

SKETCHBOOK

BY SAM DEVLIN

Sail Or Power? Make Mine A Motorsailer

An aggravating Saturday morning got my head spinning off in a new direction. It started when my lawnmower broke. I spent the better part of the morning busting my knuckles trying to get the drive belts back into position and sharpen the mower blades, and only then did I discover that the mower would run only with the choke full on (and not very well in that mode). Suffice it to say that the ethanol added to our gasoline supply is not particularly compatible with properly running engines.

Bloody-knuckled, hot and sweaty, with my lawn unmowed and the air only just clearing from the blue fog of my cursing, I retreated to my happy space — the drafting table — and spent a few moments musing about another life, another destiny and some high adventure.

My steed on this journey is the Shearwater 39. She captivates me with her potential and is a most able and seaworthy companion for my dreams. This boat's design is my therapy. She certainly would be a neat boat to build.

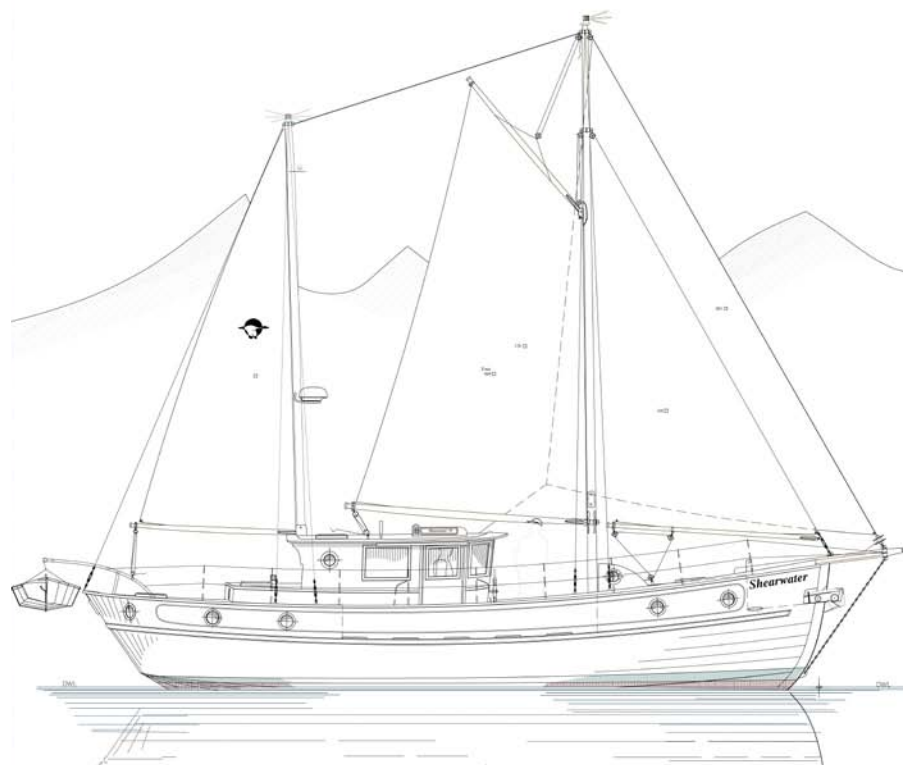
I want a vessel that's large enough to be comfortable on ocean-crossing trips. Carrying a lot of fuel and the ability to supplement fuel burn with sail power are also key. She needs to be capable of sitting on her own bottom for scrubbing or any underwater maintenance, a requirement that calls for a wide and flat-bottomed keel with a 1-inch stainless steel keel shoe running the full length of the keel bottom. Ballast, fuel and water tanks would be fitted into this keel void, meaning the engine could be set much lower into the boat than usual, with a shaft line virtually parallel to the waterline.

My sail plan is split into a snug ketch rig with roller furling on the forward-most headsail. The staysail is self-tending, fitting well into the theory of a 50/50 motorsailer. If I ever got her into the trade winds, she would be a comfortable and economical sailor, but for lighter wind conditions and some high-latitude cruising and exploring, the engine would be my best second mate. I would choose the John Deere 4045 (an engine we have used many times on other builds with good success). The Deere would be slower turning than most

diesels these days, but also would be quiet and smooth, with a good torque curve that would be the perfect match for this type of hull. The engine compartment is large enough to allow a thick cake of sound-deadening material, and engine access would be through either a sliding door in the below-deck passageway or a flush, watertight deck hatch in the midcockpit deck top.

