

Owner's Notes for F-31 Alouette

I. Preparations for getting underway

1. Remove the tiller cover, 3 winch covers, and companionway hatch boards. Stow behind cooler.
2. Turn ON the 12 VDC master switch #1 or #2, and anything else you are going to use (instrument, pilot, etc.). Turn OFF the AC master.
3. Lower the dagger board by releasing the up haul line (red one), and pulling the down haul line (blue one) until the black tape on the line is just aft of the cam cleat.
4. Disconnect the AC power cord; take it with you (leave on dock for a day sail)
5. Put the outboard down (just release the line & ease it down)
6. Put the rudder down and secure it with the green line. (This line tends to catch on the bolts on the side of the rudder case.)
7. Remove the main sail cover; put some tension on the jib halyard, rig the maxi reacher if plan on using it. Tighten maxi halyard with winch until the system "creaks a bit".
8. Free the EZ Jax system, hoist each side until the marking tape is just above its respective cleat, secure each to its cleat. Remove all but the far aft sail tie.
9. Open the vent on the outboard fuel tank, pump the squeeze ball until solid pressure is felt. With the twist throttle on the engine fully closed, push the start button. The engine should start within 5 seconds. If it does not, shift into fwd gear, twist throttle to full 3 times, shift back to neutral. If it still does not start, or runs for a while and dies, then try opening the throttle as far as possible with gear lever in neutral (In theory, the closed throttle acts as a choke, opening it a bit cancels the choke.) When the engine starts, insure that water is at least slowly coming out of the small hole on the starboard side.
10. While the engine is warming up (allow about 3 minutes) remove the bow and stern dock lines.
11. When ready to depart, cast off the spring lines & jump aboard.

II. Raising Sails

1. Raise the main, being careful not to allow the battens to hang up on the EZ Jax. Also, insure that the GPS chartplotter is inside the cabin so that the hanging reefing lines do not catch on it
2. When unfurling the jib, keep a bit of tension on the furling line and let it out slowly so as not to tangle the furling line on the drum.
3. Once the jib is out and trimmed, tension the halyard just enough to get the wrinkles out of the luff, cleat, and stow the halyard.
4. Secure and raise the engine. When the wind is over about 12 kts, I

like to fall off a bit before unrolling the jib, get the boat sailing on main alone, raise the engine, then unroll the jib. Safer that way.
5. Organize all lines and cleat all halyards to the horn clears below the respective halyard clutches.

III. Sailing the boat

An F-31 can be sailed on main alone or jib alone almost as well as with both sails. When single-handing, I often roll the jib up most of the way (to white tape on furler line), cleat both jib sheets (at white tape on sheets), and let the jib self tack.

1. Going to weather: There are 2 main differences between a fast trimaran and a monohull. First, angle of heel does not give much feedback about being overpowered. And, the boat does not heel to spill air from the sails. (See **XI. limits**) Still, anything over 15 degrees is too much heel – SHORTEN SAIL. Second, the higher boat speed from what you would see on a similar size monohull makes the apparent wind move farther forward. In a good breeze, if sailing as close to the wind as you can without pinching, and you fall off a little, boat speed will increase, apparent wind will move forward, and your tell tales, and sail trim will remain about the same. You are just going faster, AND sailing at a greater angle away from the direction that you want to go.

2. Sailing downwind: Most often F-boats gybe back and forth downwind, sailing 30 – 45 degrees higher than DDW. The reason is that the extra speed more than compensates for the extra distance. But, you have to get the angle right which is a bit tricky. (90 degrees apparent wind angle is a good average) The good news is that the boat will go downwind any way you choose to do it, except in really light air (less than 5 kts)

3. Reaching: In wind over about 15 knots, you should have the main reefed unless you are experienced with an F-31. The boat can exceed wind speed (even reefed), and your apparent wind will be much farther forward than true wind. For that reason, if things appear to be getting out of control, and you want to slow the boat down and/or shorten sail, it is better to fall off the wind than to harden up and try to pinch as you would want to do with a slower boat (With true wind abaft the beam, even if apparent wind is far forward). Make sure that you understand this concept before accepting responsibility for the boat!

IV. Lowering sails

1. In heavy air, the best time to roll in the jib is when on a broad reach or any angle that will unload the sail. Do not roll in the jib with it flogging wildly or with over about 12 knots of apparent wind. Keep some tension on one of the jib sheets while rolling it in

and put 3 - 4 wraps of sheet around the sail to keep it rolled. (Same with maxi reacher – and even more important!) Also, the maxi roller furling line has a melted splice that is not all that strong. Try to put as little strain as possible on it.

