

Designs In Action

Swan-41

The Driscoll shipyard in San Diego is regularly filled with spectacular sailboats—some built there, others rebuilt or refinished there. The majority of them bear the mark of noble heritage, so for one yacht to stand out is like saying that one particular diamond is outstanding in a Cartier window display.

But the Swan-41 is such a boat. From dockside, the meticulously laid teak decks, sleek cabinhouse, and easy

lines mark the boat as a standout.

Designed as a smaller sister to the highly successful Swan-44, the 41 is a 1974 product of the Sparkman & Stephens design boards. Built in fiberglass by Nautor of Finland, the Swan-41 combines a rare level of quality in a production line boat. Without resorting to cliches like "old-world craftsmanship," I think the Swan-41 is characterized by the fact that everything *fits*. The hatches have a solid clunk when they close, the drawers slide easily, the wood joinerwork leaves no

rough or mismatched ends, and the fiberglass is flawless.

The hull meets Lloyd's scantlings, and each boat is delivered with a Lloyd's Certificate of Construction. Designed to meet the latest IOR and Admiral's Cup rules, the Swan-41 manages to achieve a rating in the 30.5 range without the need for unusual hull bulges or bumps. But make no mistakes, she looks like a racing machine. The flush deck, low cabin, and generous complement of winches identify her in any crowd.



Reprinted from April, 1975, SEA Magazine; copyright, 1975, CBS Publications.

The most striking exterior feature of the Swan-41 is the laid teak deck. Starting from a well-thought-out fiberglass deck, Finnish craftsmen carefully lay half-inch teak planks on all walking surfaces to provide the absolute maximum of adhesion regardless of how wet the going is. For anyone (like myself) who sails on fiberglass boats a lot, stepping onto a real teak deck is a surprising reminder of how slippery even the best non-skid fiberglass deck can be. Because the house is nearly flush, movement on deck is easy and unrestricted. Surrounded by the sturdy (and standard) double lifelines, the deck becomes a racing crew's dream—wide, well planned, and safe. As just one example of forethought on the part of both S&S and Nautor, the boat is delivered with dacron dodgers for the

main and mid-deck hatches. But instead of just tacking the dodger on after the boat was built, a special ridge was molded into the deck to accept the circular track and make the entire unit waterproof. I have to conclude that the Swan-41 was built by men who know what it's like to punch into big head seas when it's blowing hard.

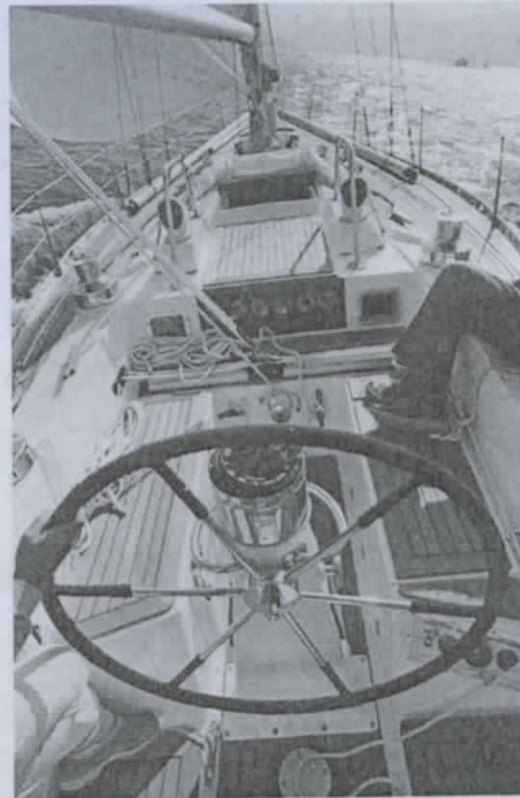
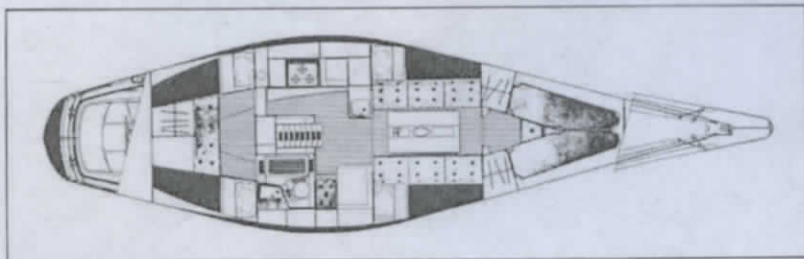
The cockpit carries the same teak decking as the rest of the boat, and includes a special hatch for stowing the life raft—readily accessible but not a clumsy lump lashed to the deck as on many ocean racers. A pair of Lewmar 55 three-speed winches handle the genoa sheets and a pair of Lewmar 45 three-speeds are mounted aft for the spinnaker sheets. Along with this standard set of sheet winches come seven other Lewmar winches for the

