

## TOP

### OHLSON 38

**"The Brilliant Beauty Performer"**

**Designer: Einar Ohlson**

### FACTS AND QUOTES

#### Design parameters

The Ohlson 38 has been designed according to Lloyds Scantling Rules. A number of calculation analyses have been performed which strongly indicate her outstanding sea-worthiness. These boats have been sailed around the world and crossed the Atlantic and Pacific repeatedly.

The design work on the Ohlson 38 have probably started at the end of 1967, surely upon request and inspiration by the US yacht broker and Einar Ohlson's representative, Richard 'Dick' Sheehan. The design of the Ohlson 36 had come of age by then and something new had to come to satisfy the need of the sailing crowd. Interestingly though Einar Ohlson had designed his yachts for cruisers, in the United States they were regarded quickly recognized as great racing boats due to the successful sailing of Dick Sheehan and his many "Pursuit" which he sold to clients after only a season of sailing.

The Ohlson 38 came into service in 1968-69 on both sides of the Atlantic both in Britain and on the US East Coast with great racing results.

On the Ohlson 38 many aspects were different to the previous Ohlson designs: her rudder was now separated from the keel and located on short sheg further aft allowing for an effective but smaller rudder, thus limiting wttered surface. Her hull was to be built from GRP only. To allow greatest adaptation to market needs she was available with a sloop or yawl rig. Rigs were immdetialtey adapted to the changing requirements of the then used measurement formulars, and at least five sloop rig designs became available over time which allowed for competitive racing under various measurement formulas, IOR, CCA etc. With Einar Ohlson's accessss to the test tank in Göteborg her hull had been optimized by tank testing to satisfy need of racing sailors. The GRP hull could be ordered in various versions, with GRP deck and coachroof, or the GRP hull could be finished in mahogany or teak. Two stern configurations were available to please the eye. US boats were imported and sold by Dick Sheehan.

The Ohlson 38 was repeatedly upgraded, not only the rig configurations. Individual designs were developed with a shorter cabin for a dedicated British yachts-man and in 1973 a new deck was designed with a middle cockpit and aft cabin. Unfortunatetely these design ideas were not put into practice and the standard design continued to be built until the end of 1970s.

Ohlson 38 sailing ability: she is responsive, beautifully balanced and fast.

#### Data

Length overall: 36 feet 8 inches (conventional stern)

37 feet 3 inches (reverse transom)

Length on waterline 26 feet 6 inches

Beam 10 feet 3 inches

Draft	5 feet 6 inches
Sail area	560 square feet
Displacement	15,000 pounds
Year designed	1967

### **Yards**

Hulls and other sections were laminated by the then leading GRP manufacturer, Tyler in Tonbridge, Kent, UK. Hulls were available to all yards in Europe.

Most of the early boats were built by Svinevikens båtvarv, Arvidsson & Karlsson, Sweden, the interior was finished in wood. GRP versions were built by Orvar Olsson, later Malö Yachts of Kungviken, Sweden. Most of these boats were exported to the US market. The first boat in Britain was built by Alexander Robertson & Sons, Sandbanks, Argyll, Scotland. Later then boats were built by Matthiessen & Paulsen of Arnis in Germany and Navalco SA at Le Legue-St Brieuc, France, who might have acted as agent as well.

A total of 128 hulls of the Ohlson 38 have been built by Tyler between 1969 and the end of 1970s which gives an indication of the number of total boats built. About 50 of them were sold directly by Tyler – later as well for home completion – as Tufglass 38.

Boats built in Sweden were marketed under the name of the company, Bröderna Ohlson AB in Göteborg, Sweden. In the later years Tyler delivered not only the GRP hulls and sections but manufactured the boats completely. Many of these boats were sold to the British market where these boats made a career as long-distance cruisers. Only after about 1975 was Tyler able to somehow raise attraction again for the boat by selling a redesigned version as well for DIY (do it yourself). She was marketed by Tyler alone under the name Tufglass 38.

### **Material available**

Drawings, photos of various sources, catalogues, sales documents, some video footage from YouTube, several books and articles on racing and cruising.

### **Books**

A number of authors have written about the Ohlson 38, namely US sailing legend Richard "Jud" Henderson ("The Ohlson 38, A boat for all reason", in Choice Yacht Designs) and in "East to the Azores – A Guide to Offshore Passage – Making" on his voyage to the Azores in his Ohlson 38 Kelpie.

British author Clare Francis wrote a moving book "Come hell or high water", on her participation and solo-sailing an Ohlson 38, 'Robertson's Golly' in the *Observer* Royal Western Singlehanded Transatlantic Race in 1976.

