

# Tayana 37 Cutter

*This product of the Far East would make a good choice for the retired couple who want to travel.*

**W**ith several hundred boats sailing the seas of the world, the Tayana 37 has been one of the most successful products of the Taiwan-built boat invasion of the US that began in the early 1970s.

Her shapely Baltic stern, scribed plank seams molded into the glass hull, and lavish use of teak above and below decks have come to epitomize the image that immediately comes to mind when Oriental boats are mentioned.

Not all thoughts of Far Eastern boats are pleasant, however. To some, Taiwan-built boats mean poor workmanship, overly heavy hulls, unbedded hardware of dubious heritage, wooden spars that delaminate, and builder-modified boats light years removed from the plans provided by the designer. Add to that a serious language barrier and the inevitable logistical problems of dealing with a boatyard halfway round the world, and you have a situation ready-made to generate potential nightmares for the boat buyer.

To the credit of the builder, the designer, the primary importer, and a powerful owners' association, the Tayana 37 weathered an astounding sixteen years of production—a lifetime in the world of boatbuilding—while making steady improvements and maintaining a steady output of over 50 boats per year.

Washington-based designer Bob Perry had just hung out his own shingle when the Tayana 37 was designed in the early 70s. The Sherman tank Westsail 32 had just come lumbering onto the scene, bringing with it a resurgence of interest in the double ended hull form, and more



people than ever before were beginning to have the dream of chucking it all and sailing away to a tropical paradise. Perry conceived the Tayana 37 as a cruising boat of traditional appearance above the water, with moderately heavy displacement, a long waterline, and a reasonably efficient cutter rig of modern proportions. (A ketch rig is also available). Below the water, the

LOA	36' 8"
LWL	31' 10"
Beam	11' 6"
Draft	5' 8"
Displacement	24,000 lbs.
Ballast	7,340 lbs.
Sail area	864 sq. ft.

forefoot of the long keel has been cut away, and a Constellation-type rudder utilized rather than a more traditional barn door. Perry sought to cash in on the popularity of the double ended hull while keeping displacement moderate and performance reasonable, avoiding the plight of boats such as the Westsail 32—the inability to go to windward, and sluggish performance in anything short of a moderate gale..

Bob Perry has become an enormously successful designer of cruising boats, from traditional full keel designs such as the Tayana 37, to modern fin keel cruisers such as the

Nordic 40, Golden Wave 42, and the Valiant 40. A remarkable number of his designs have been built in the Orient, in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. The stern design of the Tayana 37 borrows heavily from the well known Aage Neilsen designed ketch Holger Danske, winner of the 1980 Bermuda Race. It is one of the more handsome Baltic-type sterns on any production sailboat.

The Tayana 37 began life as the CT 37. In 1979 the boat became known as the Tayana 37, named for Ta Yang Yacht Building Company. While some snobbishness exists among some owners who own the CT version, Perry insists that this is illusory. According to the designer, the CT 37 and the Tayana 37 are the same boat, built by the same men in the same yard. In much the same way that the early Swans imported by Palmer Johnson were known by the name of the importer—the names Nautor and Swan were unknown here in the late 1960s—early Tayanans were known as CTs because the name CT had already become known in this country.

Perry, who has worked with many yards in the Far East, considers Ta Yang one of the best. The yard has been very responsive to input from both dealers and owners. Over the years the Tayana 37 has been in production, this has resulted in steady improvement in the quality of the boat.

The vast majority of Tayanans now imported into this country are brought in by Southern Offshore Yachts, which has offices in eastern Canada, Rhode Island, Maryland, and both coasts of Florida. By working closely with the builder and maintaining good contact with the owners' association, Southern Offshore has had significant input into improving the quality of the boats.

Owners report that Southern Offshore has been very responsive to handling warranty problems. The same cannot be said for all Tayana dealers. One west coast Tayana 37 owner responding to our owner survey reported that "basically, the dealer treated us like second-rate citizens." A similar comment was voiced by a midwestern owner.

## Construction

The hull of the Tayana 37 is a fairly heavy solid glass layup. Some roving printthrough is evident in the topsides. The hull-to-deck joint has in the

past occasionally been a problem with the boat. There is no doubt it is strong, but there have been numerous reports of leaking.

