



30 DAYS SUBSCRIBE ↓

- › [Subscribe to Sailing World](#)
- › [Give a Gift Subscription](#)
- › [Get the Digital Version](#)
- › [Renew My Subscription](#)
- › [Featured Retailers](#)

SAILING WORLD

[Log in](#) | [Register](#)

GEAR EXPD REGATTAS SAILBOAT GEAR EXPD REGATTAS RAC

[Photos](#) | [Videos](#) | [Blogs](#) | [Regatta Calendar](#) | [Contests](#) | [Forums](#) | [The Pin End](#) | [Marketplace](#) | [America's Cup](#)

Follow Us: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

[Email \(/Forward?path=node%2F154531\)](#) | [Print \(Http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php\)](#) | [Share \(Http://www.addthis.com/bookmark.php\)](#)

[Comment \(/Sailboats/beneteau-first-367-2002-boty-best-value#comments\)](#)



OCTOBER 25, 2001

Beneteau First 36.7 - 2002 BOTY Best Value

A fast racer/cruiser from Farr Yacht Design

By Lynn Bowser

Related Tags: [Sailboats \(/Sailboats\)](#) | [Review \(/Content-types/review\)](#)

If you're shopping for a racer cruiser in the mid thirty-foot range and you want to get a lot of bang for your buck, then the 36.7 is hands down your best bet. With a starting price of \$107,400 including basic electronics but less sails and spinnaker gear, this will be a hard value to beat, racing or cruising.

Following on the heels of their success with her big sister the 40.7, Beneteau continued the pedigree by selecting Farr Yacht Design to draw the lines for the new 36.7. The Farr office has an extensive and impressive record of winning race results and is widely acknowledged as one of the top racing yacht design firms in the world. And it really shows. Under way the First 36.7 springs to life. We test sailed her in the Chesapeake out of Annapolis following the fall Sailboat Show. The wind was blowing from the prevailing southerly direction at 12 to 18 knots true. Upwind the helm feels balanced and the boat has an overall powerful, smooth feel. The fine hull entry forward exhibited little tendency to pound into the moderate one to two foot chop we encountered. At 11,552 pounds displacement this boat is no ultralight. However, with a generous 655 square foot working sail plan and a large gennaker, she was responsive to sail trim and rudder movements both reaching and

running downwind. Although the conditions didn't warrant it that day, it felt that with little effort this boat will break loose and surf under spinnaker in the open ocean.

Beneteau has wrapped a bundle of high quality gear, several unique features and many creature comforts into a neat package. With a racer/cruiser, it's a delicate balance between the wants of designer, builder, and buyers; compromises must be made. The more subtle the execution, the better the effect. It's obvious that this boat carefully addresses the needs of buyers who want to be able to race competitively at the one-design or club levels yet still cruise in comfort. The slight compromises which have been made to both racing requirements and cruising amenities have been done correctly and in all the right places.

Stepping onboard for our dockside inspection, the first thing we noticed was the cockpit layout. A raised and extended traveler track forward of the helm allows for plenty of mainsail travel running in a breeze and room to induce proper twist in the light stuff upwind. The mainsheet lead angle when the traveler's dropped down like this makes it difficult to release, but this can be easily remedied with a ratchet block not connected to the traveler car.

The aft portion of the cockpit seats are easily-removable lockers which open the cockpit up into an efficient T-shape providing ample crew space for racing maneuvers, a feature Beneteau first developed on the 40.7. There are also practical molded-in footrests for the helmsman as well as up forward for foredeck crew. The teak rails on the sheer provide for firm footing when working to leeward but are an uncomfortable obstruction for hiking outboard. With a little ingenuity and a wood plane, they could be shaved down should the more serious racer desire. Speaking of the serious racer, if you do want to get a little more aggressive, then you'll spend a little more cash. According to Beneteau, the full tilt racing model with a deeper keel—7.2 foot draft versus 5.9 foot—a three-spreader, aluminum, Sparcraft rig, Navtec rod rigging, Tuff Luff headstay system, spinnaker gear with a carbon fiber pole, and a fresh suit of racing sails will set you back an additional 30 thousand. That's not bad for this level of performance and comfort.

The judges were unanimous in commenting that a better backstay adjustment system will be a requirement to race competitively. The best solution here would be to add hydraulics and be done with it. We also felt that the non-skid could have been more aggressive.

