



Alliance: Sailing power reborn

Bob Falise's handsome new motorsailer just might be the next new thing

BY CHARLES MASON

The bridge spanning the Intracoastal Waterway just south of Vero Beach, Florida, is about half a mile ahead as we power south on a beautiful mid-February day. Bob Falise is manning the wheel and engine controls at the cockpit helm station of his brand-new 50-foot motorsailer. Even though he's sporting the broad grin some of his friends consider a trademark, it's clear he's thinking hard about the next five minutes. "The northerly winds over the past day or so have blown a lot of water south in the waterway," he says. "It's piled up here, and that's created some real aberrations in the normal high- and low-water levels."



Yes, a Bruckmann 50 can move in light air (top); Bob Falise (above) always has a smile—and a sailor's knowledge of what works well

and confidently powers toward the bridge. We move into the shadow of the vast metal structure overhead; when the mast starts to move under the structure, there's an audible "tink, tink" as the tip of the antenna skids along the bottom of the steel girders.

As the bridge gets closer the cockpit banter between Falise, the yacht's builder, Mark Bruckmann, Dan Betty, another Bruckmann 50 owner, and me becomes more focused on whether the wind-blown water will prevent the mast, or at least the VHF antenna mounted above it, from passing under the arch. Someone goes to the bow for a different perspective, but Falise has already made his final calculation. He sizes up his approach

When I'm not offshore, I want to know I can get where I want to go well before sunset





Light air can't slow this 50-footer at all; (right) the foredeck is clean, with a powerful windlass and well-secured anchors



Seconds later we burst out of the shadows and back into the blazing sun and open water. Falise shrugs his shoulders in a self-deprecating manner. But his smile is still there.

Falise has always had confidence in his decisions, both in his career as a corporate attorney for publicly held companies and as a lifelong sailor and boatowner. Twenty-five years ago he built his first large cruising yacht, a Bill Harden-designed 45-foot center-cockpit cruising ketch he called *Phoenix*. In the summer it carried his family and friends along the New

England coast, in the winter to the Florida Keys and the Bahamas. It wasn't that long ago that Falise and his family celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday in the yacht's spacious main saloon.

"*Phoenix* was a terrific vessel for us," Falise says. "Because it had a heavy displacement and a wide beam it was great in rough weather, and the ketch rig made it easy to handle. But times

change, and I've decided I need a faster-sailing yacht. When I'm not offshore, I want to be able to get where I want to go well before sunset. I've also concluded that a real inside steering station, as opposed to the raised-saloon configuration, is a high

Dan Betty (left); Charles Mason (right)





Control and visibility from *Alliance's* inside helm station are excellent

priority for me." Since a real pilothouse is what would give him the inside steering station he wanted, he was led to a motorsailer.

While the motorsailer concept has had many interpretations over the years, most have leaned heavily toward the motor side of the equation. In the mid-nineties Falise, along with many others, was impressed by the ingenious ideas embodied in the Northeast 400, a motorsailer that was developed by well-known Connecticut yacht broker Jim Eastland to a Mark Ellis design. Falise gave serious thought to getting one, but his family was still happy aboard *Phoenix*. As someone who is happiest sailing the largest yacht he can sail by himself, even offshore, Falise concluded that it was too small. Then and now his upper limit is the point at which a yacht has become so large that it requires a professional crew.

Ellis's next motorsailer, a 50-footer built by Bruckmann, caught his eye, and *Alliance*, the third yacht out of the

The joinery in the galley is traditional, but the work area is modern and functional



Charles Mason (both)

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molds, has fulfilled all his requirements. Even though the pilothouse is a major element of Ellis's design, he has drawn the coachroof and house profile in a way that enhances the sweep of the yacht's classic sheerline. The accommodations, the sailing systems, and the size fall within Falise's criteria, and Bruckmann's interior details are compatible with Falise's style and taste.

On deck

The underwater sections aft contain a volume similar to that of many successful poweryacht designs for a reason: to minimize the stern's tendency to drop down when the yacht is powering at or near hull speed. The cockpit is a primary beneficiary of this design; Ellis has configured it to provide plenty of room around a centerline table just



Charles Mason

The office features a custom partner's desk and an ornate leather-covered chair

forward of the steering pedestal. In addition, there is generous locker space under the cockpit seats on either side of the table. The seats are positioned to provide comfortable resting places in port as well as safe and easy movement at sea.

A swim platform runs the length of the transom; the door leading to it is a familiar piece of gear on most power yachts, and the arrangement is unbeatable. There's no need to climb up and down decks or steps to get into the dinghy or take a quick swim off the stern. You just open the door, latch it in place, and walk out onto the back porch.

