Sailing Magazine's Boat Test

LOA 48'10"; LWL 40'9"; Beam 13'8"; Draft 9'6";
Displacement 16,750 lbs.;
Ballast 7,950 lbs.; Sail Area 1,345 sq. ft.

**Base boat price $395,000**
Farr International, Inc.
613 Third Street, Suite 11
Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 268-1001; fax (410) 268-1137
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# CONCORDIA 47

*A mix of high-performance ingredients produce an exciting breakthrough cruiser*

by John Kretschmer
with photography by Michael Wootton

**C**onsidering Carroll Marine post-cures its composite hulls in a computer-controlled oven, it is not too much of a stretch to speak of its newest boat in terms of gourmet cooking. The list of ingredients is mouthwatering. By combining design work by Farr Yacht Design, construction by Carroll Marine and marketing and organization by the crew at Farr International, you get an intriguing and very fast boat. Then add a classic name like Concordia to the mix, and it gets even better. The Concordia 47, Carroll Marine's first entrée in the performance cruiser field, does not disappoint those expecting a major breakthrough.

The 47 is not a typical performance cruiser. This is an extremely fast hull with a carbon spar and a comfortable, well-thought-out interior. Before this new millennium gets very old, this may be what all cruising boats will look like. For the year 2000, the Concordia 47 strikes me as a boat that is refreshingly ahead of its time. It will also be ahead of the cruising fleet on almost any point of sail.

The first of what will become a new line of cruising boats, the Concordia 47 is a development of the Corel 45 hull, "modified," as Bob Perry noted in his recent review in *SAILING*, "to make it more cruiser friendly." The design premise was to keep the boat incredibly light by using the most advanced materials during construction, and to keep the sailplan easy to manage for short-handed cruising.

The westerly was light but steady as we went out for a test sail, and amber wavelets creased Chesapeake Bay near Annapolis. The Concordia 47 was sailing flat, tracking smartly to weather as we approached in the photo boat. We crossed the nearly plumb bow, revealing a nice perspective of the fine entry slicing through the water while throwing a minimal bow wave. I steered the photo boat while Mike Wootton took a few profile shots. Compared to the hard edges of most Farr/Carroll Marine grand prix boats, the lines of the Concordia 47 seem just a bit softer. The cabintrunk has been extended, obviously to give the boat more headroom and elbowroom below, but I think it also gives the boat more of a presence on the water. Completing our loop, the view from the stern offered a look at the twin wheels and sleek transom step arrangement.

**By the numbers**

When you crunch the numbers, the differences between the Corel 45 one-design and the new Concordia 47 cruising machine become more apparent. While the LWLs are nearly identical, the Concordia displaces almost 1,500 pounds more than the Corel with its displacement of 16,750 pounds. That doesn't suggest that the Concordia is even remotely heavy. By comparison, the Farr-designed Beneteau 461 weighs 20 percent more than the Concordia. Interestingly, the Corel 45 carries slightly more ballast than the new Concordia. Ballast doesn't impact seaworthiness like it once did when most hull and keel shapes were similar, and the Concordia will be plenty stiff with a 47 percent ballast-to-displacement ratio, although the righting motion will be a bit slower, a bit less jerky, which is, of course, more desirable in a cruising boat.

Like the Corel 45, the Concordia 47 sports a draft of 9 feet, 6 inches. From a speed standpoint, you can dramatically reduce the wetted surface of the hull with a deep keel and a bulb, relying on the keel form and low center of gravity for stability. For practical cruising applications, however, I think this keel may end up dredging more than a few harbors. There are plans to offer a 7-foot shoal-draft version.

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The hull of the Concordia 47 is vacuum-bagged E-glass and Kevlar sandwiched around Baltec's new Superlite coring material. Vacuum-bagging ensures that the laminate skins encapsulate the core without voids while using as little resin as possible. It is one of the best ways to build cored hulls. By post curing the hull in an oven, a temperature-sensitive catalyst can be used that allows Carroll Marine to use pre-impregnated materials and maintain strict control of the laminating process. By comparison, most manufacturers of cruising boats lay the hulls up at ambient room temperature, allowing the chemicals to cure on their own.

