

# Alberg 30

*One of Carl Alberg's most successful boats, the Alberg 30 enjoyed a production run of a quarter-century.*

The Alberg 30 was in continuous production from 1962 until 1987, an impressive run of 25 years. Made the entire time by the original builder, Whitby Boat Works, production was down to a trickle towards the end of the run: only three Alberg 30s were delivered in 1984, for example.

No other sailing auxiliary that we know of has a production record of that duration, the previous record belonging to the old Tartan 27 that was introduced in 1961 but discontinued in 1979.

During those 25 years, over 700 Alberg 30s were built with virtually no substantive changes: boats built 30 years ago can race one-design with 30s built at the tail end of the run.

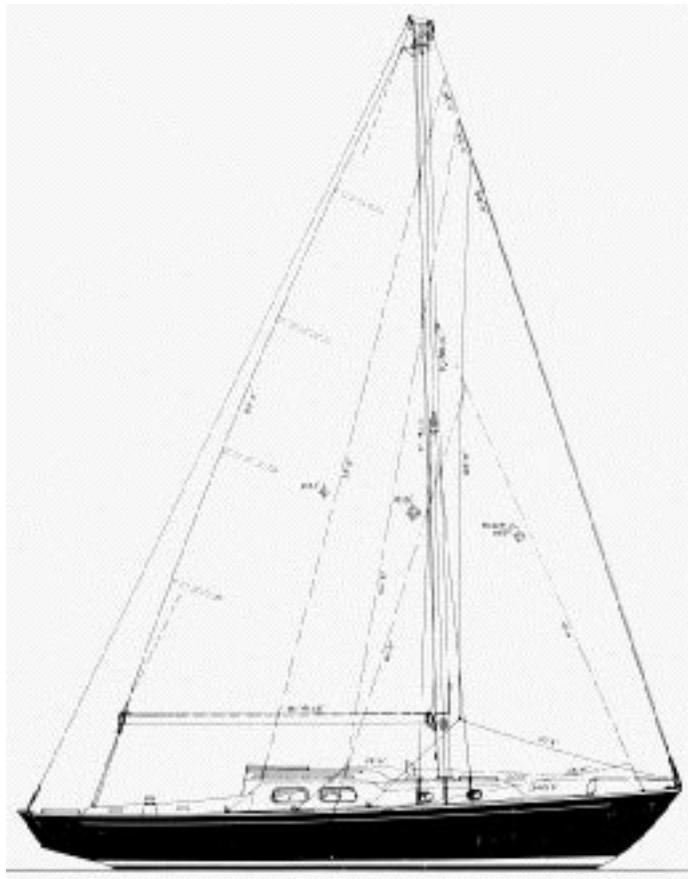
The designer of the 30, Carl Alberg, most successfully made the early transition from wood to fiberglass boat design. His 28' Triton for Pearson Yachts is credited with starting the boom in fiberglass auxiliaries (1958).

A series of Alberg designs have been the mainstay of the successful line of Cape Dory Yachts since the early 1970s.

The Alberg 30 is an adaption of a 30-footer Alberg designed for San Francisco Bay and was first built in response to a request by some Toronto sailors for a cruising auxiliary that could be fleet raced.

By the time the first boat was built, a large group of Chesapeake Bay sailors had also commissioned a fleet. Today those two areas are still the hotbeds of Alberg 30 ownership with more than 100 boats represented in the Toronto association, almost 200 in the highly active and enthusiastic Chesapeake Bay association.

Price of the first 30s was \$10,000 delivered and reasonably well equipped; 25 years later the "base price" of a 30 was about \$45,000 Canadian, or \$34,000 US at the time.



## Specifications

LOA .....	30' 3"
LWL .....	21' 8"
Beam .....	8' 9"
Draft .....	4' 3"
Displacement .....	9,000 lbs.
Sail Area .....	410 sq. ft.

## A Close Look At The Boat

Clearly the Alberg 30 is anachronistic. Her low freeboard, long overhangs, narrow beam, low aspect rig with long boom and short foretriangle base, broken cabin profile are clearly vintage, harking not just from the time of early fiberglass, but of the previous era of wood. So too is her accommodation layout: settee berths, ice box top doubling as a chart table, jammed head, and split galley.

Yet a demonstrable demand has endured for such "old fashioned" boats on both the new and used boat markets.

Owners of boats of this heritage accurately perceive that they are ruggedly built and seaworthy. At the same time, with their moderately heavy displacement and large wetted surface, they are relatively sluggish performers and, because of their short

waterline lengths and narrow beam, cramped for space compared to more modern boats of comparable overall length and/or displacement. Similarly, with their relatively slack hull sections and narrow beam, they seem quicker to heel than the more initially stable modern hull forms, although at about 20 degrees they firm up reassuringly. Ballast is encapsulated cast iron.

The Alberg 30 is well built, modestly finished, and so-so performing. Owners report a remarkable absence of structural problems that cannot be attributed to normal wear in a vintage boat. The finish and decor of the boats has undergone routine upgrading during the long production run, reflecting the changing marketplace and styles, although the 30 has never been considered to have an elegant or even especially “yachty” decor. Plain oiled teak has been commonly used topside and below, though earlier boats (pre-1970) had the more fashionable, at that time, mahogany.

