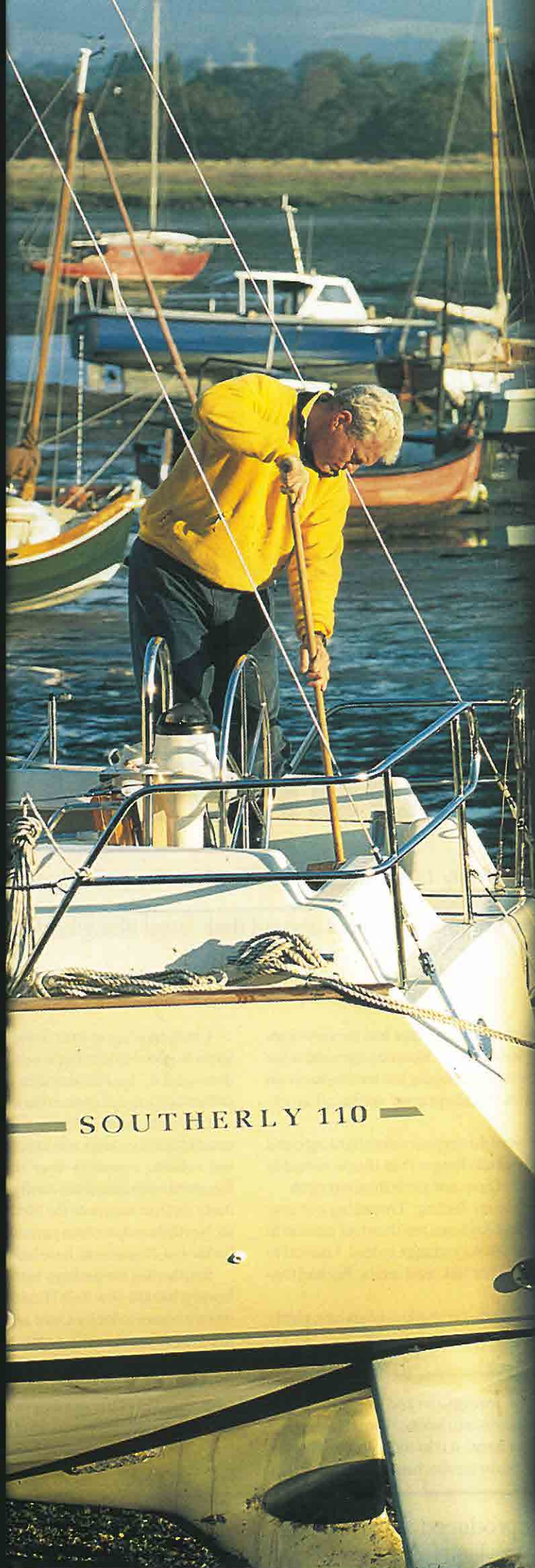


On test

SOUTHERLY 110

Yachting World





A great little mover under sail – the twin rudders come into their own upwind when the Southerly 110 feels as if she sails on rails



Groundwork

Northshore's new Southerly 110 enables you to explore the parts that other boats cannot reach.

Matthew Sheahan dries out aboard their latest lifting keel family cruiser

On any other day, touching the bottom would have had the crew leaping to their feet and running for the leeward rail. Running aground is the price you sometimes pay on the race course for trying too hard to sneak an advantage over your competitors. Once it has happened, getting off quickly is all that matters.

But this day it wasn't. Today we were driving ourselves hard aground with every intention of staying significantly longer than the permitted licensing hours at the Anchor pub in Dell Quay, just yards from our stern.

I'd be lying if I said it wasn't a bizarre feeling. Threading our way through an armada of small cruisers and dayboats less than half our size in the confines of a shallow muddy creek felt very strange indeed. I started to wonder whether, if our anchor dragged a few feet, we'd need a 'Pay and Display' ticket.

Once you're used to this, it's easy to see that lifting keel boats have plenty to offer. But, as we found out, they can have their limitations.

Creek crawling

As those who've been there will know, spring tides and forecasts of gale force winds do not provide the best conditions to head out over Hayling Bar off Chichester Harbour. On the other hand, it is in these conditions that you might find yourself racking your brains for alternative family activities.

Creek crawling in your cruiser is not something an owner of a fixed keel yacht would consider, but if you're aboard a boat that dries out upright and draws just 0.71m (2ft 4in) with the keel up, all you need are a few pairs of wellies and you can explore the bits the others can't reach.

