



Albin Ballad

Rolf Magnusson's advanced half-tonner is still raced today and can make a comfortable cruiser as well

It is now over 20 years since the Albin Ballad first hit the water, yet she is still raced with enthusiasm all round the coast of Britain.

She has also made the important transition from racer to cruiser which so many of her contemporaries also achieved.

Designed by Rolf Magnusson, she was built in her hundreds by Albin Marin in Sweden, when it was one of the biggest boatbuilders in Europe.

The distinctive feature of her hull is the knuckle some 6in above the waterline amidships. In other respects, too, she was at the forefront of design at the time; the semi-elliptical rudder (though hung on a full skeg) and rig heavily biased towards the genoa, for example.

Her overall appearance, though, is sweet and conventional. The coachroof



is rounded and low, the sheer quite flat, and she has a pleasing amount of overhang at bow and stern.

Her construction varied from the very low-tech, sprayed chopped strand mat of the sturdy hull to the balsa sandwich constructed deck. The encapsulated lead fin keel is modestly proportioned, giving her a draught of 5ft 1in. The encapsulation will often have suffered damage due to grounding and should be checked carefully.

The keel-stepped mast and rigging were stout and many boats still sport the original set. She had massive galvanised webs under the deck to take shroud loads. The original engine was a Volvo MD6A which developed 10hp and gave about 6 knots in ideal conditions. It had an unusual feature in that it had a generator to charge the starter battery and an alternator for the service

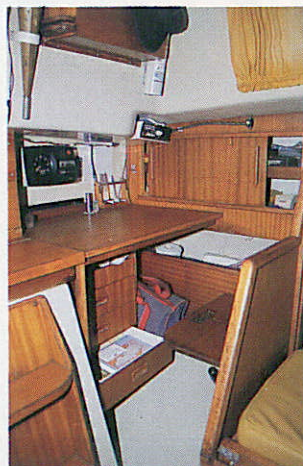
battery – one of the earliest yachts of this size to be designed for two batteries. The batteries themselves, though, are sited in the forecabin, resulting in long and power hungry cable runs.

The accommodation offers six berths, two in a rather small and low forecabin (the sole is a step up from the saloon), two settees in the saloon and two pilot



berths. Headroom in the saloon is just over 6ft.

The galley is a bit disappointing. The boats were not supplied with cookers which were fitted to owner's specification. Two-burner, ovenless models were the norm. An ice box and large sink complete the arrangement, together with a modest amount of stowage. The chart table opposite is aft facing but has its own seat and is well supplied with



Top: the rather modest galley.
Above left: the practical, seagoing saloon.
Above: the chart table with good drawers

drawers and lockers. Stowage throughout the boat is excellent. The interior is built of teak ply on an internal moulding, which is solid and has stood the test of time well.

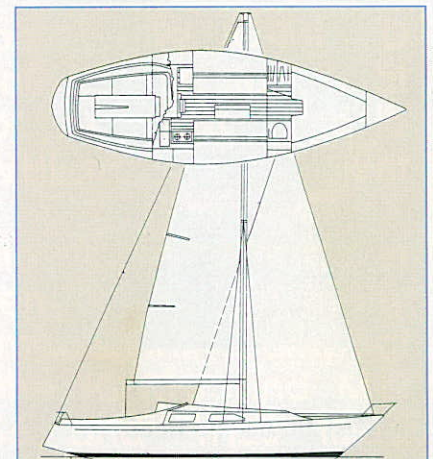
The cockpit is very large for a yacht of this generation. It has long bench seats and deep cockpit lockers. The tiller, which rises from the sole a short way forward of the transom tends to restrict the working area when under way.

The decks are uncluttered and easy. The original rig featured roller furling on the boom, but some will have been converted to slab reefing. Her racing pedigree means that many examples have been sailed hard, so check sails and rig carefully.

Under sail she was and still is a witch to windward, though very wet in a seaway. She is light, well-balanced and quite stiff. Thanks to the full skeg she tracks well downwind and heaves to quietly. JJ

The survey

Tony Staton Bevan writes: Albin Ballads tend to have been built to more than adequate standards and I have not encountered any major recurring defect. □



Specifications

LOA 9.14m (29ft 11in)
LWL 6.90m (22ft 7in)
Beam 2.96m (9ft 8in)
Draught 1.55m (5ft 1in)
Displacement 3,300kg (7,276 lb)
Ballast 1,550kg (3,417 lb)
Sail area (main and genoa)
40.7m² (438sq ft)
Headroom 6ft
YM boat test Yes
Second opinion Yes
Owners' Association No
Designer Rolf Magnusson
Builder Albin Marin
Original price £6,570
Today's prices: From £14,000 to £19,000