

# The Practical Sailor's Evaluation of the Whitby 42

## THE BOAT AND THE BUILDER

The Whitby 42 is one of the small success stories of the boatbuilding industry. Designed by Ted Brewer in 1971, the Whitby 42 has been in production since 1972. Almost 250 boats have been built.

While most boats have been built by Whitby in Canada, hulls numbered between 200 and 300 were built under license by Fort Myers Yacht and Shipbuilding in Florida.

It is safe to say that Whitby is a conservative boatbuilding firm. The 12-year old Whitby 42 is the newest boat in the Whitby line, which also includes the C&C-designed Whitby 45, the Alberg 37, and the Alberg 30. Yes, Virginia, you can still have an Alberg 30 built.

When the Whitby 42 was introduced in 1972, cost of the boat, including such features as diesel auxiliary generator, hot and cold pressure water, and refrigeration, was \$42,000, including US duty. In the same year, the Morgan Out Island 41 had a base price of \$33,000, and the Coronado 41 was \$30,000.

In 1983, the Coronado 41 is a memory, an Out Island 41 will set you back about \$130,000, and the Whitby 42 will cost you just shy of \$103,000 with the US duty paid. In other words, the Whitby 42 has good staying power, and, if anything, has improved on its value position in the market.

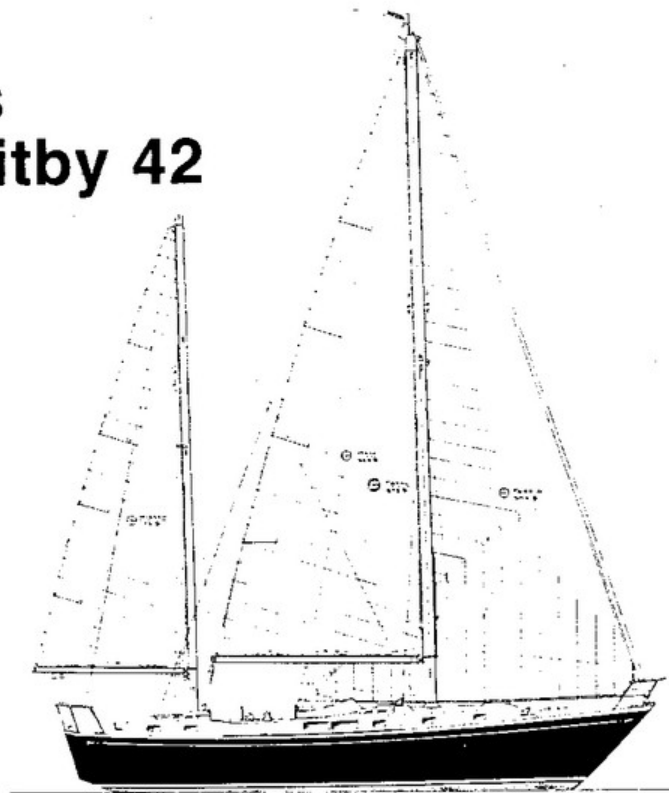
When we first saw the Whitby 42 in 1973, it seemed an ungainly whale of a boat, with high topsides, white decks, white everything. Over the years, through the subtle use of color — dark sheerstrake, two-tone decks — the appearance of the boat has been quietly altered. While the Whitby 42 will never have the sleek grace of an ocean racer, she has acquired a sturdy grace of her own, the product of endless refinement and subtle improvement over the 12 years of her production history.

Much of the credit for the changes in the Whitby 42 goes to Karl Hansen and his wife Doris, who both own Whitby and oversee most of the details of production. A large portion of the rest of the credit goes to the owners of the boats, who exhibit extraordinary interest in improving the breed.

The Whitby 42 is a fully-powered auxiliary, rather than a motorsailer. Although she won't go to windward like a light displacement fin-keeler, the boat is fully capable of performing well as a sailing vessel.

