

# Tartan 34C, Design #1904

By George H. Colligan, Tartan 34C #162, *Temujin*, 1971 \*\*\*

I think Olin Stephens himself said it best: “There is nothing outstanding or unusual about it. Everything seems to just work well. In a way, it is a masterpiece!” And, to prove the point, not only were 525 built from 1967 until 1978; but today, over 150 owners are lavishly restoring and upgrading these gracefully functional 34-foot centreboard sloops. The newly formed Tartan 34C Owners Association is testimony indeed to the emergence of the boat as a true S&S classic.

The Tartan 34C itself can trace its design heritage to a sloop designed in 1964 by the name of *Deb*, design # 1786. Built in England for Mr. Eric Barker, *Deb*, now called *Sunstone* and sailed by Tom and Vicky Jackson of Southampton, England, quickly established herself as an outstanding racer and cruiser. She was the first of the S&S centreboarders to separate the rudder from the keel and to show a deeper hull section to ensure offshore reliability and stability. In the design scheme of things, the 38-foot *Deb* was followed in 1966 by the *Deb 33-Class*, design # 1873. A review of her lines [See Fig.1], sail plan and layout shows a boat that, while somewhat finer in the ends to conform to RORC practice, is nearly identical to the Tartan 34C, designed a year later for the firm of Douglas & McLeod in the United States, and reflecting the influence of the CCA rule.

