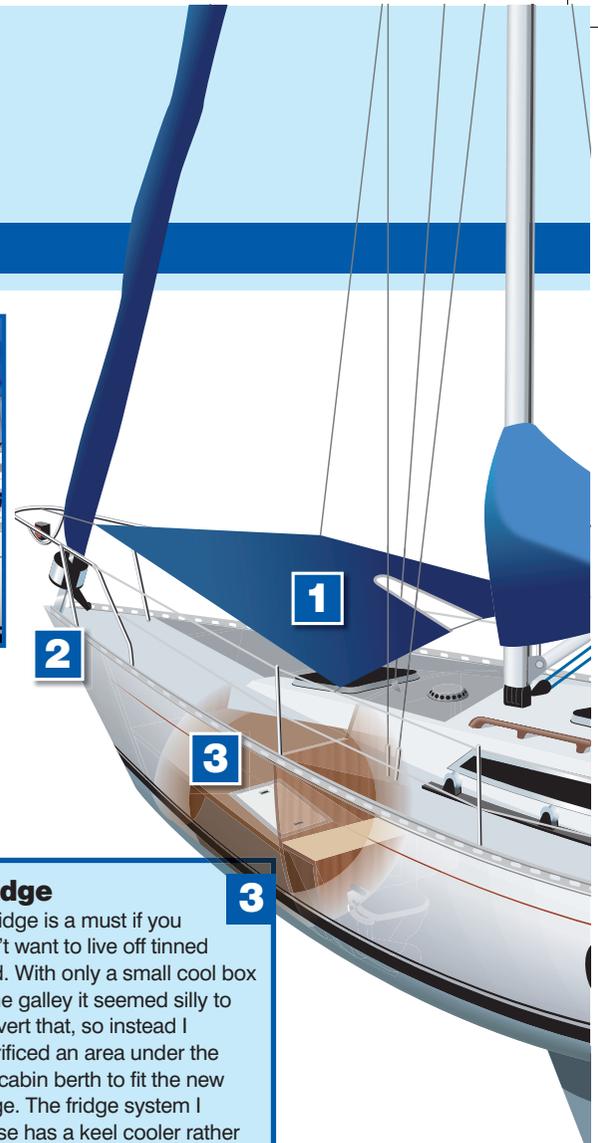


## From solo racer to blue-water cruiser

### 1 Foredeck cover/ raincatcher

'We had a foredeck cover made. This was primarily to catch water to save us from jerry-canning it to and from the boat in the dinghy. You also have to pay a lot for water in the Caribbean. We only caught water in it once or twice, though – it actually serves better as a shade for the forecabin! It's amazing how it keeps the heat out of the forecabin and away from the fridge.'



### Forecabin bunk cushions

'I replaced all the cushions in the saloon in 2004/5, but at the time didn't do the forecabin. As we were now going to be sleeping in the forecabin every night for 10 months we decided to get some new upholstery made. The old cushions were original (1981) and were in five parts, so we changed this to three – two long cushions and a small triangle piece to infill the middle – which means there are fewer gaps to fall between. The cushions are made of 100mm (4in) hard foam with a 25mm (1in) layer of softer foam on top to make it really comfy. It's really important to have a comfortable bed.'

### 2 Anchoring

'We carried 25m of chain spliced onto warp. I started the season putting all the chain out with some warp, no matter what the depth, as I wanted the confidence we wouldn't drag. The warp also meant we wouldn't be kept awake by the sound of the chain moving on the bottom. I had never really anchored before and I just wasn't confident. As my confidence grew and I started to anchor in shallow water I started to use less and less chain. I now can't remember the last time I put out any warp. I normally only used 15-25m of chain and tend to stick to the 3x depth rule. To avoid the noise of the chain grinding in the night I bought a chain hook and some mooring line to make a snubber.'



### Fridge

'A fridge is a must if you don't want to live off tinned food. With only a small cool box in the galley it seemed silly to convert that, so instead I sacrificed an area under the forecabin berth to fit the new fridge. The fridge system I chose has a keel cooler rather than being fan-cooled, as these are more efficient in hot climates. I fitted a lot of insulation but still wish I had installed more. The fridge is the biggest drain on the batteries.'



### Hanging locker

Compared to many modern cruising boats, the Sigma 33 has very little storage – and much of that is designed, naturally, for the cold and wet sailing conditions of Northern Europe. 'You have very little use for a hanging locker in the Caribbean,' says Will, 'So we converted one into shelves for bedding and towel storage by using an Ikea shoe rack.'



### Gas regulator

'I made modifications to the gas set-up on the boat. In the Caribbean and much of Europe you will struggle to get butane. We fitted a regulator that could take both butane and propane. All the time we were in the Caribbean we were only able to fill up with propane.'

### Barbecue

'A great buy. We do most of our cooking on the barbecue at anchor. It's fun, it tastes better and it keeps the heat outside. Fish, pork chops, chicken, corn on the cob, steaks – we grill it all on our Magma BBQ, a brilliant piece of equipment. My only regret is that I didn't plumb it into the main gas bottles. The disposable gas bottles I use are hard to find and expensive in the Caribbean.'

■ **Magma BBQ, tested PBO Summer 2010**