mainsheet and halyards.

Wheel steering is standard and the binnacle mounts a 6-in. Danforth Constellation compass. A combination of chain and cable connects the wheel to the rudder quadrant and the builders have thoughtfully included a pair of windows on each side of the pedestal so that you can determine what the ominous squeak is without disassembling the entire unit.

Two hefty grabrails lead the way to the main cabin hatch, which is a sliding smoked perspex affair that is big enough to hoist the engine through. A midships ventilation hatch is aluminum framed and the forward hatch is also dark sliding plexiglas.

The halyard winches are placed on the deck aft of the spar and also on the anodized aluminum mast itself. The



Report And Photos By Chris Caswell

Swan-41	
LOA	41 ft.
Waterline	30 ft. 2 in.
Beam	11 ft. 9 in.
Draft	6 ft. 5 in.
Displacement	17,750 lb.
Ballast	9,700 lb.
Sail Area	972 sq.ft. (100% jib)
Base Price	\$83,000

Price As Tested

\$83,000 (not including sails, which reflect individual tastes. Base price reflects a fully-equipped boat)

West Coast Distributor

Nautor West

2438 Shelter Island Dr., San Diego, CA 92106

Swan-41 comes equipped with a double bell spinnaker fitting and track, two aluminum spinnaker poles, a reaching strut, and even upper and lower strut eyes on the mast for normal or starcut chutes. The boom has a worm outhaul as well as roller reefing and a built-in vang eye.

Belowdecks, the Swan-41 duplicates the Swan-44 layout. The main companionway stairs lead to a "working" section of the cabin with the L-shaped galley to port and a navigator's seat and chart table to starboard. Stepping aft through the galley, you wind up in the owner's stateroom which has a pair of single bunks, a large hanging locker, a settee and vanity, plus lots of storage. Between the navigation area and the owner's stateroom is a walk-through head compartment with a telephone-type shower, and washbasin.

The midships compartment has two

pilot berths with pull-out transom berths (all with canvas leeboards) that serve as seats for the folding table encircling the mast. The forward compartment has twin pipe berths, two spacious hanging lockers, and sail storage bins. Compared to a more conventional doghouse-type sailboat, the midships cabin is dark since the only natural lighting comes from the overhead hatch. But Nautor has scattered nine dome lights around the cabin in addition to lights over each bunk, so the problem can be eliminated artificially. Ventilation is excellent as a result of the four Dorade vents located over the head, galley, and midships cabin.

Powerplant is a Perkins diesel driving a two-bladed folding prop through a 2:1 hydraulic reduction gear.

Under sail, the boat has a solid feel. The steering is light and sensitive, but I doubt that you'd have any control

problems in surfing conditions. Our trial boat was rigged with the optional taller mast (no extra charge!) and increased sailplan since conditions on this coast are lighter than you might encounter in the English Channel or the North Sea.

The theory behind the boat is obviously to equip it so completely that an owner need only add sails and go racing. The extensive standard equipment inventory starts with the note that all power and auxiliary systems are rigged and tested in the water "to the satisfaction of the Builder." After ten pages of fine print listing sheets, snatch blocks, galley equipment, bottom paint, soap dishes, fenders, boat hook and bosun's chair, the list ends with "one-half model of hull."

There's no question that I'm really impressed with the Swan-41. But now I wonder. . . do I want one just to get the half model for my wall? 