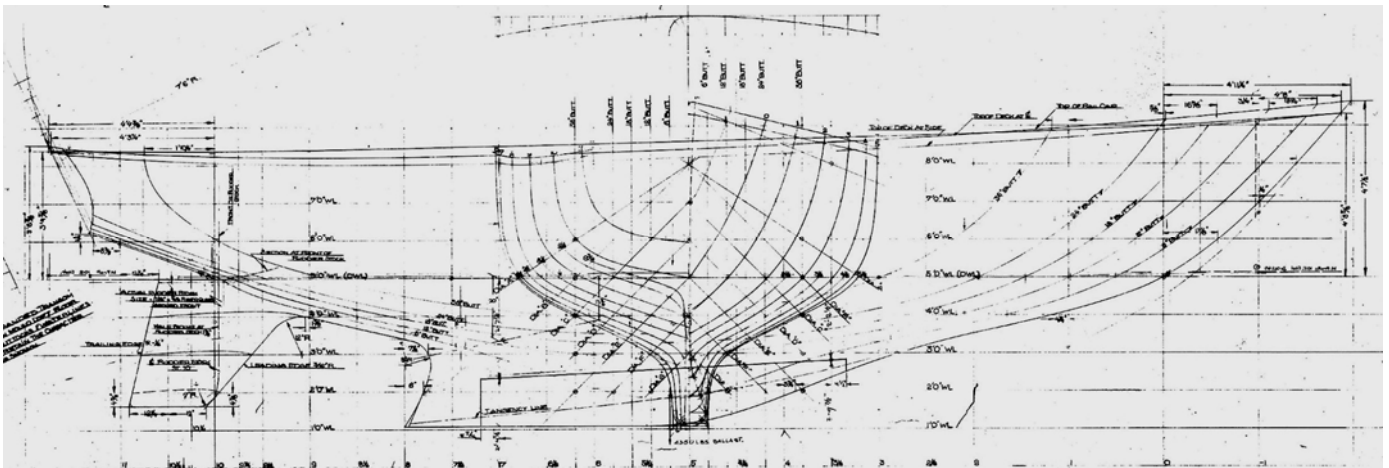
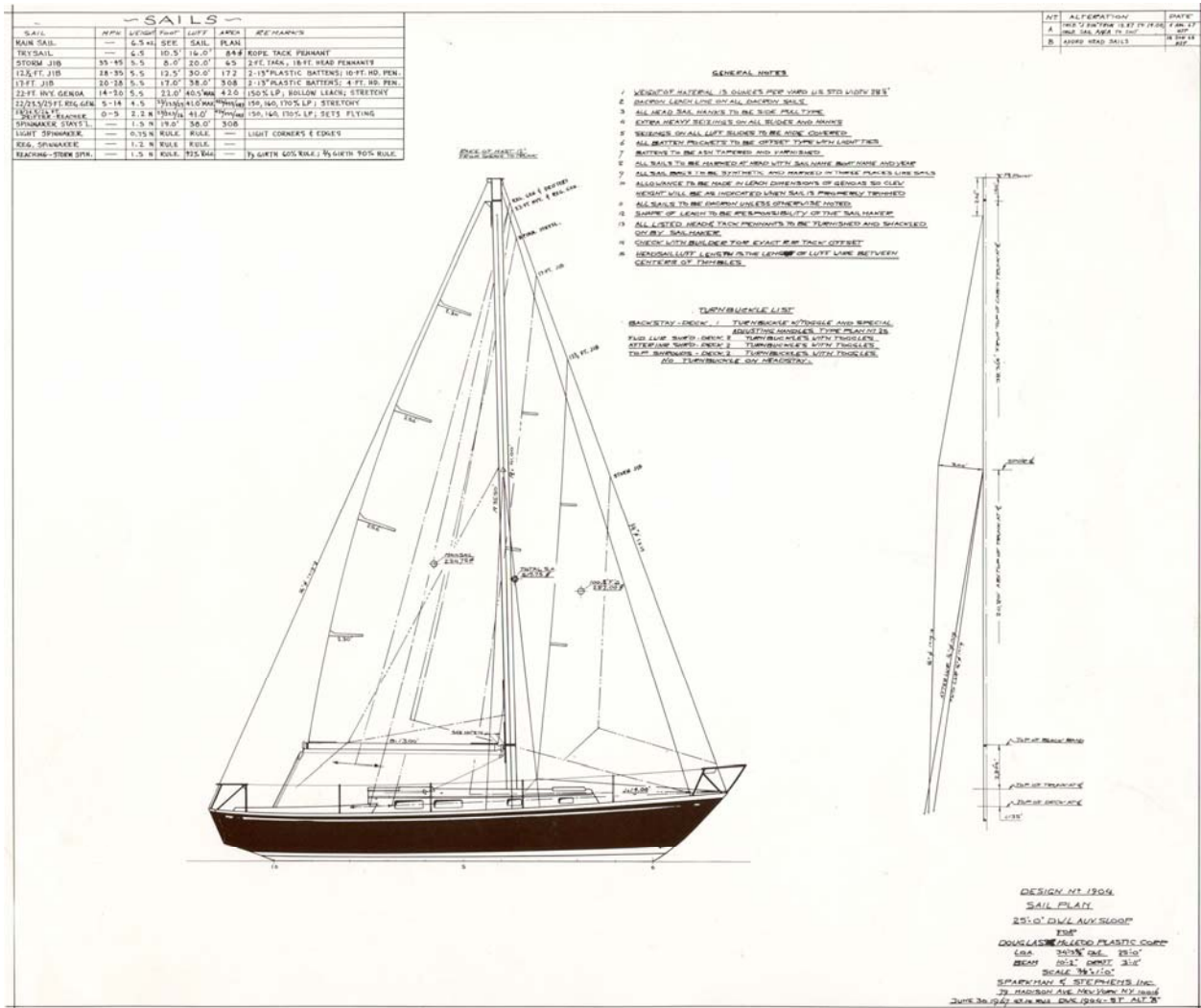


Fig. 1 *Tartan 34C Lines and sections*

The Tartan 34C was a success from the very first. In 1968, she headed south to capture her class in the prestigious SORC. Then, with owners sailing them, Tartan 34C's won the rugged Port Huron-Mackinac Race, on the Great Lakes, and the Marblehead-Halifax Race on the eastern seaboard. Since that auspicious beginning, Tartan 34C's have won numerous races, including Chesapeake Bay High-Point Championship; and, now in the hands of new owners, are winning again on the Great Lakes, in New England, the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf Coast, and the Pacific Coast.



Nor should the performance have come as a surprise given the talent and experience of the design team involved in the yacht's development. In addition to Olin and Rod Stephens, the lines, deck plan and sail plan were developed by the team of Gerhard Gilgenast, German Frers Jr. and Francis Kinney, all outstanding designers in their own rights.