Performance of the Alberg 30 has systematically suffered by comparison with newer boats introduced over the years. At an average PHRF base rating of 220, the 30 may be equated with such full-keel kin as the 28' Triton (245), the Seawind 30 (240), the Bristol 29 (225), the 32' Vanguard (230), and the redoubtable Tartan 27 (235). At the same time, the maintenance of the one-design standard of construction and absence of major changes permits excellent fleet racing as a class.

Although changes during the production run have been minimal, they are important to the prospective buyer. These include a variety of engines and, in 1969-70, the adoption of a fiberglass interior liner as well as some changes to the cockpit.

The original engine in the 30 was the Graymarine 22 hp, followed by the Atomic Four, the 10 hp single cylinder Bukh diesel, the more powerful Volvo Penta MD7A and finally the Volvo 2002.

The Gray and the Bukh reportedly are shy of adequate power for the 30 as well as not being easy (or cheap) to get parts for. The Atomic Four, as

dependable as it is, should be getting close to the end of its expected life span; repowering with the Universal diesel should be feasible, though not inexpensive.

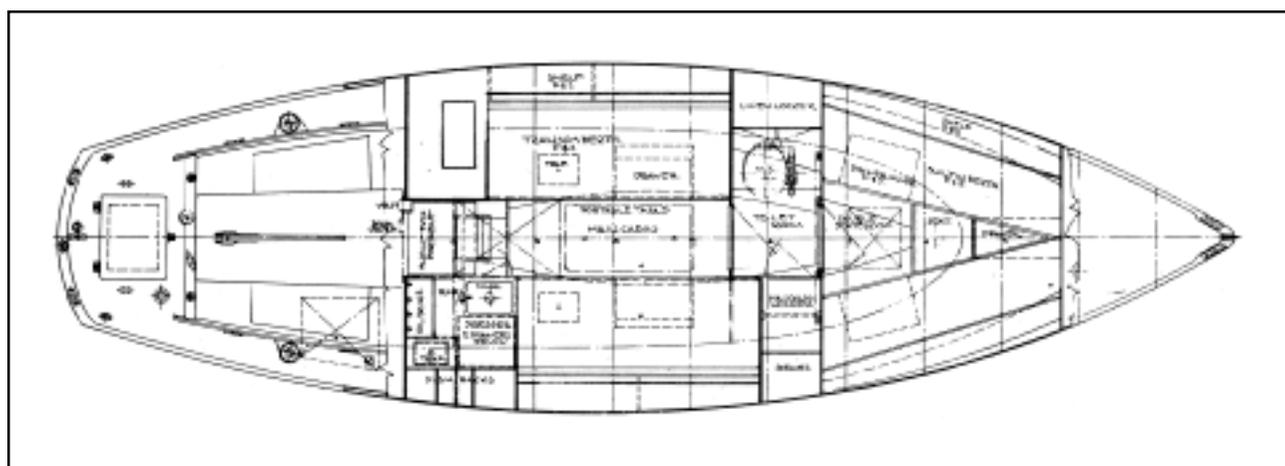
The changes in 1970, as much the result of tired tooling as of inherent drawbacks, did away with a cockpit access to the icebox (a “beer box” that melted ice at an unconscionable rate), improved the non-skid deck pattern, replaced teak plywood hatch covers, changed the hull-to-deck joint, added a seahood for the companionway, and provided the winch bases with a molded recess for handles. The wood coamings remained.

