

SAILING TODAY



Starlight
35 Mk 2



Photos Jon Nash, Illustration Fowler media graphics



Starlight 35 Mk 2



In its original form, the Starlight 35 made a name for itself as a capable and well-mannered fast cruising yacht. **Geoff Hales** and **Rupert Holmes** sailed the latest

version to see how it measures up

The sailing qualities of many modern cruising yachts are compromised by the desire to pack as much accommodation as possible into a given length, but Starlight designers Stephen Jones and Jonty Sherwill have resisted the temptation to try to cram in more cabins and berths than the hull can sensibly take. They have recognised the simple fact that, if you want a boat of less than about 38 feet that will sail well, you cannot plan for two large double aft cabins, because that forces you to carry the beam so far aft that the boat becomes cranky to sail in a stiff breeze.

We took the Starlight 35 out on two separate occasions, and on the initial test Geoff experienced at first hand the benefits of the designers' refusal to compromise hull shape. The true wind that day was never less than 25 knots, and on occasions reached 35 knots (Force 6/7, occasionally gale 8), yet the boat was completely

effortless to control and sailing it was a delight. It was also fast, exceeding 10 knots downwind on a number of occasions.

Overall, there are many detailed improvements that make the Mark 2 Starlight more attractive than its predecessor. Jonty, who was responsible for the Starlight's interior, has produced a bright and airy boat with good stowage. He has clearly paid attention to detail, and the teak joinery – enhanced by maple inlay – gives an immediate, though restrained, impression of style. Cherry is an option for those who prefer that to teak.

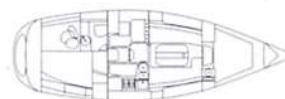
The boat is well put together, and any prospective owner will feel reassured by seeing the detail and thoroughness of the construction process. No one is pretending that the Starlight is a cheap boat, but sometimes it's true that you get what you pay for. If you're in the market for a boat of this value and don't need a larger one, the Starlight is well worth considering...

Specification

LOA	11.00m	36ft 1in
LWL	8.75m	28ft 8in
Beam	3.51m	11ft 6in
Draught (fin keel)	1.83m	6ft 0in
(wing keel)	1.50m	4ft 11in
Displacement	6,907kg	15,227lb
Ballast	2,540kg	5,600lb
Water	145lt	32gal
Fuel	136lt	30gal
Engine (Yanmar)	20.1kW	27hp
Sail Area*	55.9m ²	601ft ²
RCD Directive	Category A – Ocean	

*(main and 100% fore triangle)

Contact: Julian Fawcett, Rival Bowman Yachts Ltd,
Ocean Quay, Belvidere Road, Southampton, SO14 5QY
☎ 01703 234777 fax 01703 237444
e-mail: HYPERLINK mailto:bowlmanboat@aol.com
Price Standard: £117,324 (inc VAT)



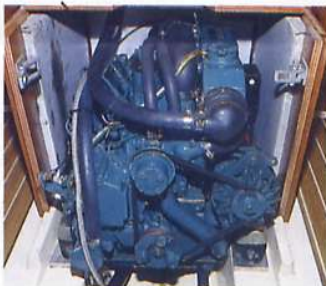
Anatomy of a cruising



The chart table is big enough for an Admiralty chart folded in half, and has plenty of space to mount instruments



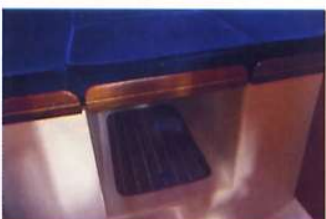
All surfaces and corners in the heads are designed to be as easy to clean as possible. A shower is fitted as standard



The forward half of the engine is more accessible than most, and access to the aft end is easily gained by removing panels



The after cabin is well ventilated and has good stowage, although the standing area at the head of the berth is relatively small



Below the forecabin berths there is stowage for bags, which can be pushed forward of a lift-out board to keep them out of the way

It's easy to move around in the Starlight's well-planned cockpit, and the mainsheet is easily reached from the wheel



A half-depth skeg provides support for the Starlight's large rudder and helps to improve directional stability

The switch panel opens to reveal a neat wiring system, with cables carefully labelled and carried in conduit tubes

There's reasonable stowage under the chart table, but the fiddles are too low to ensure charts will stay in place when the boat is heeled

yacht

Accommodation and interior



The Starlight 35 has bright and roomy accommodation that works well both at sea and in harbour. An advantage of not squeezing in too many cabins or toilet compartments is that nothing is unduly cramped. Our test boat is owned by a tall sailor, who has not felt a need for any modifications, apart from a short extension to the aftercabin berth. We also gave all of the accommodation the 20-stone sailor test, and he found no problems, even judging the heads compartment to be one of the best he has used.

