



Photos Rick Buettnet



The Vancouver range of heavy displacement

cruising yachts has been so successful that it is still being made today. **Duncan Kent** sailed a more recent model...

# Vancouver 34

**T**he Vancouver range of long keeled, heavy displacement cruising yachts comprises 27, 28, 32, 34, 36 and 38-footers. The 28, 34 and 38 are still made, with the 34 and 38 also being available in pilothouse form.

Initially introduced by Pheon Yachts in 1979 as the Vancouver 32, the 34 Classic is the same boat but stretched in 1991 to increase the waterline and cockpit length, and to enable wheel steering to be fitted. The interior changed little, except on the pilothouse version, which was brought in three years later. From 1983 onwards 120 of the Classics have been built, by Sussex-based Northshore Yachts, and they are still a very popular part of Northshore's modern fleet.

As with the others in the range, the 34 is a worthy offshore cruiser, built to take ocean passages with ease and comfort. Her hull and deck are heavily moulded by hand, using the latest waterproof resins, with plenty of reinforcement around the long, encapsulated keel and other areas of increased stress. Topsides and deck are end-grain balsa sandwich for lightness and the hull-deck join through-bolted and bonded over. Her cutter rig is sturdy and over-specified for extra security and the deck layout is straightforward and safe to negotiate.

Like all Vancouvers, the 34 has a long keel that is extended to provide a lower rudder support, but is cut away forward to improve her manoeuvrability. The rudder support means ropes are kept clear of the prop, which operates in



# Classic

a large cavity for maximum effect. The rudder also has a small amount of counter-balance to keep the helm light and positive. The Vancouver 34 Pilot shares the hull of the 34 Classic, but has an internal steering/navigation position and 360° panoramic views from the raised seating area.

The galley is moved forward and becomes linear and a midship double cabin is added to starboard.

Our test boat *Picaro* is owned by Derek Cooke (62), a company director, and his wife Cristina (57). They hail from Windsor and sail out of Hamble. They are longtime fans of Vancouvers, favouring them for their durability, performance and comfort. Since buying her they have sailed along the Channel and to France and enjoy all the cruising extras they ordered when commissioning her.

## Specifications

LOA	10.44m	34ft 3in
LWL	8.38m	27ft 6in
Beam	3.20m	10ft 6in
Draught	1.44m	4ft 9in
Displacement	6,350kg	14,000lb
Ballast	2,722kg	6,000lb
Sail area (main, yankee, staysail)	54.80m <sup>2</sup>	590ft <sup>2</sup>
Sail area (op. genoa)	40.41m <sup>2</sup>	435ft <sup>2</sup>
Fuel	180lt	40gal
Water	227lt	50gal
Berths	5/6	
Engine (original)	3-cyl Yanmar 27hp	

**Designer** Robert Harris **Builders** 1979-1983 Pheon Yachts, 1983-Northshore Yachts ☎ 01243 512611 [www.northshore.co.uk](http://www.northshore.co.uk) **Price guide** Classic – used £80,000 – £126,152 (new) inc VAT & comm. Pilotouse – used £95,000 – £148,697 (new) inc VAT & comm





Photos Rick Duettner

# What's she like below

**T**he Classic (non-pilothouse) Vancouver range has a raised superstructure and sole for the first couple of metres, which gives a comfortable 1.88m (6ft 2in) of headroom in the busiest part of the yacht. It has been built to withstand the harshest of sea conditions, using top quality equipment and craftsmanship to create a durable, but attractive woody interior. The layout is fairly 'standard' for a conservatively beamed cruising yacht designed in the 1970s, in that she has a quarter berth instead of a double aft cabin.

