

Delphia 40

Polish and polished, this cruiser caters to refined sailors

It's no secret that European builders supply the majority of cruising boats to the U.S. market. But it's no longer just the domain of French, German, Italian or Scandinavian yards. Manufacturers in Eastern Europe have joined the competition. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, things began to look up for builders in the former Eastern bloc and business improved further with the ongoing EU expansion. While wages are still a fraction of those paid in Western Europe, the manufacturers now have access to modern production methods and foreign markets. One example is the Polish Delphia yard in landlocked Olecko, 170 miles northeast of Warsaw.

The company began as Sportlake in 1990 and changed its name in 2003. Owned by brothers Piotr and Wojciech Kot, the company was initially known for the Sportina line of smaller boats, but after the

facility's modernization in 1999 business expanded into bigger boats. Delphia says it employs more than 600 workers to produce 2,000 powerboats (Quicksilver and Cortina) and 300 sailboats a year (Delphia and Sportina). At this time, 10 percent of the company's production is exported to the U.S. With a 49-footer in the pipeline, Delphia's current flagship is the Delphia 40, a family cruiser that made its North American debut at the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland, in 2005.

More than 100 Delphia 40s have been built, a success that brought about a performance version, the 40 GT. In contrast to the standard version, the 40 GT has a taller mast, a deeper lead keel and a number of equipment upgrades, some of which have since trickled down to the base version. One of them is the tall rig, which is now standard, said Scott Farquharson, director of Delphia Yachts USA in Annapolis.

The details

The boat comes from the drawing board of Polish designer Andrzej Skrzat, who has built his reputation drawing smaller boats.

"When we talked about replac-

ing the cast-iron standard keel with a lead version, he had the drawings ready, so he must have done it before I came to his office," said Jeff Brown, president of JK3 in San Diego, Delphia's dealer for the southwestern U.S.

Adhering to the specifications of Germanischer Lloyd, the hull is laid up by hand with unidirectional and biaxial glass, using vinylester resin in the outer layer. The laminate is solid below the waterline and reinforced in high-load areas. While above the waterline the laminate includes Airex foam core to save weight. There is a five-year transferable warranty against blistering. Bulkheads are laminated to deck and hull to increase stiffness and a ring frame takes up the rig loads through stainless steel tie-rods. The overlapping hull-and-deck joint is bonded and bolted and capped by a solid aluminum toerail that runs stem to stern.

Down below

SAILING tested the two-cabin version, with the owner's stateroom forward and the guest cabin aft on starboard. The arching coachroof creates 6 feet, 8 inches of headroom in the saloon and admits plenty of natural light through skylights and windows. The deck hatches in the saloon, the heads and the galley open for good ventilation in fair weather or at anchor and have privacy shades.

The test boat's U-shaped galley to port at the foot of the companionway was equipped with a two-burner LPG stove and oven, top-loading Isotherm seawater refrigerator and freezer and a shiny but shallow double sink behind a transparent splashboard. Brown said U.S. boats will be converted to three-burner stoves. Cabinet storage space is more than adequate. This galley setting works better at sea than the inline arrangement on the three-cabin model.

The large dinette converts to a six-foot double by lowering the square table and inserting a



Delphia 40 GT

LOA 39' 4"; LWL 36'3"; Beam 12'11"
Draft 7'11"; Displacement 18,415 lbs.
Ballast 6,470 lbs.;
Sail Area 818 sq. ft.;

Base Boat Price \$199,000
Delphia Yachts USA
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large cushion. The cold-molded mahogany joinerwork has a satin finish and is neatly fitted even on the backside of cabinet doors and in places that don't get much daylight. The drawers slide smoothly and lock in the open and closed position. The floorboards, a synthetic teak-and-holly imitation, are screwed down, but several panels can be unlatched and opened for a quick inspection of the deep fiberglass sump, the electric bilge pump or the 11 30-millimeter stainless steel keelbolts. Seacocks, valves and hoses (with securely installed stainless steel clamps) are labeled.

Handholds and rails are sturdy and properly installed, just where they are needed. The aft-facing nav station on starboard includes GPS, VHF, stereo, circuit breakers and, for the prudent mariner, a table that accommodates paper charts. Unlocking



Plenty of handholds and headroom fit for an NBA player make moving about the spacious interior non-problematic.

*With wind in the mid-teens,
the 40-footer tops 7 knots on
the wind under a 135-percent
genoa and full-batten main.*



and folding down the DC panel reveals neat and orderly wiring, color-coded and labeled, just like Germanischer Lloyd would want it. To power electronic gadgets the boat has three DC outlets, one each in the nav station and in both heads. The 75-amp hour gel starter battery lives under the bottom step of the companionway, while the two 100-amp house batteries are strapped down under the settee.

A 92-gallon stainless steel water tank under the V-berth limits storage for personal gear, which has to move into the cabin's hanging locker. Both heads are equipped with Jabsco electric flush toilets, holding tanks with Y-valves, handheld showers, hot-and-cold pressure water and sump pumps.

A gargantuan cockpit locker to port, which is also accessible through a hatch in the galley, is unique to the two-cabin version and has enough volume to swallow duffel bags, spare sails, fenders, lines or the ship's dog.

