



Why I love J/22s

Jeff Eiber, Crew, Cleveland, OH

On windy days it's physically demanding to trim the jib and chute, and hike hanging on to the jib sheets. It's a thorough workout—it's never like a boring session lifting weights, and it's much more worthwhile than hanging over a lifeline like a piece of wet laundry. Because the hull is easily heeled by weight placement, in light air correct weight movement during roll tacks and gybes is rewarded with good boat speed. And in a straight line light air sailing, small adjustments in weight are critical for speed. You're not just sitting on your ass doing one job. You have to be on your feet, feeling the heel of the boat and constantly moving to maintain top speed by steering with your weight while focusing on going the right way. Heavier boats with static crew are just much less satisfying since the crew rarely move as a team to respond to small changes in heel angle. With just two or three crew, you need to be doing a couple things at the same time all day long. The more you can think about and do, the quicker you get around the course. The J/22 is sailable in a very wide range of conditions so you'll rarely go to a regatta and sit out an entire day of sailing because it's too windy or too light or the waves are too big. When you commit to a J/22 regatta, you know you're going to get a couple or more days packed with sailing.

Terry Flynn, Quantum Sails, League City, TX

When I got the note from Chris about my favorite things I like about the J/22 Class, I thought, how easy is this? BEER, Regatta BEER, Cold BEER. But then I started to think a little deeper, and so my answer would have to be Paul's wife. No that would make Julie jealous, so I guess I better not put that in the article. But to get a bit more serious, it has to be the people. Going to a regatta in the J/22 Class is more like a family reunion. This Class seems to attract the nicest sailors. I remember (as my kids say) back in the day, having all the kids playing together at regattas while the adults had a few cold ones, going over the day's events. Now most of them are sailing and own boats of their own. The Class has done a great job of starting debriefs after the day's racing, and this helps improve the whole Class but also makes it a friendlier group.

Greg Fisher, College of Charleston, Mt. Pleasant, SC

I enjoyed my first regatta in the J/22 in 1982 (or was it 1983?) at the North Americans in Marblehead. While there were only nine boats at that early event, there sure was talent (Kenny Read for one!), and it was obvious that the J/22 was a great boat with a tremendous future. Since that point, I have sailed 4 Worlds, probably 8 or 9 North Americans and 9 or 10 Midwinters. I have been long sold on the qualities of the boat—it's fast, easy to race with family (most of my racing includes my wife Jo Ann and my daughter Martha). While the J/22 demands some careful tuning to reach top speed, the Class's enthusiastic and supportive sailmakers have laid out detailed guides on step-by-step set-up. The Class organization has always been first class...and has obviously contributed to some great years of growth. Chris and Julie Howell have always not only been totally engaged in every event they attend, they have religiously worked above and beyond to ensure everyone and everything is well taken care of. I think their support has meant a lot to the J/22 Class. Now I am the Director of the Sailing program at the College of Charleston. Interestingly enough, one of our fleets of 54 sailboats is comprised of 10 J/22s...over 25 years old! How many one design classes can boast that kind of durability!? These boats have the original rudders, masts and deck hardware... the spreaders and bulkheads were reinforced and that is all that has been updated since they were placed in service for our very busy sailing association. By the way, these boats are used almost daily for our PE classes, our recreational program, and we hold 5-8 regattas a year where they are raced hard...pretty impressive that they are still our cornerstone of our entire program. While there are a number of one designs out there (some recently introduced), few have the history, the longevity and the management that has always made the J/22 such a superb boat to race. Count me in for a bunch more years! And by the way, we just ordered 10 more new boats to be delivered next fall, and I am convinced this is the wisest decision I've made at my new job here with the College of Charleston!

Brad Julian, 36, former college sailor at USMMA, Annapolis, MD

When asked “What makes you like the J/22 over other alternatives?” I always find myself summing it up with four main themes: they are relatively low cost, simple, highly competitive and full of great people. We bought our J/22 (USA 677) when I was in my late 20s, shortly after getting married but right before kids—I guess a time in life when you find yourself with a little bit extra spending money coming in but, at least for most of us at that age, you’re not quite “rollin’ in it.” After taking several years off from sailing since college and moving back to the Annapolis area, we were looking to get back out on the water—but in a sort of grown-up, yet still beer-drinking down-to-earth class with strong numbers and solid competition. The J/22 was the obvious choice. In fact, I don’t think we even looked at other classes all that seriously. With over 1,600 boats in production in the US since the 70s, it means there is a large secondary market for used boats. Between the used market and the cost-conscious Class Rules (like no exotic high cost sail materials, or construction compounds, etc.), it makes the fleet very affordable even for those who may still be wet behind the ears from college. The simplicity of one design, trailer-able, and well-built boats was also attractive to me to keep the maintenance issues at bay. However, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that behind the simplicity is still a rather sensitive and finicky platform that takes lots of time and practice to learn how to squeak every ounce of speed from. In fact, even with a junior sailing and college sailing background, it took more than a couple of years to get to the point where I think we can be just as competitive, speed and boat handling wise, as those who have been dominating the Class for a long, long time! That brings me to the last point about the people. Not only does the J/22 help you sail with your friends (and if you’re lucky your spouse or children), but there is also a great mix of “old guard” who pass down knowledge to “middies” such as myself (with a few years now in the Class but not quite double digits yet) and those who are just starting out. But no matter what phase of class evolution one is in, I am always impressed with how well the group gets along on and off the water.



