

CHANDLERY

Schenker Watermaker

On the way home from the Mediterranean, Nick Nicholson came upon a watermaker in the Canary Islands that he found promising. He sent in this report before he reached Antigua this winter.

There's no doubt that a watermaker is one of the key pieces of equipment on the modern long-range cruiser. The Village Marine Little Wonder—one of the first high-output low-voltage watermakers—has done yeoman service on *Calypso* during her four years of cruising, and has largely freed us from the perpetual search for sources of fresh water.

Since its introduction almost a decade ago, the Little Wonder has gone through significant upgrading to reduce power consumption, which historically has been a major consideration for low-voltage watermakers. The *Spectra series of watermakers* raised the stakes even higher with their ultra-efficient machines.

In the Canary Islands, we came across a relatively new low-voltage watermaker that is direct competition for the Spectra units—the Schenker watermaker. Although the name may sound German, Schenkers are actually made in Italy. These beautifully-packaged machines, available in either 12-volt or 24-volt configurations, are available with outputs of 35, 60, or 100 liters per hour. In American terms, that's about 9, 16, and 26 gallons per hour. Electrical consumption is 110, 240, or 440 watts, which translates into 9, 20, or 37 amps per hour at 12 volts.

Obviously, for the largest unit, the engine or other charging source should be on to keep the battery voltage up when the machine is running, unless you have a very big battery bank. At 24 volts—increasingly the voltage of choice for larger cruising boats—amperage is halved. With a 12-volt system, each US gallon of fresh water eats only 1.25 amp hours of electricity, making the Schenker one of the

most efficient low-voltage watermakers available.

Like the Spectra, Schenker uses off-the-shelf low-pressure pumps to power the watermaker. The smallest unit has a single pump, while the two larger systems feature dual pumps. With dual-pump systems, the failure of one of the pumps reduces output, but the unit will still function.

All models use standard 2521 reverse-osmosis membranes, available anywhere in the world.

Both rack and modular systems have been available in the past, but the company seems to be gearing more towards the modular systems, which can be fitted to smaller spaces. All the units are beautifully put together, and are easy to install.

We haven't tested the Schenker watermakers, but we examined them carefully at Sunshine Maritime Ltd. in Gran Canaria. British-operated Sunshine Maritime is the UK distributor for Schenker, and has sold several machines to US owners. Prices in the Canaries range from about \$3,900 to about \$5,300. Shipping and duty would obviously push the cost higher on units shipped to the US. A number of accessories and options are available, including fresh-water backflush, ultraviolet sterilizers, and remote electronic controls.



Above: Schenker's largest watermaker uses dual low-pressure pumps (bottom) and three standard 2521 membranes. **Below:** Smaller models use two membranes plus single or dual pumps.



If you're thinking about a high-output low-voltage watermaker, this is one to look at. ■

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