

**CLASSIC PLASTIC** BY BARBARA MARRETT

## All Business on All Oceans

Forward thinking and a reverse sheer put the able Albin Vega in a class of her own

PER BROHÄLL BASED HIS DESIGN for the Albin Vega 27 on the classic Swedish skerry cruiser, and although the boat is unremarkable in appearance, the more than 3,000 built between 1966 and 1978 are the measure of his success in creating an affordable, fast, seaworthy vessel.

The Swedish-built Vega's full keel with cutaway forefoot helps her track well, and she balances perfectly under properly trimmed sails. "It's like owning a sailboat with training wheels," says delivery skipper Bear Johnson. "Of all the cruising boats I've sailed, the Vega has the best sailing characteristics." She's an all-weather boat, responsive in light air, and capable of handling squally offshore conditions. She's quick on a reach or downwind, and fast passages are one of her trademarks; an Albin Vega once held the record for a boat her size crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Many have circumnavigated.

The hull is solid laminate, and the deck and cabin trunk are of sandwich construction with a PVC foam core. Gel-coat blistering hasn't been evident. However, some owners have experienced deck compression under the deck-stepped mast. Others have reinforced the main beam and vertical supports as a preemptive measure.

The iron-ballast keel is encapsulated in 1/2-inch fiberglass, with a hollow in the after section for the bilge sump. The rudder is seated to a fitting on the keel. In a few instances, owners have reported the stock separating from the rudder's fiberglass skin.

After 25 to 35 years, expect the rubber gaskets around the ports to need replacing. The deck is through-bolted to an internal flange on the hull with a rubber seal in between. This joint has had occasional problems with leaks.

Recommended upgrades include replacing the gate valves on the through-hulls with seacocks, fitting larger primary winches to replace the Lewmar 8s, and replacing deteriorating foam-backed hull insulation.

The Vega hasn't compromised seaworthiness for volume below; she's comfortable



The Albin Vega is large enough to carry a couple comfortably around the world but small enough to fit the budget of a beginning weekend sailor.

for no more than two adults for extended voyaging. Her hardwood furniture and a small kerosene heater give the interior warmth. Vega owners boast about their excellent storage—over 32 lockers! The interior's main drawback is the low headroom of only 5 feet 10 inches, except in the companionway and under the main hatch.

Original equipment in the simple galley included an icebox, a two-burner Origo alcohol stove, and foot pumps to deliver both salt and fresh water to the sink.

In the main cabin, the two settee berths can be converted into one roomy bed, and the standard forepeak has two berths. A head and sink are to starboard forward of the main bulkhead.

Before 1971, Vegas were fitted with a 12-horsepower

Albin gasoline engine. Later models had a 10-horsepower Volvo diesel, then later still a Volvo 13. Most boats have been repowered, a variety of engines being used.

Vegas seem to develop character and subtle differences with age. At a recent rendezvous in the Pacific Northwest, I met up with nine Vegas. Among them were single-handed circumnavigator Tony Skidmore's *Lorna Doone*, completely refitted with a custom interior, and *Siliqua*, still with her original gear. In North America, a good used Vega sells for \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Detailed information—and many replacement parts—can be obtained via links on the excellent Albin Vega website ([www.albinvega.com](http://www.albinvega.com)).

Barbara Marrett is a *Cruising World* contributing editor.

### Albin Vega 27

LOA	27' 1" (8.25 m.)
LWL	23' 2" (7.06 m.)
Beam	8' 1" (2.46 m.)
Draft	3' 10" (1.17 m.)
Sail Area	341 sq. ft. (31.7 sq. m.)
Ballast	2,020 lb. (918 kg.)
Displacement	5,070 lb. (2,305 kg.)
Ballast/Disp.	.40
Disp./L	182
SA/Disp.	18.5
Water	17.5 gal. (65 l.)
Fuel	6 gal. (23 l.) gas or 9.4 gal. (35 l.) diesel
Designer	Per Brohäll

