

FEATURED SAILBOAT • SEAWARD 32RK

The Seaward 32rk was born from the desire of boat builder Nick Hake to have a sailboat that could make sense in the waters of Nick's home state of Florida. There, warm, pristine waters are everywhere. However, water deep enough for a fixed keel sailboat is not as common, particularly in the unspoiled, out-of-the-way places Nick and his family sought, since they lived and worked in congested southeast Florida.

To complicate Nick's fantasy, he also wanted to take the family across the Gulf Stream occasionally, a sometimes-challenging, 65-mile ocean passage, to island hop through the Bahamas. And maybe put the boat on a trailer and haul it to Maine one summer to escape Florida's heat.

Obviously, his dream has become a reality. But when it was still only a dream, there were sailboats that could do quite well in the shallows. Also, there were boats that could handle a rough Gulf Stream crossing. But the shoal-keeled boats designed to sail the flats quickly became ungainly in open water, and the deep-keeled, offshore boats quickly got stuck trying to navigate inshore passages. There were no boats that could do both well.

The Seaward 32rk became a reality for Nick about nine years ago when Hake Yachts, LLC of Stuart, Florida, introduced the first 32rk at the Annapolis Sailboat Show in 2001. The boat is unique and quite fascinating. It sails well in shallow water as well as offshore. An additional appeal to sailors is the boat's ability to retract its foils and put its nose up on a sandy beach.

The heart and soul of the boat is a clever, vertically retracting keel that moves up and down according to the whim of the captain. The key word here is "vertical." It doesn't pivot or swing or fold. It goes up and down in a trunk, much like a dagger board on a small sailboat. If the water is shallow, an electric motor brings the keel up to proper draft. The keel has a 2,000-pound, solid lead, torpedo-shaped bulb at its lower tip, making it possible to also control the boat's stability by moving the ballast where it's most needed. If the wind pipes up and you're in deep water, putting the keel further down stiffens up the boat considerably.

Nick even uses the keel like an electric anchor in shallow water, lowering it until it hits bottom. This keeps the boat stationary while the family takes a swim or a walk on the beach. The keel has a range of draft from six and a half feet to 20 inches, and can be positioned anywhere within that range to suit sailing conditions. The rudder moves vertically as well, and is set manually to match the depth of the keel.



For more information

For more about the Seaward 32rk and 26rk call 772.287.3200 or go to www.seawardyachts.com.

The beauty of the moving keel lies in its simplicity. Moving parts are few: a drum style winch driven by a 12-volt motor is housed in a fiberglass compartment on deck, far from any salt water. The keel itself is hung by quarter inch stainless cable, routed through bronze turning blocks attached to the upper portion of the keel. All the moving parts are dramatically engineered, and designed specifically for a saltwater environment. The system has worked so well that Hake Yachts introduced an almost identical smaller sister to the 32rk, the 26rk a few years after the first 32 was launched.

Since the boat has a minimal draft of 20 inches, it goes on and off a trailer much like a 28-foot powerboat. No marina help is needed. Putting the mast up and down is something a sailing couple can easily do with the help of Hake's optional mast raising gear. Nick says it takes about an hour from launch to sailing, and with the boat's on-board winches doing the heavy lifting, no strenuous physical effort is necessary.

The Seaward 32rk is a thoughtfully conceived and well crafted sailboat, and includes a great many niceties as standard equipment. Included in the base price are: full battened mainsail, roller furled 135 Genoa, three cylinder Yanmar diesel, Andersen stainless, self-tailing winches, electric refrigeration, wheel steering, large head compartment with separate shower, two burner stove, catbird seats in the cockpit as well as a hot and cold cockpit shower and more.

"Sail Without Boundaries" is the Hake Yachts tagline that appears in their advertising and stationary. It seems to sum up their boat and their philosophy quite nicely.