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## Swan 43: the restoration of 50-year-old Sparkman & Stephens yacht Runn

*Pip Hare, Yachting World, October 10, 2016*

**Intricately restored at a Swan specialist in northern Finland, the Swan 43 Runn has found a new home with Charles Hill, his wife and four children. Pip Hare describes the sensitive refit of a 1960s classic**



S&S Swan 43/004 Runn

When a Contessa 32 became a little bit too snug for a holiday with his wife and four children, Charles Hill went in search of a bigger boat for adventurous family cruising. Two years later, Runn, a 1969-built S&S Swan 43, has emerged from a painstaking refit.

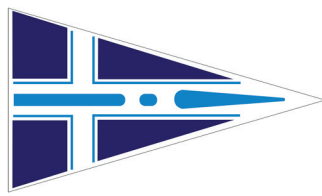
The Swan 43 was only the second Olin Stephens design to be produced at the Nautor's Swan yard, but its overhanging ends, short coachroof, low freeboard, sheer and tumblehome established the classic Swan lines. Runn, hull number 004, was commissioned for Finnish racing legend Michael Berner (a skipper in the 1985-6 Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race) to campaign in the 1969 Admiral's Cup and subsequent transatlantic race.

A Swan 43 seems an unusual choice for family cruising – accommodation is limited by modern standards. But it ticked all boxes for Charles. A fan of the seakeeping qualities of older designs, he sought a yacht which could be cruised double-handed with his wife and could host comfortable family holidays away from marinas, but which could also be raced competitively in class from time to time.

“It all depends how you measure comfort,” Hill explains. “This boat was built to be comfortable at sea, the berths are the right size and in the right place, and you can walk from cockpit to forepeak being able to hold on all of the way.”

### Built to last

Runn was found in Helsinki, poorly maintained and suffering from a lack of use. Consultation with Lars Ström, manager at Nautor's Swan design office for over 30 years, and Svenkki Kronqvist, manager of the Yxpila yard in Finland, Swan refit experts, revealed her origin and robust build quality.



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In September 2014 Runn was transported to the Yxpila yard at 63°N to begin a mammoth refit. Hill managed the project, Ström and Kronqvist provided expert advice. Hill admits this was his first boat restoration project, but he was hands on – as well as overseeing the project from Suffolk, he spent one week in five working on site alongside the Finns – and drew on his experience of restoring classic cars.

He says: “With classic cars it is all about the detail – when the original build quality is good then you need to maintain that quality throughout, even on those details that no one will ever see.” This ethos shines throughout the boat; the quality is high even behind the lockers and under the floorboards.

Runn’s hull was structurally sound and free from osmosis. The teak decks and engine had been replaced four years earlier, so structural work was limited to a rebuild of the aft bulkhead – doors were added to create a more private aft cabin, the only adjustment Hill made to the interior layout – and a modification of the bow to take a custom-made double bow roller with a windlass and anchor chain box. This sits in a watertight crash section forward. Any older, rotten cross members were replaced with new aluminium box sections.



Runn’s logo, a circular cross pictured left on its spinnaker, was created for her original owner, Michael Berner, by influential Finnish designer Timo Sarpeneva

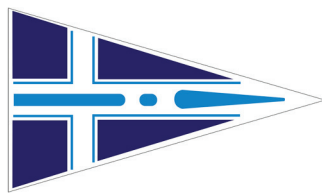
## Authenticity vs performance

Next it was necessary to strike a balance between authenticity and performance. Hill says committing to renovate throughout made the project easier to manage – the entire boat has been considered in detail and original features have been kept where possible so long as they are functional and do not impede the sailing performance.

Below decks, the water-damaged interior was replaced to the original design. When parts such as grabrails, louvred door vents and hatch fastenings were no longer available, Hill engineered replacements from scratch in his Suffolk workshop.

This approach had a significant impact on time scales, something he had expected from his classic car work. “When you are working with your hands it takes time,” he says. “You can’t work to the clock.”

Runn’s sail plan has been modernised to offer greater flexibility for short-handed sailing yet is still in keeping with the original design. A self-tacking jib has been replaced with a 135 per cent overlapping genoa close to the original spec on a roller furler. In addition, a new inner forestay was fitted to



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accommodate a Number 4 jib for more breezy conditions. The original mast now sports a fully battened main and stack-pack system.

## Downwind tactics

For downwind sailing, Runn can fly a large running spinnaker – it has slightly narrower shoulders than the original to reduce rolling – plus an asymmetric in a snuffer. This is flown from a bowsprit engineered to be fitted through the bow roller in minutes – perfect for short-handed sailing.

