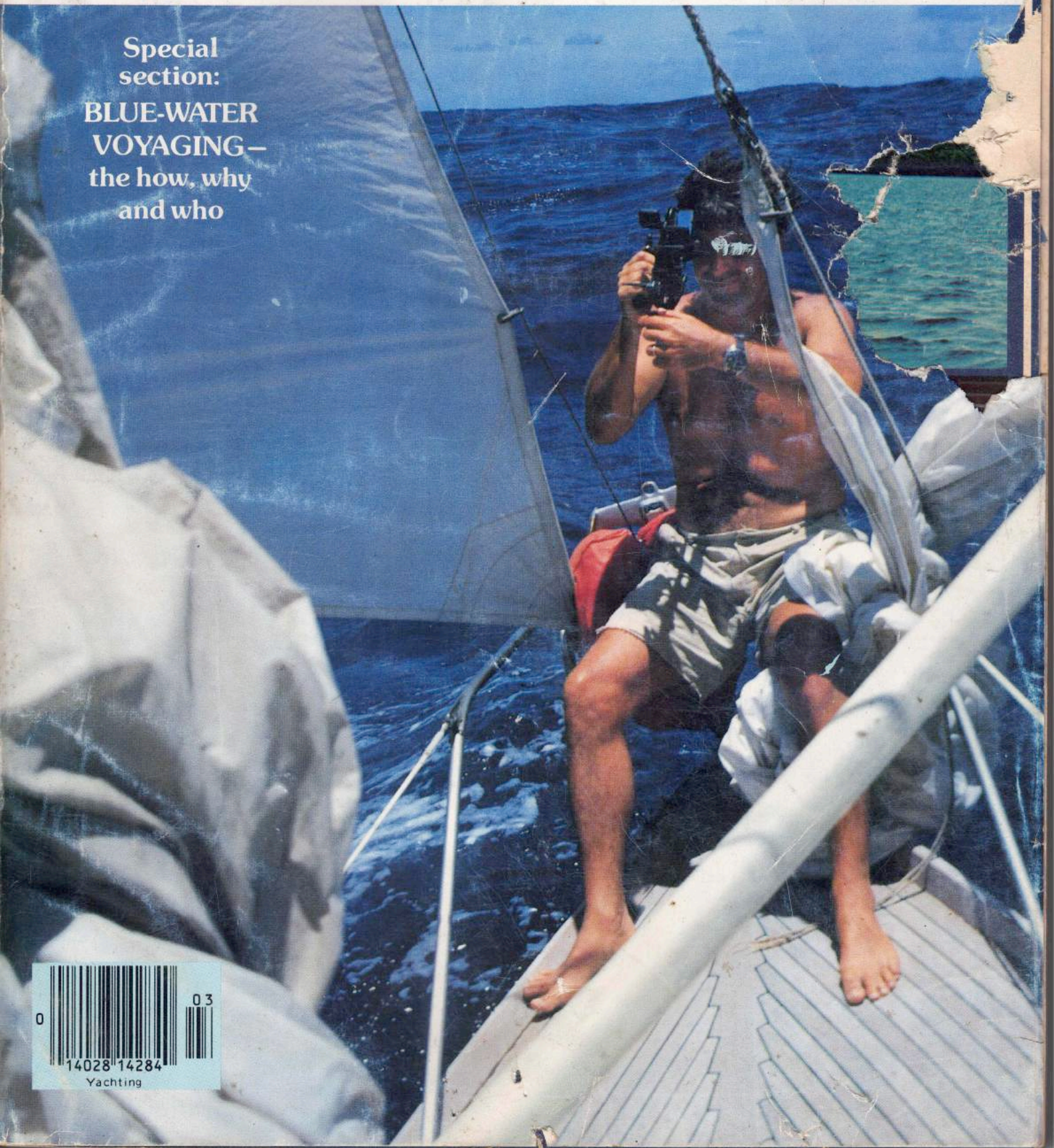


Yachting

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**BLUE-WATER
VOYAGING—**
the how, why
and who



the cruising yachtsman

By Tony Gibbs



Stretching the limits of accommodation for a small ocean cruiser requires the kind of imagination visible throughout

Nor'Sea 27—a pocket yacht

ALL OTHER things being equal, it is probably easier to design a large cruising boat than a small one, if only because the human crew cannot be conveniently scaled down to fit in a so-called "tabloid" accommodation. To attempt a serious cruising yacht for four people on a 23-foot waterline is a real intellectual challenge, and to make such a boat trailable as well is even more demanding.

