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Bruckmann 50 MKII

These classic Mark Ellis-designed motorsailers only improve with time

By George Day

It was a lovely summer afternoon when we set off from Falmouth, Massachusetts in the company of three Bruckmann 50s to see if we could get some photos of the big motorsailers engaged in “synchronized sailing” on Nantucket Sound.

The breeze was light and there was a little chop, but the boats were

able to fill their sails and gathered speed to about 4 knots in the 8 knots of wind. The boats were sailed by their owners—Dan Betty from Andover, MA, Keith and Diana Anderson from Montgomery, TX, and John Cryer and Edna Ramos from Houston, TX—so they were somewhat

shorthanded for close maneuvers. Still, one by one, the 50s formed up on Dan Betty’s 50 and we were able to more or less get them sailing in formation through all angles of sail. You wouldn’t normally think of displacement motorsailers as nimble, but the 50s were fully capable of sail-

ing close and turning smartly when called upon to do so.

As we wrapped up the photo shoot, the three boats waved so long and headed off in their own directions for the choice cruising grounds of Nantucket Sound. It was only by coincidence that the three owners and their boats were all together in Falmouth at the same time. Yet it is no coincidence that Falmouth Marine has become the boatyard and marina favored by Bruckmann 50 owners over the years. Dan Betty has been keeping his boats at the yard for many years and has worked closely with the yard to maintain and improve his own 50. So when new owners come along, Dan often persuades them to join him in Falmouth. The yard is now the certified Bruckmann service yard in New England.

The Bruckmann 50 has earned the reputation of being one of the best-designed, best built cruising motorsailers available anywhere. The hull was designed from the keel up to combine the best qualities of a displacement sailboat with the load carrying ability and buoyancy aft of a displacement powerboat. This was no easy task, but Canadian yacht designer Mark Ellis got it right. The 50 is a true 10 knot boat that can achieve top speed under power, under sail with 15 knots of breeze or more, and when motorsailing.

DESIGN CHANGES

Over the years, owners have worked with Mark Bruckmann and Mark Ellis to create their own semi-custom 50s, and with yards like Falmouth Marine to modify and upgrade the boats. This year, Mark Bruckmann took many of the ideas that owners have put into their boats to create the new Mark II version.

The biggest change to the design is the addition of an extended stern platform that lengthens the waterline, adds balance to the boat, offers an excellent boarding and swim platform, and provides a place to stow a dinghy while underway. The platform looks good on the stern and completes the boat in a very useful way.

The other significant design change is the addition of a 200hp John Deere engine as an optional upgrade. The boats so equipped have proven to be true 10 knot cruisers and can maintain near hull speed while burning less than five gallons of diesel per hour. The John Deere engines are quiet, powerful and have long lives when well maintained. Since you tend to use the engine all the time aboard a motorsailer, these qualities are important.

Owner Keith Anderson has been involved with farming all of his life, so when he learned that the 50 came with a John Deere engine as standard equipment he took it as a sign that the boat was right for his family.





LIVING ABOARD

Before we set out for some synchronized sailing, I was offered tours of the three Bruckmann 50s in Falmouth. They were all similar on deck, with roller furling headsails and Forespar Leisure Furl booms for the mainsails. The boats are designed to be cruised by a couple, so sheets, halyards and reefing control lines all lead aft to the cockpit and electric winches are standard.

Down below, each boat reflected the subtle differences between the owners in the layout of the furniture, the type of seats and the navigator's chair in the pilothouse. Yet each offered complete 360° visibility through the huge pilothouse windows, so the inside steering station was the spot for standing watches and handling the boat at night or in cold, wet weather. For those who cruise in the higher latitudes, the Bruckmann 50 is truly a three- or even four-season cruising boat.

But the 50 is also set up for real indoor-outdoor living when cruising warmer climes. The pilothouse and large cockpit are linked via a large, watertight door and two opening windows. The cockpit has long benches and a lovely teak table with drop leaves that will seat six for dinner. In the tropics or on warm northern evenings, this is where the family will gather for sundowners and meals.

Forward and down two steps from the pilothouse, you'll find the huge ship's galley to port and the study or lower lounge to starboard. Keith and Diana Anderson love to cook, so the galley was a huge factor in their choice of the 50. It wraps around in a large U-shape with the stove and oven outboard, the sinks on the centerline forward, and the huge fridge freezer under the counter aft. With cabinets and drawers everywhere, the galley is truly a seagoing kitchen.

Across from the galley is the study, library or TV nook depending on how you want to set it up. On all three of the boats, this was also the laundry since the owners had full frontloading washers and dryers built in with access through two low doors. With gensets and high capacity watermakers, these boats are truly self-sufficient and as convenient as any home.





The guest cabin lies off the hall that runs forward to the master stateroom and can be set up in a number of configurations, including converting it into an office. The master stateroom forward has a large centerline double berth, ample drawer and locker storage, and two large hanging lockers. The forward cabin is large and airy and will be a very comfortable home while cruising.

John Cryer noted that he and Edna had looked at a lot of boats. They had owned a Beneteau 47.7 and were looking for what John called their "last boat." They had discussed a custom design and met with several high-end semi-custom builders.

"It came down to the Y-Factor," said John. "When Edna compared the living spaces and cruising accommodations on the boats out there, nothing suited our needs better than the Bruckmann 50."

Dan Betty is a serial boat owner and has enjoyed both sailboats—a Mason 44 and a Northeast 400 motorsailer—and powerboats—a Hatteras 41, a Mathews 46 and an Atlantic 47—so he knew what he

was looking for in his next and perhaps last boat. The 50 combined the best qualities of all of the great boats that he'd already owned.

One of the qualities in the boats that sets them apart is the classic Bristol or Herreshoff styling in the finish work below decks. Mark Bruckmann creates interiors that have white bulkheads that are trimmed and detailed with brightly varnished mahogany or teak. Drawer handles, hinges and latches are sturdy classic designs. Ports and hatches are all top of the line. The engine room under the raised pilothouse is a joy to look at and work in, with good access to all engineering systems.

The Bruckmann 50 MkII is a lovely and capable cruising boat, and with the addition of the stern platform and the optional 200 hp engine, this great design has only gotten better.

Bruckmann 50 MkII

LOA	51'2"
LWL	44'6"
Beam	15'5"
Draft	6'0"
Displ.	45,000 lbs
Ballast	16,000 lbs.
Sail area	1,135 sq. ft.

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