

World Cruiser Chimes in on Experience with Supreme Anchor

In 2006, *Yachting* and *Sail* magazines partnered with West Marine to test the holding power of 14 anchors in a sandy to sandy/clay bottom surface (*Sail*, October 2006). That test found the anchors with the highest holding power to be the Delta (fixed CQR), Manson Supreme (roll-bar), Rocna (Claw/Bruce), Spade (Claw/Bruce), and Fortress (fluke).

The *Sail* test results showed several newer designs had enormous holding power, were very quick to set (with full power and a scope of only 3:1), and that they were very difficult to break out.

The results convinced *PS* contributor and world cruiser Andy O'Grady it was time to try a new anchor on *Balæna*, his 42-foot gaff cutter. He decided on a 45-pound Manson Supreme.

"For 30 years, I had depended on three anchors: the plow (with lead-weighted tip), the original Bruce, and a traditional fisherman's. On *Balæna* (displacing 14 tons), we had five anchors ranging from 35-80 pounds. We use a 3/8-inch chain rode and a scope usually

greater than 5:1. We have never dragged once the anchor has been set and tested with full power astern, even in storm-force winds. Breaking the anchor out gives a good idea of how well it had been holding. It is not unusual to be unable to break it out alone."

So, over three months and a wide variety of bottoms, O'Grady tested his new Supreme in anchorages rated Good for holding.

"We were disappointed. The Supreme is consistently difficult to set and generally needs more than 5:1 scope and a prolonged gentle pull...What is more, the anchor always broke out with ease, and I interpret that to mean that it has not dug in well."

He reported that on the few occasions the anchor performed well, the bottom was fine sand with mud below. According to O'Grady, "Newer is not always better. The large number of Bruce anchors to be seen on the Norwegian coast suggests that good seaman have found them to be effective."

O'Grady's conclusion? "If you have found an anchor combination that works well for you in demanding conditions, stick with it even if tests promise something better."



PS contributor Andy O'Grady (left) built Balæna, a 42-foot gaff cutter, in 1988. He and his wife, Ulla Norlander, have sailed Balæna all over the world, including New Zealand, Chile, South Georgia, South Africa, the Caribbean, the U.S., Greenland, and Europe.