

LONG TEST

MERMAID 380

This Danish cruising yacht is well built, has a good sailing performance and is delivered with an extensive inventory

Danish Boats International A/S of Kolding are the country's largest builders of glassfibre production yachts. Over the years they have established an enviable reputation for a high standard of build and finish for their LM motorsailers and, more recently, for their pretty, canoe-sterned Mermaid cruising yachts. The most recent addition to this range, and the company's largest yacht, is the Mermaid 380.

Designer Bent Andersen has drawn a high-volume hull with a long entry and firm-bilged midship section which terminates in a powerful canoe stern. The sheer is gentle and looks good from all angles. The coachroof ends just forward of the deck-stepped mast, giving an enormous expanse of clear, teak-laid foredeck and wide side decks. The scrubbed teak toerail is very much in keeping with the yacht's character. The out-turned flange join between hull and deck moulding is capped by a very neatly-run, black neoprene rubber C-section fender strip.

A Bruce anchor can be stowed over the stemhead roller, but there is no anti-chafe for the cable working on the teak deck. A better drain is needed for the anchor locker

A 33lb (15kg) Bruce anchor is carried over the single roller stemhead fairlead, but there is no scotchman to take the chafe of chain cable on the nicely laid teak deck. The drainage for the anchor well was not adequate on the yacht we tested — a production prototype — but the builders assured us that this was being modified in subsequent yachts.

A stout, four-legged, step-through bow pulpit provides plenty of security in the eyes of the yacht. Large, toerail-mounted mooring cleats are fitted well back from the stemhead and at each quarter. Spring cleats are provided as standard as also are boarding ports through the lifelines at the point of maximum beam.

The decks are the clearest we have seen on a yacht of this type and the inboard-set shroud anchorages allow very easy passage along the side decks. The scrubbed teak handrail along each side of the coachroof extends forward from the five-panel, aluminium-framed

windshield to close by the fall of the after lower shroud.

Considerable thought has been devoted to the design and comfort of the cruciform cockpit. Whitlock Cobra, solid-rod steering drives the partially skegged rudder. Two full turns are required from lock to lock. The system is very free-running and there is no backlash. A neat, folding, teak cockpit table is fitted to the forward side of the wheel pedestal and there is also a holder for drinks glasses.

Stowage for warps and fenders is beneath the cockpit port seat and there is also useful lazarette space abaft the cockpit after coaming. The well-made accommodation washboards stow in a shallow recess beneath the starboard seat. The corner seats are well-sited for the helmsman and the cruciform shape of the cockpit allows free passage around the wheel. To increase space in the galley, the accommodation access has been offset a little to starboard of the centreline. The access itself is wide and the companion convenient to use with well-placed grabrails.