However, the story nearly ended in 1972, when a fire swept through the buildings where the Tartan 34C was being built. The moulds and some hulls were completely destroyed. Out of the ashes of the company rose a newly organized Tartan Marine to build the boat while this allowed Douglas & McLeod to continue building smaller boats as a separate company. The company known as Tartan Marine went forward to build over 3700 yachts to S&S designs including a 37-foot centreboarder, a 41-foot ocean racer similar to the Swan 41, a 42-foot motorsailer modelled after Irving Johnson's *Yankee*, designed by S&S and built of steel, and a delightful 27-foot cruiser-racer. All in all the relationship between S&S and Charlie Britten, President of Tartan Marine resulted in the construction of some of the best sailing boats of the era.

The Tartan 34c's cruising performance record, too, is an enviable one: Jak Ayers single-handed his *Compadre* around the world, across the Pacific to Hawaii a number of times and to New Zealand. *Compadre* is now being readied by new owners, Tom Laur and Lisa Goldschmidt for new horizons. *Silverheels II* has sailed around the horn of South America 6 times! After sailing to Hawaii, Peter Turner and his wife Carla, owners of *Silverheels II*, have cruised their boat for over 16 years. There are many other accounts of trans-Atlantic passages, trans-Pacific passages and even more of extended cruises all over both coasts of the United States, Mexico, Canada, South America and Europe. It is fair to say, when added together, the 525 Tartan 34C's have as many, if not more, successful voyaging miles than any other S&S design. And, the meter is still running!!!

On a personal note, my wife Susan and I plan to sail to the Caribbean and then the Med. And we are preparing *Temujin*, #162, 1971, for those voyages as I write this article. That is, of course, after we sail to rendezvous with other S&S Association members and other Tartan 34C owners at the S&S 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Mystic in July 2004.

What sort of boat is the Tartan 34C? Well, by today's standards she would be considered a moderately heavy keel-centreboard sloop with graceful overhangs, wide side decks, a long and pleasing cockpit and a moderate sail plan. Nothing radical or outstanding. As Olin says: a masterpiece!



