

→ **SPECIFICATIONS**

LOA 33FT 1in • LWL 27ft

BEAM 9ft 3in • DRAFT 5ft 10in

DISPLACEMENT 6,700lb

BALLAST 3,340lb

SAIL AREA 486 ft² (main and jib)

FUEL/WATER (GAL) 12/19

TYPICAL ASKING PRICES

\$12,000 - \$27,000

OWNER'S ASSOCIATION tten.com

The T-Ten has had a devoted following since its inception



Cult
Boats

The All-Arounders

The flush-deck Tartan Ten is more than just a raceboat | BY ADAM CORT

In the Upper Midwest, on lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan, the Tartan Ten has been a force of nature from the moment it was unveiled by Tartan Yachts back in 1978. As a kid growing up in Cleveland, I can still remember when the first T-Tens appeared on the scene with their aggressive overhanging bows, reverse transoms, tall 7/8th rigs and oh-so-cool flush decks.

In all, Tartan produced 378 T-Tens before it discontinued production in 1988, and to this day the boat has maintained a loyal following that often spans multiple generations. In the late 1990s, a group of T-Ten sailors tried building an upgraded version called the LS-10. That effort ultimately failed, but the class still draws between 30 and 40 boats to its North American championship regattas—not bad for a 33-footer that weighs nearly 7,000 pounds and is a heck of a lot tougher to ship than the latest sport boat *du jour*.

Although the Tartan Ten is best known as an inshore raceboat, it also works well as a distance racer and daysailer. Every year, a fleet of Tartan Tens takes part in the Chicago Mac Race, and a couple of T-Tens can almost always be found competing in any number of other offshore events on the Great Lakes, like the Hook Race or the Queen's Cup.

As evidence of the boat's appeal as a daysailer, all you need to do is get out on a nice evening or afternoon anywhere there happens to be a Tartan Ten fleet. Inevitably, you'll see at least one or two T-Ten crews out enjoying the boat's sweet sailing ability and its massive user-friendly cockpit. The T-Ten is very much a sailor's boat, and owners never get tired of putting their boats through their paces.

"A lot of people just enjoy sailing the boat. It doesn't have to do with racing or anything else. I can singlehand my boat in 20 knots of wind, no problem," says Tartan Ten fleet captain Ted Mahoney.

Class president Scott Irwin agrees. According to Irwin, in years past, when he worked for a marina on Lake Erie, he would always use the company's Tartan Ten when taking corporate customers out for a daysail. "What other boat can hold eight people in the cockpit and not have them sitting on top of each other?" Irwin says.

In recent years, the fleet found its numbers eroding, so it fought back, doing everything from rebuilding its web site to strengthening its class-sanctioned regattas and permitting

the limited use of new materials in, for example, headsails.

The fleet also created a new set of rebuild specifications to take the guesswork out of getting an old hull back into racing trim. These specs cover everything from beefing up the boat's mast step to upgrading the turnbuckles on the shrouds.

Wet cores, in particular, have long been an Achilles heel. Nonetheless, there are plenty of boats soldiering on that carry a little extra water ballast and do just fine. Then again, one of the nice things about sailing a 20-year-old boat is that even the worst case is no reason to panic.

"You could buy a Tartan Ten for \$10,000 or \$20,000, put \$20,000 or \$30,000 in it, and you've still got a \$30,000 to \$40,000 boat that's ready to go," Mahoney says, regarding a more extensive retrofit.

"It's the only class that lets you get into real competitive big keelboat racing for thirty grand or less," agrees Irwin, and he should know. A few years ago, he picked up a fire-damaged Tartan Ten for about \$3,000. Stripping out the old core, rebuilding the interior and repairing the rig and sails set him back about \$30,000. The boat went on to win the North American class championship in 2008.

Today, a quarter century after the last new Tartan Ten popped out of its mold, the class appears to be as strong as ever. Fleets of 30 or more boats are still typical at sanctioned regattas, and the cut-throat fleets in

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the Chicago area are a sight to behold. It's been said the success of a one-design class is as much a product of the people who support it as the boat itself. If that's the case, the Tartan Ten will remain a force in sailing for years to come. **A**