

# ON BOARD

*This sloop may change the racer/cruiser image*

## CONCORDIA 47



The Concordia 47 combines speed, comfort and easy handling in a great-looking package. A big rig and minimal wetted surface make her sail like a witch in light air.

BY DENNIS CAPRIO

Steering the Concordia 47 from the high side, I saw the gust coming before I felt it. Whomp! The leeward rail dipped into the blue-gray Narragansett Bay, and I fought the wheel's tug to keep her from coming into the wind. Exciting stuff, but stupid.

I suspected that the 47 would steer as close to the wind as any race-bred cruising boat, but she taught me that forcing her to stay higher than 28-30 degrees to the apparent wind is a waste of effort. Crack off a degree or two and hang on: She lifts her rail out of the water and accelerates like a shark hell-bent on getting its next meal.

Tacking the Concordia under her working sails requires little more than turning the wheel—the headsail almost takes care of itself. The non-overlapping 106 percent LP jib snaps around quickly, and a heads-up trimmer can have it sheeted in before he needs the winch handle. When I got everything just right, we were at maximum velocity on the opposite tack in the blink of an eye—all

right, maybe a few blinks. If I pulled her out of the tack at too steep an angle, she chided me by putting her rail under and slowing. If I let her fall off too far, she sat up and begged for a sail trim. No matter how I mistreated her, though, she never showed an angry gesture.

She's fast, too. Upwind, she easily makes half apparent wind speed and will sometimes better that. I sailed her in true winds of 12-15, occasionally gusting 18-20, and saw 11-12 knots on the boat's instruments from a beam reach up to near a close reach. Steering feel at the twin wheels was good—I always knew what the rudder was doing.

This is a wonderful boat, one of the best compromises of style, performance and comfort I've driven. I expected as much, because she comes from the drawing board of Farr Yacht Design. Keen observers may recognize the Concordia 47's ancestry—she started life as the Corel 45. Recycling the hull and adding a couple of feet to the after sections to get the swim

LOA	46'8"
LWL	40'7"
BEAM	13'6"
DRAFT	9.52'
DISPL.	16,750 lb.
BALLAST	7,950 lb.
SAIL AREA	(IMS) 1,345
ENGINES	47 hp Yanmar Sail Drive
FUEL	50 gal.
WATER	100 gal.

scoop and a hair's breadth more sailing length turned out to be a grand idea. The extension allowed the builder, Carroll Marine, to move the backstay aft, too. This lengthens the staying base between the backstay and headstay, allows a bit more roach in the mainsail, and keeps the lower section of the stay from leaning into the cockpit. I've whacked my head on the backstay of enough boats to be grateful for the absence of this hazard.

Although the deck mold, too, differs from that of the Corel, her raceboat heritage shows in the tidiness of the arrangement. Wash decks are wide and free of lines up from the transom the mast. The jib sheets to a car on a track, one on each side snugged up tightly



