



This new mid-size bluewater cruiser will make a fine and sensible couple's cruising boat

Island Packet 360

The Island Packet 360 debuted at last fall's Annapolis sailboat show and caused a nice stir among the boatbuilder's many fans. The new boat shows some definite evolutionary traits while maintaining the qualities that make Island Packets so admired in the cruising fleet.

The 360 is built using the same hull as the popular Estero, which was launched a few years ago. The hull has a slightly more plumb bow than the current fleet of Island Packets and stirs memories of the great early boats that made Island Packet

famous. The boat's bowsprit is a bit longer than we see in the larger boats, which spreads out the sailing rig, provides a good anchoring platform and gives the 360 a decidedly classic and salty look.

Under the water, the 360's hull has the same Full Foil Keel, shallow draft and attached rudder that you see on her sister ships. The hull design offers a sea kindly motion, a high degree of stability, some positive lift when sailing to windward and, of course, the minimum draft that allows you to really gunkhole close to the coastline. For those who are sailing far afield, this hull shape will

take a grounding better than a fin keel design, will better protect the rudder and propeller, and will allow you to dry out or careen the boat for quick repairs or refreshing the antifouling paint.

The 360 has a fairly tall cutter rig with the staysail flying on the patented Hoyt Jib Boom. With roller furling on all three sails and a self-tacking staysail, the 360 is an automated cruising boat. And because the sails are all fairly small, even the lightest and smallest crewmember can trim, reef and furl them.

The 360 sports an all-new interior that combines the warmth of



traditional varnished teak joinery with the brightness of light-colored laminates and countertops. The boat offers two large, private double cabins and has a large head forward with a separate shower stall. The galley is huge and has twin refrigerators (either of which can be used as a freezer), a propane stove and oven, a microwave, and plenty of storage above and below the counters.

The L-shaped settee to port has a table that folds down from the main bulkhead, and across from the dinette are two swiveling easy chairs. There are storage lockers behind the settee and the chairs, and a small table fits neatly between the chairs for drinks or playing cards. The chart table folds up from the galley cabinet, where the navigator can use

it while sitting in the aft easy chair.

The interior is spacious and homey, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. For a couple who

likes to cruise with another couple or their children, the 360 offers a lot of accommodations in a manageable and affordable package.





After the Annapolis show, we had the chance to sail the boat before it was delivered to the nearby dealership at Gratitude Yacht Sales. The morning breeze was light and the Chesapeake Bay was lovely in the early autumn warmth. Off the Naval Academy we rolled out the mainsail and then the genoa and the 360 responded nicely. At 19,300 pounds, she is no lightweight, but even so the ample sail area easily turned the light breeze into 5 knots of boat speed. She seemed to almost be making her own wind.

We tacked up the Severn River next to the Academy where the breeze was building. The 360 tacked easily through 90 degrees and maintained her way while making very little leeway.

At the fixed bridge across the river, we bore off onto a broad reach and rolled out the staysail to give us maximum sail area. The 360 responded well and soon the bow wave was hissing nicely along the hull and the wake stretching away smoothly. This is the kind of pleasant sailing that we would have been happy with all day.

But we didn't have all day, so after a few jibes downwind, we rolled up the sails and headed back into Annapolis under power. The 360 motors efficiently and is easy to steer and maneuver. We brought her in alongside a dock in town without any fuss and then backed and

turned her within a boat length.

The new Island Packet 360 does a lot of things well. She is a capable ocean sailing boat with excellent accommodation for living aboard. She is built to the highest standards and carries ABYC and CE offshore ratings. If you are looking for a handy, mid-size blue water boat that is also a lot of fun to sail, the new 360 should definitely be on your list. Take her sailing and you won't look back.



Island Packet 360

LOA	36'5"
LWL	31'6"
Beam	12'4"
Draft	4'0"
Mast height	54'0"
Water	110 gals.
Fuel	55 gals.
Displ.	19,300 lbs.
Sail area	831 sq. ft.
Engine	40-hp.

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