

Charley Morgan estimates that about 375 Morgan 41s were built during its production run from 1966 to 1972, though our research indicates there might be far fewer. This was a Vietnam War-era boat, so some material substitution during the production span is likely, particularly with metal components.

HULL

Like many early fiberglass boats, the Morgan 41's hand-laid, solid fiberglass hulls have outlasted many lightly built newer boats. Morgan had its own chemists to check cure rates and resin ratios at different temperatures. The company worked with fiberglass and resin manufacturers to ensure predictable results during molding.

Much of the hull's strength comes from its thick (by today's standards) layup schedule, which the CCA rule encouraged with its credits for heavy displacement and low ballast/displacement ratios. Two of the five owners we interviewed reported blister problems, though not severe. The hull skin was further supported by a "stick built" interior in which all of the joinery work is bonded to the inside of the hull, contributing to stiffness. A few bare hulls were sold as kits, and the bulkhead tabbing on these boats should be closely checked. The owner of one such boat reported that the hull flexed in heavy weather.

DECK

The main deck is plywood cored, although Morgan said balsa may have been used in the foredeck on some boats. Serious rot problems in the deck appear to be rare. The cabin top is FRP (possibly core-composite on some boats), clamped and bonded to an interior stiffening liner with a polyester filler putty. The cabin top flexes slightly when an well-fed skipper jumps on it, suggesting that some additional stiffening may be in order, particularly beneath any load-bearing hardware that may be added.

HULL-DECK JOINT

The hull-deck joint is an inward-turning flange with the deck through-bolted at 10-inch centers and bedded in a poly-

urethane sealant. The joint is capped with a teak toe rail, which is screwed in place with self-tapping screws. On the boat we inspected (Hull No. 83), some of the through-bolts showed signs of leaking, but in general, the hull-deck joint appeared in very good shape for a boat of this age. The joint was such a nuisance on one heavily raced boat that it was fiberglassed from the inside—a bear of a job.

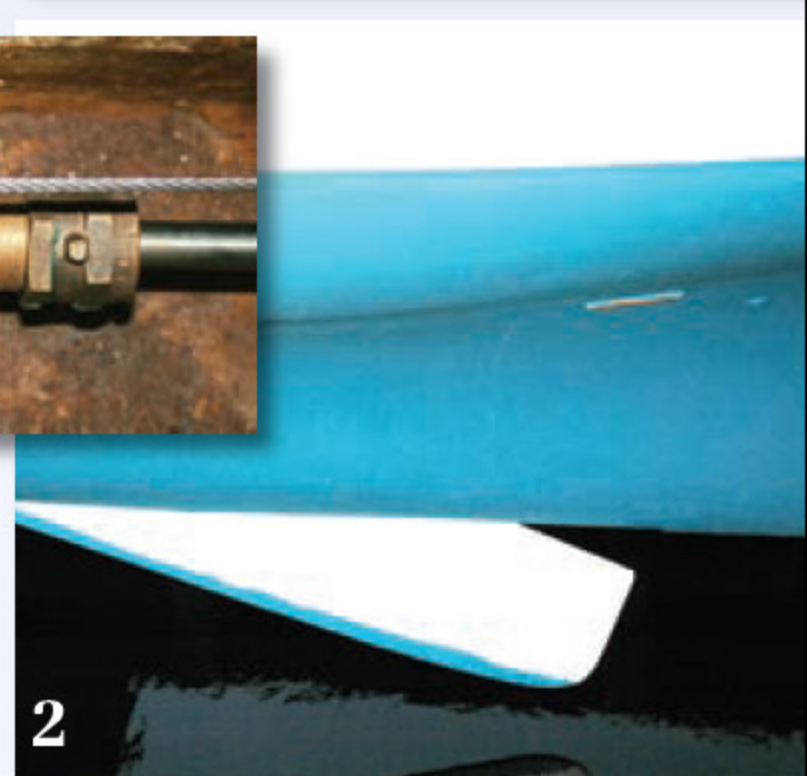
SPARS AND RIGGING

An upgrade of more than just wire is due here if it hasn't yet been carried out. The backstay chainplate fractured or broke on three of the five boats we researched. Less desirable aircraft forks are standard terminals at the mast. The original spreaders were spruce, and prone to rot. Several owners replaced the shroud chainplates as well as the horizontal mild steel I-beam to which these chainplates attach. Mild steel in the mast step is in a hidden spot beneath the head and prone to corrosion.

KEEL AND RUDDER

We heard of no unusual problems with Edson cable steering, which is easily accessible via cockpit lockers, or the rudder, which is supported by a formidable bronze shoe.

The centerboard is a different story. The lifting setup employs two sheaves (one of which is attached to a mild steel plate beneath the mast), two cables (one of which is continually immersed in water and notoriously prone to corrosion), and a stainless steel shaft (which passes aft through shaft log that is prone to leaking). Morgan 41 owners have come upon perfectly good solutions—one of which involves the simple substitution of Spectra SK75 for the immersed wire rope—but the improvements require the assistance of a professional. Access to the problem sheave is usually delayed until the mast is replaced, so the mast step of any boats which still have the original rig merit close inspection.



Construction details, from top:

1. A cast aluminum-alloy stemhead fitting and the stylish but nearly invisible port running light;

2. Centerboard partially lowered with an inset photo of an improved shaft and cable lifting system;

3. Hull-deck joint and stanchion fasteners (which could use a backing block) from belowdeck.