



Island Packet Estero

MOST BOATS IN THE 30- TO 40-FOOT range are designed to be comfortable coastal cruisers that are capable of longer offshore passages. So when it came time to pick a winner from the boats entered in this category—and each boat’s stated design brief offered slight variations on the same basic theme—the judges named the Island Packet Estero the Best Midsize Cruiser Under 40 Feet. Alvah Simon may have summed it up best when he said, “This boat will encourage people to travel.”

The 36-foot Estero has the full keel and stout hull for which all Island Packets are known, but designer Bob Johnson brought a fresh look down below to make the most out of the accommodations plan. The saloon wraps around the area forward of the mast. This layout leaves plenty of room for a large galley and head as well as two sleeping cabins aft. The judges noted that this design makes excellent use of the available interior space.

They also applauded the African ma-

hogany joinery, copious storage, counter space in the galley, and molded nonskid sole at the companionway base and in the galley. During deliberations, Roger Hell-yar-Brook was particularly enamored with the boat’s wiring, bronze sea cocks, and beefy backing plates, but all the systems and construction features rated good to excellent in his notebook.

The attention paid to construction was in abundance on deck as well. The boat’s substantial bulwarks, big scuppers, 26-inch-high stanchions, and double anchor rollers on the bowsprit were all big

hits with our panel of experts. Wide side decks and plenty of handholds make it easy to go forward. But with all control lines leading back to the deep and secure cockpit, you only really need to go forward when it comes time to tie up at a dock or set the ground tackle.

Unfortunately, we test-sailed the Estero in rain and 5 to 8 knots of breeze; still, once the judges got the boat going, boat speed touched 5 knots in the puffs, and it was easy to sail. Put all the achievements of this boat together and it’s no puzzle why the Estero was the judges’ choice as the Best Midsize Cruiser Under 40 Feet.

B.S.

“This is a sturdy cruising boat that will take care of its owner.”
— ROGER HELLYAR-BROOK

WINNING DETAILS

- ◆ Construction and systems are exemplary.
- ◆ The cockpit is comfortable and secure.
- ◆ The accommodations plan makes excellent use of the available space.

