

Sailing Nordic Waters



By Mikael Sundebäck, WindRider Sweden

Scandinavians have taken to the waters ever since the Vikings developed simple ships and crossed the oceans. Today sailing in Sweden, Norway and Denmark is a decidedly more peaceful affair - especially if you enjoy riding the waves with WindRider Sweden.

Sailing WindRider along the west coast of Sweden on a clear summer day provides a stunning adventure among plenty of boating friends. During the high season you can expect to see boats absolutely everywhere as evidence of Scandinavians love of water – ferries plowing towards Denmark, pattering powerboats, competition sailboats, canoes and old ships in various sizes. We have lately noticed an increased interest in multi-hulls, a boat type that has been somewhat alien to the strictly conservative sailing society of Scandinavia. The benefits including easy, fun, affordable, trailering, and versatility, especially of WindRider trimarans, is beginning to become more widely known in Scandinavian waters.



If you go back far enough in time, there was a long period when our Nordic forefathers only fearfully crossed shorter distances of water. Then came the Vikings. They weren't exactly pleasure boaters, but they did employ the same tricks and face the same obstacles as sailors today. The Vikings also opened Nordic eyes to what could be accomplished with a seagoing vessel, a good sail and the right know-how. Most of those insights were put to military use, while coastal fishermen continued to use their simple shore-hugging craft to carve out a living. And earning a living wasn't always easy, especially in the area around Smögen. Scandinavia isn't known for its gentle weather, so operating and maintaining boats took hard work in often cold and icy conditions. Even if the climate, due to the Gulf Stream, keeps us a lot warmer than other places around the world situated as far north as us. Without the Gulf Stream we would probably have had polar bears at the west coast of Sweden. This with cold and harsh conditions, of course, did not change when boating stepped into our modern era of entertainment sailing. The risk of synthetic ropes and other gear weakening due to UV radiation and salt water is smaller up here, but the snow and ice still demand the same sort of attention they did in the olden days. And there is real danger, too. Sailing the coast of northern Norway, for example, is not

for the faint-hearted. Even in summer. Your safest bet here is to join an experienced sailor from the area if you plan on going on an expedition. Last year we sold a WindRider 17 to a customer that lives in this remote part of the Scandinavia and he has promised us to report proof of WindRider 17 performance later this year. We are not worried that the WindRider 17 has lived up to its expectations.



So, the Scandinavian boating season may be shorter and less balmy than the Mediterranean, but we make up for it in intensity and style. Shallow and rocky Scandinavian archipelagoes don't lend themselves to the mega-yachts or multihull plenty fullness of the Caribbean, but with our means we steadily have moved towards two main focuses – larger or simpler. We see that a 30-footer, which was a big as a regular family could hope to go two decades ago, and what would fit into the marinas along the coastline, is considered small today. Hardly any manufacturers build them anymore. Forty feet or a smaller daytrip sailboat is truly the new 30 feet. To get your hands on a 30-footer you will have to turn to the “pre owned” market. Few families opt for the 50- or 60-foot monsters, so the mass-market focus lays squarely on 40-footers and smaller entertainment or nature exploration boats. Our challenge lays with spreading the trimaran message. WindRider has noticed that many former family sailors now with children that have left the nest have shown interest in the easy way of living present by owning a WindRider. They have now sold the family sailboat and want to get back to basic, but in addition want to add speed and flexibility.



The latter has also with the present society's focus on efficiency has also favored powerboats over sailboats in a way that has let people reach farther but also increased the importance of speed and performance. Using the wind for power will always be an unpredictable mode of transport, but on the

other hand also the kind of dependant of natural forces that the stressed man of today is craving for as relaxing activity. By combining the freedom of sailing with speed and ease of use in a WindRider trimaran, we seek to save the souls of the restless boat lovers.

As for adventurous long-distance sailors everywhere, reaching farther and farther out is a part of the challenge. Norwegians have always had their beautiful coast (Europe's longest) to adventure along, with the odd risk-taker heading straight out for England or Scotland. Danish sailors in southern Smålandshavet, for example, who get the itch for foreign shores have northern Germany within reach. Otherwise, a visit to Bornholm, the easternmost part of the realm, has for long been a favorite destination. Denmark in by the way is the only country in Scandinavia dominated by long stretches of sandy beaches, ideal to multihull compared to the rest of Scandinavia which is dominated by shorelines consisting of islands with bare rocks and cliffs. On the other side of Sweden on the eastern coast facing the Baltic Sea we have yet another type of archipelago eg. thousands of small islands with small forests and fields shattered along the coastline. In this part of Scandinavia Swedes and Finns have exchanged boaters across the Stockholm-Åland archipelago, and the Swedish island of Gotland has attracted sailors from all manners of countries thanks to its central location in the Baltic. Armed with EPIRBs and personal rescue equipment some sailors are even crossing the Baltic to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in smaller boats such as WindRider 17 - during predictable stable weather conditions that is.



But whether we are chilling in Smålandshavet, exploring the Norwegian fjords or island hopping the west coast of Sweden near Smögen, sailing Scandinavians all share the same basic dream. It's one of getting away from it all, finding a secluded cove and just relaxing, enjoying a picnic on the rocks and snaps in the cockpit or on top of the trampolines during the never ending summer nights. You are free to embark at any island of your choice, since every man's right of admission to the nature assets of the archipelago and the forests of Sweden is regulated by a special law called Allemansrätten, and why not bring along some amazing fresh seafood from a local fisherman's catch of the day. The dream may get lost sometimes in the noise and occasional congestion, but as you would leave the WindRider Sweden basecamp in Hasselösund Sweden behind with your feet at the rudder controls of a WindRider 17 the dream will come back as clear as ever – that is a promise! Time will slow down, the scale returned to human proportions and all the allure of traveling by sailboat will become abundantly clear. As more and more are finding out - Scandinavians and their WindRiders is a love meant to last.

Coasts

Denmark: 7314 kilometers

Sweden: 3218 kilometers

Norway: 21925 kilometers

Scandinavia in total: 32457 kilometers

USA: 88633 kilometers

