

SAILBOATS

J/112E

J/BOATS' VERSATILE NEW J/112E LETS THE CRUISING SKIPPER DIAL IN AS MUCH PERFORMANCE AS DESIRED.

BY [Mark Pillsbury](#)



J/Boats

V shaped bow sections are intended to provide directional stability and reduce slamming when seas are up.

Having spent a few seasons hanging around with CW's Boat of the Year judges, I can't step aboard a new sailboat without stopping to measure it up against its design brief. That's the standard that our team of industry pros uses as they survey a broad range of entries each year to come up with winning models. And it makes sense, when you think about it. Each boat is built with a purpose in mind, and the good ones do their jobs flawlessly, year in and year out.

From that point of view, when I stepped aboard the latest addition to what J/Boats calls its Sport Cruising line, I knew exactly what the just-launched J/112E was intended to do: go sailing.

Oh, you could certainly sit in the roomy cockpit and soak up the rays in some sunny anchorage. And at day's end, you'd find everything you'd need in the well-equipped galley to whip up dinner for friends. With two private cabins, there's plenty of room for the kids or another couple, and settees on each side of the drop-leaf centerline table in the saloon could be turned into sea berths in a pinch.

But what you'd really want to do, if the J/112E was your boat, is get those sails up and go sailing, no matter the size of your crew — which is just what a few of us did aboard hull Number One, on a late autumn afternoon out on Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay. The breeze was light as we motored away from the dock, but once out in open water, where we had 10 knots or so to work with, the J/112E sprang to life. Upwind, the speedo read 7.2 knots, nearly matching the wind speed. Later, with the asymmetric kite set on the retractable carbon sprit and a bit more breeze, we were rewarded with a few surges of 9 knots and better. Were we having a good time? You bet.



J/Boats

The performance-oriented J/122E's interior will pamper crew on overnight races.

J/Boats' designer, Alan Johnstone, says the intent wasn't to build a boat for hardcore racers (J/Boats has plenty of other models for that) or for the long-distance bluewater cruiser. What he and the team wanted to produce was a versatile and lively sailboat for a performance-minded skipper, with amenities that also make it quite suitable for the yacht club's annual cruise or a family's summer getaway.

At 36 feet, the J/112E is the middle sibling in a range that includes the 32-foot J/97E and the J/122E, a 40-footer that was the genesis of the Performance Cruising line. E, by the way, stands for "elegance and design evolution," according to J/Boats' brochure. The base boat sells for \$275,000; the J/112E we saw, outfitted with Doyle sails but sans navigation electronics, was priced closer to \$310,000.

The 112E is built in France by J Composites Shipyard, which is licensed to manufacture a number of models for the Newport, Rhode Island-based company. The boat's end-grain balsa-cored hull is resin-infused using the SCRIMP system, as are its foam-cored deck and bulkheads and the fiberglass floor grid that takes the loads from the keel, mast and chainplates. An outer layer of vinyl ester resin is added to the layup to prevent osmosis. The result is a hull that the builder is willing to stand behind with a 10-year warranty.

The J/112E's standard draft is 6 feet 11 inches, with an epoxy-encapsulated cast-iron fin and lead bulb keel; a 5-foot-9-inch shoal-draft foil is an option. For cruising sailors, the boat comes with an aluminum spar and boom (a carbon-fiber rig is available), and flies a 105 percent jib set on a Harken roller furler. Other options

include teak decks, an electric cabin-top winch to take the work out of raising the high-aspect main, a dodger and cockpit bimini, cockpit cushions, and an anchor windlass with a retractable roller.

With several of us aboard for the test sail, the cockpit still felt roomy. Though today's design trends call for twin helms even on 30-footers, the J/112E has a single 59-inch-diameter wheel that lets you sit outboard to either side with good sightlines forward, or stand comfortably, which I like to do when sailing downwind. For the record, the chain and wire linkage and deep fin rudder provided fingertip control. The cockpit bench seats end just forward of the wheel and the easily adjusted Harken traveler, mounted on the cockpit sole. On each side of the helm, there's plenty of room to move past. Better yet, the layout lets the helmsman sit aft of the wheel (when there's crew aboard to help with sheet trim), straddle it with feet braced on the pedestal, or sit forward of it, so the pair of winches for controlling the tails of the 2-to-1 mainsheet and primaries for the jib sheets are readily within reach. (To reduce clutter, the two ends of the mainsheet are led into watertight boxes in the cockpit sidewalls and then through deck blocks to their respective winches.) Down below, accommodations are modern and practical. There's a pleasing mix of varnished walnut woodwork and white side and ceiling panels; portlights in the cabin top, opening overhead hatches, and ports in the hull let in lots of light during the day. In the saloon, the space between the aforementioned table and settees seemed a little tight; Johnstone said the walk-through space will be increased slightly on future boats, and the table will be a little narrower.

The owner's cabin forward includes a large hanging locker, a roomy double V-berth with storage beneath it, and double doors that open into the saloon. The single head and shower, located to port at the foot of the companionway, can serve as a wet locker on rainy days, and aft of it, there's a large, deep locker that's also accessible from the cockpit above.

Overall, I found the interior to be quite comfortable, and a place where I'd enjoy relaxing and recouping after a good long sail. With tankage for 53 gallons of water and 22 gallons of fuel, the J/112E probably will not cross many oceans. But that's not what it was built to do. It was created to sail as most of us do, with a bit of racing here and there, frequent daysails, and the occasional week or three of coastal cruising. For that, I'd say the builder nailed the design brief with a bull's-eye.

Specs:

LOA: 36' (10.97 m)
LWL: 31'9" (9.68 m)
Beam: 11'10" (3.61 m)
Draft (standard/shoal): 6'11"/5'9" (2.11/1.75 m)
Sail Area: 696 sq. ft. (64.7 sq m)
Ballast: 4,000 lb. (1,815 kg)
Displacement: 11,300 lb. (5,125 kg)
Ballast / Displacement: 0.35
Displacement / Length: 157
Sail Area / Displacement: 22
Water: 53 gal. (201 l)
Fuel: 22 gal. (85 l)
Holding: 12 gal. (45 l)
Mast height: 56'10" (17.32 m)
Engine: 30 hp Volvo (saildrive)
Designer: Alan Johnstone/J/Boats Inc.
Price: \$310,000
J/Boats
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www.jboats.com

Mark Pillsbury is CW's editor.

