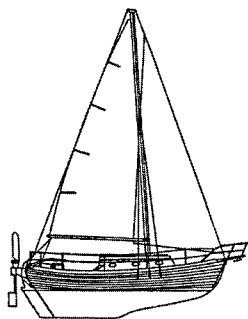


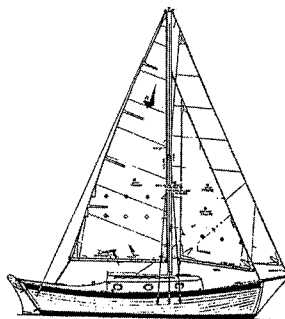
Nor'Sea 27

by Ted Brewer

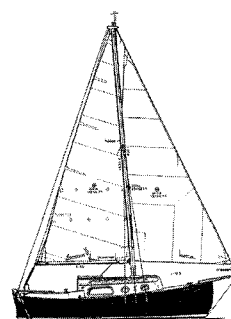
THE NOR'SEA 27 is one of those very rare birds, a true bluewater auxiliary cruiser of trailerable beam and, as such, she has become almost a cult boat. In looking for other yachts to compare with her, we found a selection of unusual boats, a bit smaller



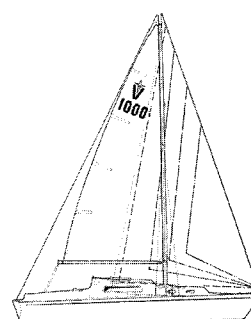
Nor'Sea 27



Pacific Seacraft 25



Flicka 20



Albin Vega

and lighter, as there are very few boats that fit into the trailerable bluewater category. The Pacific Seacraft 25II and the Flicka are considerably smaller but certainly fit the requirements of trailerable/bluewater boats. The Albin Vega is definitely in that category, as she was designed for ocean cruising. Indeed, an acquaintance of mine recently completed a circumnavigation in one.

Many sailors will argue that some of the old CCA-influenced, narrow-beam yachts, such as the Cape Dory 25D and the Bristol 27, are trailerable bluewater boats, but these vessels, with their relatively long overhangs, were not specifically designed for ocean work. In any case, it's impossible to include every husky vessel with trailerable 8'0" to 8'6" beam, so I'll draw the line at the CCA cruiser/racer types, desirable though many of them are.

As far as trailerability is concerned, a craft with less than 8'6" beam may be *legally* trailerable, but you won't catch me trailering any boat weighing well over two tons. In any case, none of these can be easily launched from a ramp, due to their draft. I would have to class these boats as being trailerable by a gas guzzler, but with difficulty at that.

Although these boats were all conceived as ocean cruisers, their designers certainly took very different approaches to the problem. The comparison table shows this, with results all over the charts: displ/LWL ratios from less than 200 to more than 400 and sail area/displacement ratios from less than 13 to more than 18. Except for a similar purpose, these craft have very little in common.


Obviously the Vega, with her high sail area/displacement ratio and solid ballast ratio, will readily outperform the others and, indeed, would sail circles around the smaller Flicka. The Nor'Sea 27's performance will not disappoint her skipper either as her sail area is generous for ocean going and her long waterline will let her step out in a good reaching breeze. Still, the Vega should take the honors, especially to windward, due to her higher aspect-ratio fin and lower wetted area.

The two smaller boats are definitely handicapped by being somewhat undercanvassed and having a relatively long keel with resultant high wetted area. However, this is not as serious as it sounds since they were not intended as performance cruisers. A few extra

days on an ocean passage is not a major problem as long as you're comfortable and the rum holds out.

The long keels on all of these boats will provide good directional stability. This is of major benefit to the crew on long passages. The seaworthiness of the four boats has been well proven over the years, but the Nor'Sea 27 has a remarkably low capsize screening factor number, and that should be a real comfort to her owners when caught out in a serious blow. The three lighter displacement boats show higher CSF numbers. All are still well under the 2.0 that is considered, by many, to be the dividing line between coastal cruisers and bluewater yachts.

The Nor'Sea 27's comfort ratio, at over 30, is also reassuring. Her motion in rough weather should be relatively easy, much easier than that of the sportier Vega or the Pacific Seacraft 25II. Interestingly, the Flicka, with her very high displ/LWL ratio benefits by receiving a high comfort ratio for her size. So although she may be the slowest of the four, she should be unusually kind to her crew in heavy weather for such a small craft.

There is no easy way to class such disparate boats but, if I had the choice of one for a long voyage, it would be the Nor'Sea 27. I appreciate her full, round stern as it should aid in maintaining course in breaking seas and yet provide sufficient reserve buoyancy to reduce the chances of being pooped. And I like the overall layout and the protection the aft cabin gives to the cockpit in adverse conditions. With Lyle Hess' reputation behind her, I feel that this is one of those boats that will take you where you want to go and will bring you back again in comfort and safety. 

	Nor'Sea 27	PS 25II	Flicka	Albin Vega
LOA	27'0"	24'6"	20'0"	27'1"
LWL	25'0"	21'0"	18'2"	23'0"
Beam	8'0"	8'0"	8'0"	8'0"
Draft	3'10"	3'4"	3'3"	3'10"
Displ.	8,100 lb.	4,750 lb.	5,500 lb.	5,070 lb.
Ballast	3,100 lb.	1,750 lb.	1,750 lb.	2,017 lb.
Displ/LWL Ratio	231.4	236	409.6	186
Bal/Displ Ratio	38.3%	36.8%	31.8%	39.8%
Sail Area	400 sq ft	236 sq ft	250 sq ft	341 sq ft
SA/Displ Ratio	15.9	13.4	12.8	18.5
Capsize Screening Factor	1.60	1.90	1.81	1.86
Motion Comfort Ratio	30.4	20.7	28.3	20.1