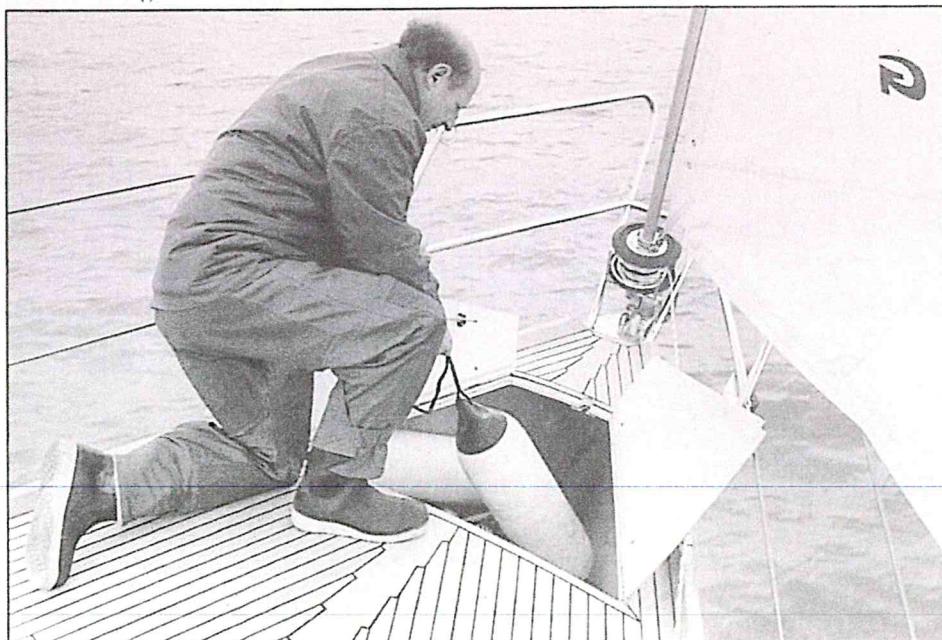
RIG AND SAILS

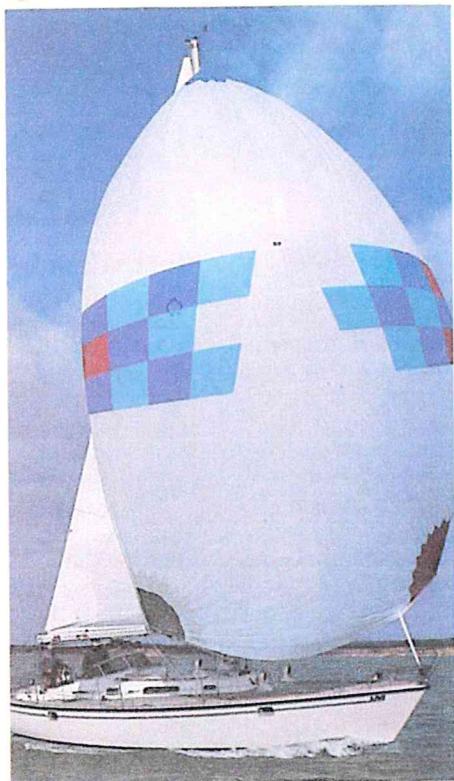
A deck-stepped, three-panel John Mast is fitted with the shrouds anchored to ties close to the side of the coachroof. The forestay is set a little way down from the cap so the moment between the cap-attached backstay and the forestay sets just the right amount of fore and aft pre-bend into the upper panel of the mast. The backstay tension is adjusted with a Barbarossa winch-handle drive unit and a telescopic boom vang is standard. The sails, by Green of Denmark, are well made and set efficiently.

ACCOMMODATION

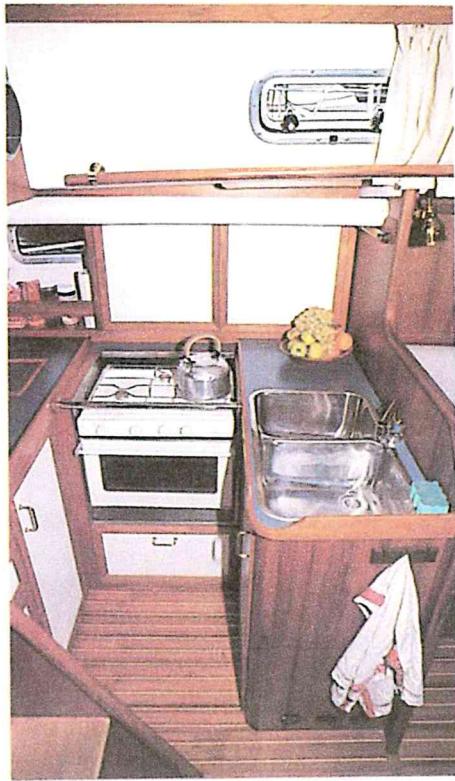
For a long time, stained African mahogany has been favoured by Scandinavian boatbuilders for interior trim. Currently, however, they are making

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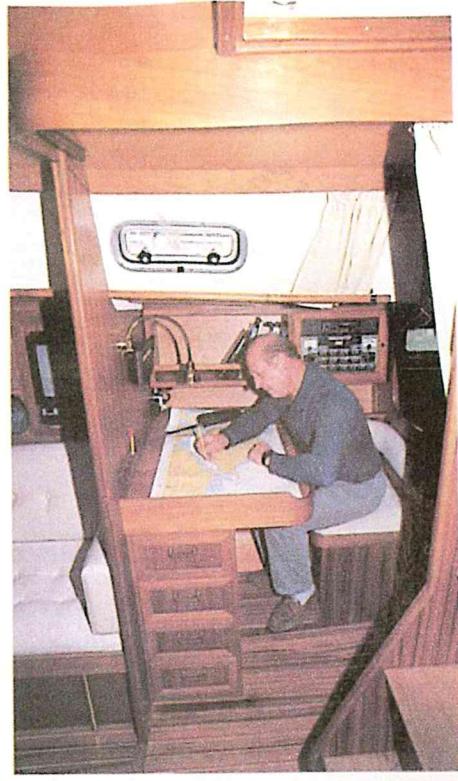




