

THE SUPERYACHTS

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Twirlybird V

RIGHT: Twirlybird V represents an experienced yachtsman's vision of a high performance sailing yacht with exceptional comfort and stability.

BELOW: The forward part of the deck saloon with controls, chart table and communications centre.

The most interesting thing about the 40.5m (133ft) ketch *Twirlybird V* is that her design and construction were overseen by one man with single-minded dedication – and that man was her owner. Inventor, engineer, former whaler, a man who has given his name to one of Europe's largest commercial helicopter operations, Alan Bristow is a very special kind of yacht-owner who fought hard to get exactly the yacht that he wanted.

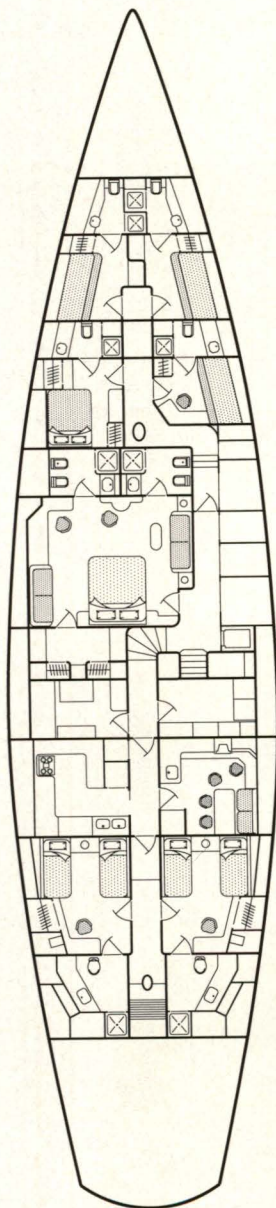
The brief from the outset was for a high-performance sailing yacht of exceptional stability, capable of carrying full sail with no more than 20 degrees of heel when sailing at 33 degrees to the true wind in a Force 6. Then add safety, reliability and comfort. At first Tony Castro worked with the owner developing the concept, including the deck layout and interior arrangement, then Ron Holland Yacht Design, hugely experienced in large aluminium sailing yachts, produced the lines plan and engineering drawings for the hull and superstructure including the large volume, low resistance bulb keel.

When design work was complete, the owner took on the rôle of project manager. Ken Freivokh was responsible for interior design, as well as such related matters as lighting and air-conditioning. A fundamental requirement was for the interior to function as a real sailing yacht on which life could

continue as normal at pronounced angles of heel and in rough waters, and that function should not be subordinated to fashion. Throughout the boat, the design has been considered in the light of use at sea, without detracting from the quality and comfort of the accommodation. There are handholds integrated into the furniture, corners are softly curved and lee cloths are available for all berths. The accommodation layout starts aft with guest cabins panelled in cherry with burr-elm dado and discreet

• SPECIFICATIONS •

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| LOA | 40.5m (132ft 10in) |
| LWL | 32.5m (106ft 7in) |
| Beam | 9.2m (30ft 2in) |
| Draught | 4.0m (13ft 1in) |
| Displacement | 232 tonnes |
| Spars | John Powell Masts |
| Winches | Lewmar and Seaway |
| Sails | Hood |
| Sail Area | 778m ² (8,370sq ft) |
| Propulsion | 1 x 750hp MTU 12V183TE62 diesel |
| Propeller | Hundested VP FR/EL (1.22m diameter) |
| Generators | 2 x 50kW Northern Lights |
| Range @ 12 knots | 2,700nm |
| Construction | Aluminium hull & superstructure |
| Naval architects | Ron Holland Yacht Design |
| Interior design | Ken Freivokh Design |
| Builder/Year | Lürssen Werft /1993 |







ABOVE: Decorative fabrics, beautifully colour co-ordinated, distinguish the dining and seating areas in the main saloon, which features cherry-wood panelling and a glass-fronted cocktail cabinet. To port, a door leads out into the guest cockpit.

gold detailing. An interesting feature of all the cabins is the lighting which can be varied from the detail downwash over the pictures, to the overall illumination. Each guest cabin has a spacious bathroom with a white and blue theme.

