

Why a Sigma 33?

A enquiry to the Sigma 33 website in November 2005 as to the pros and cons of the Sigma 33 resulted in a typically enthusiastic response – a sample of the comments are below:

Andy Johns - Shadowfax

The Sigma 33 represents great value (as far as any yacht can!) When you take out the fixed costs associated with owning yacht (mooring, insurance, winter storage) then the running costs are relatively low. Because of the strict one design nature of the class you can not be tempted into spending a fortune on modifying the boat to gain handicap advantage. In my opinion time spent on fairing the hull, ensuring your halyards and sail controls run well, relatively new sails and loads of practice is all that is required to have a huge amount of fun racing and cruising your Sigma 33. Clubbing together not only relieves the financial costs but helps with organising crew and regattas etc..

But.... Do be aware that these are old boats and as with any aging lady they do require tlc to get the best out of them. There are owners with far more experience than I who can no doubt add to the list but make sure you pay particular attention to the state of the standing rigging, mast, engine (I would try and buy a boat whose engine has been replaced - but this will make the boat more expensive). I would also try and get a boat with a decent set of sails and preferably 2 sets - one to practice with and another to collect trophies!

The class is really social and during the last 4 years we have made some great friends and had some fantastic weeks racing and partying. The Sigma 33 is still one of the few classes where the whole fleet finishes within minutes of each other at Cowes week.

The Sigma is raced with up to 7 - can be raced with less - 6s and 7s did really well in the double handed Fastnet.

In summary I can't think of a better yacht for racing inshore / offshore and cruising unless you have the budget for a Swan 45! Just make sure you do your homework! (Yachts for sale at www.sigma33.com)

Paul Gosling - Troy

I have been crew on 33 & 36 for years they are the best boat going for racing or cruising. So we purchased TROY in nov 2003 we only cruise her with our children but my wife would not change even for one of those FRENCH things.

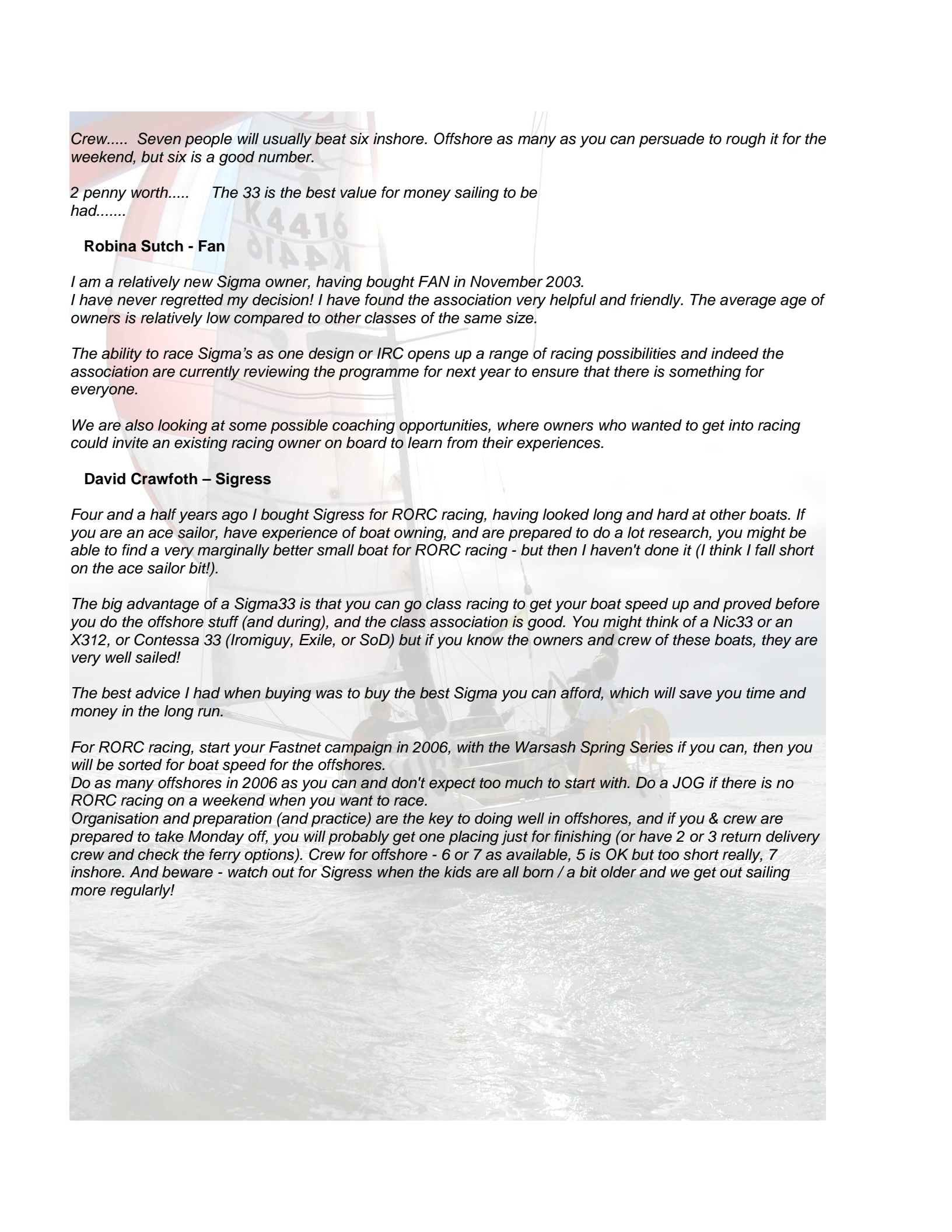
Clive Oliver -

Good..... Things don't usually break when you wipe out, all the expensive gear doesn't make a lot of difference, easy to set-up (just make sure the stick isn't leaning over), nice big engine, safe as houses, takes years to master.

