

The Proper Yacht, 2nd Edition by Arthur Beiser International Marine, 1978 ©

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DOWNEASTER 38

Designer Henry Morschladt
Newport Beach, California
Builder Down East Yachts Inc.
700 E. Alton Avenue
Santa Ana, California 92707

LOA 38 ft. 11.58 m.
LWL 29 ft. 8.84 m.
BEAM 11 ft. 10 in. 3.61 m.
DRAFT 4 ft. 11 in. 1.50 m.
DISPLACEMENT 19,500 lbs. 8,845 kg.
BALLAST (encapsulated lead) 8,000 lbs. 3,630 kg.
SAIL AREA (cutter rig) 665 sq. ft. 62 sq. m.
ENGINE Faryman diesel (24 hp; 32 hp optional)
FUEL 90 gals. 340 liters (Note this should read 75 gals - CP)
WATER 50 gals. (100 gals. 190 liters (380 optional) liters optional)
CONSTRUCTION Fiberglass hull and deck; aluminum fuel tank; stainless-steel water tank; aluminum spars

The Downeaster 38 was conceived by Bob Poole, a Maine sailor transplanted to the West Coast, as a "classic cruising yacht utilizing modern materials and technology where they belong while retaining the traditional features of the fine early cruising yachts of Down East." Himself experienced in fiberglass yacht construction as an executive of Columbia Yachts, Poole commissioned Henry Morschladt, a young California naval architect who specializes in cruising sailboats, to come up with a suitable design. The result is a straightforward, common-sense boat that will evoke a nostalgic twinge in those who remember what sailboats used to look like. The Downeaster 38 is no greyhound of the sea, but in the long run a friendly shaggy dog makes the better companion for many of us, and for such people the 38 or something like it may very well be the right boat.

The Downeaster 38 is a larger boat than its overall length would indicate since the waterline length is 29 feet and the beam is nearly 12 feet. A ballast displacement ratio of 41 percent, together with the large beam, means that the 38 will stay on her feet despite the shoal draft of just under five feet. Three rigs are available: cutter, ketch, and schooner. All seem well proportioned and easy to manage, though the sail plan in each case is rather on the scant side. The basic sail area of the schooner can be augmented to a greater extent than the other rigs by setting a 498-square-foot gollywobbler between the masts or even a 727-square foot "gollyaker" (a balloon jib set from the main masthead), but it seems a shame to be obliged to use such clumsy sails in light airs on a cruising boat. Still, when the wind pipes up a bit, all three versions of the Downeaster 38 ought to perform merrily without imposing any stress on their crews. There are a few items in the sail plans I don't particularly like—for instance, the angle of the mainsheet in the cutter and the pin rails in the shrouds of the ketch and schooner—but these are easily corrected.

The interior of the 38 is conventional in outline and well thought out in detail. The forward cabin sports a double berth. The starboard side of the main cabin has a pilot berth outboard of a settee and the port side can be arranged either in the same way or with a settee that converts to a double with a shelf over it. The galley has a double sink near the centerline, a desirable

feature, and opposite is a fixed chart table and a quarter berth.

Construction specifications seem high, with the laminate to Lloyd's requirements. Seacocks on all through-hull fittings below the waterline, a steel back-bone in the rudder, and so forth. Sand set in a polyurethane adhesive is used for nonskid deck surfaces in place of the customary molded patterns that are invariably slippery when wet. Mr. Poole clearly cares about his customers. Another welcome item is the provision for hand-starting of the engine in an emergency. Wheel steering is standard, as are two independent batteries. Lots of options are available, of which some really ought to be part of the standard boat: an emergency tiller, the grounding of the rigging for lightning protection, a set of metric tools and a spare-parts kit for the German engine, dorade ventilators, and grab rails in the interior. Still, as production boats go, the Downeaster 38 is better in this respect than most, and on the whole, designer and Builder are to be congratulated on their work.