

Words & pictures Graham Snook

The new 340 has a bowsprit, twin rudders, twin helms and no chart table, a bold move from a traditional Swedish builder. Graham Snook went to see how it adds up

HALLBERG-RASSY 340

FIRST TEST



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Oceanis Yacht 62



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SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE	Hallberg-Rassy
MODEL	340
PRICE FROM	SEK 2,218,080 £197,645 inc VAT
DESIGNER	German Frers
BUILDER	Hallberg-Rassy

Magnus Rassy has an invisible weight on his shoulders. Every new boat Hallberg-Rassy produce bears his name and the first of each new series is named after very first boat he built – *Rassher*. Hallberg-Rassy is not just a name, it's an approach, a collection of features that have developed over time, ideas you'll find on every Hallberg-Rassy being built in the small town of Ellös on the island of Orust, on Sweden's west coast. The new 340 replaces the HR342, which sold 329 boats. She sports a fixed bowsprit, a fold-down transom and twin rudders. This is not the first time Hallberg-Rassy has shown these features; they were seen last year on HR's new 44 (tested YM, March 2017), the sales of which have pleasantly surprised Magnus. The question is, will the 340 be equally successful?





The cockpit is long, and aft of the fixed windscreen is an area that can be used for charts

handholds, and substantial window) with good windscreen (with opening cleats forward, middle and aft. The 340 also has other features that are becoming more common, such as lines being brought further back in the cockpit, a fixed bowsprit and through-shroud sheeting. The cockpit coaming is deep, chunky and gives good back support, and there is teak step on top of it. The seating is

It used to be the case that, if she's a Hallberg-Rassy, she has a teak deck. On the 340, however, the teak deck is optional. There hasn't been one built yet without tree-covered decks though. The deck has everything one expects to see on a Hallberg-Rassy: handholds running forward of the mast, decent teak-capped toe rails that drain below the water level, a fixed glass

DECK LAYOUT

Under engine, at 2000rpm, she made 5.6 knots comfortably. From driving a powerful car that is built for comfort and speed, responsive, in a graceful manner, similar to the feeling one gets weight – albeit a little more than I like – is smooth, and she's She has a nice feel to the helm, the Lewmar steering has providing plenty of grip. she remained composed and in total control; her twin rudders she lost little speed despite heeling past 20°. Despite all of this and even when pushed, with around 20 knots of apparent wind, With full sail up she recorded good speeds in all conditions northern end as it funnelled through the surrounding hills. true in the south of the fjord, but 15-18 knots toward the toggle switch. The wind on Ellösefjorden was light, 10-14 knots the genoa using the optional electric furler was just a flick of a Raising her Elvstrøm EpeX mainsail was easy and unfurling best to break through my many layers of winter clothing. It was a bitterly cold morning; the ice on the pontoon was as slippery as a freshly caught eel. A brisk Force 4-5 was doing its

PERFORMANCE

The 340 is the first Hallberg-Rassy to offer twin wheels, although as standard she is fitted with a tiller; all of the first eight yachts ordered have opted for twin wheels. The wheels make movement through the cockpit, to and from the fold-down transom, easier, as well as markedly improving visibility forward to see where you're going and keep an eye on the genoa telltales. The backstay makes moving from one wheel to the other a little awkward though, as there's also only 35cm clearance between each wheel and the 1:48 backstay. The helm seats, outboard, are a clever design; the coaming remains at full height (28cm/11in), and while the seats aren't particularly wide (28cm/11in) they are long enough and provide a comfortable and sheltered seat, feeling like you are sitting in the cockpit rather than on the deck. It isn't the most spacious of helm positions, located as it is, immediately forward of the fold-down transom, but it's not bad for a 34-footer with twin wheels. Set in the coaming forward of the port helm is a handy switch panel for navigation lights, electric furling and windlass, and forward of each wheel is an excellent grab handle that makes passage to and from the helms easier.

