

# ON TEST

The swing keel and twin rudders of the latest generation of Southerlies create handling that owners of earlier models could only have dreamed about, says James Jermain

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# Southerly 35RS





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**I**f anything', observed designer Rob Humphreys, as spray flew over his head and 30 knots of wind drove the lee rail ever closer to the water, 'this rudder is a bit too neutral.

'We could give the rudders a bit less balance,' he added, ducking out of the way of a lump of sand-yellow Chichester harbour water and leaving the helm to look after itself while he adjusted something.

The Southerly 35RS merely got on with the job of beating to windward at over 6 knots in a solid Force 7. The main had a couple of reefs and there were a few rolls in the self-tacking jib. With Rob more or less redundant behind the wheel and no sheets to tend when the time came to tack, there were a couple of hands on board who wondered why they were there.

Thanks to Humphreys' magic pen, the swing keel and twin rudders of the latest generation of Southerlies create handling that owners of earlier models could only have dreamed about. When we crossed Chichester's notorious bar on an ebb tide into a west-south-westerly wind with serious attitude, she ploughed on through

a bit elusive. But in these conditions most owners would gladly swap some off-peak VMG for finger-light steering and the chance to leave the wheel to attend to other duties for a moment or two.

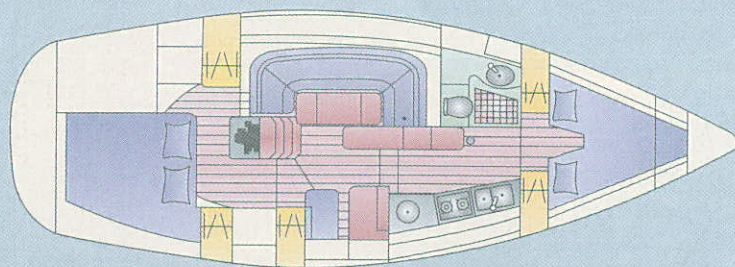
Because of her lifting keel and creek-crawling abilities, it is tempting to dismiss

## We clocked some impressive speeds... surfing down waves was child's play thanks to the power of the twin rudders

high and broken waves with no more than a quarter turn of the wheel at most to keep her straight. An older Southerly 115 would have been very hard work in such conditions.

Rob was right: the helm was so neutral and she was so straight-running that the slot was

the Southerly as a serious offshore yacht.' But the 35RS shares with her sisters a heavy-displacement hull form, a reassuringly high ballast ratio and a suitably modest sail area. She has a GZ curve and a STIX number many more obviously offshore designs would envy.



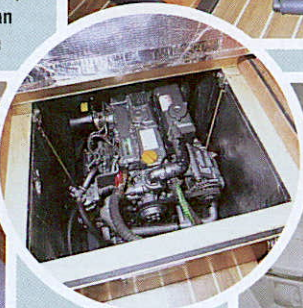
**RIGHT:** A steel locking pin fixes the swing keel in either the up or down position. When removed, the keel automatically kicks up on hitting an obstruction



**ABOVE:** The saloon table is long but narrow and the seating is cramped. However, the 2m settee is long enough to sleep on



**ABOVE:** The bright forecabin has conventional v-berths



**ABOVE:** Power is provided by the 29hp Yanmar diesel



**ABOVE:** The heads is forward of the saloon, opposite the galley



## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

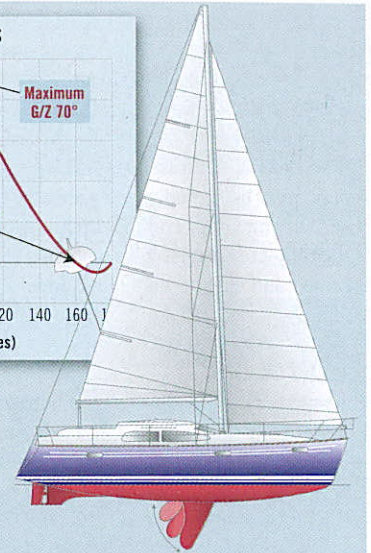
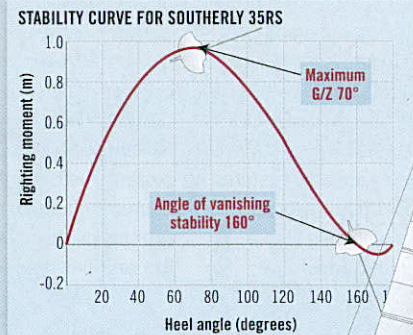
<b>PRICE</b>	£129,216
<b>LOA</b>	10.82m (35ft 6in)
<b>LWL</b>	9.22m (30ft 3in)
<b>BEAM</b>	3.57m (11ft 10in)
<b>DRAUGHT</b>	0.72m to 2.18m (2ft 4in to 7ft 2in)
<b>DISPLACEMENT</b>	6,811kg (15,016 lb)
<b>BALLASTPLATE</b>	2,205kg (4,455 lb)
<b>KEEL WEIGHT</b>	1,050kg (2,310 lb)
<b>TOTAL BALLAST</b>	3,255kg (6,765 lb)
<b>SAIL AREA</b>	(100% fore triangle) 56.11m <sup>2</sup> (605sq ft)
<b>BERTHS</b>	4/5
<b>ENGINE</b>	Yanmar 3YM30 29hp diesel driving conventional stern gear and three-blade propeller through moulded skeg.
<b>BATTERIES</b>	One starter, one domestic battery
<b>FUEL</b>	182 lit, 40 gal stainless steel tank
<b>WATER</b>	205 lit (45 gal) stainless steel tank
<b>DISP/LENGTH RATIO</b>	242
<b>SAIL AREA/DISP RATIO</b>	16

