

# Blue Water Sailing Survey

The *BWS* review of the J/40 ran in the April issue, prior to the completion of our winter readers' survey. Here, then, are our readers ratings and thoughts on the J/40. "Damn fine boat!" enthused one owner. "After seven years. it's still the best boat for me." wrote another. Rating on a scale of 1 to 10. with 10 the highest score, it is not surprising. then, that 8s, 9s and 10s predominate on the J/40 scorecards.

**Passagemaking Qualities:** Among survey respondents. "longest passages recorded ranged from 100 to 825 miles. The average overall offshore rating was 9. All but one of the boats had seen offshore service. It should be noted, however, that none of the respondent's boats apparently had crossed an ocean, and scores do not reflect relative comfort. wear and tear, and range of conditions experienced over the long haul. On the other hand. prolific 24-hour runs were the norm, and daily runs in excess of 170 miles were not unusual. One boat, with the help of the Gulf Stream, logged 210 miles. The consensus was that the J/40 had an easy motion in a seaway. but there was some question as to the dryness of the decks. with scores in the 7 range and one skipper filling in the blank after "Dry decks" with a simple "no." Dinghy storage also seemed to be a source of frustration, with 6 and 7 scores predominating.

**Construction:** The J/40's construction by Tillotson-Pearson in Warren, Rhode Island garnered consistently high marks. with hull and deck construction consistently winning 10s and "excellents." The lowest scores in the other construction categories were a 7 for chain plates on an '87 J/40 a 6 for rudder / shaft, also on an '87; and the terse and inconclusive comment "strut problem" after "prop shaft" on an '86 model.

**Rig / Rigging:** The sloop rig with wire rigging and keel-stepped mast received high marks, with the Harkan main sheet traveler, positioned just forward of the

binnacle, rating 9s and 10s.

**Performance Ratings:** The J/40 excelled in our survey sailing upwind. with tacking angles averaging 30° (apparent wind). and downwind. with scores averaging between 9 and 10 for both points of sail. Roll-factor ratings averaged 9, and tracking ability scores ranged from 7 to 10. with 10s predominating. "Ten" scores were the norm for performance under power --forward, reverse and docking. In terms of performance in various wind strengths. the survey tells us that the J/40 is a well-balanced boat that excels in light to moderate velocities. with scores averaging between 9 and 10, that also holds its own in strong winds and storm conditions. with scores averaging close to 9.

**Accommodation:** The accommodation plan with four berths in two cabins rated high, which is not surprising, because all berths are sizable and three of them are good sea berths. The efficiency of the seagoing galley, with efficiently-draining sinks on the centerline, and stove installation received mostly 9s and 10s, but galley storage space was considered less than adequate by some respondents, one of whom gave this latter category a 6. Mixed reviews were also given to bulk food and equipment storage and personal gear storage. with scores ranging from 5 to 8. Ventilation was considered excellent. as was the cabinetry. Overall below-decks comfort ratings ranged from 8 to 10, as did those for the below-decks plan for living aboard and offshore sailing.

**Summary:** "I'd buy another one," one of our respondents wrote. He is apparently not alone, for such sentiments are the norm among J/40 owners. For what it was designed to be --a performance cruiser that's fast, simple to sail and easy to handle-- the J/40 plain and simply excels." It's a fine all-around boat," wrote another owner, and our survey backs up this claim.