

Valiant 42

By [Darrell Nicholson](#) - Published: November 19, 2006 Updated: March 2, 2020



The Valiant 42 is a direct descendant of naval architect Bob Perrys seminal Valiant 40, the first of which was built by Uniflite in Bellingham, WA, and launched in 1975. The 40 was a commercial and critical success: Some 200 were eventually built, and the boat, which is credited with introducing the term performance cruiser to the sailing lexicon, was inducted into the American Sailboat Hall of Fame in 1997.

The Valiant 40 also had early success on the race course and in mara-thon shorthanded events like the OSTAR, the BOC Challenge, and the Bermuda One-Two. Mark Schrader became the first American to circumnavigate via the five Southern Capes aboard his Valiant, Resourceful, in 1983. The list of other significant voyages in Valiant 40s not to mention the countless miles sailed by ordinary cruising couples and families is quite remarkable.



However, well over a hundred of those original Uniflite Valiant 40s were seriously flawed. A fire-retardant resin employed in the construction of the boats from 1977 to 1981 was eventually deemed the culprit in countless cases of severe hull blisters. Many are the tales of frustrated Valiant 40 owners undertaking tedious bottom repairs.

The blistering problems were addressed once and for all by 1984, when Texas Valiant dealer Rich Worstell purchased the company and began building the boats using isophthalic resins alongside Lake Texoma, about an hour and a half north of Dallas. Rich Worstell remains in charge, though his son, Kris, is being groomed as the successor of the family-owned business.

DESIGN

The Valiant 42, which was introduced in 1993, is a refined, updated version of the original Valiant 40. This tried-and-true offshore cruiser continues to meet the needs of long-distance sailors. An important change is the rig, which evolved from a single-spreader configuration to a taller, double-spreader spar that boosted light-air performance with 77 square feet of additional sail area. By adding a beefy stainless-steel bowsprit, the overall balance of the boat under sail was also addressed.

The keel is now in its third iteration and, with input from keel specialist Dave Vacan'ti, the foil has been shaped with a larger leading edge and smaller trailing edge for improved lift and efficiency. An additional 1,800 pounds of ballast further enhanced stability.

The biggest change is the new deck, which is built without any hatch bosses. Hatches are added later to suit the various interior arrangements. The cockpit has been redesigned with higher coamings that encircle the entire space on the V40 they terminated aft of the primary winches that are better suited to halt the ingress of water. The interior of the 42 adds more headroom to that of the 40, and there are now five different accommodation plans from which to choose. Because it is a semi-custom boat, an owner can tweak these basic layouts.

To this day, Bob Perry notes that the rounded stern was a design feature foisted upon him by the original builder for marketing considerations, and not a direction he would've taken if left to his own devices. It was 1973, he said. Westsails were all the rage. Everyone wanted the Colin Archer look. But I do have to say, double-enders are pretty. They're aesthetically pleasing. They conjure up all sorts of romantic notions.

Modern boats with broad, square sterns in general can provide bigger cockpits and expanded seat-locker storage. They're more stable and buoyant and, when heeled, increase the vessel's effective sailing length.

But if the canoe stern was a marketing compromise, Perry's approach to the underbody was not. The Valiant 42 has a fine entry, relatively long waterline and full sections aft, and there is nothing Colin Archerish about the detached, separated keel and rudder, which minimize wetted surface and were a radical departure for offshore cruising boats at the time, when full keels were the widely accepted approach for long-range voyaging. The keel/rudder configuration gave the boat the performance edge.

DECK LAYOUT

The massive stainless-steel bowsprit/pulpit that gives the 42 its extra two feet of length is fitted with a Schaefer System 3100 roller furler and dual bow rollers working in unison with the standard Lighthouse windlass. It's a big, hefty, reassuring platform for handling ground tackle.

There were seven Lewmar Ocean System hatches on the boat we sailed, as well as a pair of fiberglass Dorade vents with stainless cowls and guards, and a series of Hood cast stainless-steel opening ports with screens. Owners can add or subtract hatches to modify ventilation for their cruising climate.

An Antal whiskerpole adjustment track works in tandem with a Forespar whisker pole for poling out headsails; a spinnaker pole package is an option. Genoa tracks are recessed, which is good news for barefoot sailors. A rugged, custom traveler set-up is stationed just forward of the hard dodger/bimini. The traveler controls and mid-boom Lewmar mainsheet system are led aft through the dodger to a pair of Lewmar winches that are stationed just behind dual sets of Antal rope clutches to handle the mainsheet, single-line reefing controls, halyards and traveler. The placement of the halyard winch under the dodger makes grinding the last few inches of the main halyard a bit difficult, as it's tough for the grinder to get sufficient purchase above the winch. An electric-winch would be an option to consider here.

The Valiant 42 doesn't have a dedicated boom vang, but off the breeze the spar can be controlled by a pair of preventers that are led aft both port and starboard from the boom, via deck blocks, to dedicated clutches stationed just outside the cockpit coaming. Cockpit size limits the wheel dimensions, but the relatively diminutive 32-inch stainless-steel destroyer wheel on an Edson radial-drive pedestal is more than adequate. In keeping with the theme of offering a low-maintenance boat, there's no teak on deck beyond a pair of optional planks on the bowsprit, an eyebrow near the traveler, the companionway trim, and the swim-ladder steps. The cockpit seats are over seven feet long and fine for sleeping underway. The standard Lewmar 58CST primary winches are reassuringly oversized.