2. Drop the main either head to wind or, in really light air, DDW with engine providing enough speed so as to have no apparent wind from astern. Just open the halyard clutch and the sail will usually drop fairly neatly on the boom between the EZ Jax. Guiding it down will produce an even neater stack.

3. Sometime before securing the boat, un-cleat the jib halyard and release the halyard clutch just enough to release the tension on the halyard. Lower the maxi and lay it on the starboard net for packing.

4. Once the main sail is secured with at least 2 sail ties, un-cleat the EZ Jax system, bring the farthest aft line forward to go around the cleat, re-tie, and stuff any slack lines under sail ties.

V. Docking

Points to keep in mind about docking an F-31:

1. Make sure the dagger board is down at least half way.
2. The floats are much flatter along the sides than on a monohull. This makes it a bit more difficult to get close to the dock.
3. If you hit a low dock even at very slow speed and shallow angle, the float will ride right up onto the dock. Usually does no damage, but really looks ugly!!
4. Always have Jonny Docker handy in difficult situations, and don't be afraid to use it!
5. The best way for a crew to get off the boat and keep it under control is to step off the float just forward of the front beam with both spring lines in hand (and tied together). That way he/she has control of the boat with 2 lines and can move it in any direction.

VI. Securing boat after sailing

Securing the boat for the night is pretty much the reverse of preparing it to get underway. If just for a few hours you may just leave the rudder, dagger board and engine down. For longer, pull them up.

VII. Anchoring and Mooring to a mooring ball

1. The primary anchor is an XYZ – lightweight, but holds like hell if properly set. The only drawback is that it might be hard to set in weeds.
2. Around here, you can usually set the anchor at 3:1 scope. If it sets at 3:1, you are good in normal conditions. But be prepared to lengthen scope if the wind picks up during the night.

3. If it is blowing hard go to 5:1 or even 6:1.
4. The primary rode is 160' plus 10' of chain. (marked every 20') There is a 2nd anchor (an earlier model XYZ) and another 150' of rode in the port float compartment.
5. Using a bridle (1/2 bridal from main bow to 1 float, or full bridal between both floats) helps keep the boat from sailing at anchor. The bridal line and block (attaches to float ring) are stored in the anchor compartment. There is another block in the cabin equipment drawer if you want a full bridal. Raising the dagger board and rudder also helps control sailing.
6. There are 2 carabinieres in the equipment drawer for attaching to a mooring ball. I use the regular mooring lines, one to each float, (or bow cleats) with a carabiniere to connect the eye of the line and the mooring ball ring. Or you can use the old "pass the mooring line through the ring, and back to the boat" method.

VIII. Shortening Sail

1. There are 3 reefing lines:
 - a. 1 short white & red line that goes from the port cleat on the mast, up through the reefing grommet on the sail, around the mast, and back to the cleat on the starboard side of the mast. This line is stored in the starboard equipment drawer in the cabin.
 - b. 1st clew reefing line (already set up on the boom)
 - c. 2nd clew reefing line (stored in the equipment drawer – doubles as barber hauler line and light air mainsheet)
2. To shorten sail:
 - a. roll the jib some amount – that may be all you need. In a strong wind, if you have a lot of tacking to do, roll it in to the white tape, & set it for self tacking.
 - b. to reef the main:
 1. with the jib fully rolled in: go head to wind, use engine for control if needed. with jib out: heave to, tie tiller to leeward
 2. tighten the topping lift
 3. go forward with the short red and white reefing line, lower the main to the 1st reef point, and tie off the tack to the mast.
 4. tighten and tie off the aft reef line
 5. re-tension the halyard and slack the topping lift.
3. If you have to use the 2nd reef, rig the baby stay.

IX. Getting out of Irons

Slack the main sheet and traveler, backwind the jib and/or back the boat round to about a beam reach, tighten the sheet and traveler slowly as you accelerate.

X. Light Air

In extremely light air (<5 kt), the boat will go upwind OK because it "makes its own wind". But off the wind, especially DDW, performance really falls off. In this situation, it is hard to get the main out far enough. The maxi reacher is the sail to use. But if the wind is too light to fly it, Time for the "iron genoa".

XI. Limits

The following chart lists the **true wind speed limits** for Alouette.

