



## Buying a Second-hand Swift 18

- Notes compiled by Tony G from websites  
and experienced Swifters -

### 1 General Points

- Swiftcraft made all the boats up to 218
- Early boats had a 2 inch wide flat 'plate-style' keel. Boats 96 to 218 had a heavier keel which has a rounded leading edge
- The early boats had a problem with the forestay fixing, so a 'sugar-scoop' fixing was put on later boats. You need this fitting.
- Honnor Marine built heavier boats after this with a straight mast. They were well made but heavier and reportedly equipped with slightly lower standard kit than the earlier JCA boats. They stamped their boats with ID. After that, there was a buyout and 10 or so later boats were made – maybe with black toe-rails. The Swiftcraft boats seem to be the most desirable if you want performance and the best kit.
- Of the original trailers, SBS trailers were the best. They had leaf springs.
- First boats were cream with a brown stripe, then a red stripe and then a lighter cream with a blue stripe
- The furling was by Rotostay originally.
- Desirable extras include the push pit and boarding ladder.
- When the wind picks up a working jib is better than a genny. The boat is quick, but screws up to wind in a breeze and you need to dump a lot. But with the working jib this doesn't happen. Ideally you need one of these.
- Cruising chute is very successful off-wind.
- Always lower the keel onto the trailer so that this takes the weight when towing, otherwise the stringer across the cabin between the keelbox and the under-cockpit storage breaks as the keel bounces. A few boats had this repair from the very start as they were damaged in the factory.
- A four stroke engine is better than the two-stroke because the fumes in the outboard well can choke a two-stroke on tick-over.
- It's a good idea to make some duck boards for the cockpit floor. These improve the look of the boat and also keep your feet dry if water comes in through the outboard well when sailing.
- It's generally agreed that the outboard mounting point is too low which slows the boat down a bit, so some owners have raised theirs about 4 inches.
- Some boats had a slight 'ripple' down one side which appeared in manufacture. This not to be worried about too much as long as it's a slight almost un-noticeable ripple.

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Swift Notes

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## 2 Things to Check

In addition to checking for the usual boat things like the state of the hull, sails, running and standing rigging, electrics, cushions, stove, extras and the trailer etc ... on a Swift 18:

- Make sure there is the sugar scoop bow fixing.
- Look behind the seats on the parcel shelf on both sides. Two bungs. Take them out and check the foam for damp. May be a little due to condensation but a lot shows the boat is waterlogged between the skins.
- Check behind the potty for more plugs and again check the foam. There are also plugs elsewhere which need checking for damp.
- Look down the hull; some boats have a slight bulge on one side. This is not a problem and is due to the mould flexing when the boat was built. But anything excessive is to be avoided.
- Take the sink out. Check to see whether the log or echo sounder was fitted in there. Can be wet if not sealed.
- Check the skeg for damage.
- Take the cover off the keel box and take out the inspection hatch to check the keel lifting mechanism. Inspect the thread. Also look to see whether there are any stress fractures in the glass fibre of the keel box. There are also stainless steel straps under there and these can buckle if there's been a problem. They need to be straight.
- Check the ball race where the winch handle fits. It may be worn and need replacing.
- Check the rudder. Early ones were lighter. Some may be bent.
- Check for leaky windows.
- Check around the keel box for cracks.
- Check for delamination around the outboard well – could be a problem.
- Check the finishing in the anchor well where leaks may occur into the cabin.
- Check for leaks in the anchor well due to bad finishing.
- Sitting below decks looking astern, there is a stringer dividing the cabin from the storage area under the cockpit. Look for stress cracks.
- Check for cracks in aluminium toe rail at base of uprights holding the safety rail.
- Check out the state of the headlining – big job to replace.
- Does it have an A frame to help with mast lowering/raising?
- Is it an early one i.e. <218 sail number.
- Which keel has it got: original or heavier
- Does it have the pushpit and ladder?
- Is the gas bottle properly sealed and vented?
- Do the electrics work
- Has the trailer damaged the hull?

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