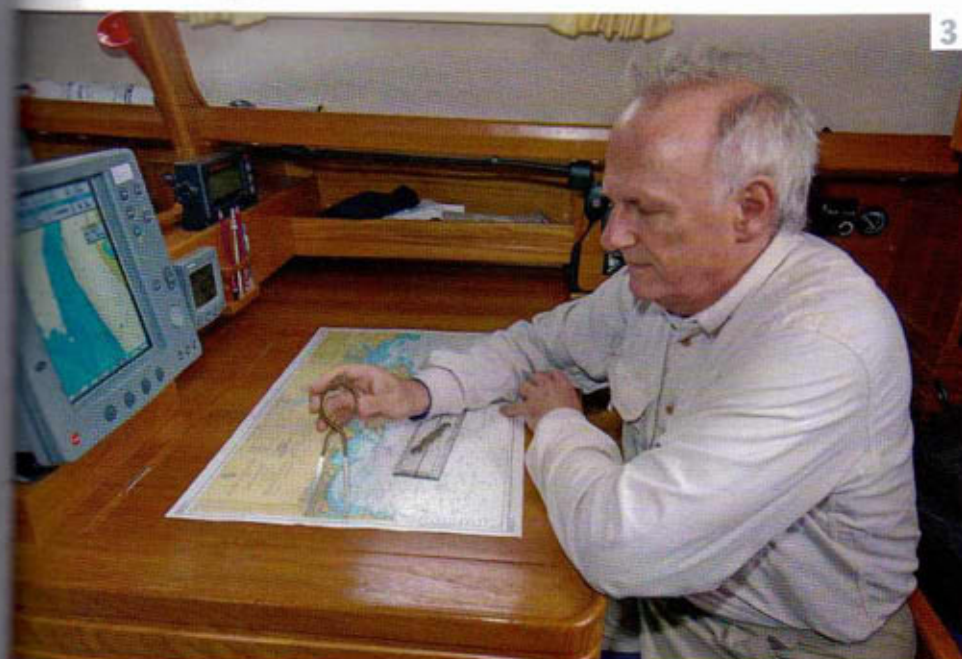
The galley is L-shaped and a reasonable size for a crew of 4-6, although the engine box does restrict the cook's movement a little. It has a full-size oven with crash bar and strap, deep sinks and there is a top-loading cool box under the quarter berth.

Work surface is minimal, but is improved for preparation by a cooker cover and sink top chopping boards. There's plenty of lockorage all around for food and crockery and a cutlery drawer and pan locker beneath the work surface. Usually there is a well positioned wet locker just alongside the galley, set back under the cockpit, but in *Picaro* a generator box has been created in the forward section of the port locker, which necessitates blocking off the wet locker completely.

Opposite is a huge forward-facing chart table, 1.18m W x 0.72m deep (3ft 10in x 2ft 4in). It has its own seat, bags of instrument room, a useful shelf and two bins below. The backrest is a small partition, which can be removed to maximise the length of the quarter berth behind – extending it to a full 2.28m L x 0.68m W (7ft 6in x 2ft 3in).

Two upright wooden pillars from the half bulkheads by the galley and nav areas provide excellent support when going forward under way, and all around the saloon is a handhold-cum-narrow shelf for keeping you steady. This is likely to be filled with bits and pieces, though – as it was by a boat hook on *Picaro* – so grabbing it in a panic might prove tricky.

The saloon has one straight settee, measuring 1.96m L x 0.68m W (6ft 5in x 2ft 3in), and a U-shaped settee to starboard, which becomes a 1.96m L x 1.0m W (6ft 5in x 3ft 3in) double berth by dropping the saloon table. The seating is comfortable and, despite the relatively narrow beam, quite spacious. Although there is plenty of teak around the place, a white deckhead keeps it bright by reflecting the natural light through the



## The owners

Derek Cooke and his wife bought *Picaro* after sailing their older Vancouver 32 for four years. They love Vancouvers for their durability, performance and comfort and ordered her with many bluewater cruising extras such as air conditioning, generator, electric windlass, fridge etc, so that they could cruise in comfort wherever they liked, at any time.

The Cookes are great fans of Northshore, having had a Fisher 25 prior to the Vancouvers, and although Derek says, "Mrs Cooke is not totally committed to sailing," he also says, "She thoroughly enjoys the on board life."