The 55-gallon stainless steel fuel tank is installed aft, on centerline under the cockpit floor. The 40-horsepower Yanmar 3JH4

auxiliary diesel (an upgrade from the standard 40-horsepower Volvo engine) has a saildrive transmission and can be accessed through hatches on all sides. By unlatching and removing the companionway steps while motoring the effectiveness of the three-inch sound insulation becomes obvious.

On deck

Unhooking the double lifeline gate aft and folding down the thwart seat opens the path from the swim platform into the self-bailing cockpit. Lockers for the life raft and the propane gas tank are under the starboard seat, while the lazarette has a caddy for the two stout Lexan companionway washboards and room for tons of other gear. Teak surfaces in the cockpit contrast the molded non-skid on the rest of the deck and add a touch of classic style. Small, unobtrusive teak bars laminated to the cockpit sole improve the footing behind the helm when heeled. The shortened cockpit seats provide enough clearance to squeeze past the leather-covered 58-inch Jefa wheel without contortions.

On the test boat, instrument readouts were mounted on the

steering pedestal. The engine control panel at the bottom of the steering pedestal is easy to reach. The wide coamings with their ergonomically angled backrests sweep up toward the cabintop to provide comfort and safety.

An option worthy of consideration is the sturdy cockpit table with stainless steel legs, two fold-down leaves, four in-line cup holders and a deep recess for a portable beverage cooler. Besides offering space for a repast, it serves as a handhold and foot brace in rough weather.

Six stainless steel chocks and cleats are mounted forward, center and aft. Stern and bow pulpits of 3/16-inch tubing and double lifelines with solidly anchored stanchions give the crew places to hold fast when working the ends of the boat or while negotiating the deck. A 37-pound stainless steel Bruce anchor occupies the bow roller and a 1,000-watt Quick electric windlass with remote control inside the anchor locker pulls in the 5/16-inch chain rode.

The boat's sailing hardware, including tracks, blocks and





Coachroof windows and hatches, along with a light interior woodwork finish, makes for a bright interior, top. The forward V-berth features its own head, above, while the aft-facing navigation desk has an expansive electronics panel, left. Rack-and-pinion steering provides just the right amount of feedback from the spade rudder, giving two-finger control to the helm, far left. A centerline drop-leaf table and shortened cockpit seats make it easy to move around the cockpit and past the 58-inch wheel, top left.

cleats, is mostly Lewmar, except for the sheaves of the mast organizer, which come from Swedish supplier Rutgeron Marin. Rolling up the genoa from the cockpit is a smooth exercise thanks to the Furlex 300s roller

furling system and the properly aligned fairleads on the starboard stanchions. Tracks and cars on both side decks allow proper jib lead adjustments. The 9/10 Seldén dual-spreader mast has moderate prebend and comes with a track for the spinnaker pole. The standing rigging, which includes a pulley-adjustable backstay, upper, lower and cap shrouds, is made from stainless steel wire with diameters from 3/8 to 3/4 inches.

Mast clearance is a smidgen under 60 feet, low enough to pass under ICW bridges. The mainsheet has a conventional mid-boom arrangement with a short traveler track forward of the companionway, which keeps the cockpit clean and uncluttered. Sail control lines and halyards are color coded and led aft along the cabintop to rope clutches and two manual Lewmar 40 self-tailing winches. Farther aft on the cockpit coaming and within reach from the helm, two Lewmar 50 self-tailers handle the genoa trim.

Underway

Under engine, the helm felt smooth and responsive. Forward or backward, the boat turned around in both directions within its own length. The saildrive and the two-blade Gori folding prop produced a cruising speed of 6.8 knots at 2,400 rpm. The boat's North NorDac sail wardrobe includes a 135-percent genoa and the full-batten main with slight roach. Making sail was quick, thanks to the batten cars, a Stackpack and the roller furler.

Brown was a little apprehensive because it was the boat's maiden voyage under canvas, but after a few minutes the basic trim was dialed in and she hustled along past San Diego's Shelter Island at 7-plus knots close hauled in a breeze in the mid-teens. Even in strong gusts the boat remained balanced and Jefa's tight rack-and-pinion steering relayed just the right amount of feedback from the spade rudder, so the Delphia could be driven smoothly with two-finger control. Dropping the traveler was enough to depower, so the main and jib remained strapped in, which reduced the need for elbow grease at the winches.

"That's where the lead keel makes a big difference," said Brown, who prefers the GT package because it will liven up performance in light and moderate air.

Visibility from the helm was good. Broad reaching and criss-crossing the track of the inbound brig *Lady Washington*, the boat hit 8 knots and more. Although rigged for venues with moderate air, the Delphia handled the blustery conditions with aplomb, stood up to gusts and showed a nice turn of speed, all without being in denial about its cruising roots.

The two-cabin version is ideal for family sailing with young kids or for two-couple cruising. The GT's higher price is justified because it includes many useful options and upgrades over the standard model. Stepping off at the dock, the lingering impression was that of a well-designed and well-executed boat with legs to complement her looks. As the Delphia 40 GT proves, the Poles aren't merely on their way, they have arrived.