

NEW BOATS



The 445 strikes a nice pose while under sail

Sea Trial Catalina 445

A powerful and practical all-rounder | BY KIMBALL LIVINGSTON

There are certain things you can count on in a Catalina. It will sail well. Not like a world beater, but like an honest boat. It will be built to a price point, but not the lowest price point. And a Catalina will incorporate scads of the value-add notions of in-house designer Gerry Douglas, who also gleans ideas from endless conversations with Catalina owners.

The new 445 is a shade more performance-oriented than most Catalinas. The buyer might be different from someone looking at the company's popular 42-footer, or the 47, so this one does more than fill a gap in the lineup. The 445 buyer probably wants to do some PHRF racing, but it would be a pity if the boat never went cruising, because this one has the legs for it. Styling cues are a touch fashion-forward, but the knowing eye will instantly recognize a Catalina.

CONSTRUCTION

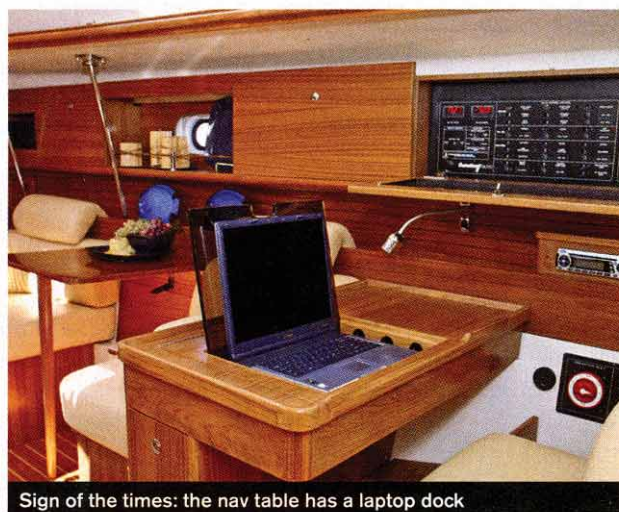
There are five main components: hull, structural grid, hull liner, deck, and molded deck liner, with a collision bulkhead forward. The grid catches the load of keel, mast, and tankage; like the liners (which also make a structural contribution) it has chases for clean runs and updates of electrical wiring. The fiberglass hull is cored from the waterline up with balsa. The deck is also balsa-cored except where winches and other gear are mounted. Furniture subassemblies are not structural, Douglas says, "so that everything ends up in the right place." The company is sticking with lead, not iron, for its keels, which is one reason why Catalina's price point is a bit north of some.

ON DECK

Catalina leads sail controls to the cabintop in the same configuration on all the boats in the line. If you know one Catalina you

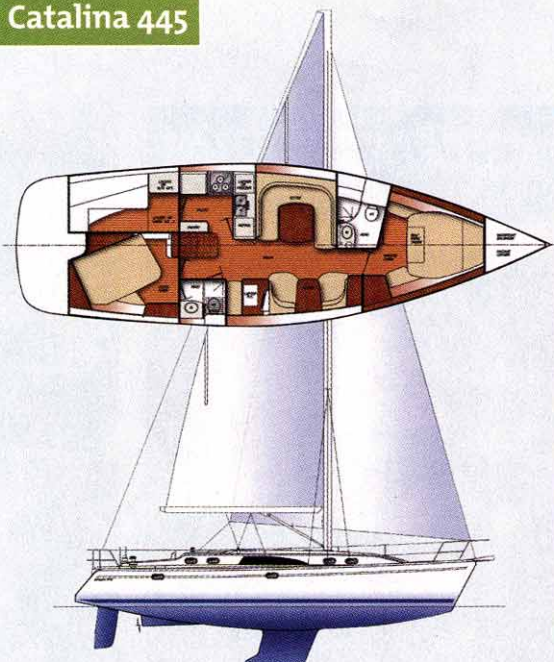
know them all. Traveler controls for both sides are led to one point, so you don't switch spots to adjust. When you live with a boat, these things matter, and if you are fortunate enough to have berthing that allows you to board via the transom, life on a 445 could not be easier. Twin independent backstays provide extra security for the mast and open the stern passageway. A dedicated electronics hotspot just forward of the traveler (and clear of foot traffic) eliminates a forest of antennas on the transom.