All the yacht's sail controls run to primary and secondary electric winches that are securely mounted on both of the cockpit's large coamings. Although Falise prefers to use a three-point sheeting arrangement rather than a traveler for his mainsheet system, both are mounted at the after end of the pilothouse roof, keeping the running gear well clear of the cockpit.

The fiberglass deck's antiskid surface provides sure footing, and Ellis has placed handholds on the pilothouse and coachroof to provide reassuring support when needed. The foredeck is clean and seamanlike. A solid welded-stainless bowsprit has embedded rollers that securely embrace the anchors and is the base of the large roller-furling system for the standard 120 percent genoa. The windlass, mounted on deck directly behind the bowsprit, is positioned so that it can perform a host of tasks in addition to retrieving anchors and rode.



A gold-plated sink from France is a highlight in the head (above). A hydraulic ram lowers (to floor level) the table in front of the saloon settee (right)



Charles Mason (both)

Belowdecks

Mark Ellis's interior plan features two cabins, two heads, and a galley forward of the main saloon. Since Bruckmann is amenable to making small changes to the interior spaces to accommodate an owner's needs, Falise

has made the library/den area directly across from the galley into an office with a large built-in desk and a handsome partner's chair in Italian leather. The styling is dark mahogany and brass, and the space looks a bit like a London gentlemen's club.

The engine spaces, directly below the saloon floor, have been built so every piece of equipment, including the engine, can be removed for servicing or repairs without having to remove bulkheads or disassemble cabinetry. Bruckmann owner Dan



Dan Betty used his powerboat experience to change the basic powerplant setup

Betty has had a big influence on the way Falise's engine spaces are configured. An experienced yacht owner, Dan and his wife, Pat, have owned a wide array of power and sailing craft over a span of 28 years—everything from an Ericson 27 to a Matthews 56-foot motoryacht that they cruised from Maine to the Florida Keys. Owning the Matthews, says Betty, was fun, but he did have to spend a lot of time with mechanics discussing how to fix a particular piece of equipment that had suddenly stopped running.

He went back to sail and bought a Mason 44 with every piece of gadgetry one could want. The Bettys frequently sailed offshore, but they eventually tired of always being “down in a dungeon.” They still wanted to sail, but they wanted a boat that would let them see what was going on around them, at sea and in port. When they saw one of Eastland's 400s, they were sold on the concept and sailed one for six years. “A motorsailer,” says Betty, “is stable, efficient, quiet, seakindly, warm, and dry. You can't beat that.” But there was one problem. It became too small for their growing family.

Betty found during sailing trials aboard hull #1 of the Bruckmann 50 that even though the yacht handled beautifully, the high-rpm diesel that was installed wasn't for him. A slower-running engine, he reasoned, would be far more fuel efficient; equally important, a lower cruising rpm would give him much more flexibility in choosing a propeller that would produce minimum drag under

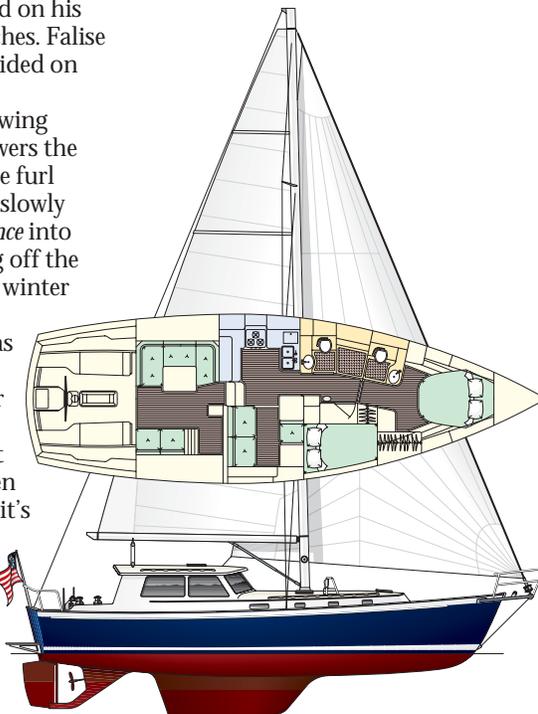
sail and maximum muscle under power.

