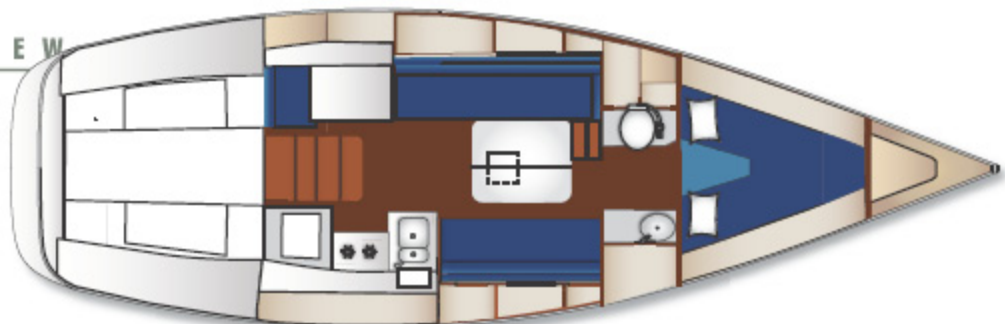
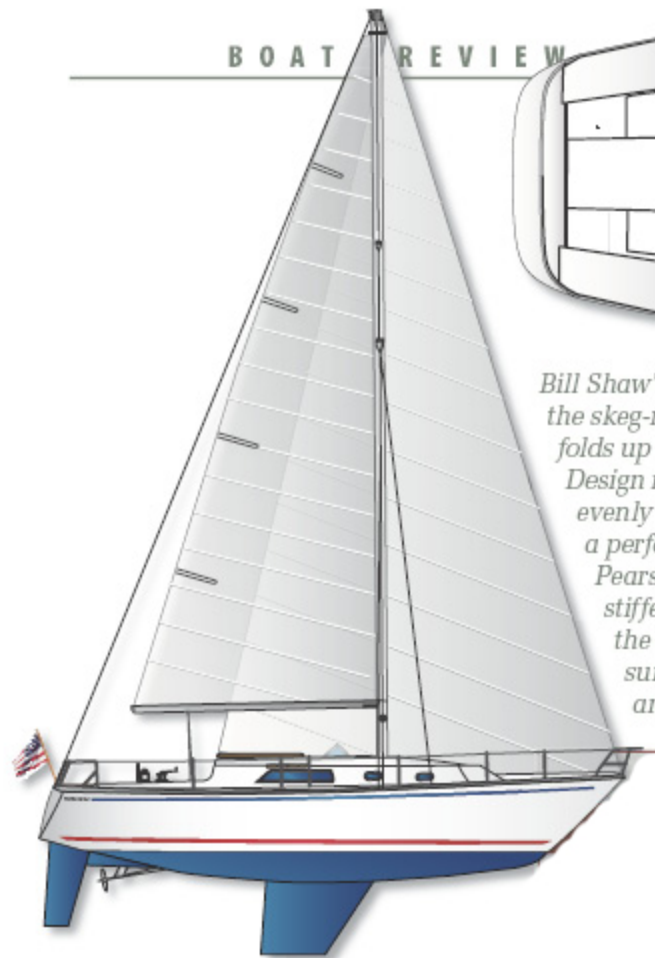


BOAT REVIEW



Bill Shaw's fairly high-aspect spade rudder (left), on the P32 diverged from the skeg-mounted rudders typical of many 1970s Pearsons. The saloon table folds up into the bulkhead, opening space in the main saloon (above.) Design ratios for three classic cruisers from the 1970s compare quite evenly (below). Designer Gary Mull's narrower, longer Ranger 33 has a performance edge, though it will have less initial stability than the Pearson. The Pearson's greater beam, draft, and ballast should make it stiffer in a blow than Bill Lapworth's Cal 31. All three deftly straddle the cruiser-racer line, with enough sail area to enjoy Mid-Atlantic summers, yet sufficient ballast and form stability to tuck in a reef and hold their own in windier venues like San Francisco Bay.

INTERIOR NOTES: PEARSON 32



PRO: Galley readily adapts to three-burner propane stove

PRO: Grab rails

PRO: Adequate storage for summer cruising

CON: Liner inhibits access to parts of hull

The Pearson 32 came with two layout options, one with a port quarter berth (rare), and one without. Joinery is above average for a production boat of its era. A two-burner alcohol stove was common, but there's room for a gimbaled, three-burner propane stove. The fine entry makes for a tight V-berth (right). Access (left) to the engine's front and sides is good, but reaching the back requires a contortionist.



