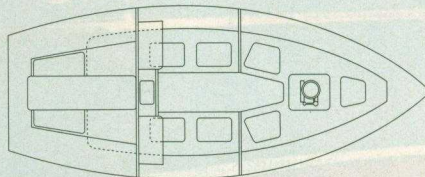


HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU PAY?
£2,000-£3,300

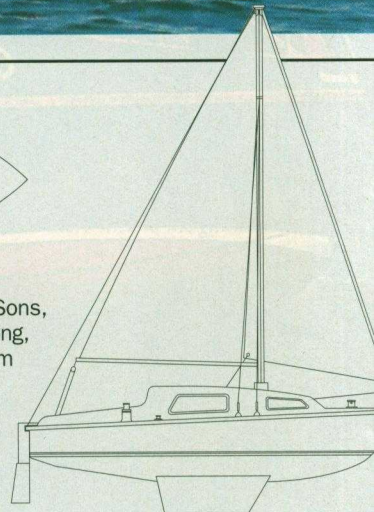


Specifications

LOA	5.79m	19ft
LWL	4.65m	15ft 6in
Beam	2.14m	7ft
Draught	0.66m	2ft 2in
Displacement	727kg	1,600lb
Ballast	327kg	720lb
Sail area Mainsail	7.44m ²	80ft ²
Genoa	8.37m ²	95ft ²
Water	50l	11gal
Max headroom	1.64m	5ft 4 1/2in
Disp/length ratio	192	
Ballast ratio	45%	



Designer: John V Sadler **Builder:** Sadler and Sons, Bicester
Cockpit seats: 1.44m (4ft 8 1/2in) long, 0.44m (1ft 5 1/2in) wide **Cockpit width:** 1.38m (4ft 6 1/2in) **Side-decks:** 18cm (7in) wide
Saloon headroom: 1.32m (4ft 4in)
Saloon berths: 1.98m x 0.61m (6ft 6in x 2ft)
Forward cabin headroom: 1.27m (4ft 2in)
Forward berth: 1.98m x 1.72m x 0.45m (6ft 6in x 5ft 8in x 18in)



SeaWyched!

This affordable little cruiser, with an active owner's association, is an ideal starter boat. **David Parker** reports

Over 700 SeaWyches were sold in kit form since they were first introduced in 1970. Peter and Lena Hubbard built theirs in 1979, and have enjoyed the versatility of its design ever since.

"Before buying the kit we considered a Sailfish," says Peter. "It came ready to go on a trailer, but we decided the SeaWych offered more boat for the money." Before the SeaWych they had owned a 16ft dayboat with two berths and a swing keel.

The Hubbards mainly cruise *Emma* around the Solent and from Chichester to Poole. "We sail her whenever we can – she's perfect for local, coastal sailing," says Lena.

Design modifications

To build something this size in a standard-sized garage is quite an achievement. Working in their spare time, it took Peter and Lena 18 months in total to complete *Emma*.

The kit consisted of separate mouldings – hull, deck, berths, sink, etc – which had to be bonded together.

"The trickiest bit was fitting the top to the bottom," comments Lena.

Because she was destined for cruising rather than racing, *Emma* was built to a higher specification than the standard boat, and the deck and hull fastenings were strengthened with layers of wetted-out mat above and below the mouldings. They also bonded the shelves to the hull to provide a web for more rigidity.

Usually, the main bulkhead on the SeaWych is shaped to give the cabin an open-plan interior, but Peter incorporated a door frame to add greater strength amidships. This means that *Emma* has a two-cabin arrangement and

the forward compartment containing the heads can be closed off with a curtain. There's no hatch forward, only a small vent, but some owners have added a hatch to provide an emergency escape route.

Peter has fitted out *Emma* in teak which obviously adds more weight, but does enhance the interior. He has also upgraded the design of the original windows. Typical of their day, these were fitted like car windows using rubber gaskets, but Peter has built frames which involved steaming the timber to fit the compound curves of the apertures.

Accommodation

Peter and Lena are happy with the amount of space on board for just the two of them, but wouldn't want to cruise *Emma* for lengthy periods of time.

There are four berths, all 6ft 6in long. The two quarter berths in the saloon extend back under the sides of the cockpit. A large part of each berth is in the main cabin, so you're not confined to a cubby hole. The V-berths in the

forward cabin have an infill to create a double bed measuring the full beam of the boat (7ft) tapering down to 18 inches.

Under the forward berth is a sea toilet. This doesn't have a separate sea-cock but a ball head arrangement which discharges straight down through the bottom of the boat through a flap valve held shut by a spring and water pressure.

"This is a successful design which has worked for 21 years," says Peter, "but we're all environmentally more conscious now, so we don't use the sea toilet in marinas or harbours. Instead, we've got a Portaloos which is small enough to be pushed down the quarterberth out of the way."

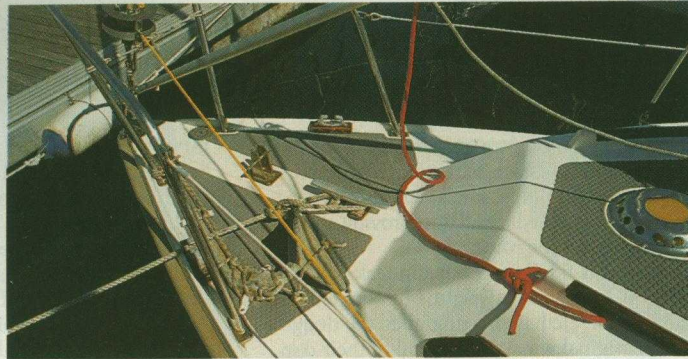
To help counter-balance the weight of people in the cockpit, the Hubbards have fitted the battery box in with the loo compartment. Up forward there's a chain locker with 15 fathoms of 1/4-inch chain and a disused, built-in water tank with a filler on the foredeck. Over the years, the tank became porous, so now the space is used as storage for canned food.

