



Cruising to the max

The new J/65 redefines performance cruising in a boat that will be a couple's "ultimate" passagemaker

by George Day

This spring J/Boats, based in Newport, Rhode Island, will launch the first of two new 65-foot performance cruising boats that are now in build at Pearson Composites in nearby Warren, R.I. Although J/Boats is no stranger to building larger performance cruisers—the J/46 and J/160, for example—the new 65-footers mark a real departure for the company that promises to set new standards for performance and luxury in the cruising fleet.

In early April, *BWS* stopped by the plant in Warren, R.I. to look over the plans for the new boat with J/Boat's president Jeff Johnstone and to crawl around inside hull number one which was close to having its deck laid on. Aside from sailing a boat a long distance in a wide range of conditions, there may be no better way to get a feel for a boat's characteristics and quality than to see it with its skin peeled back and all its systems laid bare. That's just how we found the new J/65 and an impressive sight it was.



Hull number one gets hoisted from the mould

The design

J/Boats was lunched in the mid 1970s with the now venerable J/24 which was billed at the time as a racer-cruiser that could compete effectively around the buoys and then take a couple off for a weekend cruise. Today it is almost quaint to think of adults cruising in a 24-footer, but in those days it was done all the time and we seem to be none the worse for it.

The original mission that launched the J/24 remains the centerpiece of every new J/Boat design that has come along since. The boats are created to sail exceptionally well, whether cruising or racing, while offering sail handling arrangements and accommodations tailored to couples or families who want to have fun cruising for days or weeks on end.

It sounds a tall order, yet over the last three decades J/Boats has introduced new boats every year that meet and often exceed those criteria, all the while advancing the pure design elements of the line of boats for better sailing performance and innovating ways to make sailing easier and more efficient.

The successful line of "sprit" boats that have become so popular are a fine example of the J/Boat habit of thinking outside the box; the J/160, at 53 feet, has earned a reputation for being an excellent round-the-world cruiser for couples, while the incredibly popular J/105 does exactly what the original J/24 once did: it offers great sailing around the buoys and fine family cruising on the weekends.

Last year, the company launched its new J/100 daysailer which sports a new, trim look with a low, flat sheer and a nearly plumb bow that evokes, to this viewer, the purposeful look of the latest generation of America's Cup boats. While earlier Js had broad beams and flat hull shapes under the water, the new generation of designs, kicked off by the J/100, have much lower beam-to-length ratios, more V'd underwater hull shapes and lower centers of gravity. These qualities combine to create hulls that are very easily driven, stable under a press of sail and have excellent directional stability. Designs that are long and lean have always had great manners at sea while offering their crews good performance on all points of sail, especially upwind.

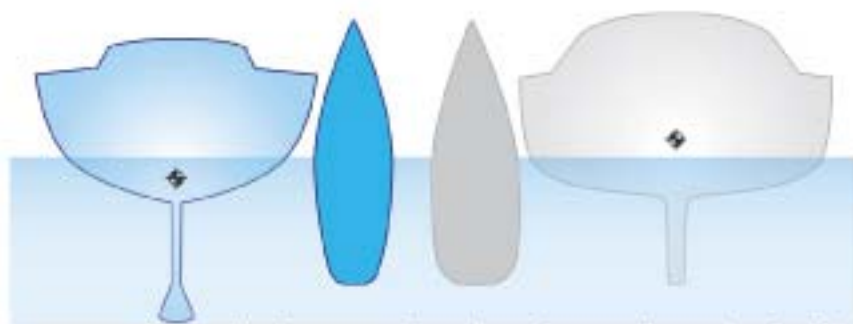
The new J/65 takes all these ideas and advances them to a logical conclusion in a boat that is truly