Runn has a small skeg-hung rudder typical of the era. The Swan 43 was built with a trim tab on the back of its keel. This has been glassed over on many boats, yet Charles chose to keep it on Runn. With careful adjustment of the three wheels at the steering position, the helmsman can balance a powerful sail plan both reaching and beating.

Fact: In 1969, Runn's steering failed while halfway across the Atlantic. The boat's original owner, Finnish race legend Michael Berner, used the boat's trim tab second quadrant to jury rig a solution

That trim tab exemplifies Hill's approach. He has been thorough and principled throughout, restoring Runn in line with her original ethos – to be strong, seaworthy and to offer optimum performance. Although the total cost has been equivalent to the purchase of a new production boat, boats like Runn are simply not available on the market today. She is beautiful functionally and aesthetically. Better still, she'll be sailed and loved for many years to come.



Old and new: the three wheels allow steering with the original trim tab. The outer wheel operates the rudder, the inner wheel the trim tab and the middle wheel allows the trim tab to be locked into position. Yet near the original brass compass binnacle is a removable iPad bracket for easy navigation.

### Swan 43 Specifications

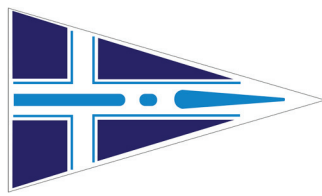
**LOA: 13.04m (42ft 9in)**

**LWL: 9.45m (31ft 0in)**

**Beam: 3.55m (11ft 7in)**

**Draught: 2.20m (7ft 3in)**

**Disp approx: 9,000kg (19,842lb)**



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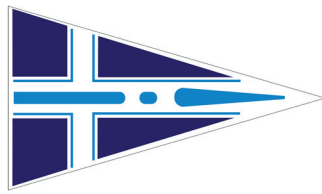
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Hill's solution to tender storage, constructed by himself. It can be removed easily when in racing mode.

This original brass halyard winch is on trial – Hill is keen to keep this beautifully engineered feature, but only if the wire halyard for the roller-furling jib does not detract from Runn's sailing performance





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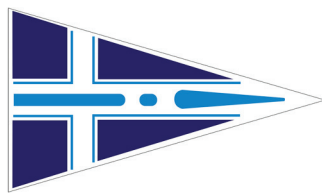
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A watertight bulkhead separates the forepeak from the anchor locker

The interior joinery work was entirely replaced. When he couldn't buy grabrails and louvred teak vents, Hill hand-made replacements in his workshop

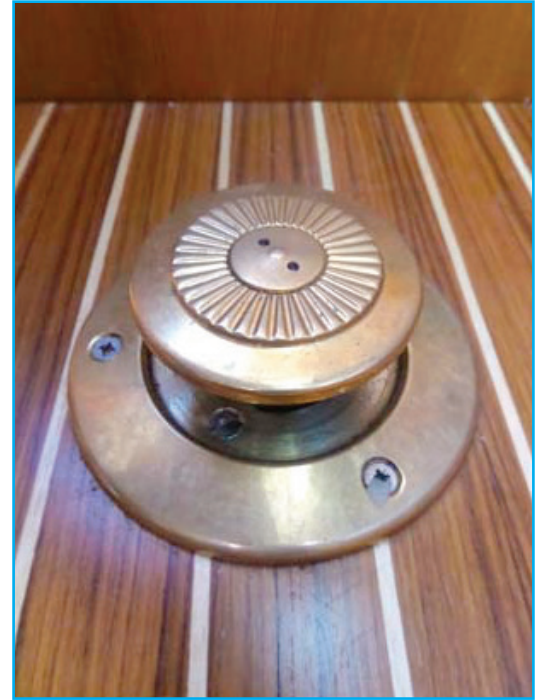




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Custom-made cup and tool-holders exemplify how every aspect of Runn's interior has been engineered for efficiency



Hill's philosophy shines through in this foot pump, which is actually a plastic Whale Gusher footpump with a brass cover he engineered

To allow serious cruising, the bow has been modified to take a custom-build double anchor roller, which doubles up to take a small bowsprit for the asymmetric spinnaker

The Perspex decklights had deteriorated over time. Hill managed to replace them with glass and brass versions from Classic Marine in Suffolk



Courtesy of YACHTING WORLD  
Original Article at:  
<http://www.yachtingworld.com/extraordinary-boats/swan-43-restoration-50-year-old-sparkman-stephens-yacht-runn-94273>