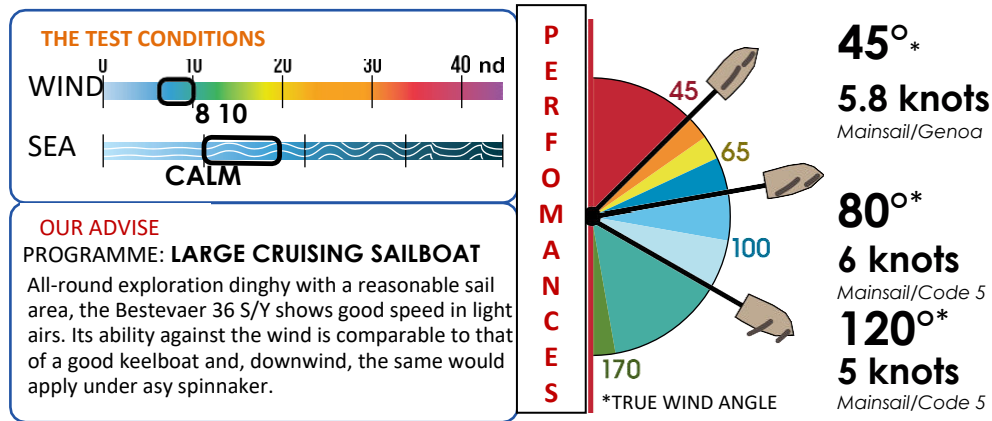


BESTEVAER 36 S/Y

The Rover of the seas



“THE NEW BESTEVAER

is my ideal boat!” When a sailor of Gerard Dijkstra’s calibre is carried away like this, you expect to find a spectacular yacht. So it comes as something of a surprise to find a raw aluminium sperm whale with as little bling as a Land Rover. Not an ounce of paint enlivens its silhouette, which bears the hallmark of the Bestevaers, the Dutch exploration yachts already familiar to insiders, with modern interpretations of the traditional



▲ The sail plan places great emphasis on the (square-headed) mainsail, and the solent is reasonable.

working hull bottoms. But the “ideal boat” adds really modest dimensions to it (a hull with less than 11m) and disarmingly simple options, such as an external rudder and a hand tiller.

AMAZING SPEED

It’s fair to say that we’re still in for a few surprises. Already, under the soft wind flurries between the Ile d’Aix and the Pont de Ré, the speed and manoeuvrability of the “ideal boat” are astonishing. As are the pervasive clear-cut choices on board. We quickly learn that the concept is as well thought-out as the deliberate rusticity. But this minimalism takes us by surprise. After a career as a professional racer, hasn’t the Dutchman Dijkstra brilliantly succeeded in becoming the architect of reference for luxury giga-sailboats as well as for Class J yachts? His firm’s portfolio of designs resembles a Who’s Who of the world’s largest three-masters, ketches and sloops. Alongside this expertise in designing giants, the man himself designed his first exploration yacht. He entrusted KM, a young maintenance yard based in Makkum, on the banks of the IJsselmeer, with its construction. This Bestevaer was a 53-foot cutter. Inspired by Dutch pilot boats, this superb raw aluminium

unit with its deliberately classic lines (tight bow, flush-deck, low helm station, circular hull portholes and straight transom stern) has enabled Dijkstra to criss-cross the polar regions. And the KM yard to launch a semi-custom production of 45-to 66-foot long successors. As he grew older - he is 80 and his wife 84 - it was out of the question for this bright-eyed sailor to stop sailing. So he designed a sort of pocket-sized super-yacht, a scaled-down discovery sailboat. Less than 11 metres long seemed a reasonable size for his new projects, given that he designs his hull bottoms around a sail plan. A 42m² square-headed mainsail and a 23m² self-tacking boom jib were more than enough for him. Add an optional 28m² genoa, this 50m² “code 55”, which is now carrying us away under this gentle breeze, and a 13m² forestay on a removable stay, to this set-up and we’re ready to take on the entire Beaufort scale.

What are his new projects? Gerard wants to land his dream yacht on the uncertain sands of the Friesland Islands. This string of dunes runs along the northern coasts of the Netherlands, Germany and even Denmark. Guaranteed solitude and lunar landscapes are features of this place. A sailboat with movable appendages was, therefore, required. The advantage of a “small boat” is that, if you get it right, you can get a pinnacle-like draught of just 70cm with the centreboard up. With an external rudder, which can also be raised but is designed to keep 50cm below the waterline, the pocket-sized explorer remains manoeuvrable at duck pond depths. But Gerard didn’t want to miss out on a return to the ice either. His jewel has all the qualities of an indestructible adventurer: three watertight compartments, space capsule insulation, and an ironclad construction. But that still wasn’t enough for its architect. As we know, the man is not lacking in sea experience. He didn’t want such compartmentalised innards so as to feel

“ Neoclassical silhouette, but a very contemporary design. ”



▲ On deck, we appreciate the finish of the aluminium, the surface of which has been sandblasted to eliminate the need for a non-slip coating. Note also the preventer guy, which is very reassuring when gybing.