There are plenty of grabrails, and the companionway steps are easy to descend, even when the boat is well heeled. Headroom varies from 1.75m (69in) in the forecabin to 1.85m (73in) in the saloon.

Each side of the saloon there is a single settee berth, with lockers outboard and above each backrest. In the Mark 2 boat, the upper locker fronts have been brought further inboard, which looks neater and creates more stowage. The fiddles on the saloon table are a sensible height and shape to keep crockery in place when the boat is heeled.

The saloon has ample ventilation, with opening ports above the galley and chart table, as well as one each side above the settees. Lighting is well organised, with individually-switched halogen lamps let into the deckhead.

Hot and cold pressurised water is supplied to the galley, and there's also a foot pump for cold water. The fiddles around this area are sensibly high at around 75mm, but the rise in the worktop between the sinks and the cool box/refrigerator is less pronounced, and we weren't entirely convinced it would prevent washing up water entering that compartment.

The two-burner Plastimo cooker has both grill and oven, with an excellent crash bar and provision for a strap as well. The lucky cook can even enjoy a comfortable seat on the engine box.

In the after cabin, the double berth extends under the cockpit, although for two-thirds of its width there is reasonable headroom above the berth. This reduces to just 42cm (1ft 4.5in) under the cockpit floor, but Geoff tried the berth overnight and was pleased to report that there was no feeling of claustrophobia or of being cramped.

Outboard of the berth there is a deep, full-length locker and a smallish hanging locker. Opening hatches above the head of the berth and to the side of the cockpit provide much better ventilation than you'll see in most boats. Although cabins which are entered through the galley always bring worries about crew being trapped by fire, the optional extra door between this cabin and the heads compartment would be a reassuring feature.

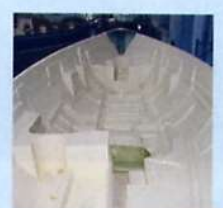
The Starlight's forecabin is brighter than the aftercabin and is marginally the larger of the two. Stowage includes a trough-shaped locker above each berth, with deep inboard sides to retain gear, although the lockers below the berths could have been bigger. On the port side there's a good-sized hanging locker, with a moulded interior. Opposite this is a vanity unit with a washbasin.

The interior mouldings below the vanity unit curve at the sole to intrude slightly into the teak and holly cabin floor, and have the same non-slip finish as the deck.

Rival Bowman offers Starlight buyers a choice of two hanging lockers, or one locker and a washbasin, in the forecabin

Working space in the galley proved adequate for serious food preparation, and there is ample storage below the work tops

The Mark 2 Starlight has larger lockers each side of the saloon, with a bookshelf incorporated in each one



Construction and build quality

The Starlight's construction is relatively conventional, with a hand-laid GRP hull and deck mouldings. Ribs are bonded both to the interior mouldings and to the inside of the hull, creating a very rigid structure. The void between the two is filled with closed-cell foam, which provides a degree of buoyancy and sound deadening.

The hull-to-deck joint can be seen in places, and looks well done, with the hull turning over inboard to form a flange and the deck both bonded and bolted onto this.

Geoff felt that the hull and gelcoat surface were not quite as fair as he expected from the Bowman name. But the engineering is well up to standard, with the propeller shaft well supported by a substantial half skeg, which also provides support for the massive lower

rudder bearing. The rudder itself is substantial, with torsional loads taken by unusually large stainless steel tongues. This kind of detail helps to show where the money goes in a well-constructed boat.

Most visible fibreglass work appeared to be of a high standard, although it was surprising to see a few rough edges where pipework passes through a bulkhead in the main cockpit locker.

The lead keel is hung beneath a moulded-in stub keel, and is secured with 13 large stainless steel bolts, two of which are high tensile. This allows for a surprisingly deep bilge sump – a rare sight on a modern yacht. It also helps to keep the keel's centre of gravity low, which significantly improves stability.

How does she perform



Above: All control lines running back from the mast pass through covered channels, giving the deck an uncluttered appearance

Left: Teak decks are available as an option. Note the headsail furling line which crosses the foredeck at ankle height

Right: The cockpit is well laid out, and has all the sail controls needed for efficient sail trimming. The mainsheet and traveller are easily reached from the wheel



So what are the alternatives to the Starlight 35?

Few boats can match the Starlight's combination of outstanding sailing qualities and attention to detail. One of these is the US-built Sabre 362. Of course, it's also possible to buy more boat for less money...

Sabre 362	
LOA	36ft 2in
Price	£144,358
Bavaria 38	
LOA	38ft 2in
Price:	£90,475
Dufour 38 Classic	
LOA	37ft 6in
Price	£103,352



Dufour 38 Classic

at sea?