Of course, there's nothing new in lifting keel boats, but often the complicated internal systems and structures required – along with the loss of internal volume, concerns over stability and the additional cost – have frequently hampered the configuration's acceptance in all but the notoriously shallow waters of the Netherlands and the Chesapeake, USA. Even so, Northshore have been particularly successful with their Southerly range for the last 25 years and have built well over 600 lifting keel boats.

Southerlies are perhaps better known for their practicality than their beauty, but the new Rob Humphreys-designed 110 is a big step forward when it comes to looks. Gone are the harsh, top-heavy, angular topsides of her predecessors and in comes a sleek-looking, slippery hull with a well proportioned, homogeneous superstructure, complete with the ubiquitous modern-style tinted windows. She is, in essence, a snug little cruiser with looks you'd be proud of wherever you took her.

When it comes to practicality on deck she scores well once again. She has bulwarks, high guardwires and decent, comfortable coamings that surround a deep and secure aft cockpit. Control lines are led back to the

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Landing on mud does make the stroll to the pub more tricky and makes a mess on deck

You may think you have the measure of this 36-footer. I'd put money on you being wrong . . .

cockpit where they are all within easy reach and the helming position offers good visibility whether you choose to sit or stand.

In fact, the only thing I wasn't so keen on here was the position of the mainsheet which was too far forward along both the boom and the deck for my liking – but then that's an old chestnut.

There were a few other niggles. In the cockpit the wheel could do with being just a few inches further forward and on the foredeck the bow roller needs a decent lead and a pin to stop the warp jumping out.

An anchor windlass would have been very handy, too, (this is available as an option) and for my money I'd like an anchor locker with a seawater hose. When you get as muddy as we did, you just want to dump the chain and warp in the self draining locker and flush the entire lot out. Without it the deck gets filthy.

And by the same token, a deck shower on the transom would have made life cleaner in the cockpit, too.

Below decks

Despite their well-deserved reputation for high-quality semi-custom builds, when it came to the 110, Northshore were unashamed of their intention to produce a production boat. The minute you step below, the 110 has that modern modular feel. From her internal floor pan, into which the major structural components and bulkheads are slotted, to the pelmet covers for the hull side portlight curtains, she's clearly been designed for efficient construction. Northshore admit that she can be built in around half the time it takes to produce a 115.

Some may turn up their noses at such a wholesale change to time-honoured techniques. Small details, like the Velcro-attached seat backs and considerable use of moulded headliners, do put her in a different class from some of her stablemates, like the upmarket Vancouvers, but she's a well put together yacht with some clever and worthwhile ideas.

She makes good use of the volume under the raised deck where the view



Left: the saloon table slides up to provide access to stowage. Above: good visibility from the nav station, but instrument space is limited. Right: reasonable access to the engine





Plenty of space, light and visibility, especially for a 36-footer. Above: the aft cabin has been well laid out, too, with decent headroom

from both galley (to port) and navigation station (to starboard) is far superior to that aboard a typical 36-footer. There are a few problems, especially in the nav station where lack of instrument space is being addressed on future models, but overall the layout will appeal to those who appreciate plenty of light and a feeling of space. The saloon is further forward and lower in the boat, yet still doesn't feel buried, thanks to the several hull portlights.

Particularly impressive is the minimal space that the lifting keel system takes up. In fact, you'd be hard pressed to know it was there at all.

Another impressive feature is the amount of room in the after cabin, given that this is an after cockpit boat and only 36ft LOA at that. By contrast, the forward cabin is a touch on the snug side, but apart from a few niggles, which Northshore plan to change on subsequent models, including lengthening the berths, it is perfectly adequate.

Under way

By this stage you may think you have the measure of this 36ft cruiser and already know enough to take an accurate guess at her sedate performance. I'd put money on you being wrong.

With her keel down she draws 2.17m, that's a full 7ft 2in in old money

and close to what you'd expect from a modern racer. Sure, her keel profile may be rather longer in the chord than a typical racing keel and with no bulb on the bottom either, but she's got what it takes to embarrass most 36ft production family cruisers.

Upwind in 17 knots true she points like a demon, easily holding 45° true and clocking six knots through the water. Crack her off just a few degrees and she leaps to the mid-sixes, peaking at 6.7 knots at 60° – I've sailed boats that struggle to sail this close, let alone match those speeds.

She tracks well and her twin rudders provide a solid and direct feel with heaps of directional stability. She's easy to spin round, has a manageable sail plan and, although the boat I sailed had a 120 per cent overlapping jib as opposed to the standard 135 per cent headsail, I'd still be surprised if she was anything less than a doddle.

