

Popular

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Boating

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POPULAR
BOATING tests

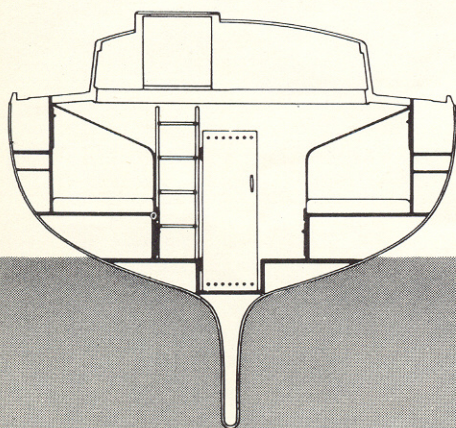
Chris-Craft Sail Yacht

A power-boat manufacturer enters
the auxiliary market
with a splashing success

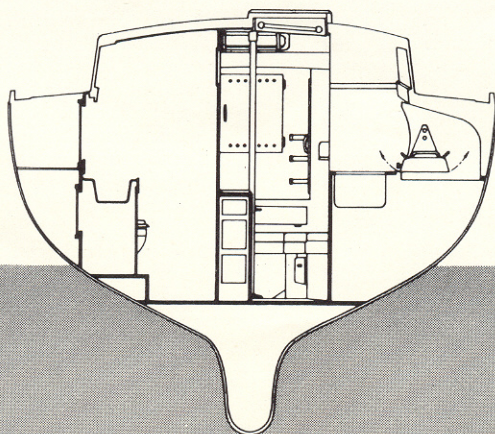


Stiff and fast, the Sail Yacht charges through the Gulf Stream. The old master, Morris Rosenfeld, took this

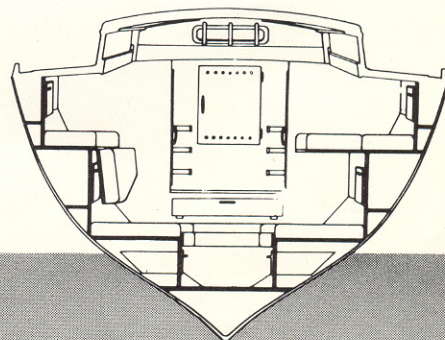
shot from bouncy escort to celebrate his 80th birthday, while his son Stanley relaxed and enjoyed the sail.



Section through aft cabin shows bunks, lockers, companionway.



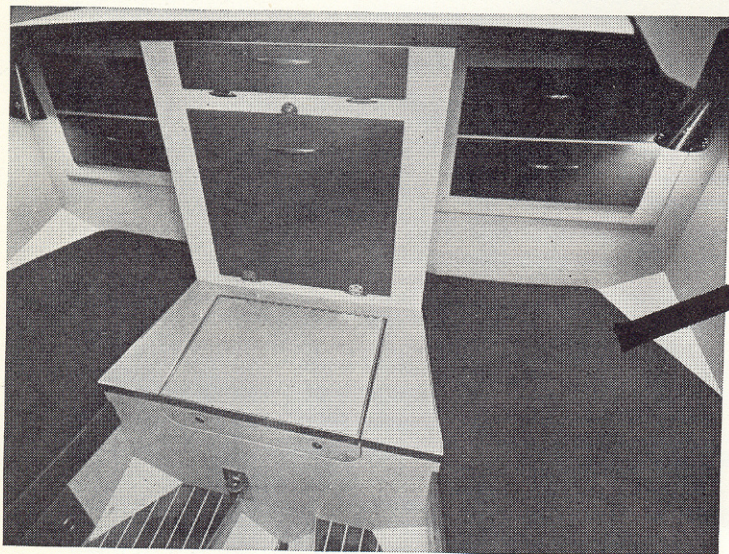
Midships section looking forward; the small galley is to starboard.