Add twin wheels and transom lifelines



Sign of the times: the nav table has a laptop dock

Catalina 445



VITAL STATISTICS

HEADROOM: 6'9"

V-BERTH: 6'7"x5'2"

SETTEES: 6'8"x2'1"

COCKPIT SEATS: 6'4"x1'8"

OUR TAKE

PROS:

- Easily-driven hull and user-friendly sailplan
- Ergonomic deck and cockpit layout
- Inviting belowdeck accommodations

CONS:

- Inmast furling won't appeal to all
- Forward master cabin works better at anchor than at sea

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 44'5"

LWL: 38'4"

BEAM: 13'7"

DRAFT: (fin keel/wing): 6'4"/4'10"

DISPLACEMENT: (fin keel/wing) 23,500/24,300 lbs

BALLAST: (fin keel/wing) 7,200/8,000 lbs

SAIL AREA: (100% foretriangle) 856 ft²

ELECTRICAL: 600 AH

FUEL/WATER/WASTE: 66/178/54 gal

DISPLACEMENT-LENGTH RATIO: 187

SAIL AREA-DISPLACEMENT RATIO: 16.7

BALLAST-DISPLACEMENT RATIO: 31%

POWER: 50hp diesel

DESIGNER: Gerry Douglas

BUILDER: Catalina Yachts, 818-884-7700, www.catalinayachts.com

PRICE: \$254,950, FOB Largo, FL

that open with pelican hooks, then retract and disappear, and there's a clear passage from the swim step to a cockpit that is highly fit for entertaining. The table holds an insulated cooler, handrails, engine panel, and a chart-plotter housing that rotates port/starboard.

The back of the house is properly squared off so that you can rest against it at sea. Trust me on this one: curved seating is great for cocktail time, but when you're putting on the miles you spend time resting your back against the house—or stretched out sleeping—and this cockpit is long enough for that. Catalina offers an optional hard dodger; with it you won't watch your canvas fade.

A Seldén rig with in-mast furling is standard; vertical battens aid mainsail shape. "The boat was built around the mast," Douglas says. The spar is deck-stepped to the top plate of a compression post. This configuration lessens noise below while eliminating the leaks of keel-stepped masts. Genoa tracks are 13'9" long to accommodate adjustments to large overlapping headsails. Douglas is not interested in small, self-tacking jibs, he says, "because most people sail most of the time in 12 knots of breeze. You need the power of the overlapping headsail."

ACCOMMODATIONS

Catalina sticks with teak for its interiors. Many surfaces are veneer, but scuff points—passageways and table edges—are solid wood so that wear and tear can be refinished.

Dig the details: Above the nav station, an electrical panel behind glass with voltage

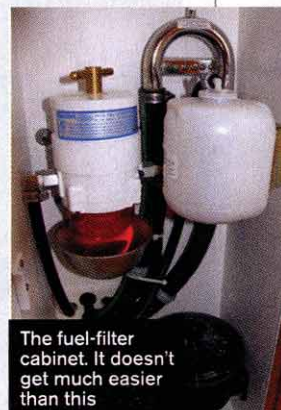
metering and the top two switches dedicated to cabin lights (easing those black-night searches). A nav station including a recessed, covered laptop cuddy (and it even feels good to sit there). A long drawer for paper charts. Two heads—housed in separately-molded components—on opposite sides, facing in, means that one

should always be usable, whatever the heel. In the master stateroom forward, a bed that electrically tilts for reading. Aft cabins divided 60/40 because on most boats, most of the time, two sleeping cabins suffice, while storage and workspace are at a premium. If you need another sleeping cabin, there it is.

UNDER SAIL: Our day was light by San Francisco Bay community standards (but sandwiched between 30-knot blows, so I'm not complaining) and we appreciated the extra punch of the optional asymmetric spinnaker. Riding on its own furler, the spinnaker was tacked to a removable bowsprit attached, in turn, to dedicated points built into the anchor roller. Then, even in a wimpy breeze, hull number one was alive. The steering felt good, with no obvious resistance in the doubled mechanics, and I felt comfortable moving around the deck, bouncing off the extra-high lifelines. It was not a day for authoritative performance assessments, but reaching in patches of 6-8-knots we nudged up near the speed of the wind often enough to feel confident of the performance.

UNDER POWER: Yanmar's 50-horse 4JH-2BE has been fitted into larger, heavier boats without issues, and it will take good care of the 445. Basic, quick access is as easy as popping open the ladder (with built-in tool box cuddy) or using one of the cunningly placed hatches, and the entire assembly can be unscrewed for 360-degree access. A thing of beauty is the dedicated fuel-filter cabinet, housing an arrangement as clean and serviceable as you'll find anywhere. Single-station engine controls are thoughtfully mounted at the starboard wheel, your give-way side under power for closing traffic.

CONCLUSION: Catalina builds people-pleasing boats, and the company's service ethic keeps many owners in the fold as they step up to larger boats. The 445 promises to continue the tradition. The slight performance flavor does not compromise it as a cruising platform or as a place to entertain. The interior is bright and livable. If you're thinking about anything remotely like this you will want to consider the 445. *AL*



The fuel-filter cabinet. It doesn't get much easier than this