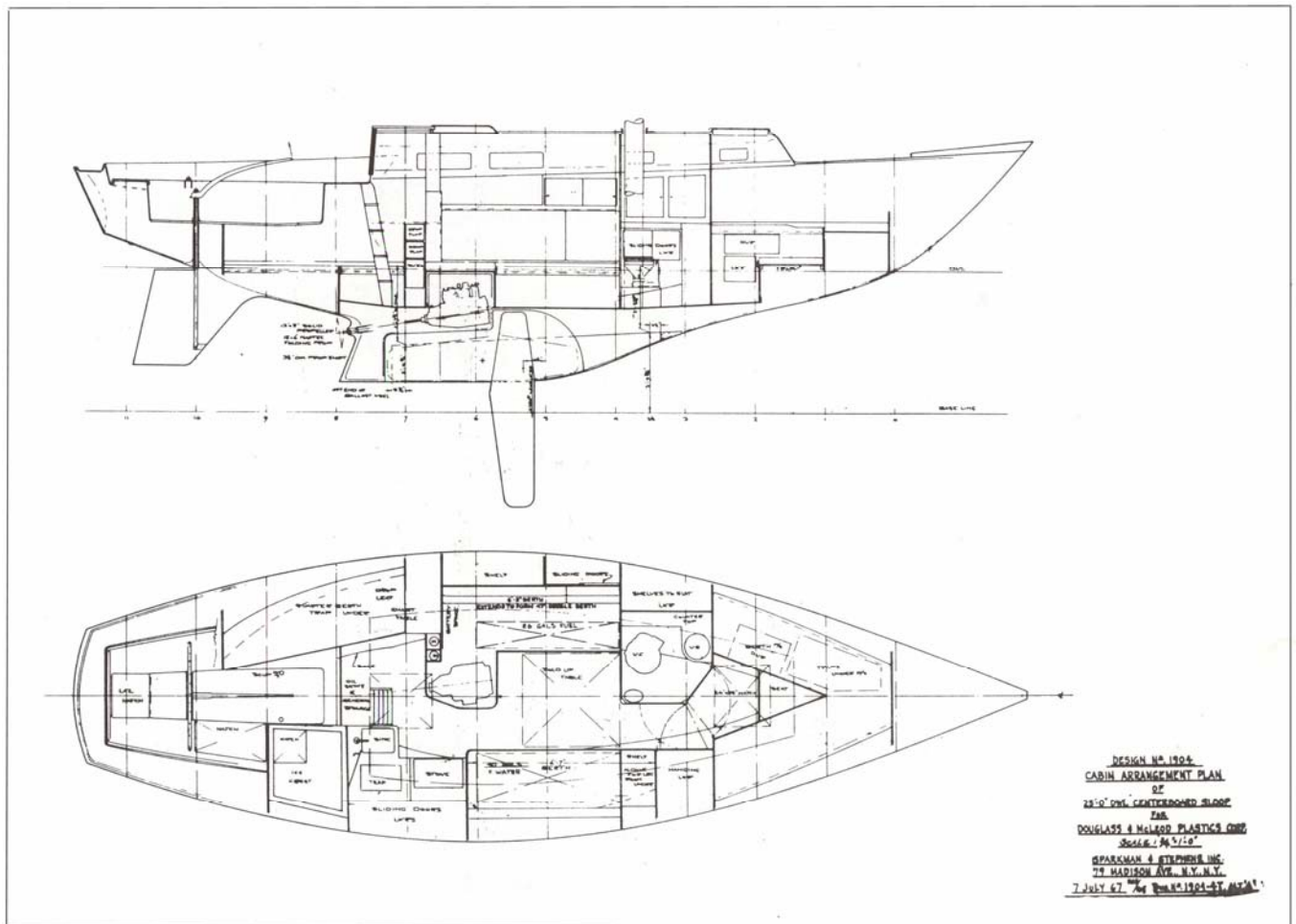
*Interior of Temujin*

Her interior accommodations, as the plans show [See Fig. 2], are adequate and she sports three functional and secure sea berths, two having excellent leeboards made of teak with a padded cover. The forward V-berth is a bit narrow but can easily be converted into a double with an insert for sleeping at anchor or at the dock. Of importance is the fact that there is a full 6'2" of headroom throughout the boat from the main companionway to the forward hatch in the V-berth and there are lots of handholds to see you get there.

The galley is small but the icebox is up under the cockpit bench and bridge deck so as not to impinge upon the counter space too much. The icebox has a hatch leading to the cockpit seat area

so you can reach down for a beer or soda while underway without having to leave the helm. It also permits ice to be loaded from above without dripping water over the cabin sole. Originally equipped with a two-burner alcohol stove, her owners, today, have opted for propane stoves and ovens. Susan thinks the galley is a bit too small for more than one or two dish meals. I reminded her that Eric and Susan Hiscock sailed around the world with a much smaller galley. Nonetheless, she is, of course, right and, some ingenuity in preparing meals is required. Thus, the gas barbecue on the push-pit! Food storage is another matter. For cruising sailors it is important to know that there is sufficient storage space in galley lockers and elsewhere for provisions for 7 to 10 weeks, though supplemental fuel and water will be required. In addition, beneath the cockpit benches there is enough space to house a water maker and refrigeration system. Long distances are within reach!

On the port side aft is a large and comfortable quarter berth; and, because the engine is over the keel in much the same way as the S&S 34, so well regarded in Europe, there is an enormous storage bin under the cockpit sole aft of a true wet locker that is tucked under the companionway ladder. The chart table is a drop-leaf stand-up table that has both admirers and detractors. I am an admirer!



**Fig.2** Accomodation plan



The engine, which was originally an Atomic 4 (a diesel option was offered.), is directly over the centreline and is readily accessible for servicing. Many owners have changed the engine to diesel, though a number of owners cling to the silent smoothness of the Atomic 4. An understandable addiction!