Many owners have put tens of thousands of sea miles on their boats. A fair number of owners are retired couples who purchased the boat as a cruising home. Since the boat has the elbow room, accommodations, storage, and comforts that you would associate with a retirement home, it has proved a remarkable success in that capacity.

The Whitby 42 does not particularly look like an oceangoing boat, with her center cockpit, high topsides, wide beam, and shoal draft. Nevertheless, an astounding percentage of the boats are used for serious passages.



## Specifications

LOA	42'
LWL	32'8"
Beam	13'
Draft	5'
Displacement	23,500 lbs
Ballast	8,500 lbs
Sail Area	875 sq ft

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## CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the Whitby 42 is sturdy, but without the dramatic overkill frequently seen in cruising boats. The hull is balsa-cored from just below the sheer to just below the waterline.

Hull and deck are joined with an internal flange, which is glassed together and mechanically joined with stainless steel rivets. In the way of the genoa track and some deck fittings, hull and deck are also bolted together. If you prefer, the builder will use bolts throughout to join hull and deck, for a slight additional charge.

On current boats, all through-hull fittings are equipped with through-bolted bronze seacocks. Older boats may have gate valves on underwater fittings.

Deck and deckhouse are also balsa-cored. Solid glass is used in the way of deck hardware. In some older boats, owners report that the area under the mizzenmast was not solid glass, resulting in compression of the

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deck in the vicinity of the mast. Owners of older boats also report that the underdeck support for the mizzen was marginal. Boats currently in production appear to have solved these problems.

For those used to looking at the massive construction of some cruising boats, notably those built in the Far East, some of the construction details of the Whitby 42 may look a little light. The success of these boats as cruisers indicates that proper proportioning in design and construction are more important than massive scantlings.

### PERFORMANCE

#### Handling Under Power

With a fuel capacity of 210 gallons, the Whitby 42 has a range under power of about 1500 miles. The Lehman Ford 4-254 diesel produces about 67 hp, enough to drive the moderate displacement hull in almost any conditions.

Fuel tanks are located amidships. This means that the trim and balance of the boat will not change significantly as fuel is consumed.

Although a three-bladed prop in aperture is standard, light air performance would be significantly improved by replacing the prop with a feathering prop such as the Maxprop or the Luke feathering prop. Using this prop there would be little or no sacrifice in performance under power, but there could easily be an increase in speed of a half knot or more under sail in winds under 10 knots. If you're off cruising in the South Pacific, just carry along the standard prop as a spare.

Amazingly, none of the Whitby 42 owners we talked to had added a feathering prop. It would be one of our first major changes if we owned the boat.

Because of her windage and fairly long keel, the boat does not exactly handle like a sports car under power. One owner says that his boat "turns like the Queen Mary," so give yourself plenty of room and take your time when docking.

Like most center cockpit boats, the Whitby 42's engine is located under the cockpit. The result is a huge engine room with stooping headroom. The entire cockpit sole is the engine room hatch cover, and it can be unbolted in an hour or so to allow removal of the engine without tearing the interior of the boat apart. For a cruis-

ing boat that puts a lot of hours on the engine, this is a real plus.

The engine room has enough space for a small auxiliary generator. A generator was standard when the boat was first built, but is now an option. If you intend to do extensive cruising in the boat, a generator of about 3.5 kw would be worth installing. Unfortunately, the weight of the generator, which is mounted on the port side, may give the boat a slight port list.

Access to the stuffing box is good, through hatches in the cabin sole in the aft cabin. General access to the engine is excellent.

Dual Racor fuel filters are now standard.

#### Handling Under Sail

Owners characterize the Whitby 42 as slightly faster than other boats of the same size and type. When equipped with a mizzen staysail and a spinnaker — a very reasonable combination for offwind sailing offshore in this boat — the boat is quite fast. One West Coast owner has raced his boat with remarkable success, but that is certainly not the boat's forte.

