

A Charming Anachronism

From Holland comes a pleasing blend of the old and the new

THE PUFFIN 42 IS PRIMA FACIE evidence that the classic revival sweeping the world is not limited to stratospheric megayachts but reaches down to earthly family cruisers. In an era dominated by IT, DVD, and broadband rigmarole, the Puffin 42 is a charming anachronism, reminiscent of plucky pilot cutters that plied the waters of England a centu-

ry ago. But the Puffin 42 is not mere throwback: She's a modern wolf in classical sheep's clothing, with enough power, stability, seaworthiness, and structural integrity to give any cruising sailor confidence and pleasure. And she owes much of it to Olivier F. van Meer.

about life offshore—above all, that simplicity, not artifice, serves the sailor best. So he designed the Puffin 42 for utter reliability and efficiency, wrapping her 36,500 pounds in a style that fanciers of traditional lines will surely embrace. Despite his global travels, however, van Meer is quintessentially Dutch; he drew the Puffin 42 with his countrymen foremost in mind. Those hard-sailing Dutchmen are forced to cruise in Europe's shallowest waters; they need wading-depth draft. But they're also among Europe's tallest folk;

they need Texas-style headroom. Van Meer handily solved this paradox by giving the Puffin a round-bilge hull with a stocky 3-to-1 length-to-beam ratio (not unlike the plump seabird for which she's named). Applying a plumb bow, minimal stern overhang, and external rudder, he created a canoe body whose design waterline is 93 percent of its length and which has a board-up draft of just 3 feet 7 inches. The Puffin's draft is therefore shoal enough to cruise Eu-

rope's rivers and canals, the Bahamas, and Intracoastal Waterway. While her hullform provides considerable stability, there's 4,400 pounds of internal ballast, and the foil-shaped centerboard, which serves to increase upwind lift, carries another 2,700 pounds. The Puffin 42's ample deckhouse offers an option of one or two double berths tucked under it. Forward of it is a cozy saloon/galley and a double master cabin with separate toilet and shower. Deep cockpit lockers assure plenty of stowage.

The Puffin's builder, De Gier & Bezaan, is widely known for building updated versions of traditional craft. They build the Puffin in steel, with aluminum as an option—boatbuilding materials whose strength is excellent, provided they're maintained against electrolysis. The Puffin 42 is an oceangoing workhorse, with bulwarks for safety and an uncluttered deck layout for handling a cutter sail plan comprising a nonoverlapping furling yankee set on a long, off-center sprit, a furling staysail, and a high-aspect mainsail with lazy jacks. What more could a family ask?

They could ask that the Puffin 42 also have an easily balanced helm and good tracking, which I can confirm after sailing one last May in a 35-knot blow. With a reef tucked in, the Puffin was stiff and easily handled. And there's something splendid about sitting (or standing) at the helm of a fast boat—ah, that long waterline!—that's a prettier sister to the fleet of plumb-bowed cruiser/racers that seem to be gaining in popularity.

The Puffin 42, with impeccable joinery and workmanship by De Gier & Bezaan, is approved by Lloyd's Register for the European Union's CE accreditation.

Jack Somer, a former *Yachting* editor, lives in Connecticut.



Her sweetly windowed structure gives the Puffin the usable interior of a much larger boat.

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Van Meer is a Dutch designer who came to his trade from the "school of the sea." Born 37 years ago aboard his parents' 72-foot schooner, he's since sailed some 110,000 ocean miles, absorbing critical lessons

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Puffin 42

LOA	50' 10" (15.50 m.)
LOD	41' 9" (12.72 m.)
LWL	38' 7" (11.77 m.)
Beam	13' 10" (4.20 m.)
Draft Board Up	3' 7" (1.10 m.)
Draft Board Down	8' 0" (2.45 m.)
Displacement	36,500 lb. (16,556 kg.)
Sail Area	1,366 sq. ft. (127 sq. m.)
Power	Lombardini 82 hp.
Fuel	125 gal. (476 l.)
Water	145 gal. (552 l.)
Designer	Olivier F. van Meer
Sailaway Price	\$560,000

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