But these criteria are essentially the ones that Lyle Hess and Heritage Marine of Long Beach, Calif., set out to meet, and their collective effort, the Nor'Sea 27, represents some highly original and, I think, successful new thinking to create a small, seagoing vessel.

The Nor'Sea's specifications are interesting, but they tell only a part of the story. An even 27' overall, she has an 8' beam and draws 3'6". Displacement is a hefty 7,000 lb., 2,500 of it ballast, and she carries 376 sq. ft. of sail. Just as a point of comparison, the very popular Swedish Vega is also 27'x23'x8' and has two inches more draft. But she is almost a ton lighter and has about 70 sq. ft. of sail less than the Nor'Sea.

Nor'Sea's fiberglass hull is molded in a lapstrake pattern, which may strike some observers as hokey, but looks aside, it adds a certain amount of structural strength and may deflect some spray back down where it belongs. The hull is quite fine forward but carries its beam

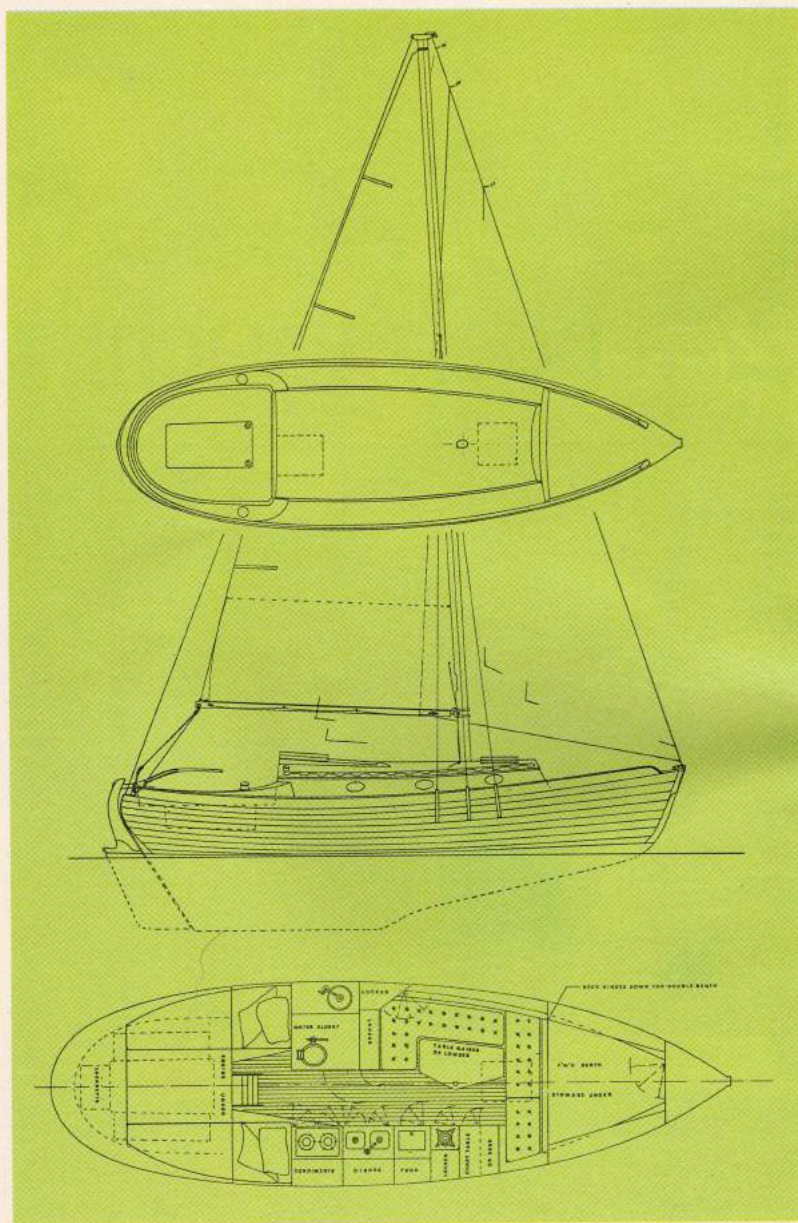


Ralph Poole

Two views of the standard Nor'Sea 27 with after cabin

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This is the alternative layout for the Nor'Sea 27, with quarter berths instead of a separate after cabin. For a boat this size, one open cabin seems a more practical setup. The sail plan shown is the standard one. A "Trade winds" version with less area is also available

