

# DELTA 94

## A Sparkman & Stephens classic with grace and fine detail

ONE OF THE PRETTIEST boats at the 1977 Southampton Boat Show was the privately-owned black Sparkman & Stephens-designed sloop, *Black Delta*. Based on the hull of the old *She Traveller*, but with a modified deck moulding from the *She 31*, *Black Delta* attracted a good deal of attention, much to the surprised delight of her owners. After the show they discussed with the builders, South Hants Marine, the possibility of going into production. With the aid of one of South Hants' top shipwrights, Laird Adams Engineering began fitting out Delta 94s and 2 years later, with a new factory and over fifteen boats sold, she would seem to be something of a classic among 30ft fin-keeled cruising boats, with an accommodation and quality which clearly reflects the owner's original concepts.

YM photo



Below the finish is above average with a number of useful lockers putting the available space to good effect. The saloon table is solidly built with drink and cutlery drawers and with the addition of one of the back cushions on the port side, the cut-out in the seating can be filled to form a large double berth with the table leaf acting as a leeboard. The galley is partially shielded from the saloon by a half bulkhead and, although cramped, it is just the place to wedge yourself into with the top of the engine box as a seat. The entire box dismantles for access to the Petter Mini Twin.

Forward of the mast there is a clean, sep-

arately moulded wc/washroom and two full-size peak berths in the fo'c'sle. All the berths are finished in a pliable PVC material which looks like soft leather, especially so as the saloon seating is buttoned through. The cushions are filled with a two-ply foam, soft on top, hard underneath, which take the contours of the back comfortably whilst providing a firm base.

### PERFORMANCE UNDER SAIL

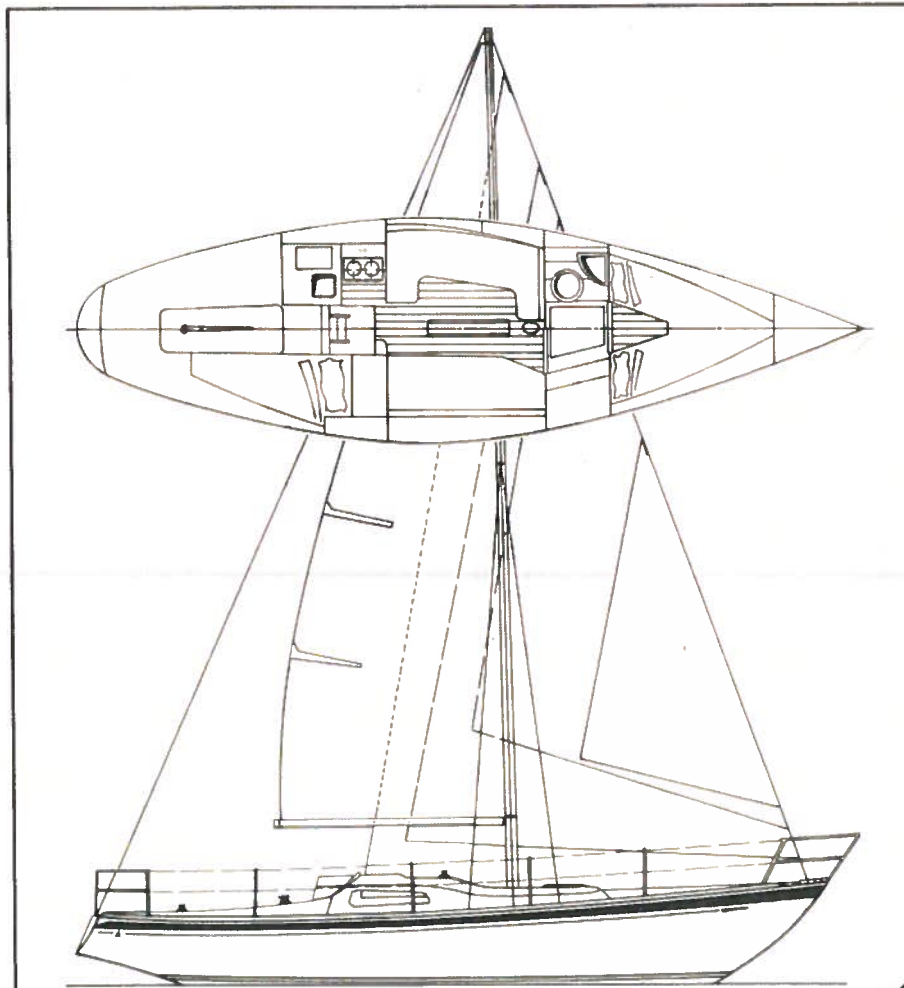
Initially, with a full main and working jib, the Delta was slightly overpowered in the Force 5-6, but apart from dipping her gun-

