

ALBACORE

BUYERS GUIDE



John Woffinden

Draft 0.2

18th Jan 2008

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Background.....	3
Hull Shapes	3
Materials	4
Wood.....	4
GRP/Composite	5
Price Guide	6
Beginner or Boat for Cruising	6
Club Racing to top 50% at the Nationals.....	6
Top 10% at the Nationals.....	7
Price Adjustments	7
Racing Record	8
Where to find Albacores	8
Web Resources.....	9
Other Places to Search	10
What to look for when viewing a boat	10

Introduction

When first moving into the class, it can be a little confusing as to why two apparently similar boats are priced very differently. This may reflect an unrealistic price set by the vendor or there may be valid reasons for the difference.

This guide aims to assist the prospective new Albacore owner to understand what to look for in their first Albacore and why some boats command a premium whilst others do not.

There are limits to what can be learnt from such a guide, so it is always worth consulting a current Albacore owner when looking for a boat, most will be more than happy to help you, especially if you offer to buy them a beer!

Background

The Albacore class rules describe the boat as a "restricted class". The hull is essentially one design but there is a large amount of flexibility allowed in the internal layout and position of the fittings. Having said that, the tolerances on the hull are quite large by modern one design standards and this has led to a number of subtly different hull shapes evolving over time. The hull design and the way in which the boat is fitted out can have a large effect on a boat's value.

Hull Shapes

The available hull shapes can generally be categorized into four main groups:

- Fairey
- Young
- Woof
- Kingsfield

The Fairey Hull shape is the original shape built by Fairey Marine. Any wooden boat number below 2000 will be a Fairey Hull.

Early Young boats (Hull numbers <2000) were Fairey Hulls finished by Young. Later boats (5000-7900) were built on Young's mould which was similar to the Woof described below, but with a slightly more V shaped hull in the aft sections, this benefits upwind speed, perhaps at the expense of downwind speed in marginal planing conditions. Late Youngs (approx 7900 onward) were built on a Woof mould.

The Woof hull shape started to appear in boats with sail numbers around 6000 upwards (there were a few in the 5800's). The Woof has less rocker than the Fairey and is generally regarded to be slightly quicker, especially off wind in marginal planing conditions. Subsequent designs including Young's and Speed Sails' boats are based on the Woof hull shape.

The Kingsfield design pushed the tolerances to the limits, in fact some boats would not measure and had to be modified after being built. The Kingsfield

design is generally thought to be faster down wind, possibly at the expense of upwind speed.

Despite the respective merits of the differing hull shapes pretty well any boat in good condition with a reasonable rig can be competitive for club level racing and get you well into the middle third of the nationals, if well sailed.

Photographs and more details of some of the differing types of Albacore can be found on the US Albacore web site.

http://www.albacore.org/USA/members/public/identifying_albacore.asp

The US and Canada tend to have a larger number of different GRP boats around, and fewer wooden boats other than those imported from the UK. Very few US and Canadian GRP boats have been imported to the UK.

Materials

Albacores may be built of all Wood, all GRP/FRP or GRP/FRP with wood decks. The varnished wooden boats can be gorgeous to look at if looked after well. The hull shape with its compound curves is ideal for moulding and results in a hull that is very strong and retains its stiffness. Many of the top boats are wooden boats that are over 25 years old

Wood

A number of builders have built wooden Albacores, however there are no wooden boats being built at present largely due to the cost; a fully finished wooden boat would probably be over double the price of a new FRP. At time of writing the last wooden boat built was ALB 7988 in 1998

Fairey

Boats numbers up to 2000 in the UK are almost certainly Fairey Marine hulls although some Fairey Hulls were finished by JD Young. These boats were hot moulded producing a very strong and long lasting hull. Many of the originals were built with a stern deck although a number have been modernized and had the stern deck removed to reduce weight. Some boats were fitted with a metal centre board which is fine for cruising but would be a disadvantage for racing.

They are generally not considered to be quite as quick as the more recent boats, but they can do well if the rig is modernized.

Woof

Woof hulls are generally considered to be among the fastest of the wooden boats, although they can be found at both ends of the fleet depending on who is driving!

A Woof in good condition will command a premium price as they are sought after by those people who love to have a wooden boat and want one that is still competitive at the top level.