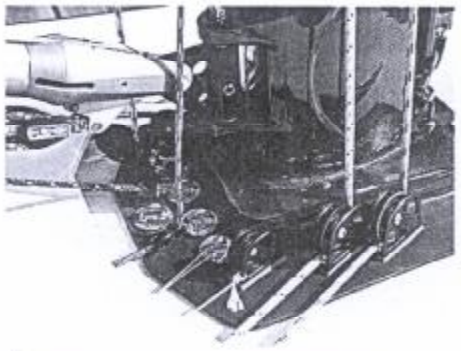
Superlite coring is also used in the deck and for the bulkheads. The deck is a vinylester composite, and the bulkheads are epoxy laminates with natural wood veneers. A structurally integrated aluminum grid accepts the keel bolts and supports the rigging loads. Weight is pared everywhere. Not only are the rudder and rudder stock carbon fiber: The rudder quadrant is too.

Climbing aboard from the photo boat, Carol Dean and I joined Farr International's Tink Chambers in the open-style cockpit, which is not only efficient for sailing, but extremely comfortable. Twin wheels open up access to the transom step, a wide platform with a telescoping ladder and a shower with hot and cold water. The cockpit seats may be a bit short for sleeping but are well designed for sitting. There is a decent-size cockpit locker and a dedicated liferaft compartment.

**On deck**

The view from either helm is terrific. The wheels are set well aft and the primary winches are on the forward end of the coaming, putting them out of reach from the helm. But that is the nature of this style of cockpit and in practical cruising applications, an instantly alert autopilot helmsperson is just a push button away anyway. The mainsheet traveler runs across the sole just forward of the wheels.

The fractional rig features a carbon mast by Hall Spars, an aluminum boom and rod rigging. A Hall Quick Vang and carbon spinnaker pole are also standard. There is no need to haul lapping genoas aboard since the 106-percent jib, which is designed for easy tacking and roller furling, provides plenty of horsepower. In addition to a couple of different jibs, all you'll need is an asymmetrical chute and storm jib for cruising. A powerful high-roach mainsail is at the heart of the drive system, and the aluminum boom is set up for two reef points. All deck blocks are Harken, using Black Magic blocks where applicable. In keeping with the cruising philosophy, there is a hydraulic backstay instead of runners. The Navtec hydraulic panel and pump is well positioned by the main trimmer.

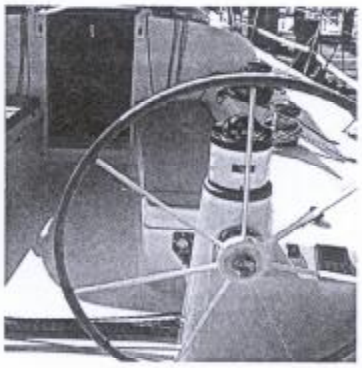


*All lines are led aft underneath a raised portion of the coachroof to eliminate deck clutter.*

All sail controls are led aft under a raised portion of the coachroof. This is aesthetically pleasing and certainly eliminates deck clutter, although personally I am always on the alert for chafe and like to keep an eye on as much of the running rigging as possible. The nonskid surface is aggressive, and there are stainless handrails on the coachroof. The stanchions are almost too well supported: A support leg extends well inboard and will be something to catch a foot on the first few times you go forward. Also, if you plan to cruise seriously, a suitable anchoring arrangement will need to be added.