The saloon has a neat little galley and the cover on the sink serves as a step-down from the companionway. There's a two-burner ▶▶



"We still see hundreds about. A lot of young families have them for several years – it hooks them and then they move on to bigger boats." *Peter Hubbard, owner*





Top left: The cockpit has ample space for two adults and two small children. Space onboard has recently been extended by a sprayhood Top right: Emma is still fitted with round-the-boom roller-reefing for the mainsail Bottom left: Narrow side-decks need care when going forward. The owner has added teak window frames Bottom right: The sturdy pulpits provides security on the foredeck

SeaWych Association

Emma is kept on a half-tide mooring at Bembridge, IOW, and Peter and Lena belong to Brading Haven YC. The club has a strong relationship with the SeaWych Owners' Association and has hosted the Seawych Rally for 28 years.

The Association is extremely active and has members in the Netherlands and France. The rules allow for anyone buying a bigger boat to retain their membership, and they now have over 200 boats in the association – 108 of which are SeaWyches.

Contact SeaWych Owners' Association: Peter Hubbard ☎ 02380 595147 **Fax** 02380 595147 (marked PMH) **Email** pmh@maths.soton.ac.uk **Membership secretary** Barri Hopkins ☎ 01206 384809 **Email** barrih@btinternet.com

Yacht in the Med for £30 a month?

Pam and Tony Wilkinson have had their SeaWych, *Sprite 11*, for about five years, and keep it on a mooring at the bottom of their garden at Emsworth.

They also belong to a syndicate of five owners who have a SeaWych near Cannes.

"This must be the cheapest way to have a yacht on the Riviera," says Pam. "We pay £30 a month each – and that covers the mooring, insurance, and maintenance charges. Our initial capital outlay was £600 each which included the cost of getting the boat down there. It's very cheap. Big boats cost you so much just sitting in the water so unless you're constantly belting across the Channel you're not getting your money's worth."

cooker and grill on the port side, with a work surface on the starboard side.

Shelves running above the berths can carry a great deal of gear. There are two lockers under the saloon berths with additional lockers in the forward cabin. There's also a large locker leading from the saloon under the cockpit sole. Some owners have used this area for inboard engines but Peter and Lena prefer to restrict it to light stowage to prevent too much weight aft.

Recently Peter and Lena fitted a sprayhood which makes a big difference to their sailing comfort and allows them greater space below with the hatch open. Four of us in the cockpit was a bit of a squeeze, but there would be ample space for a couple and two small children.

The fuel tank stows underneath the cockpit sole, accessed from the port-hand locker. Concerned about what would happen if the cockpit got swamped in heavy weather, Peter added two extra cockpit drains to the two specified in the plans. "But we've never had water in the bottom of the boat," he says. Other modifications include extension pieces to raise the sheet pulleys above the tracks for the genoa sheets.

The stanchions and substantial pushpit, pulpits and guardrails make this feel like a safe family boat – we particularly liked the open foredeck layout which gives plenty of room for anchor work.

Under sail

The SeaWych handles like a typical small bilge keeler. She has a sloop rig with a roller-reefing foresail and roller-reefing mainsail. We particularly liked the 'old fashioned' bottom handle winches – they're very handy and quick, you don't have to hunt for a winch handle and there's nothing to lose over the side.

The SeaWych doesn't point too high – about 50 degrees – and is sensitive to high winds, tending to gripe up into the gusts. If the wind is on the nose, Peter and Lena often just use a combination of the engine and the genoa.

During our test sail, we found her to be a sturdy little craft, and you can feel her stiffen up and lose her initial tenderness as she builds up speed. As Lena remarked, she's "a safe, dry boat." Emma's normal cruising speed is about 4-5 knots, but Peter tells us with the spinnaker flying she's done 7 knots.

Further improvements

Two versions of the boat were built. The Mk1 didn't have the rolling genoa and carried quite a lot of weatherhelm. To counteract this the sail plan was moved forward and she was given a larger genoa with a slimmer mainsail. The ballast was also moved forward to prevent the transom dragging through the water.

Emma is a Mk2, but weatherhelm was still quite heavy so Peter modified the rudder by adding four inches to its leading edge. This alteration has given her neutral helm. We found her light and well balanced, although she still comes head to wind if over pressed. In retrospect, Peter now feels he might have added too much to the rudder, and he would prefer a bit more weatherhelm to give an increased feel to the tiller.

Peter wanted the boat to be as strong as possible because she was destined for a life of cruising, so he also beefed up the standing rigging using 6mm shrouds instead of 3mm.

Emma is powered by an 8hp Yamaha on an outboard bracket, and during tests we recorded a maximum speed of 5.5 knots. A long-shaft engine is used to prevent the prop lifting out of the water – when someone moves forward on to the foredeck, for example.

Generally, we found this boat responsive to handle under power, bearing in mind that with the offset outboard bracket you can use both engine tiller and rudder for close-quarter manoeuvring.

ST

SAILING TODAY

Verdict

The SeaWych is a 'compromise' boat. She has reasonable accommodation and performance – but on a boat this length the coachroof is too high and beam too big for really good sailing performance.

But the most attractive aspect of this boat is that it offers extremely good value for money. On the second-hand market prices start at approximately £2,700. Expect to pay up to £3,300 for one in really good condition on a road trailer.

The SeaWych is economical to run, offers low maintenance and is an excellent starter boat – and you won't have to pay silly money to get afloat.

FOR

Good value for money
Good accommodation
Low maintenance

AGAINST

Modest sailing performance
Build quality varies
Small cockpit

Next month: Small boat sailing – launching sites in the Helford River