Part of the problem with the hull-to-deck joint is the fact that the hull and deck moldings form a hollow bulwark extending well above the main deck level. This bulwark is pierced by hawsepipes and several large scuppers at deck level. Careful bedding of all fittings that penetrate the bulwarks is essential to avoid leaks. On new boats, the entire hollow bulwark is glassed over from inside the hull, greatly reducing the possibility of leaks. This results in an incredibly labor intensive joint, but labor intensive is the name of the game in Taiwanese boatbuilding.

None of the numerous through hull fittings is recessed flush with the exterior of the hull. The argument is frequently made that this is unnecessary on cruising boats. Nothing could be further from the truth. The cruising boat is frequently undercanvassed for her displacement and wetted surface. Add to this the low speed drag associated with projections from the hull, and you have a boat that spends a lot of time motoring in light air, when she should be sailing. While the Tayana 37 is far from undercanvassed, she could benefit from a little more bottom fairing as much as the next boat. An option to recessing the through hull fittings would be to fair them in with large microballoon blisters—not as effective as recessing, but perhaps easier to do after the fact.

The rudder stock is a substantial stainless steel rod, with the rudder held on by welded arms riveted through the rudder blade. The heel fitting is a bronze casting. This is fastened to the hull with stainless steel bolts. Inevitably, there will be galvanic action between the bronze and the stainless, with the fastenings coming out on the short end. There is provision for protection of the rudder straps with zincs.

All hardware, including cleats and stanchions, is through-bolted and backed with stainless steel pads. Most hardware is fairly accessible from belowdecks.

The ballast keel is an iron casting dropped into the hollow fiberglass keel shell. The casting is glassed over on the inside of the boat. We prefer an external lead keel for its shock absorbing qualities in case of grounding.

The glasswork of the Tayana 37 is of good quality. There are no rough edges, the fillet bonding is neat, and there is no glass or resin

slopped about. Tayana warrants the hull against defects for ten years.

Until recently, the standard steering system was a Taiwanese worm gear system copied from the Edson worm gear. Recurrent problems with this system, notably extremely sloppy and mushy steering, have resulted in significant changes. The standard system is now a pedestal system Taiwanese-built but remarkable similar to the Edson pedestal steerer.

Seacocks are used on all through hull fittings. The seacocks appear to be copies of US-made Groco valves. Hoses to seacocks are all double clamped.

## Handling Under Power

Three different engines have been used in the Tayana 37: the Yanmar 3QM30, the Perkins 4-108, and the Volvo MD17C. The standard engine is now the Yanmar. This makes good economic sense, as Japan is rather closer to Taiwan than either England or Sweden. Both the Volvo and Perkins are still available as options. We see no reason to choose either engine over the Yanmar.

While the engine box removes completely to provide good access for service, there is no provision for easy access to the oil dipstick. This means that this vital task is likely to be ignored. A simple door in the side of the engine box would solve the problem.

The placement of the fuel tank has caused substantial discussion on the part of owners. The standard 90 gallon black iron tank is located under the V-berth in the forward cabin. When full, this tank holds almost 650 pounds of fuel. This is about the same weight as 375 feet of 3/8" chain—a substantial amount to carry around in the bow of a 37-footer. A Tayana 37 with the bow tank full and a heavy load of ground tackle will show noticeable bow down trim. The design was originally drawn with the fuel tanks under the settees, but the builder put the tank forward to create additional storage in the main cabin.

This is a good example of one of the basic recurring problems with Far East built boats. Frequently the builders have good glass men and good inside joiners, but their inexperience in sailing results in inconsistencies which compromise their boats.

Fortunately, thanks to the pressure from owners, the builder offers optional tankage

amidships. where it belongs. By all means select this tankage option so that the fore and aft trim of the boat will remain unchanged as fuel is consumed.

Although any of the engines is adequate power for the boat, don't expect the Tayana 37 to win any drag races. With her substantial wetted surface and fairly heavy displacement, performance under power is sedate rather than spritely. Owners report handling under power fair to good. although one reported that his boat "backs up like a drunken elephant."

## Handling Under Sail

The Tayana 37 comes as a ketch or cutter, with wood spars or aluminum, with mast stepped on deck or on the keel. Few builders offer you so many options.

