

KETTENBURG K43 SLOOP No. 5 - ALUMINIUM HULL WITH INDEPENDENT SPADE RUDDER, BUILT 1964. Author/owner: Tim Chauvel, contact: chauvelt@gmail.com

During the early 1960's, the Kettenburg boatyard of San Diego designed a forty three foot ocean racer/cruising sloop known as the K43. The yachts were built to the Cruising Club of America rule that strongly favored seaworthiness and comfort necessary for a good cruising boat, as well as the high performance demanded of a racer.

Only nineteen K43s were built, and only three of the hulls were built out of 5052 marine grade aluminum with an independent spade rudder.

The picture below shows the first aluminum K43 built in 1964 which was the fifth boat of its class. The boat was commissioned by the well known southern California Torrance sail maker Ken Watts. The hull was built by Yacht Dynamics, a group of southern California airplane engineers originating from McDonald Douglas. The deck, cabin and interior were built by Kettenburg.



1964 K43

The aluminum K43 was designed with a spoon bow entrance and a cut away forefoot extending down to a deep full keel. The beam is eleven feet with a draft of six feet two inches. The stern is configured with a wine glass shaped overhanging transom, and a counterbalanced independent spade rudder at the point of immersion.

Constructing the hull in aluminum instead of wood saved approximately 1300 pounds in hull weight. The weight saving was placed into the lead ballast located in the keel. The hull plates

were rolled and fully welded. A layer of epoxy was applied under the water line, making the hull smooth and fair. Interestingly, the boat has no keel bolts, as the lead ballast is encapsulated into the aluminum hull.



K43, No. 5 sailing off Long Beach, California

The design and materials used to construct this K43 created a light and easily driven sloop, allowing for the use of smaller sails.

The deck, cabin top and interior of the boat was custom built out of wood. The interior has full headroom throughout, and a light and airy main cabin is surrounded by windows and bronze portholes. The deck is made of 1" marine plywood overlaid with glass fiber cloth and through bolted to the hull. The cabin interior has Honduras mahogany trim and highlights. The main cabin table is an exquisite example of inlaid mother-of-pearl shell.

Records show that in her first year of racing under Ken Watts, K43 No. 5 won the Whitney racing series of southern California. In later years under three different owners, the boat went on to win the Champion-of-Champions race in San Francisco Bay; sailed a fourteen month cruise from California to the Marquesas and Tuamotu Islands, Tahiti, and Hawaii; and on another occasion sailed from San Francisco to Hawaii, and back. One owner noted that the passage from Bora Bora to Hilo, Hawaii was completed in 14 days.

The boat is almost 50 year old and has recently gone through a major refit. Below are pictures of the interior:



Main cabin looking forward



Main cabin looking aft



Forward berth



Toilet and shower



Chart table



Galley