



## Tiller or wheel?

I was about to cross the English Channel aboard an interesting 40-footer when the owner said, as we passed the Needles lighthouse: "OK, we're clear and on course, the autopilot's on." At which point he went below for the rest of the passage. With a fresh easterly giving us a broad reach and a bit of a sea, it seemed a crying shame not to take the tiller – yes tiller – feel how she went and try to get the best out of her.

There's nothing like taking the helm for a few hours in good conditions to get to know a boat.

**'There's nothing like the feel through a tiller; the pressure of just the right amount of weather helm ...'**

And in a well-balanced boat a tiller is a joy. It's a rarity these days in cruising yachts, but last month Mike Birch opted for one in his Labrador 44, and this month Gerry Dijkstra does the same for his 53-footer.

Any yacht, within reason, should be capable of being steered easily by tiller if properly balanced. Wheels, by mechanical definition, are more powerful and often hide bad behaviour. But there's nothing quite like the feel through a tiller; the pressure of just the right amount of weather helm and that distinctive quiver indicating perfect balance.

Salesmen probably think cockpit space and a dining table are more important than balance, so the wheel reigns supreme. But next time you're given the option, try a tiller – you may never look back.

**David Glenn**



## BESTEVAER 2

# Gerry Dijkstra's 'retirement' cruiser

Last month we examined short-handed racing sailor Mike Birch's choice of cruising boat. Coincidentally, we have a chance to look at another well-known yachtsman's interpretation of a comfortable cruising yacht.

Gerry Dijkstra is no stranger to the pages of *Yachting World*, his recent involvement with the J Class movement returning him to prominence. But his exploits in the 1976 OSTAR single-handed transatlantic race in *Bestevaer*,

a yacht he designed himself, are responsible for the lines of *Bestevaer 2* which Gerry believes is for long distance 'retirement' cruising.

While the new boat is less extreme than the original, she retains some of the same characteristics – especially in the rig. Gerry Dijkstra describes the cutter rig as ideal for use in the winter in northern waters, and the 120 per cent overlapping genoa as more of a summer sail. Under staysail and reefed main, this

powerful aluminium cruiser could probably deal with almost anything an angry North Sea could throw at her.

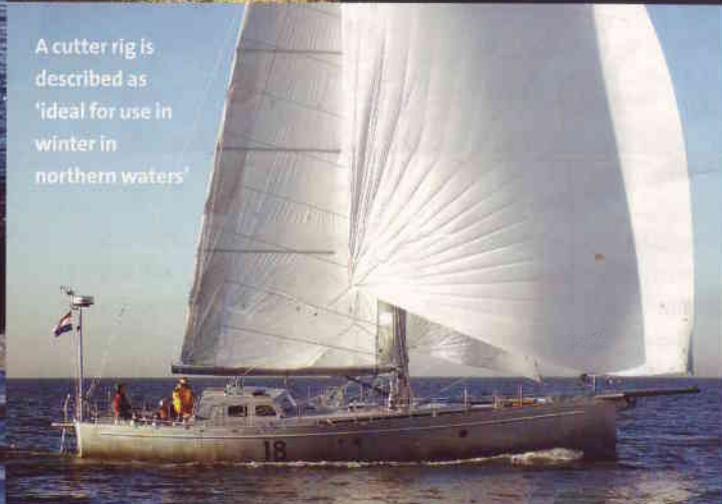
Interestingly, like Mike Birch's Labrador 44 (*Yachting World*, May) the 53-footer is tiller-steered, although anyone wanting to buy a similar yacht from her builders K & M, based in the north of Holland, could opt for a wheel.

## Beam and stability

Extended waterline length afforded by the almost plumb



This beamy Dijkstra design is tiller-steered and aimed at short-handed retirement cruising



A cutter rig is described as 'ideal for use in winter in northern waters'

stern provides extra speed and more accommodation. She is quite narrow in her ends and weight has been restricted in these areas, but with moderate maximum beam and a big sail plan, she can maintain high speeds in light airs as well as fresher breezes.

At just under 14ft beam, *Bestevaer 2* is narrow by modern standards (although considerably beamier than the original) but stability is enhanced by water ballast instead of an impractical deep bulb keel. With the windward tanks full, heel can be reduced by 8°.

