

Shark 24, Cruising Outfit

We have cruised with our Shark “HAL noon” (# 1411) for several years in Holland and the Mediterranean without adding too much cruising equipment.

This time was important because we learnt what is necessary and – even more important – what is not.

The equipment we added, exactly fits our personal needs.

- We always do couple cruising. We think that more than two people can't live comfortably on a shark for days or even weeks.
- We don't use the V-berth, we find it too narrow.
- We never really cook on the ship. Except of preparing the breakfast or warming up a canned soup, our pantry is never asked for.
- Having a wash or a shower, well as sailors do ... (we visit a marina every other day anyhow).

Space is rare on a Shark, you can only stow those things that are really needed, everything else must stay at home.. But compared with backpackers you will live in great comfort! And if there has remained a little bit of boy scout blood in your veins ... you will really enjoy it!

There will still be enough stuff on board, and everything must have it's proper place, otherwise you will spend life on board with permanent searching.

The second critical item apart from space is weight. A Shark can't carry much load and it's amazing what you will carry aboard for longer cruises!

All additional interior works must be carried out light weighted, otherwise you will wonder where the waterline has gone!

We only used light plywood 5 or 9 mm thick (except of the mast reinforcement).

Structural strength was achieved by small strips of wood – whenever needed.

The result: the weight of the entire adds is less than 15 kg!

Forepeak

With us everything began as we recognized some weakness of the cabin roof under the mast step ... well known to many Shark owners. Our Shark couldn't keep higher rig tension especially when racing or when tuned for stronger winds.

The original (V-shaped) plywood before the main bulkhead was reinforced by two vertical supports standing on two horizontal bars laying on both V-berth seats.

I through bolted them (for safety reasons only) to the seats with M5 bolts.

Putting the reinforcement in place the cabin roof was slightly lifted by means of a hydraulic jack (mast layed, no rig tension!). Thus the entire support is under tension after removal of the jack.



Material for the reinforcement: 2 x 16 mm multiplex plywood (same size as the original V-shaped support).



The remaining part of the fore peak serves as sail stowage now and also hosts other bulky equipment e.g. the gangway (which is urgently needed in most Mediterranean marinas).



Because the fore peak always looks very untidy, the “boat lady” insisted on some kind of separation to the cosy living room!

A roller blind for windows, we found at IKEA (hope this famous Swedish company is in business in Canada as well), shortened to the appropriate width, was an easy (and cheap) solution.

The interior of the ship will warm up quite a bit during summer, mainly through the Plexiglas of the fore hatch. Therefore and because we always had difficulties with a leaking hatch we replaced the plexi by a plywood board. No more leakage and – amazing – a lot cooler in summer!

Space between the main bulkhead and the new mast-reinforcement gives a nice place for two “wardrobes”, starboard for the skipper and port for his wife (or whoever she is!).

Bottom and doors made from 5 mm plywood with a frame of strips of wood, 5 mm thick. Two small magnets at each door serve as locks.

These two wardrobes carry our entire vacation clothes (being mainly T-shirts during summer time) as well as “the little black one” for the boat lady when having dinner in a nice restaurant!

These wardrobes are much more suitable than the lockers under the cabin seats which will always be wet when a little bit of water comes into the ship – due to the lack of a bilge. This would spoil the entire wardrobe!

The lockers are a good place for canned and bottled provisions. They are kept cool under the waterline, even the beer is drinkable – well nearly, to be honest! But you will get used to it. And its much more healthy not to have iced drinks in hot countries, the doctors say!

Above the wardrobes there are two bookshelves. We always have our nautical books and the manuals on starboard and the “bellestristic literature” on port: our cabin is cosy and tidy as I said already!



Small strips of wood keep the books in place, when the boat heels. They can be pushed upwards to get a book out of the shelf.

Toilet

Well, this surely is one of the most important challenges: where to put the toilet in a Shark?

We don't like porta potties or chemical toilets, we think they smell ugly and when I think of cleaning them ... brrrr!

