

# The Colgate 26, A Purposeful Trainer

by Bill Lee

**W**hen we first stepped aboard the **Colgate 26**, we were most impressed by the boat's large cockpit. The trade-off involves minimal accommodations, even by pocket-cruiser standards. But consider this: The pocket-cruiser group is unique to our Boat Of The Year line-up in that, while some pocket cruisers are suitable for extended passages and long-term living aboard, others are evaluated also on their ability to serve as building blocks to a sailor's big-picture aspirations. I feel it is extremely important that sailors learn to sail on fine-sailing, well built quality boats in which form follows function. Pocket cruisers often are trainers and we were most impressed with how well this exceptional Jim Taylor design met its objectives.

Four students and one instructor are the anticipated complement of sailors. The forward part of the cockpit is long enough to allow one person at the tiller with room still for three more adults on the weather side between the



Billy Black

helm'sman and the back of the cabin. Cockpit seats continue aft of the tiller and there is room for an instructor or more guests behind the traveler.

The forward end of the double-ended mainsheet leads to a barney post in the center of the cockpit. The aft end leads to a cam cleat on the traveler which is just aft of the tiller and easily accessible to the instructor, giving him emergency access to the mainsheet or the tiller. The other benefit of this

mainsheet arrangement is that a student seated just aft of the traveler has a perfect view up the leech of the mainsail while controlling at the same time the traveler in one hand and the mainsheet in the other.

Wire lifelines run aft from the conventional bow pulpit to just behind the mast. There they join solid tubing rails about 18 inches high that run aft and lean well outboard. These are strong and convenient to grab, and they add security when the boat is heeled.

The interior is hardly a palace, but certainly there is enough of one to fit the bill on a camping-style overnighter for four. Of course a boom tent and warm weather are strongly recommended.

When people fly in for a week of sailing instruction, the show must go on whether it is blowing five knots or 25 knots, and this boat sailed really well through a wide range of conditions in our on-the-water testing. The fractional mast has good bend characteristics and there are no runners to worry about. The rudder is extra large to ensure excellent control under the most difficult conditions and in the hands of the most novice sailors.

Our actual sailing bore out these observations. The cock-

**Steve and Doris Colgate's new trainer offers great performance, a big cockpit and camping accommodations.**

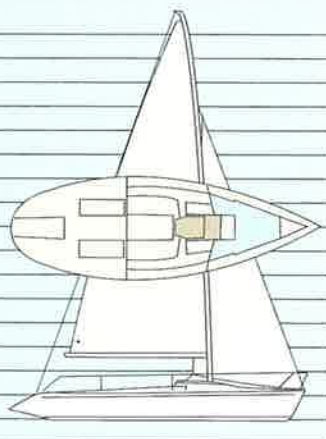
pit design really shows its stuff beating to weather, with good secure foot bracing across to the leeward side. As soon as the boat heels, the rail seating, cambered subtly, assumes the perfect angle to keep you up on the high side without sliding down into the cockpit.

After going to weather for a while, we set a spinnaker and away we went. One of the things that impressed me most about this little boat is the sense of security it offers. Some boats require that you be strong as a gorilla and agile as a cat, but this cockpit is secure and efficient, definitely a user-friendly place to be.

Not only did I find the Colgate 26 to be a good trainer but also I found myself applauding her for being an excellent sailboat in her own right. The vessel appears very indestructible relative to most modern sport boats and I found aboard her excellent glasswork and construction quality with good attention to detail. At approximately \$24,000 with a trailer she represents tremendous value on today's market.

## Colgate 26: Best Pocket Cruiser Award

LOA: 25'8" (7.83 m.)  
 LWL: 20'0" (6.10 m.)  
 Beam: 8'6" (2.62 m.)  
 Draft: 4'6" (1.37 m.)  
 Ballast: 1,050 lbs. (476.3 kgs.)  
 Disp: 2,600 lbs. (1,180 kgs.)  
 Sail area: 283 sq.ft. (26.3 sq.m.)  
 Mast above DWL: (36"10" (11.3 m.)  
 Ballast/Disp: .40  
 Disp/Length: 145  
 SA/Disp: 23.9  
 Fuel: Locker for Portable tank  
 Water: Opt tank  
 Holding: Porta-potti  
 Auxiliary: Bracket prvd'd, outbd opt  
 Cabin headroom: Sitting  
 Designer: Jim Taylor  
 Price As Tested: \$24,000



**Steve and Doris Colgate  
 Offshore Sailing School Ltd.  
 16731 McGregor Blvd.  
 Fort Myers, FL 33908  
 Phone (941) 454-1700**