Since *Picaro's* launch in 2004 the Cookes have cruised throughout the Channel and N France and plan to set off to warmer climes shortly.



1. The woody interior is warm and welcoming
2. A generator has replaced the usual wet locker, so the bulkhead now supports the boltcutters
3. The chart table is very large and you'll find generous space for instruments and stowage
4. The L-shaped galley contains plenty of hardware, but is a little short on worktop space
5. The saloon area is cosily partitioned off to make a snug retreat for relaxing at the end of the day
6. The heads compartment comprises a host of useful amenities and is a good size
7. The engine can be accessed quite easily when the companionway steps are removed
8. The forecabin can be kept as two singles or made into a decent double with an infill

# decks?

portlights – all of which can be opened for ventilation. Stowage is good, with plenty of room under the settees, behind the seat backs and in lockers and shelves above. There is also an attractive, large bottle/glass locker to port with small shelves above. Fresh water is kept in a flexible tank over the keel, which keeps the weight in the right place, and the fuel tank is behind the engine. The floor throughout is teak/holly striped Plydeck.

Forward of the saloon a corridor offset to port takes you past a large clothes locker, with a shelf above, into the forecabin. This is the main suite on the boat and has wood panelling for insulation and its own hanging locker inside the door. There are usually two lockers for clothes – one with a small desk/vanity unit – but in *Picaro* the locker to starboard has been used to house an air

conditioning unit for sailing in the Med. Headroom is still 1.88m (6ft 2in) under the large hatch and there is just enough room for dressing even with the infill for the double vee-berth in place. Kept as singles, the berths are different lengths – 2.35m (7ft 8in) L to port and 1.92m (6ft 3in) L to starboard. Both are 0.60m (2ft) wide. As a double the width increases to 2.1m (6ft 10in) and is wide enough at the forward end to avoid footsie fights in the night. Beneath the berth is some additional stowage and a holding tank for the heads. In addition to the large deck hatch above, there are two smaller opening side ports for ventilation.

The heads, just before the forecabin on the starboard side, is a good size for a 34-footer and is a fully independent moulding right up to basin level. The loo faces forward and has a shower seat

and the holding tank diverter valve is easy to access with clear directions and a tank level gauge alongside. This will become very important when anchoring in beautiful secluded coves in the Med. There is stowage under and above the sink, although I would prefer doors on the lockers above, rather than just fiddles, and the seacocks are easy to reach below the basin. Hot and cold pressurised water is standard and the floor is electrically drained beneath the teak grate. A cowl vent and opening port keep it well ventilated.

Overall the interior of the V34 is well thought out for long-term cruising and with the yard offering to customise a large part of it to suit your own needs, could make your perfect bluewater cruising accommodation – providing you don't hanker for giant aft cabins.



1



2



5



8

Photos: Rick Buehner

# How does she perform

**T**he teak cockpit is not overly wide, but is large enough to take a wheel and pedestal without it interfering with the crew, and a cut-away allows the helmsman access past the wheel. A hump in the helm seat offers lateral support when heeled and the compass binnacle has an instrument pod and grab rail above. A folding teak cockpit table attached to the pedestal allows four crew to eat out. There are three sizeable cockpit lockers – one full depth, the other two shallower but still spacious – and cave lockers for small items.

In *Picaro* a Whispergen 3.5kW generator has been installed into a box in the deep locker, without really affecting the stowage area. Two gas lockers (one for the spare) are installed each side of the wheel, draining overboard.

The decks are traditional and businesslike, but access is a little cumbersome thanks to mid-deck chainplates and headsail tracks. The handholds are excellent, as is the Treadmaster, and the raised, teak-capped bulwark with integral scuppers works well and looks great. The chain locker is below, fed via a chain pipe and a bollard for the ground tackle is standard, although there is plenty of room for a windlass. Despite twin bow rollers, the 35lb CQR anchor sits in chocks on the pulpit, keeping it well clear of the furling gear. Deck gear is top quality and sized generously.