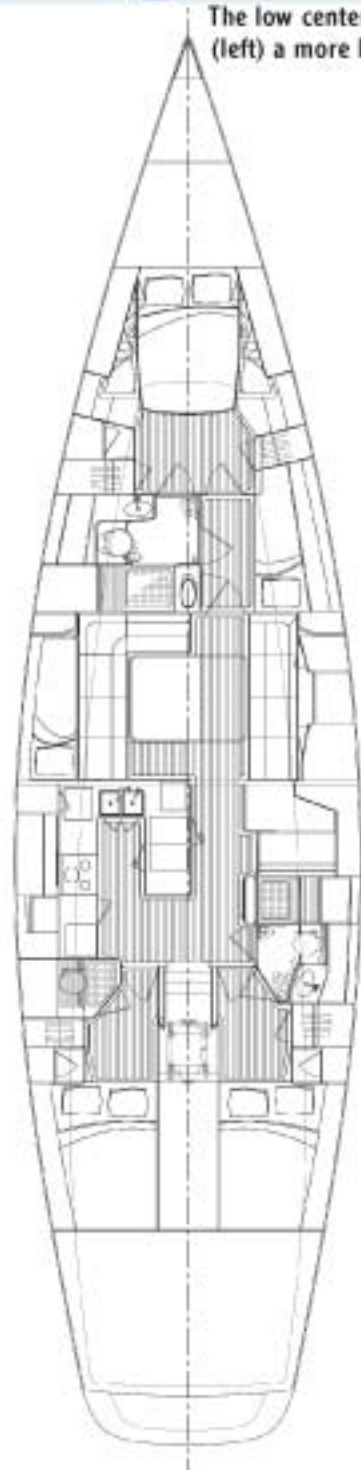
J[®]
65

LOA	64'6" (19.66 m.)
LWL	57'0" (17.37 m.)
Beam	16'0" (4.88 m.)
Draft	9'0" (2.72 m.)
Displacement	50,000 lbs. (22,500 kg.)
Ballast	19,000 lbs. (8,550 kg.)
Sail area	1,819 sq. ft. (164 sq. m.)
Engine	125-hp diesel
Sail area/Displ.	21
Displ./L	121

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The low center of gravity and narrow beam give the J/65 (left) a more kindly motion than beamier designs (right)



designed to carry a couple or crew quickly and safely across the world's oceans whether racing or cruising.

The boat's numbers indicate that the 65 is truly at the performance end of the cruising spectrum. With a water line of 57 feet, the boat will have cruising speeds between eight and 12 knots in average conditions; the polar diagram shows the 65 reaching at 7.5 knots in eight knots of true breeze. That means you will be sailing happily when others in heavier boats will be powering.

The boat displaces approximately 50,000 pounds and has 19,000 pounds of ballast, most of which is in the bulb at the bottom of the fin keel, so it is neither ultra-light nor under-ballasted. The ballast/displacement ratio of 38-percent falls slightly above the mid-range for performance cruisers and indicates a boat that will be stiff and weatherly while having a soft and easy motion at sea.

The 65 has only 16 feet of beam on deck, which is narrow by modern standards for a cruising boat. The beam/length ratio of 4.06 is greater than the average and really shows that the boat will be easily driven in light airs. Combined with moderately light displacement, and higher than average ballast/displacement ratio and the long waterline, the hull numbers indicate a boat that will be easy to sail and very quick.

The boat has a carbon fiber mast by Hall Spars on which flies a large mainsail and a small, 100-percent jib for working sails. The sail area/dis-

placement ratio comes out at 21, which is higher than you will find on most cruising boats but not outside what good sailors would consider a comfort zone. Like most J/Boats, the 65 should sail well under mainsail alone.

Note in the sail plan that the headstay has been set back from the bow by about two feet. This creates a platform for flying an asymmetrical spinnaker or cruising chute from the bow without the need for a sprit or spinnaker pole. If it is easy to fly, then cruisers are more apt to use their spinnaker when the wind is right for it.

The design of the J/65 makes use of modern construction techniques and materials that allow the builders to create a hull and deck that are both light and strong. By creating a hull and rig that are both light and very easily driven, J/Boats has developed a 65-footer that will acquit itself well on the race course—particularly point-to-point events—and will be a pleasure to cruise.