AT THE HELM

1.67m (5ft 5in) long to the wheel pedestals (1.79m with a tiller), so there's plenty of room to move about the cockpit and tend lines without having to move people. The Lewmar 40ST winches are within easy reach of the helm, and can also be used by the crew. The mainsheet can be attached to an eye in the sole, or, as track – which gives only 34cm of travel. With the boom out, the mainsheet passes over the Lewmar 30ST winches for the lines from the mast – so restricting access to these and the genoa winches makes trimming the sails a little awkward. Deck storage is good, with a lazarette locker beneath the sole between the wheels. It has a partition to separate the liferaft from the gas bottles – it did mean one has to lift the liferaft out in order to deploy it as there's no access from the transom. The cockpit locker to starboard has a false base, beneath which you'll find the calorifier, heater, and accumulator tank, as well as room for less frequently used items such as antifreeze and outboard oils. Two-part moulds are used to make the locker lids, so they have a smooth finish inside and out.



THE 340 IS THE FIRST HALLBERG-RASSY TO OFFER TWIN WHEELS

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

The hull has a Divinycell foam core sandwich to below the waterline, with solid laminate surrounding the keel. The inner frame is both bonded and laminated in place. The hull has a keel stub to take the loads from the T-shaped lead keel, while also providing a decent bilge sump. The bowsprit, too, is laminated as part of the hull.

Bulkheads are laminated into the hull before the deck is added. The deck is foam-cored along its horizontal surfaces and solid laminate on vertical surfaces. It is bonded and laminated onto the hull and bulkheads and the hull/deck joint is then concealed under a hefty, teak capping rail that runs the length of the toerail.

The optional teak deck is made on a deck jig first and then bonded to the deck, so no holes are drilled in the deck. The teak is vacuum-bonded onto the deck. The teak starts off at 10mm thick, but by the time it's sanded it's around 9mm, a generous thickness, considering there are no screw heads to wear down to.

RIG & SAILPLAN

The 340 has a Selden twin-spreader discontinuous rig with split lower shrouds, which gives good access forward and a tighter sheeting angle for the genoa. This boat had the optional electric Furlex furler controlled by a toggle switch in the panel in front of the port helm. Once set, the furler locks, and you just need to switch the angle of the headsail foil from tack to tack.

Forward of the furler is the substantial built-in bowsprit, made to take the loads from a code zero or asymmetric spinnaker.

The mainshet is at floor level. A strop between the block and helm this means passing between the wheels and the backstay. The traveller would have been nice, or if the jammers for the traveller were raised to seat level, just so one doesn't have to reach down to floor level every time they want to adjust the sheet. For the

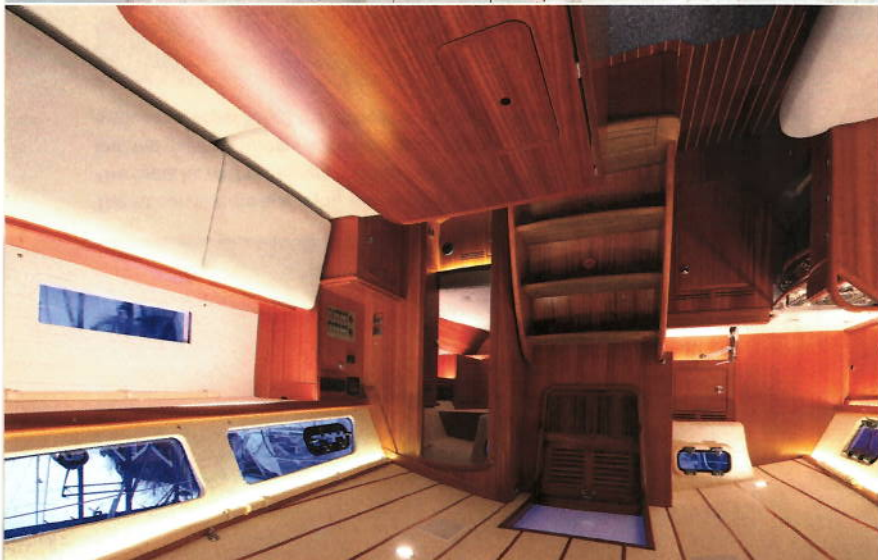
ACCOMMODATION

The 67cm-wide (2ft 2in) bare teak companionway steps are flanked by solid varnished Khaya mahogany, giving a clue as to the quality and craftsmanship down below, and will be familiar to anyone who's been onboard a Hallberg-Rassy before.

