

Swan 65: the sought-after sailor's yacht

The remaining Swan 65s are legendary Whitbread round-the-world race yachts that are still cherished, sailed and raced all over the world.

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August 21, 2014

Nautor's of Finland describes its own Swan range of yachts as "the sailor's choice". Most of the 41 Swan 65s that were built during the 1970s are today still sailing and they're a timeless design still much sought after as the vessel that three times made its mark in the Whitbread Round the World (now Volvo Ocean) Race.



The Swan 65 Desperado during Aberdeen Asset Management Cowes Week. Photo Cowes Week Limited/Rick Tomlinson.

The 65 series was designed by Sparkman and Stephens and built between 1972 and 1979. Forty-one hulls were produced. The 65 may not have been the first Swan sailing yacht built, but it did help cement the builder's nearly cultish following when a ketch-rigged Swan 65 named *Sayula II* won the first-ever Whitbread Round the World Race in 1974. Another Swan 65, *King's Legend* took second place in the 1978 running of the Whitbread Round the World Race, finishing behind an aluminium boat named *Flyer*. That same year, the race's first female captain finished fifth in a Swan 65 named *ADC Accutrac*. Quite a pedigree!

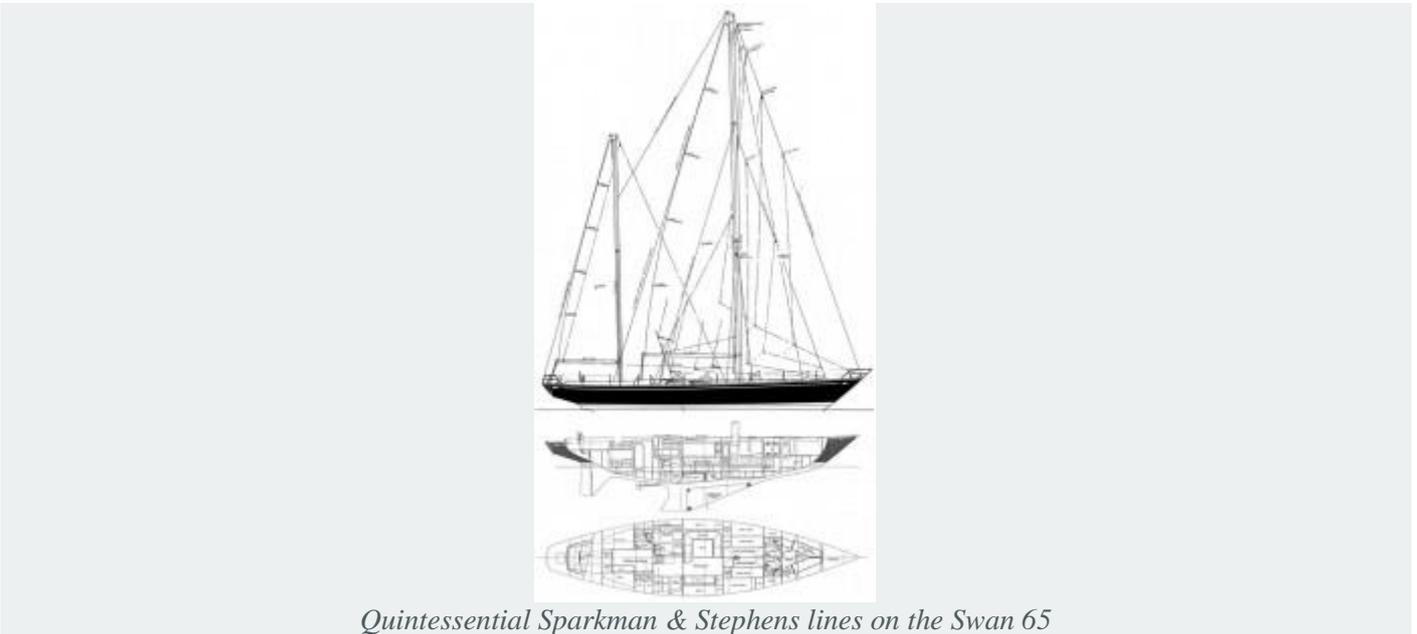
The Swan 65 was followed up by the Swan 651, which was designed by German Frers. It differed significantly in its interior and just 19 hulls were produced between 1982 and 1991.

CONSTRUCTION AND RIGGING

The hull is a solid fibreglass laminate with a lead, aft-swept fin keel and full skeg-hung rudder. The overall shape is pointy on both ends – much like the classic International Ocean Racing shapes of the 1970s, which had a long overhang. The nearly flush deck is a fibreglass sandwich construction and like most Swans, it came covered in acres of teak planking. Over four decades, many of these boats have had their teak decks replaced at least twice.

The original 65s came rigged as either a ketch, or a masthead sloop, and both rigs carried around 170 square metres (1,800 sq ft) of sail area on their keel-stepped, anodized aluminum spars. Primary winches were Barent or Lewmar, and several winches were mounted on deck near the main mast for working halyards.

ACCOMMODATION



Quintessential Sparkman & Stephens lines on the Swan 65

There was a certain sensibility to the interiors of the classic sailing yachts of the 1970s, and the Swan 65 followed that mould. To be fair, though, it was much more elaborately outfitted and beautifully finished than anything you'd see on a race boat today. The teak interiors were hand rubbed satin varnish and the sole was made of teak and holly.

The Swan 65's layout includes a forepeak with two bunks for crew and stowage for sails, extra lines, and equipment. Next heading aft are two side-by-side, but separate, heads that each serve an identical cabin, one on either side of the mast with over/under bunks. Additional sleeping accommodations are situated at the other end of the boat, where another head was situated to serve aft staterooms. Like the forward heads, it is a head/shower combo – there are no separate shower compartments here.

The main saloon is rather posh if you think of race crew traipsing through it in wet foulies. To port is a U-shaped settee with a varnished table, and to starboard is a straight settee that serves as an additional bunk.

Unlike vessels today, which espouse the “great room” concept, the galley on the Swan 65 is completely enclosed with its own door. It's a well-designed, sea-going galley with an outboard gimbaled stove, twin sinks on the centreline, a top-loading refrigerator, and plenty of counter-top space laid out in a U-shape. This

keeps the cook snug and supported in the roughest seas. A full, forward-facing navigation station is situated to starboard across from the galley.

PROPULSION AND MECHANICALS

The Swan 65 came with either an 89-horsepower Volvo or 115-horsepower Perkins diesels that could push the boat to eight or nine knots. Many have since been re-powered with new engines that have a smaller footprint but more horsepower. With 1,000 litres of fuel (which is quite a bit by today's standards) the range under power was well over 1,500 miles. Tanks for both diesel and water (757 litres) were multiple (at least five in each case) and constructed of stainless-steel. Many of the rewired boats today will have a 24V system.

Today, Nautor Swan offers models from 42 to 105 feet and therefore technically reaches into the world of superyachts. They have built over 2,000 hulls overall. Swans have changed exterior shape and interior appeal over the years and with the addition of an Italian design team, the boats continue to be sleek and fast but as always luxurious and comfortable. It's not hard to find a Swan on a racecourse or in a remote anchorage on a leisurely world circumnavigation.

SWAN 65 SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 19.84m

Beam: 4.97m

Draught: 2.92m

Displacement: 31.75 tonnes

Sail Area: 172sq m

Fuel Tankage: 1,000 litres

Water Tankage: 757 litres

www.nautorswan.com