much farther aft than do most canoe-stern yachts. The keel is long and straight, well cut away forward for maneuverability.

In some respects at least, the 27 is wrapped around its accommodation, and the result is impressive, both in the accompanying plan and

in reality. The original version, illustrated here in the color photos, had a center cockpit and a small double cabin with V-berths all the way aft. For my money, the after cabin was a remarkable design accomplishment but one I would not care to inhabit for extended periods.

I have no doubt kids would love it. In addition, the tiller was rather high for comfort, because of having to clear the after doghouse.

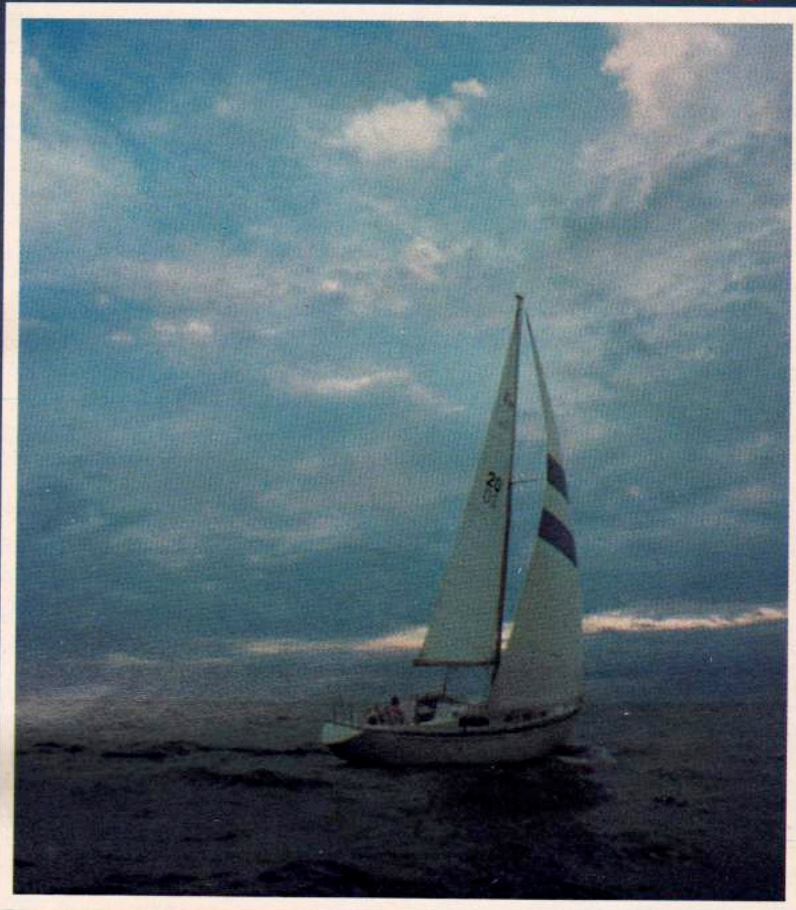
Heritage Marine subsequently came out with a more orthodox layout, which I've seen but not sailed, that moved the after bunks into the main accommodation as quarter berths, shown here. Although the galley on this second version is just a little more truncated, the rest of the plan is much the same from the companionway forward, and customer response has heavily favored the one-cabin arrangement.