On deck and under way



Top: The Starlight proved easy to sail with just two people

Above: On the first day of our test we exceeded 10 knots on several occasions

Right: The Starlight's optional winged keel. Note the well-protected prop shaft



The Starlight's deck layout holds few surprises, although our testers found a couple of small niggles. The non-slip finish on the deck, for instance, is highly effective, but can be hard on knuckles and foul-weather gear.

The furling line for the headsail roller reefing is led to a jammer on the coachroof, but crosses the foredeck at ankle height, forming an effective trip wire. It would be possible to lead the line closer to the deck, but this would increase friction and make the system more difficult to operate. It seemed to us that the more usual arrangement, with the furling line led along the side deck would be better. The spinnaker pole downhaul line posed a similar problem, but as this is not used as often it should be less of a hazard overall.

On the plus side, lines leading aft from the mast pass through neat channels let into the coachroof. These have removable covers which give easy access to the lines should they become snagged. Reefing the mainsail is a one-person operation thanks to pennants led back to the cockpit from both luff and leach reefing cringles. The optional arrangements for moving the genoa sheet car worked very easily, despite the strong winds we experienced.

Self-tailing Lewmar 44 winches are used for the genoa sheets, and fittings such as cleats and fairleads are well up to the job. The anchor well is a sensible size and has a shelf for a windlass.

Extensive use of teak trim makes the cockpit feel attractive, and the helm position is provided with a practical foot support. Although the wheel does not feel over large, at just over a metre in diameter, as on most wheel-steered boats it restricts the helmsman from reaching the winches. The optional tiller would cost more, but our guess is that the Starlight would be a nice boat to steer by tiller. On the wheel-steered boat, fitting the emergency steering would be a straightforward operation.

As well as the main cockpit locker on the port side, there are three others, including a large after one and a dedicated one for gas bottles. The locker lids are not watertight, but do have large drain channels.

It is nice to see that the instruments are positioned over the main hatch where everyone can see them, rather than on the wheel pedestal. On Mark 2 boats the spray hood has been redesigned and now has a leather-covered grab rail, which is both kinder to the hood and safer than the usual habit of holding onto the fabric edge.

Under sail

On the first day of our test, the wind strength varied between 25 and 35 knots, but the boat was effortless to control throughout. We part-rolled the genoa and put one or two reefs in the main as the weather and wind angle dictated, which gave us a fast and stress-free sail. The Starlight proved so quick that on one downwind leg Geoff decided not to bother with the mainsail and didn't think much speed was lost – it was always doing more than eight knots.

The sails are from Parker and Kay and set superbly – they're a very good choice, even though they are relatively expensive.

The Starlight would beat to windward happily under part-rolled headsail alone, readily picking up speed after tacking such that we were able to tack again almost immediately. It really was a most impressive performance.

Next we sailed the boat with a double-reefed mainsail and no headsail, leaving us a little underpowered. But again the Starlight responded perfectly and sailed very close to the wind, sliding along gently and repeatedly tacking easily without losing way. It would have been easy to beat up to a buoy or drop anchor in a crowded anchorage with no worries that the boat would do anything to cause concern. Geoff wished Stephen Jones had been on board to thank him for such an impressive performance.

Having had an earlier opportunity to sail a Starlight with the wing keel option, Geoff found the arrangement worked well, with the boat's motion noticeably reduced in a lumpy sea. However, the deep fin keeled boat is somewhat quicker when sailing to windward.

On the second day of our test we enjoyed a gusty Force 4/5 breeze. Once again the Starlight proved to be a powerful performer, frequently nudging close to its hull speed of 7 knots. Upwind she proved close-winded and beautifully balanced, sailing at around 6.5 knots in flat water.

Inboard power

A Volvo Penta 2030 inboard diesel drives a choice of propeller, our test boat being fitted with a folding two-bladed model. She was fast and quiet under power, and at 6 knots there was plenty of power to spare.

The boat was easily controlled, with a steady, predictable feel and maintained steerage way at very slow speeds, even in gusty conditions.

If allowance is given for the propeller's kick to starboard, the Starlight will quickly gain steerage way when going astern, and can be turned round in either direction in less than two boat lengths.