The Delta 94 is an elegant yacht both above and below the waterline, fine-ended with a deep S&S belly blending into the swept back dorsal fin of a keel and large skeg hung rudder. The high coachroof of the *Traveller*, which many would argue spoiled her lines, has been replaced by the altogether more stylish moulding from the 31 which sweeps up from amidships to give more headroom at the lowest point of her sheer. She has a high bridgedeck and small companionway with a long narrow seagoing cockpit which stops some way short of the stern, leaving room for a useful stern locker or lazarette. This leaves a clear area behind the helmsman which is an ideal place from which to control spinnaker sheets or put junior members of the family to keep them out of the way of the cockpit action, although the aft overhang which looks so attractive in profile should not be overloaded. The helmsman sits well forward and if need be can steer from the shelter of the folding spray hood.

The one major criticism of the cockpit is that the angle of the tiller drastically reduces the space available to other crew members making the well smaller in use than it need be. Cockpit seating is comfortable with a curved teak moulding to the slatted seats, although the coamings are designed to keep the crew in, rather than to be perched upon. There is a deep port cockpit locker which will hold a deflated dinghy and small outboard, two self-tailing Lewmar sheet winches and a couple of spinnaker winches mounted on plinths set into the coamings abaft the helmsman.

Forward of the mast the decks are clear with good cleats and fairleads and a 25 lb CQR which stows in deck chocks. S&S apparently feel that a foredeck broken by a well weakens the structure of a boat in a vital strength area and in any case, by modern standards, the boat is fine ended with scarcely room for one large enough to take a decent sized anchor and warps.

The working areas are covered in a rough diamond pattern Treadmaster to give sure-footed working, with non-slip paint on the coachroof and side decks. A stainless steel traveller amidships handles the characteristic *She* mainsheet which is double ended and can be adjusted from the cockpit with the aid of a small snubbing winch and cam cleat. The arrangement means that the cockpit is not divided by the main traveller.





The interior makes good use of the Delta's narrow beam

wales every now and then, she remained tolerant of her crew and highly responsive, with the helm showing the same steady feel so characteristic throughout the sail. For the first part of the review, moreover, she was handled quite happily by the man and wife crew alone, and they made light work of hoisting sail and getting under way in the congested confines of Chichester Harbour. Later on we dropped a slab in the main, which probably increased our speed a little, with less heel. Upwind the Delta tacked surely and it was a pleasure to settle her into the groove. Even when she had luffed almost to a standstill, she would bear away with little fuss although she tacks sedately and needs to be allowed to pay off, and gather a knot or two before sheets can be hardened on the next tack. A weekend racing in Poole Bay had established that she was a forgiving boat downwind and under shy spinnaker so the sail back to the yacht basin was pursued lazily with a foot crooked over the tiller.

### UNDER POWER

To get some idea of her performance under power in confined spaces we undertook a series of fairly wild gyrations in among the boats of the marina, using the full turning circle ahead and astern to see how she would react. Once again, in keeping with her handling under sail, she proved reliable in unaccustomed hands with a turning circle scarcely more than her own length, although the torque from her fixed two bladed propeller needed some correction when going ahead and a steady grasp on the helm was needed astern to counteract the force on the skeg hung rudder. With room to gather way astern, berthing would present few problems, a quick burst ahead was all that it needed to correct any wayward tendencies and the Petter had power to spare in close quarters, whilst driving her hull at displacement speed in smooth water at little more than cruising revs.