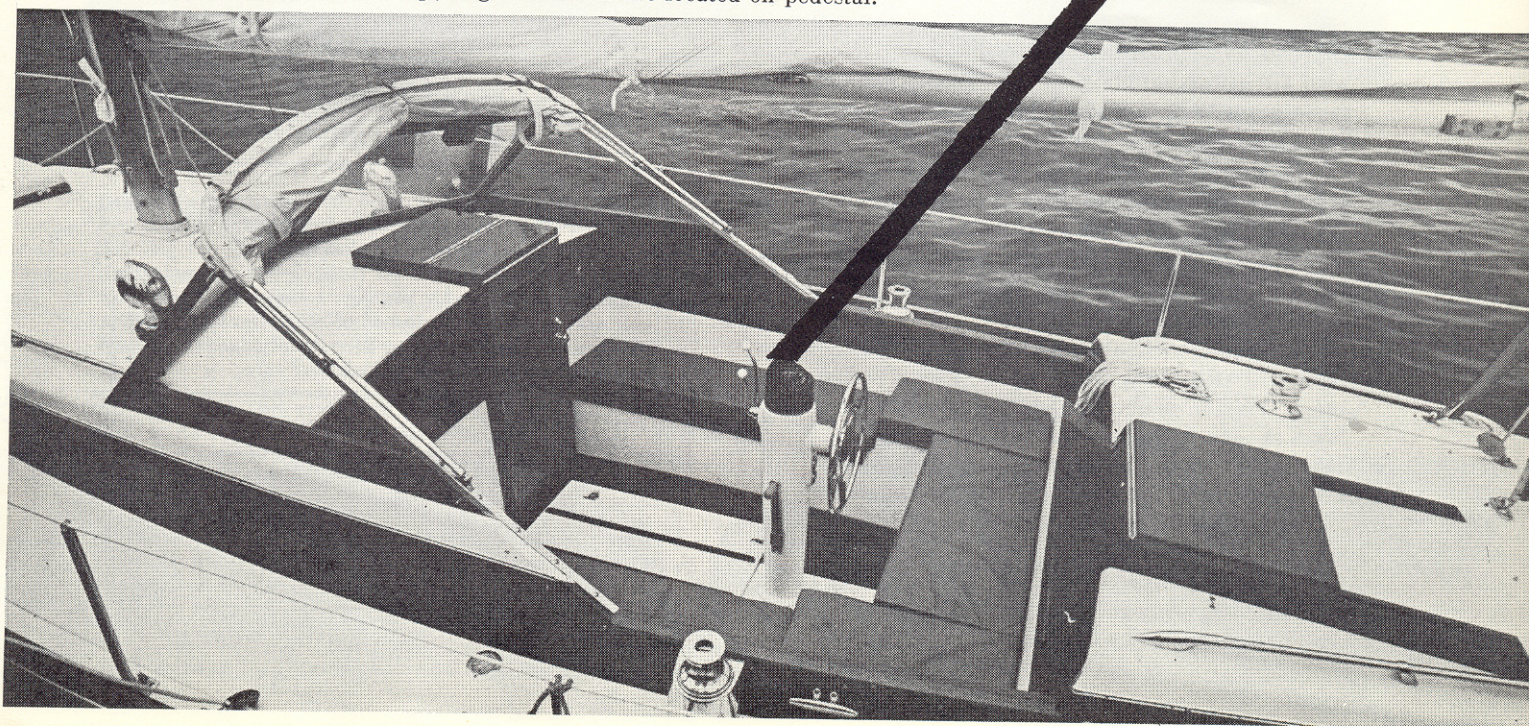
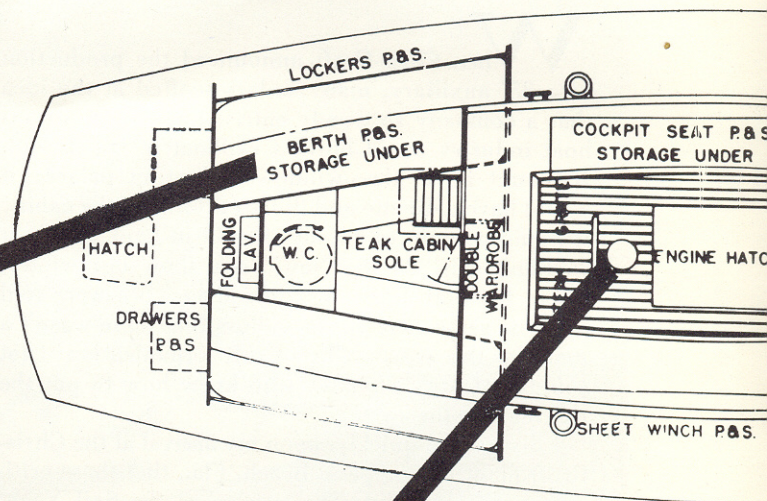
Main cabin section shows bunks in raised and lowered positions.