You do have to get used to a few unusual quirks, however. To achieve good stability with the keel fully up, she has virtually all her ballast in the hull rather than the keel – much like a bilge keeler. The result is that she feels a little tender for the first few degrees of heel when compared with fixed-keel boats, yet once she's settled to 15-20° (the norm), she's as stiff as a board.

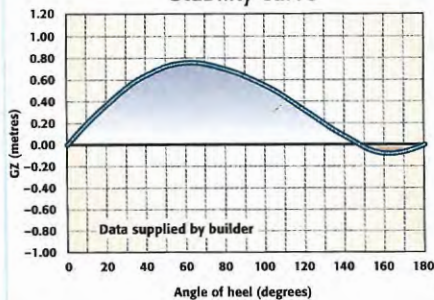
Dead downwind you can experience a similar sensation if you push >

COMPARABLE BOATS	SOUTHERLY 110		FEELING 356DI		DUFOUR 36 INTEGRAL		ATLANTIC 36	
LOA	10.98m	36ft 0in	10.50m	34ft 5in	11.07m	36ft 4in	11.0m	36ft 1in
LWL	9.22m	30ft 3in	8.90m	29ft 2in	9.17m	30ft 1in	9.96m	32ft 8in
Beam (max)	3.61m	11ft 10in	3.61m	11ft 8in	3.76m	12ft 4in	3.66m	12ft 0in
Draught	2.18m	7ft 2in	2.10m	7ft 0in	2.31m	7ft 7in	2.34m	7ft 8in
Disp (lightship)	6,250kg	13,779lb	4,700kg	10,362lb	6,396kg	14,100lb	7,345kg	16,192lb
Ballast	3,255kg	6,765lb	1,850kg	4,708lb	1,905kg	4,200lb	3,393kg	7,480lb
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	45.92m ²	494ft ²	43m ²	463ft ²	54.96m ²	591ft ²	57.32m ²	617ft ²
Berths	4		6		7		4	
Engine	Yanmar GM30		Volvo		Volvo		Mitsubishi M4.14	
Power	20kW	27hp	21kW	28hp	21kW	28hp	23kW	31hp
Water	205lt	45gal	200lt	44gal	341lt	75gal	500lt	110gal
Fuel	182lt	40gal	90lt	20gal	159lt	35gal	150lt	33gal
Sail area: disp	13.8		15.6		16.2		15.4	
Disp: LWL	222		186		231		207	
Price (ex VAT)	£99,500		£77,000		£76,579		£126,492	

ONTEST

SOUTHERLY 110

Stability curve



DATA

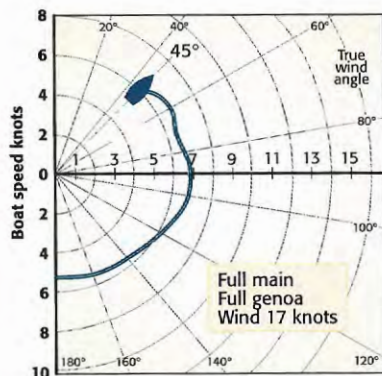
Designed by: Rob Humphreys
Built by: Northshore Yachts,
 Itchenor, Chichester, West
 Sussex PO20 7AY. Tel: +44
 (0)1243 512611. Fax: +44
 (0)1243 511473.

Sail area: displacement ratio: This ratio gives some indication of power available. Higher numbers = greater performance.

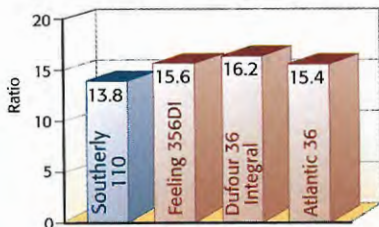
$$\frac{SA(ft^2)}{(\text{Displacement (lb)} \div 64)^{0.66}}$$

Disp:waterline length: Performance indicator. Low numbers = higher performance.

