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Hallberg-Rassy 29



Despite being the smallest design from this prominent Swedish yard, the HR29 is no less an ocean cruiser than her larger stablemates. Duncan Kent reports

Year after year in *Yachting Monthly's* readership survey, Hallberg-Rassy is the name that many of you aspire to own, for good reason too, they have made their name by building high-quality cruisers for more than four decades. Hallberg-Rassy's boatyard, on the Swedish island of Orust, was formed by merging those of Harry Hallberg and Christoph Rassy in 1972. Since then the company has gone from strength to strength and now produces a range of dependable ocean cruising yachts from 9.4-19.5m (31-64ft).

The HR29 was launched in 1982 as a compact but competent family cruiser and a total of 571 were built before the design was dropped in 1994.

Performance

The HR29's hull is relatively narrow and tapers aft, which limits her accommodation but makes her a steady and stable boat in big seas. Though she wasn't built for speed, her ample displacement and deep-vee bow means she covers the miles easily and comfortably even in adverse weather conditions.

We set out from Portsmouth Harbour on a perfect sailing day, with sunshine and a warm Force 4-5 wind blowing from the southeast. Hoisting full sail, *Osprey* soon fell easily into her stride, nudging away the wash from passing ferries and warships without a drop venturing onto her pristine new teak decks.

Having a longish keel means she stays resolutely on course, but the cutaway forefoot enables her to be tacked more swiftly than a full long keel would allow. She has an overlapping, furling genoa and her powerful self-tailing winches made light work of tacking.

When the sea breeze filled in she heeled a little more, but her generous ballast kept her stiff and her rails dry. Under normal conditions she's light and positive on the tiller, but when the apparent wind rose briefly to 24 knots, her helm did get a little heavy – nothing that couldn't be sorted by dropping the mainsheet traveller car down the short track.

Off the wind she's a little sluggish, as you might expect with so much wetted surface and her ample displacement. Overall she has a wonderfully sea-kindly motion and could happily and safely be cruised in almost all sea conditions without worry.

At the helm

Having a long tiller enables the helmsman to get up close to the self-tailing Lewmar 40 primary winches for efficient grinding, and to trim the mainsheet, which is on a short track running along the after edge

Hallberg Rassy 29 – Performance on test

Point of sail	Apparent wind angle	Apparent wind speed	Boatspeed
Close-hauled	35°	20 knots	4.2 knots
Fetch	60°	18 knots	5.5 knots
Beam reach	90°	20 knots	6.2 knots
Broad reach	120°	14 knots	4.7 knots
Run	180°	12 knots	4.0 knots

of the bridge deck. Whilst at the tiller you can also reach the plain Lewmar 8 winches on the coachroof, to where the single-line reefing lines, halyards and kicking strap are led.

Design & construction

The HR29's Lloyds-certified hull has a solid GRP lay-up with a foam-sandwich deck and coachroof for reduced weight and improved insulation. The hull/deck joint overlaps and is topped off with a smart teak capping, and her long, cast-iron fin keel is fully encapsulated, so it can't fall off and never goes rusty!

Standard deck equipment was high quality and fixtures and fittings robust and long lasting. For this reason many still sport their original gear.

Sailplan

Her sail area is somewhat conservative and she has swept back spreaders, which means you can't let her boom out too far without chafing the mainsail. Reefing at

the mast was standard, but *Osprey* has the reefing lines and main halyard led back to the cockpit. She has a fully-battened mainsail and a 130-percent genoa on a Furler 200S furler as standard. Lazyjacks and decent batten cars ease mainsail handling considerably.

Deck layout

The majority of owners opted for teak decks, which really emphasise her classic looks. The cockpit is narrow and safe with high coamings, but more than three crew is a crowd. In port, with the tiller raised up, there's room for six. No quarterberth means *Osprey* has two full-depth cockpit lockers, together with a deep, full-width lazarette, so there's ample stowage for all your usual cruising kit such as the dinghy, kedje and fenders. She has a stern rail gate, a fold-down boarding ladder and the backstay bifurcates to ease cockpit access.

Although her side decks are wide, access

from the cockpit can be a bit tricky as they narrow aft and disappear altogether at the cockpit coamings.

