

Best
Small
Cruiser



Najad 355: A Fit, Snug, and Snappy Sailer

The BOTY judges found lots on which to agree as they proclaimed the Najad 355 to be the Best Small Cruiser of 2008:

great sails, solid motion through the water, practical interior, well-laid-out deck. There was, however, one point of contention during the sea trials: Who should get to steer next? This boat was a hoot to sail.

In a 9- to 11-knot breeze, the Najad sailed closehauled at just less than 6 knots and tacked through 85 degrees. Cracked off to a beam reach, the speed over the ground on a pocket-size GPS read 7.

A conventional main and an overlapping genoa give the Najad a fairly traditional cruising-boat feel and considerable lift under way. The boat handled the small Chesapeake Bay chop just fine. Control lines led aft to the windshielded cockpit, where judge Stacey Collins noted that the mainsheet could be easily trimmed while standing at the helm. Sail-

“We all had big smiles on our faces when we got off the boat. We had fun sailing it.”

—STACEY COLLINS



A solidly built hull and properly installed systems lie just beneath the pleasing, traditional interior of the Najad 355.

control lines running back from the mast were led through stainless-steel plates to prevent an inrush of water, should a wave come over the bow.

Belowdecks, the teak interior includes roomy double cabins fore and aft, an L-shaped galley to port at the foot of the companionway, a head and shower to starboard, and a midline table and two settees amidships. The galley is a no-nonsense work space for cooking under way and features double centerline sinks.

Judges deemed the structural quality of the boat quite good, with a Divinycell and epoxy hull and deck, a cast-iron fin with a lead bulb, and stainless-steel keel bolts. Carrying a price tag of \$340,000 (delivered to the U.S. East Coast), the Najad was by far the most costly of the small cruisers, but as judge Steve Callahan concluded, “This was a boat that sailed really well. The wind was up a bit, and it was clearly a sailboat.”

M.P.

Winning Details

- ◆ Elegantly appointed near-offshore cruiser
- ◆ Safe and functional cockpit
- ◆ Fine performance under sail