A key feature of the yacht (just like Birch's boat) is the pilothouse with a 'heel

adjustable' chart table, another feature surviving from 1976. Plus, there's excellent visibility through the numerous ports, each of which is relatively small, making them less vulnerable to any solid water shipped.

The accommodation is divided into four watertight areas. Gerry Dijkstra makes the point that even if the two middle compartments are flooded, the yacht will still remain buoyant.

### Designed for the ice

Again using his experience of sailing in heavy weather, Dijkstra has designed the cockpit in such a way that all life-saving equipment is



The comfortable-looking saloon is light and airy with plenty of portlights and hatches. A wood-burning stove is supplemented by central heating

**Bestevaer 2, known by builders K&M as the Bestevaer 53ST**



stowed in lockers so it cannot be washed away by accident. It is nonetheless, easy to access.

The designer's description of his yacht continues: 'Consideration has been given to sailing in light ice so, as a result, the Bestevaer 53ST has no seacocks, but standpipes and internal cooling for the engine with a dry exhaust. Reinforced 10mm plating and a strong longitudinal girder in the bow all add to one's peace of mind.'

### Wood burner

The yacht's accommodation looks extremely comfortable and is served by central heating

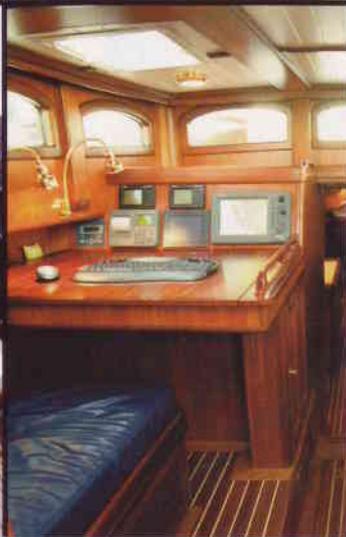
as well as a separate wood burning stove. In Dijkstra's yacht, there are two double cabins (both, unusually, on the port side), a large galley and a comfortable saloon. There are opening ports and plenty of natural light and ventilation.

Options include a lift keel and twin rudders, which will reduce draught from 2.80m to 1.50m. There are a number of sail options including a big roached main and an asymmetric, which can be set off a retractable bowsprit.

Equipment includes Frederiksen deck gear, a Nanni 65hp main engine, B&G and Furuno instrumentation and Windpilot self-steering. Other options include a carbon fibre mast and a Hoyt boom. Dijkstra's yacht will be unpainted aluminium with a red boot topping and bottom, but a painted version is offered.

Built by: K & M Yachtbuilders: De Steinplaat 7, 8754 HE Makkum, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 (0) 515 233 000 info@kmy.nl www.kmy.nl

<b>Bestevaer 2</b>	
LOA	16.7m
LWL	14.87m
Beam	4.52m
Draught	2.60
Sail area	windward 155m <sup>2</sup>
	running 270m <sup>2</sup>
Displ	117 tons (approx)
Ballast	5 tons
Water ballast	1.8 tons
Water	800lt (in 3 tanks)
Fuel	627lt (in 3 tanks)
Grey/blackwater	100lt (in 2 tanks)



### Bestevaer 65S

Dijkstra's involvement with K&M goes further with the classic looking 65, two of which have already been built. Again they are in aluminium and custom-finished with a variety of options below, generally to accommodate six people in three separate sleeping cabins.

The designer has insisted that weight be kept out of the ends of the yacht and with her tall, high aspect ratio rig, she really only needs a blade jib to get her going in almost any wind speed. An asymmetric can be set for offwind work.

Features on deck include a big coaming for the comfortable-looking cockpit, a pleasingly low doghouse which provides a navigation station, offwatch area and excellent all-round visibility. There's something about bulwarks on a cruising boat like this; they're noticeably deep with a decent-sized cap rail and big scuppers, which immediately adds a sense of security.

This boat draws 2.80m, just over 9ft, a fair amount for coastal cruising. But at this length, the 65 is probably destined to stretch her legs over longer distances.

<b>Bestevaer 65S</b>	
LOA	20.04m
LWL	14.73m
Beam	4.55m
Draught	2.80m
Sail area	windward 202m <sup>2</sup>
	running 403m <sup>2</sup>
Displ	28.2tons
Water	840lt (in 2 tanks)
Fuel	1200lt (in 2 tanks)