She has a pleasant positive sheer and her coachroof blends into the foredeck behind her steep bows, giving her the looks of a true ocean-going yacht. The moulded non-slip on the coachroof is effective and teak hand holds continue forward of the mast.

The foredeck is relatively easy to work

on, although the proud forehatch can be an obstacle to unwary toes. Her deep, self-draining chain locker also serves as a gas bottle locker, which isn't ideal as the gas bottle looks very vulnerable to damage from the anchor.

Living aboard

Access from cockpit to cabin is also slightly awkward due to the high bridgedeck, but you'll be glad of that in big, following seas. She is surprisingly roomy inside with

headroom just under 6ft (1.8m). The saloon has an L-shaped settee to port around a two-leaf table with a bottle store. Teak abounds, which lends the saloon a warm, cosy feel. The settee backs lift up to increase the width of the berths, which are 2.0m (6ft 7in) long by 0.69m (2ft 3in) wide. This also provides a place to stow bedding during the day. Above each side are two deep lockers and a fiddled bookshelf, and there's further stowage



ABOVE: She's an ideal yacht for a couple wanting to cruise reasonable distances in comfort and safety

PHOTOS: COLIN WORK



The owner

Chris Cooper (53) has owned *Osprey* since 2013, after selling his *Halcyon 23*, which he sailed for 13 years. Working part time as an airline steward means he has up to 50 days a year to enjoy his sailing. Chris loves the Hallberg's character and substantial build, saying the beautiful woodwork below decks makes her feel like a real traditional yacht. He also loves the way she handles under sail in heavy conditions and is confident that she could take him anywhere safely and in comfort.



Communication to the helm from the companionway is possible

Key cruising features



She has a stout fractional rig with a conservative, easily-handled sailplan

Although the 29 didn't sport the usual HR windscreens, handles on the sprayhood make things easier

The portlights don't open, so it can get a little stuffy below decks with just the forehatch and a few vents for air

Her sidedecks are wide forward, but disappear aft where the cockpit coamings begin

The mainsheet traveller is mounted atop the bridgedeck, within easy reach of the helm

Her transom and coamings are high enough to keep the sea from entering the cockpit

'Her hull shape makes her a steady and stable boat in big seas'

under the settees with top and frontal access. Full-length teak handrails run overhead and the half-bulkheads between the nav station/galley area and the saloon have sturdy handholds at their corners, making it easy and safe to move around under way. Sadly, none of the portlights in the saloon open, instead ventilation comes from hatches and mushroom vents in the saloon, heads and forecabin. The heads

is ahead of the saloon to port and there's a sink opposite. Closing both the saloon and forecabin doors makes it completely private, but does restrict forecabin access. There's a huge hanging locker behind the loo and good lockers above and below the sink. No shower was standard. Through a split doorway from the heads, the forecabin has a vee berth measuring 2.0m (6ft 7in) along the centreline and 1.82m across the head including the infill. Headroom drops noticeably, making dressing in the small floor area nigh-on impossible with the door shut. The hull sides are teak and above the berth are deep shelves with high fiddles. Underneath there is some stowage in the

aft ends, although there's a holding tank to port and the fresh water tank takes up the forward area. There is no other clothes stowage. A large forehatch above provides plenty of natural light and air.

Galley

To port is a compact, L-shaped galley containing a gimbaled cooker with two burners and an oven, a large cool box/fridge and a deep sink with a drainer. The lockers above are shallow but adequate. There's a small gash bin under the sink and a pan drawer beneath the cooker. As the food-prep area is minimal the engine box cover doubles as a worktop, but it's the first companionway step, too, so movement through the boat is restricted when the cook's at work.

Chart table

Opposite the galley is the navigation area with an outboard-facing chart table above a cabinet of four drawers, which is designed to be stood at. Chris has extended its depth a little to allow it to take Admiralty charts. As this model is without the optional quarterberth there is heaps of room for instrumentation all around it and plenty of stowage for charts, pilot books and plotting instruments in the drawers.

Maintenance

The freshwater-cooled, two-cylinder Volvo diesel fits snugly into the engine box but access is pretty good for servicing. A panel in the cockpit sole lifts to enable ample access to the saildrive, engine seacock, fuel tank and primary fuel filter.