Betty's *Bonaventura* was the second Bruckmann 50 off the line, and his decision to install a 140-horsepower John Deere diesel and a 26-inch three-blade Gori propeller has proved successful. He can get 10 knots whenever he wants and can cruise at 7 knots "forever." The Deere's vertical dimensions were slightly larger than the engine installed in the first yacht, so the engine-room overhead on his yacht was raised about 2 inches. Falise saw the installation and decided on the Deere for *Alliance*.

The sun is beginning to swing toward the west as Falise lowers the main into the yacht's Leisure furl boom. Once it's secured, he slowly turns the wheel to put *Alliance* into the narrow channel running off the ICW that will take us to her winter berth. "There's one more piece in all of this," he says as he gently nudges the bow thruster to align the hull for the final approach, "and it's important. When people get older—and that includes even the most dedicated sailors—it's a fact that their legs get less nimble. Going up and down the companionway of a conventional yacht in any kind of a seaway and even in port can become a real challenge. I'm lucky

because I don't have that problem, at least not yet. But plenty of my sailing friends know exactly what I'm talking about. For me the way this yacht sails and handles under power plus the basically one-level living space can keep me happy and confident about being able to sail as long as I feel like it."

It's a persuasive argument that, of course, is made with a smile. 



SPECIFICATIONS

BRUCKMANN 50

Price (FOB, Mississauga) about \$775,000

Designer: Mark Ellis Design Ltd., 2340 Ontario Street, Oakville, Ontario, Canada, L6L 6P7; tel. 905-825-0017, www.harrisellis.com

Builder: Bruckmann Yachts, 2265 Royal Windsor Drive, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, L5J 1K5; tel. 905-825-0036, www.bruckmannyachts.com

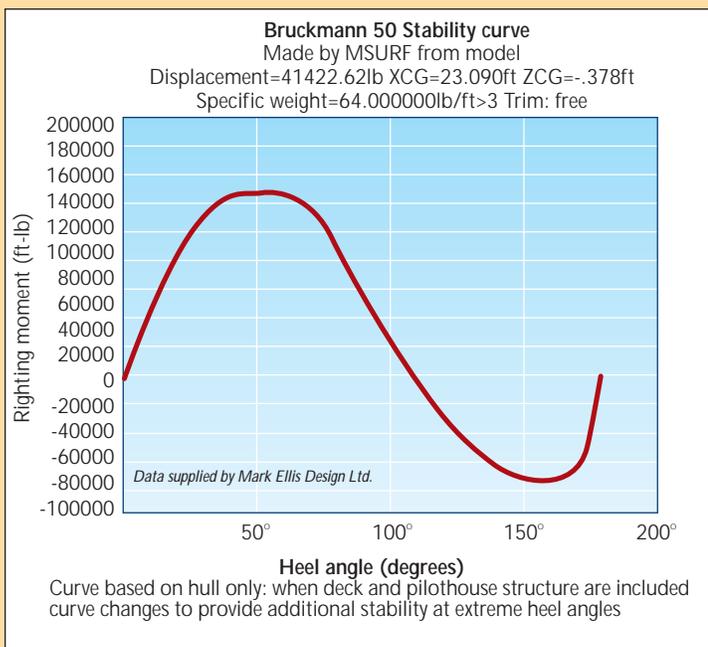
Construction: Fiberglass roving and unidirectional reinforcements over foam floors, vinylester resins, Core-Cell core used in both hull and deck; aluminum backup plates on all through-deck hardware.

LOA	49' 4"
LWL	42' 2"
Beam	15' 5"
Draft	6'
Displacement	44,000 lbs
Ballast	16,000 lbs
Sail area	1,081 sq ft
	(100% foretriangle)
Auxiliary	140-hp diesel
Fuel	200 gal
Water	200 gal
Waste	40 gal
Sail area-displ. ratio	13.88
Displ.-length ratio	261.90

DESIGNER'S COMMENTS

This design expands on Jim Eastland's outstanding concept for a modern motorsailer with excellent performance, classic aesthetics, and gracious and functional accommodations. To accomplish the sailing objective the hull has a long waterline, short overhangs, and a relatively low displacement-to-length ratio. The run aft is broad and flat to reduce the tendency to squat at higher speeds under power. The balanced hull form, efficient shoal-draft keel, and spade rudder provide upwind performance better than what's usually associated with motorsailers.

The large pilothouse is an ideal living area, and the height and width of the saloon sole allows easy access to the machinery spaces below. The cockpit has been specifically designed so that visibility forward through the window panels is unobstructed. The swept sheer, wide side decks, trunk cabin, and bowsprit are in keeping with our efforts to draw handsome yachts that will provide good value and sailing pleasure. **MARK ELLIS**



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