

# Island Packet 440

*Light-wind performance aside, the IP 440 is built to go places.*

By [Darrell Nicholson](#) - April 16, 2025



*Island Packet has earned a reputation for crafting stout, seaworthy passagemakers that will grace any anchorage. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com*

For nearly 30 years under the direction of designer and CEO Bob Johnson, Island Packet accomplished what few modern boatbuilders have been able to do—produce more than 2,000 boats targeted at liveaboard and passagemaking sailors who plan to spend months, if not years, on their boats. The Island Packet 440, introduced in 2005, is a good example of how Island Packet accommodates the peculiarities of dyed-in-the-wool cruisers without sacrificing safety or

sensibility, or straying from Johnson's original concept. In 2017, Island Packet came under new ownership and the company shifted away from production-level numbers and has since introduced the new 349 and 439 models.



*The proud stewards of this Island Packet 440 focused on a nice cockpit canvas package. This quintessential profile shot also shows off the best of Island Packet: transom steps to access the dinghy, or emerge from an immersion; a robust easy-to-handle rig; a club-footed staysail to help weather the storm; an expansive coach roof that foretells a sumptuous interior. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com*

If you don't share Island Packet devotees' view that a full-keeled, moderate displacement cutter is the most sensible boat for long-term cruising, or you're an around-the-buoys racer who can't live without a lively helm in light air, then settling for an Island Packet will be as easy as switching religions. Sure, over the years, Johnson has tweaked his boats' underwater shapes (streamlining the keels and rudders to generate more lift, widening the sterns, and sharpening the entries) and the furling staysails set on a self-tacking Hoyt boom (hardly passé),

but at its very heart, the 440 is your father's Oldsmobile—a station wagon at that. It is consistent, reliable, and built for long hauls.

## Design

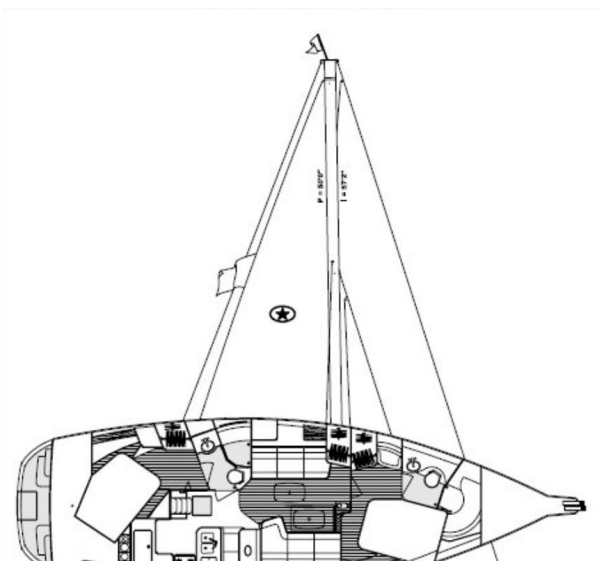
In profile, the IP 440 is a bit of a mixed breed. It has the traits of a traditional cruising boat: raised cabintop, high freeboard, a light spring in the sheerline and a short bowsprit that is equipped to handle two working anchors. The stern, however, features a modern reverse transom with an expansive swim platform and stairs. This makes it easier to transfer jerry jugs from a dinghy, adds to waterline length and helps diminish the slab-sided look that usually accompanies high freeboard.

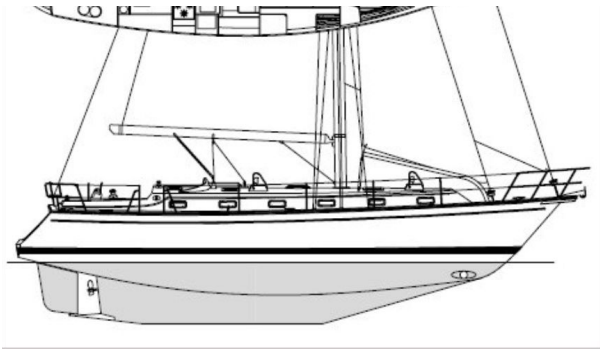
Below the waterline, the cross-section harkens back to traditional full-keeled cruisers, but the keel is foil-shaped for better lift. The rudder, too, has been given a finer trailing edge.