Kingsfield

Kingsfield hulls are again considered to be competitive and a good prospect for those that want a wooden boat.

Knight and Pink

Again a reasonable option for those looking for a wooden boat. Believed to have a Woof derived hull shape.

Young

Early Youngs were Fairey hulls finished by Young, refer to the notes above.

Boats moulded on Young's own mould can be found in the sail number range 5000-7900. These can be a competitive boat if well maintained, but perhaps not as sought after as Woof shaped boats.

Later wooden boats (up to sail number 7988) built by JD Young were built on the class associations own Woof mould. These are a good option for those looking for a wooden boat.

Graham Chard/Bob Hoare

A few later wooden boats with numbers in the 7900s were built by Graham Chard at Bob Hoare Racing boats. These were again built on the a Woof mould and one in good condition is a competitive option for those looking for a wooden boat.

GRP/Composite

A number of different builders have made GRP Albacores in the past with either GRP decks or Wooden Decks. GRP boats likely to be found in the UK are:

Fosrite

Sail numbers in the 2000-6000 range. They are based on the Fairey hull shape.

The condition of these boats can vary tremendously depending on condition, a number of examples I have seen have gone very soft. They are fine for cruising and beginning club racing.

Rondar

Sail numbers in the 5000-6800 range. Based on the Fairey hull shape.

Again the condition can vary greatly, the examples I have seen seem to be much stiffer than the Fosrite hull. Depending on condition and the fittings they are good for club racing and good examples can be competitive at National level getting into the top third of the fleet.

Porter

Based on the Woof derived hull shape, sail numbers around the range 7500 – 7900

Composite construction FRP hull with wooden decks. Competitive for club racing and at National Level

Amos

Similar to the Porter but built with an epoxy resin FRP hull. Woof derived hull shape. Sail numbers in the mid 7000s. Competitive for club racing and at National Level

Speed Sails

Speed are the only current builder of Albacores in the UK. The Speed Albacore is of FRP (foam sandwich) construction with the hull mould taken from a Woof hull. Speed's boats can be competitive at the highest level A Speed won the Nationals in 2006 and was 2nd in 2007.

Sail numbers for Speed boats are 7990 onwards.

A number of the early hulls did have quality issues and as a result Speeds have (an undeserved) reputation for not lasting. However, Speed acknowledged the problems and worked to resolve the issues. The stories often banded around the dinghy park about the decks falling off are simply not true. The design has evolved with feedback from owners and the boats are now proven. The deck moulds have been reworked for 2008 boats, demonstrating the commitment to the Speed Albacore.

As with all boats look for one that has been well looked after.

Unfortunately for the newcomer, Speed's do not come onto the market very often and are often snapped up very quickly or sold on by word of mouth without being advertised.

Price Guide

Because of the wide range of boats available and the difference in the way they are fitted out prices can range quite significantly. It is possible to get on the water for a few hundred pounds at one end of the scale. A new boat, fully fitted out and capable of winning the nationals will cost around £7000

If you can enlist the help of a current owner, this when help ensure that any boat is sensibly priced. Unfortunately (for purchasers) good Albacores are in demand and this reflects in the price, however good boats do hold their value very well and will last if looked after.

Beginner or Boat for Cruising

You can get on the water for as little as £200-£600

For this price range expect to do some simple repairs or re-varnishing. Equipment will be basic, a stern deck may be fitted.

Take note of the condition of covers and trailers and adjust price accordingly.

Wooden Fairey/early Young

GRP Fosrite

Club Racing to top 50% at the Nationals

Expect to pay around £500-£3000 depending on age and condition and fittings for a club racer. The price ranges shown are indicative, cheaper options may be available if repairs are required. Upper limits would be for boats in good condition that are well fitted out and ready to sail with good sails, trailer and

cover. Currently good quality GRP boats seem to be more in demand compared to wooden boats

Modernised Fairey/early Young £250-£1200

Rondar £600 - £2000

Porter/Amos £1500-£2750

Young/Knight & Pink/Kingsfield £1500 - £3000

Top 10% at the Nationals

Second hand wooden boats in this class rarely come onto the market. No new wooden boats have been built in the UK since 1998, most of the top boats are cherished by their owners and will probably be buried with them!