Bad.... This isn't a dingy, turns & accelerates slowly (compared to later designs), takes years to master

Start Racing..... Pay your entry fee and assume position at back of fleet, stay out of trouble, give yourself plenty of time to manoeuvre, read the rule book and play with the little plastic boats supplied. HRSC does a nice Wednesday evening.

Budget..... No amount of money can make up for doing it regularly with friends, teamwork is everything.



Crew..... Seven people will usually beat six inshore. Offshore as many as you can persuade to rough it for the weekend, but six is a good number.

2 penny worth..... The 33 is the best value for money sailing to be had.....

Robina Sutch - Fan

I am a relatively new Sigma owner, having bought FAN in November 2003. I have never regretted my decision! I have found the association very helpful and friendly. The average age of owners is relatively low compared to other classes of the same size.

The ability to race Sigma's as one design or IRC opens up a range of racing possibilities and indeed the association are currently reviewing the programme for next year to ensure that there is something for everyone.

We are also looking at some possible coaching opportunities, where owners who wanted to get into racing could invite an existing racing owner on board to learn from their experiences.

David Crawfoth – Sigress

Four and a half years ago I bought Sigress for RORC racing, having looked long and hard at other boats. If you are an ace sailor, have experience of boat owning, and are prepared to do a lot research, you might be able to find a very marginally better small boat for RORC racing - but then I haven't done it (I think I fall short on the ace sailor bit!).

The big advantage of a Sigma33 is that you can go class racing to get your boat speed up and proved before you do the offshore stuff (and during), and the class association is good. You might think of a Nic33 or an X312, or Contessa 33 (Iromiguy, Exile, or SoD) but if you know the owners and crew of these boats, they are very well sailed!

The best advice I had when buying was to buy the best Sigma you can afford, which will save you time and money in the long run.

For RORC racing, start your Fastnet campaign in 2006, with the Warsash Spring Series if you can, then you will be sorted for boat speed for the offshores.

Do as many offshores in 2006 as you can and don't expect too much to start with. Do a JOG if there is no RORC racing on a weekend when you want to race.

Organisation and preparation (and practice) are the key to doing well in offshores, and if you & crew are prepared to take Monday off, you will probably get one placing just for finishing (or have 2 or 3 return delivery crew and check the ferry options). Crew for offshore - 6 or 7 as available, 5 is OK but too short really, 7 inshore. And beware - watch out for Sigress when the kids are all born / a bit older and we get out sailing more regularly!

John Oliver - Ephesian

I've owned my Sigma 33 ood for 22 years. No regrets what-so-ever. After chartering boats for about 10 years I decided I needed to race both off shore & round the cans. With three teenage sons who were keen as mustard to race I mortgaged my house to buy my Sigma. I was that keen. Previously we owned an Enterprise dinghy.

Let's start with your question of what's bad about them. Well, you can give the same answer for every boat that exists. "It ain't cheap". Like all boats you have to find a mooring. That ain't cheap. So the first thing you do is join a yacht/sailing club, which is where you'll get info where to moor your boat, unless of course your rolling in the filthy stuff and can afford a marina. Apart from the above it's a great yacht the most versatile yacht you'll ever purchase. Many owners have raced across the Pond to the Caribbean. One owner & his wife and baby circumnavigated the planet. Yet it will hold it's own round the cans in any company. My wife & I sailed down to the Med, returning via the River Rhone and French canals, a superb cruising holiday. What more could you want in a yacht. They survived the 1979 Fastnet with flying colours.

You start racing by racing against the Sigma 33 Fleet by joining the Sigma 33 Class Ass'n. Which is what we did. We started at the back end with just as exciting racing with the tail enders as the front runners and worked our way through the fleet to the front end winning many trophies.

To answer the budget question is almost an impossibility. How long is a piece of string. Depends where you moor, how seriously you want to race.

Sails ain't cheap, but you probably know that already.

You can cruise with only two. I know some owners who cruise solo. It was my idea to incorporate the furling headstay which was unanimously voted for by the Class and approved by the designer David Thomas. Because it made the Sigma more versatile so Mum & Dad can go cruising but by removing the drum you convert immediately to a racing yacht. As many owners do.

To race. Well, depends. officially 7 crew, including helm. Heavy weather, you'll need the 7 crew. I always go for 7 regardless of the weather. Means more crew to buy me a pint in the clubhouse.

Any more questions, just ask away. Now go away and buy the yacht. Get David Hopkins to survey it for you if you live in the South. There ain't nothing he don't know about Sigma 33's.

