

An interview with Bob and Deborah Sholtes

With so many options available, how did you decide upon the Seawind 1160?

We shopped every catamaran in the 35 – 40' range; new and old; and nothing met our needs like the Seawind 1160 Lite. First and foremost, she is a sailboat, but one we can comfortably live on and that has features we didn't see on much larger and more expensive boats. Finding the "right" boat is a matter of both knowing how you intend to use the boat, where you intend to sail, and the conditions you expect to encounter. We knew the answers to these questions and that helped to prioritize the features that made the 1160 Lite just right for us.

Did you test or inspect any other catamarans during your research, how did they compare?

Almost four years ago, when owning a cruising catamaran went from dream to a planned goal, we started researching catamarans on-line and started attending the Annapolis boat shows. Our next step was to complete the ASA training, which we did as a family on a Lagoon 440, completing the series of 101, 103, 104, and 114 in one intensive week. That experience helped us understand that in order to make a final purchase decision, we needed to sail boats from different manufacturers and with different layouts – most importantly helm position. We sailed boats from three different manufacturers with fly-bridge, partial fly-bridge, and dual aft helms. None of these setups seemed ideal – either because of potential safety concerns (e.g. trying to climb steps in rough seas), the sense of isolation (especially fly-bridge and aft-helms), or lack of space in which to have more than two people participate in sailing. The boats we sailed had different configurations of salon and cockpit but all had duplicative table set ups in both the cockpit and the salon. The Seawind configuration of lounge with table and outdoor space with a different seating arrangement makes the Seawind feel like a much larger vessel. Each space is unique and can be blended by opening the doors. There is no need for the duplicate table and seating as the salon can feel like cockpit dining or lounging if that is what you want. We also appreciated the lighter weight and lower windage of the Seawind 1160 Lite compared to the other boats we considered.

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Through all this exploration, we kept coming back to the Seawind, which on paper, seemed to address all of the things we found we didn't like about the other boats we'd been looking at.

Finally in 2016, there was an 1160 Lite arriving in the Miami boat show (along with another 38' vessel from one of the big French builders). We made plans to attend the Miami show and finalize our decision. Stepping on the Seawind, it immediately felt like we were home. The twin helm setup at the bulkhead that had always appealed to us intellectually proved to be better than we had dreamed. The seating options at the helm offered so much flexibility based on operating (sail vs power) and weather conditions, plus it offered continuous connection with guests on board. The galley down design offered more work space and storage than on the 44' cats we had chartered, plus it offered ventilation and a fantastic view while still being easy to use while underway. Having two queen sized berths on a boat, one in the island configuration helped make the boat live larger than her 38' length would imply.

They say every boat is a compromise. So far, we haven't felt like we have compromised anything. We own a great sailing boat that is very comfortable underway and on the hook. We are able to do this at a price that was less than any of the other boats we considered.

How much time did you spend researching and planning your new cruising lifestyle?

4 years ago: Made the decision that owning a cruising catamaran was in our future

3 years ago: Obtained ASA certification, purchased an old mono-hull to confirm we liked being boat owners and to improve sailing and boat maintenance skills

The next couple of years, we chartered as often as possible, learning our likes and dislikes in a live-aboard environment; attended boat shows.

1 year ago: Narrowed our decision down to two boats. Attended a show and test-sailed. Made the final decision and put down our deposit. Roughly one year after we made the decision, we took delivery of our boat, S/V Seven Day Weekend.

Now: We are happy Seawind owners looking forward to fun and adventures for years to come!