

ALBACORE

BUYERS GUIDE



28th Feb 2008 John Woffinden
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Introduction

When first moving into the class, it can be a little confusing as to why two apparently similar boats are priced very differently. This may reflect an unrealistic price set by the vendor or there may be valid reasons for the difference.

This guide aims to assist the prospective new Albacore owner to understand what to look for in their first Albacore and why some boats command a premium whilst others do not.

There are limits to what can be learnt from such a guide, so it is always worth consulting a current Albacore owner when looking for a boat, most will be more than happy to help you, especially if you offer to buy them a beer!

Background

The Albacore class rules describe the boat as a "restricted class". The hull is essentially one design but there is a large amount of flexibility allowed in the internal layout and position of the fittings. Having said that, the tolerances on the hull are quite large by modern one design standards and this has led to a number of subtly different hull shapes evolving over time. The hull design and the way in which the boat is fitted out can have a large effect on a boat's value.

Hull Shapes

The available hull shapes can generally be categorized into four main groups:

- Fairey
- Young
- Woof
- Kingsfield

Since the mid1990s all Albacores have been built from a Woof derived mould so this section is only relevant if intending to purchase a boat over 30 years old!

The Fairey Hull shape is the original shape built by Fairey Marine. Any wooden boat number below 2000 will be a Fairey Hull.

Early Young boats (Hull numbers <2000) were Fairey Hulls finished by Young. Later boats (5000-7900) were built on Young's mould which was similar to the Woof described below, but with a slightly more V shaped hull in the aft sections, this benefits upwind speed, perhaps at the expense of downwind speed in marginal planing conditions. Late Youngs (approx 7900 onward) were built on a Woof mould.

The Woof hull shape started to appear in boats with sail numbers around 6000 upwards (there were a few in the 5800's). The Woof has less rocker than the Fairey and is generally regarded to be slightly quicker, especially off wind in marginal planing conditions. Subsequent designs including Young's and Speed Sails' boats are based on the Woof hull shape.

The Kingsfield design pushed the tolerances to the limits (and beyond), in fact some boats did not measure and had to be modified after being built. The Kingsfield design is generally thought to be faster down wind, possibly at the expense of upwind speed.

Despite the respective merits of the differing hull shapes pretty well any boat in good condition with a reasonable rig can be competitive for club level racing and get you well into the middle third of the nationals, if well sailed.

Photographs and more details of some of the differing types of Albacore can be found on the US Albacore web site.

<https://albacoresailing.com/identify-albacore/>

The US and Canada tend to have a larger number of different GRP boats around, and fewer wooden boats other than those imported from the UK.

Materials

Albacores may be built of all Wood, all GRP/FRP or GRP/FRP with wood decks. The varnished wooden boats can be gorgeous to look at if looked after well. The hull shape with its compound curves is ideal for moulding and results in a hull that is very strong and retains its stiffness. Many of the top boats are wooden boats that are over 40 years old

Wooden Boats

A number of builders have built wooden Albacores, however there are no wooden boats being built at present largely due to the cost; a fully finished wooden boat would probably be over double the price of a new FRP. The last batch of wooden Albacores were built 1997/8. Two wooden boats have been built since 8127 which was shipped to Canada in 2009 and in 2018 and Albacore 8250 was built at Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy.

Fairey Marine

Fairey Marine were the original Albacore builders with the original Uffa Fox



designed Swordfish being modified in 1954 to become the Albacore. Boat numbers up to 2000 in the UK are almost certainly Fairey Marine hulls. Many Fairey hulls were finished by other builders such as JD Young and W Davies. These boats were hot moulded producing a very strong and long lasting hull. The originals were built with a stern deck although a number have been modernized and had the stern deck removed to reduce weight. Very early boats

were fitted with a metal centre board which is fine for cruising but would be a disadvantage for racing.

They are generally not considered to be quite as quick as the more recent boats, but they can do well if the rig is modernized.

Woof

Woof hulls are generally considered to be among the fastest of the wooden boats, although they can be found at both ends of the fleet depending on who is driving!

Don and Richard Woof built over 50 Albacores, numbers range from 6400s through to 7300s. The layout included full length seat tanks the forward portion of the buoyancy tank / seat being allowed to flood when capsized. The separate bow tank was of relatively small volume. Well shaped contoured side decks made for comfortable hiking.