Between the main cabin and the forward section are the head to port, and a hanging locker and drawers to starboard. The head is very useable and the mast comes right down to the keel-step in the head compartment. (You can grab it if the need arises.)

Of importance, too, is the spaciousness of the cockpit and side decks. The cockpit offers two long benches and a full-scale bridge deck to use when seated under a dodger, as well as a large lazarette seat inside the aft coaming. There are two hefty teak side coamings and the layout is perfect for short-handed sailing with the winch islands holding two winches directly along side the helm station. Each side deck is wide and passage forward for whatever reason is relatively unencumbered. The foredeck is wide and long and there is room enough for a dual set of anchor pipes or a windlass. There is excellent footing for sail handling, too.



*Temujin*

After 4 years and several thousand miles, I have found the boat to be everything I expected. She is beautiful to look at with a graceful sheer and a goodly amount of teak trim to give the boat a pleasing appearance. She doesn't look quite as modern as some people might like but I guess that's why I like her. And, her performance is excellent being easily driven and steered. Her balance is readily achieved, once you learn to use the centreboard as a trimming mechanism, and many in the association use the expression "Let Olin steer!" when the wheel brake is tightened and the helm is balanced. The Tartan 34C will sail herself for hours, thanks to the balance of Olin's design. I wrote in a recent note to the Tartan Owners' web site that I found it a bit demoralizing that the boat sailed to windward faster without me than with me on the helm! But, in single-handing across Lake Ontario on a cold and blustery north-country day, the boat just sailed herself 40 miles, all the way to Oswego!

The fact that there are nearly 450 of the original 525 accounted for and over 150 owners have banded together to form an owners' association is proof of the enduring quality of the boat, as Tartan Marine built it. The interiors were finished mostly in teak, the hull lay-ups were the very best, and the rigging and hardware was of first quality throughout. Over the past thirty years some minor problems have arisen; but the new crop of owners has lavished endless hours and funds on restoring these boats.

This last part of the Tartan 34C story really represents a facet of a broader phenomenon in current yachting history as so many older boats, classics, are being rediscovered by the boating community. S&S boats are no exception, as yachts like *Stormy Weather*, *Bolero*, *Dorade*, *Finisterre*, *Inverness*, *Laughing Gull* and many others have received unstinting and expert attention by their owners in making them look and perform like they did when new. So too with the Tartan 34C, as more and more people are bringing these yachts to better than new condition; and, this new crop of sailors is every bit as adventuresome as the original owners. Of course, there are, among the crowd, some original owners still and their children, too!

Numerous restorations and renewed sailor interest has resulted in the boats beginning once again to appreciate in value. And, yet, they remain an excellent buy in today's brokerage boat market. So, as one writer put it, the Tartan 34C gives the owner "blue water without the red ink". And, as the photos and drawings show, it is a very pretty way to sail the ocean blue!



*Sunshine*



*Midnight Rambler*



*Transegrity*

And, now for the numbers:

LOA: 34'5"  
LWL: 25'0"  
Beam: 10'3"  
Draft: (board up) 3'11"  
(board down) 8'4"  
Displ: 11,200 #  
Ballast: 5,000 #  
SA/Displ: 15  
Displ.Length Ratio: 320  
Capsize Screening Index: 1.84  
Ratings: PHRF: 183

Cockpit Length: 9'3"  
Headroom: 6'2"  
Vertical clearance: 44'0"  
Deck width: 24"  
Berth length: 6'5" or more  
Longitudinal centre of Flotation: .557  
Moment to change trim 1": 1087 ft. lbs.  
Fuel: 26 gallons (US)  
Water: 40 gallons (US)



*Temujin*

For further information on the Tartan 34C, you can read numerous articles on the Tartan Owners Website: [www.tartanowners.org](http://www.tartanowners.org) This site contains information about all the Tartans, both those designed by S&S and those designed by Tim Jackett, President of Fairport Marine, the present builders of Tartan Yachts. The Tartan 34C Owners portion of the site is filled with technical articles, classifieds, a discussion forum, and many photographs of Tartan 34C's. Anyone with a specific question, may, of course, contact me at [colligan@northnet.org](mailto:colligan@northnet.org) I will be happy to answer your question or refer you to someone who can.