Tom Linville, Chief Measurer, Weems, VA

What’s so great about a J/22? In a word, it’s a very versatile sailboat, in the sense that it’s suitable for all aspects of sailing. It spans whatever sort of sailing you aspire to, from junior training in a keelboat, family day-sailing, community or club sailing programs including fleet racing, right up to serious regional regattas and high levels of competitive racing at continental and world levels. This is proven by the facts that the J/22 is THE keelboat chosen by many sailing programs as well as major international competitions. So it has a universal appeal. Why is this so? There are many factors, beginning with affordability—one can find good used boats starting around \$5,000 with sails and a trailer. While these are good for routine sailing, some may need a few upgrades, such as hull finishing and new sails, in order to be suitable for local competition. Excellent used boats in racing condition can be found for around \$8,000, and all-up new boats with new sails and trailer cost about \$35,000. Given the type of performance the J/22 delivers, there is hardly a better bargain available among one-design sailboats. That last term is significant, as the Class Rules enumerate specific characteristics that keep all the boats virtually identical, so that older boats compete successfully against the very newest ones. The boat is easy to sail, as it is exceptionally responsive as well as very stable, and it is quite rugged and safe. If handled properly, it is safe in fairly significant wind strengths, e.g., up to 25 knots, and if knocked down it has wide enough decks that it will not swamp, and will right itself. This stability is the result of being a sturdy keelboat, yet it handles like a dinghy. Simply stated, this boat is FUN! In addition to just being a great boat to sail, it is easily trailerable. It weighs less than a ton fully-rigged, and a mid-size car can tow it quite easily, although most serious road travelers opt for a pickup truck, van, or SUV. It is generally launched from a hoist, but there are trailers designed for ramp launching. To top off the boat itself, there is the association of owners—the International J/22 Class Association. It pays to belong, as you can keep up with all the Class news including scheduled events, results, rules and specifications, tips for maintaining, handling, racing your boat, etc. The Class is managed by owners who volunteer for office, and administered by an exceptional professional Executive Secretary. And, if you travel around the Class to local fleet events or major regattas, you will find a very congenial group of sailors, many of whom will become your long-time friends. This group

includes weekend sailors up to sailing professionals, all of whom thoroughly enjoy the J/22, and will go out of their way to make the boat enjoyable for you too. Some of us have been sailing various one-design boats for over 50 years, and know that the J/22 is the best of them all! It's just a perfect design and a truly GREAT LITTLE KEELBOAT!



The ladies love the J/22 too!

Sandy Adzick

This will be my 18th year sailing a J/22, and I am still loving it! I found a boat that reacts quickly, has the response of a small dinghy, but also has the comfort of a keelboat. I can plane and surf down 7 ft. waves, and the next day have the hiking stick lightly balanced between three fingers as I steer my way upwind in a 6-8 knot breeze. The J/22 is easy to ready for travel and small enough to trail behind my SUV to the next away regatta. It's a boat that is easy for teaching, from the first-time sailor to those who want to refine their racing skills. Women and men of all ages can skipper and crew together on this boat. I usually sail with a total of four on board, the more the merrier, and still under the maximum crew weight. There are many times I race with an all womens' crew, and we can be just as competitive as the men on the race course. It is the fun that my crew and I have on and off the water that really defines what sailing a J/22 is all about! It's a great group of sailors who enjoy the camaraderie, the competition, the helpful hand, the sharing of knowledge, and the fun of sailing that day.

Leandra Kern

While sailing the J/22, you enjoy the best of many worlds. The boat is large enough for a comfortable crew of 3-4, and small enough to easily trail. Subtle and continuous adjustments in sail shape, rigging, and steering are imperative to compete on this boat, which also allows for quick and agile maneuverability. The J/22 Class is a competitive group of sailors who love to travel and race in all different locations and conditions.

Sue Mikulski

Folks of all ages have fun on the J/22—juniors to seniors. It's an affordable boat for family fun and club sailing with a simple choice of sails, sailing with 3 or 4 people, and is easy for all women crew as well. It's very diversified, as the J/22 is found with high level competition such as the NAs in Michigan last year, team racing, and of course a terrific match racing boat. A talented sailing friend told me in big breeze, just drive it down with the kite up and she'll hum and purr, and it is so true. The J/22 is very much a dinghy but easy to control, and a terrific boat to learn on. Great for all levels.

Hilary Armstrong

I like to race J/22s because they are relatively comfortable; and being a bow person, I like the toe rail on a J/22. It helps me know where the boat's edge is which helps me to stay on it! I like it because the team works so closely together. The close proximity allows for more and better communication and creates more camaraderie.

Sara Crawshaw

I enjoy the J/22 more than other boats because it's easy to maneuver and can sail nicely in light and heavy wind conditions.

Vicky Tai

I like that you can have people of varying skill levels sailing it, and each position still has an integral part to sailing the boat well. It has a little of everything—weight distribution, spinnaker work, sail trim—for a boat that is so responsive to all of these things, it keeps it exciting.