The Mermaid was a delight to handle even in the light conditions



A well designed galley. The U-shaped format and deep sinks are good points



The navigation area can be shut off from the saloon by a curtain

The Mermaid 380 shows off her attractive lines. Note her extremely clean decks



LONG TEST

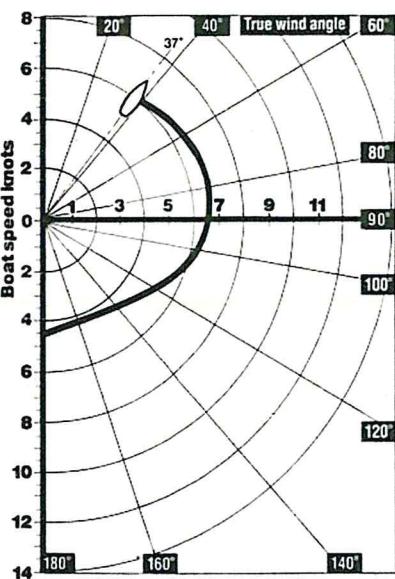
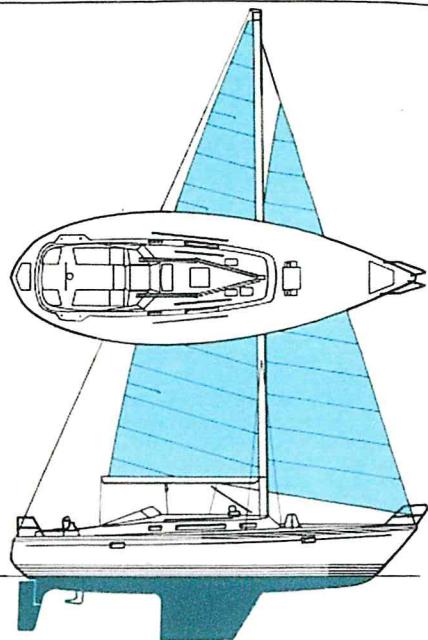
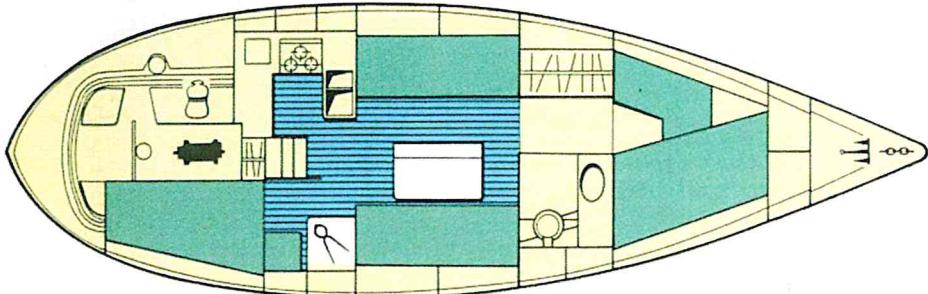
MERMAID 380

Specification & enquiries

LOA	38ft 4 1/4in	11·70m
Hull length	37ft 0 1/4in	11·30m
I.WL.	31ft 9 1/4in	9·70m
Beam	11ft 11 1/4in	3·64m
Draught	5ft 7in	1·70m
Displacement	14,333lb	6,500kg
Ballast	5,733lb	2,600kg
Sail area (inc 100 per cent fore Δ)	615ft ²	57·16m ²

Berths	7
Engines	Volvo Penta
2003T	43hp
Fuel	55gal
Water	88gal

Designed by: Bent Andersen/LM Boats International A/S.
Built by: LM Boats International A/S, Nordhavn, DK-6000 Kolding, Denmark. Tel: 45 5 53 51 22. Telex: 51467 LMG DK.
UK agents: Scanyachts, Hamble Point Marina, Hamble, Southampton SO3 5PG. Tel: Southampton (0703) 455608.
Price: £75,950 ex VAT.