ST verdict

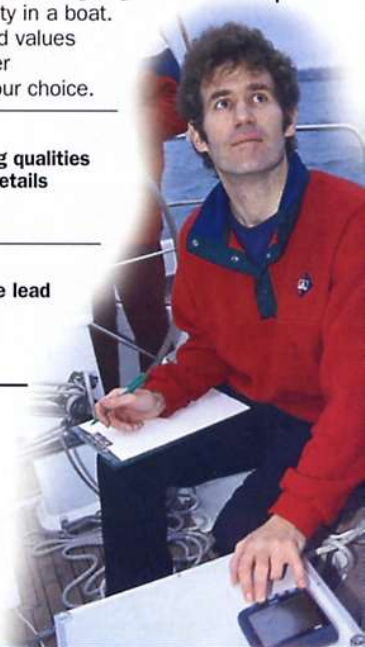
The Starlight's quality construction and style stand out, but are almost put in the shade by its excellent sailing qualities. It is not hard to see what your money pays for, and no one should begrudge integrity and quality in a boat. Good second-hand values should give further reassurance to your choice.

FOR

Remarkable sailing qualities
Good layout and details
below
Joinery quality

AGAINST

Roller headsail line lead
Fierce non-slip
Less-than-perfect
hull fairness

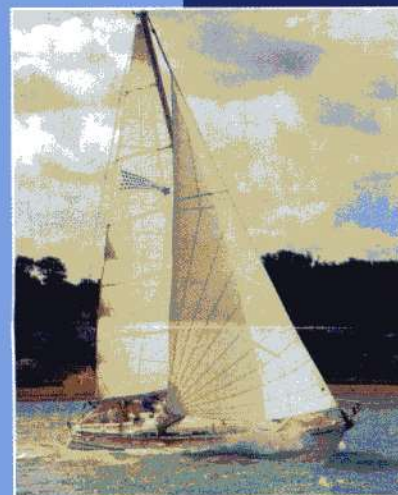


A Glittering New Starlight

The New 46, fast, sleek and superbly comfortable
Designed by the best, built by craftsmen to last
Quite the most beautiful yacht in her class
Probably one of the quickest



Starlight 39Mk2



Starlight 35Mk2

The New Starlight 46, joins the Starlight 35 and 39 as a natural progression in a range of great looking, fast sailing yachts. Leaders both on the race course and in the cruising grounds of the world, Starlights combine luxurious interiors with glittering passage making to give their owners many years of carefree sailing.

Starlight

Rival Bowman Yachts Ltd

Ocean Quay Belvidere Road Southampton SO14 5QY

Tel: +44 (0) 1703 234777 Fax: +44 (0) 1703 237444 e-mail: bowmanboat@aol.com www.bowman-yachts.co.uk

STARLIGHT 39 Mk2

Stephen Jones designed the Starlight 39 with exceptionally beautiful lines to be a fast, safe, passage maker which would be a joy to sail. The result is one of the most attractive yachts afloat which suits both experienced yachtsmen who like to race and those who leisurely cruise the coasts. Stephen's successful design skills, coupled with the quality workmanship of the Rival Bowman craftsmen have developed one of the most successful yachts in her class.

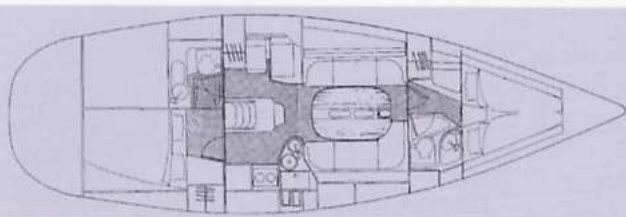
The Starlight 39 Mk2 enjoys a host of enhancements which have been developed by Rival Bowman with considerable input from owners who have sailed thousands of miles, both cruising and racing these fine craft.

Although fully crewed Starlight 39s have enjoyed considerable success on the racing circuit the majority of boats are used for cruising with the family and making the most of the luxurious accommodation and carefree sailing that these yachts provide.





STARLIGHT 39 Mk2



Rival Bowman Yachts Ltd

Ocean Quay Belvidere Road Southampton Hampshire SO14 5QY England
Tel: +44 (0)1703 334777 Fax: +44 (0)1703 334444

SPECIFICATIONS

Max. length	12.15m	39'10"
Waterline length	9.69m	31'9"
Max. Beam	3.81m	12'6"
Draft		
fin keel	2.09m	6'10"
wing keel	1.63m	5'4"
Displacement	8,958 kg	19,749 lb
Ballast	3,229 kg	7,119 lb
Mast Height		
(above waterline)	17.3m	56'10"
Water Capacity	227lt	50imp. g
Fuel Capacity	182lt	40imp. g
Engine: Yanmar 3JH3	29.4kW	40hp

SAILS

Std Sail Area	69.54m ²	748sq ft
Mainsail	35.39m ²	381sq ft
135% Genoa	46.10m ²	496sq ft
150% Genoa	51.23m ²	557sq ft
Tri-Radial Spinnaker	122.95m ²	1323sq ft
Storm Jib	11.60m ²	125sq ft
Recreational Craft Directive (RCD) Cat. A-Ocean		