

**Practical
Boat Owner[®]**



A proper little yacht

A pocket-sized classic, the Hurley 22 still has a lot to offer says David Harding

Many people in search of a second-hand 22-footer wouldn't look twice at the Hurley. They'd glance down through the hatch, say "too small", and move on to something else. After all, most newer boats are much beamier and have far more freeboard – as a result of which they're a good deal roomier.

Typically they're also lighter, with flatter, shallower hulls and less wetted area so you could reasonably expect many of them to be faster too. And a good number also have lifting keels for easy trailing.

So where does this leave the Hurley, with her deep narrow hull, long keel and relatively heavy displacement? Why should anyone buy one today?

Prime time

In the late '60s and early '70s she was one of the most popular small cruisers afloat. Nearly 1,500 22s were built over more than two decades, so clearly there was

something about her that people liked. True, she wasn't as small down below by comparison with her contemporaries as she now appears next to more modern designs, but even by the standards of the day she was considered far

says something about the confidence she inspires in her owners.

And it was for her seakeeping qualities that Bob Grose bought *Juanita*, now renamed *Why Worry*.

Having parted with his Vancouver 27 he wanted something smaller yet which would cut through the seas. "I find beamy, flat-bottomed boats too twitchy", he explained. "I prefer narrower hulls and long keels for directional stability, and fine bows for upwind comfort – but there aren't many small boats like that around."



Simple and snug, the layout features a cooker and chart table which fold away into side lockers.

from spacious.

She's best known for her solid construction, excellent sailing performance and go-anywhere ability – indeed, she's made several Atlantic crossings and has been sailed as far as Australia, which

Underwater surprises

There certainly aren't many boats of any size with the Hurley's

underwater profile. She has a long, encapsulated keel which is cut away aft and separated from the rudder. Above the waterline is a nicely-proportioned hull with a sawn-off counter stern and generous bow overhang, topped with a short coachroof.

Various lengths of mast were used on the 22 and *Why Worry* has



one of the longest. Set well forward, it gives her a high-aspect ratio foretriangle and a very generous spread of sail. Indeed, the towering rig almost looks too much for the slim hull beneath – until you remember she has a ballast ratio of nearly 60% and a very low centre of gravity.

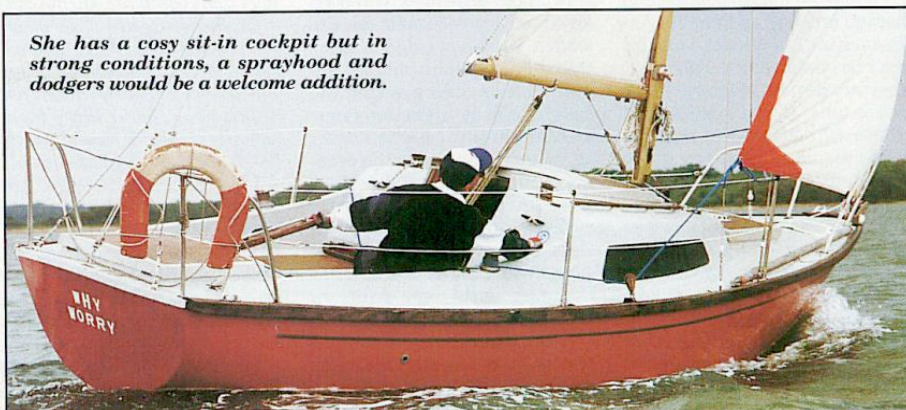
'Under sail

When I went out with Bob there wasn't quite as much wind as he'd had on his first sail two weeks earlier – then it was blowing a good F5 and he'd been amazed at how well the boat amped to windward even though clearly over-pressed under full sail.

But we did have 15 knots or so most of the time – the top end of F4 – and it was my turn to be impressed. I hadn't expected her to be so fast. There was no log on board, and being close to the water can give a false impression of speed, but without doubt she was quick. She certainly wasn't interested in letting the two boats which were following us for a while – a 24 and a 27 footer – get any closer.

The Hurley's weight and ability to carry her way makes her a

She has a cosy sit-in cockpit but in strong conditions, a sprayhood and dodgers would be a welcome addition.





Her weight and fine bows also meant she thought nothing of the occasional washes that came our way from passing power boats in the harbour. She cut through the waves cleanly with a minimum of fuss, suggesting that she would indeed be a competent little seaboat.

There was plenty of grip from the rudder and she didn't hesitate when asked to bear away from close-hauled with the sheets pinned in. Hove-to, she practically stopped dead. In fact it was difficult to fault her manners or her sailing performance – except in one way. She was uncomfortably heavy on the helm, and it made little difference whether she was pushed hard or only heeling slightly. *Why Worry's* sails are a bit old and stretched, but she has a backstay tensioner and full-width mainsheet traveller so we could tighten the forestay and control the mainsail's leach quite accurately. But we didn't have enough open water to set her up on one tack and try everything we could have, and since she seemed far from overpressed neither did we put in a reef.