It seems to me a far more practical set-up for a boat this size, that will see a lot more daysailing than long-haul cruising. Perhaps the most unusual part of either layout is transposing the normal locations of head and chart table. A moment's inspection of the plan, however, shows the added beam aft (or the lack of it forward) is the reason. It is, in sum, an arrangement one simply has to see to decide upon: Many people will find its almost wizard-like use of space irresistible, others will feel that there is just too much going on down below.

As is usually the case, my chance to sail this sturdy little yacht came on the kind of day that overjoys the Southern California Chamber of Commerce, but that drives sailors crazy. All I can say about the Nor'Sea's sailing qualities are that she has the good points of a heavy boat in light airs—the ability to carry her way well, to come about on momentum alone, and to resist being thrown around by wakes.

She is clearly both well and heavily built, with good hardware properly installed. One option—a triangular plate built into the upper shrouds to allow the tabernacle-mounted mast to be raised or lowered toward the bow—seemed to me a potential weak point in an otherwise superior rig. In addition, the boat I sailed was owned by a man who clearly had too little time

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*John Masfield "Sea Fever"

the cruising yachtsman

to keep her wood trim in the condition it deserved, always a rather depressing sight.

Not an inexpensive little boat, the Nor'Sea comes in around \$30,000 F.O.B. Long Beach, with a single-cylinder diesel. Part-built versions are also available. For someone who plans to sail offshore, even in small doses, the mental comfort of having such a powerful little platform is probably worth the extra cost. Most of all, though, the 27 is a vessel that has to be seen to be properly judged, and the company puts out a list of presumably en-

thusiastic owners who will allow one to crawl over their boats. Write Heritage Marine, 2919 Gardena Ave., Long Beach, Calif. 90806.

CALCULATORS REVISITED

An article in the April, 1977, *YACHTING* examined the rapidly-growing array of calculators designed for or adaptable to the requirements of yacht navigation, both celestial and coastal. At that point, one of the most advanced devices was the SR-52 from Texas Instruments, a gadget that would handle nearly any navigational sit-

uation, but that required (at least in my opinion) a good deal of practice to achieve any kind of confidence in its multiple-step programming operation. In addition, its price—around \$200 or so—made it a somewhat expensive luxury for the yachtsman who would use it only occasionally.

As if reading my mind, or perhaps the minds of a number of other users, Texas Instruments has now come up with a much less costly unit, the TI-58, that answers most if not all of the objections to their SR-52. Like its more expensive companion, the TI-59, the 58's essential gimmick is the plug-in module, a removable part less than an inch on a side and about a quarter-inch thick, that can contain in its innards dozens of programs totaling up to 5,000 individual program steps. For the navigator, the possibilities are awesome.

TI's *Marine Navigation* module contains 30 programs, 28 of them directly applicable to boating. (The other two are a diagnostic, or test, program to make sure the unit is working, and a real-to-metric-and-back conversion program.)

In the coastal navigation section, the module contains programs for time-speed-distance; current sailing; distance to the horizon (for vertical angle); course to steer given boat speed, current and desired course; distance off from two bearings of one object, and time of nearest approach; distance, course and speed made good from two observations; dead reckoning position; rhumb-line navigation; running fix from one object or fix from two.

Under the celestial navigation heading, the 58's module—the same module, mind you—is prepared to furnish local time of sunrise, sunset or twilight; planet or star location and identification; sextant correction; sight reduction for sun, moon, planet or star sight; fix by two observations; time of local apparent noon; noon sight fix and great circle sailing distances.



The Texas Instruments TI-59 computer, shown here with one of its plug-in modules. The TI-58, at about half the price, lacks only the capability to handle magnetic chips as well as modules. But the *Marine Navigation* module, described in the accompanying article, contains more than two dozen programs covering just about any navigational situation