

CALIBER 40

Elegant & **STRONG**

By Sally Weigand

One definition of the word "caliber" is "a degree of merit." Monohull sailboats bearing the name Caliber embody a very high degree of merit. Manufactured in Clearwater, FL, these blue water sailors successfully ply the world's oceans and are equally at ease on the Great Lakes, rivers and bays. The Caliber factory is a family business; Michael McCreary, N.A., designs the 35-, 40- and 47-foot models they produce.

ing aboard. Every inch not used for other purposes is useable storage. Our longest stretch of continuous occupation was a two-month trek to the Bahamas for which we packed enough supplies for a year. Apparently, we thought there were no stores or restaurants in the Abacos. Six weeks bringing it down the ICW, leaving the North in a cold April and arriving in the hot South in June, was another opportunity to load it with a variety of types of clothing and household gear.

FEATURES

The boat is a sloop with an added cutter rig for more control in heavy winds. We rarely use this sail, but did add an asymmetrical spinnaker. The Caliber's design disperses the load on the chain plates when sailing by attaching each



The Caliber 40—an elegant but strong sailboat designed for serious cruising.

In 1997, we bought a two-year-old Caliber 40 LRC (long-range cruiser) in Annapolis, MD. For several years before retirement, the Chesapeake Bay was our cruising ground. When we moved to Punta Gorda, FL, we brought it south with us. Choosing the boat's name was more difficult than choosing the boat, which was rather easy after we first saw a Caliber. We called the boat *Ballywig*, which has no real meaning other than combining our heritages: "bally" means town in Gaelic; "Wig" is my husband's nickname taken from his German family name.

A vanilla-color hull with teak trim is somewhat different from the more usual white fiberglass sailing vessels. An attractive boat with graceful lines, it is even lovelier to look at below deck where warm teak envelops you. Abundant storage contributes to making this an excellent boat for liv-



Ballywig at the dock, showing many of its features, including inboard genoa tracks and ample opening ports and hatches.

OWNER'S BOAT REVIEW

Specifications

LOA	40'11"
LWL	32'6"
Beam	12'8"
Draft	5'1"
Sail plan	739 square feet
Displacement	21,600 pounds
Ballast	9,500 pounds
Water	179 gallons
Fuel	212 gallons
Engine	54 hp diesel

- Water and fuel are stored in dual tanks with dual filters.
- Much of the boat's weight results from construction practices rather than added ballast.
- This boat's strength comes partly from abundant structural support.

chain plate to a thick bulkhead that is bonded to the entire length of the hull. For a solidly built cruiser she sails well. Performance is enhanced with its "modified fin keel," a merger of a full and fin keel design. Looking at the keel out of the water it is more full than fin. This design offers superior directional stability. Inboard genoa tracks aid windward performance. We out-sailed a 42-foot Hunter on Charlotte Harbor, but I would not put *Ballywig* in competition against a racing J/boat. Even when fully loaded, this boat maintains performance. Its high ballast-to-displacement ratio makes it very stable in heavy seas. The skeg rudder combination protects the rudder and adds maneuverability to the craft. Since this is higher than the keel, it is protected in the event of accidental grounding. Safety to the bow of the hull comes from a watertight collision bulkhead. Reinforced impact zones at the bow waterline and forward bottom of the keel offer additional collision protection that hopefully would never be needed.

Being a true blue water cruiser, the cockpit is not voluminous and has no entry for following seas from the stern. However, port and starboard seats adequately take a reclining adult. The large wheel requires some agility getting around when going to and from the helm seat. A teak table folds up from a vertical position on the pedestal where we take all meals whenever weather permits. A built-in, insulated icebox keeps food and beverages cold, convenient in

heavy seas when going below presents a challenge. The manufacturer has since added two stern rail seats that are a nice feature. All lines are controlled from the cockpit including auto-reefing. A folding, stern boarding ladder and deck shower accommodate swimmers. An extra long and high bow pulpit contains double heavy-duty rollers for raising and lowering the anchor. On the bow above the waterline, an anti-chafe attachment for anchoring or towing is meant for heavy-duty loading such as a sea anchor. The sleek hull is protected by a full-length rub rail.