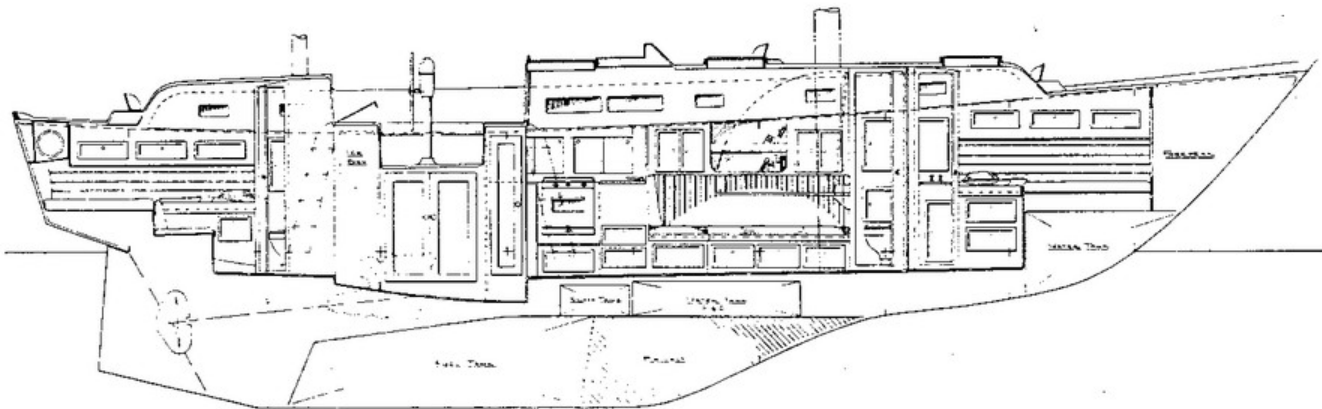
In the past, there have been problems with the mizzenmast. Since the main boom ends fairly close to the mizzen, the mizzen forestays do not have a very good angle for forward support. Until this year, it was also absolutely necessary to use the mizzen running backstays when carrying a mizzen staysail. Earlier boats also reported problems with the under deck support system for the mizzen.

All of the mizzen problems are exacerbated if the boat is equipped with a radar antenna mounted on the mizzen — the natural location on a ketch.

Fortunately, most of these problems have been resolved on boats currently in production. The mizzen spreaders are now swept back enough to provide good after support without the use of running backstays, although we would probably still rig them in heavy weather or sloppy seas. Forward support of the mizzen is improved by the addition of a triatic stay between the main and mizzen mastheads.

The use of a triatic probably constitutes a second-best solution, as loss of one mast could well result in the loss of the other, since the masts are tied together. However, there is no simple way to improve the staying of the mizzen.

The mainsail is now equipped with slab reefing, a



## *For offshore use, the louvered companionway drop boards should be replaced with solid boards to prohibit water going below in heavy weather*

great improvement over the roller reefing found on older models of the Whitby 42. A separate track on the mainmast for a storm trysail is an option we'd go for if the boat is to be used offshore.

Another highly desirable rig option is the doublehead rig, which comes in a package with a platform bowsprit and a removable inner forestay. Owners report that the extra sail area forward improves the balance of the boat as well as giving her more sail area forward.

Despite the great beam of the boat, her midships hull section is almost round. This means that the boat picks up very little form stability as it heels. Coupled with a ballast/displacement ratio of about 35%, this yields a boat that is not particularly stiff under sail, according to owners.

Although the boat comes with hydraulic steering, it is also possible to use an Edson pull-pull system. Since this is a less powerful steering system than the hydraulic steerer, you should go with the maximum size steering wheel that will fit in the cockpit — about a 40" diameter wheel. In addition to providing the extra leverage for the pull-pull system, a larger wheel lets you sit further outboard, an absolute necessity on a center cockpit boat when using a large genoa.

We prefer the pull-pull steerer because it gives the helmsman feedback about the balance of the boat. In the long run, the steering feedback will make you a better sailor. When the boat steers hard, it is out of balance, and is not being sailed to maximum efficiency.