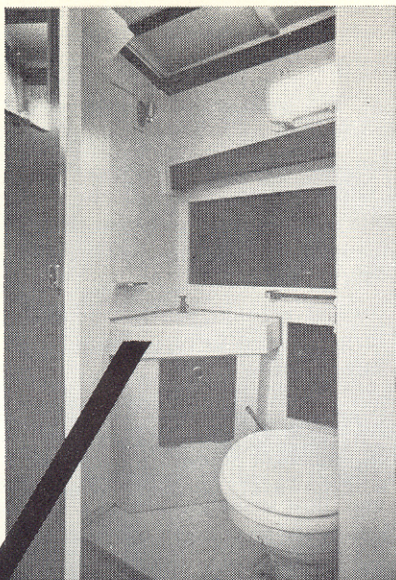


Windshield keeps spray out of cockpit and does not obstruct vision.

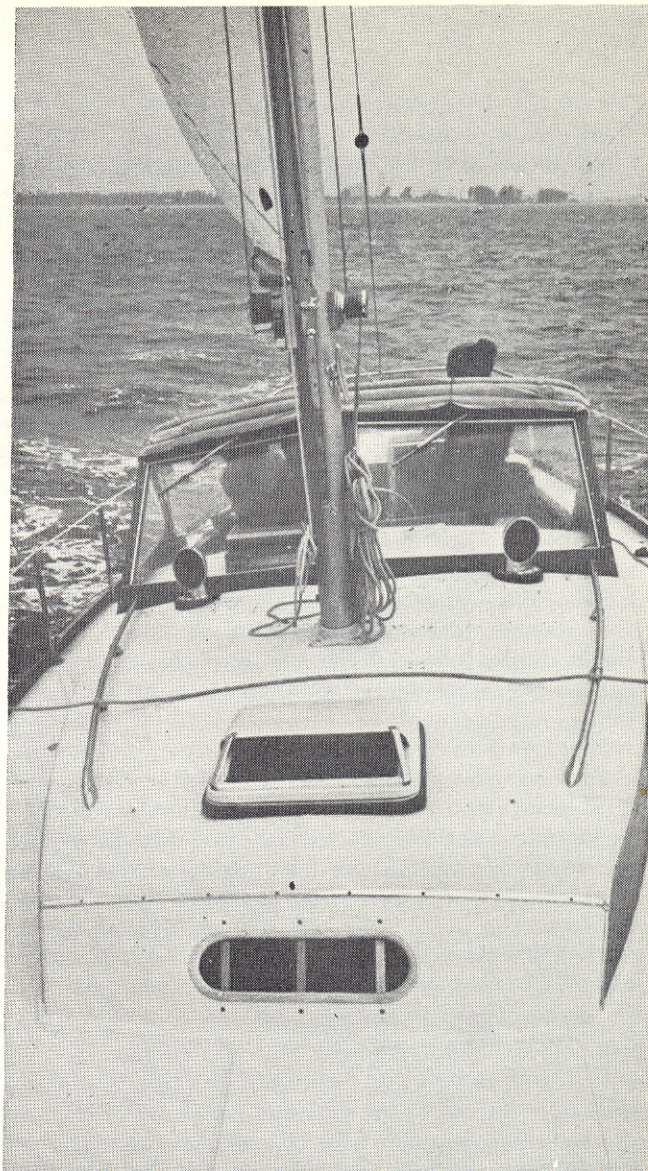


Aft stateroom has two bunks, head, generous lockers.
The cockpit is wide and deep; engine controls are located on pedestal.