The Woof design evolved with the MkII having floor stiffening and the Mk III being built with no thwart and substantial knees supporting the centreboard case.



Woof 6493 *Showdown For Jador*
Built 1977 - 3rd 2024 UK Nationals

Kingsfield

Kingsfield hulls are again considered to be competitive and a good prospect for those that want a wooden boat. Kingsfield featured a higher crowned fore deck, the outer layer of wood was at an acute angle with the waterline making for a striking appearance.

Knight and Pink

Again a reasonable option for those looking for a wooden boat. Believed to have a Woof derived hull shape.

J.D. Young & Son

Don Young was active albacore builder from the late 60s through to the late 90s building over 200 boats. Early Youngs were Fairey hulls finished by Young. Boats moulded on Young's own mould can be found in the sail number range 5000-7900. These can be a competitive boat if well maintained, but are perhaps not as sought after as Woof shaped boats.

Later wooden boats (up to sail number 7988) built by JD Young were built on the class associations own Woof mould. These are a good option for those looking for a wooden boat. The National Albacore Association still has the original Young mould.

Chipstow

A batch of three boats were built by Alan Jackson (Chipstow) who was a well regarded Merlin Rocket and Enterprise builder. Chipstow built their own mould which was built right down the centre of the building tolerances.

Bob Hoare Racing Dinghies

A batch of five wooden boats with numbers in the high 7900s were built by Graham Chard at Bob Hoare Racing boats. These were again built on the Woof mould and one in good condition is a competitive option for those looking for a wooden boat.

Wooden Boat Competitiveness and Value

Wooden Boats used to command a premium price and were considered faster than FRP boats. However, since Ovington started producing very high quality boats that remain competitive, the second hand market value of good wooden boats has collapsed. Bargains are to be had -less than £2,000 will buy you a beautiful very competitive boat that has been cherished by its previous owners is and, in the right hands, capable of winning.

There is a perception that the Ovingtons might be quicker however if you study recent nationals and internationals results wooden boats still feature at the very top of the fleet.

GRP/FRP/Composite

A number of different builders have made GRP Albacores in the past with either GRP decks or Wooden Decks. GRP boats likely to be found in the UK are:

Fosrite

Sail numbers in the 2000-6000 range. They are based on the Fairey hull shape.

The condition of these boats can vary tremendously depending on condition, a number of examples I have seen have gone very soft. They are fine for cruising and beginning club racing.

Rondar

Sail numbers in the 5000-6800 range and they are also based on the Fairey hull shape. Again the condition can vary greatly, the examples I have seen seem to be a little stiffer than the Fosrite hull. Depending on condition and the fittings they are good for club racing.

Porter

Porter produced a mould from a Woof hull 7512, and produced a considerable



number hulls This mould has transferred in ownership over the years eventually passing to the ownership of the National Albacore Association and is the current hull mould used by Ovington. Porter sail numbers around the range 7400 – 7900. All Porters are of composite construction with an FRP hull and wooden decks. They are competitive for club racing and at National Level.

Amos

Similar to the Porter but built with an epoxy resin FRP hull. This Woof derived hull shape is believed to have used the Porter Mould. Sail numbers are in the mid 7000's. They are of composite construction, FRP hull with wooden decks and competitive for club racing and at National Level.

Speed Sails (Holt)

Speed built Albacores from the Association Woof derived mould from 1999 to 2008. Early Speeds were moulded by Holt and fitted out by Speed. Speed at some point took over the entire manufacturing process. A deck mould was produced which is believed to have come from the original Rondar deck mould. Speed Albacores feature a minimal size bow tank and seat side tanks. The side



tanks stop about 60cm (24") forward of the transom, usually two small airbags were installed to complete the buoyancy system.

The Speed Albacore is of FRP (foam sandwich) construction. Speed's boats can be competitive. A Speed won the Nationals in 2006 and was 2nd in 2007.

Sail numbers for Speed boats are 7990 – 8126

A number of the early hulls did have quality issues and as a result Speeds have (an undeserved) reputation for not lasting. However, Speed acknowledged the problems and worked to resolve the issues.

As with all boats look for one that has been well looked after. For the newcomer, Speed's do come on the market and are usually at a reasonable price for a new comer to the class – offering a competitive FRP boat. See prices guide in the section below for indicative values.



