

# Yachting World



AUGUST 2016

## Back across the Atlantic

Crews' own stories of return voyage to Europe

### RACING

Short-handed spinnaker hoists

The unstoppable rise of the 100ft racer

Giles Scott on big fleet tactics

### ON TEST

Contest 42CS – a pedigree bluewater cruiser

### CRUISING

Tropical storms and the El Niño effect

Rio bound – cruising Olympic waters

An adventure in Morocco

## Aboard Alex Thomson's radical new Hugo Boss

AUGUST 2016 £4.90

CS\$12.95 US\$10.99 A\$11.50  
NZ\$16.00 Holland €8.50 Spain €7.50





# ON TEST: CONTEST 42CS

OUR MINI-CRUISE ABOARD THIS IMPRESSIVE FAMILY CRUISER  
DEMONSTRATED THE QUALITY OF DUTCH CRAFTSMANSHIP

**C**ontest introduced a 42-footer to its range almost 40 years ago and it was considered a relative giant for a production yacht at the time. Today the 42CS is the smallest of the Dutch company's range – exactly half the length of its newly announced flagship, the 84CS.

But here is a model that cleverly represents everything this third-generation, family-run yard stands for – a manageable-sized bluewater cruiser that has the options and attention to detail mastered from building larger vessels, and as such is an ideal introduction to the quality produced by time-honoured knowledge and skill.

A particularly good-looking craft, modish yet elegant, the 42CS has that clever knack

of feeling like a larger boat than she is.

During a visit to Contest's Medemblik yard I had the opportunity to take an example for a mini cruise – a return trip out to the Frisian islands directly west of the IJsselmeer.

It was the ideal way to appreciate how this model is blessed with the pedigree of over half a century of builds. Contest is one of the largest and oldest family-run yards in the world, and conducts the whole build process on site – a yard with a rich past and a promising future.

## Hitchhiking out to sea

The good thing about being confined to tight channels with a large tidal range is that, if you time things right, you can get







## FACTS

Test Editor **TOBY HODGES**

- ▶ **Where we tested:** Netherlands, from Harlingen to Vlieland and back through the IJsselmeer lock and down to Medemblik.
- ▶ **Wind:** from 0-12 knots.
- ▶ **Model:** 42CS with short-handed cockpit set-up and three cabins.



Photos by **RICHARD LANGDON/OCEAN IMAGES**





**Above:** a deep, protected and snug cockpit. This is the short-handed version with no traveller.  
**Left:** a comfortable perch for the helmsman close to all sheets and running rigging.  
**Right:** wraparound coachroof windows



**Above:** a light, spacious and practically located galley.  
**Left:** locking back through to the yard at Medemblik



a slingshot ride on your way – like turtles riding the Gulf Stream.

In such a manner we found ourselves enjoying a 2.5-knot tidal hitchhike as we spun out of Harlingen, the old fishing port north of the vast lock that controls the IJsselmeer's marine traffic. On a rather still, light breeze afternoon, that sort of tide can do wonders for your apparent wind.

Our destination and overnight berth was the island of Vlieland, 20 miles off the giant dyke closing off the IJsselmeer. Our test boat, *Tessa*, had already completed a season in the UK and was bound for the Baltic this summer. She is royally equipped – her owner has gone for a short-handed cockpit set-up, with single-point mainsheet, rigged so that all the sheets and running rigging can be managed from the helm. The powered coachroof-mounted winch has a remote switch by the helm, as does the jib furler. So within a couple of minutes and with minimal physical effort, the sails were raised.





## “THE QUALITY OF THE CONTEST’S BUILD AND FITTINGS GIVES HER A LARGER BOAT FEEL AND A LITTLE BIG BOAT MENTALITY”

It became obvious pretty quickly why the 42CS won the European Yacht of the Year award in 2014. She is a delight to sail. Tessa’s twin carbon wheels, linked with Jefa wire, produce a tactile, direct and communicative feel at the helm. In the calm conditions we could feel every knot’s increase in wind. Her stiff construction belies her modest 11 tonne displacement (40 per cent in the keel), and her tall mast indicates performance potential.

The afternoon Force 3 was from a direction just offwind enough that we could negotiate the barge-laden channel on port tack. When close-hauled we made between 6.2 and 6.4 knots at just over 30° to the apparent wind. This rose to 7 knots once the breeze hit double figures – which, with our friendly tide, equated to 9.5 to 9.9 SOG (speed over the ground).

Tessa is not only well-equipped with optional top of the range extras such as a carbon Seldén mast, furling boom, generator and electric winches, but the standard spec

of most items, including running rigging, Andersen winches and Spinlock clutches, seems particularly high.

