

# Swan 43

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**JULIAN EVERITT tests Finland's finest.**  
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CLASS I, CLASS IIa and Admiral's Cup racing in this country has been and may continue to be dominated by one-off, highly-priced yachts which in most cases become (questionably) out of date after only two seasons. Owners probably buy new boats for the psychological advantage it gives them—"it's a new boat, it must be fast." Production boats, unlike in the smaller classes, have had no look in, mainly because most production line boat builders would consider their changes of success remote and they therefore haven't bothered.

A similar situation arises in class IIIa where the One Tonners play around with all the prizes like so many rubber balls, and anything that can be termed as sensible competition has either increased or decreased its rating to get into another class. Turning the tables, the class IIb, IIIb and JOG championships have been won by off-the-peg boats for several seasons running. In America, the production Admiral's Cup size Cal 40 wins races as easily as sliding off a greased pole and other GRP boats figure in the results in all classes.

This year with the Admiral's Cup competition at its fiercest since the series began in 1959, production boats will be making their major debut. Four types have been launched in this country, all entered in the lists for Admiral's Cup selection.

The Sparkman and Stephens designed Nautor Ky built Swan 43 is one of them. Owned by Hurrell & Johnson who import the boat from Finland (together with the Swan 36), Casse Tete III, as the boat is called, is an up-to-the-minute design with obvious famous parentage. Derek Boyer's 30 ft waterline Clarion of Wight was the first of a new breed of S&S RORC pot hunters. Renowned for her speed to windward, she was selected for the 1963 British Admiral's Cup team and went on to win the Fastnet. She led to Dennis Miller's Firebrand—"only level with you at the leeward mark, but up to weather a minute a mile faster." The Swan was originally commissioned by a Finn as a direct development of Firebrand with separate rudder and trim tab. But with the success of Morningtown and Kerkyra, both S&S One Ton Cup designs, it was decided for the new production Swan 43, to use the underwater profile of the One Tonners. Drawings for the Swan arrived around July at Nautor Ky.

A sail test on this type of boat can prove somewhat academic—after all from a sailing point of view it is a racing boat and it's either good or bad at its job and criticism of performance can only fairly come after a day's racing. But in all fairness,

the fact that we sailed the boat with only four people, setting the kite on a 20-knot shy reach indicates that the boat is easy to handle and makes a workable cruiser.

To windward in a 20-knot Easterly, complete with the classic Solent chop, Casse Tete eased her way to windward hardly faltering below a steady 6 knots as she encountered the waves.

"Right," yelled Dave Johnson, "let's see what she'll tack through in this sea. We're on 148 degrees now. Ready about!—genny in—let her settle steady, that's about 208 degrees. Close as a 12-metre!—She's got a bit of weather helm even with the trim tab at 10 degrees, we'll see if we can move the draft of the mainsail forward with the Cunningham Hole." Casse Tete is still being tuned up. Indeed she has not yet had her rod backstay fitted, and when the Admiral's Cup selection trials come she'll be going that bit faster.

The steering position is a little exposed at the back of the cockpit, but you get a superb view of the sails and waves. The floor is dished to provide a level surface at all angles of heel. The double rudder steering system with treble linked wheels takes a bit of getting used to. If you're on the wind with 10 degrees of weather helm on the tab and you want to tack, bring the main rudder up, and declutch the tab. Then as she fills on the new course, reset the tab and lock back to main rudder. The advantage of this system over (dare I say it) a conventional double rudder layout with separate tab adjustment is that the rudder and tab are never working in opposition, which can happen if the tab is fixed and a slight amount of lee helm is required on the main rudder.

With the windward work over, a sharp about turn brought us onto a beam reach. Do we want the kite up? Yes. Should be pretty fast getting back—we're doing 8 knots under No. 3 genny. Okay, we're ready. Up the kite. Steady, trim pole forward, trim a bit more.

With the wind just forward of the beam and gusting 23 knots, helming required anticipation but with both rudders working she remained controllable. The boat is fairly stiff, but the most noticeable attribute is the superb way pitching is damped, and at the end of a reasonably energetic sail the deck was wet only with rainwater. Nothing salty came over the bows.

The deck is laid out purely for ocean racing efficiency. With tiny deckhouse and large flat teak-laid decks. (The teak costs £800 over standard). Forward is a large sliding sail hatch with a ventilation hatch amidships over the saloon. Spinnaker winches are mounted forward on the cabin top where there weight does least harm and where it is easier to watch the



trim of the spinnaker and adjust accordingly. Headsail sheet winches are aft in the cockpit. All four are the silent two-speed variety made by the Australian firm of Barlow.

The flat deck, with no obstructions, makes walking about the deck easy. The twin spinnaker poles are mounted parallel to the centreline alongside the two deck hatches and in this position they don't obstruct the side decks. The mast is of thin cross-section to reduce windage as are the lenticular rod shrouds. Surprisingly for a Sparkman and Stephens designed boat, the halliard winches, (of which there are four) are mounted on the mast. Extra windage! The reason for four winches is that the boat uses double headsail hoists for fast sail changing. A criticism of the mast gear—there are no eye bolts on the deck to clip spare halliard ends to.

The mainsheet system is straightforward with a four-part tackle on the end of the boom leading to a vertically-mounted winch on the bridge deck between helmsman and crew. Riding turns are prevented by a simple metal guide over the winch.

"Reckon we'll carry the kite right up the Hamble River," said Dave. "Less wind up there and we'll see how smart your sail handling is." Apart from one member of the crew getting the spinnaker halliard wrapped round a toggle on his jacket and being threatened with an unwanted trip up the mast, the sail drop went smoothly.

Despite the flush deck there is full headroom below, right up into the forward cabin. The woodwork is nicely executed in a very light coloured timber and edged with teak. Berths are provided for eight people—two pipecots forward, four midship berths and two quarter berths. To starboard of the companion way is the galley complete with ice-box, double sinks and

cooker with oven grill and two burners. Fully-gimballed for sea use, the cooker can be planted on its own four feet when in harbour. A small pump provides running water, hot and cold. Opposite is the navigator's perch, completely adequate for this all-important task. There is also a spare seat aft of the navigating area, useful for the odd crew member not too keen on taking his watch above decks.

Locker space abounds in this part of the boat as well as in the saloon. Forward and to port is the toilet/washroom compartment which is watertight and used as a shower room with hand showers. Opposite are two large full-length hanging lockers.

Forward—take your pick between a sail room or a two-berth cabin. A soft, studded leather-cloth headliner is provided throughout to prevent condensation. The floor is teak-laid. Reasonable light is provided in the saloon by the opening deck hatch. The artificial light comes from very neat Nautor Ky-built flush fitting roof light with rocker switches.

The standard engine is a Volvo Penta MD2, but Casse Tete is fitted with the larger Perkins 4/107 which hurls her along at around 9 knots—some motorboat, too. Handling under motor is good. With full rudder the boat will turn in twice her own length. Both the big engine and the teak decks help to reduce the rating over the standard boat.

A 42-gallon freshwater tank is situated above the keel, where its weight will do least harm, together with the batteries. The removable GRP 20-gallon fuel tank is aft under the cockpit sole.

#### CLASS NAME

Swan 43, built by Nautor Ky of Finland

