



High-cut headsails provide excellent visibility from the 485's cockpit

Island Packet 485

WITH ITS distinctive color, full keel, sturdy bowsprit, and cutter rig, this 51-footer is unmistakably an Island Packet. The company has made a name for itself—and built a loyal following of owners—by sticking to the idea that offshore boats should be safe, seakindly, comfortable, and easy to sail, as is the new flagship of the line. The 485 is longer, wider, and heavier than the older 420 and is aimed at cruisers who are looking for more boat than previously available from Island Packet. But it's more than an expanded 420; with the addition of a center-cockpit layout and large windows illuminating a raised deck saloon, designer Bob Johnson offers a fresh approach to traditional Island Packet aesthetics.

On deck

The deck is surrounded by a raised varnished-teak caprail. Lifeline stanchions are sturdy and the diamond-pattern anti-skid is effective. Sidedecks are wide, alu-

minum handholds run the entire length of the cabintop, and sheets lead to within arm's reach of the helmsman.

Whitlock Mamba rack-and-pinion steering covers the span between the center cockpit and the quadrant without excessive friction, and all deck fittings, including six solid mooring cleats, are backed with aluminum plates.

While some center cockpits are on the shallow side, to allow for maximum interior volume, the 485's is deep and comfortable. The seats are over 7 feet long, and coamings are tall and angle outboard. The cockpit locker is big enough to accommodate an eight-person life raft plus other gear, and there are plenty of brace points. The cockpit is a long way off the water and takes a couple of steps to get into and out of, but this orientation also makes it dry and secure offshore and frees up significant aft deck space for dinghy stowage during a passage or sunbathing at anchor. The aft deck's

cavernous lazaret can be accessed through a watertight deck hatch and from the owner's stateroom.

Belowdecks

Island Packets have a reputation for spacious interiors, and the 485's generous freeboard and wide (15-foot, 4-inch) beam up the ante considerably. The most obvious example is the conspicuously wide-open main saloon, where two nearly straight, ultra-cushy settees, which double as excellent seaberths, line both sides of the saloon at the boat's widest point. A small detachable snack table can be mounted on a post in front of either settee and can be removed to make room for a large expandable dining table that folds down from the bulkhead. In keeping with the high level of fit and finish of the varnished teak interior, the snack table is gorgeous but needs fiddles if it's to be of practical use offshore. The dining table unfolds to over 6 feet wide and is a great setup for entertaining in port.

The glossy teak-and-holly sole in the saloon can be slippery when wet, but safely traversing this wide-open area offshore is made possible by two solid grab posts and handholds running the length of the cabintop. High-traffic areas, such as the base of the companionway stairs, the galley, and the nav station, have an exposed-fiberglass sole topped with grippy anti-skid.



The nav station (left) is well equipped, and the galley has considerable counterspace

Photos by Peter McCowan



The bowsprit is sturdy and ground tackle is easy to deploy. The interior fit and finish is excellent, and the salon is wide and spacious

To accommodate the boat's considerable fuel and water tankage, the saloon floor is raised 11 inches above the rest of the interior. A well-executed nav station in an alcove next to the companionway steps provides ample space to spread out charts as well as several lockers for cruising guides and nav tools (but the chart table lacks fiddles). The nav area has plenty of room to mount electronics, a swiveling leather armchair/nav seat, easy access to the boat's electrical panel, and a hanging locker for wet foulies. The galley is equally spacious and well-suited for passagemaking. Long Corian countertops provide room for two to work without getting in each other's way, multiple lockers will swallow extensive provisions, and the three-burner propane stove gimbals properly and is protected by a crash bar.

Since the boat is designed for a cruising couple, there are only two dedicated sleeping cabins. Both are roomy enough for long-term cruising comfort. The master cabin aft, with its walk-around double bunk, innerspring mattress, separate sitting area, huge cedar-lined hanging locker and drawers, and ensuite head, is a bit more spacious than the forward cabin. However, guests won't be roughing it. The forward cabin has all the important stuff—a comfortable double bunk, copious storage, and excellent ventilation. A third cabin, set up as an office/work area with an L-shaped countertop and a stool, can be converted into a double bunk.

Under way

People don't buy Island Packets because they perform like twitchy grand-prix racers; they buy them because they don't (among many other reasons). The 485 will not bounce around and pound upwind like the lightweights and more often than not will be forgiving and comfortable in all but the worst conditions. I was not expecting grand-prix performance during my test sail off Annapolis, but the 485 was no slouch by any standard.

The keel-stepped mast (which is just short enough to fit under most fixed bridges on the ICW) is conservative, and the rig (with in-mast furling) should be easy for a cruising couple to handle, but there is sufficient sail area to keep the boat moving in light winds. In up to 10 knots of breeze, with the main, genoa, and self-tacking staysail flying, this 40,000-pound long-keel cruiser tacked through 90 degrees and recorded speeds in the 6-knot range. Sailhandling gear and the cockpit layout were efficient, visibility from the helm was excellent, and the boat tracked beautifully. The inner forestay is set back enough to allow the genoa to be tacked around without the need to roll it up, though obviously the cutter rig is not the ideal configuration for short-tacking. But who short-tacks offshore?

Speedy passages will be possible even when the wind dies. With a range under power of over 1,500 miles, the 100-horsepower Yanmar diesel will motor at 7 to 8 knots through high-pressure dead zones. Handling under power was smooth. The substantial three-blade fixed prop provided sufficient bite to stop and back, and an optional 7-horsepower bowthruster is available to enhance close-quarters maneuverability. The engine compartment is wrapped in lead-lined foam soundproofing that will have you wondering if the engine is on when it's idling. The engine is accessible from all four sides, and the overall installation is excellent.

CONCLUSION

This is a sensible, mature cruising boat that provides all the essential ingredients necessary for comfortable and confident offshore passagemaking. With its integral full keel, attached rudder, keel-stepped mast, superior systems installation, and top-notch craftsmanship, peace of mind comes standard with the purchase price. But the 485 is more than just bulletproof. Glossy varnished woodwork with beautiful inlaid tables, settees that are as comfortable as a domestic couch, and spacious cabins will likely inspire pride in new owners and maybe a bit of jealousy from guests. **Bill Springer**

SPECIFICATIONS

Island Packet 485

Price: \$498,950 (introductory price FOB continental U.S.) includes in-mast roller-furling main, 110% genoa, and staysail with Hoyt boom, Harken winches, Whitlock Mamba steering, (2) VacuFlush heads, gimballed 3-burner stove w/oven and microwave, (6) 12-volt AGM house batteries, (1) dedicated starting battery

Designer: Bob Johnson, N.A.

Builder: Island Packet Yachts, Largo, FL; tel. 727-535-6431, www.ipy.com

Construction: Hull is built of hand-laid high-modulus triaxial fiberglass with a structural grid system. The bottom is coated with the PolyClad system and has a 10-year limited warranty against osmotic blisters. Deck is cored with PolyCore and comes with a 10-year warranty against delamination.

LOA	51*7 (
LWL	43*2 (
Beam	15*4 (
Draft	5*3 (
Ballast	16,000 lbs
Displacement (dry)	40,000 lbs
Sail area	1,234 sq ft (100% foretriangle incl. staysail)
Power	100-hp Yanmar
Fuel/water/waste	300/300/60 gal
Displ.-length ratio	216
Sail area-displ. ratio	17.2