"Making a Hallberg-Rassy look more modern is difficult. It has to feel like a Hallberg-Rassy; it has to be familiar to Hallberg-Rassy owners but also feel contemporary," explains Magnus, as we relax in the salon. The mahogany gives it a lovely warmth, and the seating is comfortable whether sitting for dinner or lounging afterwards; the cushions have three layers of differing density foam. But like all Hallberg-Rassy yachts, it is the quality of the impeccably finished solid wood that sets them apart – and pushes the price up.

Where on some boats one might find a 0.8mm iron-on strip of veneer around the table edge, on the 340 it's 34mm strips of solid wood. So too are the corner posts in the cabinetry, the fiddles, and the cupboard door edges. There are few places where

The companionway steps are broad and provide bracing for the narrow galley



There's a handy ventilated shoe locker under the bottom companionway step



The joinery, around the head of the forward cabin berth, features lots of solid wood



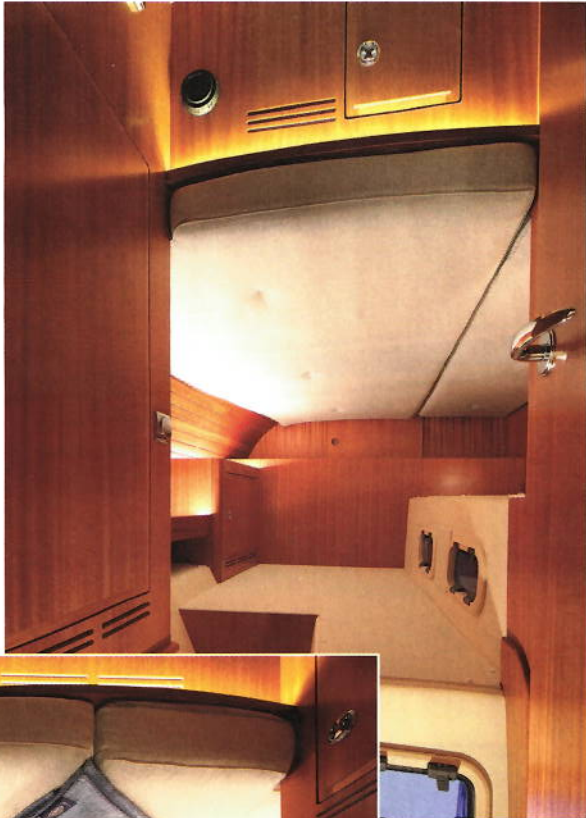
The saloon is large and light, with modern Hallberg-Rassy styling. The seats have three layers of foam providing support and comfort, and the galley is narrow but offers good bracing. Using the sink its a squeeze, especially if the stove is in use at the same time



The table has bottle stowage for 10 bottles inside



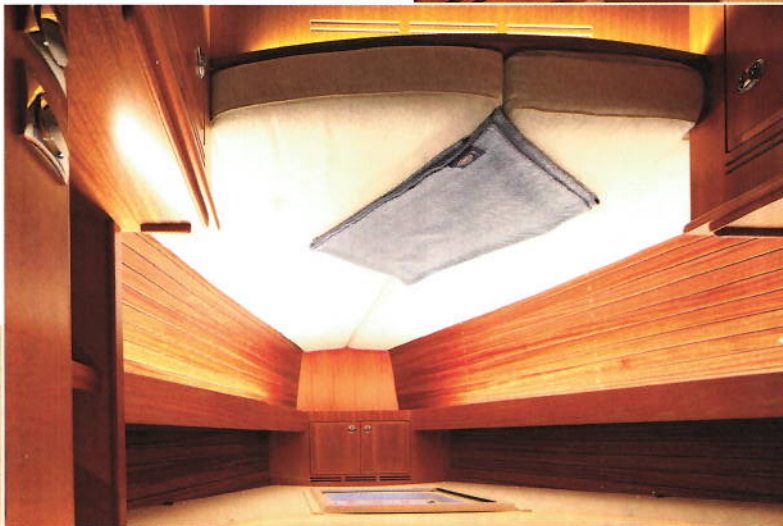
Her broad hull makes the aft cabin wide. The forward-hinged locker outboard is easier to access from the saloon than inside the cabin



The shower curtain keeps the toilet dry



The forward cabin is like a cocoon of beautifully finished mahogany. Both berths have a neat fiddled shelf at their head