Ovington Boats

Ovington are the only current builder of Albacores in the UK and took over the class mould in 2008 when Speed Sails closed down. Ovington manufactured new deck moulds with a more ergonomic layout. The Ovington lay-up uses epoxy resin and has a foam core. The general opinion is that these boats are very well made, durable and remain competitive. Ovington have exported over 60 boats to Canada.

Ovington Albacores hold their value well and do not come up regularly in the second hand market. Most are in very good condition and will command a premium price as they are sought after. For early examples expect to pay £5000 later examples will be more.



Ovington / Composite (Plywood Deck)

A number of Ovington hulls have been produced and Wood-decked by several builders including James Jarvis (JJ Boats), Kevin Gosling (Gosling Dinghy Craft) and Paul Sleeman (CS Boats). These boats offer a solution for those people who love to have a wooden boat but don't want the maintenance of an all wooden boat.



Ovington / JJ Boats 8255 *Uffa Fox Sake*
Winner Concours d 'Elegance at the RYA Dinghy Show 2025

USA and Canada Built Albacores

Skene, Onterio Yachts and Hapco have all made albacores for the North American market – it is believed that only one of these (8011) has been imported in the UK.

Price Guide

Because of the wide range of boats available and the difference in the way they are fitted out prices can range quite significantly. It is possible to get on the water for a few hundred pounds at one end of the scale.

New Albacores

The cost of a new FRP decked hull from Ovington, with self bailers installed, ready for home fit out is £8,350 inc VAT. A professionally fitted out boat with road trailer and launching trolley cost around £14,000 -16000 depending on the specification of mast, foils, sails, fittings, covers etc.

Used Boats

Unfortunately (for purchasers) good Albacores are in demand and this reflects in the price, however good boats do hold their value very well and will last if looked after.

Beginner or Boat for Cruising

You can get on the water for as little as £200-£600.

For this price range expect to do some simple repairs or re-painting / varnishing. Equipment will be basic, a stern deck may be fitted to boats built before the mid 60s.

Take note of the condition of covers and trailers and adjust price accordingly.

Wooden Fairey/early Young

GRP Fosrite

Rondar

Club Racing to top 10 at the Nationals

Expect to pay around £1000-£7500 depending on age and condition and fittings for a club racer. The price ranges shown are indicative, cheaper options may be available if repairs are required. Upper limits would be for boats in good condition that are well fitted out and ready to sail with good sails, trailer and cover. Currently good quality GRP boats seem to be more in demand compared to wooden boats.

Modernised Fairey/early Young £250-£1200.

Porter/Amos £1000-£2000.

Woof / late Young / Knight and Pink / Kingsfield – some lovingly treasured very competitive boats have gone for less than £2000.

Second Hand Speed in good condition £1200- £2500.

Price Adjustments

The boat's condition, the fittings, sails and equipment that it has with it, can have a bearing on the price that a boat will command. A cheap boat that needs extras to bring it up to spec may end up costing you more than the one that initially seemed more expensive. But if you don't need the extras then the converse is true.

Sails

A new suit of sails costs around £1100 depending on the make and any discounts available. For beginners and cruising the sails are less critical, but if you want to race, consider the condition of the sails being offered with the boat. You may be able to buy second hand sails as some owners buy new sets every few years and sell off their older sail. Class rules only allow one new main and two new jibs per year thus restricting the supply. Therefore if the boat has new sails it will affect the price.

Trailers

Most boats come with at least a launching trolley (but not always). If you plan to travel with you boat you will need to have a suitable road trailer. New combination trailers cost around £1500 so factor this in. Second hand trailers can be found from time to time but they are often of the non-combination type. A second hand combi-trailer in good condition will cost around £150-£500 if you can find one.

Covers

A top cover is essential for boats kept outdoors in a dinghy park, not only does it keep the worst of the weather out, but you are less likely to find bits going "missing" from your boat than if it is left uncovered. For a wooden boat I would suggest that a good quality breathable boom cover is essential.

If you are going to do a lot of trailing of your boat then an undercover to protect the hull from road grime is highly recommended.

