

MacGregor 26

Motorsailer

Did you hear the story about the sailor sailing singlehanded in his MacGregor 26 when he had a heart attack? He put the pedal to the metal and powered back to the dock at speeds in excess of 20 knots where he was met by paramedics. He thinks the MacGregor saved his life. In my own 26-footer he would have powered back at a sedate 5.5 knots and probably died en route.

But we have a new MacGregor 26 now. The new 26 has been modified and improved for even better performance and comfort. Roger MacGregor does all the design work for his plant. Roger was kind enough to send me a 48-inch long model with the brochure for this review. Thanks, Roger.

"Sails better than a powerboat and powers better than a sailboat," they say. In fact the new 26 is a respectable sailer. I have a client

formance as long as you keep the boat on its feet. The brochure says 22 mph under power.

If I use 2,750 pounds as displacement I get a D/L of 101. L/B is a modest 3.25. Draft with board up is 12 inches and with board down 5 feet, 9 inches. The internal ballast is augmented by 1,150 pounds of water ballast in a tank that runs on centerline from the daggerboard trunk to the transom. Built-in foam flotation will keep the 26 afloat in case of damage. Before you begin casting asparagus at the performance of this boat just imagine the boat with 10 inches less freeboard and a more svelte cabintrunk. All the proportions are there for a decent sailing boat.

The layout is clever and uses a big mirror forward of the galley to give the effect of a totally open, bulkhead-less layout. In fact, the head is enclosed, so there are bulk-

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who, after owning an original 26, fell in love with sailing and bought a Saga 35. If the 26 had been such a bad boat he would have never bought another sailboat. While the aesthetic package may not be to your liking and the 50-horsepower outboard auxiliary may be contrary to what you think of for a sailboat, don't underestimate these boats. To a great degree they are designed to entice powerboaters who think they might like sailing into giving it a try. More than 6,000 26s have been sold to date. That's about three a day for six years. The boats are EEC-approved and about a third of the production is shipped overseas.

The new 26 has more shape to the hull and an additional 300 pounds of internal lead ballast. Deadrise has been increased from 8 degrees to 13 degrees to give the boat a softer ride and get the VCG lower for stability. The deep chest of the 26 flares to a flat run for planing performance. The original 26 had a centerboard and that has now been replaced by a high-aspect-ratio daggerboard. The smaller slot of the daggerboard has reduced drag and improved speed under power and sail. This deep daggerboard should work to give the 26 good on-the-wind per-

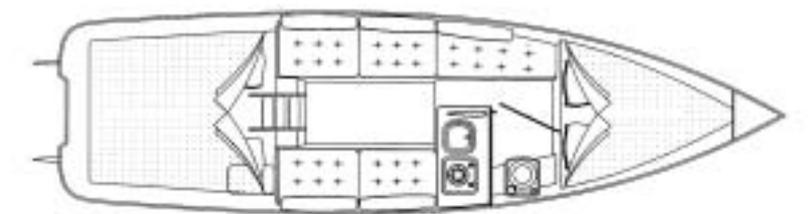
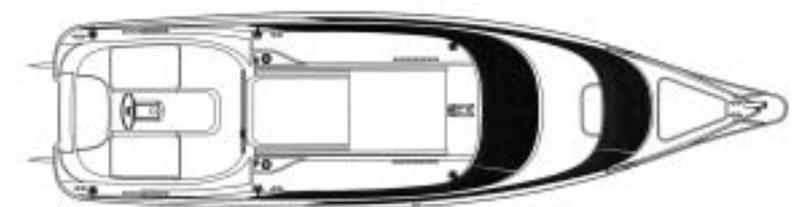
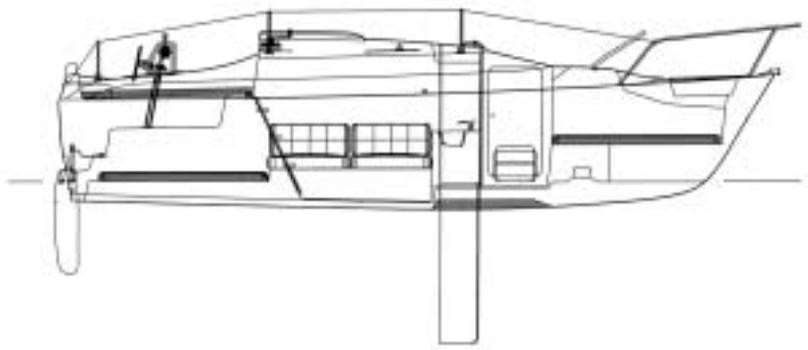
heads. Roger has worked two double berths into this layout, settees and a mini galley. There is no privacy for sleeping but I think adding more bulkheads and doors would have destroyed this interior. It's designed for small families where privacy is not required. The cockpit is large but that little wheel, while I'm sure it works, looks too small for me.

"But what about those aesthetics, Bob?" I think the boat looks fine. While I would not call it beautiful or handsome I do prefer the new model with its stepped cabintrunk. The look is more interesting and there is better headroom below. I wouldn't put this boat alongside the latest Chuck Paine design and compare the aesthetics. The 26 shows a hybrid power/sail look that won't work on many boats. The wraparound windows and lack of side decks are right out of the powerboat school. I think you have to put this boat into an aesthetics genre of its own.

OBE: \$17,990

Our Best Estimate of the sailaway price

MacGregor Yacht Corp., 1631
Placentia, Costa Mesa, CA
92627, (949) 642-6380,
www.macgregor26.com.



A new version of the classic design perfect for reformed powerboaters.

LOA 25'10"; LWL 23'2"; Beam 7'9"; Draft 12" (board up), 5'9" (board down); Displacement 2,550 lbs.; Ballast 1,450 lbs.; Sail Area 300 sq. ft.; SA/D 25.7; D/L 101; L/B 3.25; Auxiliary 5- to 50-hp outboard; Fuel 24 gals.; Water 5 gals.