APPARENT WIND ANGLE ** APPARENT WIND SPEED

POINT OF SAIL	AWA**	AWS**	SPEED
Run	180°	5.5-9.6 knots	5.0-5.4 knots
Broad reach	120°	9.8-13 knots	6.2-7.0 knots
Beam reach	90°	11-13 knots	6.6-7.3 knots
Fetch	60°	12-15 knots	7.0-7.6 knots
Close hauled	30-32°	13-17 knots	5.7-7.1 knots



The anchor locker has a handy shelf for extra storage forward



The mainsheet traveller doesn't offer much movement but eases access aft



043
R 340

SHE FEELS LIKE SHE'S BUILT FOR BOTH COMFORT AND SPEED



accessible stowage for bedding. There is direct and diffused LED lighting overhead. They can be switched off and the overhead lights can be dimmed, too.

The hull windows are set into white painted ash panels. These are a bit too low to give a good view when sitting in the salon, a view and add to the ambient light.

Like all the hatches and portlights, these are clear, to bring in as much light as possible. To starboard is a handy pop-up TV on a gas strut mechanism.

There's stowage under the forward end of the L-shaped seating to port, but tankage for water and fuel takes up the rest of the underseat stowage space. The table is beautifully finished and opens out to 1.0m x 1.2m (3ft 3in x 4ft 1in), and there's bottle stowage for 10 bottles in its central section.

The helm position is sheltered and cosy. It has all the helm needs within reach of either wheel

The heads have a composite stone surface where a sink is neatly inset. The shower is an extension of the tap nozzle, which pulls out. There's no separate shower compartment, although there is a shower curtain to reduce the amount of wiping down afterwards. There was a lack of handholds in the heads, and I'd miss them using the heads in rough conditions.

The salon is large, with each bench seat over 2.0m long (or 1.83m/6ft with the forward seat backs in place). The seat backs can be lifted up to make the berth wider or provide quick,

forward you won't be disturbed.

The forward cabin door didn't completely close off the cabin from the salon. When closed, it had a 6.5cm (2.5in) gap at the base and a 9cm (3in) gap above – this has now been reduced to 5mm at the base and 3cm above. There's still a 16cm (6in) gap outboard, at the top, to allow for the hatch outboard to open. Because these gaps, it didn't stop sound, light or draughts coming from the salon. Now, it's hoped, if you're sleeping

opposite the heads, though this is concealed behind the cabin lockers to starboard: one in the cabin, the second in the corridor book/Pad/glasses in place overnight. There are two hanging shelf area – the fiddles aren't that high, but enough to keep a windlass motor. At the head of each berth is a handy fiddled (7in) berth, and meet at a locker which houses the Lewmar V2 art of which is stowage. Shelves run the length of the 2.0m (6ft) hold them up. Beneath you'll find the retractable bow thruster, – as are the hinged bunk boards beneath, with string and clips to sides, which not only look great, but are excellent for ventilation

The hull sides of the forward cabin have lovely slatted wood of varnish, with all other features having six equivalent coats. wearing areas: floor, table and grab handles etc. have eight layers veneer, varnished and sanded until it's baby smooth. Hard-

you can't see solid mahogany in some form or other.



PRICE AS TESTED	£2266,900 Inc VAT
LOA	10.95m (34ft)
HULL LENGTH	10.36m (35ft 11in)
LWL	10.10m (33ft 2in)
BEAM	3.47m (11ft 5in)
DRAUGHT	1.90m (6ft 2in)
DISPLACEMENT	5,980kg (13,145 lb)
BALLAST	2,300kg (5,070 lb)
BALLAST RATIO	38.5%
DISPLACEMENT	Length 162.3
SAIL AREA	63.7m ² (685sq ft)
SA/D RATIO	19.7
DIESEL	188 litres (41 gal)
WATER	277 litres (61 gal)
ENGINE	29hp
TRANSMISSION	Saildrive
RCD CATEGORY	A
DESIGNER	Gerrán Fers
BUILDER	Hallberg-Rassy
UK AGENT	Transworld Yachts
TEL	023 8045 4000
WEB	Hallberg-rassy.com

