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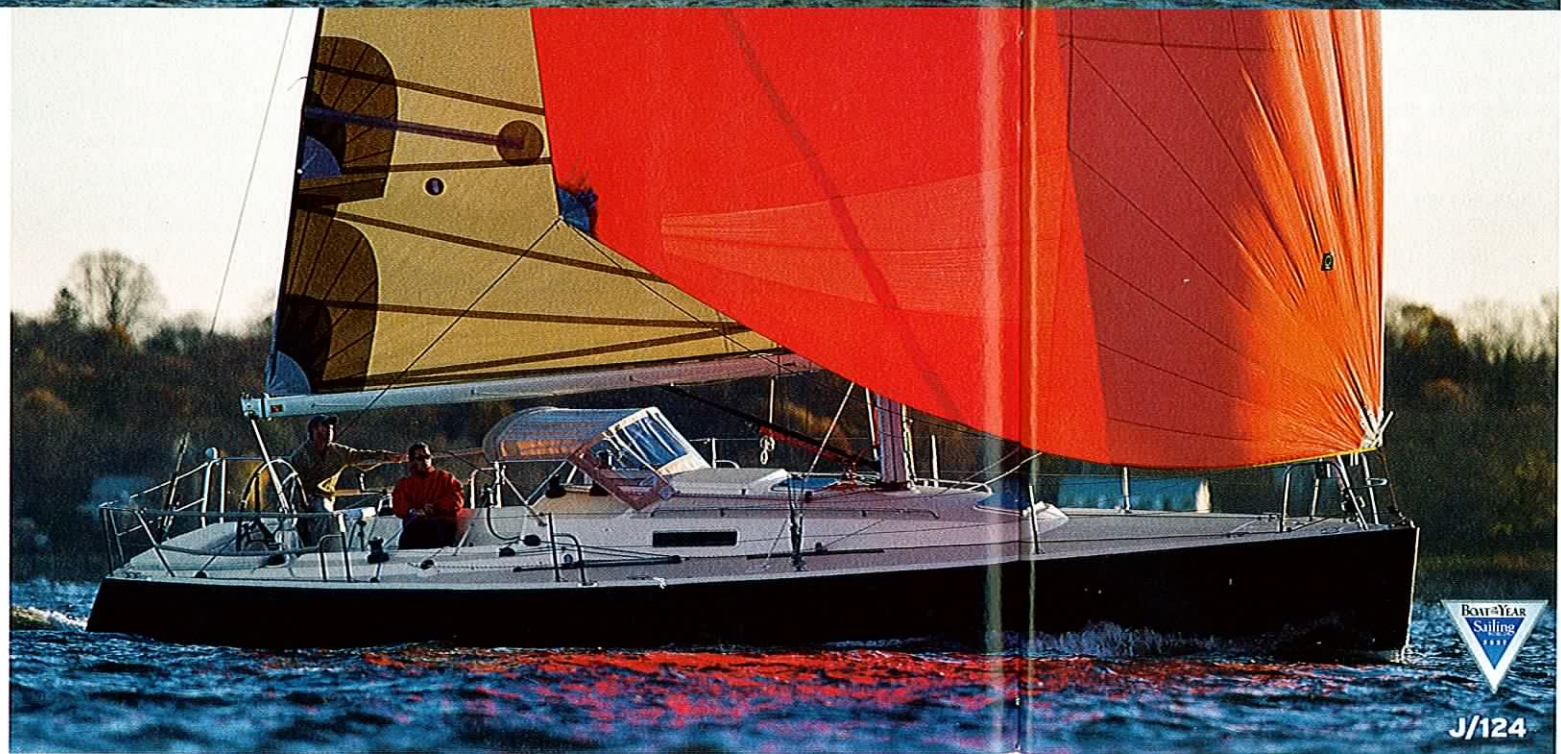
Tech Review

Grand Soleil 37

Finding Dual-Purpose Perfection

BY TONY BESSINGER

THE STARS HAVE ALIGNED, THE BANK account is healthy; it's finally time to fulfill your dreams and buy a boat. Both cruising and racing are part of your plan, but owning two boats isn't. How do you decide what kind of boat to buy? We spoke with dealers from all around the United States, all of them with decades of experience in the marine industry, and all carrying a few of the most popular brands in the country. Their experience and collective wisdom should help you find a boat,



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new or used, that best fits your needs. A savvy boat dealer will assess what a buyer is looking for before he or she shows them any boats or takes them on a test sail. "What we try and do is play a game by drawing a line with one side being a pure cruiser and the other a pure racer," says Garth Hichens, owner of Annapolis Yacht Sales, Md.

"Then we try to find where they are in the middle of that. It's not as though there's a line in the middle that's racer/cruiser, it's more of a wide band. I talk to them and find out where they fit." Prospective buyers can help facilitate this process by first coming up with a simple "pros and cons" list. According to Jeff Trask, owner of Sail

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California, which sells J Boats in Newport Beach, the first question you should ask yourself is: What is the most important thing you're going to do on a sailboat? "Then we take a look at the size of the family and the budget," says Trask. "You can cruise on anything, and you can race on anything, but it's a lot easier to race anything than it is to cruise anything."

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