

“Enavigo is a direct translation from Latin and means to sail forth, put out to sea, sail clear of obstacles or swim. It’s a name that transfers well across international boundaries and appropriately describes this wonderful blue-water sailing yacht.”



Envisage Enavigo

An English Cutter, built in Croatia. Infused with vintage styling, yet built with modern techniques. The result? A modern classic

There aren't many countries in the world with literally a million sailing opportunities, but Croatia is one of them. The archipelago that lines its coast is a glittering chain of over a thousand islands, and a thousand charter boats ply her waters during the summer months. We've heard so many tales of sailing in Croatia - all of them good - that when the invitation came in to visit one of the country's few boat builders and sail their craft, we jumped at the opportunity.

Tucked in the heavily wooded hills of north-eastern Croatia, near the Hungarian border, the Enavigo yard is situated in Virovitica, a town renowned for furniture production. It was here we met Tomislav Matasic and were introduced to the Enavigo 33.

Born out of a passion for sailing and the desire to build "a craft that is a sheer pleasure to own with the durability to become a family heirloom - passed down from generation to generation," Tomislav is obviously proud of his creation and holds family values as a priority. Gathering his son Vedran, who manages the

company's marketing department, we begin the tour of a facility that would have many high-profile yacht producers turning green with envy.

Far from a jumbled assortment of draughty and dilapidated sheds, Enavigo create their boats in conditions not dissimilar to a cigar humidor or fine wine cellar. The environment within the purpose-constructed unit is carefully controlled, monitored and recorded four times a day. "Many builders use the word 'quality' in their marketing material," Verdan quietly smiles, "but I want to show you how it means something completely different here at Enavigo. It's a different level."

To understand Enavigo's commitment to building quality craft, one has to understand Tomislav's other business interests. A precision engineering division deals solely with the manufacture of parts for industrial presses, where tolerances are minute and measured with micrometers and electronic devices. The other business is occupied in the production of fine furniture, employing craftsmen skilled in working with wood.

It would be fair to say then that Enavigo is the lovechild resulting from a perfect marriage of precision,

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While possessing the charm of boats built a century ago, the 33 Cutter benefits from modern boat design technology, including her hull shape and Selden aluminium mast and boom.



craftsmanship and Tomislav's passion for the ocean – and it's been 15 years in conception. So, armed with a blueprint by US designer Tony Gondola the Enavigo Cutter 33 has been born.

After discussing their quality control procedures (see Precision and Control panel opposite), and demonstrating how each external wood component is protected by a 1mm layer of 150gsm glass, we took a look at hulls being laid on the factory floor. The first examples had pine strip planking, though the company has now added cedar or oak options, dependant upon the owner's choice.

The planking is covered by two layers of 6mm khaya strips, alternating as 45-degree crossed layers. All this is then overlaid with two layers of 350gsm glass matt and epoxy. The result is a sturdy bluewater hull measuring an inch thick.

"We all appreciate that wood is far more beautiful than modern materials,"

Tomislav tells me, "but few appreciate how strong and light it is. In 30-hour structural integrity tests, designed to mimic repeated stresses at sea, grp maintained only 22 percent of it's original strength, aluminium 37 percent – but wood kept 64 percent."

Fully convinced of Enavigo's production techniques I couldn't wait to hoist the main and set sail, but I had to: Virovitica is a five-hour drive from the coast – an interminable distance.

As we rolled through quaint villages with huge stork nests perched on the lamposts and lunched in a quiet country restaurant however, one couldn't help but fall for Croatia's charm. Worth the journey in itself was the Plitvicka National Park, it boasts some of the most awe-inspiring waterfalls and lakes imaginable. Soon we were through the tunnels carved into towering mountains and arrived just as the sun set over Biograd.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOS: 12.9m (42ft 4in)

LOA: 10m (32ft 10in)

LWL: 9m (29ft 6in)

Beam: 3.5m (11ft 6in)

Draught: 1.5m (5ft)

Disp: 8.2 tons

Ballast: 3.5 tons

Sail area: 92.5m² (996sqft)

Power: 39hp (29kW)

Water:

Fuel: 220L

Guide price: €248,900

The Enavigo 33 is built by:

Enavigo Yachts

Virovitica, Croatia

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Top quality hardware from respected brands like Harken are matched by the rest of Enavigo's components which are manufactured in-house.