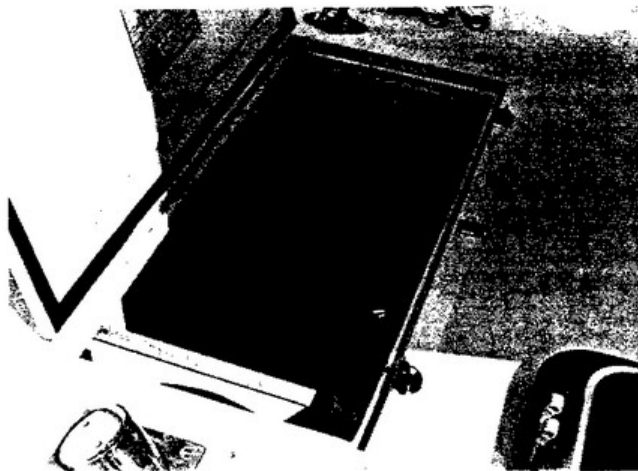
With a high aspect rig and a generous sailplan for her moderate displacement, there is no excuse for the Whitby 42 to be a dog under sail. If you have the boat heavily loaded, you'll just have to add more sail to maintain performance. Fairing in the through-hull fittings and adding a feathering prop will also help performance, particularly in light air.

Finally, by all means spring for the bowsprit and the extra sail area it gives you. According to one owner, designer Ted Brewer said the addition of the bowsprit is the single greatest improvement in the boat over the years.

### LIVABILITY

#### Deck Layout

The deck layout of the Whitby 42 is about as simple as



The propane locker comes equipped with two 20 pound bottles, a season's use for most people. The latches should be stronger, however.

the deck on a boat can be. There are sturdy Skene chocks and large cleats forward, and chocks plus big cleats aft. With the platform bowsprit, anchors can be made self-stowing. Large urethane bow rollers would be preferable to the small stainless steel rollers on the bowsprit-equipped boat we examined.

The foredeck has plenty of space for an anchor windlass, an absolute must if the boat is used for extended cruising. The forepeak locker could be used to hold anchor chain, but we'd be reluctant to add another 500 lbs of ground tackle in the front of the boat, since there's already a large water tank under the forward berths.

Despite a wide cabin trunk, access forward along the deck is good. To go from the cockpit aft, however, it is necessary to go over the top of the aft cabin, as the mizzen standing rigging takes up much of the side decks aft.

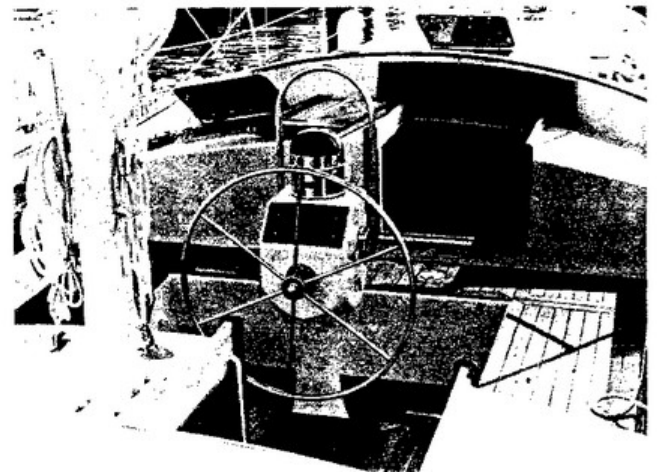
Stanchions, bow, and stern rails are tall and sturdy. There are two lockers on the afterdeck, one useful for lines and fenders, the other containing the propane bottles. Although the lids of both lockers are equipped with gaskets, surprisingly flimsy turnbutton latches are used to secure the lids. For offshore passagemaking, we'd replace these with sturdier latches.

There is also a large locker on the port side of the cockpit. This locker, too, lacks a good set of hatch dogs, and since it opens into the engine room, we'd give high priority to making it secure, despite its location well above the water.

The cockpit is huge. However, it is not particularly vulnerable, since it is fairly high. We've seen few cockpits which would be better in port. There's even a big icebox next to the helmsman, making it unnecessary to truck down to the galley for a cold one.