Although 42ft might seem comparatively small for a cruising yacht today, the top quality of the Contest’s build and fittings gives her a larger boat feel and a ‘little big boat’ mentality. It helps to explain why Tessa’s British owner downsized from his previous Oyster 49, after looking for something smaller. He didn’t want anything over 45ft for ease of handling, but still wanted top comfort down below.

### Intoxicating experience

We conducted a photoshoot off Vlieland’s western shoreline for a couple of hours, where deep water continues right up to the beach. Sailing upwind at 7 knots towards miles of dry sand, before tacking or gybing away when just a couple of boatlengths off was rather a novel and intoxicating experience, but one I wouldn’t have

**Above:** nestled into Vlieland marina for the night. Tessa was royally equipped with top of the range extras such as carbon Seldén mast and furling boom

attempted without having confidence in the yacht’s handling.

With the breeze up into double figures, I started to feel a little weatherhelm on the 42CS, at which point she is not quite as easy to keep in a groove. That attribute was instead reserved for flat-water sailing. We were treated to a magic sail that evening as we short-tacked up the channel leading to the narrow entrance to Vlieland marina. The water was milky smooth, with the 5-7 knots of wind unable even to form ripples over the tide. The 42CS continued to sail admirably well, averaging a knot less than the breeze.

It was at this time that the 42CS truly showed her colours. The fact that we could keep sailing and really enjoy helming in the sort of conditions in which many medium-weight cruisers would have to motor is a testament to the Contest’s stiff build. And it speaks volumes of a hull shape that is equally adept at sailing in the rough stuff.

We would wait for the 2m contour line to





- ① A large, practical foredeck is gained by using flush hatches and a low profile at the forward end of the superstructure.
- ② A hydraulic vang and powered mainsheet winch make up for the lack of a traveller on the 'short-handed' version.
- ③ The cockpit quarter lockers have relatively small hatches, but are deep enough to house fenders and a small inflatable tender.
- ④ Sitting-out panels on each quarter offer the perfect position from which to steer, within easy reach of the primaries each side.

show before spinning her through a tack. The electric winches allow you to touch-trim the sails from the helm and the 108 per cent genoa provided a nice balance of power and size, making her easy to handle.

Only once we were directly outside the marina entrance did we furl the sails and glide into the sanctuary.

### Holland has a hill

For anyone seeking a cruising destination within easy reach of Amsterdam or the IJsselmeer, Vlieland is a beautiful island with white sand beaches, a charming town and – rather unusually for the Netherlands – a forest-lined hill. The marina is very well equipped, the nearby town charming. I have sailed many times around the Dutch coastline, but this is the most picturesque haven I've yet come across.

The only downside to our mini cruise was that our return journey to Contest's Medemblik yard the next day involved motoring under breathless skies. It did mean, however, that we had ample time to run through the details on deck and below.

This Contest has a very elegant, modern look, set off by a coachroof line with

wraparound tinted windows that offer privacy and sunlight protection. The cockpit design is superb: deep, protected and very comfortable.

Contest's sales manager, Marcel Offereins, explains that Contest built a plywood mock-up of the cockpit in the yard six months before finalising this design, so that it could be trialled and perfected by the build team. And it shows. There's an ideal curve for your back in the forward coamings, with benches long enough to seat eight or where the offwatch can nap comfortably.

The cockpit layout options come down to three different types to suit three different preferences: short-handed, performance cruising and cruiser-racing. I liked the short-handed version of the cockpit layout on *Tessa*, which has the mainsheet leading from the boom-end directly down to a block and winch set on a pod abaft the table.

This is in reach from either helm yet still allows for walkthrough cockpit access – something the 'performance' layout with a cockpit bench-mounted traveller would obviously restrict.

In summary, there really is little to find fault with on the deck design of the 42CS.

# A FAMILY AFFAIR

## THE CONIJSN FAMILY HAS KEPT A TIGHT REIN ON QUALITY FOR 57 YEARS

**T**hree generations of Conijns have built this company up over half a century. Contest Yachts started life under Ed Conijn in 1959 when he began building the popular Flying Dutchman two-man trapeze dinghy. His son Fritz took the reigns in 1970 and Fritz's son Arjen has led the company since 2003.

Ed Conijn's other son sadly died in a boating accident on a lake, hence his and the yard's deep-rooted desire to make safe boats. Conijn was a keen sailor who ran a timber yard. Having seen a glassfibre boat in the US in 1958, he was convinced this was the way to build quality yachts.

With the launch of the four-berth Contest 25 in 1959, he led the way in early glassfibre production. The yard exported over 600 boats of 25ft-37ft to the US in its first decade.