After a refreshing night in the hotel a short walk down to the marina afforded the first opportunity to experience the 33 Cutter in her own environment, and what a beauty she is. Stepping aboard over the wineglass-shaped transom, on the extended rear-bumpkin, which provides an anchor point for the backstay, the open pushpit leads to a spacious cockpit, ideal for cruising.

The teak side decks arc forward, tracing the voluptuous beam and wrapping around the raised coachroof coated in white Awlgrip. Bright stainless ventilation hoods gleam in the sunlight and brass lined portlights stud the coachroof's verticals, matching the glossy mahogany toerail running beneath the guardrails. These lead forward to an open foredeck that benefits from a shapely bowsprit, and with the mainstay and 1,200-watt electric windlass from Lofrans well forward, the foredeck is a clear space for the bowman

to happily work unhindered by clutter. Below his feet sits a locker for sail and sheet storage.

Immediately upon stepping aboard, one's senses are easily captivated by the charisma that only a wooden boat possesses. Sounds are muted, warm natural grains are easy on the eye, it smells different below and the whole craft is just incredibly tactile.

While the Enavigo 33's character is unmistakably classical, she also benefits from a century's technological progress - most evident above and below.

While wooden spars are available, the sails by Victory Sails fly from an aluminium mast and boom supplied by Selden, and below the waterline a 3.5 tonne ballast keel compliments a CAD-perfected hull. This makes a major contribution to the cutter's 8.2 tonne displacement, but provides numerous benefits. The long keel provides extra strength and directional stability,

Precision and Control



"At Enavigo we marry the precision of our engineering division with the passion and talent of our woodwork business," explains Tomislav.

"Almost every component for the craft, apart from deckware, rigging, electronics and the engine, we make ourselves. This way we can control the quality."

At Enavigo, quality control has been tuned into an art form. Each component has an individual serial number and its life is meticulously recorded. "If a component were to ever fail, we could tell who made it, when, from which supplier the material came from, what the temperature and humidity was within the yard on the day, the moisture content of the wood and a whole lot more," Tomislav continues. "Then corrective measures would be taken."

The accuracy with which the shaped and formed wooden components fit together (see above) is a clear demonstration of the company's painstakingly precise build process. Every care is taken to ensure the longevity of any boat they build, so prior to any metal component coming into contact with wood, the area is resin coated to eliminate the possibility of water ingress and corrosion in the future.





Surrounded by a mixture of natural grains, one feels snugly cocooned below decks on the 33 Cutter.



keeping the yacht straight and solid in the peaky waves we encountered. Carrying the keel's weight longitudinally also results in a shallower draft, helping avoid submerged hazards and allowing access to marinas and anchorages off-limits to long-keelers.

Over several days sailing around the coast, visiting numerous islands and picturesque towns steeped in history, I couldn't help falling for the Enavigo 33. The ease of sailing, with all sheets running back to the cockpit and instruments easily visible to starboard of the companionway, made for lazy morning cruises. As the heat from the midday sun raised the mercury, we'd recline in the shade provided by the stylish bimini. In the evenings, returning to port with bellies full of excellent local seafood, the 33 demonstrated her potential as bluewater cruiser in freshening winds.

While we didn't stay aboard during our trip, the accommodation would

certainly have made a restful option. Dominated by warm natural grain, the living area avoids pretention and instead provides the practical facilities required for extended cruising, or for a couple to live-aboard in comfort.

On descending the companionway steps, the useful nav station sits to starboard, opposite a well equipped galley, complete with gimballed gas hob and large refrigerator to port. The owner's cabin, as is traditional, occupies the bow, while the double guest cab is set aft portside. The sofas that sandwich the dining table (which cleverly conceals a bottle storage) in the salon amidships can be converted into further bunks.

In conclusion, the Enavigo 33 Cutter demonstrates how a new craft, built to exacting standards from traditional materials, in a classic design, can have a character and personality that the vast majority of production yachts could never possess.



The Enavigo glows and shows her attractive silhouette in a picture perfect Croatian sunset. A good day's sailing.

