

A Best Selling Yacht From The End Of The Boom Years

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The **Scanmar 33** appeared as the explosion of Swedish yacht sales of the 1970's tapered off into the meager period of the 1980's. The demand had changed in favor of larger and more comfortable yachts, and the Scanmar became a huge success.

Sometimes a yacht is associated with a particular person, not necessarily the designer/builder but rather the one who got the project started and who built the brand. Nisse Olofsson is such a person. He is Mr. Scanmar. He is known as well for the "Compis" and "Scanner" boats, but this article deals with his big success, the Scanmar.

Approximately 500 Scanmar 33's were built. That's an astonishing figure. It might be close to a record number for a relatively large boat. A substantial portion, almost half, was exported. But hundreds are sailing in Sweden, easily recognized from their decorative red lines on relatively high free boards. It is a typical family boat with lines and properties tailored more for comfort than for that last fraction of speed. Still quite a few owners race; for example, for many years she's had her own class in the Around Gotland race.

All Scanmar 33's were built during the first half of the 1980's, but she is a product of the 1970's in terms of her creation and as a part of the trend begun at that time.

During the boat show in Langedrag Nisse Olofsson got the idea for a bigger boat. In 1974 he had bought the Compis-project from designer Bernt Andersson in Karlstad, and he had the boats built by the brothers Borjesson in Bjasta by Ovik. In 1977 he got started with Scanmar 25, but it did not become a big seller, with only 50 built by 1980. Was the trend about to shift towards larger sailboats? Nisse thought so.

"When I saw the Contrast 33 at the dock in Langedrag, I wanted something like it, but larger. I wanted a well-sailing cruising yacht." And as it turned out, not only was the length of 33ft just right, so was the pure cruising concept. "I had an idea about the interior design which I gave to Rolf. He then designed a boat around it. I was standing next to him as he drew the lines, so there were no errors in communication."

What the market particularly wanted was an aft cabin. That design had started to appear on other boats, but then mostly as a kind of enlarged bunk. "I wanted a large space, through the entire width of the boat. Rolf thought that made for a very wide ass, but I'd think that today it doesn't appear so unusual any more."

To match the large stern area Nisse wanted a slightly larger than usual forward cabin, which required rounder lines forward, which explains the background for the relatively low LYS-number of the Scanmar 33 (1.13).

Not only the broader stern but also higher freeboards gave the desired spaciousness. Though some of the American or French 30-footers we find today have almost the same interior volume, it was unique for this size boat at the time. The mid-cabin is generous with a large U-shaped portside sofa, easily accommodating five persons around the table. The long sofa, opposite, leaves plenty of room to pass though. Because of the large spaces fore and aft, the main cabin sofas are not meant to have to be used as beds. Behind the sofas are, to port a shelf, and to starboard a more spacious shelf and cabinet space. To starboard there is also a small nav-table turned towards the bulkhead to the toilet, which is neat and spacious. It is built entirely of wood, yet suitable for a shower.

On the opposite side is the L-shaped pantry, which is one of the features that are clearly a step above those of the 30-footers. There are twin sinks, an insulated cooler compartment, a stove with an oven, and yet room for a counter space. The entry to the aft cabin is via the pantry. Here are closets on each side and enough bare space to install cabinets. Light is provided via two slot shaped windows in the hull.

Most of the interior is made of wood, but a glass fiber module is the base for the floor and the port side sofa. Some 33's have been modified by replacement of the fiberglass flooring with wood.

The general impression of the interior is a welcoming feeling of a homey salon with plenty of space and yet intimate because of the plentiful use of wood. The Scanmar 33 is a fairly typical Swedish medium boat of its time, not luxurious but of high standards. And the prices were moderate, around SEK 240,000 (\$32K) for the early boats.

On deck the Scanmar 33 is clean and simple in all its functions with only a single trim runner for the fore sails, a perpendicular runner for the self tacking foresail, a hatch and a couple of Electrolux vents. All mast lines are led aft to the cockpit, which is roomy, with a high, angled frame giving good back support. A short beam lies across, just in front of the wheel.

It was not a given that the Scanmar would have a wheel. "I was thinking back and forth, and decided only after seeing the Whitlock link system, which eliminated the wire related problems", explains Nisse Olofsson.

It is prudent to replace much of the original deck hardware, which is now some 15 to 20 years old. It was often under designed to save cost, and it is beginning to age and become inefficient. An example of such an upgrade:

- The Genoa winches were replaced with self-tailing winches.

- The spinnaker winches were moved aft to the cockpit frame, where they can be used for the Genoa as well, if required.
- The winches on the cabin roof were exchanged to self-tailing winches and one step larger, as were the off-loaders, which have been greatly improved since the 1970's.
- The runner for the self-tacking foresail was changed to lessen friction.

Here too important improvements have been made over the years.

An important detail needs attention: The original shroud mounts with their two bolts mounted through the deck **can simply break off** (emphasis added), due to the angled forces especially on the lower shrouds. The Scanmar Association has available replacement mounts, which fit in the original deck holes, and replacement is recommended.

Another important point should be looked at: The bottom sleepers are bridged across the keelson, giving no support at the bottom of the keelson. This could lead to a so-called "swing-keel" problem. This potential problem can be fixed. An owner, who corrected it on his own, spent 100 hours on removal and modification of all the sleepers, but it is not recommended unless the owner is experienced in working with fiberglass. To have it done professionally might cost around SEK 25,000 (\$3K) in Sweden.

The first Scanmar 33's were under sail in 1980. The boat was an immediate success. 82 boats were built the first year. And it chugged along until 1986, when Nisse Olofsson sold his company to the Borjesson Brothers. At that time approximately 500 had been built. No major changes were made during this 6-year period. In fact, says Olofsson, the brochure's pictures were the same throughout – they were taken of the prototype boat! "There is no first and second generation", he explains.

Following the Scanmar 25, the 33 was the second boat in a series. It was followed by the 31, the 35, 345 and the 40. It is a sign of the times beginning in the 1980's that of the 31, which came in 1984, only 100 were sold. The era of the small sea going cruisers, which had been so prominent in Sweden in the 1970's, was at an end.

Nor were the Scanmar 35 and the 345 huge sellers; each sold approximately 100 copies. But they arrived at a time, at the second half of the 1980's, when the Swedish boating industry's time of glory was about to end. Now it was the Borjesson Brothers in Bjasta who owned the business, and the company ceased operations in 1991 following bankruptcy. Nisse Olofsson had gone on to the Scanner boats certain that by now the trend favored boats of 40 foot and up. They were less price sensitive and always in demand on the export market.

But it is as 'Mr. Scanmar' that he has become known. A sign that these boats remain popular is their second hand prices. The Scanmar 33 price today hovers around SEK 440,000 (\$ 60K) give or take SEK 25,000.

One owner's experience:

"It's an incredibly fine family boat. It's difficult to find anything better in that size and at the price. As for racing you have to be pretty skilled to do well against other types of boats with similar LYS-numbers. It's easier to do well the more it blows. Not unexpectedly the Scanmar 33 has some difficulties to do well in lighter winds, with its relatively heavy displacement and bulky lines. A good light wind Genoa is important, not only for racing. A heavier working Genoa is a good complement, and can be used in winds up to 20 knots (though in this case the main will flutter)."

"A 110% fore sail is an alternative to the heavier Genoa. Some owners have installed backstays to allow for the use of a Genoa in heavier weather, both for safety and to tighten the fore stay better."

"Balance and stiffness are satisfactory."

The **Scanmar Association** has some 200 members. Membership is SEK 200/year.

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