



New and Improved

Marlow Hunter takes a different tack in building the MH 37. *By Mark Pillsbury*

At first glance, the newest sailboat from Florida's Marlow Hunter looks to be a slightly smaller adaptation of the MH 40 that was introduced shortly after luxury powerboat builder David Marlow bought the company in 2012. Like its bigger sibling, the 37's wide beam is carried all the way aft from amidships; hard chines provide considerable volume below; a large swim platform folds down from the stern; and long, sleek-looking ports span either side of the cabin house to create a distinctive look and let lots of light into the interior.

But in reality, quite a bit is different about the MH 37, starting with the way the sailboat is built. Greg Emerson, Marlow Hunter's sales director, says the balsa coring that Hunter has traditionally used in its hulls and decks has been replaced with Nida-Core honeycomb (the hull is solid glass below the waterline). Should water somehow find a way into the laminate, the coring won't be degraded. With the 37, Marlow Hunter opted for a better grade of gelcoat than it previously used and vinyl ester resin for the layup. In addition, more Kevlar has been added to the laminate to increase

hull strength forward. The company has long used the tough-as-nails cloth to strengthen the bow in case of collision, but in laying up the 37, Kevlar is carried back through the keel and up the sides to help support loads from the chainplates.

Emerson said the changes in construction are a result of Marlow's involvement in the design process, which also includes in-house engineers and longtime Hunter designer Glenn Henderson.

I got to sail the MH 37 on a sunny November afternoon on Long Island Sound. The breeze was light, less than 10 knots, and our close-hauled speed hovered just under 5 knots. In about 8 knots of wind, the boat tacked through 90 degrees, not bad considering the in-mast furling main (a conventional main is available) and shoal-draft keel (a deep keel is also available; standard foils are cast iron, lead is an option). The 110 percent jib, set on a roller furler, is easily handled, with sheets led to winches mounted outboard on the coamings just forward of the helm. I found I had to stretch to reach them while still holding the wheel, but tacking singlehandedly

was still quite doable, and the cockpit's beam is an inevitable trade-off for the generously sized aft cabin below.

I'm a fan of Hunter's trademark arch over the cockpit because it places one end of the double-ended mainsheet — led from the traveler overhead to a line stopper that's mounted by the helm — where the skipper can grab it quickly if needed. The sheet's other end is led aft from the mast to a winch on the cabin top where the crew can help trim too.

The B&R fractional rig eliminates the need for a backstay, so the cockpit is uncluttered as you step aboard from the swim platform. The boat we sailed had a folding wheel, which added to the ease of moving about. I found the cockpit seats to be quite comfortable and long enough to stretch out on. A fold-down cockpit table, mounted on the steering pedestal, will prove handy for entertaining.

Owners who favor marinas will appreciate dual 30-amp power cords that are permanently affixed and hang in a locker on the stern. The fuel fill is also located there, which means you need to lower the swim platform to diesel up. For those who prefer to anchor out,



Clear, wide side decks make it easy to move about the MH 37 (opposite). An athwartship double in the owner's aft cabin provides headroom for sitting up and reading (left). A solid wood sole adds warmth to the interior's traditional layout.

Marlow Hunter has you covered too, with twin offset bow rollers, a large anchor locker and a windlass. I liked the heavy cleat placed in the locker for making off a snubber. Elsewhere on deck, fold-down cleats are used to eliminate toe-stubbers.

The boat we sailed had the optional 40-horsepower Yanmar diesel (a 29-horsepower Yanmar comes standard). Underway, we had plenty of get-up-and-go while motoring out the channel. When I shifted into reverse at speed, we stopped on a dime. At cruising rpm, the boat easily turned a full circle in about a boat length and a half.

Stepping below, you realize just how big this 37-footer is. Aft, in what the builder has deemed the owner's cabin, a queen-size berth lies athwartships, an arrangement that allows sitting headroom at its head. The cabin includes two hanging lockers and a door to the head and shower, located to port of the companionway steps and also accessible from the saloon. Ports in the hull and cockpit sides let in a good deal of light, but pleasant as this place is, at 6 feet tall I think I'd make the forward cabin and V-berth my stateroom. There's plenty of room there to move about and lots of storage in the two hanging lockers and under the berth.

As I started down the companionway, the first details that struck me were the two heavy stainless handrails to either side of the companionway hatch. A second set of rails flank the stairs, ensuring a secure trip up or down in boisterous seas.

Starboard of the steps, there's a well-laid-out, well-equipped galley. The Corian countertop hints at luxury, while a dedicated dish-drying cabinet indicates utility. Throughout the interior, the rich American cherry woodwork is easy on the eyes, and blends well with light-colored panels on the forward bulkhead and overhead. The long windows in the cabin sides, ports in the hull and five flush-mounted overhead hatches provide plenty of light during the day; at night LED interior and exterior lights brighten things up. Options on the 37 I sailed included AC and a Raymarine instrument package, among other features.

Forward of the nav desk, which sits opposite the galley, a long settee spans the port side of the saloon. A U-shaped seat and dining table are to starboard; the table can be lowered to provide two additional berths, if desired. For ventilation, the MH 37 even sports a pair of dorade vents in the saloon, somewhat of a rarity in contemporary production boats.

Heading back toward the slip at Mystic Shipyard, we set the sails wing-and-wing for a spell. Though more breeze would have made for a spirited ride, the MH 37 moved along quite well and answered the helm instantly as we rounded up to a reach for our run home down the channel. Spying the many nooks and crannies along the shore, I couldn't help but think that this latest offering from a longtime American boatbuilder would be a fine craft for cruising this coast — or any other that you'd care to visit.

Mark Pillsbury is CW's editor.

MARLOW HUNTER 37

| | | |
|--------------------|--|----------------|
| LOA | 39' 9" | (12.12 m.) |
| LWL | 35' 8" | (10.87 m.) |
| Beam | 13' 1" | (3.99 m.) |
| Draft (shoal/deep) | 5' 0"/6' 6" | (1.52/1.98 m.) |
| Sail area | 841 sq. ft. | (78.1 sq. m.) |
| Ballast (shoal) | 5,727 lb. | (2,598 kg.) |
| Displacement | 18,995 lb. | (8,616 kg.) |
| Ballast/D | .30 | |
| D/L | 187 | |
| SA/D | 18.9 | |
| Water | 80 gal. | (303 l.) |
| Fuel | 50 gal. | (189 l.) |
| Holding | 25 gal. | (95 l.) |
| Mast height | 61' 2" | (18.64 m.) |
| Engine | 40 hp Yanmar (upgrade) | |
| Designer | Glenn Henderson, Marlow Hunter Design Team | |
| Price | \$220,000 | |

Marlow Hunter
800-771-5556
www.marlow-hunter.com

SEA TRIAL

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|--|
| Wind speed | 6 to 8 knots | |
| Sea state | Calm to 1 foot | |
| Sailing | | |
| Closehauling | 4.7 knots | |
| Reaching | 3.6 knots | |
| Motoring | | |
| Cruise (2,400 rpm) | 6.7 knots | |
| Fast (3,000 rpm) | 7.8 knots | |

COURTESY OF MARLOW HUNTER