

BOAT TEST

Story and photography by David Liscio

e33

A daysailer that's fast and fun with plenty of room for friends

Sailmaker Robbie Doyle, who concocted the e33 performance daysailer with designer Jeremy Wurmfeld, was walking speedily along the dock of the Pleon Yacht Club in Marblehead, Massachusetts, when we arrived for an early October sail. Doyle does most things quickly, and as if to show how simple these boats are to rig he had two e33s ready to go in about five minutes.

The more battered of the two boats, *eclipse*, is hull No. 2, a prototype that Doyle has owned since he and Wurmfeld co-founded e Sailing Yachts. The other yacht,

Agila, belongs to a local resident who loaned it for the occasion.

As the day unfolded, we shanghaied e33 owner Rick Skinner of Alabama, who just happened to be visiting the area and stopped by to confer with Doyle about this boat's peculiarities. Who better to tag along on a boat test? We were eager for his impressions.

"The first thing that drew me to this boat was the size of the cockpit," said Skinner, who sails out of Mobile Bay. "You can put a lot of people in it comfortably."

Doyle said he once crammed 18 people in the cockpit for dockside cocktails, probably a record for a 33-foot sloop, but as he pointed out, nearly 6 feet of cockpit is behind the traveler, so most of the passengers are nestled in what amounts to an aft lounge.

When the boat is under sail, the deck plan also means that as many as six passengers can sit safely away from where the work is being done, though once aboard the e33 it would be difficult not to join in the challenge of making the boat go faster.

Skinner said his boat handles nicely upwind and down, adding that the dog-leg shaped tiller makes it comfortable to steer no matter the wind direction.

One of the e33's selling points is the absence of winches, based on the premise that the sails can be trimmed by macro and micro tuning lines that rely on mechanical strength.

Skinner nodded at the notion but prefers the self-tailing winch installed on his boat in Alabama, claiming it makes singlehanded sailing easier. He also enjoys a homemade self-steering system he invented, using bungee cord with a few stainless fittings and mini-blocks to tame the tiller. It's not exactly an autopilot, but it allows him to briefly leave the helm.

On deck

The slender e33 is actually designed for ease of singlehanded sailing since crew weight isn't required for stability and only one jib sheet needs tending while tacking. The system converts easily to a self-tacking jib via a track installed just forward of the mast. The sheet leads forward to the tack and is trimmed inside the cockpit. The downside of this arrangement is less-precise trim since some of the jib area is sacrificed. The self-tacking jib isn't standard equipment on the e33 but such devices seem to have gained popularity among recreational sailors.



e33

LOA 33'; LWL 27'11"; Beam 8'9";
Draft standard 5'9", shoal 4'9";
Displacement 5,900 lbs.;
Ballast 2,500 lbs.; Sail area 530 sq. ft.

Best Boat Price \$199,900

e Sailing Yachts

43 Norman St.
Marblehead, MA 01945
(877) 439-2248
www.esailingyachts.com

The standard e33 comes with Harken sheaves and Spinlock clutches.

For Doyle, an America's Cup veteran, the moment is all about having a hand on the tiller and making the boat get up and go, so it's no surprise to find that the e33 can accelerate with little coaxing.

Whether tacking around the buoys off Marblehead Light or weaving through the mooring area, the e33 sails smoothly and is easy to control. Although *eclipse* has no winches, raising and trimming the sails presents no problems. The lines are led aft to a pod on the centerline in the cockpit.

Doyle is clearly pleased by the performance of the full-battened square-top mainsail, manufactured, of course, by Doyle Sailmakers.

"It's very efficient," he said, explaining that the sail's square top is unique in its class and enables the boat to handle both light and heavy air.

A first look at the square-topped design—a feature new in 2009—will leave most sailors with the



The e33 is set up for efficient singlehanded, yet can accommodate a crowd.