A sturdy molded breakwater protects the front of the cockpit. We'd add a dodger for offshore use. The original drawings of the boat also show a permanent windshield, which would be a good feature on a boat used primarily in northern latitudes.

One Whitby 42 we've seen has a permanent shelter over the front end of the cockpit, which both improved the looks of the boat — the shelter was designed by someone with a good eye — and gave remarkable protection to the front of the cockpit, allowing the com-



The cockpit of the Whitley 12 can entertain plenty of friends. A dodger attached to the high breakwater will keep the cockpit dry at sea.

## *In port, the occupants of the forward cabin are not second-class citizens — their accommodations are very spacious*

panionway hatch to be left open in all but the worst weather offshore.

For offshore use, the louvered companionway drop boards should be replaced with solid boards, since a remarkable amount of water can get below in heavy weather. This is particularly important in the companionway to the aft cabin, which faces forward.

The companionway to the aft cabin makes it impossible to fit a mainsheet traveler. Therefore, a good boom vang is a must.

We strongly recommend the two-tone deck option. Not only will it break up an otherwise overwhelming amount of deckspace visually, it will be much easier on the helmsman's eyes. Although it's not listed as an option, you could probably also get the deckhouse top in a color other than white. This would visually lower the height of the deckhouse as well as reducing glare.

### **Belowdecks**

Down below, the Whitby 42 really shines. The boat has one of the more livable interiors we've seen.

The owner's cabin aft has two large berths. If they are to be used as sea berths, they must be fitted with lee cloths. Since the berths are not parallel to the centerline of the boat, they do not make particularly good sea berths. The person sleeping in the leeward berth will find his head lower than his feet, while the occupant of the weather berth will be in the opposite situation.

Although there are a fair number of storage bins and a good hanging locker, the aft cabin has few drawers. Although drawers are not a particularly efficient way to use space, they are extremely convenient, particularly for those who have lived their lives in houses.

The aft head is huge. A few handrails would make it more comfortable offshore.

A passageway with stooping headroom joins the aft cabin to the rest of the boat. Getting full headroom in this passage would unnecessarily complicate the cockpit layout.

A workbench which can be converted to a berth is on the starboard side of the passage. The space below the bench is filled by a fuel tank, some storage space, and a big chart storage locker.

Outboard of the workbench is the electrical panel. Despite the stooping headroom, this is just about the ideal location for the electrical panel, since it is completely protected from spray.

On the port side of the passage, just aft of the companionway, there is a large locker for foul weather gear.

Little touches like the chart storage area and the wet gear locker make the difference between a floating condominium which is miserable at sea and a true cruising boat.

The main cabin is roomy, light, and well-ventilated. The galley to port has a large refrigerator and deep freeze — Grunert holding-plate refrigeration, driven by an engine-mounted compressor — a three burner propane stove, and, on new boats, deep double sinks.

The only weak point in the galley is the mounting of the stove. On starboard tack, it fetches up against the back of the stove well when the boat heels much over 15°. On port tack, the stove blocks access to the drawers under the sink counter. Although the boat is meant to be sailed at slight angles of heel, the stove should be free to gimbale through at least 90° without inconvenience.

There is a ventilation hatch over the galley, a real boon for the cook in hot weather.

Except for the stove limitation, the galley gets an A+.