Albacore top covers range in price from about £120-£350 more for a breathable one. An undercover will cost around £120

Fittings

Class rules present few restrictions on how an Albacore may be fitted out. Some boats will have the minimum and very basic fittings, others will have comprehensive control over the complete rig. If you are not interested in racing, then a basic fit out will suffice. If you wish to race seriously then a number of control lines will be required, although perhaps not a fully adjustable rig to start with. Take into account the cost of re-fitting out a boat that has only basic controls. It is very easy to spend several hundred pounds on bits of string and fittings.

Paintwork/Varnish

For wooden boats and wood decked boats, the cost of stripping down and re-varnishing/painting a boat can soon add up. If the boat is winter stored in a dry

garage then a good varnish deck can last over a decade – high wear areas such as gunwhales need touch up from time to time depending on the level of use.

For many people this is part of the joy of owning a wooden boat, but if you just want to get on the water quickly take into account the condition of the paint and varnish work.

Classic Vintage Dinghy Racing Association is a great resource

<https://www.cvrda.org/hints/>

Racing Record

A boat with a good racing record that has perhaps done well at the Nationals will command a certain premium over a boat that is not proven. However a good result is generally down to the people sailing the boat rather than the boat itself, so you shouldn't put too much emphasis on this. Just be re-assured that the track record proves the boat is capable (at least when in the right hands) and you won't have to spend much on the boat to be competitive.

Check here for results archive

<https://www.albacore.org.uk/results?view=catalog>

Where to find Albacores

It is perhaps a good reflection on the class that owners keep their boats for a long time. Good secondhand boats are sought after and can often be sold by word of mouth with club members selling to other club members.

However good boats are available, but you need to know where to look and ensure that people know you are looking so they can keep an eye out for boats on your behalf.

If there are other Albacores at your club, make it known to the class captain and/or the other owners that you are looking for a boat so they can keep an eye out for you. They will generally welcome an addition to the Alb fleet, or they may even be considering selling their boat in the near future.

If there are no Albacores in your club, then contact the class association who will be happy to help. Or try a Google search for *Albacore Sailing Club*, to find a club near to you.

Web Resources

There are a number of web resources where Albacores are often advertised:

Albacore class web site

The For Sale board on the is one of the most useful sites

<https://www.albacore.org.uk/for-sale-wanted>

As well as sellers posting their own boats for sale, often links to other sites where a boat is for sale will be posted.

It is worth posting an Albacore Wanted advert.

But, remember to post an update if you stop looking.

Facebook

UK Albacore Facebook page often has Albacores coming up for sale.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/UKAlbacoreAssociation?locale=en_GB

Older boats often appear on Face book market place.

<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace>

Apollo Duck

Another popular free listing site where Albacores can be found from time to time.

<http://sailingdinghies.apolloduck.co.uk/listings.phtml?cid=102>

eBay

Albacores often come up for sale on the eBay auction site, the boats are often older boats that may require work, but newer boats do come up occasionally. However be careful not to get carried away in a bidding frenzy, if you are buying unseen.

<http://www.eBay.co.uk>

If you are familiar with eBay then you can set up a search for *Albacore* in the following sections:

Sporting Goods>Sailing>Dinghies / Boats
Car Parts and Vehicles>Boats & Watercraft

A simple search for just Albacore will also work, but you will also get results showing Albacore aircraft memorabilia and fishing items.

Other Places to Search

A more fruitful place to search for a new boat may be where a club only has one Albacore and the owner is looking to move into another class. Unfortunately identifying such a boat is difficult, you may get lucky with a carefully crafted Google Search. For example try the following in Google:

Albacore "for sale" "Sailing Club"

If you have Albacores at your club, look around the dinghy park for unused boats. If the boats are not for sale then you could perhaps offer to buy a half share, or have the use of the boat in return for dinghy park fees, insurance and a contribution to maintenance.

As mentioned above, let people know you a looking for a boat. It is not unknown for boats to be hidden away stored in garages and barns, with lots of people looking on your behalf you may just unearth a gem.

What to look for when viewing a boat

If you have found a boat that seems to meet your needs then arrange viewing and ideally a trial sail if possible. Ask a current Albacore owner to come with you as they are more likely to spot potential problems.

You should check for the following:

Damage: Check for obvious damage and repairs, ask the owner if the boat has been damaged or repaired and to what extent, were the repairs carried out by a professional? Check that there are no deformities in the hull particularly where the boat rests on the trailer.

