

# Island Packet 37 Used Boat Review

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I must admit that I admire the way in which Island Packet clearly defines its target market and makes no pretense of being all things to all potential boat buyers. When I look at any Island Packet model, I see a cruising boat. I'm not confused by a sleek profile, wedge shaped decks, wing keel or any other element that could be confused as intending some multi-purpose use.

The Island Packet 37, which was in production from 1995 through 1999, is clearly a cruising boat and followed the company's conservative and proven design formula right down to the signature

yellow-tinted beige hull color.

Designed by Bob Johnson, who is also Island Packet's president, the IP 37 is actually 38'5"; in length including the bowsprit and 36'5" on deck with a healthy 12'2" beam. Standard draft and shoal draft models were offered with drafts of 4'6" and 3'8" respectively. The specified displacement is 18,500 lbs with 8,200 lbs ballast, and there is no indication of any difference in ballast or displacement between the standard and shoal draft models.

The hull of the IP 37 is a solid fiberglass laminate (no core) and is reinforced with a fiberglass structural grid and plywood bulkheads that are all tabbed in place. Attachments are all well accomplished, and the quality of fit and finish is consistent with that of high quality production manufacturers. As with all Island Packet yachts, the decks are constructed of a fiberglass composite utilizing PolyCore, a proprietary resin microsphere mix, which is impervious to rot, very strong in compression, and less prone to delamination than some other core materials.

The deck and hull are securely joined at an inward flange with a belt and suspenders approach, utilizing adhesive sealant as well as nuts, bolts, and washers. The mechanical fasteners are accessible for service without destroying fiberglass liners and joiner work. Deck hardware is attached with stainless steel fasteners and aluminum backing plates for longevity and proper distribution of loads.

The solid construction of the IP 37 is backed up by a ten-year manufacturer's warranty which takes the usual hull and osmotic blisters protection a step further by including protection against delamination of the deck composite. Of particular interest to used boat buyers, is that the warranty is transferable to the second, third or even fourth owner.

The decks of the IP 37 are unobstructed and have a diamond-pattern, non-skid deck surface which is very secure. There are double lifelines along each side supported by securely fastened stainless steel stanchions, and there is a continuous hand rail along the entire length of the cabin top.

The eight-foot long cockpit has full-length seats on each side, a centerline helm seat aft of the steering pedestal, and a drop leaf table forward of the steering pedestal as standard equipment. There is a large starboard seat locker for storage and stern rail with stainless steel boarding ladder.

The interior accommodations are very livable featuring a forward V-berth cabin, aft quarter berth cabin, and amidships main saloon. A feature that I feel is essential to a cruising sailboat is a comfortable and workable galley, and the IP 37 has one of the best I have seen on a boat of this size. Another desirable feature on a cruising boat is secure and comfortable sea berths, and in this regard, the IP 37 falls a little short. This feature is less important for coastal cruising, and I suppose weather cloths can be fitted to the settees in the main saloon for offshore passages, but it would have been nice if Island Packet had included this feature.

Auxiliary power for all IP 37s is provided by a 38 hp, fresh-water-cooled, Yanmar diesel engine

mounted in an engine box below the companionway steps. Access for inspection, repairs and maintenance is quite good, and the engine has sufficient power for the 18,500 lb displacement.

In today's market, sailing performance is important to cruising sailors, but some compromises are necessary for the accommodations and draft limitations desired by many cruising sailors. The IP 37's full keel assures good tracking, reduces leeway for a given draft and allows easy hauling in remote areas that may not have modern haul-out facilities. On the other hand, it adds substantial wetted surface which increases frictional resistance, the primary robber of speed of any sailboat. Still, owners of IP 37s report good sailing performance in all but very light air conditions. Island Packet's literature specifies the IP 37's sail area displacement ratio as 18.3, although my own calculation, using the manufacturer's specified rig dimensions, indicates the SA/D to be 15.2. The area of the staysail is likely included in their calculations to arrive at the higher number. However, this is not the typical method of calculating SA/D, and 15.2 is the more legitimate figure for comparative purposes.

Company literature also claims a positive righting moment to more than 140 degrees, with the maximum righting moment somewhere between 75 and 80 degrees. This suggests a very stiff boat. My rough calculations indicate that to accomplish this the vertical center of gravity of the entire boat needs to be at or even slightly below the static waterline which is an impressive accomplishment on any boat with only 4'6" draft.

Island Packet's commitment to cruising designs and solid construction has earned them an excellent reputation and loyal following that keeps prices of used models high but also assures very good value for your dollar.

*Reviewed in the February 2002 issue of SpinSheet by Jack Hornor*

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