In plan view, the beam widens fairly quickly at the bow, reaching its maximum—14 feet, 4 inches—midships. The aluminum, double-spreader rig from Charleston Spars features continuous rigging (no intermediates to tune aloft) and twin backstays. The mast is keel-stepped. The outboard chainplates are a rugged design that Island Packet modified around 1996 to remedy a potentially serious problem: Water leaks at the deck and collected in fiberglass pockets where parts of the chainplates were concealed, which could promote hidden corrosion.

The IP 440 comes standard with a roller-furling main. The jib is cut higher and leads farther aft than on previous IPs, permitting slightly tighter sheeting angles, but it still chastises those inclined to pinch.

### Island Packet 440





Her full keel and easy-to-manage sail plan will protect you when the going gets tough. Queen-sized berths fore and aft are wedged ingeniously into the 440's fore and aft staterooms, making life aboard for a cruising couple and guests comfortable indeed. It's easy to fashion sea berths with lee cloths out of those longitudinal settees in the saloon. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com

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Sailboat Specifications	Courtesy of Sailboatdata.com
Hull Type:	Long keel w/rudder on skeg
Rigging Type:	Cutter
LOA:	45.75 ft / 13.94 m
LWL:	38.08 ft / 11.61 m
S.A. (reported):	1,131.00 ft² / 105.07 m²
Beam:	14.33 ft / 4.37 m
Displacement:	32,000.00 lb / 14,515 kg
Ballast:	12,000.00 lb / 5,443 kg
Max Draft:	5.00 ft / 1.52 m
Construction:	FG

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## Deck

Johnson's pragmatic design philosophy carries forward to the deck details. In the cockpit, a huge sail locker sits under the starboard settee, allowing access to the shore power system, the steering, and the optional autopilot. Another big locker is accessed under the opposite settee.



*Principal sail controls including mid-boom sheeting lead aft to the cockpit. She's also fitted with mast pulpits, helping secure crew working forward. Note the side shrouds affixed to the exterior of the hull. Buyers should survey those terminals with care. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com*

All running rigging is led aft to the cockpit. Tending the mainsail or staysail sheets—led to winches at the companionway—requires leaving the helm, not a huge strike for a pure cruiser. There are four well-placed padeyes for the helmsman and crew to clip into. We like the nice, fat, 2-inch-diameter twin cockpit drains. Two cockpit line-storage bins eliminate clutter. The boarding platform has molded seats, and a hot and cold shower.

The divided anchor locker, accessible through a Lewmar deck hatch, drains to the bilge with a shutoff valve.

## Accommodations

Four people can cruise comfortably for extended periods on this boat, and with 260 gallons of water and 400 cubic feet of storage space, you can probably carry six for short periods without a mutiny.



*Plenty of light, lots of handholds, and an astute interior plan mark the belowdecks spaces of the Island Packet 440. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com*

The galley is U-shaped to starboard with a clear view of the saloon and plenty of room for storage, dedicated shelves, and cabinet space to keep mealtime essentials close at hand. The 12-volt fridge/freezer, a Frigoboat keel-cooler design, keeps food cold, but there's only one lid to access both, allowing precious cold air to escape unnecessarily. The deep double sink, a slide-out trash bin, and two hatches over the

galley are nice touches.





*The mark of a superb galley: Double sinks, tall fiddles, massive top-opening refrigerators, a well-guarded gimbal oven. Yes, it's possible to prepare Christmas dinner for the whole anchorage. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com*

The aft stateroom to port has an island berth running diagonally (awkward for sleeping at sea, but the saloon settees will do fine for this) and a separate door to the port head which is also accessible from the main cabin.

The saloon is well lit, and has excellent ventilation through three dorades, eight hatches, and 12 opening ports. The starboard settee pulls out to make a double berth.



*Note the drop-down table stowed on the bulkhead. In this age of the chartplotter, you still need that big old-fashioned nav table for paper charts if the electronics decide to hiccup. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com*

The forward cabin is well aft of the bow, making room for an island berth. The L-shaped forward head allows for a separate shower, but puts the vanity sink outboard, requiring you to shut the seacock when the boat is on a starboard tack.