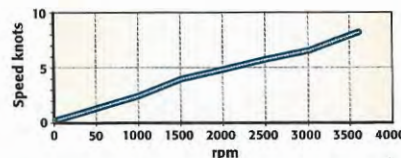
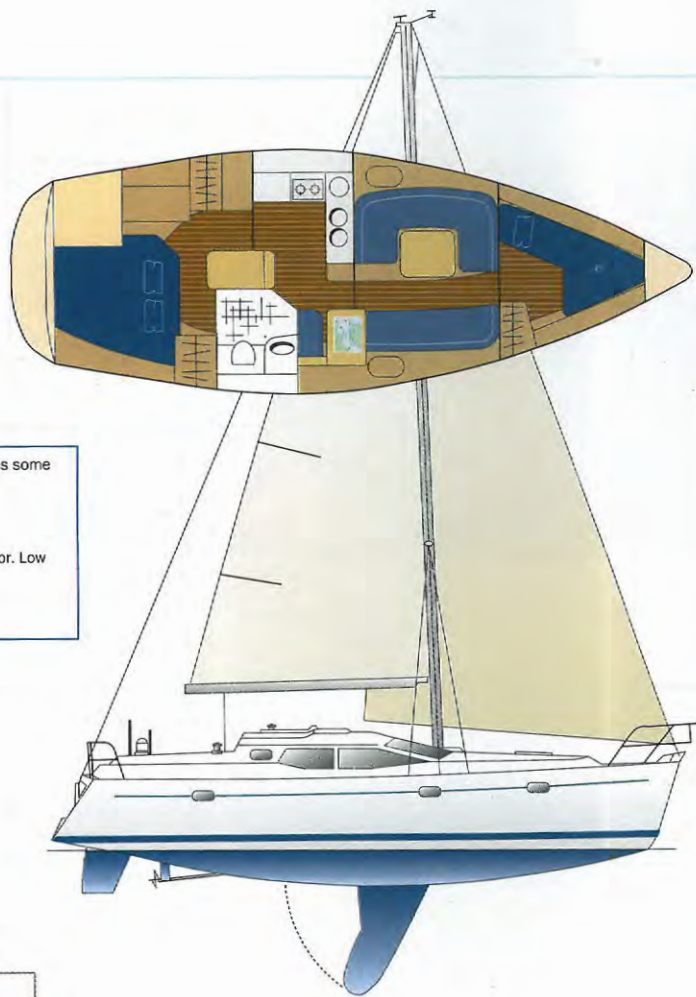
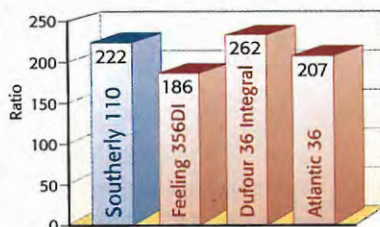
$$\frac{(\text{Displacement (lb)} \div 2240)}{\div (0.01 \times \text{LWL (ft)})^2}$$



Sail area/displacement



LWL/displacement



her hard with full sail set as again she feels quicker to roll than a conventional fixed-keel boat. As for performance downwind, 5.4 to 5.8 knots was typical with the wind anywhere between dead astern and on the quarter, good numbers for a confirmed family cruiser of this size under white sails only.

I wasn't so happy with her performance under power. A 27hp Yanmar is fitted as standard, but it is a touch on the noisy side, especially over five knots. This I could live with, but her handling caused me problems.

All previous Southerly models have had single rudders mounted on the centre-line and sitting directly in the propwash. The downside has been

She's got what it takes to embarrass most 36ft production family cruisers

that, in order to achieve a minimal draught, the rudder has to be shallower than normal with a loss of performance that Southerlies have been frequently criticised for in the past.

Twin rudders are a sensible alternative which works beautifully under sail, but not under engine when there's little, if any, propwash to help you squirt the yacht around in tight spaces. In fact, there were times when, with a strong cross wind and tide, I found her pretty tricky to put where I wanted.

And that was with the keel fully down. With it up the situation is worse and you certainly need to allow more space to manoeuvre than normal.

The 110 isn't alone in her idiosyncratic handling under engine. Most yachts with twin rudders suffer from the same problems. I can only hope that practice makes perfect and you'd get used to her handling eventually.

In the short term, a solution might be to fit a small bow thruster, a move which might seem excessive for a boat of this size, but it would get over the problem without ruining her long list of good points. □

CONCLUSION

With Sterling so strong, the heat is on for British manufacturers to compete internationally against good basic boats with frighteningly low prices. Simply fighting like for like is difficult enough, but to try to push forward and invest in innovative ideas takes nerve, commitment and confidence.

Here Northshore score with a proud track record and a well-built cruiser, proving that there's always room for improvement without pushing the price tag through the roof. The 110 is a great little mover under sail, she has bags of space below decks, but might require a bit more practice under engine before you put her into some of the tighter spots.