

## Centurion 32

If you reckon the typical Fulmar price tag looks high, you might consider stepping back a decade and having a look at an equally attractive 32-footer that did well in the early '70s. The Holman and Pye-designed Centurion 32, built by the French yard Wauquiez, sold in large numbers (around 400) and several found their way over to the UK.

When this series first hit the news stands, PBO reader David Weisfield was quick to write in. I'd already intended to list the Centurion among my Top Ten favourites (Holman is, in my opinion, one of the all-time great designers) and David's comments provided encouragement. He wrote: 'I have had my Centurion 32 for about 15 years and would have great difficulty in parting with her. They don't often come up for sale in the UK, as most owners feel the same. Rather than trade up to a larger boat we have recently decided to refit for the 2010 season.'

'The interiors of most Centurions up to 35 years old have withstood the test of time and the woodwork and joinery are usually still in superb condition. The vital statistics of the Contessa 32 and Centurion are similar but the Centurion's slightly deeper topsides provide a better interior layout.'

'There are many accounts of long voyages on Centurions. About three years ago I had a chat with a young German couple on a Centurion 32 at Cowes. I asked how long it took them to sail over. They said three weeks; they had just arrived non-stop from Antigua! While in Australia recently I heard of a Centurion 32 in Sydney that had been sailed there by a couple from Lymington.'

### Good looking

The Centurion is arguably the prettiest of the 32-footers.

Holman was an artist and most of his designs look sublime.

She has a gentle sheer and classic tumblehome on her topsides. Her dimensions are typical of her era. Like many others

(Sadler, Contessa etc) she sticks to a 7.32m (24ft) waterline length on her overall length of 9.98m (32ft 9in). So bow and stern overhangs are long and elegant. Her 2.97m (9ft 9in) beam is enough to get ample space into the saloon, yet not so much as to encourage twitchy handling when well heeled. And of course her longish fin keel and tab provide directional stability.



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**ABOVE** An elegant design, with long bow and stern overhangs

**LEFT** The Centurion's woodwork stands the test of time

Lighter than the later-designed Fulmar, she weighs in at 4,354kg (9,600lb) while her 2,000kg (4,409lb) ballast is more than the Fulmar's. She also draws around 15cm (6in) more. All in all, these vital statistics explain why the Centurion has such a great reputation as a heavy weather boat.

This seaworthiness is confirmed by another owner, who posted on the web: 'I have owned a Centurion 32 for five years. She has had new rigging, winches

and a new engine this year. The interior is original and in excellent condition. She is a solid boat, and yes she likes wind – lots of it – and is very fast in the right conditions when other boats are giving up... if you want a yacht to go anywhere this is a good one.'

### Class act

The Centurion is a well kept secret on this side of the Channel. But she's a class act. Of course, as with any yacht of this age, you will need a survey and should assess the cost of engine and rigging replacement; just in case this becomes necessary. But even if you do need to invest in replacement gear, you won't be throwing good money after bad. These beauties are worth maintaining; examples in good condition should always sell quickly.



David Harding

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