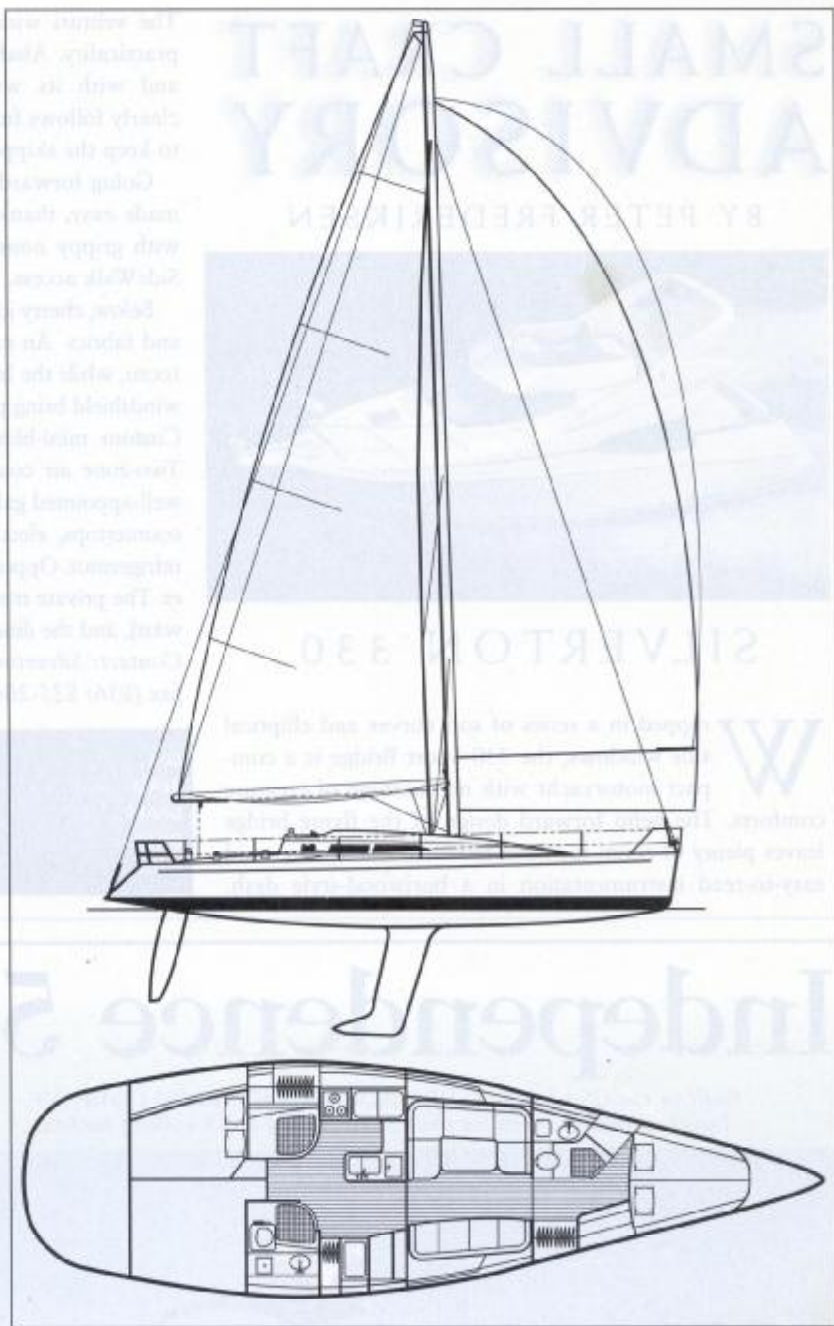
against the sides of the trunk cabin, which leaves a clear passage to the foredeck. The absence of a toe rail over most of LOA is another page from the racer's book. This lets the crew hang out on the rail for extended periods of time during races. A shallow teak toe rail helps keep the foredeck crew on the boat.

When I see a smooth deck-edge like this, I think "one-way ticket to the cold briny." My first couple of attempts at going overboard made a prudent sailor of me, so I prefer sturdy 6", or higher, bulwarks—I'd rather not test the integrity of my harness, tether and jackline. On the other hand, the absence of bulwarks or toe rails on the Concordia 47 wouldn't keep me from buying one. For cruising, though, I'd insist on tough netting to fill the gaps in the lifelines.

Cruising aboard the 47 ought to be fun. Carroll Marine in its brochure compares it to a BMW M3 or Mercedes S Class, both of which combine speed with luxury. The moment I stepped belowdecks, I felt comfortable and at ease—the boat simply feels right. Her rightness no doubt comes from the traditional layout; the older I get, the more I appreciate the logic of a symmetrical arrangement delineated by straight lines. It may not appear spectacular at the dock, but it works, whether you're at anchor or hustling along at double-digit speed in a typical offshore seaway. The U-shape galley is small enough to let you brace against the boat's motion, but large enough to make cooking more fun than chore. The wet locker alone, right abaft the nav. station, is enough to make me sign on the dotted line. Far too many cruising boats don't have one at all or have it placed inconveniently at the other end of the cabin.

The owner's stateroom is in the bow and has a big V-berth, head to port, and a hanging locker opposite. The after stateroom is a little claustrophobic to suit me, but it has a decent hanging locker and a stand-up dressing area. This is the place to sleep when you're off watch on a passage, as is either settee in the saloon.

Construction gets five stars. Carroll Marine vacuum-bags the hull of E-glass/Kevlar wet epoxy pre-preg over Superlite balsa core. The deck is



a wet pre-preg of E-glass in vinylester resin over variable-density foam and balsa cores. A structurally integrated aluminum grid takes the keel and rigging loads. The structure is as stiff as a church.

The base price for this stellar racer/cruiser is only \$395,000. The Lewmar electric winch package for all sail-handling chores is about \$25,000; the Hall Spars custom carbon boom is \$7,821 (carbon mast is standard); watermaker and refrigeration total about \$20,000. By the time you get done with everything, you're looking at \$500,000, or more.

I love to sail fast boats, and I'm willing to trade other characteristics—easy handling, headroom below, luxurious amenities, sail-handling aids—to get it: If I bought a Concordia 47, I wouldn't have to trade anything. □

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