



It looks the part, but how does this German contender stack up against American opposition in a competitive market sector?

REPORT BY JOHN WOOD

# Bavaria 29 Sport

Time was when American sportscruiser manufacturers effected 'European styling' in the race for sales. Evidently it was considered that we Europeans had a level of sophistication which American buyers sought.

Now the wheel has come full circle, as German builders BMB have adopted similar styling, but they call it 'American'!

Landlocked Bavaria has never been a hotbed of boatbuilding, but BMB have made an impact on the market with their range of four boats, from 29ft to 36ft. We tested the smallest model, the 29 Sport.

## DESIGN & LAYOUT

Overtly sporting, the 29 Sport looks fast even when still on its mooring. An integrated bathing platform, a forward-angled folding radar arch and a long bow are all design signatures of sportscruisers in the new millennium.

Though a generous beam is retained a good way forwards, and there is good headroom in the cabin, the boat is quite sleek, with a fairly flat foredeck. A low mounting for the rubbing strake and a contrast colour scheme help offset the prominent freeboard which is inevitable on this size of boat.

Space allocation is just about evenly split between cabin and cockpit, and the design of the cockpit is excellent, offering sociable seating and good working space.

Inside, the manufacturers have resisted the temptation to divide the forward section up to create a separate cabin in the bow, and have stuck with the traditional layout for a boat of this size.

That means a dinette/vee-berth forward, a galley to starboard, a WC to port, and a fair amount of space allocated to the midships sleeping area, which therefore is likely to serve as an owner's cabin. ▶▶

## highlights



### GENEROUS MIDSHIPS BERTH

The midships sleeping area makes for a comfortable and secluded owner's cabin.



### EASY DECK ACCESS

Steps from the bathing platform offer easy access up to the side decks.



### SMART SUNPAD

Cantilevered seat-backs form the sunbed infill, so there is no scrabbling in lockers for cushions.



**accommodation**

Mahogany finish, quality mouldings and good upholstery add up to a very comfortable interior, with a light and spacious feel despite a predominance of wood.

There is full standing headroom in the main section, and sitting headroom forward, where the dinette converts into good-sized double berth. An FM radio/CD player will add to the ambience when required, and there is a hanging wardrobe to starboard for clothes.

To our minds the midships berth will usually be the owner's preferred night-time retreat. Accessed through its own door, it is fitted out with cupboards, a hanging locker and a double settee with further stowage in its base.

The double berth comprises a mattress on the floor but is a good size. The whole cabin is well appointed, and lit by its own porthole.

In the galley to starboard, a stainless steel sink with mixer tap, a two-burner stove and a fridge come as standard, with a microwave optional. There is abundant stowage in drawers and cupboards, in the bases and above, as well as open stowage for glasses.

The quality of finish in the toilet compartment is impressive, with wooden doors to the eye-level lockers and a Corian sink surround. Headroom is good for those of average stature.



**dinette/berths** Underseat stowage, open lockers above the seat backs and an outboard shelf make this a practical space.

**toilet/shower** A stainless steel mixer tap on a wanderlead doubles as the showerhead, and a sea toilet with a manual flush comes as standard.

**galley** A porthole helps to light the galley surface, making the most of a good layout and workspace.



**POWER OPTIONS**

The twin 170hp Volvo Penta KAD32 diesels fitted in our test boat are the most expensive engine choice. Other options include a single 285hp KAD300 diesel, a single 320hp petrol, and twin 225hp or 320hp petrols.

**PERFORMANCE & HANDLING**

We recorded a top speed of 33.4 knots with the KAD32s pulling 3900rpm, a fair speed for this type of craft. If you want to go faster, you

will be looking at the petrol engine options, sacrificing fuel economy.

A fast cruising speed of 27 knots was achieved with the engines turning over at 3500rpm, and a very comfortable 83dB(A) noise level in the cockpit. Easing the pace further to 3000rpm saw 23 knots and 82dB(A), while 2800rpm meant just staying on the plane at 19 knots.

Mid-range acceleration is good, so the hull lifts quickly, offering a sturdy pull for skiing.

The performance and handling of the Bavaria 29 really set it apart from its competitors. Responsiveness and speed of turn are those of a sportsboat, and if you were blindfolded you would not know that this was a twin-engined rig. The only time it really shows up is in turning circles, which could be tighter.