FACTS AND FIGURES

PROS	Excellent build quality
	High coaming at helm
	Large saloon
CONS	Backstay bisecting helms
	Lack of elbow-room in galley
	Gaps around forecabin door

HALBERG-RASSY 840

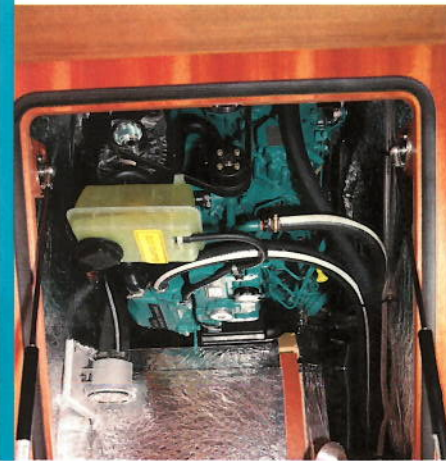
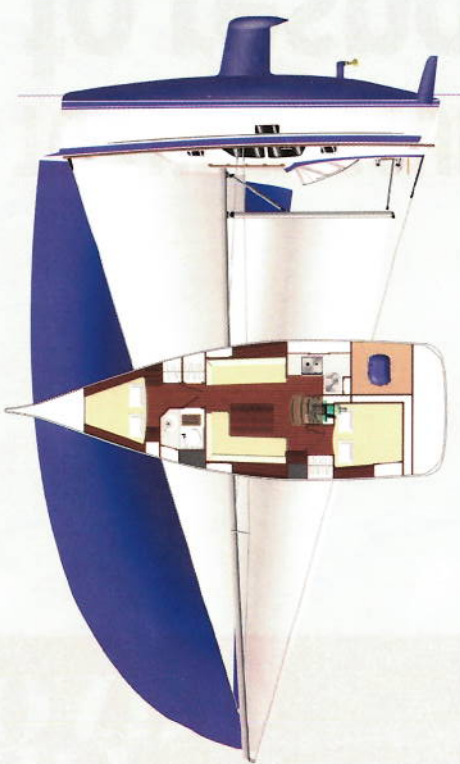
THE TEST VERDICT

I loved sailing the 340. She feels solid on the wheel and the high coaming gives security and protection. I was less convinced about the twin helm layout and would have liked a bit more space without the backstay bisecting the passage from one wheel to the other. She's beautifully built down below, with wonderful craftsmanship and a large saloon. The space, however, comes at the expense of the galley and a chart table. These may be deal-breakers for you. If so, start saving for the Hallberg-Rassy 372.

It was the late superyacht designer Jon Bannenburg who said a straight line was the cheapest distance between two points' and, while it might have been cheaper or easier to make the 340, there are gentle curves that contribute to her design and feel. Remove them and she'll no longer be a Hallberg-Rassy. Then there are the materials used – this amount of solid wood is not often found on production yachts. All this work costs time and money, the latter you'll need a decent amount of to contemplate buying this boat.

WOULD SHE SUIT YOU AND YOUR CREW?

As with most of the Hallberg-Rassy range, the 340 was designed to be sailed by a couple, maybe with occasional family or friends, and for this, she excels. The twin wheels offer more shelter than most, but there is also freedom to move – a moot point if keeping the tiller. The craftsmanship on board is lovely, and the saloon is large, bright and comfortable. There are many details that make a Hallberg-Rassy desirable, and the 340 has all the hallmarks and many more – it's the little details and features that contribute to making life afloat just that little bit easier and more comfortable. Like a life partner, no yacht is perfect. If you can look past their idiosyncrasies and still be smitten, you'll die a happy soul. The Hallberg-Rassy 340 achieves what many larger boats aspire to, including twin helms and a large saloon, but this comes at the cost of compromises elsewhere. That aside, she is a genuinely great boat that sails superbly and is beautifully made.



All service points on the engine can be reached, although you may have to unscrew some panels

GALLEY

The L-shaped galley is set facing outboard of the companionway. It's small but it offers good bracing against the chunky solid mahogany side to the companionway steps. The double sink is aft facing (the second sink is half-size), and it's possible to wash up at sea as long as there aren't any big pots on the aft ring of the stove next to it. With stove outboard and the side of the companionway inboard, elbow room at the sink is limited. There is a fridge in the corner between the stainless steel sink bowls and the stove. There's a 5cm-deep sculpted fiddle on the edge of the composite stone work surface. There's also an up-and-over cover for the stove, which is quite heavy. Forward board and a vertical line of drawers.