Occasionally second hand Speeds come up for sale.

Woof or late Young in good condition £3000-£6000

Second Hand Speed in good condition £4000- £5800

New Speed £6750 on the water (list price), £7900 complete with covers and combi trailer (list price)

Price Adjustments

The boats condition, the fittings sails and equipment that it has with it, can have a bearing on the price that a boat will command. A cheap boat that needs extras to bring it up to spec may end up costing you more than the one that initially seemed more expensive. But if you don't need the extras then the converse is true.

Sails

A new suit of sails costs around £700-£800 depending on the make and any discounts available. For beginners and cruising the sails are less critical, but if you want to race, consider the condition of the sails being offered with the boat. You may be able to buy second hand sails but good quality ones are hard to come by – Class rules only allow one new suit per year thus restricting the supply. Therefore if the boat has new sails it will affect the price (say £100-£350 depending on the sail condition).

Trailers

Most boats come with at least a launching trolley (but not always). If you plan to travel with you boat you will need to have a suitable road trailer. New combination trailers cost around £750 so factor this in. Second hand trailers can be found from time to time but they are often of the non-combination type. A second hand combi-trailer in good condition will cost around £150-£400 if you can find one.

Covers

A top cover is essential for boats kept outdoors in a dinghy park, not only does it keep the worst of the weather out, but you are less likely to find bits going "missing" from your boat than if it is left uncovered. For a wooden boat I would suggest that a good quality breathable cover is essential.

If you are going to do a lot of trailing of your boat then an undercover to protect the hull from road grime is highly recommended.

Albacore top covers range in price from about £120-£200. An undercover will cost around £120

Fittings

Class rules present few restrictions to how an Albacore may be fitted out. Some boats will have the minimum and very basic fittings, others with have compressive control over the complete rig. If you are not interested in racing, then a basic fit out will suffice. If you wish to race seriously then a number of control lines will be required, although perhaps not a fully adjustable rig to start with. Take into account the cost of re-fitting out a boat that has only basic controls. It is very easy to spend several hundred pounds on bits of string and fittings.

Paintwork/Varnish

For wooden boats and wood decked boats, the cost of stripping down and re-varnishing/painting a boat can soon add up. For many people this is part of the joy of owning a wooden boat, but if you just want to get on the water quickly take into account the condition of the paint and varnish work.

Racing Record

A boat with a good racing record that has perhaps done well at the Nationals will command a certain premium over a boat that is not proven. However a good result is generally down to the people sailing the boat rather than the boat itself, so you shouldn't put too much emphasis on this. Just be re-assured that the track record proves the boat is capable (at least when in the right hands) and you wont have to spend much on the boat to be competitive.

Where to find Albacores

It is perhaps a good reflection on the class that owners keep their boats for a long time. Good secondhand boats are sought after and can often be sold by word of mouth with club members selling to other club members.

However good boats are available, but you need to know where to look and ensure that people know you are looking so they can keep an eye out for boats on your behalf.

If there are other Albacores at your club, make it known to the class captain and/or the other owners that you are looking for a boat so they can keep an eye out for you. They will generally welcome an addition to the Alb fleet, or they may even be considering selling their boat in the near future.

If there are no Albacores in your club, then contact the class association who will be happy to help. Or try a Google search for *Albacore Sailing Club*, to find a club near to you.

Web Resources

There are a number of web resources where Albacores are often advertised:

Albacore class web site

The For Sale board on the is one of the most useful sites

http://www.albacore.org.uk/Discuss/forum/forum_topics.asp?FID=3

As well as sellers posting their own boats for sale, often links to other sites where a boat is for sale will be posted.

It is worth posting on the Albacore Wanted forum board.

http://www.albacore.org.uk/Discuss/forum/forum_topics.asp?FID=5

But, remember to post an update if you stop looking.

Boats and Outboards

This is a popular free listing site, Albacores come up from time to time, however old adverts are not always taken down after boats have been sold.

<http://www.boatsandoutboards.co.uk/php/browser.php3?keyword=albacore&Submit.x=0&Submit.y=0>

Apollo duck

Another popular free listing site where Albacores can be found from time to time.