I know, this topic is delicate, but a reasonable loo is the most important equipment on a cruising ship!

Don't you remember the miserable voice of your wife when you entered the harbour looking around for a place to moor: "I think I need a toilet ..."

How, my dear! I didn't even find a place yet!

And if you managed to moor somewhere in a hurry, you have to bear the sight of your loved one hurrying down the stage searching for a toilet ...

Believe me, if you don't solve the toilet problem she will have joined you twice on the Shark: the first and the last time!! You are well on the way towards single handed cruising!

We found our solution by accident. On a rainy harbour day in Enkhuizen, Holland we were strolling around through a household supply store (as far as I remember we needed a new corkscrew).

Suddenly an outcry from my wife: "Lueder, ich hab's" (my wife speaks German with me normally!)



An ordinary metal garbage can with a removable plastic ring to secure a waste bag properly.

Exactly, that's it! And it also fixes the problem with the not existing waste water tank (which is mandatory in many harbours nowadays)!

Since then he has his home on our Shark. He spends a very honourable life as a sea toilet!

He lives in a seat located between the two wardrobes which additionally makes life easier when fishing for something in the wardrobes or on the bookshelves (because of 1,3 m headroom you always have to sit in the Shark).

A knot in the waste bag and it will be absolutely tight (we checked it, it's true!).

And instead of the boat lady in a hurry you can watch the skipper now, with a happy whistle on his lips disposing the boat waste (together with ...)!





In front of the seat (bow-wards) is another (smaller) locker hosting the battery, charging controller for the solar panel and the main fuses.

Pantry

We straightened the sloping sides of the existing lockers and added handles on both sides. Handles are urgently needed if he (mostly she!) is on the way in the cabin for a beer or the cigarettes!

Without these handles there were bruises periodically (no, I never beat my wife!!), once even a broken rib ... which all doesn't guarantee not to finish life as a single!

We don't have an ice box and a drain in our pantry, both were victims of the compromises mentioned at the beginning.

We never missed the drain. We do dish washing – seldom to be honest – in a bucket in the cockpit. Mostly we make use of the low freeboard: grip the spoon tight if you log more than 4 knots, otherwise it will be gone!



An ice box would be nice, but the beer is amazingly cold if it is stored underneath the waterline – you will get used to it!

The actual pantry consists of small drawers (lightweight, 5 mm plywood!) and of an alcohol stove which slides under the drawers and is secured by a (red) strap.

The drawers keep everything our pantry life needs: below left the cutlery, above left the glasses and mugs, right the plates and in the middle spices and all the other kitchen stuff e.g. can opener, lighter, corkscrew etc.

The stove is pulled forward when in use. We don't have gimbals. We never cook underway and hot water for a cup of coffee can be prepared without gimbals as well.



The drawers are kept in locked position by a small cam at the bottom. You must lift the drawer a little to open, it's very easy.





Underneath the pantry there is a water tank, it has to be pulled out a little bit to get water.
 On the left there are boxes for all the daily food we need for breakfast. Keeping things in such a box is very convenient because we can supply everything for the cockpit breakfast with one grip.

Chart table

Each cruiser must have a proper table for the chart work!

The locker opposite to the pantry has a board with a leaf. Underneath is the chart stowage.

At the main bulkhead the GPS and the radio are mounted.



The GPS antenna is located in the mast step. The antenna is available as car equipment (Garmin).



Under the chart stowage there are drawers for all that stuff, that otherwise would gamble around somewhere.

The drawers (lightweight again, 5 mm plywood) are locked by cams at the bottom, similar to the pantry drawers.

They can be subdivided by pluggable thin boards.



Skippers pride is the combined chart and breakfast table!

A slider can be pulled out of the pantry. It hooks into the chart case.

This provides an excellent table for the chart work and offers – partially pulled out – additional space when cooking.





