



HAMMERHEAD 54

IF VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE, CHRIS WHITE'S Hammerhead is a fiery hot salsa. Just when you begin to think you've seen it all in the design editor's chair at YACHTING, along comes something to blow the notion completely away. Hammerhead is even a thing one could call beautiful, if that term may properly be applied to a trimaran.

Accompanying the blueprints were photos of the actual boat, which is just plain mind-bendingly gorgeous, and one shot of the yacht's wake in an obviously moderate wind looks like the trail of a destroyer in hot pursuit. Surely a sailboat couldn't be going this fast in so little wind.

Hammerhead is a big tri at 54' overall. Big enough to be very fast—16 knots in a mere 12 to 14 knots of wind and more than 20 knots in a blow—and big enough to be laid out in a center cockpit arrangement that allows two couples to occupy truly separate and therefore private quarters, each with its own head. This gets around one of the legitimate critiques of the smaller tris—that they involve a cat's cradle of highly stressed members to propel a pretty tiny cabin through the water. With all that length and a very clever central hull section that flares from a narrow inverted bell-shaped bottom out to a respectable beam of 12', Hammerhead sports an interior that would be com-

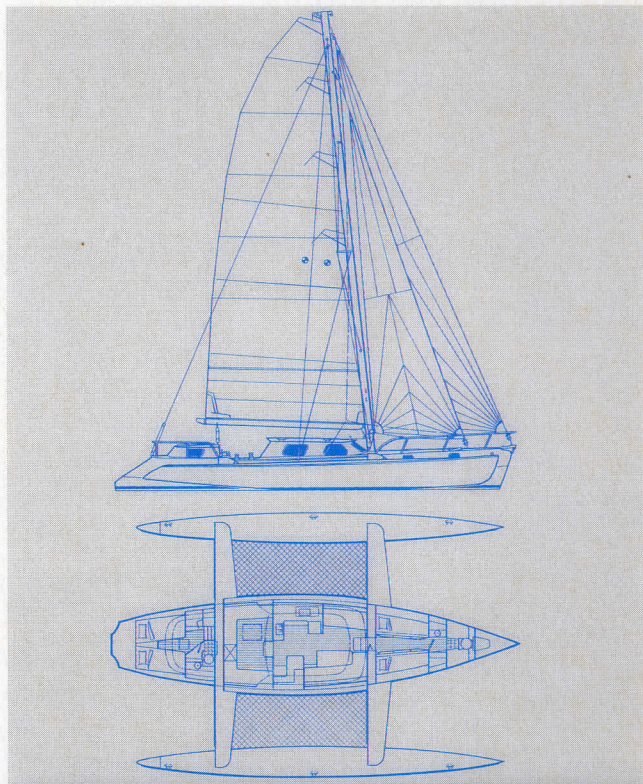
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parable to that of a 50' monohull, no mean feat.

Where does the outrageous speed come from? Look at the numbers. The displ./length ratio of 53 would be simply impossible to achieve on a ballasted yacht, yet was met in this case without resorting to the very high-tech, and high-cost, methods that might get you down to 75 on a monohull. The sail area to displacement ratio of 32.45 is double that of most ballasted oceangoing yachts. Half the weight, double the speed makes a good rule of thumb in yacht design.

The rig displays a lot of sail area on a relatively short mast, because the client wants to travel the Intracoastal Waterway. White trimmed the original sail plan by 5' in height and had to think anew how to get back the horsepower. Fortunately he recalled the Bahama sloops. These boats, like multihulls, have immense stability (by carrying a whole village worth of full-grown men on the ends of planks called *de prys*). They top off their sail plans with short gaffs, which increase sail area up where the wind blows—White developed a high-tech adaptation to solve the dilemma.

The gaff-like headboard has upper and lower hinges of doubled-up batten cars, enabling it to swivel but always to maintain leach tension, even when deeply reefed. To eliminate the chafe that would arise with the main halyard attached midway along the headboard, the main halyard



Center cockpit arrangement allows two very private staterooms.

LOA 54' 0"
LWL 52' 4"
Max. beam 34' 0"
Draft 2' 5" / 8' 6"
Displ. 1/2 load 17,000 lb.
Beam/length ratio .629
Masthead above DWL 64' 6"
Sail area 1,341 sq. ft.
Displ./DWL ratio 53.0
Water 80 gal.
Fuel 80 gal.
Sail area/displ. ratio 32.45
Min. cabin headroom 6' 3"
Engine Yanmar 4JHTE 62-hp diesel
Designer Chris White

sheave is in a masthead crane, which is also hinged so it automatically aligns with the headboard on any point of sail. The running backs are only required to reduce headstay sag beating in heavy airs. There is no centerline backstay, because it would conflict with the exaggerated roach of the mainsail. The upper and middle shrouds are sufficiently swept back to ensure the rig stays in the boat.

Ideal in the Bahamas, the pivoting rudder steers the boat at any degree of retraction. That leaves the propeller, just above the low point of the central hull, to think about. Hammerhead has a centerboard, instead of a daggerboard, so one can simply raise the board to act as a sounding device, and carry on into shoal waters. □
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