The yard has remained at the forefront of technology and is used to building big boats – the first Contest 48 launched in 1976. "During these years my father changed from pure production to semi-custom," says Arjen Conijn.

In Arjen's time, the yachts have continued to grow – indeed, during our visit, Contest was just announcing its largest model to date, the 84CS (see page 66). The yard continues to be privately owned by the Conijns.

What is the secret to their success? "We are relatively conservative," Arjen admits. "We have the knowledge and we keep control of development. Keeping control of quality is essential. Just being smart, but not too smart!"

### Quality construction

I would always recommend a yard visit to anyone considering buying a yacht. In the case of Contest, it's a sure way to lure a potential owner. Its vast waterfront yard at Medemblik has continued to expand since 1970.

Contest was one of the first yards to adopt vacuum infusion in the late 1990s. It's a technique that remains central to the company's build philosophy, offering weight, stiffness and environmental benefits. "The nice thing is that you can work really precisely like this and you can check it easily," says Arjen.

Contest vacuum-bags its hulls for 24 hours to rid them of 99.99 per cent of air, then infuses the whole in one-shot in around two hours, to ensure any resin not required is removed. Conijn says the result is close to 70 per cent glassfibre and 30 per cent resin. "This shows how stiff your product will be, because resin is just weight, not strength."

He showed us an example of two sections of glassfibre hull taken from 1991 and 2001. The latter was less than half the width and weighed nearly half (2.4kg instead of 4.5kg) thanks to the significant reduction in resin content.

Viewing this process, together with the longitudinal stringers used in the hull and bonded bulkheads, generates real confidence in Contest's construction. As does its carpentry workshop, where beautiful woodwork and veneers are all made in-house. Contest also has the luxury of space. The full teak decks are set out, ready to be vacuum-glued in one section to avoid the need for screws.





**Main picture:** the latest generation of Contest owners, Arjen Conijn

**“WE ARE RELATIVELY CONSERVATIVE. KEEPING CONTROL OF QUALITY IS ESSENTIAL. JUST BEING SMART, BUT NOT TOO SMART”**



**Above:** Ed, Fritz and Anne Conijn aboard



**Above:** life on board in the early days



**Above:** restored 1971-built Contest 25



**Above:** Contest 31, a popular model



**Above:** Contest 29, launched in 1964

### **Milestone Contests**

**31 (1971)** – was exported to the US and all over Europe.

**48CS (1996)** – Contest's first semi-custom cruiser.

**62CS** – “The boat that brought us to the bigger level,” declares Arjen Conijn.



**Above:** the company's recently announced flagship, the Contest 84CS





### Bright, modern interior

Five comparatively steep steps bring you into a modern, bright interior. On descent, you perhaps might expect to find a raised saloon format. Instead the single-level low sole restricts any views out of the coachroof windows unless the boat is heeled. The natural light they introduce, combined with the extra headroom this creates, however, makes it seem particularly spacious.

The décor is light and smart, if a little clinical. After all the carpentry skills we had seen on show in the yard, the abundant use of light oak veneer is a little underwhelming.

Contest provides a semi-custom approach, offering a broad range of layout options by segregating the two or three cabin interior into forward, mid and aft sections. There are various berth/workroom options fore and aft and in the mid section a choice between portside or L-shaped galley, navstation or shower separate to the heads.

The three-cabin test boat had the latter option. Instead of a navstation, the saloon table had a chart drawer, with Apple TV installed for beaming electronic charts direct to a pop-up flatscreen TV. A Mastervolt digital switching system made for a smooth, touchpad operation of the electronics.



### Galley

The L-shaped galley is well-laid out and at a sociable height relative to the saloon. It has a fiddled Corian worktop and reasonable stowage, however a strap would be required for working at the stove on starboard tack. A longitudinal galley to port is the alternative option.

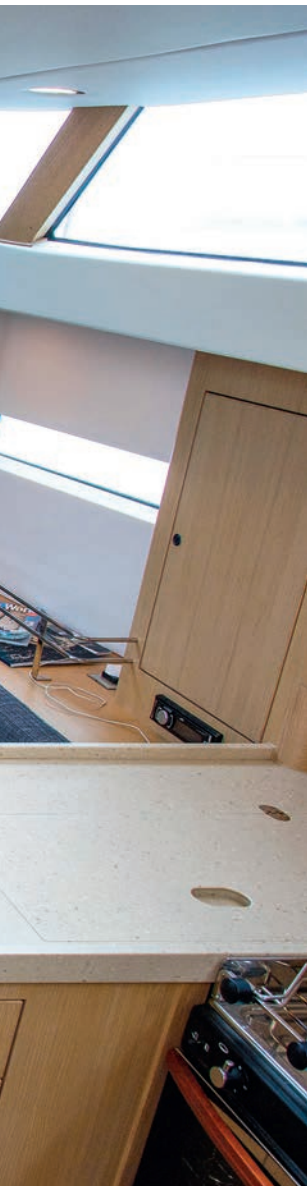


### Forward cabin

The forward cabin feels rather dark in comparison with the rest of the boat, which is the one main drawback I could find with the 42CS's interior. Hull portlights for owner's cabins are de rigueur these days, but this has just a small hatch over the foot of the double berth.

