

ON TEST

Photos: Graham Snook

MAN OVERBOARD

YM spends a day on the water testing a wide range of MOB recovery systems. Discover what worked and what didn't...

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Legend 33

Is this the ultimate modest family cruiser or just another average white boat? James Jermain put the Legend 33 through two days of testing to find out

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NEW GEAR

We look at the latest gear up for grabs, including the Neptune VHF radio, a hand-held chartplotter from Garmin, and a waterproof, foldable computer keyboard



SECOND-HAND BOAT TEST

Steady, secure and well-mannered, James Jermain finds Mike Bidwell's Vancouver 27 to be a little gem

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LEGEND 33



A motorcycle magazine described one of the most popular touring bikes ever built as the equivalent of 'own-brand sliced white bread'. It was not meant entirely as an insult. The writer regarded the bike as competent, universally popular but somehow undistinguished and a bit lacking in excitement.

There are boats that fall into the same category, and it is tempting to think of the Legend 33 as one of these. It is broad beamed, high volume, built to a price, rigged to sooth nervous crews and

essentially capable of doing its job. But it is not undistinguished. Legends always stand out from the mass of 'average white boats', mainly because of the B&R (Bergstrom & Ridder) backstayless rig, but also because of the cockpit arch, the distinctive sheerline, and, below decks, an American-styled interior that many owners feel has distinct advantages over the European pattern.

What she is, is a thoroughly competent coastal cruiser, at her best in the sort of conditions most families and cruising couples prefer. What she is

not is a full-blooded, take-it-on-the-chin offshore cruiser. How do we know? We put her through two days of mixed, midwinter sailing to find out.

Design

Designed by Glenn Henderson, working to well-established Hunter Marine/Warren Luhrs criteria, the Legend 33 is clearly part of the same family as the other small Legends, the 306 and the 36. She is significantly beamier and taller than her closest competitors but she carries it surprisingly well. The beam is carried quite well aft allowing the bow sections to be relatively fine. The beam remains broad at deck level but she is neatly tucked in at the waterline to give a balanced waterplane, at least when on an even keel. Below the waterline she is full-bodied but not excessively so. Our test boat was fitted with lead/antimony bilge keels, which are aerofoil shaped and well enough spaced and flared to avoid turbulence between them. The rudder is a simple spade. The coachroof is actually quite low and merges almost without a break into the foredeck.

On deck

The cockpit design is interesting, being short but wide, though not so wide that you can't brace your legs on the opposite seat. A large steering binnacle dominates the middle part of it. There is sufficient

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS: LEGEND 33

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Price | £56,341 |
| LOA | 10.09m (33ft 1in) |
| LWL | 9m (29ft 5in) |
| Beam | 3.53m (11ft 6in) |
| Draught (deep) | 1.71m (5ft 6in) |
| (bilge keel) | 1.40m (4ft 6in) |
| Displacement | 4,997kg (11,016 lb) |
| Ballast (deep) | 1,569kg (3,459 lb) |
| (Bilge keel) | 1,623kg (3,579 lb) |
| Sail area | 46.6m ² (502sq ft) |

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Berths | 5 |
| Engine | Volvo 19hp diesel |
| Batteries | 1 x 110ah battery |
| Fuel | 95 litres (25 gallon) |
| Water | 189 litres (50 gallon) |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Disp/length ratio | 193 |
| Sail area/disp ratio | 16.37 |
| Ballast ratio | 32% |
| RCD Category | A |
| STIX number | 36.35 |
| Design | Glenn Henderson |
| Builder | Hunter Marine Corporation, Florida, USA |

UK Agent Opal Marine
Tel: 02392 583242

OPTIONS

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Bilge keel option | £1,696 |
| In-mast main reefing | £955 |
| Rod kicker | £293 |
| Electric anchor windlass | £1,697 |