<http://sailingdinghies.apolloduck.co.uk/listings.phtml?cid=102>

Yachts & Yachting

Y&Y used to be the place to advertise a boat for sale. However as they charge for a listing the dinghy small ads are less popular than the free sites. Worth checking though.

<http://www.yachtsandyachting.com/classes/?s=42&c=3>

eBay

Albacores often come up for sale on the eBay auction site, the boats are often older boats that may require work, but newer boats do come up occasionally. However be careful not to get carried away in a bidding frenzy, if you are buying unseen.

<http://www.eBay.co.uk>

If you are familiar with eBay then you can set up a search for *Albacore* in the following sections:

Sporting Goods>Sailing>Dinghies / Boats

Car Parts and Vehicles>Boats & Watercraft

A simple search for just Albacore will also work, but you will also get results showing Albacore Aircraft memorabilia and fishing items.

Sailing Club For Sale boards

Keep an eye on the for sale section of club web sites where they have an Albacore fleet. Some suggestions are:

<http://www.maidenheadsc.org.uk/main/content/view/19/48/>

http://www.lrsc.org.uk/for_sale.html

<http://www.southcerneysailingclub.org.uk/11.html>

<http://www.strathclydelochsailing.com/70126.html>

http://www.rudyardlakesc.org.uk/4sale_wanted.htm

<http://www.winsfordflash.co.uk/>

<http://www.parkstoneyc.co.uk/pagealbacore.html>

Note however that clubs with Albacore fleets often pass boats on between members and they may never make it to the for sale board.

Other Places to Search

A more fruitful place to search for a new boat may be where a club only has one Albacore and the owner is looking to move into another class. Unfortunately identifying such a boat is difficult, you may get lucky with a carefully crafted Google Search. For example try the following in Google:

Albacore "for sale" "Sailing Club"

(at time of writing this found three boats for sale, although the adverts were quite old)

If you have Albacores at your club, look around the dinghy park for unused boats. If the boats are not for sale then you could perhaps offer to buy a half share, or have the use of the boat in return for dinghy park fees, insurance and contribution to maintenance.

As mentioned above, let people know you are looking for a boat. It is not unknown for boats to be hidden away stored in garages and barns, with lots of people looking on your behalf you may just unearth a gem.

What to look for when viewing a boat

If you have found a boat that seems to meet your needs then arrange viewing and ideally a trial sail if possible. Ask a current Albacore owner to come with you as they are more likely to spot potential problems.

There is a good checklist on the US Albacore site:

http://www.albacore.org/USA/members/public/buying_first_albacore.asp

In addition to the points listed on that site you should check for the following:

Damage: Check for obvious damage and repairs, ask the owner if the boat has been damaged or repaired and to what extent, were the repairs carried out by a professional? Check that there are no deformities in the hull particularly where the boat rests on the trailer.

Leaks: These can often be repaired but if a leak has not been attended to there may be rot or delamination around the leak in wooden boats. Leaks around the

base of the centreboard case should be looked at very carefully as any damage in this area may be difficult to repair.

Buoyancy: Check that the buoyancy tanks or bags (where fitted) are intact and sealed. A simple test can usually be done with a short piece of hose as follows: remove one of the tank bungs and place the hose into the bunghole. Some electrical tape may be needed to seal the join. Blow a few puffs into the tube, and then place your thumb over the end of the tube. You should still get some back pressure when you release your thumb after 30 seconds. If you don't get any back pressure at all, then the tanks will need some attention. Check around where the side tanks meet the hull, especially around the floor of the cockpit. Flexing of the hull can cause the tanks to separate from the hull, especially on older GRP boats.

Measurement Certificate: If you want to race you will usually require a valid measurement certificate. Duplicates can be obtained from the RYA if the boat can clearly be identified – the hull number should be clearly engraved on the hog, transom, back of the centreboard case or sometimes on the thwart. The number on the sails is often not the original boat number. If the boat cannot clearly be identified it may have to be re-measured if a certificate is required.

It is worth looking to see if the boat is listed on the Albacore registry:

<http://www.albacore.org/registry/>

This may give more information on the boat. If it is on the registry it is likely to be an enthusiastic owner and the boat may be well known. Alternatively post a request for information on the forum.