

American Tug 34

Fast cruiser with loads of accommodations

by Jeff Holland



The American Tug 34 has a range of about 566 miles at its 12-knot cruising speed.

Tom Nelson, Mike Schoppert and Kurt Dilworth worked together for several years at Nordic Tugs, then left two years ago to form Tomco Marine Group in LaConner, Washington. Tom was president of Nordic Tugs, Mike supervised the lamination department and later served as the general manager, and Kurt was Nordic's head engineer and also developed their warranty and customer service program. Now working together on their own, they've turned a Lynn Senour, a design based on Alaskan offshore seine netters, into a fast cruising trawler that will tug at your heartstrings.

The American Tug's semi-displacement hull is as stable as it is maneuverable. Standard power is a single 330 HP Cummins diesel, but when powered by the optional 370 HP Cummins, it gets up on a plane at about 11 knots and runs at a cruising speed of 12-13 knots at 2400 RPM, but can hit a top speed of 18 knots at 3000 RPM.

I recently got a chance to try out hull #10 with new owners, Lou and Anita Simmons, who took delivery of their new blue-hulled boat on the Chesapeake before heading down the ditch to their home on the West Coast of Florida. They were accompanied by their "Banker." Not their boatloan banker, but their yellow lab with that name.

What they like about it is the "liveability" that's packed into this 34-foot boat. They actually moved down from a 42-foot trawler. "When we bought that 42-footer, we thought we would use the bow cabin in that boat for guests," Lou recalls, "but all of our friends have their own boats, so we just used it as a big storage bin." So now they've got this 34-footer with a single cabin up in the bow and that's plenty of room for extended cruising or even living aboard.

The other thing they like is the single engine, which along with the standard 6 HP bow thruster, provides all the perfor-

mance and maneuverability they need, without all the expense and maintenance of twin engines. "When he'd be down there working on the engines," Anita recalls, "and when he was through with one, he'd come up for a break and I'd think, 'If we only had one engine, he'd be done by now...'" Besides having one less engine to maintain, there's also no brightwork anywhere on the hull to sand and varnish.

There's a sturdy swim platform, supported by four hefty struts, and a big door leading into a spacious aft deck. A gasketed hatch provides access to a large lazarette, with the rudder head and auto pilot gear right there, easy to reach. A ladder leads up to the cabin top, where there's plenty of room to stow a sizable dinghy or to take in the sun.

A gasketed door leads from the aft deck into the saloon. The teak-trimmed room is thoughtfully laid out, with faux-leather upholstery on the L-shaped settee around a teak-and-holly inlaid table. "Banker" found his spot curled up underneath the table. The settee pulls out to form a double berth in case you need to make guests comfortable, but not so comfortable they'd stay too long. There's room in one cabinet in the aft port corner to install an optional washer/dryer unit. A hatch in the saloon sole provides access to a large storage compartment, as well as the stainless fuel tanks and water tank.

The galley is nicely done, taking up the whole starboard side of the saloon, providing plenty of work space on a molded fiberglass countertop that you'd take for Corian. The double sinks straddle the aft corner.

As an example of the Tomco crew's ability to accommodate some custom modifications, the owners opted to forgo an oven, going instead for a three-burner flush-top electric range. "I just used the oven to store pots and pans anyway,"

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Specifications:

Length over all:	34'5"
Length water line:	32'9"
Beam:	13'3"
Draft:	3'5"
Displacement:	18,000 lbs.
fuel capacity:	400 gallons
water capacity:	150 gallons
standard power:	single Cummins 330 HP diesel
optional power:	single Cummins 370 HP diesel
Base price	\$309,000 w/330 HP (\$4,000 extra for 370 HP)

Tomco Marine Group, Inc.

PO Box 600, LaConner, WA 98257
360-466-9277
www.americantugs.com



The saloon is quite roomy, and the settee converts to a double if you really need to accommodate guests.

Anita explains. She went instead for a Sharp Carousel convection/microwave over that's installed above the 12-volt fridge and freezer. In the space that the oven would occupy, there are two big, deep drawers for all the stuff that she would have stowed in the oven.

The passageway up to the raised pilot-house runs underneath the faux smokestack that gives the boat its tug-like profile, but it's hollow inside, providing a nice amount of

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headroom going up the steps. There's a sky-light-like hatch at the top and an access port to the wiring for the radar unit.

The pilothouse has two wide seats on either side, set up high, with foot rests and drawer storage underneath. The helm station is to starboard, with a big dash to accommodate any amount of electronics, and an expansive chart table. Gasketed doors on either side provide access to the side decks. The three big square windows of the forward-raked windscreen each have their own windshield wipers. The side windows open for ventilation, as do the two smaller windows facing aft.

There's pretty good visibility all around from the helm, though the view forward is somewhat limited by the high bows and the top of the forward cabin. You get down to the engine room through hatches on either side of the pilothouse sole, providing access to both sides of the big Cummins below. Again, this area is thoughtfully laid out, with room for the gen set, water heater, and other mechanics. Through-hull fittings and filters are readily accessible for emergencies as

well as routine maintenance.

Heading down to the forward cabin, you'll find a very yachty affair, with a full size island berth on the centerline with big drawers and bulk storage underneath the foam mattress. There are cedar-lined hanging lockers in each aft corner, a hatch overhead and two salty round ports on either side. The head is spacious, with a sink molded into the vanity counter, a Vacu-flush toilet to one side, and a large, enclosed shower stall to the other. Headroom throughout is more than adequate.

Leaving the dock on the Magothy River, we headed out of the creek, and once past the six-knot zone, we opened up and found that the silent wet exhaust system and the sound insulation kept the noise to a minimum, even with both doors open.

The 18,000-pound semi-displacement hull has hard chines almost all the way up to the bow. The full skeg made for sure tracking on a straight course, which is what you'd expect, but the surprise came in the tight turns we were able to make, even at cruising speed, with little noticeable banking. We circled a couple of times to



The pilothouse has its helm to starboard, with an expansive chart table and loads of room for electronics on the dash.

stir up some wake, then turned into the troughs, where we sat steady with very little roll. If I'd been drinking tea from a cup and set it on the chart table, it would not have runneth over. So the hard chines, combined with the wide 13' 3" beam, make for a very stable platform. ■

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