*The off-center Queen-sized V-berth forward is easy to get in and out of. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com*

## Systems

The diesel is a reliable 75 Hp 4JH3TBE turbo-charged Yanmar, with good accessibility. The alternator is a 110 Balmar with a digital controller. All batteries are AGM; the house bank is 400 Ah. A galvanic isolator and Charles Industries 60-amp, 3-stage charger are standard. Pre-tinned copper wiring is well labeled and cleanly routed. Our boat had the optional MAS 8 kW generator and a heavy-duty electric windlass from Lighthouse Marine, also optional.

Mast and all underwater metals are electrically bonded, although the boat does not have a lightning protection system. Tankage is low in the hull below the cabin sole, adding to

stability and proper trim. Island Packet recently began building its water and holding tanks out of fiberglass. The fuel tank is high-grade 5052-H32 aluminum.

## Performance

We sailed the boat on St. Petersburg Bay in St. Petersburg, Fla., with a half load of fuel and water. Winds were about 5 to 10 knots when we started, increasing to barely 10 knots by afternoon—lousy conditions for a full-bodied cruiser. There was a very light chop. Handling under power was good, given the handicaps of a full keel. It turned in about 1.5 boat lengths, and obeyed steering in reverse soon after starting from a dead stop. Our boat's optional bow thruster took the challenge out of docking.

At 2500 RPM, we cruised at 6.3 knots and recorded 85 decibels in the galley, 81 in the main salon, and 79 in the cockpit (Normal conversation is about 60 decibels). The aft cabin produced a rather noisy 90 decibels. At 3000 RPM we cruised at 7.1 knots and at 3500, 7.4 knots.

In the light stuff, the rack-and-pinion Lewmar Cobra steering felt a bit stiff, and we managed only about 4 knots in 7 knots apparent wind on a beam reach. The boat tacked through about 105 degrees, and though we could probably sail higher with more wind, the boat clearly at its best full-and-by. It lost steam broad reaching, when the staysail is best furled or used as a steering sail to balance the helm.

When the wind picked up to about 10 knots, we managed to hold about 4.2 knots on a beam reach. The boat tracked true for five minutes without tending the helm, one of the great advantages of a full keel. We'd definitely opt for a cruising chute and consider a folding propeller.

## Conclusions

As much as "performance" cruisers denigrate full-keel boats, they make sense for cruising: They maximize stability with minimum draft, they track well, and they're forgiving in the event of a grounding.

In terms of construction, systems and accommodations, the Island Packet 440 sets a very high standard. Where it misses its mark, it misses by inches, not feet. The IP 440 has the essentials to cross an ocean, and we'd not hesitate to take it on a tradewind

circumnavigation. Though a conventional mainsail likely would hurt resale, we prefer it for extended cruising. Island-hoppers and coastal cruisers, will, in all probability, be happy with in-mast furling, but we still like the simplicity and better performance of a well-cut cruising main.

Light wind isn't the IP 440s strong suit, but on a long tradewind passage, it should hold its own with many fin-keel designs of similar length and displacement, and it will almost surely deliver a less strenuous ride.

Used models range from \$360,000 to \$425,000 at time of publication. For that much, we'd expect more options (genset, bow thruster, an electric anchor windlass—for a start), but given Island Packet's cult-like following, the IP 440 should hold its value well.

MARKET SCAN



A canvas package perfect for extending the Northwest cruising season. Courtesy of Yachtworld.com

10 ▾	entries per page	Search: <input type="text"/>
Market Scan	▲ ▾	Contact
2007 Island Packet 440		Signature Yachts Inc.
\$424,000 USD		2062031679
Seattle, Washington		Yacht World
2005 Island Packet 440		Integrity Yacht Sales
\$425,350 USD (tax included)		+44 (0)1590 679222

Market Scan	Contact
<a href="#">Irish Town, Gibraltar</a>	<a href="#">Yacht World</a>
<a href="#">2006 Island Packet 440</a>	<a href="#">S &amp; J Yachts</a>
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**Contact** – Island Packet Yachts, [www.ipy.com](http://www.ipy.com).

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*This article was published on 16 April 2006 and has been updated.*