A fantail stern looks right to my eye, has a great pedigree for heavy-weather work and allows for a generous aft cabin, for comfortable evenings at anchor when the wind is howling away but a good chowder is on the stovetop. (All I'd need is a quick way to look around for anchor dragging.) The galley is fitted with a diesel heater/oven/stovetop that could double as a heating source. Another bulkhead heater would be mounted on the head wall for quicker firing.

The head is adjacent to the saloon with a pass-through to the forward stateroom. This layout should work well when the weather is tough, allowing me to go forward without getting my feet wet. If I find myself in warm, tropical waters, I could use the outside stateroom entrance and fill the passageway below with duffels and gear.



Shearwater 39

LOA: 42 feet, 8 inches

LOD: 38 feet, 9 inches

BEAM: 12 feet, 2 inches

DRAFT: 54½ inches (outboard up)

DISPLACEMENT: 28,000 pounds (light)

SAIL AREA: 569 square feet

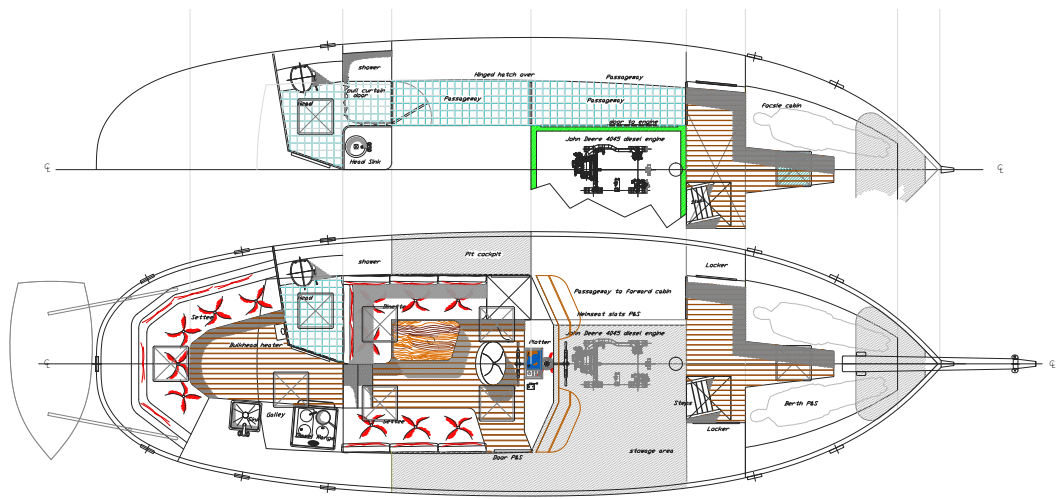
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One of the main advantages of this arrangement is having a single head for two staterooms. Honestly, I am not a fan of complicated and multiple heads, having been forced to fix them or bail water in what now totals four different oceans.

A cockpit shower works far more efficiently than a built-in shower below deck, and it has the additional advantage of keeping the interior free of moisture (which is so difficult to dry out again), but my wife really hates this pet peeve of mine (below-deck showers, that is), and she's cruising in my fantasy, too, so there is a nice little shower compartment with full headroom and splashing room at the aft end of the companionway to the forward stateroom. What more could she ask for?

There are so many features to talk about on the Shearwater that I could go on well past normal mortal attention level, but here are just some of my favorites:

- Midcockpit would be a great space to spend time in the sun or light rain with a cover over the top of the main boom.
- A recessed anchor well deck, forward with a hydraulic anchor windlass potted in the well, would keep the anchor rode and chain



out where rain and seawater could rinse it, and would keep the foul, muddy rode from contaminating the vessel.

- Dinghy davits fitted to the stern would allow for a fair-sized, outboard-powered dinghy to be carried well out of the way when sailing.
- The pilothouse would have four hatches in the roof for line of sight to the sails and to allow ventilation.
- A dinette in the pilothouse, adjacent to the galley, would allow for meals with amazing scenery.
- Outside steering would let me run the boat,

when weather and conditions allow, with
wind in my face and visibility unlimited.

- A gaff rig would provide low centers of effort in the sail plan and (hopefully) let the boat have those sails up far more often and for longer periods than most sailboats seem to manage.
- Separate cabins would give the captain and crew privacy.

Keep in mind that this vessel would be just as fine as a powerboat or as a motorsailer. Either way, to my eye, she looks like a boat should look. ■

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