Perhaps we should have tried, because after sailing the boat for the rest of the season Bob told me that she was less hard-nosed

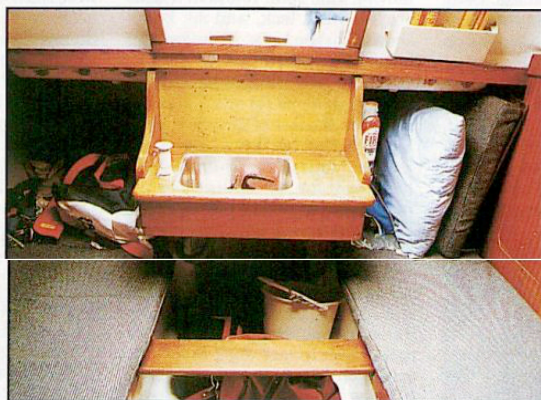
very predictable boat to manoeuvre under sail. She can be brought head-to-wind alongside a dinghy on a mooring and slowed to a virtual standstill – and then, just when many small boats would be caught in irons, she'll answer to the helm, bear away and sail off. And despite the length of her keel she can be spun very tightly.

A firm grip

Putting the gunwale under water on a Hurley 22 would take some doing. She heeled over gently to about 20 degrees in the stronger gusts, but all that weight in the bottom of her keel made sure she went no further. It gave her a very powerful feel to windward, though her low freeboard meant she couldn't be described as a dry boat. Dodgers and a sprayhood would be essential unless you're prepared to don full waterproofs upwind in anything more than a F4.

with a flattening reef in the mainsail once there was more than about 12 to 14 knots of wind.

Understandably so, but I can't



An interesting use of space. When the sink isn't in use, a covering board converts it into a step.

help feeling that the skeg-hung, scimitar-shaped rudder blade was unhelpful – its broadest part, right at the bottom, is way abaft the pivot point. It's the sort of rudder which looks as though it would

make any boat heavy to steer.

Calling a spade

Designer Ian Anderson's original drawings show a semi-balanced spade rudder. Shortly after the boat's launch, the Navy ordered a fleet and insisted that Hurley Marine fit a skeg, but the rudder still had a straight trailing edge. The origins of the swept-back blade are a mystery even to her designer. With her original rudder, or one of a more balanced design, I'm sure she'd be a different boat.

That apart, she was a pleasure to sail and very easy to manage singlehanded. Forward visibility was good and the coamings were quite comfortable to sit on, though it was impossible to lean back far enough to counteract the weight of the tiller. It invariably pulled me back inboard.

Moving around on deck was easy, and it was totally solid under foot – even the hatch garage remained rigid. Everything was firmly anchored, including the pulpit and pushpit which often wobble around on small boats. *Why Worry* is over 20 years old but there was hardly any crazing in the gel coat.

Like most Hurley 22s, she has an outboard in a well – but the fuel tank has to live in the cockpit because the engine well locker floor is steeply angled. Bob has a 5hp Johnson which drives her along quite nicely, though there's no prop wash effect because it's behind the rudder.

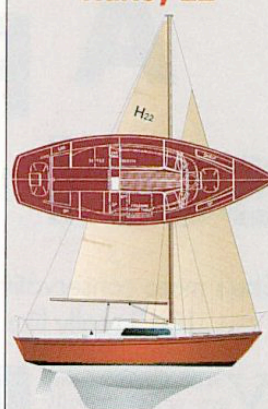
Bare essentials

There's not much room down below, but the mahogany finish gives a homely feel and she'd be quite comfortable for two people – or maybe three friendly souls for a short time. *Why Worry's* layout is uncluttered, with a sink under the companionway step and a two-burner gas cooker fixed to a hinge-down locker door to port. A fold-out table is built into another locker front to starboard.

Sixties sense

This is a boat which made me think about the way yacht design has developed since she first appeared 30 years ago. She's quick, comfortable, thoroughly obedient, great fun to sail and will look after you when the going gets tough. She has the comfortable motion of a much larger, heavier boat yet is only 22 feet long and nippy enough to take for an afternoon's spin around the harbour on your own. They really don't build them like that any more...

Hurley 22



LOA 22ft
LWL 17ft
Beam 7ft 5in
Draft - fin 3ft 9in
- twin 2ft 6in
Displacement 3,900lb
Ballast 2,300lb
Typical sail areas

- main 118sq ft
- genoa 140sq ft
Headroom 5ft
Berths 4
Engine 5 - 9hp outboard
Some inboards fitted – mainly Stuart Turner.
Price guide £3,500 - £6,000
Moulds currently owned by: Hurlwind Yachts, 1 Kents Close, South Chard, Somerset, TA20 2QU.
Tel: (01460) 221258.

Hurley days

Built by Hurley Marine in Plymouth from her launch in 1966 until the company folded 9 years later, she was taken over by South Coast Marine and later by Ravensail, who sold her as the Hurley 22 R. Hurley agents, South Hants Marine, also marketed their own souped-up 'S' version for JOG racing after a 22 won the 1967 Round the Island race. Production virtually stopped when John Rattenbury, who owned Ravensail, retired from commercial boatbuilding in 1988/9. But the moulds were taken over by John Webber of Hurlwind, who subsequently sold the company and moulds to Mike Langford. Because of the encapsulated keel, a separate mould was made for the bilge-keeled version by slicing the bottom off the wooden plug below the waterline and replacing it with a twin-legged substitute. Otherwise the hull and deck mouldings of the two types are the same, though the interior layout went through any number of changes over the years. And in Hurley Marine's heyday, ballast material tended to vary from month to month, together with rig sizes – so take careful measurements before ordering new sails!