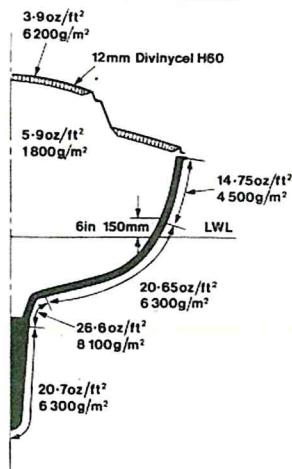
Test conditions

Wind direction 270°
 Wind speed 8/12 knots (true)
 Sea state slight
 Sail combination: 120 per cent genoa and full mainsail

Engine trials — decibel levels/speed

Speed	3kt	4kt	5kt	6kt	7kt	8kt
Forecabin	51	54	56	56	61	75
For'd head	56	60	61	64	66	77
Saloon	56	59	61	61	66	78
Galley	59	62	66	66	70	82
Charts	61	67	68	69	72	85
Cockpit	60	63	62	62	71	80

Speed	rpm	Speed	rpm
3·4kt	1,000	7·7kt	2,500
5·2kt	1,500	7·9kt	3,000
6·9kt	2,000	7·9kt	3,200



Factors

Prismatic coefficient 0·57
 Immersion 1,216lb/in (217kg/cm)
 Sail area : displacement 16·74
 Displacement : LWL 198·63
 Ballast ratio 40 per cent
 Personal stowage 10·97 per cent

Stowage volumes

Galley	23·08ft ³	0·65m ³
Saloon	50·36ft ³	1·43m ³
Forecabin	43·16ft ³	1·22m ³
After cabin	14·45ft ³	0·41m ³
Lobby	39·11ft ³	1·11m ³
Head	14·72ft ³	0·42m ³
Charts	6·57ft ³	0·19m ³
Personal stowage	161·80ft ³	4·58m ³
volume for 7		

true wind speed during the test. Sail area
displacement ratio: This ratio gives some indication of power available. Higher numbers = greater performance.

$$(\text{Displacement (lb)} \div 64) \cdot 666$$

Ballast ratio: A comparison between displacement and the weight of ballast. **Displacement waterline length:** performance indicator. Low Nos. = higher performance. $(\text{Displacement (lb)} \div 22 \cdot 10)$

$$(0 \cdot 01 \times \text{LWL (ft)})^3$$

Comparable boats (prices ex VAT)

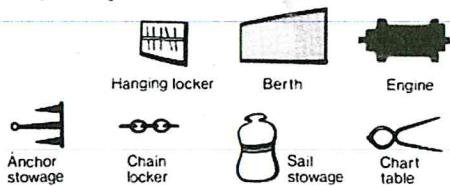
Hallberg Rassy 382 — LOA 38ft 1 1/2in (11·62m), LWL 31ft 6in (9·60m), Beam 11ft 11 1/4in (3·64m), Draught 6ft 0 1/2in (1·84m), Disp 19,845lb (9,000kg), Sail area 751ft² (69·80m²), Berths 7, SA:Disp 16·46, Disp:LWL 283·45, £82,791.

Najad 39 — LOA 39ft 0in (11·75m), LWL 32ft 10in (10·00m), Beam 11ft 6in (3·50m), Draught 6ft 1in (1·85m), Disp 21,280lb (9,651kg), Sail area 910ft² (84·54m²), Berths 7/8, SA:Disp 19·03, Disp:LWL 268·48, £86,000.

Aphrodite 40 — LOA 39ft 8in (12·09m), LWL 33ft 9in (10·28m), Beam 12ft 0in (3·66m), Draught 5ft 9in (1·75m), Disp 20,900lb (9,480kg), Sail area 670ft² (62·27m²), Berths 6/8, SA:Disp 14·18, Disp:LWL 14·18, £77,383.

Westerly Sealord — LOA 38ft 6in (11·73m), LWL 32ft 6in (9·90m), Beam 13ft 2in (4·01m), Draught 5ft 6in (1·68m), Disp 18,500lb (8,392kg), Sail area 967ft² (89·80m²), Berths 9, SA:Disp 22·2, Disp:LWL 240·6, £68,490.