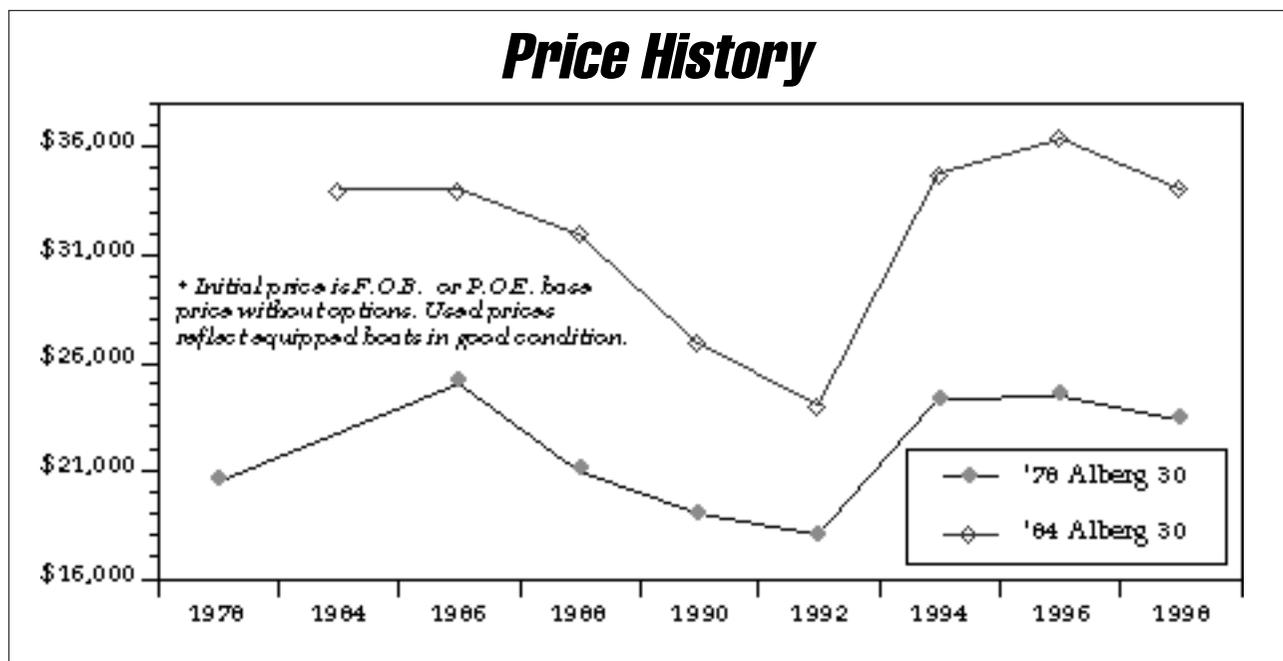
Below, per the fashion of the era and production economy, the interior became a molded component, although the most recently built boats have more teak trim.

## What To Look For

With a boat as fundamentally solid, built for as many years, as the Alberg 30, prospective buyers should feel a warm confidence in her structural soundness. The major areas of concern are the condition of her engine, rig, and cosmetics. On the basis of owner input, we'd especially check the following:

- Some rudders on earlier boats failed, the strapping pulling away from the glass laminate. It should be checked regardless of the age of the boat. Rudder bearings have also become worn on older boats, resulting in a discomfiting amount of play. The gudgeon and/or the heel fitting may need bushing. On tiller-equipped 30s the tiller head fitting is subject to wear as well as cracking.
- Perhaps the weakest part of the 30 may be the forward lower shroud chainplate fillet: a number of owners report having them enlarged and reglassed. This seems to have occurred as a gradual failure that can be anticipated; creaking and signs of separation from the hull give prior warning.
- Any engine, but particularly those in older 30s, should be carefully examined prior to purchase of a boat, not an easy task since engine accessibility is not





good. The original galvanized steel gas tanks have a history of eventually rusting through; optimally they should be replaced with ones of greater capacity (original gas, 22 gal; present for diesel, 12 gal) but this is not easy in the existing space.

- All the equipment should be checked. This includes the stove and head, but it particularly applies to the rig and deck hardware. The same mast and boom have been used on the 30 since its inception. However, earlier boats had wooden spreaders that, if original, will undoubtedly need replacement. Similarly, roller mainsail furling was standard and should have been replaced with slab or jiffy reefing (important given the 30's large mainsail and initial tenderness). Rigging swages should be meticulously examined as should tangs and spreader bases. In cases of doubt, attachments should be removed to check the condition of the spar underneath.

Given the age of many of the Alberg 30s as well as the active racing life many have undergone, owner replacements of original equipment and upgrading seem commonplace. If done to quality standards, such work has much to recommend itself to buyers.

### Price—The Bottom Line

Getting a handle on how much a buyer should expect to pay (or a seller to ask) for an Alberg 30 is difficult. About half the boats are concentrated in areas where there are strong, active owner associations. Indeed, most of the boats bought and sold in those areas are to some degree transactions involving the associations. This is decidedly to the advantage of buyers in those areas in that there is a readily available list of boats on the market, absence of broker involvement (and brokerage commissions), and a promise of continual efforts to maintain the value of the boats. For

buyers outside of those areas, we find that 30s can be bought for lower prices.

Clearly the upgrading that took place about 1970 (hull #410) has increased the value of those boats, even though the changes were perhaps more textural than substantive.

At the same time, buyers must consider the relative differences in auxiliary engines as well as the question of whether a lined hull is preferable to an interior of joinerwork.

Given the lack of real difference between the various model years, we'd look for an older boat in above average condition and save a few thousand dollars.

### Conclusions

Clearly and simply, the Alberg 30 is not a boat for everyone. A buyer has to be willing to compromise on the 20% to 25% less interior space in this boat, compared with more modern 30-footers that are just as readily available at a comparable price.

At the same time, not many 30-footers old or new seem as basically seaworthy and rugged as the Alberg. Add to these decided appeals the 30's traditional (pleasing) appearance plus the benefits of highly active, albeit localized owner associations, and the result is a boat that should appeal to a moderately large number of prospective buyers.

In buying an older boat we'd budget some refurbishing and upgrading on top of the purchase price. The boat lends itself to being retrofitted with wheel steering, good sails, polyurethane restoration of the gelcoat, some improvement to the interior decor, etc. If not done already, replacing an original old engine, improvement of the galley, and adding some amenities would make an older 30 a better boat. • **PS**