Organizationally, the boat already has a valid IMS rating certificate on file and by collaborating with Farr Yacht Design and adhering to strict weight controls a provisional set of rules for a one-design class have been proposed.



© Walter Cooper

beneteau01.jpg

 [Enlarge Photo](#)

http://www.sailingworld.com/sites/all/files/imagecache/enlarged_image/_images/200312/beneteau01.jpg



Walter Cooper

Upwind is where the 36.7 really shines.

The 36.7 is American made at Beneteau's recently expanded factory in Marion, South Carolina, but her interior has a distinctly European influence. Proceeding down below, we discovered the companionway ladder to be one of the best we found. It's not too steep and has wide curved treads that will be safe in a seaway. The interior plan is well laid out with an obvious emphasis on cruising. Racers will be pleased by the attention given to the removable dining table. Once removed, a brace is left in place to provide a hand hold and to also separate sails stowed atop the laminated cabin sole. To port, the galley is large for this length of boat has an appropriately-sized countertop sporting fiddles that are a full 3" deep. These fiddles are substantial and will definitely keep things from spilling off. The nav station to starboard is spacious and the forward head adequately sized. Twin, mirror image, aft staterooms have large double berths, hanging , and privacy doors. This is sure to be attractive for boat partnering where equal staterooms are a plus. One concession we noticed is the forward vee berth. It is minimal for two averaged-sized adults to sleep in but is a perfect spot to put the kids. All of the onboard systems such as the Volvo sail drive, the DC electrical panel and plumbing runs were properly installed, cleanly led and neatly bundled. The nicely crafted woodwork is done in African manogany which has an evenly applied cherry stain with a high quality varnished finish. The literature we were given states that this "design incorporates a variety of innovative features at an incredible value." Being a custom boatbuilder myself, it's honestly hard to fathom how they build this boat for the price it's being offered. Beneteau says that with their proprietary construction methods they need to hit a production rate of 70 boats per year to make the numbers work and if they build 100 they'll do just fine. It looks as though they have hit the targeted market on most points and shouldn't have difficulty reaching their goal. With a high boat-to-dollar ratio, the First 36.7 is sure to yield a lot of value for the buyer's dollar, along with some silver as well.

Beneteau First 36.7

LOA 35.1 ft.

Beam 11.5 ft

Draft 7.2 ft.

DSPL 11,552 lbs.

SA 655 sq. ft.

www.beneteauusa.com

0 Comments [Post a Comment](#)
 (#comments)

ARTICLES RELATED



**FROM THE
ARCHIVES**

MAY 07, 2012

Twenty Years of J/24s (/racing/twenty-years-of-j24s)

Jeff Johnstone looks back at the boat that "started it all" for his family's company. From our April 1997 issue.

Rating:

</racing/twenty-years-of-j24s>

Related Tags: [Anniversary \(/keywords/anniversary\)](/keywords/anniversary), [J/24 \(/keywords/j24\)](/keywords/j24), [Boatbuilding \(/racing-topics/boatbuilding\)](/racing-topics/boatbuilding), [Keelboat \(/boat-types/keelboat\)](/boat-types/keelboat), [Racing \(/racing\)](/racing), [Sailboats \(/sailboats\)](/sailboats), [J Boats \(/boat-brands/j-boats-0\)](/boat-brands/j-boats-0)



**FROM THE
ARCHIVES**

APRIL 16, 2012

The Tale of the Comet (/sailboats/the-tale-of-the-comet)

This hard-chined 1932 design has a storied history. From our April 1995 issue.

Rating:

</sailboats/the-tale-of-the-comet>

Related Tags: [Anniversary \(/keywords/anniversary\)](/keywords/anniversary), [Comet \(/keywords/comet\)](/keywords/comet), [Sailboats \(/sailboats\)](/sailboats)



</sailboats/the-j70-gets-real>

MARCH 29, 2012

The J/70 Gets Real (/sailboats/the-j70-gets-real)

by [/sailboats/the-j70-gets-real\) Dave Reed \(/no-index/credit/dave-reed\)](/no-index/credit/dave-reed)

The first two hulls of J/Boats' small keelboat hit the water this month in Bristol, R.I. SW's Dave Reed hopped on board for a test drive.

Rating:

Related Tags: [Sailboats \(/sailboats\)](/sailboats), [J Boats \(/boat-brands/j-boats-0\)](/boat-brands/j-boats-0)