Key to symbols & factors



Stowage factor: 3ft³ per person, for stowage of personal effects. Factor is shown as a percentage of total volume. **Pounds/inch (kg/cm)** **Immersion:** How much weight it takes to sink the boat parallel to DWL. **Prismatic coefficient:** The ratio of volume of displacement to a volume at LWL and the max cross sectional area below the load waterplane. An indication of the fineness or fullness of the hull. **Polar diagram:** Shows the optimum closehauled angle to the true wind. Also shows speed attained on all courses. **Important — Consider in conjunction with the**

more use of solid teak and teak veneers. The interior of the Mermaid 380 follows the trend with extremely well-matched teak throughout.

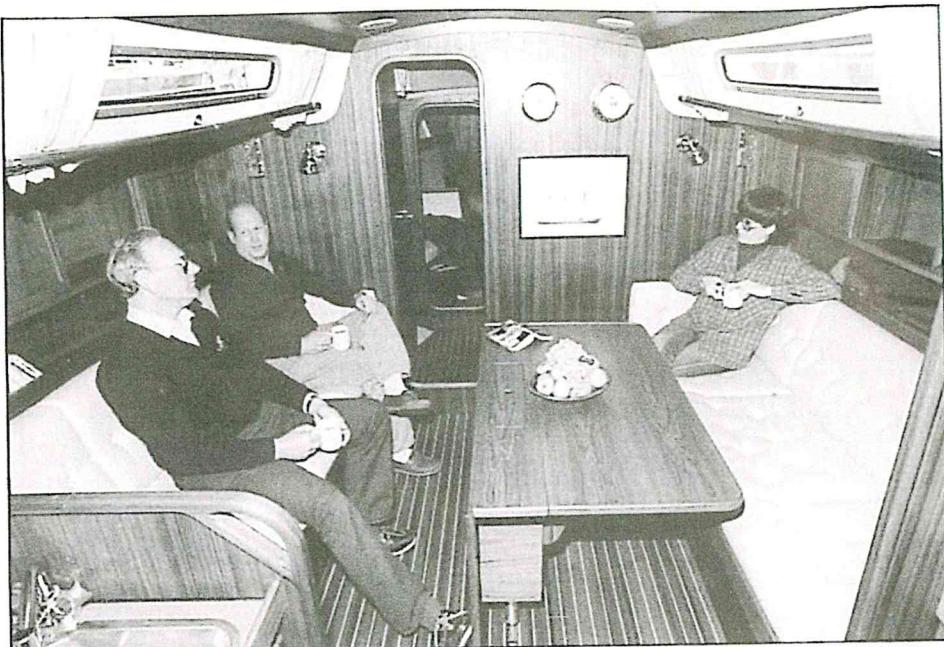
Good use is made of the space in the comfortable forecabin. Stowage is generous and, with the door in the main bulkhead closed, the forecabin, with its en suite head/shower compartment and the cavernous hanging locker and shelfed stowage to port of the lobby, becomes a comfortable owner's suite. There is a small settee built against the port side of the cabin. Headroom beneath the (540mm x 540mm) escape hatch is 5ft 7in (1.70m).

Plenty of space has been devoted to the head compartment. The layout is good and all facilities are convenient to use. There are no awkward corners, the compartment is easy to clean and seacocks are readily accessible. There is plenty of mirror area and natural light is admitted through an aluminium-framed rectangular port in the topside just below sheer and a 340mm x 210mm, vented acrylic hatch in the deckhead. Stowage for toiletries is generous and the rigging tie running through the compartment makes a convenient handhold. A second handhold on the inboard bulkhead alongside the door would be appreciated when trying to rise from the throne when well heeled on port tack. The generally high standard of finish was not complemented by the indifferent strip light, with sharp edges to trap the unwary, that was fitted to the mirror over the wash hand basin. We would also prefer to see double-clipping to all plumbing at skin fittings.

Well-chosen woollen fabric on the comfortable settees, neat curtains and rich, but not too strongly figured teak, combine to make the saloon most welcoming. Plenty of light is admitted through the 560mm x 560mm acrylic Bjerg hatch over the cabin table and through the large cabin windows. Artificial lighting is provided by four, bulkhead-mounted swivel lamps of excellent quality.