Additional batteries (110Ah) £266 each Upgrade to Volvo 2030 29hp diesel

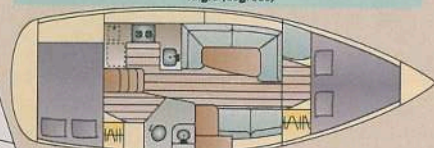
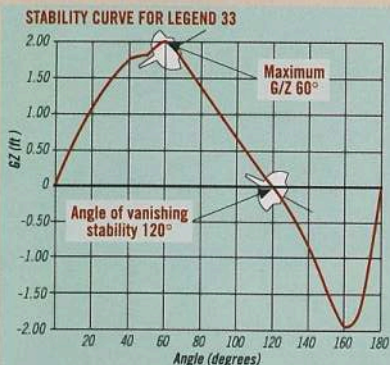
| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Microwave oven | £870 |
| DSC VHF from | £424 |
| Speed/depth/wind from | £558 |
| GPS from | £887 |
| Plotters from | £452 |
| Radar from | £969 |
| Sprayhood | £2,221 |
| Jackstays | £637 |
| Cockpit harness points | £195 |
| Heating | £152 each |
| Anchor and chain | £1,821 |
| Fenders and warps | £188 |
| Antifouling | £182 |
| Delivery & commissioning | £456 |
| £2,115 | |

FOR

- Spacious interior
- Good off-wind performance
- Easy handling

AGAINST

- Limited sea berths
- Lack of handholds
- Limited storage



CONSTRUCTION

The Legend 33 hull has a balsa core above the waterline and a solid laminate below. Kevlar is used in high impact areas, such as the bow panels, and the gelcoat includes UV inhibitors and is osmosis resistant. An internal box moulding provides internal stiffening and forms the base for major items of furniture. It also takes the loads of the bilge keels, when these are fitted, without the need for further reinforcement. The hull-deck joint is through bolted and bonded.



space behind the wheel for the helmsman but the seat is flat and not particularly comfortable when the boat is heeled. The wheel is small, which allows easy access to the after half of the cockpit and the walk-through transom, but means the helmsman needs long arms to reach it if he is sitting in either the windward or leeward corner. There is room for three or four crew on the cockpit seats and there are also a couple of 'dicky' seats in the taff rail.

The distribution of sail handling aids is also interesting. The mainsheet traveller is mounted on top of the arch and the control lines come to jammers on the uprights, close to the helmsman. It is a safe and efficient system. The mainsheet, however, runs forward and over the coachroof to a winch by the companionway where it is out of reach of the helmsman. The genoa winches are mounted at the after end of the coamings where they are, again, most easily worked by the helmsman. The boat is therefore perfectly set up to work to windward singlehanded, but if crew want to be part of the sail-trimming team, they won't find the controls particularly easy to use. There are boxes for all rope tails at the companionway so the cockpit sole is safer and tidier.

The sidedecks have good non-slip, but the flat, round-edged toerail, has no non-slip, and felt very insecure when getting out of the cockpit. There is a short grabrail on the coachroof. The foredeck is sensibly organised with a good bow roller and a large well that has room for an electric windlass.

Under sail

The standard rig for the Legend is the B&R backstayless arrangement (see sidebar). We set off into a chilly Solent swept by a strong northerly wind and were soon bowling along under full sail on a beam reach in fine style. True and apparent

wind were hovering around 14 to 16 knots and the Legend was making a bit more than 7 knots, a very respectable speed for a generously proportioned bilge-keeler. In fact, we would hardly have been aware of the bilge keels if we had not been told about them.

She heeled only slightly and the helm remained light, but she tended to wander a bit in the gusts. Even with the wind on the beam, the main was pressing against the long, swept spreaders and upper shrouds.

The wind increased during the day as we worked our way west and by mid-afternoon we were experiencing 17 to 18 knots and a top speed of just over 7.5 knots. Speed dropped a little as we turned off the wind further to a broad reach, but the large main still generated a lot of power. Dead downwind the genoa inevitably collapsed in the extensive wind shadow and speed dropped to a little more or a little less than 5 knots, depending on the wind strength.