Leaks: These can often be repaired but if a leak has not been attended to there may be rot or delamination around the leak in wooden boats. Leaks around the base of the centreboard case should be looked at very carefully as any damage in this area may be difficult to repair.

Buoyancy: Check that the buoyancy tanks or bags (where fitted) are intact and sealed. A simple test can usually be done with a short piece of hose as follows: remove one of the tank bungs and place the hose into the bung hole. Some electrical tape may be needed to seal the join. Blow a few puffs into the tube, and then place your thumb over the end of the tube. You should still get some back pressure when you release your thumb after 30 seconds. If you don't get any back pressure at all, then the tanks will need some attention. Check around where the side tanks meet the hull, especially around the floor of the cockpit. Flexing of the hull can cause the tanks to separate from the hull, especially on older GRP boats.

Measurement Certificate: If you want to race you will usually require a valid measurement certificate. Duplicates can be obtained from the RYA if the boat can clearly be identified – the hull number should be clearly engraved on the hog, transom, back of the centreboard case or sometimes on the thwart. The number on the sails is often not the original boat number. If the boat cannot clearly be identified it may have to be re-measured if a certificate is required.

It is worth looking to see if the boat is listed on the Albacore registry:

<https://www.albacore.org.uk/registry>

This may give more information on the boat. If it is on the registry it is likely to be an enthusiastic owner and the boat may be well known. Alternatively post a request for information on the forum.





Top Ten Previous Internationals & Nationals

2019 Internationals				2021 Nationals			
Pos	No	Name	Builder	Pos	No	Name	Builder
1st	6922	You Can Call Me AL	Ovington	1st	8228	Totally Ratted	Ovington / Gosling
2nd	8258	Deplorable	Hapco	2nd	8187	Castoff and Poleaxed	Ovington
3rd	7919	Mr. Lucky Jador	Young	3rd	8128	Running On Empty	Ovington
4th	8235	Albus Dumblecore	Ovington	4th	7920	Head Honcho	Young
5th	6701	Exotic Materials	Woof	5th	5897	Castor & Pollux	Woof
6th	7363		Woof	6th	6922	Bullitt	Kingsfield
7th	8015		Ontario Yachts	7th	8177	Fugly	Chris Turner
8th	8188	Ochos Locos	Ovington	8th	8254	Outrageous Grace	Ovington
9th	8128	Running on Empty	Ovington	9th	8158	It Wasn'T Me	Ovington
10th	8184	Fire And Ice	Hapco	10th	6918	Daedalus	Woof

2022 Nationals				2023 Internationals			
Pos	No	Name	Builder	Pos	No	Name	Builder
1st	8253	You Can Call Me Al	Ovington	1st	8262	Al Go Rythym	Ovington
2nd	8225	Jador 8000	Ovington	2nd	6493	Showdown for Jador	Woof
3rd	8187	Castoff and Poleaxe	Ovington	3rd	8237	Jador 8000	Ovington
4th	8228	Totally Ratted	Ovington / Gosling	4th	8235	Albus Dumbledore	Ovington
5th	8192	Gran Torino	Ovington / JJ Boats	5th	8192	Gran Torino	Ovington / JJ Boats
6th	8128	Running on Empty	Ovington	6th	8237	Krystal	Ovington
7th	7920	Head Honcho	Young	7th	8213	The Usual Suspects	Ovington
8th	8254	Outragious Grace	Ovington	8th	8233	Fifty Shades	Ovington
9th	7426	Odie	Porter	9th	8152	Albaholic	Ovington
10th	8158		Ovington	10th	7987	Foxtrot Alpha	B Hore G Chard

2024 Nationals			
Pos	No	Name	Builder
1st	8229		Ovington
2nd	8228	Totally Ratted	Ovington / Gosling
3rd	6493	Showdown for Jado	Woof
4th	8236	Wire-less	Ovington
5th	7145	Hitchhiker	Kingsfield
6th	8073	Storm	Ovington
7th	7920	Head Honcho	Young
8th	8255	Uffa Fox Sake	Ovington / JJ Boats
9th	7987	Foxtrot Alpha	B Hore G Chard
10th	7912	Bijingo	Woof