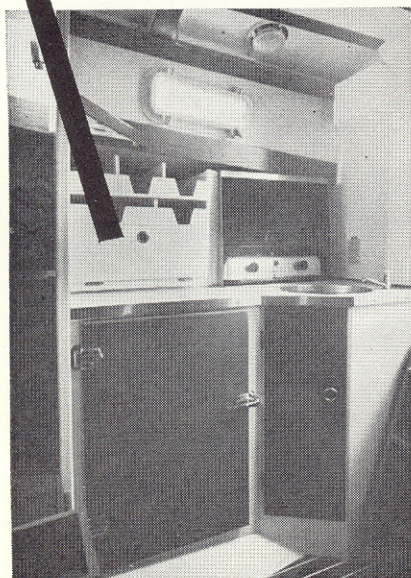
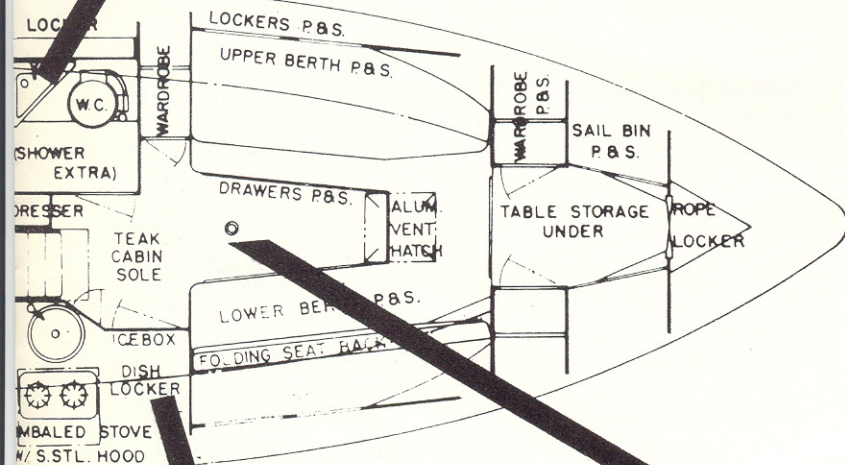




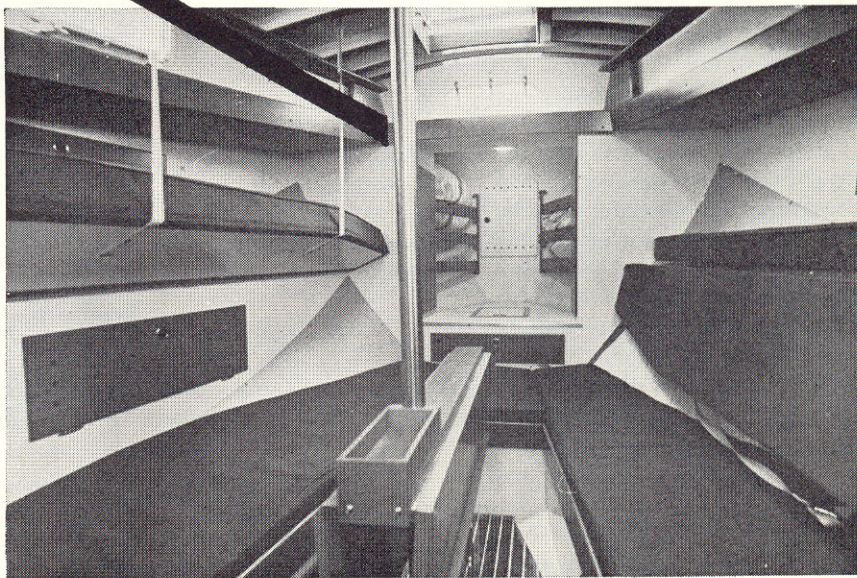
Toilet-room is commodious, can be fitted with shower.



Decks are wide for comfortable lounging. Surface has good non-skid pattern.



Galley is small and inconvenient compared to other boats of this size.



Main cabin can comfortably seat six around table. Bunk to port is set for sleeping on the windward side.

This should prevent any build-up of static electricity, and if she is struck by lightning the charge will be carried off without damage to the hull. In addition, there is a separate grounding system for the engine and electrical appliances.

The hull layup is amply thick, ranging from $\frac{5}{16}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ ". There are also plywood stringers, encased in fiberglass, to add rigidity to the structure. The hull is very tough and will withstand a considerable pounding before *Safety* is compromised.