This, though, does not spoil your enjoyment of the boat. It still comes round really well, and there is no drop-off in power; delivery continues all the way through tighter turns, and then there is plenty of thrust to play with when you straighten up. There is no slip-out from the hull or ventilation from the propellers.

Sea conditions on the day of our test did not stretch the boat, but it dealt easily with waves and wash, and the accuracy of the steering meant we could place it well.

A commanding driving position puts you on top of the job yet is well protected from the elements, with the screen deflecting much of the wind and spray.

The lean-back driving position is the preferred one, although it is rather spoiled by the throttle console impinging on your right leg. However, both seat and steering wheel are adjustable.

**cockpit**

The L-shaped forward seat, opposite the helm, can be used for seating or lounging, and its low back ensures its sociability with the after part of the cockpit.

Here there is a U-shaped settee and a good working space. However, the seat base offers the only stowage option in the cockpit (besides a fender rack on the back of the seat), and another weakness of the design is that the aft section to port is open, inviting items carelessly left on the seat to disappear overboard on acceleration.

Options fitted to our test boat include the carpet, table and camper cover, the latter being well made and fitted.



**seating** Low seat-backs mean the layout is sociable. To starboard is a cockpit bar with a Corian worksurface, and an optional fridge in the base.

**decks**

The bathing platform has a fair depth to it, though boarding here from alongside is limited by the flanks of the hull.

The side decks are a decent width for a sportscruiser of this size, and access to them from aft is easy thanks to the steps integrated in the transom. There are handholds on the radar arch as well as bow rails.

The bow area is fairly flat and has a non-slip surface. The electric windlass fitted to the test boat is an option, as are the foredeck sunpad and the teak finish to the side decks.



**transom** A gate leads through to the cockpit from the deep bathing platform.



**foredeck** The opening in the pulpit allows for boarding at the bows if necessary.

**engineroom**

The aft cockpit sole hinges up on an electric ram to give access to the tidy engine installation.

There is enough room to climb down in front of the engines and to lean back for access between them.

All essential services are to hand, with the fuel filters mounted on the aft section of the fuel tank.

When not in use, the cockpit table mounts on the underside of the hatch.



**helm** The dashboard gives a very good layout of instrumentation and switches, though room for adding more than one extra piece of electronic display is limited and there is no formal arrangement for chart display. A Simrad RD68 GMDSS VHF was included on our test boat as an optional extra.

**the rivals**

**SEA RAY 295 SUN SPORT**  
from £88,691 inc VAT

A competent design from builders who are market leaders, promising great residual value.

Tel: 023 8045 3005.

www.marinamarbella.co.uk

**MAXUM 2900 SE**  
from £70,960 inc VAT

Some added glitz but not necessarily any extra performance, and there is no diesel option.

Tel: 01206 302003.

www.morganmarineuk.com

**specifications**

<b>BUILD</b>	glass-reinforced plastic
<b>RCD</b>	design category B
<b>LENGTH OVERALL</b>	30ft 5in (9.28m)
<b>BEAM</b>	9ft 9in (2.98m)
<b>DRAUGHT</b>	2ft 1in (0.65m)
<b>DISPLACEMENT</b>	4.0 tonnes
<b>FUEL CAPACITY</b>	121gal (550lt)
<b>ENGINES</b>	twin 160hp Volvo Penta KAD32 diesels
<b>SUPPLIERS</b>	Ancasta International Boat Sales, Port Hamble, Satchell Lane, Hamble, Southampton, Hampshire SO31 4QD. Tel: 023 8045 0000. www.ancasta.com
<b>BUILDERS</b>	Bavaria Motor Boats, Industriestrasse 11, D-97232 Giebelstadt/Wurzburg, Germany. Tel: +49 93 34 94 20. www.bavaria-motorboats.com
<b>PRICE</b>	from £61,913 inc VAT; £94,757 as tested

**conclusions**

**LAYOUT**

A good allocation of space maximises the usefulness of both cabin and cockpit.

**BUILD**

Quality materials are used throughout, and the mahogany and bird's-eye veneer finish in the accommodation gives the boat an upmarket feel.

**PERFORMANCE**

We were impressed by some of the best handling we have come across in a boat of this type.



**MBM verdict**

A tried and tested format, with to some good design touches, adds up to with a sportscruiser that can compete with anything else available.

Choose your specification carefully and you can match or beat the prices of American imports.