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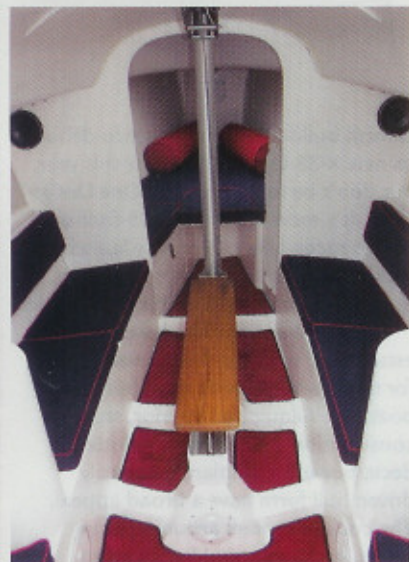


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Columbia 30

The new Columbia 30 would have attracted attention even if it were just an average white boat. The resurrection of Columbia Yachts is a story in itself. But Vince Valdes has grander aims than just bringing his father's old company back to life.

The marketplace will have to decide what to make of a high-end 30-foot sportboat that's weekend-cruiser friendly, but Valdes is betting plenty of people will want a hot-rod boat they can share with the family. When



you're sitting in the stylish interior with Valdes and designer Tim Kernan after a day of sailing out of Newport Beach, California, it all makes sense in that infectious way things do when you're talking to people who just love their boat. From the easy trailerability of a crank-up keel to the sexy recessed red lighting in the cabin, from the stout cassette-mounted outboard rudder to the original covestripe and logo, these

The next-generation Columbia has ample horsepower to knife upward in light air (above) and a Spartan interior with good headroom (left)

SAIL REVIEW

two young men dreamed up their ideal of a 30-foot speedster and took their best shot, with papa Dick Valdes looking over their shoulders and occasionally reminding them of his mantra for success: accommodations, accommodations, accommodations.

AUSSIE CAT

A market is often the mother of invention. According to Australian cruising-catamaran designer and builder Bryan Perry, "A number of people saw the Perry 43 and liked it. They said they wanted something bigger along the same lines." So he checked on what was already available and came up with the Perry 57 to scratch the itch of his potential customers. The resulting design is 57 feet long and 28 feet wide. Seemingly endless interior volume allows the main saloon to be more like a living room with a view than part of a boat. The two forward cabins are equipped with walk-around double bunks and cavernous stowage lockers; the aft cabin is equally large. The company's



program for foreign buyers offers financial incentives and includes lessons for new buyers on how to sail and where to cruise in Australia. Perry

may be on to something. The first 57 has been launched and five more are on order. **Perry Catamarans**, www.perrycatamarans.com.au. **B.S.**



The Columbia's high-performance bulb keel is retractable to facilitate easy trailering (left). The keel retracts using a simple winch (right)

For once it's okay to lead off talking about the interior, because I won't have to work hard to convince you that this boat—light, stiff, slippery, and all-carbon—will haul the mail. I didn't get to sail it in a lot of wind, but the last time I checked in on the hot-rod car scene, a big block hemi in a stripped-out chassis was guaranteed to scream—same thing here.

So how is the interior, really? Comfy, not a copycat exercise, and it feels right. You can find roomier 30-foot interiors on less-expensive boats, but they won't be racing in this company. Details: The four underseat storage lockers will hold whatever, but they're insulated and can serve

The rudder slides easily into place without the need to fumble with pintles and gudgeons



as iceboxes if need be. There's 5 feet, 10 inches of headroom, and, as Valdes points out, "for most women, that's enough." The vinyl-like finish on most interior surfaces is appealing, but it's a finish, not a weighty liner: accommodations meets speed, with berths fit for basketball players.

Forward there's a watertight bulkhead, and to handle the mast-keel loads there's a unidirectional carbon-fiber backbone intersecting major longitudinal stiffeners. Lifting the keel takes place entirely, neatly, inside the cabin. The keel housing constricts legroom, but the alternative is a different boat. Oh, and you won't be sniffing diesel as you swirl your Cabernet, because the Yanmar, small enough to be cranked off by hand, is sealed off from the interior and can be accessed only from the cockpit.



In the light breezes common off Newport Beach, the Columbia 30 sailed the way I would want a boat to sail. We took on a brand-new larger speedster from a well-known builder and beat it upwind and down. Whether I was crewing or driving, it was easy to do my job, even while being introduced to a few innovative pieces of gear.

Crossing the boat was easy (whether driving or crewing), working the cockpit was easy, and lounging dockside in that same huge, inviting cockpit? That was way easy.

KIMBALL LIVINGSTON

\$79,600 (base after 20% factory discount from \$99,500 list price FOB Fullerton, CA). **LOA** 30'; **LWL** 37'; **beam** 9'6"; **draft** (keel up/down) 2'8"/7'; **displ** 3,990 lbs; **ballast** 1,400 lbs; **sail area** (100% foretriangle) 433 sq ft; **fuel/water/waste** 12/13/9 gal; **power** 9-hp Yanmar with saildrive. **Columbia Yachts**, 714-773-9212, www.columbiayachts.com

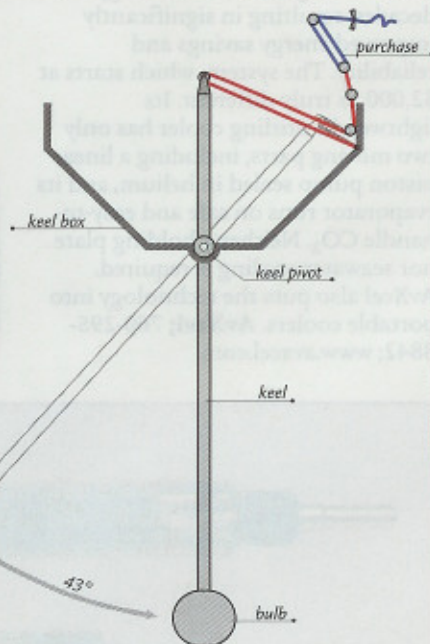
NO SUCH WORD AS CANT?



Canting keels are all the rage on high-ticket ocean racers, and the technology is now filtering down to the sportboat market. With a carbon mast and vacuum-bagged epoxy/foam hull, the Backman 21 displaces just 1,100 pounds but carries a hairy-chested 700 square feet of downwind sail area that will get you planing at 20 knots plus. The necessary righting moment to help the boat stand up to such a powerful sailplan is provided by a 440-pound bulb keel that cant

through an 86-degree arc and is controlled by tackles; along with the daggerboard, it can be retracted to give the boat just 18 inches of draft for trailering. Heavily influenced by Mini-Transat racers, this British-built boat looks like a whole heap of fun. There was no U.S. dealer at press time, but the company hopes to find one soon. **Backman Boats**, www.backmanboats.com.

PETER NIELSEN



A deck-led multipurchase system is all that's required to cant the Backman's 400-pound bulb keel to windward