

Catalina 22 Sport

Catalina Yachts' success is often attributed to their conservative approach. Old models are more likely to be tweaked and improved than consigned to the scrap heap and new ones, when introduced, will be far from radical. Buyers seem reassured by the strong element of continuity, and understand that while Catalinas don't look like tomorrow's boats today, neither will they look like yesterday's boats tomorrow.

Even if you think that some of their range look rather staid in comparison with more stylish and flamboyant European alternatives, this philosophy of gradual evolution has certainly worked in America.

Significantly, it has helped to maintain the popularity of the Catalina 22 for 36 years. But when the original version had been discontinued for some time, owners wanting to give themselves a chance in the one-design fleets had to hunt around for an old boat to restore. That's when Catalina, realising they were missing a trick, introduced the Sport version.

This history explains why the 'new' 22 doesn't look like a new design. Its age is given away by features such as the well-raked stern, relatively deep forefoot and low aspect-ratio masthead rig with a notably high boom. Catalina cater for the more modern-style sporty market with their Capri 22.

Among those who want to race in Catalina 22 fleets in the USA, the Sport will doubtless find a strong following. And over here? Since there aren't any racing fleets,

the boat will have to sell on other features. If you want one-design competition, you can buy a Hunter 707, a J/80 or one of the established sportsboats. If you're after creature comforts, by contrast, you won't be looking at something as basic and slim-line as this model of Catalina: you're more likely to be sniffing around the 22 MkII.

Simple pleasures

At a glance, the 22 Sport might appear to fall between stools for the European market. Yet there's no reason why a long-running design with sporty pretensions shouldn't sell. Given that most people use boats of this size for day-sailing or weekending, it could be argued that you don't need

lots of interior space. Keep it simple, and enjoy a nice big cockpit in a boat that's far less tweaky and twitchy than a typical modern sportsboat.

Demanding isn't the name of the game with the 22 Sport.

You're given a masthead rig with forward and aft lowers and a fixed backstay: all you get for adjustment is a bottlescrew. There's a simple 4:1 vang with a cleat at the foot of the mast, and a short mainsheet track across the transom. The genoa comes on a plastic headfoil with an integral halyard that's made off on the top of the drum. If you like pulling rigs into different shapes, forget it.

As an enjoyable boat to sail, however, the 22 doesn't score badly. She's lively without being skittish, and achieved similar speeds to the 250 on most points of sail except downwind, when she slithered away down

the face of the waves rather more readily. The principal factor holding her back in a following sea was the fixed shallow rudder, which resulted in a vague feel to the helm and made it difficult to keep her on track on occasions. A deeper, lifting blade is available for an extra £125 and should provide a better grip. It was fitted to another 22 that I looked at afterwards on its trailer, and appeared well engineered.

PRICE:
£14,874
including VAT,
ex yard



ON DECK AND DOWN BELOW



▲ The Catalina's cockpit is longer than on many bigger boats – just what you need for day-sailing



▲ Because the centreplate swings up beneath the hull, the case is relatively unobtrusive down below



CATALINA 22 SPORT

SPECIFICATION



LOA	6.55m (21ft 6in)
LWL	5.89m (19ft 4in)
Beam	2.34m (7ft 8in)
Draught - keel up	0.51m (1ft 8in)
- keel down	1.52m (5ft)
Displacement	1,021kg (2,250lb)
Ballast	249kg (550lb)
Sail area (main and 100% forestay)	19.04m ² (205sq ft)
Displacement/length ratio	139
Sail area/displacement ratio	19.75
RCD category	C
Engine	5-7hp outboard
Headroom	1.32m (4ft 4in)
Designer	Catalina Yachts

Builder Catalina Yachts, California
www.catalinayachts.com

Distributor Windward Yachting, Northney Marina,
 Hayling Island, Hants PO11 0NH
 Tel: 02392 469240; Fax: 02392 469241;
 Email: info@windwardyachting.co.uk
 Website: www.windwardyachting.co.uk

Price: £14,874 (inc. VAT, ex-Hayling Island)
 With trailer and 5hp outboard: £17,995



▲ The 22 was eager to surf down the waves, though the lifting rudder would provide more grip

Draught-dodging

A ballasted swing keel is fitted to the Sport (the 22 MkII also comes with the choice of a fin or wing). It's raised by a simple trailer winch down below, beneath the bridgedeck, so getting unstuck if you go aground is relatively simple. The plate is a glassfibre moulding containing lead ballast and weighing 205kg (452lb). That's not a massive proportion of the boat's total weight (1,021kg /2,250lb) but, taking the draught to 1.52m (5ft) when right down, it provides a centre of gravity that's low enough to balance the modest sail area. Plenty of form stability also helps keep the boat on her feet.

As you would hope in a design that's been around for so long, removing the plate for inspection or repair is relatively simple: you jack the boat up, remove four external bolts and lower the plate out of the boat. Another welcome feature is a friction device to stop the plate clonking in its case on downwind legs. Moving back to deck level, the only real anomaly is the fitting of cleats with the optional self-tailing primary winches but not with the standard non-self-tailers.

Elsewhere on deck, the same general observations apply as for the 250: the hardware does the job but is pretty basic. Stanchions and lifelines are extra.

Cockpit stowage is provided by a pair of shallow lockers at the aft end of the seats. Water drains through two holes in the transom, on the port side of which is a bracket for the outboard. The optional fold-down boarding ladder occupies the starboard side. Mouldings are generally fair and cleanly finished.

Down below

Basic and functional is the story below decks, where you find a V-berth in the bow forward of a partial bulkhead. A chemical toilet can fit beneath its aft end.

The rest of the space is occupied by two long quarter berths with the centreboard case between them, and room for a cool box beneath the bridgedeck.

Although there's a one-piece moulded headliner, most of the hardware is bolted right through. A full interior moulding forms the sole and bunk fronts. Headroom is 1.32m (4ft 4in).

Conclusion

The 22 Sport is easy to sail and reasonably zippy in a conservative and slightly old-fashioned sort of way. That's an unusual combination of qualities: she doesn't have the performance or sophistication of a modern sportsboat or the go-anywhere ruggedness of the traditional British trailer-sailer, yet she's much more reassuring to handle than many of today's tender and skittish trailable lake-sailers.

At around £18,000 for the boat, trailer and 5hp outboard, she's also competitively priced. I would imagine there's a market for a boat like this.