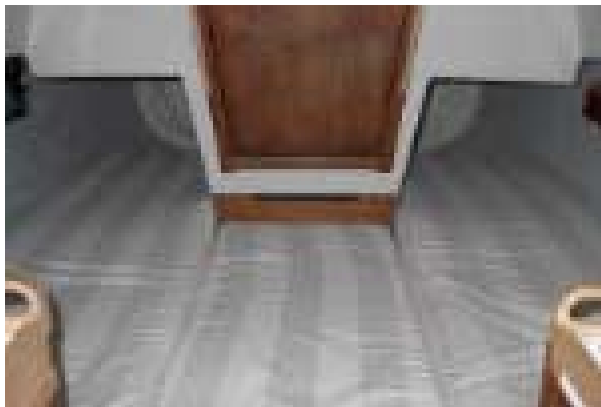
The navigator has a seat that stows in the pantry locker beneath the water tank.

The slider becomes a cabin table when it is opened and hanged by means of a sling to the wooden border of the hatch cover.



Sleeping

The two quarter berths were too small for us – and they were too far away from each other as well!



We additionally use the aisle between the quarter berths as a bed.

A board can be drawn from under the cockpit. It runs on two wooden bars fixed by screws to the cabin seat walls. The bars carry the seat for the navigator mentioned above.

The rectangular cushion from the original V-berth fits exactly on the board!

During day time the board hides under the cockpit but not completely: one part remains outside acting as a step.

The board serves as cockpit table as well, if we take our breakfast outside in the cockpit.

On both side of the hatch there are handles – very useful when the boat heels.



Anchoring

Anchoring is another problem with couple cruising!

- Where to stow the anchor, chain and anchor line? Our Shark doesn't have an anchor locker in the bow; but even if it would have one: I don't like the weight in the bow.
- My wife does not like to steer when I work with the anchor on the fore deck (crying misleading commands)
- Our outboard is a null in reverse, nearly useless when burying the anchor



Our anchor with chain and anchor line is stowed in a wooden box under the cockpit. The box has to be pulled out and put into the cockpit.



We turned the entire anchoring procedure upside down: we are anchoring forward!

- Start the motor, drop sails
- Turn the boat with wind astern; fasten the end of the anchor rope to the (port) stern cleat and slowly drop the anchor
- When it reaches the ground, slowly forward (caution: there will be a strong haul on the chain or the line, a glove would be nice!). Veer the chain or line accordingly. This works best, if the helmsman stands backwards (back to the bow) with the tiller between his knees!
- The boat lady prepares the brandy
- When enough line is paid out, bury the anchor: cleat the line and let the motor work!
When I anchor for the night, I always test if the anchor is secure: go backwards some way and run the boat forward with 1,5 – 2 knots into the cleated anchor. If it holds, it will hold the night through as well!
But be careful and alarm the crew: there will be a severe jerk and everybody will sit down immediately (and harmfully) wherever he stands, the skipper included!
- Finally bring the anchor line forward and cleat it at the bow, the boat will swing bow to wind.

Up anchor procedure is vice versa, the skipper can handle it by himself including weighing the anchor with motor.

Summary

The result is still a very small boat, but it is a cruiser with which two people can enjoy coastal cruising for weeks. They should have preserved some of the boy scout spirit of their youth however!

The Shark rewards it with never ending sailing fun. And if you show your stern to the 30-plus footers of the charter crews, passing them with 9 knots under full sails on the reach ... you don't want to sit on their boat, even if they can pee upright under deck!!!



And the small, lonesome bays, where the big ones can't go because of their draft, belong to the small boats solely.

You will find calm there and you will enjoy the sunset and the sundowner without being disturbed by the party taking place on the big ship in your neighbourhood.

Large boats will not find the kindness of the fishermen in small village harbours, who will friendly offer a place at their mole!



If we should have roused your taste to try cruising with a Shark, then we met our goal!

Cruisers are individualistic, everybody has his own requirements. We would be happy if some of our ideas would be useful for you.

Further questions, discussions or improvement are appreciated, contact:
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