

## Midget 31

# Midget 31

**Mike Kopman  
heads to Holland  
and discovers a  
capable boat with  
a big heart**

**D**ouble-enders are a bit like glacé cherries: you either love them or hate them. I believed I fell well within the second category but I have to admit, this stout little ship has a charming quality that is hard to ignore.

The Kloet brothers have been building glassfibre yachts in Holland since 1959. Their small family business prides itself on building quality boats the old-fashioned way – no staple guns here. The 31 is a development of the popular Midget 26, of which 150 have been built since 1980. Forty Midget 31s have been launched since 1990.

The Midget 31's hull is unashamedly derived from the Baltic sloops of the early 1800s. The generous beam is carried well into the ends, resulting in a hull with lots of volume and buoyancy. In plan she is almost symmetrical about her mid-sections.

## On deck

Beautifully made teak-slatted seats and floor give a solid and secure feel to the cockpit. Large, deep, and comfortable, it is well protected by a sprayhood. There are two shallow cockpit lockers and a large self-draining lazarette incorporating the gas-bottle stowage. The huge teak tiller sweeps over the lazarette hatch and dominates the aft end of the cockpit. The mainsheet is conveniently within reach of the helmsman, with a short track running across the bridgedeck. To port of the companionway is a winch and jammers for the main halyard, kicker and

topping lift. Mainsail reefing is done from the mast. All winches are handsome stainless steel Andersens.

Solid teak handrails on the coachroof extend well forward of the mast, which is stepped in a stainless steel tabernacle. An optional mast-lowering kit allows the rig to be stepped or unstepped by two people in about 20 minutes.

The foredeck is a delight for anchor handling, the full bow giving an enormous amount of space on deck. The anchor is stored on a substantial custom-made stainless steel roller, allowing it to drop clear of the bow, while a step built into the pulpit eases boarding over the bow.

## Below deck

Descending the solid teak companionway (the heavy steps are removable and should be secured) we were struck by how much space there is in this compact little boat. The Midget is unusual in that the saloon is positioned forward, just abaft the chain locker. The full bow sections mean there is enough space for a large U-shaped settee not often seen on boats this size. This arrangement allows the companionway, galley and nav table to be moved forward, resulting in the big cockpit and spacious aftercabins. The saloon table can be pivoted to each side and also lowered to form a large double berth. Overall, the joinery is of excellent quality, lovingly crafted from Burmese teak, and the interior is very well put together.

The galley, to starboard of the companionway, is small and has limited

work surfaces. We felt it was too open for safe working in adverse conditions, with little for the cook to brace against. A strap and a safety bar in front of the cooker would be essential. Stowage space around the galley is also a little scarce.

Opposite, to port, is a very generous heads compartment. There was no shower on the test boat, but this is available as an option. An oblique, aft-facing chart table is just forward of the heads, unfortunately resulting in no space for flush mounting instruments on this shared bulkhead. The table itself is big enough for a folded chart, and has good storage inside it, but we found the swing-out seat arrangement uncomfortable.

Both aftercabins have double berths and hanging wardrobes. A single-aftercabin version is also available, giving a cavernous cockpit locker and an even bigger heads compartment. We saw this arrangement aboard a Midget 26 under construction, and the heads rivalled many 35-footers!

Lifting the floorboards reveals the kind of bilges only found in traditional, full-keeled hulls, seldom seen on modern production boats. A deep sump over the encapsulated keel will trap any water shipped, while a separate sump collects any oily spills from the neat, easily serviced 23hp Vetus engine installation.

## Under way

We headed out from the Royal Netherlands SC, in the 1,050-year-old town of Muideren, on a blustery day with the wind gusting to Force 8 and a nasty chop. Powering into the



Photos: Graham Smeek



**Far left: you won't find a saloon like this aboard many 31-footers. Left: the galley lacks stowage and is not secure at sea. Above: the large cockpit is well suited to both socialising and sailing, and is one of the boat's strong points**



# YACHTING MONTHLY Tested



Photos courtesy Global Yachts

teeth of this, the Midget made slow but steady progress, porpoising a little in the short sea. We hoisted the main with two tucks and unrolled a number three's worth of jib. The Midget gathered way and assumed a slow, comfortable motion in the difficult conditions.