A cutter rig is standard, on a deck-stepped, single straight spreader Seldén mast. With twin lowers, the aft pair is set well back to eliminate the need for running backstays, but the inner forestay is a permanent fixture, so care must be

taken when tacking a large headsail. On *Picaro* the staysail is hanked on and sheeted along the coachroof at a tight angle, however, many choose the furling and self-tacking options to save hanking, hoisting and sheeting.

The mainsheet track runs along the substantial bridgedeck – ideal in engineering terms, but not always the most popular with cruising families, or single-handers. Neither is the position of the primaries, being set well forward, but then this boat is not really built for short-tacking up rivers and on long passages the autopilot or steering gear will likely be helming while the watch will be sat behind the sprayhood, right by the sheets. Reefing lines terminate at the mast with the standard slab-reef main, but single-line reefing and

**SAILING**  
TODAY

**Verdict**

The Vancouver 34 is built for blue water cruising and ocean crossing, but her modern deck layout and sail controls mean she can just as easily be used for less ambitious coastal and weekend sailing. She'll give you a safe, but exhilarating ride whatever your preferred type of sailing. Her well-made interior guarantees a luxurious night at anchor and also that she holds her value and remains in great demand on the used boat market

**FOR**

Traditional go-anywhere looks  
Well built with quality fittings  
Quick with no vices under sail

**AGAINST**

Limited sleeping accommodation  
Sheets inaccessible from the helm



1. The reefing lines terminate at the mast
2. She is a safe boat to work on under way with plenty of hand holds and good non-slip
3. The anchor stows in steel chocks on the pulpit to keep it clear of the furler
4. A well sized cockpit with a decent bridge deck to keep water out from below
5. Plenty of stowage under the 'humped' helm seat
6. More stowage for cruising items in the side cockpit lockers
7. There are two gas lockers – one for a spare
8. The 3.5kW generator is a perfect fit
9. The Treadmaster on the coachroof gives excellent grip
10. Room for us all in the cockpit at the end of a soggy day!

# at sea?

in-mast furling are options. *Picaro* has a fully battened mainsail with lazyjacks.

We left Hamble in a SW F4, motoring quietly and confidently out of the tight marina berth. The standard 27hp Yanmar engine might seem small considering her weight, but there was plenty of power and response manoeuvring out of the berth and she turned almost as tightly as a short fin keeler. In flat water she cruised at around 5kn at 2,800rpm, reaching 6kn at full revs.

Setting full sail on leaving the river we were soon driving along nicely at 6kn+ in 18kn apparent wind. As with all long keelers she tracks well and her classic wineglass section gives her a comfortable motion through the waves. The helm is light but positive and once her sails are trimmed to suit the conditions she is balanced sufficiently to leave

the helm. Hard on the wind we slowed to 5.5kn, but pointed happily up to 38° and tacked through 90° losing very little momentum. As the wind increased to 24kn over the deck she started to bury her leeward rail, but maintained a good 6.5kn pace close reaching. A prolonged gust of 26kn had the water over the deck, but she simply slowed a tad, shrugged it off and got on with the job of staying on course.

With the wind on her beam she really got into her stride at a steady 7.2kn, slowing little for the bigger waves. Heaving-to is something these boats do really well – we sat dead still with the wind comfortably 70° off our bow. On a steady broad reach home with the boom right out, the log was nudging between 6.8-7.2kn all the way.



## Insurance Price Guide

### Vancouver 36

Value £85,000

£508.88 Premium • £250 Excess

Comprehensive insurance includes:  
£3,000,000 Third Party Indemnity  
and Legal Protection with all taxes paid.  
Cruising range: UK coastal and inland waters extended to include Continental waters Brest to Elbe.

Premium is a representative example of what it would cost assuming a no claims bonus has not been earned, that the mooring is acceptable to the underwriters and that the boat has a satisfactory survey and valuation carried out by a qualified marine surveyor.

For a personal quotation, call 0800 0180012

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