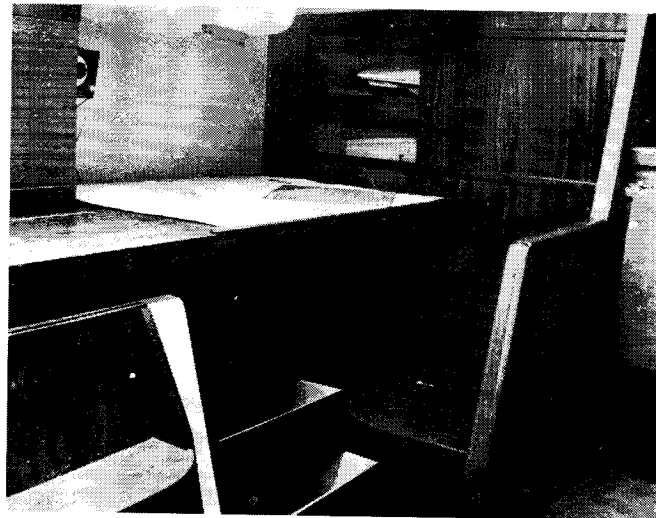
Engine Installation

The standard engine is a Volvo Penta MD6A twin cylinder diesel which proved to be very smooth and quiet in use. It is easily accessible by removing the forward engine casing in the saloon. The electrical system is interesting in that the engine is fitted with both a Dynastart generator and an alternator. The former charges one set of batteries which is used only for starting whilst the alternator charges a second set which is reserved for all other auxiliary use. Ample power supplies are therefore available for lighting and other electrical gear without any fear of difficulty in starting the engine. Provision is also made for hand starting should the Dynastart fail. A comprehensive switch and fuse box is fitted under the bridge deck.

Loa	29ft 11in	9.14m
Lwl	22ft 7in	6.90m
Beam	9ft 8in	2.96m
Draught	5ft 1in	1.55m



(above) Interior looking aft showing galley to starboard and chart table to port. (below) View of the large cockpit.



(above) Chart table with drawers under and locker behind. (below) Galley area with adequate food and utensile stowage.

