

Hurley 22. Omega. Fin v bilge keel. James Jaffrey

Looking through my sent mail I noticed I sent quite a few queries to the list when I was in the process of buying my boat, and I got a lot of helpful advice. What I didn't do was follow up with the decisions I made.

So just in case anyone is interested I thought I would follow up a couple of my posts.

Bilge vs Fin

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I asked the group, "should I get a bilge or a fin keel H22?". The response that came back was mainly, depends where you want to moor it. The general consensus seemed to be that in pure sailing terms the fin was the best but not by as much as you might think.

I didn't know where I was going to moor but made the decision to go bilge for versatility, and put down a deposit on a boat. Unfortunately the survey showed up problems with the chainplates and a few other things. I decided the boat was too expensive with the work that needed doing, but the owner disagreed. I had wanted a boat I could do some work on myself and bring up to date, but I didn't want to do anything structural...

I went to look at a boat in Wales, and she was perfect, exactly how I wanted her and nothing to do. She was over budget but there was more than just me interested (genuinely) so it needed a snap decision... I bought her. Nick Vass was involved in building her, somehow or other she also received the name Omega. She's a Hurlwind built fin keel 22, sail number 1198. Nick surveyed her, but happily there wasn't much for him to find.

I can't speak for the bilge but I don't regret buying the fin - she sails brilliantly, 1m draft still isn't much, and I don't really fancy drying out if I can avoid it (which hopefully I will). She lives in Maryport Marina, Cumrbia. Thankfully she wasn't affected by their lock gate accident last year, though sadly I believe that may have sunk another 22.

Hurley Navigation

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Perhaps the idea seemed romantic in some way, but on my first couple of trips I tried to navigate using paper charts. I did my Day Skipper in 2002 on a Starlight 35 belonging to Plas Menai. It was all very easy on that with a nice big stable chart table. Trying to do paper chart work on a '22 in Irish Sea Chop proved difficult and nauseating, although it was possible, what I actually found myself doing was relying on what was meant to be the backup system, a Garmin GPSMAP 76c handheld plotter, with an Irish Sea bluechart card in it.

The problem with that was it was hard to hold a plotter and sail a boat, and without a mount of some sort it tended to fly around the cockpit. So I posted to the group to ask what solutions others were using. I don't think any two people were using the same instrument! The idea of a plotter mounted in the companion

way made a lot of sense to me. I could just mount the handheld, but I decided it would be a lot easier to use with a bigger screen, and I would then be able to read it from the tiller.

I had a look at screen shots from other plotters and realised that I really preferred Garmin Bluecharts over other brands, so I bought a Garmin GPSMAP 551 which included a UK wide map. Omega has a two piece Washboard, so I attached the circular mounting plate for the Garmin to the bottom half. The plotter easily attaches and detaches using a thumb screw. If I'm wanting to use the plotter inside, e.g. if I'm at anchor and want the benefit of the drag alarm, then I can turn the washboard round, and the plotter is inside. Part of me wishes I'd paid extra for the S version so I wouldn't need the separate sounder, but it's screen is brilliant, even in the sun, it's easy to use (once you understand how to setup waypoints), I can read it clearly from the tiller, and I love it.

However as it's electronic I don't entirely trust it. I keep the handheld plotter on board as a backup, and I maintain my paper charts. I still do my passage planning on paper before punching waypoints into the Garmin. Under way I use a waterproof notepad and fisher space pen to maintain a regular log, so that if necessary I could bring the chart up to date and switch back to DR and EPs. Before I set off I also write onto the pad waypoint details, tidal information, VHF channels at the destination and anything else that seems relevant.

The pad and pen are similarly amazing. You can literally write on it under water. I've tried it. Mine came from - <http://www.ukge.co.uk/UK/chartwell.asp> - items FD0044 and FD0060.

A more esoteric item of nav equipment on Omega is a Wasp Trailing Log (off ebay). The boat doesn't have an electronic log, so by attaching this thing to the pushpit and chucking a spinner on a long string over the side, I can get an accurate water speed which I can use to check the tide (by comparing against GPS SOG), or if necessary as an input into my DR.

The pad, the pen, the handheld plotter, a thermos flask and a couple of other things live in a McMurdo waterproof grab bag, bungeed to the outboard access holes at the stern of the cockpit. So far this has worked well.

Unfortunately Omega now needs a bigger battery as her existing battery is only about 40ah and dependent on a low power outboard engine alternator and solar panel to charge it. I'll get her a bigger battery some time this year. I was considering shore power, but I'm hoping to spend a month on her this year and a lot of that time may not involve marina access, so I'm now considering a wind charger. Again it's low power, but it works up to 24 hours a day, and if I switch to LED cabin and nav lighting it should be sufficient to keep me going.

Heavy Weather Sailing =====

I'd chosen a Hurley because I wanted a fairly inexpensive and safe boat that would look after her inexperienced (and generally single handed) skipper when he goofed. I asked the group for any tips. I received a lot of reassurance from the

group about the boat's capabilities and her ability to look after me. I was also told that H22 don't much like small chop.

As I detailed in a recent reply to another post this has all proven true. In a recent sail I faced winds varying from as little as Force 2/3 to a high 5 or low 6. At first I attempted to reef and unreef to match the wind, but it quickly got boring (and tiring for a single hander). I ended up just leaving up full sail. When a heavy gust came she heeled quite a lot, but in a slow, predictable and controllable way. I'm sure that as Bruce said the more I sail her the safer I'll feel, but I'm already confident that this boat will look after me far better than any other 22 footer out there, and probably some bigger boats too.

Omega heaves-to wonderfully and becomes a surprisingly stable and placid place. I was able to go below and make a brew. I'm really looking forward to getting to know her properly this year.

There are some photos of the trip here
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/43230845@N07/>

Thanks all and hope you have a great season.

Regards,

James
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