Battery switches are of the vapor-proof, non-explosive type. Fuel line shut-offs are located both at the engine and at the tank ends of the fuel line, in accordance with recommendations of the American Boat and Yacht Council. Should a fuel leak develop anywhere in the system (other than a leak in one of the tanks) it can be isolated and stopped. A selector valve allows fuel feed from either tank and prevents feed-back from one tank to another when heeling under sail. Engine room ventilation is provided by two cowl vents forward of the windshield. All through-hull fittings have adequate sea-cocks.

Rigging is in the best yacht tradition, conservatively sized for ample strength. The mast is stiff and showed no signs of whipping or jumping fore-and-aft even in the strong winds and big seas encountered during the test.

This is an excellent boat for cruising with two or even three couples on board or for a family with up to four children. The main cabin will seat six around the table (although four would naturally have more elbow room). Six people could almost get lonely in the tremendous cockpit, and the aft cabin is large enough to be occupied by two people, although they will have to coordinate to keep out of each other's way. The toilet room is large and a shower is offered as an optional extra. All of the bunks are both long enough and wide enough, and each is fitted with a unique bunk-board arrangement that tilts the in-board edge about 30° and allows the use of the windward bunks while sailing.

Ventilation is good in the forward cabin. An ingenious water-trap vent in the forward hatch pipes a steady stream of fresh air below and can be shut off on cooler days. The hatch can also be opened to 45° or 90°. The hatch opening struts serve double-duty as securing dogs. Additional ventilation is provided by opening ports in the forward cabin. This is a mixed blessing, since the gaskets will have a tendency to leak eventually.

In contrast to the main cabin, the ventilation aft is inadequate. Two trap vents can be ordered as optional extras, but even with these, ventilation will be insufficient in rainy weather when the hatch must be kept closed.

The optional convertible top and side curtains will add greatly to the overall comfort of the boat in rainy weather, either at anchor or underway.

In spite of the rough weather during the test, we never had spray in the cockpit. The hull throws very little water aboard but, what did come aft was stopped by the windshield. All things considered, the Sail Yacht rates above average in *Comfort*.

Convenience is another matter. The main reason for downgrading *Convenience* is the galley arrangement. It appears that the galley has been copied from the typical Chris-Craft cabin cruiser, and it isn't adequate for use in a sailboat. Counter space is scarce, there are not enough

lockers, and the cook will block the main companionway when preparing a meal. The ice-box door is mounted vertically, and even though fiddles have been provided inside the box, there is the danger that ice and stores will fall out if the door is opened while sailing on the starboard tack. There are improvements planned that will help the galley, but the overall arrangement will remain poor without a complete redesigning job on the forward cabin. There just isn't room, with the present arrangement, to allow for a galley that would be large enough to be convenient when cooking dinner for a hungry crew of six.

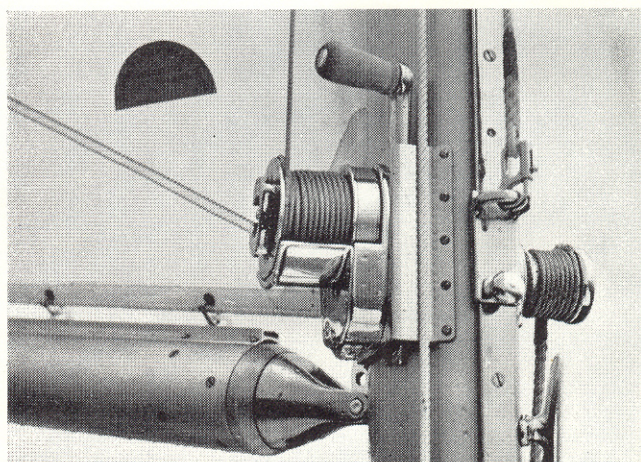
There are other minor inconveniences down below such as the lack of good hand-holds. These were provided for in the original design, but somehow weren't incorporated in the first boats. They will, however, be included on subsequent models.

On deck *Convenience* rates above average. Sheets and halyards are well placed—the helmsman can trim the main-sheet while sailing, or it can be handled by a crew member. The helmsman can also tail a jib sheet if necessary. The #3 genoa winches are adequate, but #6's may be ordered as optional equipment and would be better. Winch handles stow out of the way on the pedestal but, are within easy reach.