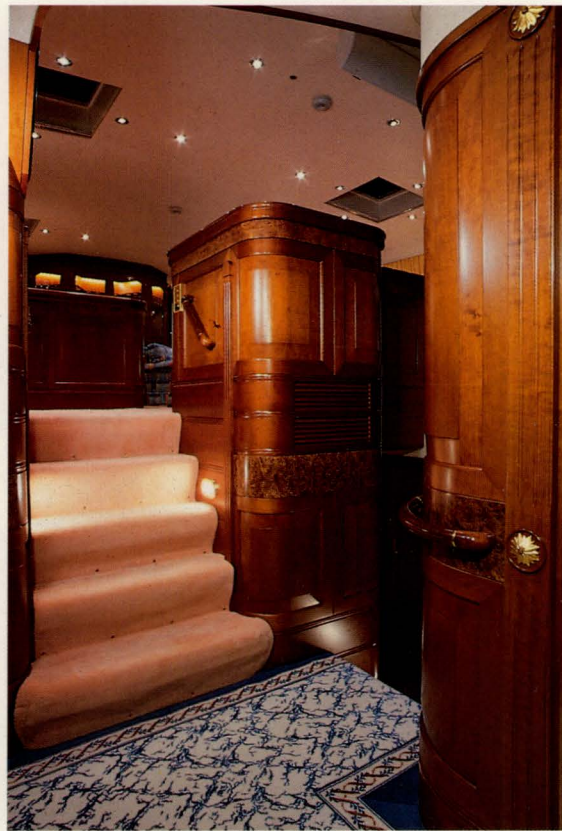
Aft, between the two guest cabins, a lobby at the base of the companionway from the cockpit gives on to a passageway that runs forward through the boat. This enables the crew to get to their quarters forward in the event of severe weather, but it also serves to link all the living areas. Next forward to port is the extensive galley with many of its essential appliances gimballed – and with Alan Bristow's touch evident in the engineering of the gimbals. Three large commercial freezers are built into the galley area and the crew mess opposite. These can be removed in the event of malfunction and replaced, avoiding the cost, as well as the complexity, of built-in units.

In the crew mess, a comfortable seating and dining area is augmented by the ship's office and the communications centre. A Compaq computer is used to run the ship's business, and also links to the Inmarsat C and Skanti 750W radio system. At the Captain's desk, as well as the computer, there are

displays of the Brookes & Gatehouse navigation and course instruments, while on the bulkhead is one of Alan Bristow's prized possessions – a precision Negretti barometer which he has had on all his boats.

Amidships lies the engineroom, running the full width of the yacht and housing the MTU main engine and the twin Northern Lights generators, but with only crouching headroom in most areas. A Hundested variable-pitch propeller enables the ideal engine revolutions to be matched to the sea conditions, making motor-sailing an effective, and highly efficient option. Day to day monitoring and controls for pumps, water and electrical systems, are carried out from two separate air-conditioned rooms.

Immediately forward of amidships and occupying two thirds of the beam of the boat is the master suite. Spacious, light, and airy, this suite comprises the main stateroom, two bathrooms and a dressing room. The panelling is cherry, in the same style as the rest of the accommodation. All cabins are equipped with specially-designed long-handled keys for opening the overhead hatches. In the dressing room behind the head of the king-size bed, the tiers of lined drawers are ventilated by electric fans.



LEFT: The rich decorative theme devised by Ken Freivokb continues up the stairway leading from the sleeping accommodation to the main saloon.

BELOW: The delightfully panelled corridor adjacent to the owner's suite is lined with large linen cupboards to starboard.



In the passageway leading to the crew's quarters forward, the panelling outboard conceals a range of storage from dry goods bins on heavy duty runners, through linen lockers, a suspension filing system for all the essential ship's paperwork, a locker for all the electrical inverters, a large custom-built freezer, and even a custom vacuum cleaner installation.

Forward of the mast, the Captain and engineer have roomy cabins finished to the same standard as the rest of the boat, enabling the Captain's quarters to double as a third guest cabin if needed. If there are eight in the owner's party, the boat operates with six crew, or seven if the guest number is six.

