

NEW BOAT TEST The UK's most comprehensive yacht tests

NEW BOAT TEST

On the wind she's no slouch, clocking up over seven knots close-hauled in the Force 5 of our test



With the wheel canted to windward, the helm is snug in the pushpit and the telltales are visible

'I never felt any loss of control or urge to spin out, she was a real delight to sail'

version. The large roach of the flat-topped Performance mainsail prohibits a backstay, so swept-back spreaders do the job instead – a slight disadvantage of these is that you can't square off the mainsail to run dead downwind. Ronstan deck fittings mean friction isn't an issue and the Harken Radial 35 primaries are up to the job; our test boat had the coachroof-mounted 20s upgraded to 35s as well.

Deck layout

A 5cm (2in) high moulded toerail keeps crew secure and coamings channel any water on the side decks aft. Grab rails run to the mast and with chainplates on the topsides, it feels safe to walk forward. The Harken furler is recessed and the controls both for it and the optional retractable bowsprit are led to the cockpit. A windlass and a stainless steel bow roller are options.

The angled cockpit coaming offers a comfy if slightly exposed seat when heeled. At 32cm (1ft 1in), the backrests are a bit low for crew sitting in the cockpit but there's good bracing on the leeward seating. A cascade washboard and a rope bin are under the bridgedeck and just aft of it, running across the cockpit seating, is the 150cm (4ft 11in) mainsheet traveller. Cockpit seating is 155cm (5ft 1in) long, but you would need a cushion to sit with the coachroof as a backrest unless you enjoy sitting on the mainsheet track.

There's a single gas locker port aft but nowhere for a spare cylinder. The starboard cockpit locker lid lifts on a gas strut to reveal fuel and holding tanks, the optional calorifier and battery charger and shore power circuit breakers. Warps hang neatly on (optional) ropehooks and there's plenty of stowage.

Winner 9.00

She's fast and fun in a blow. But does the update of Winner's popular 9.50 starter boat have the flexibility to satisfy racers and cruisers alike? Graham Snook reports

The Winner 9.50 sold more than 300 boats in a production run of 26 years, so her replacement, the Winner 9.00, has big clogs to fill. Yacht design has changed a lot in the intervening years but Winner's choice of designer hasn't – the yard in Enkhuizen on the IJsselmeer still commissions Van de Stadt's Gees van Tongeren. The 9.00 updates Winner's small, competitively priced starter-boat (the base cost is £75,500) and remains a boat to get people into keelboats and the Winner family. The least expensive Welcome model is basic, but you can upgrade the boat in many areas. We tested the Performance 9.00 loaded to the gunwales to improve her speed and comfort.



Optional transom lockers close the aft end of the cockpit off and add to the ample stowage

Performance

After an hour of drifting, a black cloud headed towards us. Rain and a north-northwesterly Force 5 filled the flat-topped mainsail and blade jib, made by Haggoort Sails, and we were off! Goose-winging in 11 knots apparent wind, we scooted along at 6.3-6.5 knots then rounded up to a broad reach, logging speeds of 6.6-7.3 knots in 15-18 knots apparent. Clearly, she is no slouch.

On a beam reach in 11 knots apparent we made 6.3 knots, rising to 8 knots in perfect control when swept by gusts of 22-25 knots, and a fetch saw our speeds average 6-6.6 knots as the apparent wind climbed to 16-18 knots. Hard on the wind, still with full sail in 18-23 knots apparent, the log recorded 6.5-7.1 knots. She tacked through less than 90°.

At the helm

Our boat had the Jefa pivoting wheel, which was too light, so the gearing has been changed from 1.6 turns to 1.2. That pivoting wheel may seem gimmicky but on the water it makes perfect



PHOTO: GRAHAM SNOOK

LEFT: With many options available, the Winner 9.00 makes a very attractive package

sense. Sitting to leeward, you can cant the wheel to the centre to bring sheet winches within easy reach, and with the wheel to windward the jib telltales are visible and the helm is snug in the pushpit. Foot blocks aid the sense of security.

Design & construction

When the 9.00 is at rest, the forefoot sits proud of the water, hinting that this is a boat as sporty as she is stylish – fast doesn't have to look aggressive. The Coremat sandwich deck is

laminated to the hull (Divinycell-cored above the waterline) at the rubbing strake.

Inside, the inner tray moulding runs from bow to stern, sitting on laminated longitudinal reinforcement around the mid-sections to take the loads of the rig and iron T-keel.

Sailplan

The 9/10 fractional rig has a 19m² 107% jib, but most of the grunt comes from the mainsail, increased by 3m² to 31m² on our Performance



The saloon retains some of the quality features found in all Winner Yachts



The L-shaped galley comprises a good sink, a fridge and a cooker with the option of an oven

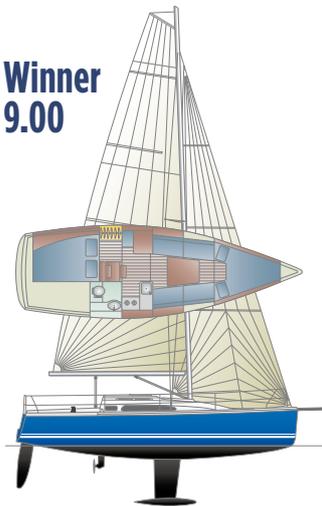
Though 156cm (5ft 1in) wide, the 60cm (2ft) under the cockpit is just 42cm (1ft 4in) high, and the steering pedestal infringes on foot space – just about usable for a child.

