

On Board SAIL

BY SVEN DONALDSON

Andrews 28

Cruisable, ramp-launched speedster with offshore racing potential

In an era when 30' sailboats are widely perceived as entry level, is there still a market for a high performance, limited production 28-footer? Two entrepreneurs from Penticton, brothers Ivan and Vladimir Ivandic, believe that there just might be. Their Andrews 28 is a state-of-the-art design from the board of noted Californian Alan Andrews, the naval architect best known for high-end race boats like Transpac 52s and 70' turbo sleds.

Although Sylva Yachts's new 28-footer is obviously not on quite the same scale, the project is equally sophisticated in many respects. Advanced construction and meticulous attention to weight control brought the prototype in at just a few kilos over the target displacement of 1,700 kilograms (3,750 pounds), which is remarkably light for an ocean-capable boat offering standing headroom, very respectable cruising amenities and an inboard diesel engine.

However, the greatest asset that the Andrews 28 brings to the table might be how easy it is to trailer and launch from a ramp. Even a half-ton pickup or mid-sized SUV

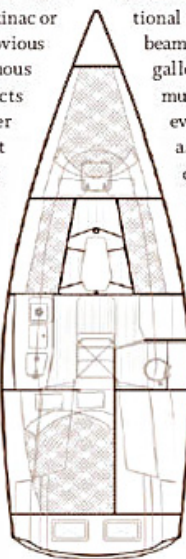
can safely tow this rig, putting far-off cruising grounds within reach and even making it feasible for Northwest sailors to enter major international events like the Newport-Ensenada, Chicago to Mackinac or Key West Race Week. And for obvious reasons, trailerability is an enormous boon to the one-design prospects of any newborn race boat. After all, who would deliberately limit themselves to a small local fleet if an otherwise comparable but "more portable" class adds the potential for regional and even nationwide one-design racing?

Design/Construction

At first glance, the Andrews 28 might appear too tall and "cruisy" to fit the image of a low-slung ultra-light displacement boat (ULDB), yet it's interesting to note that its dynamic wetted length and actual sailing displacement are very close to those of the Olson

30, the breakthrough Santa Cruz classic dating back to 1978. By comparison, the new Andrews offers inboard diesel power, at least 45 centimetres (1.5 feet) of additional interior headroom, a little more beam, an enclosed head, a serviceable galley, substantially larger rig and much deeper, more efficient foils. So even if we recognize George Olson as being well ahead of his time, it's only fair to conclude that light-displacement boatbuilding has advanced considerably over the past 30 years.

Of course, it remains an immutable fact that low displacement means there won't be much hull below the waterline. To obtain full headroom in a boat as light and short as the Andrews 28, the freeboard and/or cabin must be proportionally high. Given these constraints, Alan Andrews deserves kudos for coming through with a surprisingly



COURTESY SYLVIA YACHTS

handsome little yacht. The sleek contours of the cabin effectively disguise its size, and the slightly concave sheerline looks really nice from all viewing angles.

The Andrews 28 is built at a modern, climate-controlled plant in Penticton. More than two years of effort went into preparing extensive female tooling to allow virtually every fiberglass part to be fabricated using the closed-mold vacuum-infusion process. Hull, deck, structural furniture modules and bulkhead/ring frames are all built in a foam-cored composite sandwich using stitched e-glass reinforcements and a premium vinylester resin. The fiberglass components are assembled using an ultra-strong methacrylate adhesive, eliminating any need to hurry assembly for a reliable secondary bonding while the primary molding resin is still at its "green" or partially cured stage.

The lifting keel of the Andrews 28 sockets into a central trunk structurally tied to the bonded interior pan/grid system. The keel fin consists of a vertical, stainless steel strut, surrounded by a fiberglass shell with a stable epoxy filler occupying the space in between. The streamlined, lead bulb (representing 440 kg, or 75 percent of the total ballast) is bolted to a flange on the bottom of the stainless steel strut, resulting in a ballast centre of gravity not much higher than the boat's impressive overall draft of 2.13 metres (seven feet).

The tapered, upper portion of the keel fin wedges firmly into the trunk when lowered, and the entire assembly is locked into place for sailing by a pair of robust stainless steel crossbars. All in all, the critical keel root area appears well engineered and, if anything, should stand a better-than-average chance of surviving hard groundings unscathed.

The outboard rudder assembly consists of a cassette that swings on transom-mounted gudgeons, a deep foil that can be retracted for trailering and an integrated tiller. All three components are custom molded in carbon fibre to keep weight at the stern to an absolute minimum. Off-the-shelf carbon tubes are employed as interior compression posts and for the retractable pole for the asymmetrical spinnaker—something we're seeing more and more with high-volume builders.

Cockpit, Deck & Rig Although the back half of the open transom cockpit might be described as "full race," integral cockpit ▶



bench seats ahead of the sole-mounted traveller make the boat a great deal more versatile when it comes to cruising, dockside gatherings and so forth. Also in keeping with the Andrews's dual-role character, the seats add interior space for a walk-in storage locker aft (accessed through the head) as well as the necessary headroom to ward off claustrophobia in the portside aft double cabin.