The circulation of fresh air was a major consideration in the design of the boat, and Mr Bristow drew on his aviation experience to introduce an aircraft-type plenum chamber system that permits very large volumes of air to be exchanged without any danger of allowing water below.

Twirlybird's deck saloon is the focal point of her guests' day, with the dining and conversation areas large enough to entertain dozens of guests. But it is also the heart of the yacht, housing her navigation station and the owner's desk, a work area which



ABOVE: The owner's double stateroom is a masterpiece of understated elegance. The door between the bed and the settee leads to a well-ventilated dressing room with his and hers wardrobes and drawers.

ABOVE RIGHT: One of the two mirror-image twin guest cabins. Throughout the yacht corners are softly curved and handholds carefully positioned to ensure safety and comfort when at sea.

RIGHT: The dressing table in the master suite is flanked by doors leading to the twin bathrooms.

FAR RIGHT: Each guest cabin has its own bathroom decorated in a white and blue theme.



offers an unrivalled view of the deck and beyond.

But proud as the owner is of his yacht and its special features and ideas, one only has to ask about the deck, the rig and the sailing systems and you see a new animation and interest. Thousands of miles and many years of sailing experience, coupled with an intensely practical mind and engineering know-how, have resulted in a totally seamanlike craft.

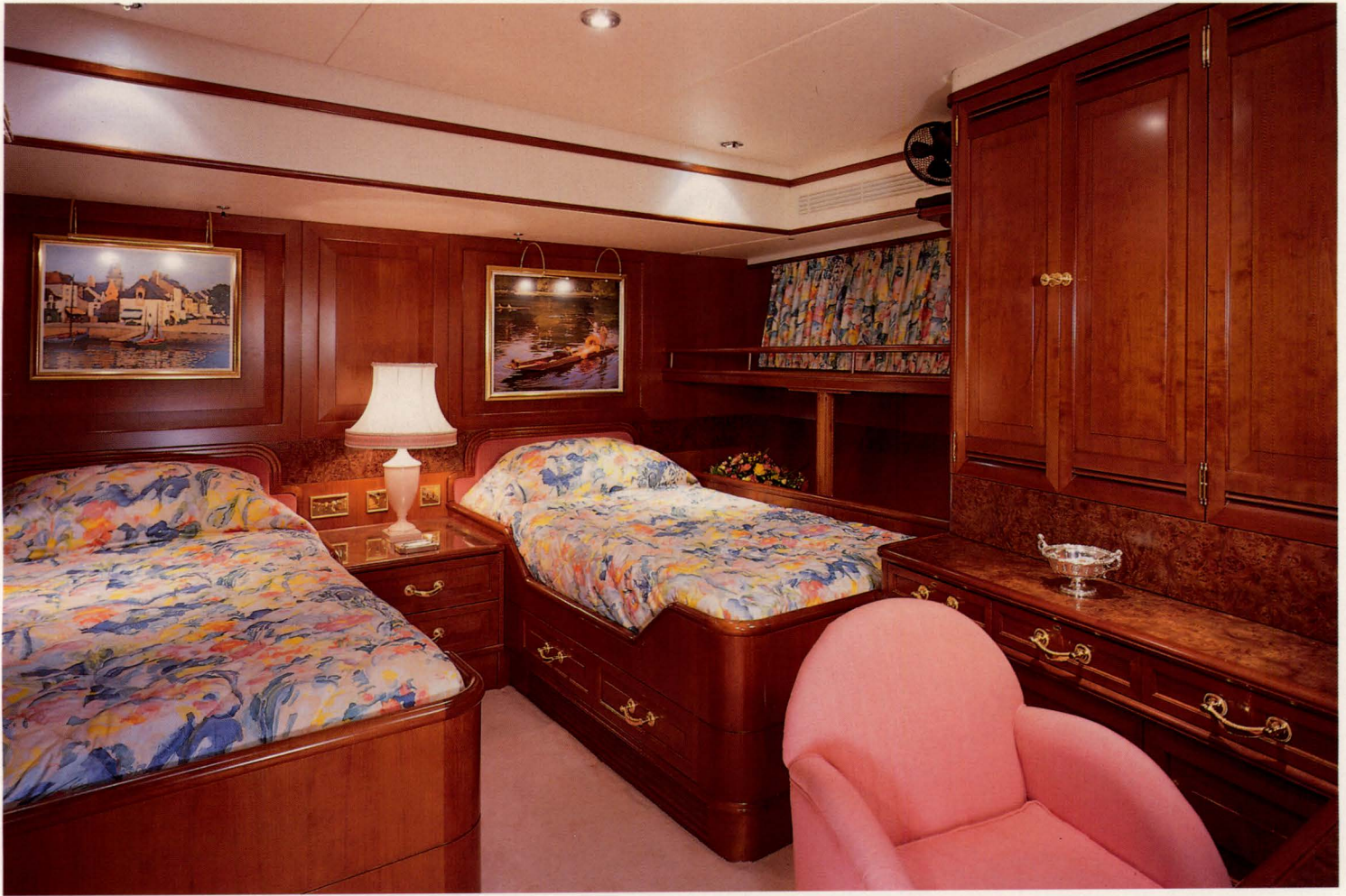
Instantly obvious is the complete lack of teak on deck. Painted non-slip offers an even better foothold, needs little maintenance, is light in weight, and does not need expensive periodic replacement. Similarly, the cap rail is a familiar-looking shiny black plastic