The two-leaved saloon table is sturdy and slightly fiddled. Its centre section is fitted as a bottle stowage. Substantial grabrails run through brass mounts the full length of the saloon on each side beneath the cabin windows. The back of each settee may be either hinged up or unhooked to provide much increased width when the settees are pressed into use as berths.

To starboard of the accommodation is the navigating compartment which, together with the head of the double



Well-matched teak and plush upholstery combine to provide a welcoming atmosphere in the main saloon. There is plenty of stowage and natural light

quarter berth, can be shut off from the saloon by a curtain. When not in use the curtain clips back against the cabin after bulkhead.

Plenty of bulkhead space is available for instruments. The navigating table is at a convenient height and the seat comfortable. There is plenty of bin and shelf stowage for the navigator's books and tools. The chart table stands on a tier of three drawers with a small locker at the bottom.

Abaft the navigating compartment is a comfortable berth which also serves as a sea berth. There is a small locker over the foot of the berth and a large hanging locker at the other end just ahead of the engine. Additional stowage is provided on a deep, fiddled shelf running along the topsides. A window set in the topside removes any criticism that the after berth is tucked into a dark corner.

The section of the cabin after bulkhead which flies over the head of the berth would be better finished with a soft, upholstered roll to prevent the inevitable outburst when the occupant of the berth makes firm contact with what is at present a sharp edge.

There is no stowage beneath the berth, the space being taken up by the fuel tank and four, 88amp/hr batteries, one of which is dedicated to engine start. In the test yacht, the batteries were not strapped down. This fault will be rectified in succeeding yachts.

To port of the accommodation ladder is the comprehensive galley with an ENO, three-burner hob and oven

and deep, double-bowl sink served by pressurised hot and cold water from a common faucet. Cupboard doors and drawer fronts are finished in white Melamine with solid teak surrounds mitred at the corners.

Solid brass staple handles are fitted to all lower units, while the stowage above and outboard of the cooker is closed by three smoothly sliding doors. The cooker is gimballed and has plenty of room to swing. A stainless steel crash bar is provided, but there are no pot clamps to prevent things shooting off the stove during an awkward lurch. The worktop space is adequate and the deep fiddles are scooped down to form brush-through corners. The aftermost worktop running athwartships is tucked a little awkwardly beneath the fascia panel beside the accommodation access.

The sole throughout the accommodation is striped teak and holly, but there is a useful grating at the foot of the companion to discourage water dripping off oilskins from spreading forward over the cabin sole.

CONSTRUCTION

Both hull and deck are moulded to a high standard and are fair and neatly detailed. The hull-to-deck join is carefully made and all structural bulkheads appear to be securely bonded in. All interior joiner work is accurately made and exceptionally well finished —

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perhaps this is a legacy of the company's origins as a furniture manufacturer. The iron and lead ballast is fully encapsulated and care has been taken to ensure a useful volume of sump so that bilge water is discouraged from reaching the underside of the cabin sole.

The Mermaid 380 is fitted with a turbocharged Volvo 2003T saildrive auxiliary which, as standard, is enclosed in a coffer-dam to contain any water should the seal of the drive leg, where it passes through the hull, become damaged. With the coffer-dam arrangement, the only way of gaining access to the engine is through a watertight panel in the cockpit sole. This is not a convenient arrangement, but the builders are quite prepared to omit the dam and provide side and front access should an owner prefer it.

All deck hardware is correctly through-bolted and plumbing and wiring runs neatly made.

UNDER POWER

With 43hp (31.32kW) beneath the cockpit sole, the Mermaid 380 is an eager performer under power. She is directionally stable and runs at a hull speed of about 7.9 knots with the engine turning at about 2,800rpm. Vibration is negligible and engine noise surprisingly low — then one remembers the coffer-dam. The removal of this will undoubtedly raise noise levels a decibel or two.

The tendency to squat at high speed is slight and handling ahead and astern entirely predictable. The yacht can be slotted into the most awkward berth with confidence. From full speed ahead, a crash stop can be performed within the yacht's overall length, care being taken to control revs to minimise propeller aeration.

UNDER SAIL

The yacht's modern and efficient rig, combined with a particularly easily-driven hull, produces a satisfyingly quick performance under sail. Light winds prevailed for the duration of our test, but we already had the experience of sailing the yacht in very hard winds (and driving rain) in her home waters in Denmark.

