

New Classics



SIMPLICITY AND SPEED

Lake Constance Pilot Cutter

Nearly all builders of spirit-of-tradition yachts harp on about simplicity – and with reason – ease of use is the mainstay of most modern boats' appeal. Simplicity and speed were at the top of Swiss boatbuilder Stefan Züst's list when he went to compatriot naval architect Jonas Panacek for a new boat. The result is a yacht whose looks are inspired by a British pilot cutter, but with the underbody of an out-and-out racer. The simplicity brief goes as far as flush decks and a complete lack of winches, enabled by the cutter rig that divides headsail area, and the use of ball-bearing races in the blocks.

Even the cockpit has been largely omitted – there is a footwell instead, giving very little volume to any seas that come on board. Stefan has built the first one, in strip cedar, for his own use, and now he and Jonas are hoping to build one for a client. The boat is 30ft (9.1m) long with a fairly light overall displacement of 2.3 tonnes, including 800kg of ballast in the retractable fin keel. This goes from a full 6ft 6in (2m), as befits her high-performance, high-sail-area formula, down to 4ft (1.2m) for shallower waters and trailability. The LCPC also has a tabernacle on the mast for trailing. The boat is reputedly extremely fast. In fact, she won her class at a recent 70-mile race around Lake Constance, where Stefan's yard is.

Auxiliary power comes from the inboard Lombardini diesel, as Stefan plans to cruise his to far-off places – and why not? It's eminently possible to singlehand, or for company, the cabin will sleep four to five. Many would want electric propulsion on a boat like this, and some might want a cabin trunk. Both are possibilities, says Jonas, who adds that "anyone who will want one will be an individualist." Stefan, a very experienced sailor, adds that "this is a boat born of thousands of miles of experience at sea" not, in other words, produced by a landlocked CAD jockey.

With speed and usability the primary aims of the LCPC, she's more of a modern boat with a dash of timeless appeal than a serious attempt at authenticity – not dissimilar in philosophy to the Essence 33, another pilot cutter-inspired flyer in the same size bracket. The LCPC looks like an interesting boat.

Price c180,000CHF (c£150,000), see pilotcutter.ch for more



Top: Aft view – note the shallow footwell

Above: Various details – the spars are hollow timber

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