

ODD BIRD WITH FINE FLIGHT : Haber 34C4 is a boat which does not resemble any other boat. But she sails beautifully with her gaff rig and four adjustable centreboards

In the end of the 1980:ies designer and boatyard owner Janusz Konkol sailed his barely six meter long centreboard cabin sailing boat on Polish lakes when he entered Zalew Wislany, the great Baltic lagoon between Poland and Russia. During the voyage between the Elblag and Nogat rivers, the wind quickly gained strength to a gale. When the sea began to rise due to hard downwind, the boat began to pendulate in a disquieting manner, becoming increasingly difficult to control. Konkol and his less experienced companion had a tough job to reduce the sail area in order to get a more pleasant and secure voyage. Only after several attempts they succeeded in lowering the jib.

This experience has influenced Janusz Konkol's entire boat design philosophy. When he few years later started production of boats of his own design at his boatyard Haber Yachts in Polish Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, stability was one of the key design features he was aiming at:

- It is not just about to have sufficient ballast to keep the boat in upright position, but also about course stability, Konkol says, who has put much development resources and own tests to bring forth what he himself describes as "the ultimate steering system".

The user's manual of 16 densely written A4-pages begin with principles on righting moment and lateral plane, before Konkol continues with an account on how the design works in comparison to a conventional sailing boat with keel. For a simple sailing journalist such as me, who are neither an educated engineer, nor an expert in hydrodynamics, the reading of the text is occasionally somewhat heavy. I do willingly admit that the text with its diagrams and technical drawings with forces being directed back and forth at different wind speeds, require some reflection. Maybe I have not understood nothing but the most elementary, but here is in any case an attempt to explain the concept in a simplified way ...

The hull shape of HABER 34C4 is almost more similar to a motor boat than a sailing boat, with just a trace of a keel. This makes for a draught of moderate 70 centimetres. Four, foldable centreboards - two small aft boards side-by-side, a large one just ahead of the mast and finally the smallest one in the very front, at the bow - will counter the drift and keep the course stable.

Similar to the centreboards, the external rudder is made foldable, in order to make the boat easy transportable and possible to sit dry on the sea bed in tidal areas. To have the centreboards fully adjustable up and downwards by the helmsman by lines and handles in the cockpit is also an important feature of the steering system, which form a large part of the instruction [i. e. the manual]. So far about what is hidden below the water line of the boat.

Above, on the deck, rigging and sails is quite another story. The mast is relatively short, only 9,7 meters, but since it is mounted on the superstructure it reaches a height of 11,4 metres above the water. But even with the gaff fully raised, the total height is not more than 14,3 metres, something which cannot be perceived as much for a 34 feet boat.

The fact that the boat has a cutter rig, with one forestay mounted on the stem and the other in front of the long bowsprit, do also contribute to the overall picture. Notwithstanding the low mast this makes possible to have a pretty large sail area. Due to its low placing this also makes for a small heeling effect, very practical when there is no regular keel on the boat. The ballast do instead consist of three tons of steel bullets laminated into the bottom of the hull. And the centreboards will thus serve the aim to counter the drift.

With rig, sails and lowered parts of the different centreboards - acting with the water through their surface area - being correctly adjusted in relation to wind speed and sea conditions, Haber 34C4 can be brought to sail on a completely stable course, without the helmsman or autopilot touching the rudder. Tendencies of windward helm, broaching and downwind pendulation or large rudder angles necessary to compensate for bad trimming - you can forget about such things on Haber 34C4. If you have trimmed her correct, she pushes unyieldingly onwards, and will only change course if the wind direction changes. At the same time, you will be seated well-protected in the saloon and still have full sight in all directions through the large windows.

Is there any snag with this? Yes, although the basic principles on how to trim and sail of course are also applicable to Haber 34C4, it still put a great deal upside down, demanding - at least in parts - a different and new way of thinking. Janusz Konkol has devoted decades to refine and learn the system outside and in, so for him it works perfectly well. After sailing a few hours in familiar waters outside Kullavik, I realize that I need more time to grasp the principle on how to adjust the centreboards with various configurations of the sails, at different wind speeds and angles.

- Just a few hours experience is not sufficient, confirms Janusz Konkol.

- A couple of days sailing, in various conditions, with someone who knows the way the system works, should however - in his opinion - suffice to learn the basics and make possible to improve your knowledge without assistance.

- Furthermore, we are developing a computerized system to provide guidance to and, in time, control the centreboards, Konkol reveals.