In light winds the Mermaid 380 accelerates eagerly out of a tack and is quick to get into the groove. In these conditions, which might seem tedious aboard some of her contemporaries,

she is a delight to handle and is capable of giving many of her much racier-looking sisters a real run for their money.

On all points the yacht is well balanced and even with a lumpy sea on the quarter and little breeze she is admirably roll-free.

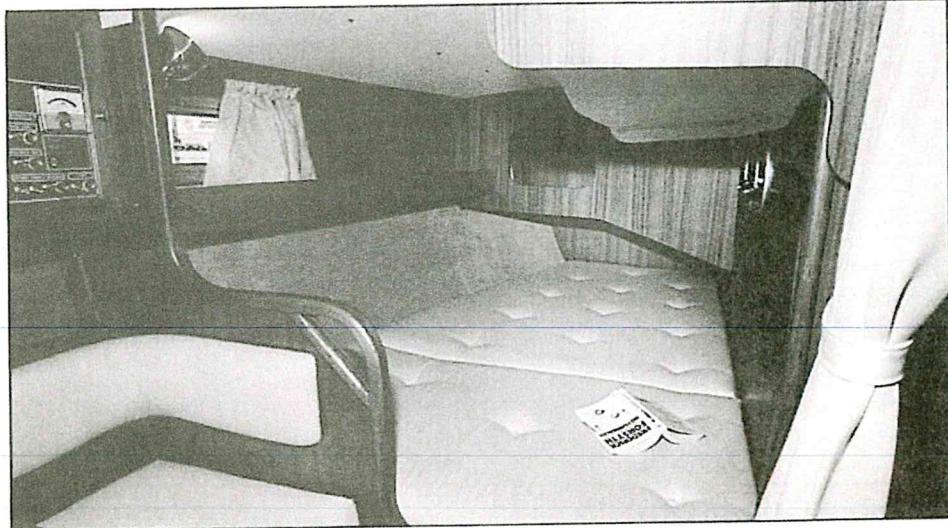
Andersen two-speed 56ST self-tailing winches provide plenty of power as primaries to handle the 130 per cent genoa, which is cut high enough to give the helmsman a good view over the lee bow. The mainsheet runs on a track across the main hatch garage just ahead of the windshield. The working end, unusually, comes from the boom end to hand via an Easyblock three or six-power take-off. This system works well. Even in the freshest winds the working end remains in the cockpit.

Manually operated stops on the mainsheet track control the car travel, but we would prefer the convenience of being able to adjust travel by simple purchases worked from the comfort of the cockpit.

Every helmsman will appreciate the comfortable steering position and the free-running wheel, which remains light in all situations while providing just a hint of feedback.

On the occasion when the yacht was sailed in Denmark, in wind speeds up to 40 knots, she remained light to steer on all points with 10 rolls in the genoa and two slabs in the mainsail. The yacht was able and dry to windward and the cockpit crew certainly appreciated the shelter from the driving rain, afforded by the low windshield capped by its spray hood. The helmsman's view through the windshield was satisfactory.

This sea berth, abaft the navigation area, is comfortable and can be separated from the main saloon by a curtain. Note the well-finished upholstery



SPECIFICATION

Teak decks are standard and so is pressurised hot and cold fresh water. The full spinnaker gear (less the sail) is included in the basic price as are the cabin curtains, the hide-covered steering wheel, the boarding ports in the lifelines, the cockpit spray hood and the stern boarding ladder. Also included in the basic price is the ground tackle, docking lines and fenders, a couple of fire extinguishers, six place settings of Copenhagen crockery, cutlery and a selection of Holme Gaad tumblers and wine glasses.

CONCLUSION

The Mermaid 380 scores very high marks for standard of build and finish, comfort below and performance both under sail and power. The yacht is delivered to a much higher specification than most in her class and this, inevitably, is reflected in the initial purchase price.

As delivered, she represents excellent value, but better sales figures might well be achieved by offering the yacht at a more attractive basic price less some of the 'frills'. The teak decks, spinnaker gear, boarding ports and turbocharged engine alone must represent a price loading of at least £9,500 ex VAT. Nothing of the yacht's charm, essential comfort or performance would be lost by offering her to a lower specification. Once hooked, most new owners would be only too ready to consider a little up-rating. ■