Accommodations and systems

As we toured the new 65 at the factory we were repeatedly impressed by the organization of all shipboard systems and by the fit and finish of the furniture below decks. Hull number one will be heading to the West Coast and from there on to the Pacific cruising grounds. The owner, who has had several J/Boats, including a J/160, wants the boat to be as self-sufficient and comfortable as possible.

The J/65 is built on a semi-custom basis so owners can shape their living environments and the systems they build in to their special needs and desires. The interior arrangement in hull number one provides an owner's cabin forward with a centerline double berth and private head with a large separate shower stall. Across from the head, a seaberth is built-in to starboard so the owner can tuck himself away when on passage.

Aft of the saloon there are two double quarter-cabins that are roomy and airy; each has its own head and the starboard head has a separate shower which will double as a wet locker when things are wet on deck.

The saloon, galley and chart table combine into a large open space in which the crew will spend most of its time. As J/Boats has demonstrated in the J/160 and the J/46 they know a thing or two about galleys. The 65 has a large U-shaped galley that will work well at sea and will be a fine place to prepare meals when at anchor. Counter space is expansive and ample lockers have been provided.

The L-shaped dinette to port will seat six and the berth doubles as a good seaberth when on passage. A pilot berth lies outboard of the dinette and will be a favorite among the crew as it lies over the boat's center of gravity.

To starboard there is a long settee that will also work well as a seaberth. Behind it cabinets have been built in for books, storage and the boat entertainment center, which reportedly will be state of the art.

In the 65, J/Boats and Pearson Composites have gone the extra mile to make all interior furniture and joinery as luxurious and finely finished as possible. Although the designers and builders have worked hard to keep the boat as light as possible, weight has not been spared in the interior and it looks exceptional. Many of the details that have been developed for the new boat will be adopted by the company as they spread the quality down through their line of smaller boats. In a real sense, the new 65 and her sistership are research and development platforms for the whole J/Boat family of boats.

A luxury cruising boat inevitably will be loaded with systems and the J/65 is no exception. Hull number one has a generator, air conditioning throughout, an elaborate refrigerator/freezer and a watermaker.

The on-board electrical system is



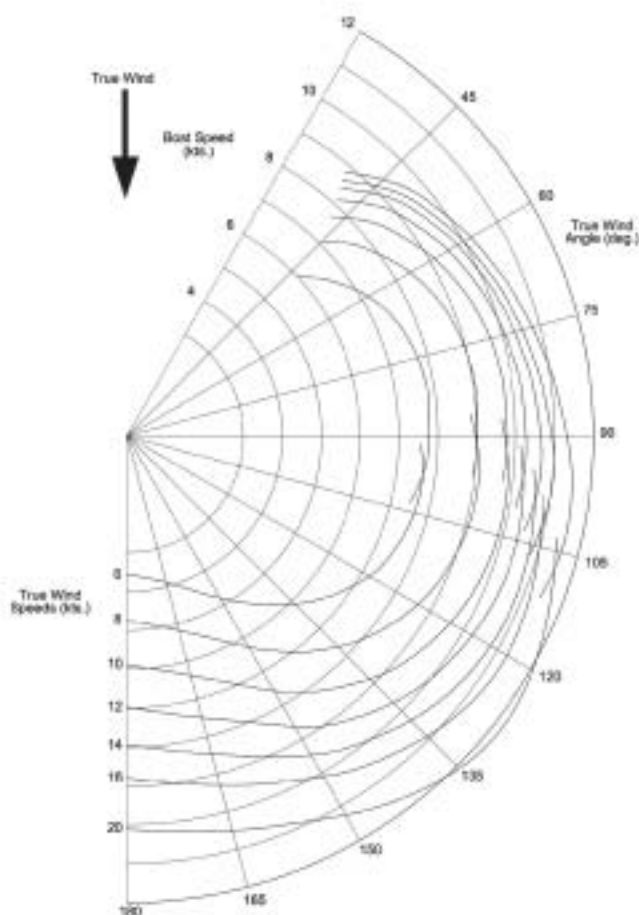
the nerve center of the whole operation. To avoid the pitfalls of a system cobbled together from a random list of suppliers, J/Boats went to Mastervolt as well as a New Zealand-based consulting firm to design and implement the 65's AC and DC systems. The inverters, batteries, chargers, transformers, battery control systems and the control panels are all designed as a unit. Mastervolt is an industry leader and has representation worldwide, so an owner knows that even though his electrical system is complex he will be able to find proper assistance just

about everywhere he wants to sail.