SYSTEMS

The standard Valiant 42 comes with a freshwater-cooled, 44-hp Westerbeke diesel with 2.13:1 reduction gear and V-drive transmission with a dripless shaft. A 55-hp Westerbeke is an available option. Engine access is good via fold-up companionway ladders, the lower of which is secured by barrel bolts. A single Racor fuel filter/water separator is easily accessed and standard (there's room for an optional second unit), as is the oil-change pump.

Switches for the optional generator (available in 5 kW or 7.6 kW), windlass, 12-volt DC power and 110-volt AC power are all located on a shared distribution panel aft of the companionway steps. All the tinned, copper wiring runs meet ABYC specifications. Valiants Rich Worstell has an aviation background thats evident in the attention to detail that the electrical panels exhibit and in the custom manifold system, and every color-coded wire, as well as all valves and hoses, are scrupulously labeled.

Batteries are situated under the aft berth near the water heater and are arranged in a two-bank system, with four gel cells in the house bank and a single gel cell as the starter battery. A 100-amp alternator is standard, along with a 110-volt automatic battery charger.

The split, alloy fuel tanks are stationed to either side of the lazarette, from where they can be easily removed if necessary. Custom-built stainless water tanks are situated beneath the port and starboard settees and are also removable. If desired, more tankage can be added in lieu of the generator in a locker aft of the engine under the cockpit, or in the storage space under the forward v-berth. Hot and cold pressure water is standard, as is a foot pump in the galley.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Valiant offers five basic interior layouts for the 42, from which owners are encouraged to customize the details. There are three Center Entry versions with an amidships companionway: the Center Entry Queen and Center Entry Pullman both have a single aft head and are differentiated by the layout of the forward stateroom and main cabin.

The Center Entry Queen/Two Heads has a second head forward. The two Side Entry models have companionways offset to starboard. They lack the CE versions separate showers. The Side Entry Traditional follows the original Valiant 40, with a forward head and V-berth. The Side Entry Pullman has an offset berth in the forward cabin and an aft head.

Our test boat was a Center Entry Queen with 6'5" headroom throughout and a generous berth in the forward cabin that measured 6'6" (long) x 7' (head) x 19' (foot). A divided chain locker is forward of the berth (a hawse pipe directs the chain aft to another locker under the foot of the berth) and theres plenty of storage in overhead lockers and below the berth.

A cedar hanging locker and small seat oppose each other at the aft end of the stateroom.

The main cabin has a pair of settees on opposite sides of the dropleaf table, just forward of the U-shaped galley to port. The galley features a 3-burner stainless-steel oven, twin stainless sinks and a Seafron 12-volt refrigerator. The forward-facing nav station is to starboard. The single head and a dedicated wet locker are behind the navigators seat at the foot of the companionway. The aft berth to port measures 6'8" x 4'8" and is well situated for a shorthanded voyaging boat; its a good sea berth and close to the action should off-watch crew be required on deck in a hurry. A clever opening in the berths side bulkhead can be opened for ventilation or topsides communication, and closed for privacy in port. Overhead and lets not forget, this boats built in Texas is a long gun locker that would also work well for chart storage.

PERFORMANCE

We sailed hull number 73 of the Valiant 42, *Tir Na Nog*, on a fluky fall afternoon on Narragansett Bay near Barrington, R.I., the home of Valiants New England dealer, Anchor Yacht & Ship Sales. Given its track record,

theres no reason to believe the 42 wont be a solid performer in good breeze, so it was informative to put the boat through the paces on a day with moderate air.

We started out in about seven-to eight-knots of true wind, with the 42 making 3.9 to 4.2 knots as registered by the GPS with a full Dacron main and high-cut 130 percent genoa from Quantum Sails. The boat tacked through 105-degrees in flat water and, not surprisingly, was slow gaining momentum out of the tacks. With a displacement of over 24,000 pounds, this was hardly a surprise. But once the boat gathered way it moved well and the helm was light and effective.

The boat responded well to a building sea breeze. In 12-knots of wind it recorded 5.2 knots close-hauled. At 14 knots, we managed 6 knots upwind. We bore off to a beam reach in fading wind and the boat made 6.4 to 6.6 knots in 10 knots true. By the time we eased off to a broad reach with a wind angle of 120 degrees the breeze had faded to between 6.5 and 7.5 knots, and boatspeed hovered between 4.5 and 4.7 knots. The boat was fun to sail, particularly when steering from the coaming with a good view of the tell-tales. Given the conditions, performance under sail was very good.

At 2,500 RPM in a slight chop and moderate wind, the 42 made 6.6 knots under power. Maneuverability and handling were excellent. The boat turned in a boat length or less and backed down nicely with the standard 3-blade prop.

CONCLUSIONS

The Valiant 42 is a solid, well-built, long-range cruising boat that will take competent owners anywhere they wish to sail. Some sailors will find the 42s double-ended profile to be hopelessly dated or old-fashioned, while others will find pleasure and take comfort in its tried-and-true lines. Theres no question the hull form has been well tested in the gravest offshore conditions.

The 42 is an expensive boat: Anchor Yachts boatshow special in Newport, R.I., last fall was just under \$375,000 for a sailaway package, including sails and limited electronics. But Valiants hold their value well. A survey of YachtWorld.com in mid-October showed eight Valiant 42s on the market, all built between 1995 and 2004, with asking prices from \$319K to \$359K.

Depending on ones budget, if one was sold on the Valiant concept, it might make sense to search for an older V40 beware of blister pox and put the money saved into a long-term cruise. But if moneys not an object, and you have your heart set on a new V42, youll be rewarded with a solid cruising platform that, for a yacht, is a good investment.

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