extrusion that turns out to be the handrail material used on the London Underground escalators; tough, hard wearing and not in need of constant time-consuming attention from the varnish brush.

Guests on deck sit or dine in the shelter of the deck saloon (under an awning if necessary), in an upholstered lounge area clear of all lines and winches. Further aft, a working cockpit is flanked by four immense Lewmar 1400 winches to handle the sheets of the furling headsails. The helmsman steers from an eyrie overlooking the deck saloon, with a clear view of the foredeck and aft deck. From it he controls the foreguy winches, running backstays, main and mizzen sheets and travellers, the furling and unfurling of headsails, and the operation of the anchor windlass and bow and stern thrusters.

The rig is a cutter-headed ketch, with five spreaders supporting the main mast and four the mizzen mast. The masts were designed by Andy Steiner and built under Henry Washburn's direction at John Powell Masts. Initial plans call for a year's experience with the boat and her systems before the spinnakers are taken aboard. Given a forestay height of some 38.5m (126ft) and a J measurement of 13.18m (43ft), the spinnakers will eventually be a sight to behold.

Main and mizzen are fully battened and stow in lazyjacks on top of the triangular booms. Hydraulic



winches and two-part halyards, plus the Bariert Sparcraft roller furling headsails simplify sail handling and make *Twirlybird V* not only exhilarating, but also comfortable to sail. A speed of 16.8 knots was achieved during sailing trials, whilst on her first Atlantic crossing from Madeira to Barbados, she averaged over 300 miles per day.

Beneath the after deck is an Aladdin's cave of equipment, from the HF radio transmitter unit – the closer it is to the antenna the better the transmission – to a pair of Lewmar Commander 10s that manage virtually all aspects of rig control. Positioned here also are the twin Seaway captive reel winches that control mainsail and mizzen running backstays – the only captive winches aboard.

The hydraulic stern-platform is a particular object of Alan Bristow's interest. Developed from his original design on *Twirlybird IV*, it acts as the davit platform for the rigid inflatable tender, as a swimming and diving platform, as a passerelle, and also as a recovery system for a scuba diver as the platform can be lowered into the water to enable a fully-kitted diver to float on and be lifted up without effort.

Bringing *Twirlybird V* to fruition has been a demanding process for the naval architects Tony Castro and Ron Holland, designer Ken Freivokh, the builders Lürssen Shipyard, and the commissioning



yard, Camper and Nicholsons. There must have been moments when Alan Bristow wondered if the result would be worth the immense effort, but *Twirlybird V* is a remarkable statement of one man's belief that his yacht should represent exactly what he wants – and it was an extraordinary achievement in bringing it to a successful outcome.