

First 44.7

Cruiser-racer

This Farr design produced by Beneteau pulls all our proportions and "balances" back to the center or at least what I see as the center. Maybe the Old Man could relate to this design. Not surprisingly it is a boat built to serve both cruisers and club racers. Are there "compromises?" Anytime you put an interior in a racing boat it's a compromise. Racers can be assured of performance because this model is based upon the First 40.7, and that boat has enjoyed an enviable race record including an overall win in the grueling Sydney-Hobart race.

As usual I get pretty scant drawings to define the real character of the boat's hull shape. Many designers and builders see this as proprietary information and I can understand this. So we will have to use our imaginations and experience.

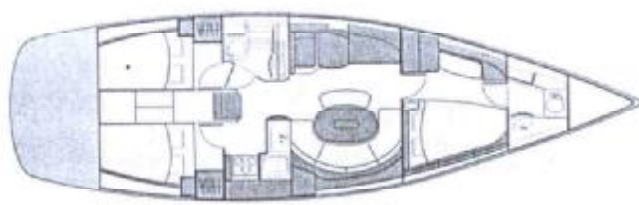
Looking at the photos I see a moderate hull form with a broad stern and a soft turn to the bilge aft. Ends are short and the D/L is 168. I don't see any hollow in the entry and BWL looks to be reasonably broad relative to beam max. The sheer is near flat and the forefoot knuckle is just clear of the cutwater. The draft options are 7 feet, 1 inch with a lead keel and 8 feet, 8 inches and with an iron keel. Given the two differences in specific gravity I would guess that stability for both models is

about the same with the extra draft of the deep keel not being enough to make up for the iron ballast. Lead weighs 702 pounds per cubic foot while iron weighs 450 pounds per cubic foot. I have an iron keel on my boat and it's a challenge to keep paint on it. The rudder drawn on the sailplan is deeper than the lead keel so I suspect there are two rudders available also.

The interior is built on an extensive GRP liner structure that forms all the structural stiffeners and bilge pans. The layout is pretty typical with two quarterberth staterooms aft and a Pullman-styled double berth forward. The owner's head is all the way forward and neither head has a separate shower stall.

The galley is small. If you deduct the sink, ice box lid and range areas from the overall galley countertop "footprint" there is very little clear counter space left. The nav station is generous and forward of the nav station there is a countertop that I suppose will be useful but I can't think for what. All saloon seating is around the dinette to starboard and there is a small centerline seat. The owner's stateroom looks very comfortable and has a small settee to port. As usual, Beneteau's joinerwork details look marvelous in what looks to me like a satin-varnished cherry finish.

The rig is the standard fractional rig with double, swept spreaders. The SA/D is 21.93. That's more than enough for most cruisers. There are rig options for racers that include either double or triple spreader tapered spars and Dyform rigging along with a carbon spinnaker pole.



The deck plan shows a large cockpit with a minimal swim step on the transom. There are coamings forward and a convenient, recessed seating area for the helmsman. The wheel is huge and I would guess from the photos about 72-inches in diameter. The wheel is mounted on a large console and recessed into the bottom of the cockpit. The traveler is directly forward of the wheel. Side decks are wide and there are genoa tracks for overlapping headsails. All lines are led aft to stoppers and winches flanking the companionway. There are lots of hatches for ventilation.

I like a boat you can race once and a while. Sure PHRF will give any boat a rating but it's no fun to race a pig regardless of the rating. While you may "win" on corrected time the party will be over before you finish. It does little good to know where to go if you can't get there. The First 44.7 looks like a good dual-purpose boat to me.



LOA 44'10"; LWL 37'8"; Beam 13'3"; Draft 7'1" (Standard), 8'8" (Optional); Displacement 20,126 lbs.; Ballast 8,047 lbs. (Standard), 7,518 lbs. (Optional); Sail Area 1,032 sq. ft.; SA/D 21.93; D/L 168; L/B 3.38; Auxiliary Volvo 2040; Fuel 57 gals.; Water 222 gals.

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OBE: \$252,000
Our Best Estimate of the sailaway price