**Down below**

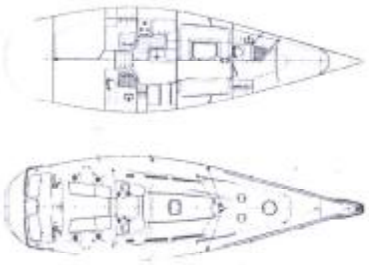
The well-thought-out interior arrangement and fine, though



*The view from either helm is terrific, and although the wheels are set too far aft for the helmsman to reach the primary winches, a quick switch to the autopilot would give short-handed sailors a chance to trim the sails. The dual wheel arrangement opens up the cockpit space and allows for easy access to the swim step.*

somewhat austere, level of finish clearly demonstrates that Bruce Farr and Carroll Marine can indeed build a world-class cruising boat. Once you descend the companionway steps, the U-shaped galley is immediately to port and features a three-burner propane stove, double stainless steel sinks and a large icebox. The two water tanks are integral to the hull, which is a great idea and an advantage of composite construction. Total water capacity is 100 gallons, which translates into the need for a watermaker for serious cruising. Tucked behind the galley is the aft cabin including a genuine double berth and large hanging locker.

To starboard is the head and shower, with the nav station just forward. The nav desk features a



cutout for a laptop computer and room for radios and repeaters beneath the electrical distribution panel. The saloon has a U-shaped settee to port draped around a table and a starboard settee opposite with a bookshelf above. There is adequate storage throughout the boat, but it is by no means excessive. Of course, that is the conundrum of all high-performance cruising boats: Fast is light but cruising gear is usually heavy. You simply can't load up a Concordia 47 like you can a heavy displacement boat. So leave the hardcover books and other unnecessary gear at home and focus on great sailing. Cruising boats don't have to become summer cottages.

Continuing forward, the V-berth cabin features a second head and another good-size hanging locker. Ventilation throughout is excellent with Lewmar top hatches and several opening portlights.

The Concordia is powered by a Yanmar 47-horsepower saildrive diesel. Access to the engine is good from behind the companionway, and the saildrive lower unit eliminates the stuffing box. The aluminum fuel tank holds 60 gallons, which is not excessive by most cruising boat standards, but again, this is not your average cruising boat. Not only is the Yanmar stingy on fuel, but you won't need to motor unless it is virtually windless. Incidentally, when we motored back into Annapolis, I was impressed with the good turn of speed and quiet running. The engine box is well insulated.