### CONCLUSIONS

The passage of time always sees cruising boats become more and more like their racing counterparts with little or no real advantages other than more internal volume, with the trend towards wider hull shapes and more and more performance in light airs at the expense of predictable handling characteristics in heavy weather.

The Delta 94 owes her shape to a design trend that reached its peak a few years ago when the racing results were all but monopolised by that most famous of design firms, Sparkman & Stephens. Basically a fast cruiser/racer of the early seventies, the Delta has timeless elegance and breeding, sure handling characteristics and a fair turn of speed. In theory there is no reason why a purely cruising boat should be appreciably slower than a racing boat and she should certainly be more forgiving. The Delta 94 epitomises this idea and whilst narrower in the beam than many yachts of her size, effective use of internal space in many ways makes up for this. Undoubtedly wetter to windward than her high-sided, lighter weight rivals, the Delta 94 should appeal to the committed yachtsman with a critical eye for a seaworthy boat and a feeling that yacht design since the Delta was drawn has progressed but a little way forward. AM

### DATA

|                           |  |              |                   |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|-------------------|
| LOA                       | 9.5m (31ft 6in)  | Draught      | 1.6m (5ft 6in)    |
| LWL                       | 6.7m (22ft)  | Displacement | 3,540kg (7,800lb) |
| Beam                      | 2.5m (8ft 1in)   | Ballast      | 1,607kg (3,540lb) |
| Sail area (working)       | 35m <sup>2</sup> (373sq ft)  |              |                   |
| Hull deck joint Deck      | Glassed and bolted, then glassed over GRP balsa sandwich with removable headliner, strengthened in stress areas with hardwood pads   |              |                   |
| Keel                      | External iron attached to hull by 20 high tensile bolts  |              |                   |
| Rudder                    | Skeg mounted with internal web   |              |                   |
| Rig                       | Kemp spars, keel stepped mast with 1 x 19, 6mm and 5mm stainless steel standing rigging comprising fore and backstay, twin lowers and cap shroud. Single spreaders. Toggles on all stays, swaged terminals. Running rigging: internal Terylene halyards, main (galvanised wire), genoa and spinnaker |              |                   |
| Sails                     | Main, cruising genoa, No3, No4 and storm, by Bruce Banks. Alternative Rotostay, main, genoa and storm jib  |              |                   |
| Winches                   | Two 30 self-tailing genoa winches or Lewmar 40, Lewmar 6 reefing winch, Lewmar 8 mainsheet winch and 2 Lewmar 10 halyard winches   |              |                   |
| Reefing Engine            | Slab with optional Rotostay headsail reefing Petter Mini Twin with 2:1 reduction, developing 12hp through a Hurth gearbox. Self-lubricating stern gland with 2 bladed fixed propeller (11in x 13in). Flexible mounts   |              |                   |
| Batteries Tanks           | One with battery state indicator and thermal overload switches 45 lit (10 gall) or 30 lit (6.5 gall) stainless steel fuel tank, 2 x flexible Crewsaver water tanks each with a capacity of 55 lit (12 gall)  |              |                   |
| Berths                    | Quarter berth, settee berth, converting double in saloon and twin peak berths which also convert to double   |              |                   |
| Headroom Designer Builder | Standing headroom only in main saloon Sparkman & Stephens Laird Adams Engineering, Unit 7, Standard Way, Fareham Industrial Park, Fareham, Hampshire PO168XB   |              |                   |
| Standard Price            | £23,690 (including VAT) with B&G log and speedo, compass, echo sounder, 5 sails, warps and fenders and spray hood and full inventory   |              |                   |



TM photo