

# Used Boat Notebook

By David Liscio

## C&C 32

This former racing machine doubles as a short-term cruiser

It's easy finding C&C 32 owners willing to wax enthusiastically about the boat's ability on the club race course or its ease of handling.

This popular masthead sloop continues to have a strong following, particularly among sailors acquainted with the quality of workmanship from Canadian designers and builders George Cuthbertson and George Cassian in the early 1980s. The pair originally launched their business in Ontario, Canada, and they had a knack for designing boats with racy profiles and its trademark aluminum toerail. The company also employed innovative use of cored laminates, allowing them flexibility of hull shape.

When the C&C 32 was unveiled in 1980, the model was advertised as a racer-cruiser in an effort to appeal to a growing demand for family cruising boats. The original brochure for the C&C 32 proclaimed "her creature comforts disguise the drive of a winner."

The on-deck design incorporated a roomy T-shaped cockpit and plenty of winches. Available with fin keel or shoal-draft keel with centerboard, the boat is ballasted with lead and driven by a large furling foresail paired with a smaller mainsail. The yacht could be ordered with tiller or wheel steering.

A long, low cabintrunk with fixed portlights added to the overall sleek profile. The deck was white, gleaming and uncluttered—with the exception of a small hatch forward and a traveler bolted across the coach roof—so the overall effect was that of a yacht meant to slip through the waves without resistance.

### First impressions

The C&C 32 looks like a racing machine of a certain age, made for speed and having fun on the racecourse. The clean lines, aluminum toerail, short boom with small mainsail and larger furling headsail together give off the appearance of a competitive racer, yet a glance below deck unveils a layout created for preparing meals, dining in comfort and sleeping six. There's even a nav station, a little niche where charts can be studied and courses plotted.

The key design compromise can be found at the stern, where instead of the reverse-transom found on race boats of that period, the C&C 32's has a chopped-off appearance.

### Construction

Potential buyers concerned about hull delamination can pretty much set their fears aside with the C&C 32. Its hull is a single unit of molded, solid fiberglass, coupled with a balsa deck sandwiched between layers of handlaid mat-and-roving. The standing rigging is stainless Navtec solid rod, and the toerail, mast and boom are made from anodized aluminum. The stemhead is

anodized aluminum and includes sculpted mooring chocks. The mast is keel-stepped for strength and increased safety.

### What to look for

During the production run from 1980 to 1984, the C&C 32 had several construction options. The boat came with a standard fin keel drawing nearly 6 feet or a shoal-draft keel with centerboard. Make sure the centerboard raises and lowers without snagging.

Most C&C 32s were fitted with stainless steel wheels. All connections from helm to the rudder post should be inspected for wear. Check the helm for sloppiness or excessive play when underway.

Owners report few problems with the C&C 32, except for the portlights. Check to see these windows are bedded and not about to pop out if struck by a wave. The Barient winches should turn smoothly if they have been greased and properly maintained.

### On deck

The C&C 32 features a short boom with relatively small mainsail and a furling 150-percent headsail. A masthead sloop rises 44 feet, 8 inches off the deck. The stainless steel Navtec solid rod standing rigging includes a split backstay.

The cockpit is large enough to seat six plus the helmsman, its roominess made possible by the designers who chopped off the stern, thereby gaining more cockpit space. The helm features a removable crescent-shaped cockpit seat.

Although C&C offered both wheel and tiller steering, the majority of 32s were built with wheel steering. The boom is controlled by a traveler mounted atop the cabin. Solo sailors complained it was difficult to reach the traveler, prompting many to fashion methods of leading the lines farther aft through a series of blocks and cleats. Other owners installed a rigid boom vang for additional sail control and shaping.

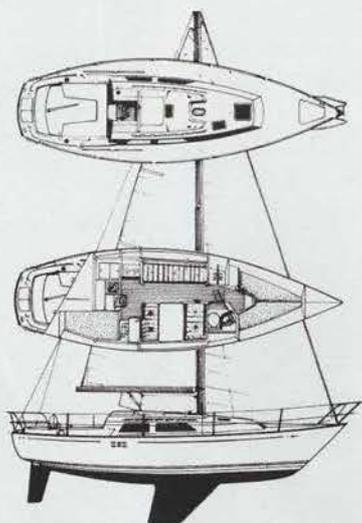
The foredeck hatch has been criticized for providing too small an opening to pass bulky sails.

### Down below

The layout below deck is considered traditional with few surprises and lots of headroom. Tom Anderson, who has been racing his 1982 C&C 32 *Nonpareil* out of

## C&C 32

LOA 31'6", LWL 24'8", Beam 10'3"; Draft keel version 5'8"; Draft centerboard version 6'11" board up 4"; Displacement 9,680 lbs; Ballast 3,900 lbs; Sail area 462 sq. ft.



### General Market Price Data

\$33,000

1980 Rhode Island

\$27,900

1983 Florida

\$26,500

1981 Washington



Marblehead, Massachusetts, for 16 seasons, says the boat has exceeded his expectations.

"I bought the 32 because I had been racing a lot aboard a C&C 38. I'm pretty tall and this was the first boat I looked at where I could stand up," he said.

