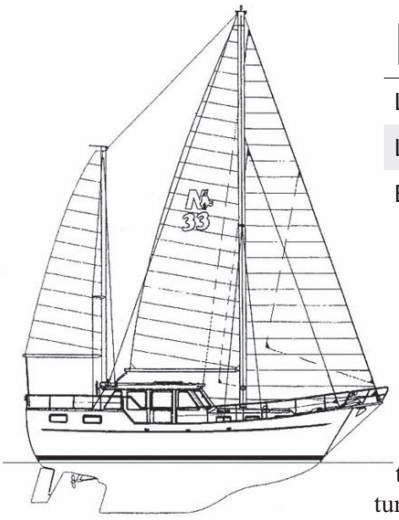
Used Boat Marketplace

with Jack Hornor



Nauticat 33

LOA (with bow sprit) 36’6”	
LOD 33’2”	LWL 28’3”
Beam 10’8”	Draft 4’1”-5’1”

Sometimes it seems that motorsailers get no respect. I recently overheard one assessment of the genre as “the worst of both possible worlds.” While some poorly conceived models may deserve this criticism, a well-designed motorsailer offers much in the way of extended boating seasons, comfort in inclement weather, the convenience of a powerboat, and the enjoyment of a sailboat.

The Nauticat 33, designed for Siltala Yachts of Finland by W. Arnipalo, is the quintessential 50/50 motorsailer, which is likely the reason for its unparalleled success. The hull is a double-ended design and closely resembles the sturdy Nordic designs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The stern is quite full, and there is a fair amount of flare at the bow so that, from above, the bow and stern appear nearly symmetrical. The original design has a long shallow keel cut away at the bow with a slender strut that extends from the aft end of the keel to support the lower end of the small rudder. Her draft is just four feet, one inch.

Some modifications over the years have included replacing the boxy aft deck house with a raised aft deck configuration and, in 1977, adding a bow pulpit. In 1982 an optional deep-draft, five-foot, one-inch-keel was offered with a skeg-hung rudder.

Construction of the Nauticat 33 exemplifies the excellent quality of European craftsmen, although older models may be fraught with age related problems. Most Nauticat 33 hulls are solid fiberglass; although, until hull number 500 (about 1978), the decks and super structure were wooden. Later models were built with a cored fiberglass composite deck and cabin structures; although teak overlays were popular and significantly increased maintenance and repair costs of older boats. The shroud chain plates are rigged with ill advised U-bolts, which are prone to corrosion and failure where they pass through the decks. However, the quality of joiner work is very good, as is access for service, maintenance, and repair.

Decks are laid out with the safety of passengers and crew in mind. The foredeck is quite spacious for a 33-footer, side decks are wide with a substantial bulwark for secure footing, and all decks are guarded by a wooden life rail supported by tall stainless steel stanchions. There is access to the pilothouse and cabin via sliding doors on both sides, which allows for safe entry and exit on either tack. Nothing is quite as inconvenient as having to tack in order to go below because the cabin entry is on one side. There is an outside helm at the only practical location, on the aft deck directly behind the mizzen mast.

There were slight changes in accommodation plans over the years, but the basic layout has remained fairly consistent. You enter the pilothouse through either of the aforementioned port or starboard sliding doors. The helm may be to port or starboard, and there is a large navigation table conveniently located near the helmsman. There is plenty of room for navigation instruments, and visibility is excellent for 360 degrees around the pilot house.

From the pilothouse there is a forward companionway down to the port side dinette and starboard galley. Farther forward, there is a V-berth cabin and a head to port. Aft and below the pilothouse is the master stateroom, which features a variety of single- and double-berth arrangements.

Auxiliary power was originally provided by Perkins, Lehman, Volvo, and Yanmar engines ranging from 85 to 110 horsepower. Any of these will push this 17,000-pound boat to hull speed without working very hard and with plenty of power left for refrigeration compressors and other needs. Engine access is good below the pilothouse cabin sole. Fuel capacity is 160 gallons, giving the Nauticat 33 a good cruising range under power at a little more than seven knots.

Nauticat 33s are rigged as ketches, although some have an inner forestay added for a second headsail, sometimes called a cutter ketch. Sail area ranges from 610 square feet to 675 square feet, depending on the year and keel configuration. This results in a sail area/displacement ratio close to 16, which is respectable for a motorsailer. For best performance, the deep draft version with its efficient underwater appendages and slightly taller rig is a must. The displacement/length ratio is a beefy 349, so you’ll need a good steady breeze for the best performance under sail, but this is a motorsailer—when the breeze drops, you start up the engine.

Although the majority of Nauticat 33s were sold in Europe, a considerable number have found their way to North America. Of 24 models currently offered for sale at *www.yachtworld.com*, six are scattered around North America with several available along the east coast. Asking prices for U.S. boats ranged from $57,000 for a 1972 model in Washington state to $99,000 for a 1985 model in Wickford, RI. There have been 13 reported U.S. sales in the last year with selling prices ranging from $57,000 for a 1985 boat in Salem, MA, to $122,500 for a 1986 model in Boothbay, ME. That’s a 115-percent price difference for one model year, so it pays to shop around.

The Nauticat 33 offers sailors lots of interior volume, excellent storage, and good range under power, all of which are important qualities for cruising sailors. The Nauticat 33 offers better performance, better quality, and typically better value than some Far East-built boats of similar style. The fact that more than 1200 new boats sold worldwide between 1967 and 1996 is testament to the success of this motorsailer.

For more information, check out the North American Nauticat Association website at *www.nauticatusa.com*

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