

# Gearing up for the ARC

Deck equipment company Rutgerson Marin have given a standard Bavaria 42 a total deck gear makeover to improve sail handling for long term cruising.

*Can a standard production cruising yacht be modified to better suit a couple setting off for a life as live-aboard cruisers? This is the question that specialist deck equipment makers Rutgerson Marin asked, and the outcome was an experiment involving ARC sailors Reidun and Finn Fagervik and their Bavaria 42 Hilde, with the aim of creating a practical and easily handled offshore cruising yacht for double-handed sailing.*

Reidun and Finn Fagervik from Oslo, Norway are giving up careers to live their dream of sailing the world. In 2004 they became proud owners of a Bavaria 42 Cruiser, chosen for both practical and sensible reasons. It had to have full standing headroom, Finn is 1.87m tall, and it had to have a price which allowed sufficient budget to equip the boat with whatever they wanted.

Finn, an engineering consultant, started to research what was needed on a boat for a cruising couple. He decided that his Bavaria 42 should have an in-mast furling mainsail, twin foresails on separate stays, backstays, and big winches for easy double-handed sailing. Of course hundreds of other items were needed and installed. The result is probably the most extensively equipped Bavaria Cruiser afloat.

In spite of his solid research and the support of the Norwegian Bavaria importer Lunde Båt, Finn had not given much thought to what the boat would be like to sail and to handle in various conditions with its new sail configuration. So, when the offer from Rutgerson Marin came along, it seemed the perfect opportunity to get his boat "geared up for the ARC".

Rutgerson Marin began by making a thorough analysis of Hilde's deck hardware in order to consider what items to upgrade, add or move and how best to organise the new hardware. Starting at the bow with the furling genoa,

they changed the standard lead for the furling line for a standing up foot block placed a bit further aft to give a better entry angle. The same solution was applied for the staysail furler.

With her twin headsails Hilde has the flexibility of either a big reaching/light airs genoa, which can be easily be rolled in when the wind increases, or a furling staysail for heavier conditions. When fitting the furling staysail, Finn found that the original stay was cut too long, resulting in a big sag in the whole furler causing a deep draft in the sail and producing too much heel. An experienced rigger recommended a furler with built-in screw and had the wire cut to the exact length.

Besides the twin headsails Finn wanted a gennaker for long reaching passages. As a result Hilde ended up with three headsails, each with a set of controlling sheets, which also needed to be lockable to free up winches. With three lines on each side, another concern was how prevent clutter on the side decks. The neat solution was to connect two Rutgerson Performance genoa cars and feed the sheets through stoppers mounted on each side of the cockpit, placing them in easy reach of the helm.

The next item to be reorganised was the mainsheet system. When Reidun and Finn took delivery of their Bavaria 42 Cruiser, the mainsheet was positioned on the coach roof – a standard safe position, but out of reach from the helm. No good in a gust. What if one end of the sheet was led forward and down to the deck and aft to the big winch? If it worked, the main could be sheeted both from the standard position and from the helm.

The solution proved just as good as planned. The Rutgerson and Lunde Båt brainstorming sessions resulted in a mainsheet lead starting on the coach roof, taking both ends forward to the mast, leading one end to the cockpit and one to the helm. Both ends were of course fed through stoppers. One stopper is the standard jammer and the aft one is fed through a Rutgerson Performance Line ▶▶



▲ Skipper Finn

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▶▶ rope clutch positioned near the helm. When specifying his boat, Finn wanted running backstays to add stability to the rig in rough weather. However, how best to take up the load and get the runners locked hard, and still to be able to release them quickly?

Normally a tackle with just a jammer is not satisfactory – there is too little tension and it is too tough to open, plus the added risk of squeezing fingers whilst using it. Instead Rutgerson Marin suggested a becket block on the upper end of the running backstay, another on deck, plus a single stopper mounted on each side of the deck. In this way the runners can be tightened on a winch; the winch made free for sheeting and released with perfect control.

What else could be improved? Well after another close look at Hilde they decided to upgrade all the blocks to the Rutgerson Performance line type. With breaking loads of 4.1 tons the risk for any deck hardware failing was eliminated. Hilde also got performance aluminium foot blocks, the same line aluminium blocks for the kicker, stronger holding rope clutches for the genoa and main halyards and the same stoppers for main furling outhaul and furling lines.

The main traveller on a Bavaria 42 Cruiser is positioned on top of the coach roof, possibly just a bit short, in order not to interfere with the lines led to the cockpit. Even if Reidun and Finn say they are in the ARC as a relaxed way to start their world cruise, the specialists from Rutgerson Marin said “why not take the chance to get the most out of the sailing?”

Sail trimming if they want to, resulted in bigger end blocks being fitted allowing 8mm control lines. If a squall hits Hilde, it will be a split second's work to let the traveller down and ease pressure before taking a reef in on the mainsail.

All in all, the Hilde experiment shows that with some modest changes and reorganisation of the deck hardware any standard cruising boat can be made more practical to sail short crewed, easier to control and, probably most importantly, even more fun to cruise.

Sailing mid-ocean with no one in sight hitting a heavy squall in the pitch dark with your partner off-watch below deck is when the claim “best in action” must have substance. Reidun and Finn Fagervik will know for sure having reached St. Lucia that for Rutgerson Marin hardware this is true.



▼ Performance stoppers



▲ Performance aluminium blocks for kicker



▲ Furling line lead through guides



▼ Mainsheet lead aft







▲ New pad-eyes and jackstays

▼ Larger performance wireblock for backstay tensioner



▼ New backstay tensioner position



▼ Mainsheet lead to secondary winch



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