<b>BALLAST RATIO</b>	45%
<b>RCD CATEGORY</b>	A
<b>STIX NUMBER</b>	not supplied
<b>DESIGN</b>	Rob Humphreys
<b>BUILDER</b>	Northshore
<b>TEL</b>	01243 512611
<b>WEBSITE</b>	www.northshore.co.uk

<b>OPTIONS</b>	
Pre-preg lightweight hull	£22,454
Teak decks	£7,505
Fully battened main	£2,573
Spinnaker and gear	£4,810
Microwave oven	£2,814
Bimini	£1,601
TV/DVD with antenna	£3,100
Heating	£4,490
Holding tank	£634
Delivery and commissioning	£5,999

- FOR**
- Improved handling
  - Build quality
  - Shallow draught

- AGAINST**
- Awkward saloon seating
  - Small after cabin bunk



## CONSTRUCTION

The hull is a hand-laid laminate heavily reinforced in the keel area. The keel box is an integral part of the moulding. Balsa sandwich is used above the waterline.

Below the waterline, clear gelcoats are used as part of Northshore's patented anti-osmosis treatment. The deck is also a balsa-cored sandwich with plywood in high-stress areas such as under fittings.

The hull and deck are mechanically fastened and bonded over. The fixed ballast is in the form of a grounding plate bolted to the hull and incorporates stiffening for the keel unit.

To prove the point, she continued to plug to windward once over the bar and in more regular, but no less high seas with pace and a comfortable motion. The lifting keel is not as efficient as a fin-shaped keel for performance. She made a bit of extra leeway and was slower into her stride after a tack. The hull form is comparatively bluff; the topsides high even



ABOVE: Headroom in the spacious aftercabin is generous at 2m, but the bunk is on the short side



ABOVE: The navigation area has a large instrument console, and Northshore is offering two seats at the chart table as an option

before adding the deck saloon. She tended to be stopped quite easily by the bigger waves but got going again quickly enough. She could be driven at 30° to the apparent wind, but allowing her head to fall off a degree or two improved speed, the ride and her ability to grip the water.

Outside open seas we were seeing speeds to windward in the region of 5.5 knots compared to over 6 inside the harbour and she tacked through 95 to 100° instead of 90 to 95°. In all conditions she came through the tack cleanly. By allowing the bows to pay off a little she was quickly back up to speed again.

One of the reasons for the improved heavy-weather performance is that Northshore have worked hard to move weight to the middle of the boat. At the same time, the small, self-tacking headsail does not drive the bows down. As a result she is better able to ride over the waves and less likely to drive into them. It is likely that the small jib, despite a generous main, will mean some frustrating moments in light airs.

To compensate, Northshore offers a short bowsprit from which to set a flat cut gennaker to improve light airs speed on all points other than hard on the wind.

Playing about outside the harbour with the gennaker, we clocked some impressive speeds, including 8.4 knots on a broad reach. Surfing down waves was child's play thanks to the power of the twin rudders. She was quite capable of maintaining 7 knots with the wind on the beam and 7.5 knots on a close reach.

The helmsman, of course, is quite capable of handling the boat on his own with no jib

sheets to worry about when beating and only the occasional, small adjustment required off the wind. The mainsheet is on a traveller ahead of the moderately sized wheel and well within reach. The helm seat is reasonably secure though there is little to brace against when sitting to windward. The view over the wheelhouse is fine when standing and there are good sight lines down the side decks when sitting.

## UNDER POWER

The 29hp Yanmar diesel has sufficient drive to push her against a strong headwind at 6.5 knots cruising. At close quarters, the twin rudders mean there is no assistance from

## THE SOUTHERLY SWING KEEL

At the heart of every Southerly is the unique Swing Keel, originally devised by Dick Carter but extensively reworked some years ago by Rob Humphreys. The deepest half of the keel is more like a high-aspect dagger board but the upper part of the foil broadens out to improve directional stability and strength.