Putting the boat through her paces off Lymington we found she was less happy hard on the wind. With a comparatively narrow sheeting angle inside the shrouds and limited overlap, she could be screwed up very tight on to the wind – under 30° – but she was less than happy with this treatment, making little forward progress and a lot of leeway. Sailed at a more reasonable 35° she settled down to a comfortable 5.5 knots with leeway within acceptable limits. We retained full sail in up to 17 knots apparent when she still felt balanced and light on the helm. Close reaching in 14 to 16 knots apparent, speed rose again to just over 7 knots and the wheel felt comfortable and positive.

Overnight, the wind rose and veered into the east presenting us with a grey and lumpy sea flecked with white horses driven on by 25-knot

The B&R rig

Legend introduced its backstayless rig some time ago now and the initial strangeness has worn off. Although it has proved strong and effective, it still worries some potential owners. The secrets lie in the wide shroud base, long spreaders and, crucially, the disposition of a shroud or stay at equal, 120° intervals.

The advantages of the system are that a large roach can be built into the main making it efficient and powerful and reducing the need for big headsails and big winches. To windward the crew have almost as much control over sail shape as with a conventional rig, with the rod kicker and mainsheet acting through the leech of the sail to do the same job as an adjustable backstay. The main disadvantage, apart from troubling the nerves of buyers, is that the wide, swept spreaders foul the main on any angle of sailing beyond 90°. Another is that owners of boats like this still insist on fitting roller-furling mains, which means a huge potential loss of sail area. Legend has to increase the mast height of these models by nearly 1.5m (over 4ft).

winds. We dropped in a reef and put seven or eight rolls in the genoa as we headed back to Gosport. She was not altogether happy in these conditions. The limitations of the bilge keels became apparent as we had to sail her full to reduce leeway and keep her head up into the waves. We tacked through about 100°. With the heel angle exceeding 20°, the windward keel root came clear of the water and the occasional wave slapped underneath it. She

Below, left to right: the huge aftercabin has a three-door storage unit; forecabin storage is below average; the roomy galley would not disgrace a 36ft yacht



Below: the heads is large, with storage lockers; the saloon seems 'squeezed'; the chart table is a good size; the port settee folds down into a double berth



LEGEND 33

also proved to be quite wet, though there are few boats of this type that would not have been the same. She reminded us of a boxer who's just off the pace, tending to duck into punches rather than away from them.

Hard windward work is not this boat's strong suit – at least not with bilge keels. Off the wind she is fast, light and easily managed. Overall she sailed faster and was lighter and steadier on the helm than we had expected. She has more than enough performance for family harbour-to-harbour cruising but if we were looking for something to take offshore in north European conditions, we would want a steadier motion and the ability to keep footing at a tighter tack angle.

Under power

The Volvo engine is installed 'back to front' and works through a V-drive. It can therefore remain under the companionway even though this is further aft than usual. The engine remains reasonably accessible though the main service points are reversed. Filters and pumps can be reached through access panels in the aftercabin. It runs smoothly and is well soundproofed, though the extra mechanics cause a bit of mid-range whine.

When we motored for the last few miles the unit proved capable of keeping up progress, despite driving into an awkward sea. We maintained comfortably over 6 knots at easy cruising revs. In sheltered water she topped 7.6 knots at 3,400rpm and 6.5 knots at a 2,500rpm.

Below decks

With the cockpit bulkhead well aft, and only a few lockers to restrict the width, the sight lines through the saloon are long, creating a thoroughly deserved feeling of size and space. First impressions of the fit-out are that it is neat, solid and well finished with plenty of cherry-faced ply and solid wood trim. The only question is, where do you put everything? Forward of the galley and chart table there are no visible lockers.

When we started to look more closely at the detail, our impressions were mixed. There is undoubtedly a lack of stowage, and some of the finish is not as good as it first seems, particularly where it is out of sight. However, there are some excellent features and nice touches. All lockers are well ventilated and the hanging lockers are lined with sandalwood, which is alleged to discourage moths and certainly smells nice. Under-bunk locker lids are hinged and split so that they are easier and lighter to lift and replace. Fiddle rails, though not in generous supply, are strong and well placed. Owners afflicted by the shape changes of middle age will also appreciate the extra width of the doors, which are 0.41m (16in) wide.