Her manners were just what you'd expect: predictable and forgiving. The easy motion, oversized tiller and large, transom-hung rudder give one the sensation of helming a much bigger boat. Considering the tiller's length, she was a little heavier on the helm than we expected. Perhaps because we're so accustomed to the sharp motion of today's flat-bottomed boats we found the Midget's motion remarkably

gentle, especially considering it wasn't the kind of day on which you'd readily go to sea. (Our camera boat had to turn back!)

Putting the helm over, she gently came around and found her feet on the new tack. It was difficult to measure tacking angles in the conditions, but she seemed happiest upwind at around 45°, maintaining a steady 5 knots. With helm lashed and headsail backed, she lay ahull admirably, taking the large seas just off the bow. Off the wind, she picked up a knot, touching 6.5 with the wind just abaft the beam. She did wander a bit and wasn't comfortable sailing too deep, but with the large quartering swell and her full double ends, this isn't surprising.

She will not surf like a contemporary boat, but many will see this as an advantage. Her solid build and seaworthy design leave little doubt about her ocean-crossing competence.

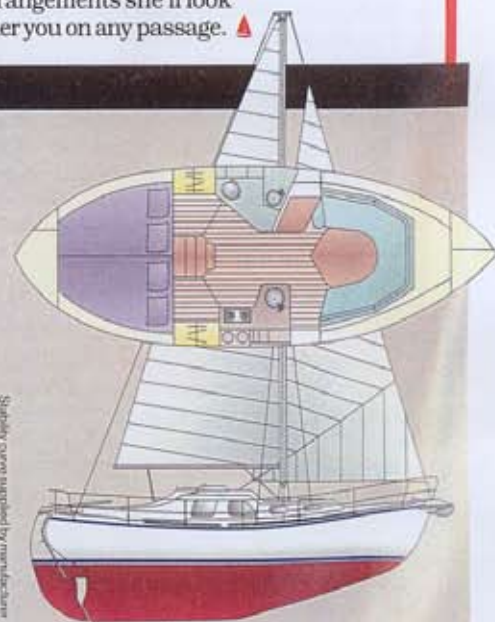
## Verdict

The Midget 31 is not likely to break any speed records, but then she probably won't break much at all. She's solidly and thoughtfully built and demonstrates clever use of space. If you like heavy-displacement, full-keel double-enders, she is an appealing boat. With a few minor changes to her sail controls and stowage arrangements she'll look after you on any passage. ▲

## MIDGET 31: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Price inc VAT</b>	£71,681
<b>LOA</b>	9.55m (31ft 4in)
<b>LWL</b>	7.80m (25ft 7in)
<b>Beam</b>	3.10m (10ft 2in)
<b>Draught</b>	1.35m (4ft 5in)
<b>Saloon headroom</b>	1.93m (6ft 4in)
<b>Displacement</b>	5,400kg (11,911 lb)
<b>Ballast</b>	2,400kg (5,294 lb)
<b>Sail area</b>	<b>Main</b> 21.30m <sup>2</sup> (229sq ft)
	<b>Jib</b> 18.10m <sup>2</sup> (195sq ft)
	<b>Genoa 1</b> 28.20m <sup>2</sup> (303sq ft)
<b>Engine</b>	23hp (33hp option) Vetus
<b>RCA Category</b>	A
<b>STIX number</b>	31.6
<b>Contact</b>	Global Yachts, Tel: 02380 456788; email: info@global-yachts.co.uk www.global-yachts.co.uk

STABILITY CURVE FOR MIDGET 31



Stability curve supplied by manufacturer

## Construction

The Midget's hull is moulded in a split female mould, incorporating the keel. The lay-up is solid GRP. A foam core is used in the deck laminate to add stiffness. The rolled-edge deck is then laminated to the hull, the joint covered with a substantial teak strip and stainless steel rubbing strake.

**For:**  
Sea-keeping  
Space  
Build quality

**Against:**  
Lack of galley stowage  
Chart table  
Deck gear 'niggles'