PRO: Good front engine access



CON: Tight V-berth

CRITIC'S CORNER: PEARSON 32

PROS

- *Forward mainsheet traveler gives trimmers room when racing.*
- *Deep self-draining cockpit well.*
- *High cockpit coamings.*
- *Adequate side-deck width.*
- *Inboard shrouds improve sheeting angles.*
- *Practical anodized toe rail.*

CONS

- *Mainsheet traveler location presents potential hazard at companionway.*
- *Inboard shrouds consume side-deck space, requiring crew to pass outside.*
- *Conventional transom is less bather-friendly than newer sugar-scoop transoms.*
- *Deck-mounted headsail winch obsolete toe-stubber.*



The binnacle, bridge deck, and lazarette consume legroom, but the relatively small footwell effectively drains any green water.



CON: Narrow side decks near shrouds

PRO: Good original nonskid

CON: Cambered deck complicates hatch upgrade

PRO: Handholds forward and aft of shrouds

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Pearson demonstrated better manufacturing controls than many of its competitors in the late 1970s thanks to Grumman's focus on quality engineering practices.

Hull: Laminate materials for the hand-laminated solid FRP hull were bench cut, pre-marked and carefully overlapped inside the female mold. Crews wetting out the dry fiberglass used serrated rollers to remove air bubbles and better insure interlayer bonding between the units of FRP composite material. The bottom of the sump is thick enough to accept the tensile loads created by the ballast, as well as handle other non-sailing stress and strain associated with unintentional groundings. Extra units of 24-ounce woven roving and chop strand mat were used in the turn of the bilge and along the centerline to add stiffness and improve the load bearing quality of the laminate in high stress areas.

Hull-deck joint: The hull-to-deck joint incorporates an inward turning hull flange, and the outer perimeter of the deck element overlaps this part of the hull. There are several advantages to this form of construction, and they include the extra seam strength derived from the angle-bracket-like stiffening effect of the inward turning flange itself, the potential for a large overlap of the seam, and an adhesive seal as well as mechanically fastened



Fiberglass athwartship floor frames helped reinforce the keel stub and cope with the side force imposed by the lead ballast keel.

junction. The fact that the seam is not directly exposed to topside impacts makes it superior to outward turning flanges that provide only a small overlap, and are constantly exposed to whatever the topsides rub or bump against.

Deck: The deck is a balsa core sandwich structure that is stiff enough to have prevented delamination problems, and these boats have a good reputation when it comes to water intrusion and core deterioration.

Rudder and keel: The spade rudder stock is stainless steel, and the fiberglass coated high-density urethane foam core blade was well designed and constructed. The bolt-on lead ballast keel attached to a stub like keel sump that was molded into the hull. Good quality stainless steel keelbolts are placed side by side in the keel stub, and on boats PS has inspected, neither the nuts, bolts nor the keel show signs of deterioration.

Rig: Chainplates are inboard and are mechanically fastened to the main plywood bulkhead. Care needs to be taken to keep the deck penetration point where these chainplates enter the cabin well bedded. Any water penetration will result in wood rot that may significantly diminish the structure supporting the chainplate.

		Pearson 32	Cal 31	Ranger 33
LOA		31' 8"	31' 6"	33' 2"
LWL		25'	25' 8"	26' 3"
Beam		10' 7"	10'	9' 7"
Draft (shoal)		5' 6"	5'	5'
Displacement		9,400 lbs.	9,170 lbs.	10,500 lbs.
Ballast		3,800 lbs.	3,600 lbs.	4,500 lbs.
Sail area (100%)		474 sq. ft.	490 sq. ft.	529 sq. ft.
Engine		18 hp.	16 hp.	30 hp.
Water		38 gal.	21 gal.	15 gal.
Fuel		19 gal.	21 gal.	18 gal.
SA/D ratio		17	17.9	17.6
D/L ratio		269	239	259
Used boat price*		\$23,500	\$25,000	\$24,500

* Average price posted on used boat websites; condition may vary greatly.