To reconnect to Janusz Konkol's voyage in the 1980:ies across Zalew Wislany, his ambition and vision with Haber 34C4 is that the boat shall be possible to sail with pleasure in lakes, canals and on the open sea as well; also in all conditions from sunny days to sudden and violent changes of weather with strong winds and rough seas. Because of this, the boat's shallow draught is completed with a function which makes possible for a person to fold the mast single-handedly and pack the whole rig together in just a few hours. This allows for smooth and easy passing under bridges or for inland transport. On the open sea it may also be securing to know that the low rig contributes to make the boat self-righting in the unlikely event that it should be put upside down:

- I have sailed back and forth in stormy winds and heavy seas close to Polish beaches in order to test how my designs perform when being exposed to breaking waves from the side, says Janusz Konkol.

Even those who are not so adventurously inclined, will certainly appreciate that Haber 34C4 is a high-quality design with great possibilities for individual adaptations and choice of equipment. Attention to detail and finish is first-rate when it comes to woodwork and interior furnishing as well as plastic and stainless steel items. Almost everything are, by the way, manufactured at the boatyard, even details in stainless steel and the powder-coated rig.

Finally, some words about the interior in which woodwork details are available in mahogany or cherry-wood. The spacious owner's cabin in the aft, with almost two metres standing height, is equipped with a wide double-berth, a wardrobe and a comfortable armchair. The smaller cabin in the forepeak is better suited to children or guests, with its tapering double-berth, being not as voluminous [as the aft cabin berth]. In the lower saloon is it also possible to arrange with additional berths, and likewise in the upper dining area in the deck saloon. On the port side there is a well-equipped longitudinal galley while the toilet with shower and a large wardrobe is located on the starboard side. All in all, there is everything needed for a comfortable sojourn for a family with many children, or maybe two adult couples. In the same time the boat can be single-handedly sailed - if only the sailor has learnt how to manage the sophisticated C4-system ...

Footnote: HABER 34.1 Cutter is available in a conventional version without the C4-system.

Facts HABER 34C4 [p. 54, lower left part]:

Length overall: 12,5 m
Length of the hull: 10,4 m
Beam: 3,65 m [sic!]
Draught: 0,7/2,2 m
Weight: 9000 kg
Ballast: 3000 kg (33%)
Mainsail: 34 sq. m
Jib: 19 sq. m
Genoa on the bowsprit: 31 sq. m
Height of the mast with gaff: 14,3 m
Height of the mast without gaff: 11.4 m
Fuel tank: 100 l
Water tank: 200 l
Engine: Yanmar 39 hp
CE-certified for category A, ocean-going, for 8 persons
Design: Janusz Konkol
Price: From 2677700 SEK when delivered in Poland
More info: www.haber-yachts.com or www.haber-yachts.se

Båtnytt like/do not like [hissar/dissar, p. 54, upper right side]

Like:

- Self-rightning
- Seaworthy
- Comfortable

Do not like:

- Complex steering system
 - The exterior look
 - Uncertainty of second-hand value
-

From the test protocol [p. 55, lower right side]:

Facts

Model: Haber 34C4

Helmsman's position: Comfortable inside, safe outside

Sailing characteristics: Different [from other sailing boats]

Stowing spaces: Many and suitable

Deck equipment: clever solutions

Price level: Rather expensive in comparison with boats from other Polish boat manufacturers

Standard equipment: Everything you can imagine

Attention to detail: Solid handicraft

Other: The steering system needs habituation

Standard equipment:

EQUIPMENT	STANDARD	ADDITIONAL
Antifouling	x	
Plotter		x
Stereo		x

Shower on the bathing platform		x
Water heating		x
Fenders and anchoring lines		x
Anchor	x	
Refrigerator	x	
LED-lighting (some lights)	x	
LED-lanterns		x
Flagpole with flag	x	
Bow thruster	x	
Windlass	x	
Wind indicator instruments		x
Windex		x

Captions

p. 55:

1. TWO STOREYS. Dining table and steering position with full sight in all directions above, and saloon, toilet and cabins in the lower storey.
2. SPACIOUS TOILET. White plastic and fine woodwork in the toilet, which also has a shower.
3. LONGITUDINAL. The galley is placed between the saloon and the owner's cabin, but in spite of being placed under the cockpit the standing height still passes [as being sufficient].
4. ENTHUSIAST. It is not a common scene with Janusz Konkol holding the tiller. Behind him is the support for the mast, when folded; also the handle with which to adjust the starboard aft centreboard.

p. 56:

4. BERTH & ARMCHAIR. Owner's cabin offer both a double-berth and a comfortable armchair.
5. KICKED. The stainless steel kicking device is also employed when the mast is folded during passages under bridges. This [i.e. folding the mast] in its turn can be managed by one person in a couple of hours.

High lighted quotation on p. 56: "If you have trimmed her correct, she pushes unyieldingly onwards"