The e33 cuts a fine figure off
Marblehead, Massachusetts.



impression that the overall sail area has been increased. After all, the sail is no longer a triangle, so one would presume the outermost reaches at the head would have to be "filled in" to accommodate the squared-off shape.

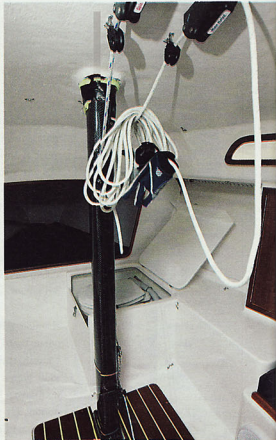
Not so, said Doyle. The overall sail area remains unchanged and is merely redistributed.

During our sail, the wind was blowing 8 to 10 knots and the e33 made the most of it. The breeze was clearly stronger once we were beyond the rocky promontory of Chandler Hovey Park where the iron tower of Marblehead Light looms overhead. Instinctively we moved to the rail to balance the boat as though anticipating a gust, but it was unnecessary. Doyle suggested we abandon the rail and enjoy the roomy cockpit since that's also where the controls are located.

The sails gulped every bit of wind and the boat eagerly pulled forward toward the shorelines of Beverly and Manchester-by-the-Sea. My wife Christine took the helm, still amazed by the fast response to her tiller commands. It was a world of difference from our sluggish, 40-year-old Bristol sloop where you can count 1-2-3 while the boat changes direction, the tiller typically rife with weather helm.

Doyle encouraged Christine to let it fly. He could read her hesitation about whether the e33 could outrun an approaching boat. Doyle shook his head as Christine started to fall off, urging her instead to harden up and cross the boat's bow rather than its wake. She followed his lead and smiled kid-like as the e33 slipped past the potential point of impact with plenty of time to spare. It was not even close.

A few more tacks and jibes and we were headed back to the dock. In the lee there was no reason to fire up the engine. We tied off the fenders and coasted casually to the dock, dropping the main just as



A huge comfortable cockpit is where all the action takes place, top left. Belowdecks, the e33 is laid out simply, perfect for weekend cruising or accommodating daysails.

a helpful hand caught our lines. In heavy air, she's undoubtedly a speed demon.

The e33 is fitted out with a Yanmar 14-horsepower saildrive with Gori two-blade folding propeller and a 10-gallon steel fuel tank. The engine instrument panel and throttle control are in the cockpit and are easy to reach.

The boat has a high-aspect-ratio E-glass rudder, aluminum rudder stock and composite bearings. The deck is sandwich construction with Corecell closed-cell A-foam.

The mast is carbon fiber, with swept spreaders and a hydraulic headstay. There's no backstay and the strut boom vang makes a topping lift unnecessary. Stainless wire standing rigging runs to stainless chainplates. A maststep helps when putting away the mainsail, although the optional Doyle StackPack would simplify that chore.

The headsail furler is below the deck, giving the bow a clean appearance. The anchor locker is flush with the deck. The cockpit has four scuppers. Lifelines are

optional. Doyle emphasizes that the e33 is designed for safe sailing from the cockpit, so there's less reliance on lifelines.

Down below

The cabin is spartan, though Doyle notes a privacy screen—curtain or light-weight bulkhead—can be ordered for the basic marine head with holding tank and deck pumpout. Four portlights help illuminate the cabin. There's an Igloo cooler for your lunch and beverages, port and starboard lockers, and access panels below the settees. The teak-and-holly sole provides some visual warmth, though the e33 is built for sailing fun and not hanging out in the cabin.

Below the waterline, a lead fin keel with large bulb keeps the e33 balanced and on track. The boat can be easily trailered. If e33 were a code, it would translate to sailing fast and easy on an elegant boat with a cockpit roomy enough for plenty of friends.

In late 2009, e Sailing Yachts introduced the e27 and e44.



The large cockpit is comfortable for daysails, and sail and throttle controls are close at hand for the helmsman.