These are maximum limits, and they are for experienced F-boat sailors. When to shorten sail is a function mainly of crew comfort. We want all aboard to have a fun sailing experience, not a frightening one. You can have speed without being on the edge. 16 knots of boat speed is just as much fun as 20 and a lot safer. The faster you go, the more serious the problem when something goes sideways, and the more likely to break something. Keep the boat well under control at all times. For people inexperienced with F-boats, reduce the below limits by about 20%. Best rule of thumb is: "If you are even thinking about reefing - reef!"

Sail Max true wind speed (gusts)

Max reacher use (if aboard) - 15 kts (off the wind only)

Full Main / Full Jib - 15 kts

Full Main / Reefed Jib - 18 kts

#1 Reef / Full Jib - 22 kts

#1 Reef / Corner Jib - 25 kts

#2 Reef / Reefed or corner Jib - > 25 kts

Stay in harbor - >30 kts

There is a funky true wind guage in the compartment behind the chart table until you get experience estimating true wind speed by feel

No flying gybes

Shorten sail at 15 degrees heel angle regardless, and if blue water is covering the lee float.

In severe gusty conditions:

- hang on to the sheets – be ready to free them. (if necessary to de-power quickly, free the main sheet, not the traveler.)
- Don't use stopper knots in jib sheets.
- If the true wind is abaft the beam, bear away in a gust and /or free sheets
- In extreme conditions going downwind, douse the main

XII. Shallow Water and Obstructions

Running aground in the San Juan Islands is always a danger. Boat

grabbing rocks abound, and shoals are common. But, by using prudence, caution, and a bit of good planning, Alouette can take you places that “others fear to tread”. Follow the below procedures to stay out of harms way.

- USE YOUR CHARTS AND TIDE BOOK!! Note the red circled areas on the charts in the chart book. Be especially careful around these areas.

- SERIOUS NOTE: The GPS chartplotter shows depths in FEET. The charts show depths in FATHOMS.

- WATCH YOUR DEPTH SOUNDER!! And keep the speed of the boat in knots no more than half the depth of the water in feet. (The depth sounder measures from the bottom of the boat which is about 18” below the water line. The dagger board hangs down 4’ below that when fully lowered, and about 2’ when floating. The rudder hangs down about 18” below the bottom of the boat.

- When maneuvering in water less than about 8’, “float” the board, and uncleat the rudder downhaul line.

- In an emergency, to go into “serious shallow” (<4’) water, raise the dagger board entirely, pull up the rudder, and steer with the outboard.

XIII. Miscellaneous Notes

- The holding tank holds only 15 gallons (25 - 30 flushes)

- You can’t legally pump the holding tank overboard in Puget Sound!

- The water tank also holds 15 gallons.

- The batteries will charge fully overnight when the charger is plugged in to 120 VAC

- Run on #1 battery for the first 2 days, then switch to #2 battery, and run on it for 2 days. At that time, the voltmeter will give an accurate indication of charge of the #1 battery

- An emergency engine pull cord is in the orange parts box. You must take the cover off the engine to use it.

- The shower drains onto the head floor, and must be pumped out manually using the manual pump behind the head.

- **Be careful opening the drawers under the main cabin bunks.** They will fall out. To open a drawer, put your thumb in the drawer hole and use your fingers to support the weight of the drawer and you can take it all the way out and set it on the bunk.

- **Do not lean back hard on the cockpit seats, They are not all that robust.**

- In general, step lightly everywhere. F-boats are made light. They are very strong where they need to be for sailing, but some creature comfort areas are less strong.

- The butane fuel canisters are stored in the cockpit with the engine fuel tanks

- Store the butane fuel containers for the stoves outside the boat

when not in use.

- To use a stove, open the case, turn the black plate over, and insert the fuel canister making sure that the little notch on the lip is up. Push the front panel lever down all the way. (The canister will move forward and a little tab will go into the notch. If the notch is not lined up right, so as to seat all the way, the stove will not light.
- Please don't cook anything that may splatter grease in the cabin. (Take the stove out to the cockpit area.) If you just want to heat water, you may set the stove on the galley counter, chart table, or on one of the cushions. (actually, set it on one of the plywood pieces stored under the cushions)
- Figure 3/4 gallons per hour & 10 MPG for motoring with the outboard. The boat has 2 – 3 gallon main tanks, and 1 - 1 gallon spare. (conservatively figure 50 NM range max with full tanks)
- Emergency equipment is in the small locker on the port side of the cockpit.
- Please no smoking in the boat (I would prefer none anywhere on the boat.)
- Fill the gas tanks on the dock, not on the boat.