The saloon exudes a warm, quality and cosy feel when at anchor thanks to the teak joinery

Hallberg Rassy 29



GRAPHICS: LIZA SAWYER

OUR VERDICT ON THE BOAT

What's she like to sail?

Despite being only 29ft long, the Hallberg Rassy 29 has all the credentials of a true offshore cruising yacht – unless a Southern Ocean passage is planned! She's easy to handle for a couple or even a single-hander, as the gear and sails are less loaded. She is a well-balanced boat and her long keel means she tracks well downwind. She does have a little weather helm when pushed, but a couple of rolls in the large genoa soon returns the tiller to its normal positive feel. Once properly trimmed she was happy to sail herself on a close reach with no input from us or the autopilot. This is important for a small crew or single-hander as there are often times you need to momentarily leave the tiller to attend to something urgently. All HRs are built to Lloyds certification. They're neither the lightest nor the quickest yachts around, but they instil confidence by their ability to shrug off heavy seas and plough on to windward without drama. The 29's motion through the water is pleasing and comfortable, which is what you need for long offshore passages. Boatbuilders used to give top priority to ensuring that off-watch crew can brew up, cook, wash and sleep safely and comfortably but this has, sadly, become a secondary consideration as they focus on boatspeed and in-port luxuries.

What's she like in port and at anchor?

She exudes a feeling of warmth and quality that makes her downright cosy at anchor! Accommodation is somewhat sparse, though, and I'd only want to share it with daytime guests as the heads arrangement means that crew in the forecabin are effectively trapped there when someone is ablating. A lot of 29s were built with a quarterberth to starboard, which is ideal for long ocean passages. It also offers you an extra berth at rest – or some extra stowage, although HR29s without the quarterberth have a much deeper cockpit locker. The galley is fine, but stowage for provisions is limited, so you'd need to find space for them elsewhere on longer trips. The saloon comfortably handles four for dinner or six for drinks and snacks. It lacks ventilation, though, so could get muggy in hot climes. The lack of a shower is a bit limiting, too, although I'm sure one could be installed with a little ingenuity.

Would she suit you and your crew?

The Hallberg-Rassy 29 is an ideal yacht for a couple wanting to cruise reasonable distances in comfort and safety. She's a beautiful boat with classic lines on the outside and warm, perfectly-crafted joinery below decks, and I for one would be extremely proud to show her off to my friends. I'm not sure I'd recommend her for cruising to warmer climes, though, as she lacks a little in ablution facilities and ventilation is minimal. She's a traditional yacht built to cope with heavy weather. Her high ballast ratio means she carries her sail without drama and she has a sea-kindly motion to windward that makes her a pleasure to sail. Of course, this comes at a cost to light air performance, which leaves a little to be desired, but personally I'd prefer the compromise to be weighted that way around – especially if I was planning a few long ocean passages.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- Guide price £30,000-£45,000
- LOA 8.90m (29ft 2in)
- LWL 7.30m (23ft 9in)
- Beam 2.83m (9ft 3in)
- Draught 1.59m (5ft 3in)
- Displacement 3,800kg (8,380 lb)
- Ballast 1,750kg (3,860 lb)
- Ballast ratio 46%
- Sail area 38m² (409sq ft)
- SA/D ratio 15.9
- Diesel 60lit (13.2 gal)
- Water 120lit (26.4 gal)
- Engine 18hp Volvo Penta 2002
- Transmission Saildrive
- RCD category A (ocean)
- Designer Olle Enderlein and Christoph Rassy
- Builder Hallberg-Rassy, Sweden
- UK Agent Transworld Yachts, Hamble, Southampton



The Volvo Penta 2002 engine is a snug fit, but access is pretty good

- Tel 023 8045 4000
- Web www.transworldyachts.co.uk
- Owners' Association www.hroa.org.uk



The galley and chart table sit opposite either side of the companionway

Would she suit your style of sailing?

CREEK CRAWLING ★★★★★

COASTAL PORT-HOPPING ★★★★★

OFFSHORE PASSAGE-MAKING ★★★★★

TRADE WIND VOYAGING ★★★★★

HIGH-LATITUDE ADVENTURE ★★★★★