

Beneteau 343: Sailboat Data and In-Depth Review

Beneteau 343, introduced in 2005, is a versatile cruising sailboat that blends ease of handling with generous interior comfort. Designed by the acclaimed naval architecture firm Berret-Racoupeau and built by Beneteau, it occupies a sweet spot in the mid-size cruiser category—ideal for coastal sailing and capable of offshore passages. It was marketed as part of the Oceanis line in some regions and quickly became popular among sailors seeking a well-balanced, modern cruising yacht.

Design and Construction

The Beneteau 343 features a modern hull with a fin keel and bulb, paired with a spade rudder, offering responsive steering and good stability under sail. With an LOA of 10.82 meters (35.5 feet) and a beam of 3.48 meters (11.42 feet), the boat delivers a roomy interior and cockpit while remaining manageable for short-handed crews.

The hull is constructed from fiberglass-reinforced plastic (GRP) using Beneteau's injection-molding process for the deck, which improves structural integrity and reduces weight. The cast iron keel carries 1,543 kg (3,402 lbs) of ballast, contributing to a ballast-to-displacement ratio of 25.3%—providing a good compromise between stiffness and sailing performance.

The rig is a 9/10 fractional sloop with swept-back spreaders and an in-mast furling mainsail (on many units), which allows for easier reefing and sail handling. The moderate rig size, combined with a large cockpit and clear side decks, makes the boat suitable for cruising couples or small crews.

Performance

With a total sail area of 60.29 m² (649 ft²) and a displacement of 6,100 kg (13,448 lbs), the Beneteau 343 offers solid light-air performance and stability in stronger breezes. Its Sail Area to Displacement ratio (SA/Displ) of 18.43 places it in the category of performance cruisers—offering better-than-average agility for a boat in its class.

The 1.90-meter (6.23-foot) draft provides a good compromise between upwind ability and access to shallow anchorages. The hull speed is calculated at 7.44 knots, a typical cruising speed under sail, and the boat performs well in a range of conditions, with a forgiving helm and minimal weather helm when properly trimmed.

Many owners appreciate the yacht's ease of handling and responsiveness, especially when sailing short-handed, making it an ideal platform for relaxed family cruising or occasional club racing.

Comfort and Accommodations

The interior of the Beneteau 343 is spacious for a 35-footer, benefiting from its broad beam and clever layout. Two and three-cabin configurations were offered, both featuring a large central saloon, L-shaped galley, and generous headroom of 2.01 meters (6.6 feet).

The forward cabin includes a traditional V-berth, while the aft cabins (especially in the two-cabin layout) provide full-width sleeping areas with good ventilation. The saloon features a U-shaped dinette convertible to an additional berth, and the galley includes a two-burner stove, oven, deep sink, and refrigerator. Multiple opening hatches and ports ensure airflow, crucial for extended time aboard in warm climates.

Storage is abundant, and the tankage—particularly the 255-liter (67-gallon) water tank—supports multi-day passages without resupply. The head compartment is roomy and includes a separate shower stall in many configurations.

Safety and Practicality

Safety features on the Beneteau 343 are well-integrated into the deck and cockpit design. Wide side decks, solid stainless grab rails, and non-skid surfaces allow for safe movement around the boat. Lifelines are robust, and the cockpit includes a deep locker for storage and easy access to systems.

The boat is powered by a dependable 29 HP Yanmar diesel engine, offering ample thrust for docking and motoring in calms. The 75-liter (20-gallon) fuel tank is adequate for most cruising needs, and access to the engine via the companionway steps is straightforward for maintenance.

With a capsize screening formula of 1.92, the 343 falls well below the offshore threshold of 2.0, indicating good resistance to knockdown and suitability for moderate offshore work in the hands of experienced sailors.

Conclusion

The Beneteau 343 is a thoughtfully designed, mid-sized cruising sailboat that offers a fine balance of comfort, ease of use, and solid sailing performance. Whether sailing solo, as a couple, or with a small family, it provides the space and confidence needed for both coastal exploration and extended passages. With its enduring build quality and intelligent layout, it remains a popular choice in the used boat market for sailors seeking a modern and manageable cruising platform.

Specifications

Hull Type	Fin w/bulb & spade rudder
Rigging Type	Fractional (9/10) Sloop
LOA	35.50 ft / 10.82 m
LOD	34.05 ft / 10.38 m
LWL	30.83 ft / 9.40 m
S.A. (reported)	649.00 ft ² / 60.29 m ²
Beam	11.42 ft / 3.48 m
Displacement	13,448.00 lb / 6,100 kg
Ballast	3,402.00 lb / 1,543 kg
Max Draft	6.23 ft / 1.90 m
Construction	GRP
Ballast Type	Cast iron
First Built	2005
Last Built	2008
Builder	Beneteau
Designer	Berret - Racoupeau
Auxiliary Power	Yanmar Diesel, 29 HP
Fuel Capacity	20 gals / 75 L
Water Capacity	67 gals / 255 L
Headroom	6.60 ft / 2.01 m
S.A. / Displ.	18.43
Bal. / Displ.	25.30

Disp / Len	204.88
Comfort Ratio	25.16
Capsize Screening	1.92
Formula	
S#	2.46
Hull Speed	7.44 kn
Pounds/Inch Immersion	1,258.02 pounds/inch
Rig and Sail Particulars	
I	43.44 ft / 13.24 m
J	12.80 ft / 3.90 m
P	39.14 ft / 11.93 m
E	13.58 ft / 4.14 m
S.A. Fore	278.02 ft ² / 25.83 m ²
S.A. Main	265.76 ft ² / 24.69 m ²
S.A. Total (100% Fore + Main Triangles)	543.78 ft ² / 50.52 m ²
S.A. / Displ. (calc.)	15.44
Est. Forestay Length	45.29 ft / 13.80 m
Mast Height from DWL	49.40 ft / 15.06 m

- Find more details and photos in the full [Beneteau 343 profile](#) on our website
- [Complete catalog of Beneteau sailboats analyzed](#) on our website