The standard rig is a masthead cutter with wooden spars. the mast stepped on deck and supported by a substantial compression column. The designer strongly recommends the aluminum cutter rig, and we heartily concur. The wooden mast is poorly proportioned, with a massive section and extremely thick side walls. One new mast we looked at had a large knot on the forward side of the mast just at spreader level. Despite the huge mast section, we feel the knot could weaken the mast significantly.

In contrast to the large section of the mast, the boom is an extremely small spruce box section. With mid-boom sheeting, this spar will probably be about as stiff as a rubber band, complicating mainsail shape. The clew outhaul slide is far too flimsy for a boat of this size, and owners report that the outhaul slide frequently distorts or explodes. Once again, these problems are not atypical in Taiwan boats. where you frequently find excellent craftsmanship but a poor understanding of engineering or the forces involved in ocean sailing.

In contrast, the aluminum rigs, which may come from a variety of sources including France, New Zealand, and the US, are well proportioned and suited to the task.

We see no reason to select the ketch rig. Both performance and balance with the cutter rig will be better. The cutter's mainsail is 342 square feet. Any couple healthy enough to go world cruising should be able to cope with a sail of this size.

The cutter rig is tall and well proportioned.

Perry has drawn an unusually high aspect rig for a cruising boat, and the result is a boat with good performance on all points of sail. With the aluminum rig, the optional Nicro Fico ball bearing mainsheet traveler, and a well cut suit of sails, the Tavana 37 will be surprisingly fast. Her working sail area of 864 square feet is generous.

Despite a ballast/displacement ratio of 33 percent, the Tayana 37 is not a stiff boat. This is due in part to the tall, heavy rig and the substantial amount of other weight above the boat's vertical center of gravity. Much of the boat's heavy joinerwork and glass work is well above the waterline, raising the center of gravity and reducing initial stability. Perry believes the initial tenderness to be an asset, reducing the snappiness of the boat's roll and making her a more comfortable sea boat. We agree.

Many owners report that the boat carries substantial weather helm. The sail plan is drawn with significant rake to the mast. This creates just enough shift in the center of effort of the sail plan to create a lot of weather helm. Bringing the mast back toward the vertical by tightening the headstay and forestay while loosening the backstay should cure much of the problem, according to reports from other owners. It may be necessary to shorten the headstay to do this.

The weather helm and initial tenderness may also be due in part to the poor cut of the standard sails provided with the boat. For years, the standard sails have been made by Lam of Hong Kong. The sails have the reputation of being stretchy and having very poor shape. Mainsail draft with this fabric is almost uncontrollable, with the sail becoming baggy and the draft moving aft as the wind increases. This will create weather helm and increase the angle of heel.

## Deck Layout

With her bulwarks, high double lifelines, and substantial bow and stern pulpits, the Tayana 37 gives the sailor a good sense of security on those cold, windy nights when he's called out for sail changes. A teak platform grating atop the bowsprit coupled with the strong pulpit relieves that appendage of its widowmaker reputation.

The bowsprit platform incorporates double anchor rollers which will house CQR anchors. Unfortunately, there is no good lead from the

rollers to any place to secure the anchor rode. Line or chain led to the heavy bowsprit bitts would chafe on the platform. An anchor windlass mounted to port or starboard of the bowsprit would provide a good lead, and is an available option.

There are hawse pipes through the bulwarks port and starboard well aft of the stem. These will be fine for dock lines, but are too far aft to serve as good leads for anchoring. There is room at deck level outboard of the bowsprit to install a set of heavy chocks for anchoring, although anchor rode led to this point will chafe on the bobstay as the boat swings to her anchor.

This is a classic problem of the boat with bowsprit. The anchor rode must really lead well out the bowsprit to avoid the bobstay, yet the long lead complicates securing the inboard end of the rode.

The long staysail boom makes it difficult to cross from one side of the boat to the other forward. The standard staysail traveler is merely a stainless steel rod on which a block can slide on its shackle. Under load, this can bind when tacking, so that it may be necessary to go forward and kick the block over after every tack. By all means look for the optional Nicro Fico travelers with their roller bearing cars. Complaints about the standard travelers are rife. Standard winches on the boat are Barlow. We suggest that you try to find self-tailing winches for all sheets.