At the bottom of the companionway the pleasant, functional galley is to port. It features a single-basin deep sink and a top-loading, double-cover, insulated icebox. The sink drains easily since it sits over the centerline of the boat. There's a two-burner stove, thoughtfully designed storage lockers and adequate counter space. Directly across from the galley on the starboard side, a permanent navigation station provides a suitable niche for studying charts, plotting courses and engaging in radio communications.

The dinette can seat four. Owners say that the passageway leading to the V-berth and the head is not blocked when the dinette is in use. The dinette also converts to a double bunk.

The boat sleeps six, with two on the dinette, two in the V-berth and one each on port and starboard quarter berths. According to Mike Clow, who sails his 1980 C&C 32 *Desire* on Michigan's Lake St. Clair, the quarter berths easily accommodate his bulky, 6-foot 5-inch frame. Not so for the dinette berth.

"Two people would have to be small and damn friendly to sleep there," he said.

The C&C 32 isn't dank, dark and gloomy down below, mostly due to generous portlights, a foredeck hatch and several air vents. Only the head takes a beating in the complaint department because it's small and features no separate shower. The boat carries 30 gallons of fresh water.

### Engine

The C&C 32 came with either a 30-horsepower Universal Atomic 4 gasoline

engine or a 15-horsepower Yanmar 2GM diesel. Owners report few problems with either power plant, although the diesel is expected to outlive its gasoline counterpart. The layout below deck provides easy access to the engine. The fuel tanks hold 20 gallons, so a long cruise would require carrying additional fuel.

### Underway

Owners have lots to say about how the boat handles underway.

"I added a solid vang and a Harken traveler," Anderson said. "I sail with the small main and a huge 155-percent genoa. In light air, you need it. At 17 knots, I put a reef in the main and leave the furling headsail all the way out."

Ken Letson, who sails his 1980 C&C 32 *Bonnie-Val* out of Madeira Beach, Florida, said the sloop's responsiveness compared to his previous boat, a Morgan 32, was simply amazing. "The C&C has nice lines, tight handling and it's really fast," he said.

Clow, too, praised the boat's handling abilities. "It performs best in light to moderate air. I've found you have to reduce sail before some other boats," he said, noting one of the vessel's shortcomings is the lack of clearance between the bottom of the boom and the traveler mounted atop the coachroof. All agree when sailing off the wind, the boat becomes a rocket.

### Conclusion

The C&C 32 is a graceful, seaworthy, well-made racer-cruiser capable of maneuvering around the buoys during club races or heading out of the harbor for short-range cruising. Although it sports a racy profile, the compact yacht is not without adequate creature comforts below deck. Easy to sail, it tends to attract loyal owners and hold its market value.

## C&C 32

### SAILING's Value Guide

(5-sailboat rating system)

**PRICE:** Used C&C 32s are available in the U.S. with an average price of \$26,000. Prices are slightly higher in Canada. ▲▲▲▲

**DESIGN QUALITY:** It was designed for both speed and comfort, which is always a trade-off. The overall lines are clean, the accommodations belowdecks are traditional. The cockpit is roomy. ▲▲▲▲

**CONSTRUCTION QUALITY:** C&Cs are top-quality in terms of overall build. A beefy, single-molded fiberglass hull is mated with a balsa-cored deck of hand laid-up mat and roving. The C&C 32 is a rugged boat and stands as an example of sound boatbuilding. ▲▲▲▲

**USER-FRIENDLINESS:** Owners appreciate the standard furling headsail as it makes the boat easier to balance. The small size of the head and its lack of a separate shower bring on occasional grouching, as does the forward deck hatch, which is too small for passing through bulky sails. ▲▲▲

**SAFETY:** Designed as both club racer and short-range cruiser, the C&C 32 is built solidly enough to sustain a pounding sea, although perhaps not a transoceanic voyage. Its keel-stepped mast gives the overall build additional strength and seaworthiness while reducing the boat's chances of dismasting. Due to the weakness of the portlights, some owners fear the glass might blow out in a thrashing sea. ▲▲▲

**TYPICAL CONDITION:** Condition ranges widely, from pristine with no structural problems to yachts suffering from having been raced too hard, too often. Boats currently for sale in the U.S. include those with ongoing projects aboard such as repowering the engine, rebedding portlights and installing wastewater holding tanks with Y-valves, to turn-key vessels ready to cast off the dock lines. ▲▲▲

**REFITTING:** The amount of refitting will depend on the condition of the sandwich-construction deck, the standing rigging and the engine. Most C&C 32s portlights require replacement. The original traveler atop the coachroof can be replaced with a smoother-operating Harken model. ▲▲▲▲

**SUPPORT:** Owners of C&C yachts gather online as part of associations and in chat rooms. C&C 32 owner Tom Anderson has started a website for C&C 32 owners, [www.cncphotoalbum.com](http://www.cncphotoalbum.com). ▲▲

**AVAILABILITY:** C&C 32s are still plentiful, with at least a dozen on the market in the U.S. and many more in Canada. ▲▲▲▲

**INVESTMENT AND RESALE:** C&C 32s hold their value, for example, one owner bought his 1982 C&C 32 in 1996 for \$25,000 and can put it on the market today for the same price. ▲▲▲▲

#### OVERALL 'SVG' RATING



