



NEW BOATS SCANDINAVIAN CRUISER 20



Scandinavian Cruiser 20

A combination of good looks and exhilarating performance | BY ADAM CORT

A couple of days after last fall's Newport Boat Show, I had a chance to take the Scandinavian Cruiser 20 out for a spin on Narragansett Bay. Despite being one of the smallest boats there, and up on a trailer besides, the SC20, with its classic lines, teak deck and royal blue top-sides, was one of the show's standouts.

It was also one of the most surprising boats I've sailed. In retrospect, I guess I should have paid more attention to the trapeze and the all-carbon-fiber hull and appendages. If ever there was a wolf in sheep's clothing, the 19ft 3in SC 20 is it.

Modelled on the lean, elegant Square-Meter boats, also known as Skerry Cruisers, that originated in Sweden in the early 20th century, the boat has a 309lb ballast bulb that comprises approximately half its total displacement. But don't be fooled. This may technically be a keelboat, but under sail it sure feels a lot like a dinghy.

By the time we got out on the bay, it was early afternoon and the sea breeze had come in, bringing with it puffs in the upper teens. The SC20's acceleration was amazing, as was its sensitive helm. The narrow hull has a beam of just 4ft 3in and is as slippery as it looks. I had to both concentrate and relax at the same time to keep from over-steering. As on a racing dinghy, the SC20 turns so quickly that if you put the

helm down hard without warning, your crew could easily end up in a heap on the cockpit sole or even in the drink—especially when they're out on that trapeze!

The Scandinavian Cruiser 20 comes with plenty of strings to pull, thanks to a 172ft² roller-furling A-sail. The 41ft² jib is self-tacking, and the 97ft² main is set on a rotating two-piece carbon-fiber wing mast and carbon-fiber boom. There is an above-boom vang, which makes it much easier shifting from side to side during tacks and gybes. This is a boat that would be a joy to single-hand. In true dinghy style, it will race with a crew of two.

One thing I didn't like was the way the mainsheet is led aft of the rudderpost. It's a challenge to keep your arms from getting crossed up while steering, sheeting in or—most importantly—easing the sail in the heavy stuff. The downside of a diminutive cockpit, I suppose.

The keel and bulb come into their own as the boat starts to heel. There's not much form stability in the narrow hull, but once the bulb has a chance to establish some righting moment it does so with authority. The result is a boat that offers the best of both worlds—the exhilarating, high-octane performance of a dinghy and the safety and security of a keelboat.

Construction quality is excellent. Inter-

estingly, the "teak" deck is not actually teak, but Flexiteek, a synthetic teak substitute. The quality of both the material and installation on our test boat was first rate. I had to ask to make sure it wasn't the real thing.

Launching the boat was a piece of cake. The boat comes with a dedicated crane for raising and lowering the keel. The cuddy and cockpit are configured so that the crane can be kept on board and out of the way while sailing.

I hope the SC20 does well on this side of the Atlantic. With that A-sail, trapeze and beautiful hull form, a strong one-design class would be a sight to behold. *AL*



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA 19ft 3in // LWL 12ft 7in

BEAM 4ft 3in

DISPLACEMENT 617lb

BALLAST 309lb

DRAFT 4ft 7in (keel down)

SAIL AREA 138ft² (jib & main)

DESIGNER Scandinavian Cruisers

BUILDER Scandinavian Cruisers Ltd.,
Bandholm, DenmarkU.S. AGENT Scandinavian Cruisers USA,
Croton-on-Hudson, NY, 203-522-6727,
scandinaviancruisers.com

PRICE \$24,900

BALLAST RATIO 50%

SAIL AREA-DISP RATIO 29

DISP-LENGTH RATIO 138

PERFORMANCE

RACER

CRUISER