Arthur F. Chace wrote a marvellous description of optimizing performance of a sailing yacht on his Ohlson 38 in "Precision Cruising" with lots of hands-on advice on safe off-shore sailing her with best performance.

The Encyclopedia of Yacht Designers, by Lucia de Sol Knight and Daniel Bruce MacNaughton lists her and her designer.

A great racing report was published in

**The New York Times, August 9, 1972, by Steve Cady. SKIPPER A WINNER BUT BOAT IS SIXTH**

"Yet each boat in the fleet of 82 had its own story and one involving Tynaje (*Ohlson 38*) was the one this sea-going reporter observed first hand. His conclusion: Getting from Nantucket to Edgartown on a racing sail boat is more fun than on steamship but take something larger than a 38-foot sloop for your offshore debut. Sheehan (*Ohlson 38 yacht broker*), a sunburned yacht broker from Larchmont, N.Y., couldn't have been more reassuring at the dock in Nantucket. "This boat went to Bermuda in a gale and came out of it without a scratch on her", he said. "If it blows, we've got chance". "Peter Ross Jr., 15-year old son of Tynaje's owner, a dentist from Mystic, Conn., offered prediction."We'll win if the skipper starts listening to the crew". "See? Said Sheehan, a former international One-Design Class skipper with 30 years of experience astern of him."It's conspiracy. They're trying to undermine my confidence as skipper. Apart from the presence of her invited deadwood from the press, Tynaje's major handicap was a broker roller-reefing system that nearly kept her from reaching the starting line on time. "A little crisis, that's all" Sheehan said softly as crew members scrambled on the pitching deck to get the main sail shortened. When the backup slab-reefing system failed, too, less than five minutes before the gun, Tynaje had to use a main sail shortened only about a fourth as much as Sheehan would have liked. Then the hectic rush for the line, as the yachts heeled over on a port tack with their lead rails awash and the crew members standing on their ears. "One minute". "We're early". "Thirty seconds, Dick" "here we go", "It looks all right," "Fifteen, 10, go for it". Five, four, three, two – one" Sheehan tugged on his long visored black yachting cap as Tynaje moved across the line smartly in front of just about everything. "We got the best start, guys." On the opening six-mile leg to Tuckernuck Shoal Buoy, a close reach, the 18-Class IV yachts heeled far over as they pitched and bobbed like can-can dancers. Some of her class rivals, like James Grant's Irina, challenged Tynaje and were beaten back. Others eventually broke through. Nobody was concerned with the bigger boats in earlier starting classes, far up ahead and almost out of sight. There was another reach, this one even closer, some sandwich-eating, then some rough windward work as the yachts tacked toward Cape Pogue Light on the Chappaquidick shore. Tynaje played the tidal sweep off Cape Pogue cleverly and made money. Finally, the horn from the committee boat at the finish line, a rather indifferent welcome considering all those hours of work. "I'll have a beer now", said Sheehan, handing the tiller to Chase."

**Richard "Jud" Henderson, author and sailor. Book: A boat for all reasons**

..."if I had to pick one boat to own and sail for the rest of my life, it would most probably be the boat I now own, an Ohlson 38. ..the Ohlson 38 is my favorite. Of course, there are some boats that are faster, a few that are prettier, others that are more comfortable, still others that are easier to handle and maintain, and some that are better built and more seaworthy, but there are none I'm familiar with that have such a favorable combination of all these features. Perhaps the most attractive feature of the O-38 is her sailing ability. She is responsive, beautifully balanced, and fast, especially when beating to windward in a moderate to fresh breeze".

**And then here are numerous quotes of O-38 sailors....**

**Peter Ross**

"Tynaje, US 2222, the fastest Ohlson 38 of all!"

**Jim Kelly**

"Ohlson 38 the Ferrari of the Day".

"I spent over 4 years completely fitting out my Ohlson 38. Sailed her over 30 years she was a brilliant performer and beautiful both inside and outside. Her name "Slim Chance". I sold her 7 years ago, it was one of my greatest mistakes. If anyone knows of her whereabouts please let me know. I want her back".

**Daniel Fisher**

"The Immortal Ohlson 38. Video tour of one of the most beautiful performance cruisers ever built, the Ohlson 38. Introduced in 1967, it was designed by the Ohlson Brothers of Sweden, whose 5.5meter keelboats dominated the Olympics in the 1950s and 1960s."

**TOP**

**The Ohlson Project**

[www.OhlsonYachts.com](http://www.OhlsonYachts.com)

[www.ohlson38.de](http://www.ohlson38.de)

[www.sailboatdata.com](http://www.sailboatdata.com)