BELOW DECK

Six foot four inches of headroom gives ample space for most adults. With 14 opening ports and seven opening hatches, the boat is light and airy. Ours does not have air-conditioning, and only once did we wish for it. Coming from northern climes, it has a diesel heater in the main salon that we use occasionally even in Florida. Descending the companionway steps, the L-shaped galley is to port with the small nav station tucked in toward the stern. Above the propane stove is a microwave oven. Next to it is storage for dishes behind teak doors. Below the double sink, which faces forward, is a storage cabinet with five drawers to the side plus a roomy area below. The surface of the nav desk serves double duty by providing additional area for meal preparation.



Looking aft from the forward cabin, the Caliber 40 shows its warm teak interior.



One feature we like very much is that the table in the main salon folds up against the bulkhead, making an open, roomy area when it is not in use.



Ballywig's L-shaped galley is roomy and holds a double sink.

Under the nav seat is storage. Being of short stature, the nav station is fine for me to sit at, but my husband has to extend his legs into the galley rather than squeeze them in beneath the desk. A six-cubic-foot top-opening refrigerator with small freezer area holds an abundance of food. However, we found the Adler Barber cooling plate to be inadequate for the large box size in tropical weather. The icebox is so deep I am not able to reach the bottom. To starboard from the cockpit steps is a head, behind which is a quarter berth with cedar-lined hanging locker. Lifting the "lid" of the bottom companionway step gives access to a trash bin. Removing the steps, you access the engine. There is adequate space in here for an air conditioner, watermaker, generator and heater, none of which we have.

One feature we like very much is that the table in the main salon folds up against the bulkhead, making an open, roomy area when it is not in use. An L-shape settee to port provides seating space for eating when the table is open halfway. A straight settee to starboard offers additional seating when the table is fully extended. Each of us has a settee

to stretch out on for reading in the evening or for a pre-bed nap as is often the case after a day voyaging. Underneath the settees as well as behind the outside settee cushions there is storage space. I filled the lower spaces with plastic crates where I keep staples and paper products sorted for easy locating. Enclosed teak cabinets as well as an open area line both sides above the settees.

Forward from the saloon is the owners' cabin and head. A double offset berth occupies the port side with a double hanging locker to starboard, also cedar-lined. The one useless feature of the boat is also to starboard, a vanity with swing-out seat and table with lid and mirror. The factory has removed the seat, replacing it with storage. More storage on shelves exists behind the vanity. Underneath the berth is voluminous storage suitable for items not used frequently since it is accessed by lifting the mattress. Drawers and cabinets on the centerline plus cabinets over the berth add up to room for more clothing than a fashion model would want. The offset berth is a disad-

Ballywig's stern, showing the cockpit and the steps for accessing the water from the transom.

vantage for me in having to crawl over my husband who claimed the inside, but I have the use of a convenient bookshelf along the outside. A second head with separate enclosed shower with door occupies the bow. This is an ideal spot for our cat's litter box as well as stowing things on top of the shower seat. Twenty-two lights throughout the cabins brighten every nook and cranny of the handcrafted interior.



ADDITIONS AND PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

Ballywig has proven to be a comfortable home on the water. We would confidently sail her on any ocean, our original plan that has not materialized. We once experienced a very bad storm while sailing but never worried about our safety, and the boat handled well. The 5'1" draft does present a challenge in shallow Florida waters. In addition to the asymmetrical spinnaker, we installed a wind generator, increased the battery capacity to three 8D batteries, installed larger fuel filters and an electric fuel pump for priming. Changes we would make are to enlarge the nav station although I have no suggestion for how that could be accom-

plished. From our experience, a sailboat does not require 212 gallons of fuel. However, those undertaking world cruises may believe differently. One hundred seventy-nine gallons of water are a blessing especially since we do not have a watermaker. I would replace the vanity in the owner's cabin with a tall cabinet with sliding shelves. Otherwise, there is nothing else we would modify on this elegant yet strong vessel.

Additional information is available at www.caliberyacht.com and by calling the factory at (727) 573-0627.