

How old is that boat?

Year	Sail Number				
1979	450 - 454	1986	5439 - 6184	1994	9600 - 9940
1980	455 - 1604	1987	6185 - 6582	1995	9941 - 10039
1981	1605 - 3631	1988	6583 - 7330	1996	10040 - 10128
1982	3632 - 4029	1989	7331 - 7803	1997	10129 - 10361
1983	4030 - 4905	1990	7804 - 8311	1998	10386 - 10415
1984	4043 - 4905	1991	8312 - 8660	1999	10415 - 10499
1985	4906 - 5438	1992	8661 - 9245	2000	10500 -
		1993	9246 - 9599		

What to look out for when buying secondhand

Simon Lomas-Clarke: The Laser2 is a pretty indestructible boat and there are some excellent bargains to be had. Ropes and fittings are reasonably easily replaced (and can be bought from almost any chandlers) if you are willing to spend only a small amount. The quality of the sails is quite important. Obviously if you don't want to race this is not as important but these are the most expensive part of a boat to replace (after the mast & hull). When I bought my boat some of the spinnakers on boats I saw were still in the packets, having never seen water! Universities are a good example of sailors that rarely use kites.

I good tip for places to look is other boat vendors: I bought mine from Topper. Someone had traded it in for a new Spice and Topper were then stuck with a boat they couldn't advertise and didn't know what to do with, plus it was in the same condition as when the previous owners exchanged it.

Make sure ropes, fillings all look good, but generally I suppose you get what you pay for. Finally, if at all possible sail the boat before you buy it. After all you will only know if it all really works as a sailing boat once it is doing what it was built to do. If you can't do this, fully rig it on the trailer.

Mike Clapp: Get hold of the current spare parts price-list from Sailboats.co.uk so you can assess how much you will need to spend if sails, foils or other parts are worn out. Check for cracking of the Gelcoat near where the gunwale sits on the trolley. This would indicate that boat has been strapped on too tightly for towing and is difficult to repair.

Mike Croker:

Hull: Have a good look at the bottom of the hull around where the centreboard comes through: cracks here indicate excessive flexing or overloading. Also look at the inside lower rear of the centreboard case: if the boat's hit some underwater obstruction hard, then this is the bit that gets damaged and can leak (the trailing edge of the centreboard will also have been damaged! Next look inside at the base of the cockpit: hard/careless use will see cracks appear at the join between the cockpit sides and floor - another sign of flexing.

Spars: look the rear of the fitting that holds the forward boom block on - a favourite place for cracks to start as the internal reinforcement stops just before the rear rivet! Can be caught if not too extensive by using a longer internal sleeve. At the aft end the boom block fitting always works loose - if it isn't re-riveted promptly then the holes are enlarged and you have to reposition the fitting, and you can't do that too many times - alternatively just bolt it!

Finally have a look at the lower part of the topmast where it butts against the lower mast section. If the boat's bumped the bottom whilst inverted then the external track can start to peel off - messy! If it's just started then it can be cleaned up and the topmast shortened a little, but again you can't do this too many times!

Just to add that ours (5749 - Razer Larf) is still going strong (well, as strong as the owners) after 15 years regular use from a shingle beach....Try that with a foam sandwich hull!

Ian Savell:Main advice I would offer to new entrants (topical with current egroup content) is to check for leaks, which is usually just a case of checking for no water exiting the drain hole when you tip it back. Noticeable leaks are associated with damage, loose fittings, or wear at the bottom rear of the daggerboard case (easily spotted, fiddly to repair). Otherwise as with any class sail condition will determine racing speed. Look at the condition and colour of the cloth, the smoother, whiter and crister the better. Old sails will not be as fast, but fine for getting the hang of the boat. Other signs of age are: (main) wear at the top batten end, (jib) flogging creases near the clew, wear from the spi pole on the luff, (spinnaker) severe stretching and creasing at the head and retrieval patches and damage to the clews. None of these are fatal, just an indication of a lot of use. Try to view the sails set. Beware of badly damaged foils as these are single source and very expensive (but chips and scratches are easy to fix). Bent masts are illegal but rare. Ropes and other disposables are cheap and easy to replace.