The aerofoil-sectioned keel itself is cast iron with a stainless-steel pivot and is operated by an electrically powered hydraulic ram. A stainless steel locking pin can fix the keel in either the up or down position. With this pin removed, the keel will kick up on hitting an obstruction without damaging the system.

A remarkable feature of the Southerly system is that, with the large external grounding plate and the heavily ballasted keel, Southerlies achieve ballast ratios, GZ curves and STIX numbers that are actually higher and better than many fin-keeled designs of similar length.



## SOUTHERLY 35RS

prop wash in slow speed turns. This and her considerable windage made coming along side in a strong crosswind and sluicing tide a trifle hairy. For once we were glad of a bow thruster.

In more moderate conditions, though, she should handle much as her sister, the 110, which could be turned sharply ahead or astern. A certain amount of control is retained even with the keel half raised, so wriggling into a confined and shallow anchorage should be no problem.

### BELOW DECKS

The new deckline of the 35RS is subtly more contemporary than the 110 and features reflective glass in the wheelhouse, which may not be to everyone's taste. Below decks, though, this is a completely new boat. Gone are several of the Southerly trademarks, such as the huge galley in the deckhouse and the crossover bunks in the forecabin.

Instead, Northshore has chosen the more common arrangement of having the saloon in the deckhouse where the crew can enjoy the views through 'wrap-around' windows. A navigation area remains opposite the seating area.

A couple of steps down aft is a huge after cabin complete with dressing table. Forward of the saloon is an efficient and secure galley with the heads and shower compartment opposite. The forecabin is light and bright and has conventional v-berths.

We found the deck saloon a bit disappointing. The table is long but narrow and the seating will be a bit cramped even if only four are dining together. The settee, though, is long enough at 2.11m (6ft 11in) to sleep on. Northshore are now offering an option of two seats on the chart table side to improve

matters. The navigation area is effective with a large chart table and big instrument console but limited stowage for bosun's stores and plotting instruments. The helmsman can just about see the sail luffs from the seat but if an internal steering option – such as an autopilot control box – is fitted, it will really be for motoring use only.

The galley, despite being relegated to the lower level, remains well ventilated and is by no means small. There is plenty of well-designed stowage and broad work surfaces, thanks to the side-opening fridge. At sea the cook has a secure backrest on the heads bulkhead and there are good grab handles.

The after cabin, despite its size, contains a surprisingly small bunk with a length of only 1.83m (6ft). In other respects, though it is generously supplied – headroom, for example is a stunning 2.03m (6ft 8in).

Stowage throughout the boat is good with plenty of space for clothes, books, tools, food and the collected kit of offshore cruising. It is also well ventilated and light, as one would



expect of a deck saloon design. The woodwork is solidly built in cheery and very well finished if a little plain is style.

### VERDICT

Gone are the days when Southerlies built big biceps on helmsmen and frustrated navigators with their wayward steering. Each one gets a little better and the 35RS is the best. Performance is more than adequate for cruising purposes and the handling stands comparison now with any of the popular ranges. The improved handling is achieved by the use of twin rudders and this has a trade-off in terms of handling under power, but this is only a serious issue in strong cross winds and is overcome by the installation of a bow thruster.

The changes to the interior layout are moves in the right direction – it makes sense to have the seating in the part of the boat with the best views. However, in the boat we sailed we felt Northshore still had some way to go to get the deck saloon working as well as it should. In terms of build quality and finish, Northshore set high standards and this model meets them comfortably.

But the key to the appeal of this boat is, obviously, its shoal draught and creek-crawling capability. In this respect it is every bit as good as her predecessors and is probably the best all round in this small sector of the market. ▲

## TWO COMPARABLE BOATS

### OVNI 345

PRICE	£107,377
LOA	10.93m (35ft 10in)
LWL	9.1m (29ft 10in)
BEAM	3.6m (11ft 10in)
DRAUGHT	0.58m to 2.1m (1ft 11in to 6ft 11in)
DISPLACEMENT	7,000kg (15,400 lb)
BALLAST	2,900kg (6,380 lb)
SAIL AREA	53.2m <sup>2</sup> (572sq ft)
BERTHS	6
ENGINE	Volvo 2030 30hp diesel
RCD CATEGORY	A
CONTACT	North Sea Maritime
TEL:	01702 584821



### FEELING 36

PRICE	£86,745
LOA	10.8m (35ft 5in)
LWL	9.9m (32ft 6in)
BEAM	3.62m (11ft 11in)
DRAUGHT	0.75m to 2.16m (2ft 6in to 7ft 1in)
DISPLACEMENT	6,500kg (14,300 lb)
BALLAST	2,375kg (5,236 lb)
SAIL AREA	53m <sup>2</sup> (570sq ft)
BERTHS	6
ENGINE	Volvo 2030 29hp diesel
RCD CATEGORY	A
CONTACT	Feeling Yachts UK
TEL:	01590 647421

