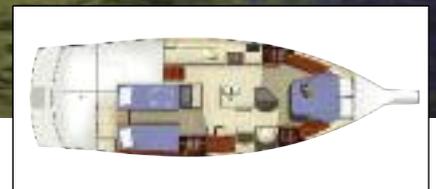


# Island Packet SP Cruiser

## A Motorsailer Worth the Look



**ISLAND PACKET** set the benchmark for cruising yachts design almost from the get go. Their formula was to match the aspects of speed and comfort with performance, 'sailability' and safety. Their new motorsailer extends this beyond their sail experience; they have another winner for sure.

The motorsailer market seems to have legs; its traction is evidenced by the Island Packet SP cruiser. Where else might aging sailors go? It seems like a natural progression though today I suggest the niche may be broader than that. High fuel prices have caused many to evaluate a hybrid sail/power option and

the Island Packet SP bridges the gap between sail and power or trawler option. For a disciplined sailboat reviewer, the transition was a snap.

That said, the time aboard confirmed for me that there were many advantages to this production motorsailer; it offers the ability to sail in comfort or easily cruise under power at 8+ knots. Incidentally, range for this boat is upwards of 1,000 nautical miles using the engine alone when driven by the 110 hp Yanmar.

Designed by Bob Johnson, Island Packet's founder, president and chief designer, the 41-foot SP has fit well into

their fleet of well-known and respected cruising boats. Its design was prompted by the desire for many cruising sailors to gain the comforts of trawler passages while, as Island Packet puts it, 'retaining the ability to make passages under sail with simplified, easy to control systems.'

With sailing knowledge in hand, Johnson and the design team worked to develop a new hull form that provides dividends in speed both under sail and power. Broad stern sections and less dead rise typify the hull. Of note is the retention of the well-known Island Packet Full

## SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	41' 1"/12.52 m
LWL	34' 9"/10.59 m
Beam	12' 9"/3.89 m
Draft	3' 8"/1.12 m
Sail Area (100%)	714 sq. ft./66.3 sq. m
Ballast	5,000 lb./2,268 kg
Displacement	21,000 lb./9,526 kg
Water	130 gal./492 l
Fuel	215 gal./814 l
Mast Height	55' 00"/16.76 m
Engine	110-hp. Yanmar 4JH4
Designer	Bob Johnson

Foil that gives protection to the prop and rudder while lowering the center of gravity in its shoal draft configuration.

But clearly this boat will get strong adoption as well as offering a 'season-extending' option included. The interior is large, welcoming and offers great live-aboard space. The larger than normal superstructure, some call the 'dog house', takes a wee bit of getting used to, but once aboard you get the dividends from increased headroom, lots of interior volume, great visibility and (believe it or not) easy handling – both sailing and under power. For someone (like me) who is used to sitting on the rails getting wet, it's amazing how well you can trim and feel this boat from inside. It handles really well.

As I researched the crossover market that the motorsailer addresses, it's clear that the focal point for this boat is the helming station. And here, quite frankly, the large helm area complete with swivel chairs and wonderful visibility aided by serious windshield wipers does not disappoint. Right at hand, on a well laid out console, are electric controls for sail trim, alongside engine and anchor. Our test boat came with a suite of Raymarine electronics complete with remote autopilot that allows control of the helm anywhere aboard.

The hull is hand laid solid fibreglass with the Polycore decks fastened through



*The large helm is a key focal point. The area boasts swivel chairs and wonderful visibility.*

a wide flange mechanically and using adhesive. From the dock you immediately notice two cockpits, one mid/forward and the other aft. The raised forward cockpit also boasts room for a large removable table.

The aft deck cockpit is a nice space, protected with a hard top. With this much additional buoyancy aft, the potential for yaw was countered by the installation of two skegs aft. Additional controls for sail trim are to starboard

complete with stoppers and electric winch. When aft, one needs to get used to the high bulkheads that support the cabin top, but as mentioned previously the space dividends are wonderful.

Next, you'll see an integrated swim platform that's molded right at the waterline. Access to the deep and well-protected aft deck is through a transom door to starboard.

Moving around this boat on deck is safe and easy with decks wide enough to



*The bright master cabin is forward with its "island" berth that allows easy movement to access the two large handing lockers.*

## ISLAND PACKET SP CRUISER



*The galley is neatly tucked forward to port, three steps below the main salon and features fridge/freezer compartments, a two-burner stove, double stainless steel sink and wonderful storage throughout.*

traverse forward with stainless steel pipe rails guarding your way. The wide bow pulpit complements this.

From the sailing side I was keen to see how well Island Packet had thought out

their running rigging and trim options. It's interesting to see how all the halyards and sheets are run through conduits minimizing lines on the deck back to new Lewmar electric sheeting StoWinches

### CANADIAN DEALERS

**Navy Point Marine**  
www.navypointmarine.com

**Westerly Yacht Sales Ltd**  
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specifically designed for this boat. They work flawlessly considering the number of turns and potential friction points that present themselves. It's great stuff and could be quite easy to get used to.

Sailing with 15 knots apparent, we were easily able to hit 6 knots. This boat is not designed to sail tight upwind; it needs to sail freer than one of my ilk would certainly be used to. That said, the smaller sail plan (714 square feet), when set up properly, seems to work well driving the boat forward considering the pilot house windage and the boat's over-



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*The nav station could easily be transformed into a workstation that could easily handle a 22" flat screen, computer and printer.*

all weight. Under power, the stability you need is there. However, we would seriously consider the reacher option package that augments range and speed over ground.

Another early observation counted eight opening ports, two hatches, and

two dorade-type vents all providing adequate ventilation.

Entering the pilothouse, you are completely overwhelmed by the bright interior complements for the side windows and sloping windshields forward. The captain's chairs can swivel to join in on the L-shaped dinette. Ventilation characteristics are enhanced though the opening of the large windows while privacy can be guarded using the louvered Oceanair shades. The walk through to the galley is tucked forward to port, three steps below the main salon and features fridge/freezer compartments, a two-burner stove, double stainless steel sink and wonderful storage throughout.

The bright master cabin is forward with its "island" berth that allows easy movement to access the two large hand-

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ing lockers. There is a separate entrance to the head to starboard boasting a separate shower stall, large head and again more storage.

Something I personally liked was that the small workstation that lies just aft could easily handle a 22" flat screen, computer and printer. Obviously, it can double as a nav station but my sense is that the paper charts will be up top on the dinette table (if needed at all) while underway.

Further aft the double berth guest cabin is large and bright. The center berth allows for easy access to the engine compartment if needed.

All in all, the Island Packet SP delivers! 🗑️

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