CATALINA 350 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Where are we....?



C350 Association Technical Editor Bill Templeton

Before answering where we 350 owners are, let's look briefly at where we came from. The 350 – like all Catalinas – grew from owner feedback and input. Gerry Douglas put together a hull that provided the interior room of a 40 footer on a 31 ft 3 in waterline. March of 2003 Sailing Magazine described the 350 as not being an "oversized clone of it's predecessors but a true departure..." Huge interior volume, 13 ft beam, modest displacement and being "surprisingly nimble" for a boat of it's proportions. The introduction of the 350 did not go without dissent...some ultra-traditionalists slammed the design as being a floating condo not suited for offshore work. I will be the first to admit that the C36 may be a better sea boat but the extended time Pat and I have spent on Makani Kaicruising Long Island Sound and Chesapeake Bay we've been comfortable and always felt safe. As far as sailing ability, she's not a "gold plater" making to windward in an offshore race...but I have found a clean bottom, Garhauer Easy Glides and paying attention I can keep up with some bigger boats...one time coming up from Atlantic City a C380 took six hours to catch and pass me only to discover he was motorsailing! We bought our 350 in Annapolis October, 2004 and took delivery in 2005. At the time the "base" price was substantially higher than the other "mass produced" boats of the same size...but by the time one added options to those others to equal what was standard on the Catalina (4 cyl diesel, 4D batteries, windlass, 11 gal water heater. etc.) the price difference disappeared...and we still had construction advantages such as the antimonious lead keel instead of cast iron.

Today, we get interested in other boats (C375 or C385) but don't find a difference in what we would do on the bigger boat over what we currently do with the 350...maybe Gerry shot himself in the foot by reducing the number of people who would move up from the 350. Recently I surveyed online yacht sales sources and compared asking prices of 2004-2006 Hunters. Beneteaus, C36s and C350s. The Hunters averaged $86,435 ... Beneteaus $86,600 ... C36s $99,633...and the C350s $114,414. This being an indication that the C350 has held its value better than much of the "competition."

Future...I would guess the C350 will continue to hold its value....with a modicum of care and maintenance will still provide comfort and safety, especially in coastal conditions. But we all begin to think of what will we do as we get older (I am "uncomfortably close" to 70...will there be a trawler in the future, I don't think so for quite awhile if at all. The 350 powers and motorsails well... all sail handling in the cockpit...maybe an electric winch or two. What about a bow thruster...some say that a thruster may not be needed; in most situations that may be true but in some high current areas (Point Judith RI, Delaware City DE) perhaps there would be a need. What follows is Robert Baker's install of a thruster in his 350.

Future entries will include SSB on the cheap (?), replacement of the waste valve, building and installing berth "fillers" to convert the "center-line queen" to a V-berth.

Keep those cards and letters coming.

–Bill Templeton, pbtemp6816@verizon.net

C350 Bow Thruster Project

After sailing an Allied Seawind 30 Ketch for nearly 20 years, we were fortunate to find an immaculate 2004 C350 at our marina after several years of searching for a new sailboat. The Seawind required heroic maintenance effort and I was spending less time on the water.

Migrating from a full keel, low freeboard sailboat to the C350 was a welcomed change in terms of amenities and cabin space, but the high freeboard/fin keel also made for some boat handling challenges, especially with high wind and current conditions. We wanted to be able to handle the boat confidently by ourselves in adverse conditions, especially in tight docking situations.

After researching bow thruster options with Pilots Point Maintenance Manager, Kip Wiley, we decided on a Side Power SE-60, single propeller unit, which they preferred for reliability and parts availability. We found the compartment under the V-Berth, between the anchor locker and forward water tank to have ample room for placement of the tunnel and thruster hardware.

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Since we had already converted to (4) Golf Cart batteries, we were able to avoid placing a dedicated battery in proximity to the thruster and ran large gauge cables from the battery compartment forward. The thruster is only used in short bursts and the main battery bank was sufficient. We installed a separate Power Switch in the battery compartment so that the thruster is powered off when docked. The more difficult job was running the control cable all the way aft and up into the Edson/Nav Pod, maybe more tedious than difficult. The simple control panel at the helm includes Power On/Off and two directional buttons.

After just one season, the value of the Bow Thruster has been proven. Jean and I can handle the boat in adverse conditions by ourselves. Even with other people on board, they often lack the experience to be very helpful or risk injury. The cost of professional installation was <$10K, which when spread over the course of ownership made sense to us. I also looked at the potential cost associated with hitting a piling or another boat, and based on the increased peace of mind, felt that this was a good investment that would enable us to use the boat more. **–Bob & Jean Baker**, C350 #167 Free Energy

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