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New Launch: Shannon 38 HPS

Still going strong, Shannon launches their latest cruiser.

by Herb McCormick



Courtesy of Shannon/Schulz Boat Co., Inc.

The first Shannon 38 HPS was launched this October in Bristol, RI.

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There is a renaissance of sorts underway in American boatbuilding, and some of it is concentrated in the little state of Rhode Island, which for many years was a major player in producing cruising sailboats, where companies like Bristol Yachts, the O'Day Corp., Freedom Yachts and so many others were based and flourished.

Those builders are gone, but these days such iconic brands as Alerion, C&C Yachts, J/Boats and other superb vessels are now being produced—or soon will be—in Little Rhody.

There have, of course, been constants through all these changes, and one exemplary example is Walter Schulz, the founder and president of the Schulz Boat Company, which is perhaps better known by the long line of sailboats and powerboats the firm has produced: Shannon Yachts.

Schulz began his career in 1974 in collaboration with naval architect George Stadel. They debuted their 38-foot ketch in October of 1975 at the U.S. Sailboat Show in Annapolis, Maryland. It was the first of over 20 sail and power boats that Schulz would produce, including his biggest boat to date, the Shannon 53 High Power Sailor (HPS).

Perhaps fittingly, this fall Schulz has returned to his roots with another 38-footer, the Shannon 38 HPS. But the lines and specifications of the two boats could hardly be more different, and graphically illustrate how Schulz and his company have evolved in the intervening decades.



1981 Shannon 38 Ketch. Photo courtesy of Cannell, Payne & Page Yacht Brokers.

For example, that original Shannon 38 had a split rig, cutaway keel and classic overhangs: the boat's LOD was 37' 9", the LWL was 30' 10" and the beam was 11' 6". The boat drew 5' 6" and displaced 18,500 pounds.

Now compare those dimensions with the 38 HPS: LOD (38' 3"), LWL (37' 9"), beam (13' 0"), draft (3' 0") and displacement (14,500 pounds).



The new Shannon 38 HPS. "Scutter" rig shown at left, sloop rig with self tending boom at right. Courtesy of Shannon Yachts.

Clearly, the new boat is not your daddy's Shannon 38. Heck, it's not even Walt Schulz's original Shannon 38!

No, it's a boat built for shallow gunkholes or the high seas, under sail or power. It can be specified with a single 165 hp. diesel or twin 75 hp. diesels that will reportedly motor at 12 knots with a 500 nautical-mile range. But Schulz insists it's not a traditional motorsailer by any means, but also a "fast and fun sport boat" that will sail at 7 knots in 15-knots of wind. The dual-purpose capability is the defining characteristic of and concept behind Shannon's HPS line, an ambitious take on the cruising sailboat.

The first Shannon HPS was recently launched and is currently undergoing sea trials off Bristol, R.I. This winter, the boat will head south to Fort Myers, Florida, where Shannon will offer inspections and sail tests to interested parties. For more information, visit the [Shannon website](#) or contact Bill Ramos (bill@shannonyachts.com).