The Andrews 28 prototype features a state-of-the-art racing layout with numerous double-ended controls. Further testing will determine whether worthwhile weight/cost savings can be achieved by simplifying things slightly, but the builders still intend to turn out a boat suitable for high-level competition. Four Anderson stainless steel winches—a good value, in my opinion, because they minimize wear on expensive high-tech cordage—handle the headsail sheets and all cabin-top controls. The big main is tamed with a well-designed traveller system, course/fine sheeting and a cascading backstay tackle for mast bend control.

Both the double spreader mast and the boom are carbon-epoxy because Ivan Ivanic does not believe the modest cost savings associated with aluminum can justify the added weight and associated loss in sailing

performance. The Hungarian firm Pauger Carbon produced the prototype rig and made a very clean job of it. However, a North American supplier will probably be chosen for future spars to reduce lead times.

Systems & Amenities A Yanmar 1GM10 diesel mated to an SD20 saildrive is mounted beneath a light fiberglass enclosure that doubles as the companionway stairs. Maintenance access couldn't be easier. This compact, single cylinder engine is definitely not the quietest auxiliary around, but the saildrive helps control vibration; there's also room enough in the enclosure for after-market soundproofing if an owner isn't overly concerned about adding a couple kilos. On the other hand, designer Alan Andrews has been quite ruthless on this subject, specifying, for example, a lightweight wet exhaust made of thin fiberglass tubing instead of conventional rubber hose. More weight means less speed, and although this little yacht is conceived as a performance cruiser, its fast, exhilarating sailing will ultimately sell the package.

The portside galley module in the Andrews houses a single-burner Orego alcohol stove, fair-sized cold box and a molded sink, which draws freshwater from a five-gallon jerry can.



The robust lifting keel trunk is bonded to the interior grid system.

The head compartment features a lightweight privacy screen that resembles a horizontal roller blind, but the toilet itself is conventionally plumbed to a 6.5 gallon holding tank housed beneath the navigation module opposite the galley.

Further forward, settees flank a central table that mounts atop the keel trunk. Both the V-berth forward and the double berth aft are easily long and wide enough for two adults, and the three-inch foam cushions are quite comfortable.

The all-fiberglass interior looks rather stark, but all the basics are there and it wouldn't be difficult to brighten things up a bit for cruising with some coloured cushions, bedding and maybe a picture or two. Cleaning house is dead easy: a straightforward ▶



sponge and bucket job. An opening forward hatch, the companionway and four opening port lights provide ventilation that's at least on par with quite a few pure cruising designs of similar size.

Though stark-looking, the all-fibreglass interior is a snap to clean up.

from a typical ramp without immersing the rear wheels of the tow vehicle. Once afloat, the keel is lowered

using a simple hand winch system and prior to sailing, locked down.

On the Water I got out on the prototype Andrews when it passed through Vancouver in mid-March, but unfortunately English Bay only saw "typical" light air conditions. All the same, it was immediately evident that this is both a sweet sailing boat and a hot little racing machine. Close hauled in an easterly that peaked at about eight knots, we easily dialed up speeds to six knots while maintaining some impressively high angles. Reaching up for maximum pace under the masthead asymmetrical kite saw us regularly into mid-sevens. The boat's preliminary local PHRF rating of 89 doesn't seem overly onerous given what I saw in light air, and in skilled hands, the Andrews 28 should prove a potent weapon on the racecourse.

Concluding Remarks The Andrews's lightweight yet rugged construction will prove of real value, not only for racing but when the boat is in cruising mode, too. Unlike quite a few 28' production sailboats, this one should be readily capable of handling payloads of a half-ton or more without dragging its transom and slowing too severely.

Sturdy construction is particularly critical for a trailerable yacht, but, again, the Andrews appears to be made with the rigours of road life in mind. Moreover, according to the builders, erecting the lightweight carbon mast is easily handled by two people, and the boat sits low enough on its trailer to launch

Introductory, factory-commissioned price for an Andrews 28 equipped with the carbon spars, diesel saildrive, standard electrical/plumbing systems and race-ready deck gear is currently US\$97,750. (Pricing is provided in U.S. dollars because most materials/equipment are U.S.-sourced). Three top-quality racing sails, a trailer and special gear for erecting/carrying the mast, jib furling gear and a basic navigational electronics package will add another \$20,000–22,000. For a compact cruiser/racer offering this level of build quality, versatility and raw performance, it's one of the sweetest deals around. ☛

Andrews 28

LOA	8.5 m	28'
LWL	7.85 m	25' 9"
Beam	3.02 m	9' 11"
Draft	2.13 m	7'
Ballast	585 kg	1,290 lbs
Displ.	1,700 kg	3,750 lbs
SA (50% LIFE)	39.5 sq-m	425 sq-ft
SA/D	28.2	
D/L	98	

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