The sailing systems on deck are powered by two Lewmar hydraulic units which are mounted in a cabinet readily accessible from the saloon. The hydraulic roller headstay, vang, sheet winches and backstay are all integrated and provided with ample redundancy.

Because the boat is loaded with systems—when we were aboard it looked as complex as a space shuttle—J/Boats designed the flooring system in the boat to allow all wiring, plumbing, batteries, air conditioning and hydraulics to run un-

The J/65's polars show how quick the boat will be in just about all winds



derfoot. The cabin soles lie on hung aluminum trusses that are raised above the hull's floor stringers. Access to all systems and conduits through removable panels is excellent so owners and service professionals can and will have an easy time tracking gremlins and making repairs.

The engine/generator compartment lies under the cockpit sole and between the two aft cabins. Access is via panels on both sides as well as from the front so routine inspections and maintenance will not require a contortionist.

J/Boats has gone to great lengths to insulate the engine room to cut down on ambient noise while motoring or running the generator. But sealing the engine compartment to dampen sound presents the problem of how to get enough air into the compartment to aspirate the engines and keep the compartment cool.

The solution was to put the large box stringers that

stiffen the stern quarters of the hull to double duty. Since the stringers are hollow, they can also act as air ducts. With blowers installed and vents placed aft, fresh air can be circulated in volumes large enough to keep both of the engines breathing and running at acceptable temperatures.

The new 65 will be a very comfortable boat to live aboard and is set up to be an excellent home at sea. Interior spaces are open and airy, yet the distances between bulkheads, tables and counters is always the length of an arm's reach. That means when things are bumpy out there you can always find a place to brace yourself while working with both hands and will never be launched across an acre of slippery cabin sole. Handholds are placed thoughtfully so the crew can really move fore and aft without stringing a safety line or dashing hopefully between waves.

Like the hull and rig, the accommodation plan and systems built into it have been designed by experienced sailors for sailors who know the difference between what works at sea and what doesn't. The J/65 certainly will perform exceptionally well whether the wind is a zephyr or piping stiffly.

BWS thoughts

A semi-custom cruising boat of this size, quality and expense is not within everyone's reach. Yet, for those who aspire to a true performance passagemaker that can win races while keeping her crew safe and comfortable, the new J/65 looks like a real breakthrough.

The process of building a J/65 will put new owners in league with a remarkable team of professionals, including the Johnstones (Jeff, Rod and AD), Pearson Composites' in-house wizard Clive Dent and project manager David Lake. The combined design and building experience of this team amounts to generations of time spent creating boats for special owners.

The new J/65 will be the flagship of almost any cruising fleet she joins and will be a real head-turner when she decides to strap on the racing sails and go for the silver. This is exactly the style of boat BWS would enjoy racing to Hawaii or Bermuda and then sailing onward to the great cruising grounds that lie over the horizon.

In many ways, the 65's performance characteristics and living accommodations hark back to the days when offshore racing was run under the Cruising Club of America rule. Boats were required then to be capable and fast ocean-going vessels that could survive storms at sea while also offering their crews comfortable accommodations below. The J/65 is a classic racer-cruiser in the best sense of that rule, in a most modern and attractive package.

The J/65 is a boat you could honestly sail anywhere shorthanded and do so at remarkably quick speeds.

Hull number two will be launched in the fall. BWS will test sail it as soon as possible and will update this review with on-the-water observations.