We felt the saloon itself was a little disappointing. It has been squeezed by the amount of space given to the galley, heads and aftercabin. Even so, a boat this length shouldn't have one settee just 1.58m (5ft 2in) long – even if the other is 2.11m (6ft 11in). It is a comfortable space, though, well upholstered and with generous



headroom. There is stowage under the bunks and in bins behind the settees. The dinette has a modest table with shallow fiddles capable of seating four at most.

The aft-facing chart table is a reasonable size with a shallow drawer underneath. The switch panels are comprehensive and there is sufficient space for a full set of modern instruments. Wiring is neatly done and runs in conduiting.

Legend says the galley would not disgrace an 11m (36ft) yacht, and we would agree. It is extensive, well equipped and has an unusual amount of Corian-topped workspace. There is a slot for a microwave oven; the front opening, domestic-styled fridge is standard and there is plenty of lockorage of all types.

The cooker is a good quality Force 10 but the fact that the swinging room for the gimbals is almost non-existent on starboard tack,

emphasises the fact that she is not well thought out for liveboards offshore.

The aftercabin is huge with a big, athwartships bunk. There is an excellent, three-door stowage unit with a hanging section and shelving, but that is virtually it. Headroom is 1.86m (6ft 1in) and there is an escape hatch to the cockpit. The forecabin has a generous bunk but stowage is below average. There is a good standing area.

The heads, opposite the galley, is large and adequately equipped. Seacocks are all accessibly collected together under a sole panel by the galley. There is a shower tray and mixer taps at the basin. Stowage lockers above and below the basin are what you would expect.

The boat is well lit and ventilated. The saloon benefits from two large skylights at the forward end. There is an opening port over the galley and in the heads where there is also a ventilator. The aftercabin has an opening port and the cockpit hatch to let in fresh air.

Verdict

It is almost irrelevant what we think about this boat. The buying public has already voted by making it one of the bestselling boats in the country. Opal Marine, a company used to selling boats in large numbers, is delighted to have taken 21 orders between the London Boat Show and the end of April. It is easy to see why: she is spacious, reasonably well equipped, and good value for money. The interior and sailing performance will suit most people most of the time. It is disappointing, perhaps, that she is not a bit sharper to windward but the optional deep fin keel would probably sort that out if this was important to you. Stowage could be better and families might miss the second settee in the saloon for sleeping. ▲

THREE COMPARABLE BOATS



OCEANIS CLIPPER 323

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Price | £60,951 |
| LOA | 9.71m (31ft 10in) |
| LWL | 8.9m (29ft 2in) |
| Beam | 3.29m (10ft 8in) |
| Draught | 1.81m (5ft 11in) |
| Displacement | 3,829kg (8,441 lb) |
| Ballast | 986kg (2,173 lb) |
| Sail area | 50m ² (538sq ft) |
| Berths | 6 |
| Engine | 18hp Volvo |
| RCD Category | A |
| Contact | Bénéteau UK, Tel: 07000 236383 www.beneteau.com |



SUN ODYSSEY 32

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Price | £54,184 |
| LOA | 9.45m (31ft) |
| LWL | 8.52m (2ft 11in) |
| Beam | 3.3m (10ft 9in) |
| Draught | 1.5m (4ft 11in) |
| Displacement | 4,545kg (10,009 lb) |
| Ballast | 1,370kg (3,020 lb) |
| Sail area | 50m ² (537sq ft) |
| Berths | 6 |
| Engine | 30hp |
| RCD Category | A |
| Contact | Sea Ventures, Tel: 01590 672472 www.sea-ventures.co.uk |
| YM report | July 2002 |



BAVARIA 32

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Price | £48,880 |
| LOA | 9.91m (32ft 5in) |
| LWL | 8.53m (28ft) |
| Beam | 3.35m (11ft) |
| Draught | 1.83m (6ft) |
| Displacement | 3,753kg (8,250 lb) |
| Ballast | 1,059kg (2,330 lb) |
| Sail area | 45.81m ² (493sq ft) |
| Berths | 6 |
| Engine | Volvo 19hp |
| RCD Category | A |
| Contact | Opal Marine, Tel: 02392 583242 www.opalmarine.co.uk |