Chart table
This is being extended to 62.5cm x 52.5cm (2ft x 1ft 9in), so you won't dog-ear the corners of your leisure folio. But you'll still have to keep charts under a bunk because they're too big for the table's lid. I found the seat a little low, too.

Galley
The L-shaped galley has a good single sink and a well-insulated optional fridge, but the lid needs a rubber seal. In port, the nav table or saloon offer extra workspace. The cooker (with an optional oven) gimbals well, though it could clobber the heads door if unlocked under way. There's no crash bar but a galley strap can be added easily. Storage is limited to one fiddled, shelved locker and two lockers outboard, and the pot locker door is only 14cm (5½ in) high.

Maintenance
Access to the water pump is a little tight. I'd like panels either side of the 14hp Yanmar 2YM15 rather than just the good fore and aft access.

Winner 9.00



- FACTS AND FIGURES**
- Price €32,000 as tested (around £12,500)
 - LOA 9.00m (29ft 6in)
 - LWL 8.00m (29ft 3in)
 - Beam 2.96m (9ft 8½ in)
 - Draught 1.25-1.9m (4ft 1in-6ft 3in)
 - Displ 3100kg (6834 lb)
 - Ballast 1200kg (2646 lb)
 - Sail area 51m² (549 sq ft)
 - Engine 14hp
 - Diesel 70lit (15 gal)
 - Water 140lit (30 gal)
 - D/L ratio 166
 - SA/D ratio 24.4
 - Ballast ratio (%) 38.7
 - RCD category A
 - STIX 37.7
 - Designer Cees van Tongeren, Van de Stadt Design
 - Builder Winner Yachts
 - Contact (SOUTH) SBS Performance Yachts Tel 01305 305 900 (NORTH) Liverpool Boat Sales Tel 0151 708 0839
 - Website (for both dealers) www.winneryachts.co.uk



ABOVE: A compact head with a wet-locker and the option of a shower
LEFT: Admiralty Leisure chart folios will fit on the table, but not inside, so you'll have to stow them somewhere under a bunk

OUR VERDICT ON THE BOAT

What's she like to sail?

Considering that we effortlessly achieved seven knots to windward and our speed rarely dropped below five knots in a boat under 30ft, it's no wonder the Winner put a smile on my face. As well as getting up everywhere in speedy fashion, she has a cockpit that is comfortable, if not the most sheltered. She was easily handled by two of us in winds that would have required a reef, had we been going further. With the Jefa steering, the helm was very light, but also responsive. It's questionable whether a 9m boat needs a wheel, but as the steering is so direct and precise, the only reason I would opt for the standard tiller would be to save the €5,674 (£4,710) (ex VAT) the option costs. When hard-pressed in the gusts the helm loaded up, but never to excess and I never felt any loss of control or urge to spin out – she was a real delight to sail. It hardly needs saying that the 31m² mainsail had a lot of pressure on it and with the Performance model you get the sail controls – Ronstan ballbearing mainsheet blocks, genoa cars and turning blocks – to make the most of it.

What's she like in port and at anchor?

With the optional bow roller you'll be able to anchor. Otherwise, you have to port-hop and tie up somewhere – probably not a bad idea anyway without a shower in the heads. The white interior doors (the heads door is standard, fore and aft cabin doors are optional), optional saloon coachroof hatch and white plank-effect sides create a light interior that's pleasant to relax and cook in. Optional bulkhead lights improve the ambience in the evening and end cushions boost the comfort levels in the saloon. In my opinion, the wet area at the companionway steps needs tweaking, but any owner should be able to sort this out with ease. The white GRP inner tray moulding makes the whole boat bright, easy to clean and very practical. She might not have a great deal of stowage for extended cruising, but then again that's not what she's about. The optional saloon lockers are ample for stowing knickknacks and have a high-quality feel – on cupboard door edges, where other builders might use a silver of veneer, Winner uses a strip of solid teak.

Would she suit you and your crew?

With three different packages, three different depth keels and a host of options to choose from, the Winner 9.00 can be as sedate or as racy, as comfortable or as sparse as you would like her. Whether you race around the cans, sail as a couple or cruise as a small family, she offers opportunities in abundance. As Remco Sol, Winner's boss, points out, 'No two Winners are ever the same.' It's also possible to upgrade her in many ways, either with Winner's packages, by ticking boxes when you order or by adding options later. It's a great concept to be able to buy a boat one year, fit more cupboards and a built-in retractable gennaker pole the next, and perhaps more cupboards the year after that, all without any modifications needed. She was sailed from Holland to Southampton for the show in September, proving she's not just adaptable but a capable little cruiser too. This mix of Performance and Classic edition was enjoyable and easy to sail; rewarding and fast without being too tippy or too covered in bits of string. Such was her responsiveness and easy pace through the water, I could happily have sailed her all day long.

Would she suit your style of sailing?

OFFSHORE PASSAGE-MAKING ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	TRADE WIND VOYAGING ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	COASTAL PORT-HOPPING ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
HIGH-LATITUDE ADVENTURE ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆		