

On test



Photos: Christel Clear

Trintella 51A

This is the first of a new range of aluminium cruisers from the Dutch yard. Strong winds and high seas in Guernsey provided an ideal testing ground

A prominent doghouse characterises the modern day Trintella, but the range has not always been identified by such styling. In fact, since their origins in 1948, Trintella have experimented with more than looks.

Their first boats were the Trintel I and II, 28-footers with steel hulls and wooden superstructures and decks. In the late 1960s, the Dutch yard started to produce glassfibre boats, again using a mahogany superstructure.

Based on this construction technique, the yard developed a range of boats from 38 to 53ft LOA which lasted well into the Eighties.

But in 1982 Trintella launched an aluminium boat, the 44A, which was not only the first to be built in aluminium, but also the first to have a doghouse arrangement.

Both the styling and construction methods quickly gained favour and, by the end of the Eighties, the company's glassfibre production had all but stopped.

The 51A is the first of a completely new range, following the sale of the yard in 1993. The 46A, 51A and 58A are all designed to replace their similarly sized predecessors. They are all aluminium, (hence the 'A' suffix) and are all designed by Van de Stadt.

Just Beer Money opens a new chapter for Trintella and, despite the fast moving Atlantic depressions and a lively flight out of Southampton, we went over to Guernsey to thump her through some big waves.

ONDECK

Just the sight of her bright yellow topsides had us reeling a little when we first set eyes on the new Trintella 51A, but it had the effect of drawing the eye away from what is normally the most distinctive feature aboard a Trintella, the doghouse.

Angular and almost prism-like, Trintella's upper deck structures make no attempt to disguise themselves, or hide behind the overall styling of the boat. Instead they are big, bold and dramatic. If you look at the pictures and cover up the doghouse with your hand, an entirely different looking boat is revealed.

With sensible headroom and comfortable seating, the doghouse provides serious shelter from the elements. It is secure, with plenty to brace yourself against, and all round visibility is excellent.

Step outside the smoothly finished archway and the doghouse continues to dominate. For a start, the sides provide excellent hand ▷



Winds gusting up to 40 knots true against a spring tide off Guernsey were testing conditions for the robust bluewater cruiser



Technical data

TRINTELLA 51A

Prismatic coefficient	0.54
Immersion	2128lb/in 380kg/cm
Ballast ratio	36.59
Personal stowage	11.62per cent

Stowage factor: 3ft³ per person for stowage of personal effects. Factor is shown as a percentage of total volume.

Pounds/inch (kg/cm) Immersion: How much weight it takes to sink the boat parallel to DWL.

Prismatic coefficient: The ratio of volume to displacement to a volume of LWL and the maximum cross sectional area below the load waterplane. An indication of fineness or fullness of the hull.

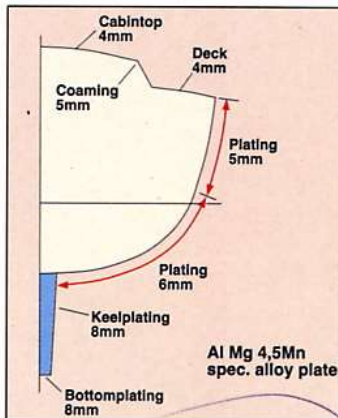
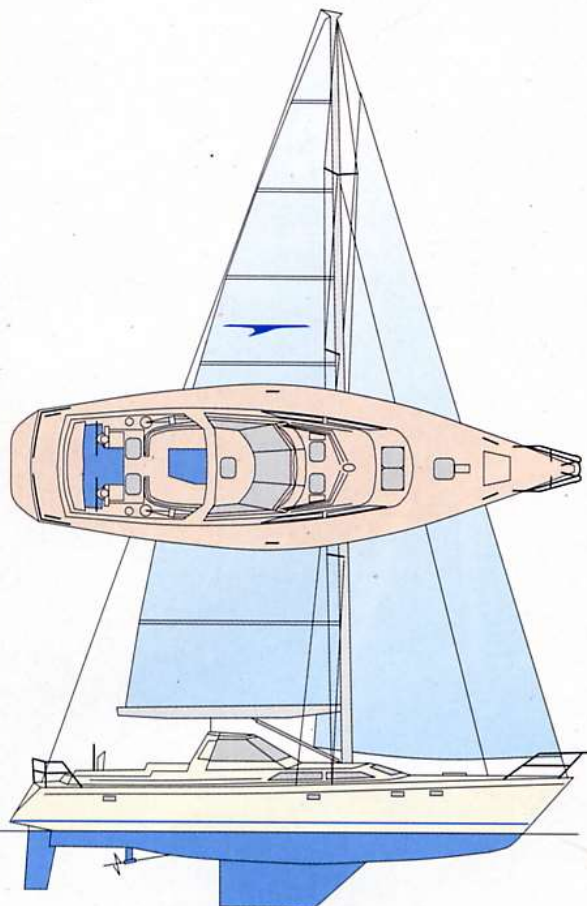
Polar diagram: Shows the optimum close-hauled angle to the true wind. Also shows speed attained on all courses. Important – consider in conjunction with the true wind speed during the test.

Sail area: displacement ratio: This ratio gives some indication of power available. Higher numbers = greater performance.

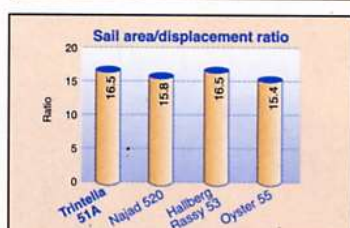
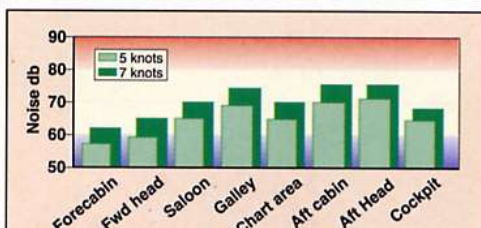
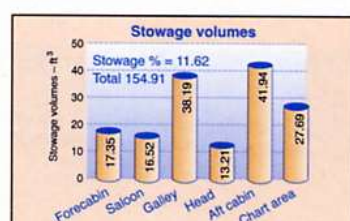
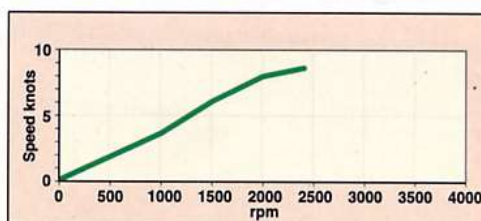
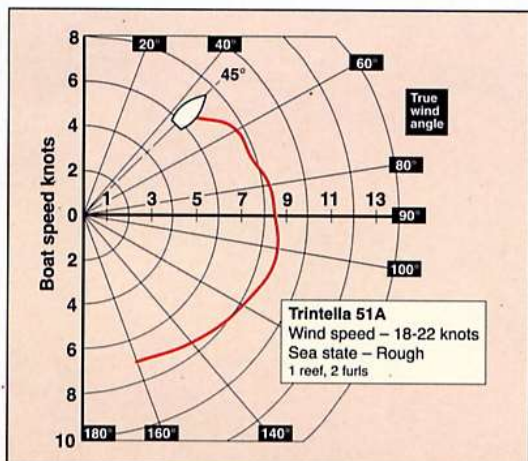
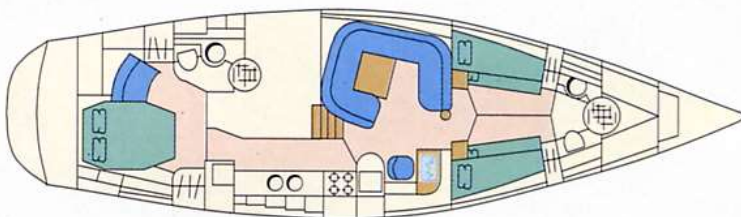
$$\frac{SA(ft^2)}{(\text{Displacement (lb)} \div 64)^{0.666}}$$

Ballast ratio: A comparison between displacement and the weight of the ballast.

Displacement:waterline length: Performance indicator. Low numbers = higher performance. (Displacement (lb) ÷ 2240) (0.01 x LWL (ft))³



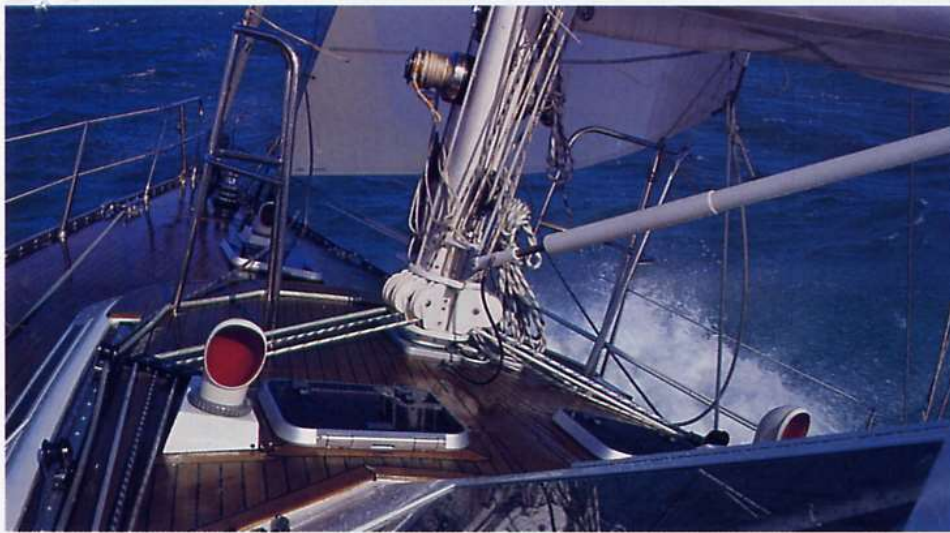
Designed by: Van de Stadt
Built by: Trintella Shipyard BV, Ertveldweg 3, NL-5231 XA, 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands. Tel: +31 73 412455. Fax: +31 73 420866
Marketed by: Transworld Yachts Ltd, Office 28, Hamble Point Marina, School Lane, Hamble SO3 5NB. Tel: (01703) 457704. Fax: (01703) 456406.



COMPARABLE BOATS

	TRINTELLA 51A		NAJAD 520		HALLBERG RASSY 53		OYSTER 55	
LOA	51ft 2in	15.60m	54ft 2in	16.50m	53ft 11in	16.43m	55ft 3in	16.84m
LWL	42ft 8in	13.00m	44ft 5in	13.55m	43ft 8in	13.31m	42ft 11in	13.08m
Beam	15ft 1in	4.60m	15ft 1in	4.60m	15ft 3in	4.65m	15ft 9in	4.80m
Draught	6ft 11in	2.10m	7ft 3in	2.20m	7ft 6in	2.29m	7ft 7in	2.31m
Disp	45,194lb	20,500kg	44,092lb	20,000kg	50,706lb	23,000kg	50,000lb	22,680kg
Ballast	16,535lb	7,500kg	15,432lb	7,000kg	19,841lb	9,000kg	13,360lb	6,060kg
Sail area	1,306ft ²	121.45m ²	1,229ft ²	114.33m ²	1,410ft ²	131.00m ²	1,303ft ²	121.18m ²
Berths	6		6		6		6-10	
Engine	Perkins 4.236 M90		Volvo Penta TMD41B		Volvo Penta TAMD41B HD		Perkins M90	
	83hp	62kW	145hp	107kW	145hp	107kW	82hp	61kW
Water	242gal	1,100lt	264gal	1,200lt	205gal	932lt	240gal	1,091lt
Fuel	187gal	850lt	154gal	700lt	187gal	850lt	120gal	546lt
Sail area:disp	16.5		15.8		16.5		15.4	
Disp:LWL	260		224		272		282	
Price (ex VAT)	£546,558		£358,298		£325,676		£434,400	

On test



Above, all the major control lines are led back to the cockpit through a bank of Antal clutches (right) to Andersen winches. Far right, reaching in 20 knots of true wind

holds, and additional grabhandles along the roof top give you something to hold onto when moving about the side decks. The mainsheet is mounted on top of the arch, keeping it well out of harm's way, but without compromising the sail handling.

The 51A has twin wheel steering which is situated at the after end of the cockpit. This enhances the secure feel on deck as you can walk safely from the companionway to the wheels without ever setting foot outside the cockpit.

The deck layout is surprisingly simple for a boat of this size, especially one that has a slab reefing, fully battened mainsail. Apart from the two mast-mounted winches for the genoa and staysail halyards, four winches are all that it takes to control the entire boat from the cockpit.

Naturally, the sheets are led back here, but so is the main halyard, reefing lines and other sail control lines. A bank of Antal rope clutches fitted forward of the winches allow them to be used for adjusting any of these controls.

The self-tailing Andersen 66s on the test boat were electrically powered, an option that is not standard, but of course added to the ease with which her ample sail plan could be handled.

Deck stowage is good aboard the 51A. No less than six cockpit lockers are situated round the main cockpit and a further huge forward cockpit locker provides enough space for sails, a dinghy, warps and fenders.

RIG AND SAILS

Although the arrangement may look conventional, the rig aboard *Just Beer Money* incorporates some of the latest thinking in rig design to good effect. The spars were built by the Dutch arm of Proctor Masts, with rigging and hydraulics by Navtec.

The rigging is attached to chainplates mounted just inside the gunwale which helps to achieve the largest possible shroud angles and

The vast engine room is cabin sized



minimum compression loads in the spar. The result is a more secure rig.

To help support the mast in the fore and aft plane, the spreaders are aft-swept, fixed running backstays are attached permanently to the deck and a set of jumper struts provide additional stability at the top of the spar.

This may sound complicated, but when considered as individual components, the principles are simple and effective.

A full-width chainplate prevents the use of large overlapping headsails and for a cruising boat this must surely be no bad thing.

The Trintella 51A has a 110 per cent overlapping headsail, balanced by a high aspect ratio, fully battened mainsail. The result is a powerful, tall rig, but one that can be easily managed.

The headsail furls on a Reckmann system and the mainsail is reefed between a pair of lazyjacks. Throughout our test, the sail plan was easy to reef, quick to change gear and



never compromised the safety of the crew during the manoeuvres. Our only criticisms involved the cut of the sails; the foot of the headsail was too long and the reefs in the mainsail too deep.

ACCOMMODATION

Long and steep drops from the deck to the accommodation are a potential problem aboard large boats and are particularly hazardous for family sailing. Access to the accommodation aboard the Trintella, though, is excellent. A series of wide steps, plus plenty of grabhandles high and low, make this part of the boat safe for adults and children.

As with any layout with character, there are bound to be as many people who hate it as there are those who love it – we loved it.

Just Beer Money has been arranged to cater for up to six people, although optional layouts are available for a crew of eight. The main saloon is amidships, the owner's cabin aft and two twin-berthed cabins forward, both sharing a head and shower unit.

"There is a common theory in Holland about interior design and the feeling of space," explained Trintella's managing director, Geert Sillekens. "Keeping angles between furniture, and walls if possible, at greater than 90° creates the feeling of space. This is what we have tried to achieve in the saloon seating aboard the 51."

Whether it is the angles of the sofa backs, which are, as it happens, greater than 90°, or the fact that the saloon seating is set at an unusual angle, or even a combination of other skilful techniques, the main saloon does feel roomy. The clever part is that wherever you stand, there are always two grab handles. ▷

On test

Photos: Christel Clear



Above, ample worktop space and plenty of stowage in the galley. Above right, saloon seating is comfortable

The second area of the boat's interior that we particularly liked was the galley. With 18.86ft² (1.75m²) of worktop space, 38.19ft³ (1.08m³) of stowage, a microwave, including a grill and ceramic hob all combined in one NEFF unit, it presents a clean, flush finish.

Galleys situated in the walkway passage always seem to start with an advantage, as bracing yourself at sea is always that bit easier. But this galley has more than location to recommend it. A vast fridge as well as another fridge/freezer unit at the other end provides ample cold storage. Two deep sinks where you can quickly and safely dump utensils, simplifies galley work, even in rough weather. An extractor fan, disguised as a drawer, slides out over the ceramic hob.

The bit that really throws you, though, is the kettle on the worktop, plugged into the wall. At first you can't work out what's different. But then you realise that there is no gas aboard this boat. The entire boat uses electrical appliances. Even the cabin heating is provided by small ceramic fan heaters.

SYSTEMS AND CONSTRUCTION

To provide all this power, a 6.5kW Whisper generator by Westerbeke, using about 1.5lt of fuel per hour, is normally used. The boat does, of course, have shore power leads as well as a main engine with double alternators as standard. Inverters are also fitted, allowing 240V to be produced from the ship's bank of batteries.

Standard fuel tanks carry 187gal (850lt) of fuel, although for those who want a watermaker, the water and fuel capacities are switched to hold 242gal (1,100lt) of fuel instead.

All the main services are fitted in a huge, well arranged, walk-in engine room. Access can also be gained through a hatch in the cockpit.

Unquestionably the most comfortable seat on board, the navigator's armchair is sumptuous



As far as her basic construction is concerned, she is built from ALMg 4,5Mn specification plate, which ranges in thickness from 15mm in the keel base to 4mm for the decks.

UNDER POWER AND SAIL

Thirty to forty knots of true wind and spring tides running against the wind in the notorious Channel Island waters made us grateful for a solidly built boat with a secure cockpit and deck layout.

Despite the fact that she is specifically aimed at cruising, she is very responsive to slight adjustments to her high aspect ratio rig. Because of the slightly unusual distribution of sail area between mainsail and genoa, the main trim has a great effect on the balance of the helm. Overdoing the mainsheet trimming and sailing with too little headsail trim can seriously load up the helm. Anyone who is used to fractional rigs will be familiar with this.

In the 18-20 knots true that we experienced to start with, this meant a typical reaching speed of between eight and nine knots. As the wind increased, further reefing was necessary, which meant that her speed remained much the same and still perfectly acceptable.

Two aspects did surprise us, however. For

such a modern boat, bristling with modern ideas and details, she feels slow to respond on the helm. It may well be that she has an acquired feel and, as an owner, you would no doubt get used to the speed at which she tacks.

Putting her about requires full lock to start with. Then, a quick reduction in the amount of helm as the bow passes through the wind, to anticipate the effect of her momentum, allows you to come out of the tack on the wind and not on a reach.

Sailing with the seas on her quarter was also awkward as she seemed prone to slew round onto a reach or skate off downwind if the helmsman was slow to anticipate.

Under power her large three-bladed propeller is driven by an 80hp Perkins engine and provides plenty of power ahead and astern. She is also one of the quietest and most comfortable boats we have ever tested under engine – a pleasure to motor.

Manoeuvring in harbour was never a problem, either, although we do have to admit to using the bow thruster to push against the strong winds, just to make life easier.

CONCLUSIONS

By the time we had finished testing *Just Beer Money*, yellow seemed to suit her perfectly and the modern doghouse seemed an essential part of her style.

She's solidly built, extremely well thought out and even comes complete with harness attachments and lee cloths as standard. There is no doubt that she is one of the most sturdy and practical boats in her class.

The Trintella shipyard employ a workforce of 35 people and build four or five boats per year, two factors which justify their claim to be semi custom producers. She costs a tidy £546,558, another factor that emphasises the tailor-made aspect of their business.

The irony is that their own ideas and details are so good that, at least among the first few 51s sold, she may as well be a production boat for all the changes each owner has asked for. □