*George H. Colligan is 61 years old and the owner, with his wife Susan, of Tartan 34C # 162, Temujin, built in 1971. George is retired from the marine business having owned two marinas on Lake Ontario and managed three others in Maryland: Ft. Washington Marina, Jenkins Boatland and Chesapeake Harbour Marina.*

*Before becoming involved in marina management, George owned and operated a sail loft in Baltimore and was a successful yacht broker in Annapolis representing, primarily, Bristol Sailing Yachts as well as brokerage boats. In addition, since learning to sail on a Tartan 27 in 1970, he has participated in yacht racing of all kinds including: the MORC Nationals, Catalina 27 Nationals, J-30 Nationals, Annapolis-Bermuda Race (3), Annapolis-Newport Race, Ocean Reef Race, Governor's Cup (6), Great Ocean Race (3), Annapolis Fall Series, CORK and hundreds of day races in a 30+ year period. In addition, he has single handed his Tartan 34C extensively as well as cruised with his wife Susan on both Lake Ontario and the Chesapeake Bay having covered over 3000 miles in the past three seasons. His Tartan 34C is the fourth sailboat he has owned. He has owned previously a Bristol 24, a custom Kirby designed half-tonner, and, a Ranger 22. Lastly, George has sailed, as a delivery skipper and yacht broker, a wide range of boats representing nearly every type of sailboat built in the past thirty odd years.*

*Prior to becoming involved in sailing in 1979 professionally, George served as a Senior Program Analyst in the US General Accounting Office in Washington DC. Beginning his public career in 1964, George participated in the first US anti-poverty program development in NY City writing the city's inaugural grant for OEO funding. As an elected District Leader, George represented East Harlem in New York's Liberal Party. George built his career in public service and private consulting as Assistant County Manager of Dade County Florida and as a Senior Associate of Macro Systems developing special management information systems for both the National Health Service Corps and the Nursing Home Ombudsman Demonstration Project. In addition, George developed a program to restructure the management of the City of Buffalo, New York and the Towns of Larchmont and Mamaroneck, New York. Finally, George ended his career in federal service with extensive policy analysis in the areas of National Health Insurance and Medical Manpower Retention in the US Military.*

*During this period, George also found time to edit a community newspaper, The Observer, in Rosedale, Maryland, direct a series of plays with Theatre Upstairs, and lead a troop of Brownies in Columbia Maryland. George also founded and was first Commodore of the Columbia Corinthian Sailing Club; founded the Mark Hopkins Performing Arts Center in Henderson New York; and, founded the Hospice Cup Regatta in conjunction with Jefferson County Hospice. George also helped establish the National Hospice Cup Regatta. George served, too, as President of the Henderson Harbor Chamber of Commerce for 2 years.*

*George now spends his time writing. He is working on two books: one a series of 15 short stories about growing up in Brooklyn in the 1950's and, the second, a book entitled: The World's Best Good Old Boats (working title) a pictorial and narrative description of 35 of the world's best boats that people can actually afford to buy and sail. George has published a number of articles and book reviews including a short story and two book reviews in Good Old Boat magazine and in The Wave, the newsletter of the Sparkman & Stephens Association. He is involved in the activities leading up to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the firm of Sparkman & Stephens, Inc. to be held at Mystic Seaport in 2004. Lastly, George has submitted 16 articles to the Tartan 34C website concerning the restoration of a Tartan 34C and has developed a project to publish a Tartan 34C Yearbook. He will be interviewing Olin Stephens II, in July, to develop a foreword for that publication. George lives with his wife Susan Jackson-Brown, a Family Therapist in New York's Adirondack Mountains. Their sailing plans include the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. Their Tartan 34C is undergoing extensive modifications and renovations in preparation for an extended sailing future!*



*Vixen*

**\*\*\* Editor's note. There was no room in THE WAVE issue 4 for this complete text. I make no apologies for reprinting as I think this c/b 34 footer makes an interesting comparison with the S & S 34 I wrote up in the 2002-3 YB**