Outboard there are three wooden sliding doors concealing a shelf with peg-and-hole storage the full length – you'll also see the pipework, which is good for access, but I'd rather not see it. Forward, the locker is deeper for items like bottles or cereal boxes. There is also a handy locker aft, again with peg-and-hole restraints. There's a hatch aft, which opens into the cockpit. Unfortunately, it's not quite big enough to fit a mug through if you're handing drinks up to the cockpit, but the companionway is just behind the cook.

MAINTENANCE

Access to all the main services on board is good. Removable access panels include meters around the screw heads to protect the wood. The large steps lift up and are supported by gas struts. To change the oil filter, there's a panel in the cupboard under the sink, which has to be removed to aid access. There are also engine access panels in the aft cabin, the one above the berth needs a jiggle to get it up and past the reading light, and there's a further removable panel under the berth too.

There isn't a chart table or dedicated navigation space on board. There is, however, a laptop-sized area above a shelved cupboard unit under the switch panel. I still don't know how I feel about losing chart table on yachts. I like mine on my yacht, but it takes up a lot of space and doesn't get used a great deal. I can see pros and cons, but not enough of either to conclude definitively. Wiring on the fold-down switch panel is neat and labelled, there's also a cord to stop the switch panel hitting the fiddle.

CHART TABLE

This boat had extra hatches in the aft cabin for light and ventilation: one facing aft into the cockpit and another two underneath the cockpit seating. At the door, there is a forward-hinged locker, which isn't easily accessible while you're in the cabin, though if you're in the saloon area and need to get something out of the locker, it makes it very accessible.

How to respond to distress calls

COMING TO THE RESCUE

Responding to a call for help at sea is an age-old obligation for seafarers, but what should yacht sailors do if they hear a distress call? Will Bruton spoke to Commander Steve Carson at the HM Coastguard's new headquarters to find out...

ost sailors will be familiar with the procedure for making a Mayday call on the VHF radio, it is drilled into anyone who does one of the RYA cruising courses, it's printed in log books and on stickers posted next to the VHF.

Some of us may even have heard a Mayday call over the radio when a diver who has got into trouble needs airlifting, or a motor boat that's got caught out after a sunny day on the Solent starts to experience problems. But how often do sailors step in and assist? And would we know what to do or say if we did respond? For some reason, many courses gloss over this element of summoning help, and a lot of us aren't quite sure what to do. Around the UK coast we are fortunate that someone from the Coastguard will almost always pick up the call and take charge of the situation, at which point we breathe a sigh of relief and carry on with our passage.

What happens, however, if you are the closest yacht to a distressed vessel's location? As fellow seafarers, we have a legal obligation to help if we can, and a moral obligation knowing that others would do the same for us. The staff at the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's Operations Centre (NMO) in Fareham know more than anyone about responding to sailors in distress,

so I went along to learn more about what happens when a sailor sends out a Mayday, and what other yachtsmen can do to help if they receive the call.

Operating 24 hours a day, and responsible for coordinating the rescue and assistance of seafarers in distress, the NMO has response plans in place for every conceivable emergency on the water. All coastguard staff at the NMO undergo an intensive initial training course and all complete the RYA Yachtmaster theory course as part of this.

Four highly experienced commanders, working in shifts, are in charge of everything that happens and they each have a wealth of operational search and rescue experience. Steve Carson has been an operations commander at the brand new NMO facility since 2014, having worked his way up from watch officer at MRCC Belfast over the course of 15 years. He also has more than 23 years of experience as a volunteer helmsman for the RNLI Bangor lifeboat. Like the other three Farham NMO commanders, he is on duty for 12 hours at a time and has overall responsibility for responding to calls of distress, whether big or small. He was well-placed therefore, to answer our questions about the best way to respond to a distress call.

It's not just large vessels that can assist a ship in distress – as boat owners, we are all expected to assist if we can



Steve Carson has been an operations commander at the NMO since 2014, having worked his way up from watch officer at MRCC Belfast over 15 years

EXPERT ON BOARD