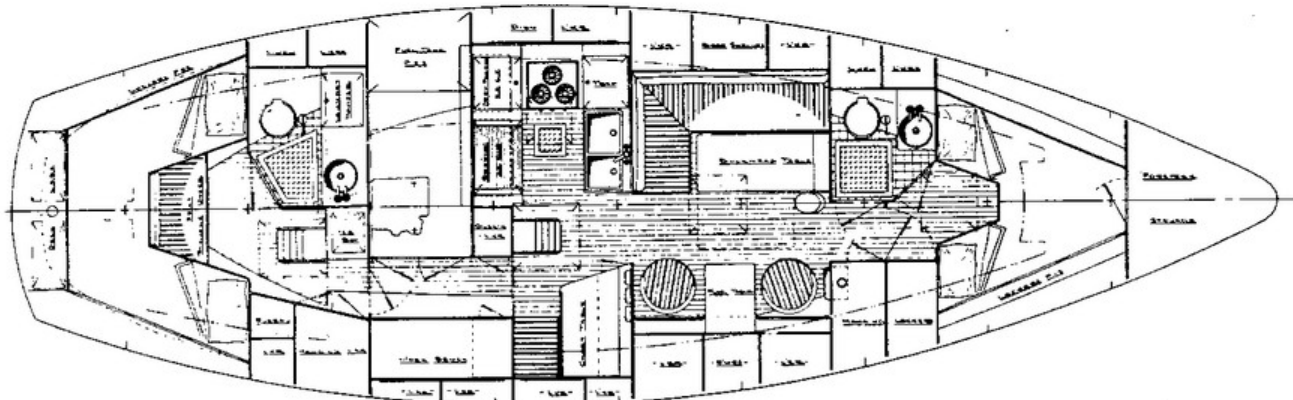
To starboard is the navigation table, with adequate room for the mounting of instruments and a good chart table. The chart table slopes toward the navigator, making it easier to work on from a seated position, but it is equipped with a folding support which allows the table to be leveled for use in port, making a handy desk.

Originally, there was no settee on the starboard side of the boat. Rather, the boat had two swivel chairs, a familiar touch to those used to life ashore. However, if the boat is to be used offshore, it should be ordered with the optional starboard settee, since the main cabin settees are the only good sea berths on the boat.

There is plenty of storage space outboard of the settees on both sides, including a rather excellent liquor locker with a folding cocktail table.

The main cabin table folds up against the port forward bulkhead. On a boat of this size, a fixed cabin table makes more sense. If we owned a Whitby 42, we'd build a narrow dropleaf table with deep fiddles, incorporating a pipe to the cabin overhead for a handhold when sailing offshore. While this would intrude into the main cabin space, it would reduce the chance of a bad fall in rough conditions, would free up the bulkhead for other uses, and would create a storage space on the cabin sole where bulky objects like spare sails could be stowed offshore.

The forward cabin and head are almost as roomy as the aft cabin. In port, the occupants of the forward cabin are not second class citizens. Except for light air sailing



## *The Whitby 42 is an excellent compromise between the needs of the long term livaboard and the long distance cruiser*

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downwind, the forward cabin will probably not be used for sleeping offshore.

All in all, the interior of the Whitby 42 is an excellent compromise between the needs of the long term livaboard and the long distance cruiser.

### CONCLUSIONS

In these days of astronomical prices, the Whitby 42 represents a good value for living aboard or cruising. While finish detail is not particularly fancy, the boat is solidly built, and should be easy to maintain.

The boat comes with a rather remarkable list of standard equipment included in the base price of just under \$100,000, with such items as hot and cold water, refrigeration, huge tankage, two showers, dual voltage electrical systems, and ground tackle.

The options are practical and born of experience. Many of them are highly desirable, such as the double headsail rig option with bowsprit, contrasting deck color, dark sheer indent, autopilot, and windlass.

Fully equipped for cruising — and we mean fully

equipped — the boat will cost about \$120,000.

You can expect reasonable sailing performance from the Whitby 42. Obviously, her best point of sail will be reaching in moderate to heavy air.

Because of the improvements that have been made in the boat over the years, we would prefer a new boat rather than a used boat. Given the fact that used boats sell for nearly as much as new boats, and given the fact that you can pretty much customize the boat any way you want when you have it built, a new Whitby 42 looks very good indeed.

Part of the reason the boat is relatively inexpensive is the strength of the US dollar. When the boat first went into production, the Canadian dollar was worth about \$1.05 US. Today, the Canadian dollar only fetches about \$.81 US.

Most owners are very enthusiastic about their boats. For most of them, this is not a first boat. Although most consider the boat a good boat dockside, they also consider it a boat in which to go places. We agree.

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