**Under sail**

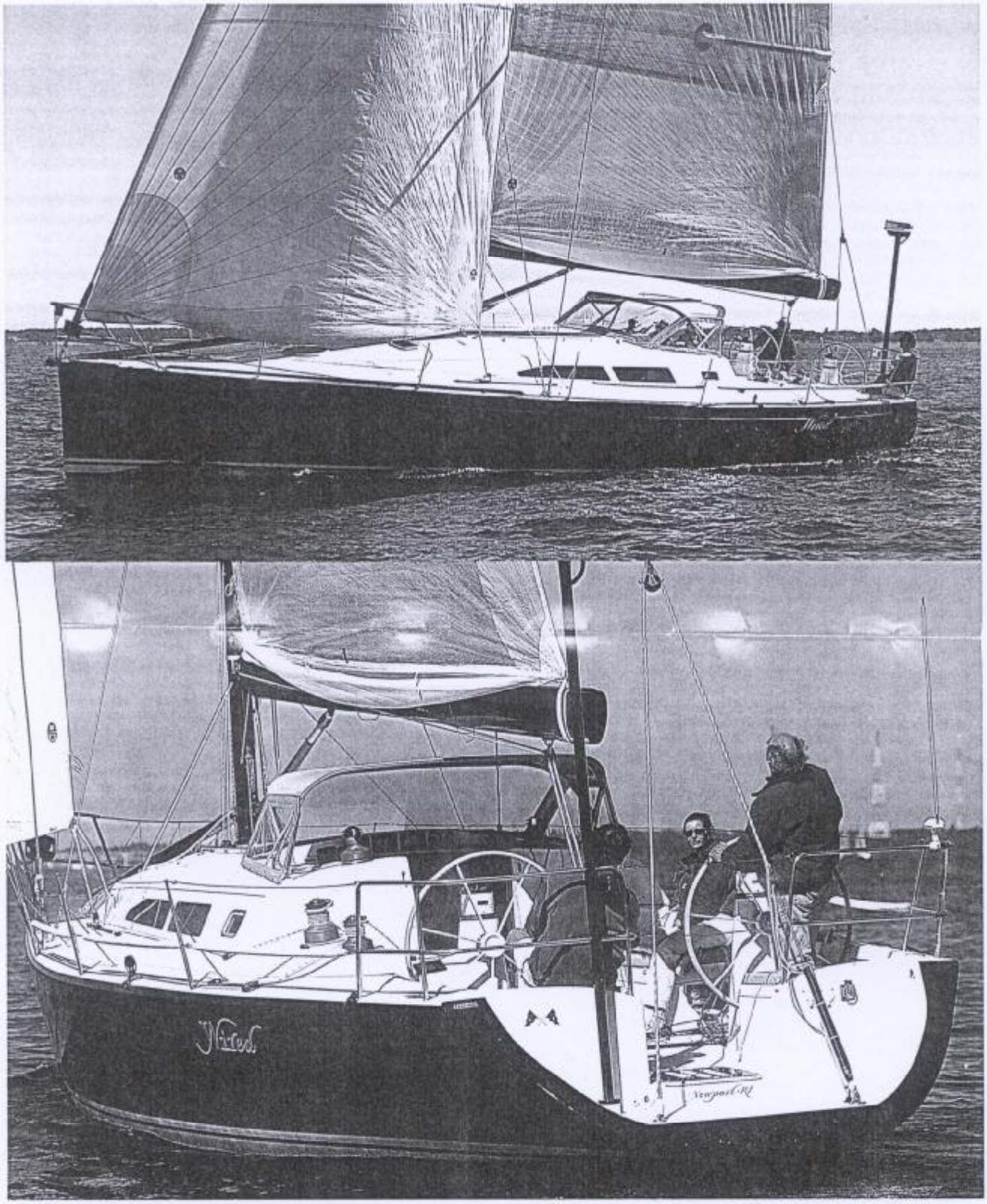
Taking the leeward wheel, I leaned out on the aft coaming and felt the boat come alive. The sensation was intriguing; we were obviously sailing fast, skipping along on top of the water like a typical lightweight flyer, but it also felt like we were slicing through the waves like an old Sparkman & Stephens Swan. It is an intangible and subjective thing, but some boats just feel right and I was quickly adding the Concordia 47 to my short list of boats that feel right.

I am not always a fan of twin wheels since, without independent systems, the steering can be a bit unresponsive. But that is certainly not the case with the Concordia 47. Although the wind became lighter as the day went on, the boat remained incredibly responsive. A slight turn of the wheel produced an immediate course change. Fingertip control seems a hackneyed phrase these days, but it does accurately describe the easy steering of the Concordia 47.

Bringing the boat through the wind revealed the advantage of the fractional rig and small headsails. Just like that, we came about, sheeted the jib home and accelerated—no muss, no fuss, and no runners to deal with. Cracking off onto a reach, the big main kept the boat moving in the diminishing breeze. In fact, we managed enough speed to move the apparent wind forward and keep the jib sheeted relatively tight and drawing nicely. As the wind died, we sailed closer and immediately started making our own wind.

I found myself longing for a stiff breeze and an ocean swell; I wanted to see how the boat would respond at sea. Of course, intuitively I already knew. I was just greedy for the experience of blasting across an ocean in a world-class boat.

*The view down the companionway banishes any doubts that this boat is not a cruiser, top. The U-shape galley, middle, features a three-burner propane stove, double stainless steel sinks and a large icebox. You can't ask for much more in a nav station, including a nifty cutout in the desktop for the laptop.*



A vison of what cruising boats may look like in the 21st century. The origin of the Concordia 47 may have been the race-oriented Corel 45, but the 47's higher displacement and added features like a larger cabinhouse, dodger and swim platform have made it cruiser friendly with plenty of speed to burn.

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