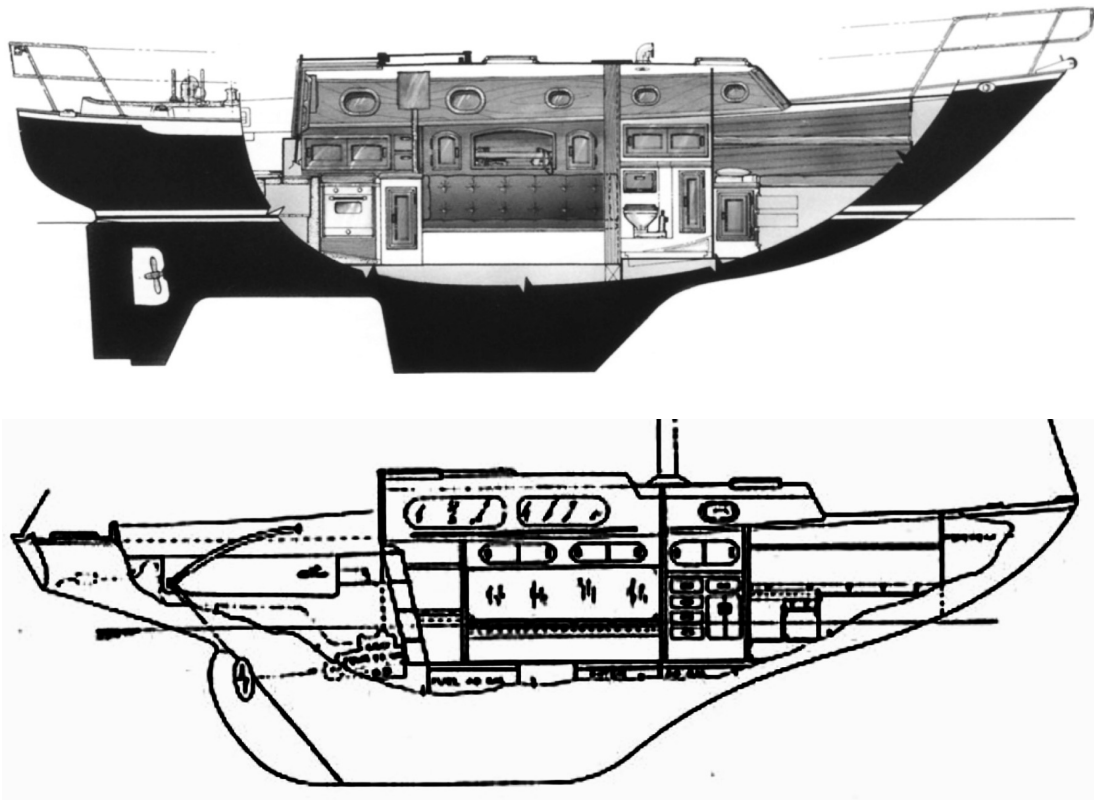


Pacific Seacraft 34 Underbody Design Compared to Spencer 35

“Full keel” sailboats like the Spencer 35 differ greatly from traditional full keel sailboats having a keel that runs the full length of the boat. Some sailors might even choose to call “full keel” sailboats like the Spencer 35 keel boats with keel-hung rudders.

Let’s compare the underbody shape of the Pacific Seacraft 34 to the Spencer 35:



Although most sailors would probably call the Pacific Seacraft a fin keel boat and the Spencer a full keel boat, comparing their underbody cross-sections we see roughly similar amounts of underbody surface area. Although the Pacific Seacraft’s elongated fin is shorter than the bottom of the Spencer’s keel, the total distance on the Pacific Seacraft from the beginning of the keel to the end of the skeg, which includes the bridge between the keel and the skeg, is much longer than the bottom of the Spencer’s keel.

So simply calling the Pacific Seacraft a fin keel design and the Spencer a full keel design is too simplistic. In reality, both designs lie somewhere in the middle of the continuum of sailboats having traditional full keels to high-aspect-ratio fin keels.

It’s not surprising, therefore, that the Pacific Seacraft design has some of the handling characteristics of full keel designs, such as good tracking and good capacity to heave to. The Pacific Seacraft 34 tracks so well that I have sailed her for hours across the Strait of Juan de Fuca in small craft advisory conditions with the helm locked, requiring only a couple tweaks of the helm or of the sail balance. Regarding heaving to, I have found that the Pacific Seacraft 34 heaves to on a mainsail alone, with no backed jib, and is completely stable in that configuration.