TEST BESTEVAER36S/Y

claustrophobic. The interior of the 36 is therefore entirely open, right down to the large Breton bed that closes off the cabin at the front. The impression of space is obviously striking for a boat of this size. Add to this two perfect watch seats under the helm station, one of which closes off a large oilskin locker and the other opens to give access to a large coffin berth, together with many storage spaces, in a search for simplicity honed over hundreds of thousands of miles, and you have the marine equivalent of a Mars Rover.

AN ECO-FRIENDLY ADVENTURER

Not to mention that Dijkstra has also grasped the spirit of the times. His pocket-sized adventurer is designed to be eco-friendly: nearly 65% of the hull is made from recycled aluminium (the aim is to reach 95% soon), and the cockpit benches, fittings and even the rudder are made from European wood. The galley worktop is a mixture of wood and recycled plastic, and 50% of the fabric used for the bench seats is recycled. The sails supplied by Elvström? Made from equally recycled polyester. No deck paint: a coarse grain sandblasting provides a highly effective non-slip surface. The engine is electric, although there is a generator - and a stove - on board, fuelled by diesel to ensure safety and autonomy, which are essential for such a programme. But the induction hob means you don't need gas, while the large solar panels and the hydro-generation provided by the propeller when under sail address most energy needs. Finally, the antifouling consists of a silicone film guaranteed for five to seven years.

Since we are in a far from perfect world, some concessions had to be made. A hydraulic jack is used to raise and lower the keel. It's hard to avoid this choice when you consider that the appendage descends to a depth of 2.40 m and contains two tonnes of lead. And an emergency hoist system is fitted as standard. Those who hold radical views will judge that the carbon footprint of the polar mini-yacht is still excessive. But this is only the first step. Obviously, all this comes at a price. It takes a year to build a Bestevaer 36. So the ideal boat costs more than twice as much as a mass-produced polyester yacht like the Oceanis 37.1... But its intelligent design, build quality, seaworthiness and "durability" don't make it a non-returnable investment, quite the opposite. What's more, with its smooth movements and light helm, the feeling of total freedom it gives you is unquantifiable. Suffice it to say that we could see ourselves heading straight for Mars in such a vehicle.

Text: Olivier Péretié.
Photos: François Van Malleghem.



The Bestevaer 36 S/Y IN FIGURES...
in 6 points

- 1. Headroom in the forward cabin: 1.80m. The Breton bed measures 2 x 1.75m at the head (1.50m at mid-length).
- 2. Height in the wardroom: 1.85m, bench seats (with lee cloths) are 1.90 x 0.50m, 0.70 cm in berth version.
- 3. Separated by the daggerboard well (2.50m long), the wardroom table is adaptable with two drop-leaves on each side. Its length is 1.60m (including a 0.53m drop-leaf), and the width of the drop-leaves is 0.43m.
- 4. The coffin berth (2 x 1.15m) is next to the hob and the galley worktop (0.72 x 0.50m).
- 5. The headroom in the helm station is 1.40m, or 2.05m if you stand on the lower step of the companionway. Seating height is 0.95m.
- 6. The very deep cockpit measures 1.87 x 1.20m. The locker opening is 1.04 x 0.55m.

HULL LENGTH 10.95m WIDTH 3.80m DRAFT 0.70 - 2.40m DISPLACEMENT 8,800kg (loaded) BALLAST 2,000kg
US UPWIND 70m² MAINSAIL 42m² (square-headed: 37m² standard) GENOIS 105% 28m² SELF-TACKING SOLENT 23m² CODE 55 50m²
MATERIAL aluminium MOTOR electric (29Kwh batteries) FUEL TANK (generator) 138L WATER TANKS 2 x 75L
ARCHITECT Gerard Dijkstra BUILDER KM Yachtbuilders EC CATEGORY A for 7 persons
BASE PRICE €650,000 INC TAX PRICE OF TESTED BOAT €1,044,000 INC TAX
Main options: Electric motor + generator, square-headed mainsail and boomed solent, forestay on a removable stay...



▲ This surprising loft-style layout offers a dream cocoon for a couple. The woodwork is remarkable, and the finish is, generally, beyond reproach.



▲ The comfortable Breton bed opening up to the wardroom can be isolated by means of a curtain.



▲ The seating can be adapted so as to use the aft berth while providing it with some volume.

Worth seeing ... again and again!



The cockpit is deep and well protected from the sea. The helm position on the gunwale is very high, providing a good view over the doghouse. Note the attention to detail, like the brushed finish of the winches, which are fitted to the aluminium coaming.



A simple way to secure the opening of the cockpit locker: a cable around the winch



the really low running backstay tackle can cause injury when not in position.



The electrical panel, installed halfway down the companionway, is exposed. It will be protected by a wooden washboard.



The doghouse houses a very pleasant watch post even if it's not in the direction of travel.



A large oilskin locker has been fitted under the tilting starboard seat in the helm station.



The Bestevaer is equipped with six mooring bitts-cleats: it's solid stuff!