

SAIL MAGAZINE

2019 Best Performance Boat under 30ft

RS21



Some years ago, the book *Aak to Zumbra* catalogued—and celebrated—the incredible diversity of watercraft that has evolved over the centuries, a diversity that remains evident to this day in the 11 winners comprising the “Class of 2019” in *SAIL Magazine*’s Best Boats contest.

One thing that hasn’t changed is the way *SAIL Magazine* sets about determining the winners in its Best Boats contest: by having its editors fan out across the country sailing, studying, evaluating and discussing the latest the boatbuilding industry has to offer—an industry that even all these centuries later never, ever seems to run out of fresh ideas. Enjoy, and congrats to this year’s winners!

The RS21: The quest for affordable, competitive racing coupled with a user-friendly rig and deck layout has resulted in some of the most beloved one-designs in the world—think the Lightning, the Opti, the Flying Scot or the Ensign. Now from the UK's RS Sailing comes the RS21, a low-cost sport boat that checks all these boxes and more. Designed to appeal to yacht clubs, sailing centers and even professional sailing leagues, the boat is both sturdy and easy to maintain, with a rock-solid infused hull, a lifting keel that can be raised with an internal crane and a carbon mast that is a piece of cake to step thanks to its pivoting heel.

The boat is also easy on its crew, thanks to a voluminous cockpit that provides plenty of room for four sailors but is still easy to manage doublehanded. There's even a nifty structure that encases a hidden retractable mount for a Torqeedo electric outboard. Best of all, the boat is an absolute blast to sail, thanks to its easily driven hull, powerful Mylar-laminate main, powerful rudder, an A-sail on a retractable sprit and chines coupled with a 50 percent ballast ratio. (The latter, in particular, serves admirably to help keep the boat on its feet, even while the crew is keeping its feet inboard.)

Blasting around Narragansett Bay in 15-plus knots of wind, the boat left a hissing wake that would have made a Volvo racer proud, but never once felt in danger of spinning out of control. Make no mistake: despite the sober, well-thought-out business model behind this design, it's all sailboat, in the finest sense of the word. rssailing.com

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