

Island Packet 370

Coastal Cruiser

Island Packet Yachts and its founder/designer Bob Johnson have been marching to the same drummer for the past 25 years. The drum has changed a bit but the beat is the same. IP and its loyal following of owners adhere to the full keel principle of design, and if number of boats built are an accurate gauge, they are successful in this approach. The new 370 is pure IP but it does show a few subtle evolutionary changes from the older models.

The boat is at the heavy end of the current D/L range with a D/L of 315. Any time you go with a full keel it is hard to get the D/L down under 300, because there's so much volume in the keel envelope itself. The 370 is beamy, too, with an L/B of 2.89. The keel starts virtually at the cutwater and rakes back at a nice gentle angle that will help you avoid snagging lobster pots.

The keel stops short, leaving a large space for the prop, and the rudder is attached to the keel with a long shoe that I presume is stain-

less steel. The rudder shows a hint of balance. Certainly with the hull and long keel monocoque you have a very strong boat to resist damage from grounding. The stern of the 370 is proportionally wider than previous models. This, of course, buys you accommodation volume and a better cockpit. By sticking with this long keel approach, Johnson ensures that his boats are well separated from the rest of the cruising boat pack.

when it's blowing. With the 370 the gap between the inner forestay and the headstay is pretty big, so the pain will not last long. Staysail and genoa together is not the most close-winded of combinations, as the staysail ends up gasping for clean air unless you bear off, but with a keel like this you are not going to point 30 degrees apparent anyway. Once you bear off onto a close reach both headsails will work well together. The 370 has a single spreader rig and an in-mast furling system. SA/D is listed in the brochure as 17.1 for the cutter and 14.4 for the sloop, indicating that they have added the sail areas of the genoa and staysail together to get the sail area of the cutter. I prefer using I, J, E and P for sail area with 100 percent of the fore triangle. That way there is no confusion.

The 370 is laid out for two couples with double berths forward and aft. The galley is big and very well laid out. The nav station is in the port quarter cabin. The bulk-

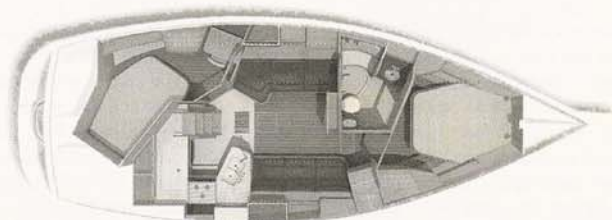
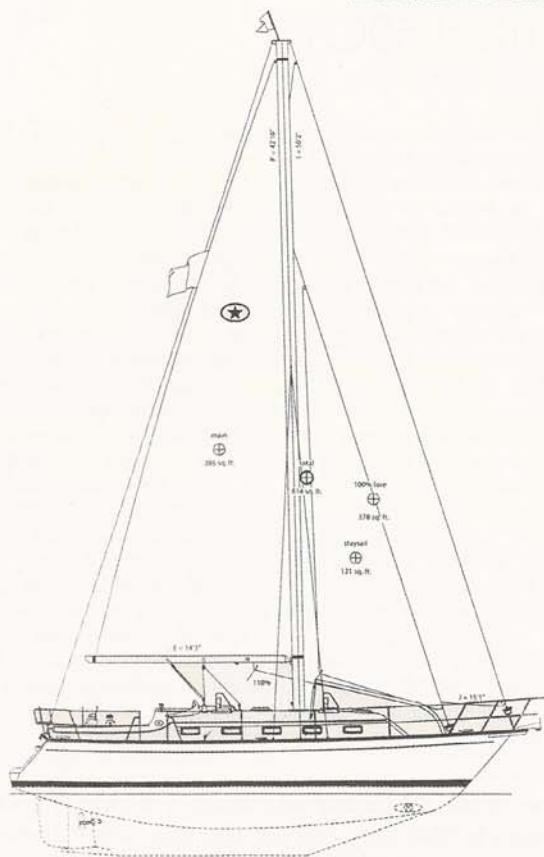
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head separating the quarter-cabin from the saloon has a big open window that closes with a removable panel. There is a head with a shower stall. Twisting that port double quarterberth 50 degrees opens up the port quarter lazarette area and makes use of space under the cockpit sole where it's almost impossible to access for stowage anyway. This seems a good compromise to my eye. Headroom throughout is 6 feet, 5 inches.

Bob Johnson's evolutionary approach to the design of his line has worked well for him. With its nipped transom profile and big swim step the 370 is as up-to-date a full keeler as I think you will find.

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The sail plan is a true cutter with the mast well aft and a staysail on a Hoyt boom. It's not much fun to drag a genoa around an inner forestay but if you leave the staysail up it works like a kind of baffle that helps guide the genoa around, so long as you leave the staysail sheeted to weather as you pass through the tack. With the Hoyt boom I don't think you have control over this. It will tack automatically, which of course is one of its benefits



OBE: \$270,000
Our Best Estimate of the sailaway price

Island Packet Yachts, 1979 Wild Acres Road, Largo, FL 33771, www.ip.com, (727) 535-6431.

A comfortable cutter with a sensible layout.

LOA 37'10"; LWL 31'; Beam 13'1"; Draft 4'3"; Displacement 21,000 lbs.; Ballast 8,400 lbs.; Sail Area 814 sq. ft. (cutter rig); SA/D 17.1; D/L 315; L/B 2.89; Auxiliary Yanmar 56-hp; Fuel 75 gals.; Water 160 gals.