The only inconvenience we found on deck was the wheel steering. It was geared too low and, as a consequence, the helmsman was kept busy with one-half to three-quarters of a turn just to make minor heading adjustments. This is to be corrected on later boats.

It is a shame that an otherwise exceptional boat should be downgraded by one item, but the overall *Convenience* picture compromises at an average rating. Casual cruisers who plan to eat meals ashore will not be terribly inconvenienced by the galley. Ocean racers, on the other hand, will curse its inadequacies at the change of each watch.

The Sail Yacht is the first large Chris-Craft that is built entirely of fiberglass. They have been using fiberglass for cabin-tops on many of the cruisers, and this experience has obviously paid off handsome dividends on the auxiliary. Glass work is excellent; hull thickness is ample; fittings are securely fastened and of ample size. In spite of miserable



Hardware on Sail Yacht is meticulously executed. Photo (looking aft) shows arrangement of mast fittings: #2 reel-type main halyard winch; #2 top-action, ratchet, jib halyard winch; optional spinnaker track. Main halyard winch-block doubles as convenient handle holder.

weather during the test (hard rain and spray on deck) there wasn't the slightest sign of a leak anywhere. There is more brightwork to varnish than on most fiberglass auxiliaries, but if this is kept up owners will find that they have a boat with excellent *Durability*.

The Sail Yacht earns a fine styling rating almost in spite of herself. She has a fat beam, short ends, and (to most sailors' eyes) a funny-looking windshield. Yet these "faults" have a functional beauty, and when blended with a pleasing sheer, tasteful use of mahogany trim on deck, a modern masthead rig, and good workmanship in the finish, the overall rating for *Styling* is above average. Below, she is trim and functional—while the joinery is good, there is room for improvement in the finish.

What will surprise most sailors as it did me, is the excellent *Performance* of this boat. She sails beautifully. She is stiff in a breeze, balances well, has an easy motion, and appears to move like a race horse on the home stretch. The weather for our test was excellent for really putting a sailboat through its paces (winds between 10 and 25 kts. from the NE), and we rung her out for fair! From the moment we stepped aboard at Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale, to some five hours later when we eased her alongside the dock, I was impressed by her performance both under sail and under power.

The response of the 60 hp four-cylinder Chris-Craft engine was excellent. Even though I was handling a strange boat, I felt I was in complete control at all times. A touch of the throttle brought instant, responsive movement in the desired direction. In spite of a strong wind blowing off the dock, taking her out and bringing her back in presented no problems.

There was no tachometer installed, but about half throttle was all that was required to push her along at five or six

kts. Advancing the throttle about three-quarters of the way pushed her at hull speed.

We sailed about six miles out into the Gulf Stream, where the wind bucking the current built up a steep, irregular chop. Unfortunately, we were the only sailboat in the area and had no trial horses to sail her against. Under working jib and full mainsail she footed well but did not point particularly high. A tighter headstay and a better jib lead would have improved her pointing considerably, although her strength to windward will be in her ability to foot rather than point with the fleet. In spite of her beam, she was not stopped by the heavy seas unless she was held so close to the wind that both main and jib carried a luff.

After about an hour under working jib we changed to number one genoa to see what she would do if really hard pressed in a breeze. She was definitely over-powered in the puffs, but she stood up well and never tried to take charge. She footed better through the lulls with this combination, and, had we been racing, a number two genoa with a single reefed main would have been the best combination of sails in 18 to 25 kts. of wind. Off the wind she is easy to steer and moves well.

The Sail Yacht was designed as a cruiser, not a racer, but I feel she has definite possibilities for alongshore and overnight races. I would not take her on a Transatlantic race with the windshield (the boat may be ordered without it) or with the galley arrangement, but there is no apparent reason why she shouldn't give a good account of herself in serious racing.

The virtues of the Chris-Craft Sail Yacht are many (the name "Sail Yacht" is not one of them); her deficiencies are few. She is a boat that will appeal to the beginner as well as the veteran sailor. With a basic price of \$25,000, she is an excellent value in anyone's book.— J