Although the side decks are relatively narrow due to the wide cabin trunk, there is reasonable access fore and aft. A full length hand rail on either side of the cabin trunk provides a good handhold.

The cockpit of the Tayana 37 is small, as befits an oceangoing sailboat. There are cockpit scuppers at each of the four corners of the cockpit well, with seacocks on the through hull outlets.

With the now-standard pedestal steering, the cockpit seems to have shrunk. Only three can be seated in real comfort, although this is no real problem for the cruising couple. It is not a cockpit for heavy entertaining in port. The elimination of the coaming around the stern of the boat has made the cockpit seats long enough for sleeping on deck, but at the expense of exposing the helmsman to a wet seat in a following sea. The coaming can optionally be continued around the rear of the

cockpit. Cockpit locker configuration varies with the interior options chosen, but the lockers are large enough to provide reasonable storage, although you should resist the temptation to load them heavily so far aft.

## Belowdecks

The interior of the Tayana 37 probably sells more boats than any other feature of the boat. There is not really a standard interior. Every boat that comes through is custom built, and almost every owner takes advantage of the opportunity to create an interior suited to his or her own needs.

The cost of producing these interiors is not prohibitive. Interior joinerwork is labor intensive, but labor in the Orient is still far cheaper than it is here.

Like other Taiwanese boats, the interior of the Tayana 37 is all teak. This results in an interior that can be oppressively dark to some people, exquisitely cool to others. To keep it looking good, someone is going to have to do a lot of oiling or varnishing.

The interior joinerwork is some of the best we have seen on any boat, whether it is built in the US, Taiwan, or Finland. Joints were just about flawless, paneled doors beautifully joined, drawers dovetailed from solid stock. There were no fillers making up for poorly fitted joints, no trim fitted with grinders, no slop anywhere. The men who put the interior in the new boat we examined were real craftsmen. Older boats we have looked at did not boast quite this caliber of workmanship, but their joinerwork was certainly of good quality.

With such an array of interior options it is difficult to really evaluate the boat's interior. Naturally, if you're considering a used Tayana, you're stuck with whatever the original buyer had installed. However, if you're thinking of ordering a new boat, the choices are wide open.

This may be a mixed blessing to the buyer. For the couple who have owned other boats, have kept copious notes about what they want and don't want in their next boat, and who are experienced, well read, and knowledgeable, the ability to plan their own interior offers an opportunity that is probably unequalled in a boat in this price range.

If you have only vague ideas of what you want in the interior of a cruising boat, one of the real advantages of owning the Tayana 37 may

be lost. Do you want a pilot berth or storage? Drawers or bins? Propane or kerosene for cooking? Quarterberth or wet locker? Fold up or drop leaf table? To the inexperienced, the choices may be bewildering. To those who know what they want, the opportunity is a gold mine.

In all fairness, there is a "standard" interior. It is prosaic but good, with V-berth forward, followed by head and lockers just aft. The main cabin has a U-shaped settee to port, straight settee and pilot berth to starboard. Aft is a good U-shaped galley to port, nav station and quarterberth to starboard. For not much more money, you can have pretty much what you want, from a 'standard' array of interior options to a fully custom interior. You're missing a good bet if you don't spend some time creating your own dream interior.

## Conclusions

The Tayana 37 is both typical and atypical of Taiwanese boats. She is typical in the problems that existed due to the builder's inexperience with seagoing yachts, typical with communication and language problems.

She is atypical in that many of these problems have been solved over many years of production, in that a good owners' association has resulted in real improvements in the boat. Anyone considering a Tayana 37 should join the owners' association and read all the back newsletters before buying the boat.

Because of the myriad options, we don't really suggest a new Tayana 37 as a first boat. Between pilot house and trunk cabin versions, ketch and cutter, and the incredible array of interior options, the first time boatowner would have a great deal of difficulty coming up with just the right boat.

The total cost of a well-equipped Tayana 37 with most of the desirable options compares very favorably with other boats of her size, type, and displacement.

The Tayana 37 would make an excellent retirement cruiser for the experienced sailing couple. Properly handled and equipped, she could take you anywhere with confidence and reasonable dispatch. If you want to design your own interior and are willing to wait for our boat to be built, she just may be the right boat for you.