However this cabin does have 6ft 2in headroom, plenty of beam for the berth itself and reasonable stowage space.





## Saloon

A large, comfortable format with plenty of natural light and headroom, the saloon has a portside berth that springs open for easy access to some of its generous stowage. The table has a section that lifts for chart stowage and can flip over to double its surface area for dining with guests.



## Aft cabins

The aft cabins have the common drawback of narrow entrances. It's a fairly standard double berth and locker format, with generous headroom. Details such as soft-closing door mechanisms and ventilated wardrobes would give it that added premium touch.

## DATA CONTEST 42CS

### SPECIFICATIONS

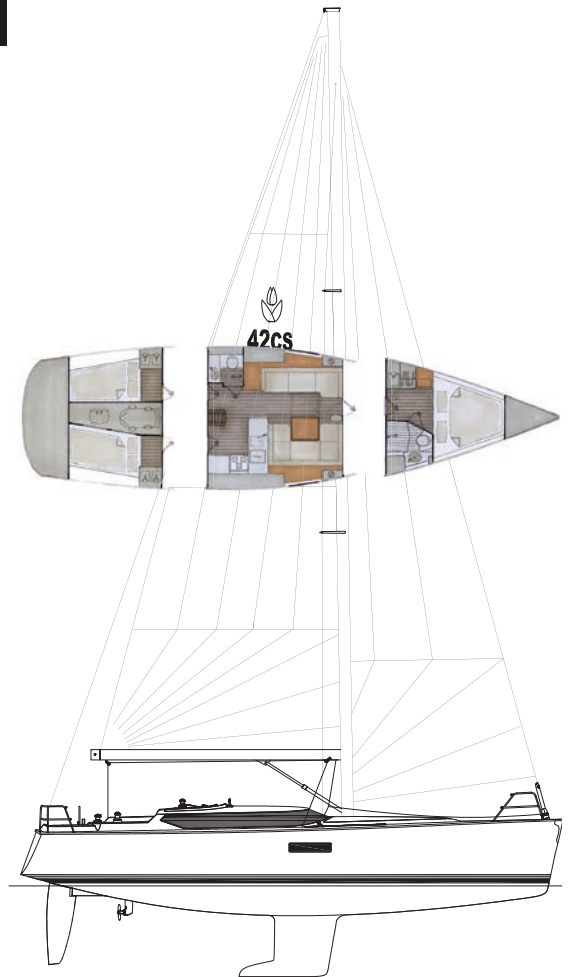
LOA	12.85m	42ft 2in
LWL	11.76m	38ft 7in
Beam (max)	4.15m	13ft 7in
Draught	2.20m	7ft 3in
Disp (lightship)	11,000kg	24,252lb
Ballast	4,600kg	10,141lb
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	104m <sup>2</sup>	1,119ft <sup>2</sup>
Berths	6	
Engine	54hp Yanmar saildrive	
Water	381lt	84gal
Fuel	226lt	50gal
Sail area:disp	21.4	
Disp:LWL	188	
Price ex VAT:	€418,000 (£324,310)	
Design:	Georg Nissen	
www.contestyachts.com		

### SEE THE VIDEO

[yachtingworld.com/contest42cs](http://yachtingworld.com/contest42cs)



Or scan this code with your phone or tablet



## Conclusion

At a time when Contest has just announced the largest model in its 57-year history, it is this, its smallest, three-year-old model that best demonstrates the timelessness of quality design and construction.

The 42CS is blessed with a big boat feel and Dutch quality from an established yard currently on a roll. Easy to sail and easy to trim, she is a luxury family cruiser that excels under sail. The 42CS finds that delicate middle ground of providing performance in a seakindly manner.

She has a modern, comfortable, well-proportioned and versatile interior – it may not suit everyone's taste, but does at least offer semi-custom choices – and particularly appeals to owners like Tessa's, who can afford a larger yacht, but would rather have top quality at a more manageable size.

My past experiences of sailing in the Netherlands tended to be either in no wind or gales. Perhaps it should come as no surprise then that Contests are designed to sail well in all conditions, and for the helmsman to milk every moment.

