

History of the Universal Diesel Motor

In the early 1970's sailboat manufacturers began fitting Yanmar diesel auxiliaries instead of the Atomic Four gasoline auxiliary, however Atomic Four sales continued to grow until their peak year of 1975. In 1976, as sales of the Atomic Four started to drop, Universal met the challenge from Yanmar by buying Kubota diesel engines and selling marinized versions, under the name Universal. Atomic Four sales gradually declined as manufacturers increasingly used diesel engines, and manufacturing ceased in 1980, with sales continuing until all units were sold in 1984. The last OEM (original equipment manufacturer) to fit the Atomic Four was Catalina, who used it up until the 1985 Catalina model year. After 1985 Universal sold only diesel marine engines, which were fitted by several OEM, including Catalina.

In 1976 the first Universal diesel was introduced. Designated the Model 5416, it was a 45 cu in, 16 hp, 2 cylinder, fresh-water-cooled engine producing 16 hp @ ? rpm (intermittent), based on the Kubota Z-751 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1976 to 1982. Approximately 1,000 were sold.

In 1977 the Model 5411 was introduced. It was a 31 cu in, 2 cylinder raw water cooled diesel producing 11 hp @ ? rpm, based on the Kubota Z-500 block, and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1977 to 1982. Approximately 2,900 were sold.

In 1977 the Model 5424 was introduced. It was a 68 cu in, 24 hp, 3 cylinder, based on the Kubota D-1101 block, and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1977 to 1983. Approximately 1,050 were sold.

In 1978 the Model 5432 was introduced. It was a 91 cu in, 32 hp, 4 cylinder, based on the Kubota V-1501 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-100 marine transmission. It was built from 1978 to 1982. It was also called the "Atomic Diesel". Approximately 650 were sold.

In 1980 the Model 5444 was introduced. It was a 115 cu in, 44 hp, 4 cylinder, based on the Kubota V-1902 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-100 marine transmission. It was built from 1980 to 1982. Approximately 280 were sold.

In 1981 the Model 5421 was introduced. It was a 52 cu in, 21 hp, 3 cylinder, based on the Kubota D-850 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission, built from 1978 to 1981. Approximately 1,000 were sold.

In 1981 the Model 5421 was replaced by the Model M25, a 52 cu in, 21 hp, 3 cylinder, based on the Kubota D-850 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1981 to 1986. Approximately 3,650 were sold.

In 1982 the Model 5432 was replaced by the Model M40, a 91 cu in, 32 hp, 4 cylinder, based on the Kubota V-1502 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-100 marine transmission. It was produced from 1982 to 1998. Approximately 360 were sold.

In 1982 the Model 5411 was replaced by the Model M15, a 45 cu in, 16 hp, 2 cylinder, fresh-water-cooled, based on the Kubota Z-500 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was produced in 1982 and 1983. Approximately 370 were sold.

In 1982 the Model 5416 was replaced by the Model M20, a 45 cu in, 16 hp, 2 cylinder, fresh-water-cooled, based on the Kubota Z-751 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built in 1982 and 1983. Approximately 230 were sold.

In 1982 the Model 5444 was replaced by the Model M50, a 115 cu in, 44 hp, 4 cylinder, based on the Kubota V-1902 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-100 marine transmission. It was built from 1982 to 1997. Approximately 520 were sold.

In 1983 the Model M-12 was introduced. It was a 24.4 cu in, 10 hp, 2 cylinder based on the Kubota Z-400 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1983 to 1988. Approximately 1,200 were sold.

In 1983 the Model M-18 was introduced. It was a 34.8 cu in, 14 hp @ 3,200 rpm, 2 cylinder, based on the Kubota Z-600 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1983 to 1988. Approximately 2,400 were sold.

In 1983 the Model 5424 was replaced by the Model M-30, a 68 cu in, 24 hp, 3 cylinder, originally based on the Kubota D-1101 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1983 to 1987. The Model M-30 was the same size as the Model 5424, but later M-30 engines were based on the Kubota D-1102 block. It was built from 1983 to 1987. Approximately 400 were sold.

In 1986 the M-25 was replaced by the Model M-25XP, a 57 cu in, 23 hp, 3 cylinder, based on the Kubota D-950 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1986 to 1999. Approximately 3,100 were sold.

In 1987 the Model M2-12 was introduced. It was a 26 cu in, 11 hp, 2 cylinder, based on the Kubota Z-430 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-50 marine transmission. It was built from 1987 to 1997. Approximately 320 were sold.

In 1987 the Model M-35 was introduced. It was a 75.5 cu in, 30 hp, 4 cylinder, based on the Kubota V-1200 block and fitted with a Hurth HBW-100 marine transmission. It was built from 1987 to 1997. Approximately 280 were sold.

In 1988 the Model M3-20 was introduced. It was a 38.9 cu in, 18 hp, 3 cylinder, based on the Kubota D-640 block. It was built from 1988 to 1997. Approximately 525 were sold.

In 1988 the Model M4-30 was introduced. It was also called the Atomic Four diesel, and was a 52 cu in, 25 hp, 4 cylinder, based on the Kubota Y-850 block. It was built from 1988 to 1997. Approximately 470 were sold. The Model M4-30 was offered as a diesel replacement for the original Atomic Four gasoline engine. It was similar to its namesake, since it was a 4 cylinder model weighing slightly less (122 kg / 270 lb as opposed to the original's 150 kg / 330 lb with

Paragon reduction drive) and generating slightly less power (18.6 kW / 25 hp at 3,600 rpm as opposed to the original's 22 kW / 30 hp at 3,500 rpm) with a smaller displacement (850 cc / 52 cu in as opposed to the original's 1,065 cc / 65 cu in).

Source: <http://downeasteryachts.com/info-index/engine/universal-engine-info>