

CARVER

530 VOYAGER PILOTHOUSE

Carver's new flagship features softer lines and a bridge like that of a spaceship. Our test team enjoyed taking it to sea.



Bathing platform

Our test boat had the standard bathing platform, but you can opt for a deeper one, which will take a personal watercraft or mini-RIB and comes complete with a



crane. A passerelle can also be fitted.

In either case the moulding extends beyond the line of the topside, which makes it easy to step aboard from alongside but must also make the quarters slightly vulnerable when manoeuvring.

The platform has a couple of in-built fender bins as well as a good-sized bathing ladder. Lockers in the curved transom take care of shore supply electrics, including the cable, and provide further stowage.

Cockpit

A walkway to starboard leads from the bathing platform through to the moderate-sized cockpit, with its transom bench settee. Our test boat had been



American builders Carver have never made any bones about what their boats are about. In terms of both layout and fitout, as much as possible is domestic sized, but, with the best will in the world, external appearance has erred on the boxy side. However their latest model, which is also their biggest to date, literally breaks the mould, with styling softened to disguise the impressive volume of the all-American interior.

Another attraction of the 530 Voyager is the provision of a raised pilothouse, allowing the whole crew to enjoy a comfortable helmsman's-eye view while underway, even if the weather is not clement enough to allow the use of the flybridge.



Decks

A pair of wide moulded steps leads up from the cockpit to each side deck, whereupon one hand will immediately fall to the guardrail and the other to a chest-high handrail that runs right along the boat's considerable superstructure.

The handrails

are sensibly inset, so they do not protrude into the walkway, and both the outboard guardrail and the superstructure are angled in a friendly way. So the decks are easy to walk along, even though they start out with a width



Design & layout

The 530's hull is a medium-vee form, of 17° amidships and 13° at the transom, while the engine installation is a straight-through shaftdrive arrangement, resisting the usual American penchant for V-drives in order to free up

more space forward.

The forward accommodation is in any case big enough to house a roomy three-cabin layout, including a master-cabin of cruise ship proportions, and a day toilet.

A handsome curved stairwell leads up to the main deck level, which is divided between the raised pilothouse forward and an open-plan saloon and galley on a lower level further aft. The galley has a number of layout

of only 8in (20cm) aft before widening to 14in (35cm) forward. Up on the foredeck, the pulpit is fabricated with two intermediate rails, so crewmembers working here will feel good and safe. There are two deck hatches: one giving onto the chain locker, which is fed by a vertical windlass, and the other taking care of a fender or two and the odd mooring rope.

Mooring hardware comprises 12in (30cm) cleats fore and aft, plus two slightly smaller ones on each side for springs. All deck areas have an effective cross-hatch moulded non-slip surface.



Exterior helm

At the flybridge helm position, biased to port, the skipper has an individually adjustable armchair, but forming part of the same seating arrangement is a second seat for a co-pilot. Both incumbents have plenty of room.

The console layout has room to spare for adding navigation electronics over and above the engine instrumentation, and everything falls



easily to hand. The throttles themselves, Twin Disc electronic ones in the case of our test boat, are set inboard of the helm, while a wet-card compass is positioned nicely in the helmsman's line of sight.

opposite, bringing the comfortable capacity to eight. Lockers within the seat-bases are well finished, and the lids are hinged rather than loose.

Aft of the dinette, our test boat had space for stowing a dinghy or mini-RIB up to 10ft (3.0m), and the cockpit overhang was fitted with a crane. Alternatively (if you opt for the wider bathing platform and decide to accommodate the tender there, perhaps), an extra sunpad area can be specified here, along with a guardrail arrangement.

Interestingly, not only is the

rear of the overhang equipped with a set of floodlights but it also has provision for a camera, so a skipper can check astern via closed-circuit television while docking shorthanded.



Flybridge

With its full wraparound screen and deep coaming offering plenty of protection, the flybridge feels more like a cockpit.

The main access is the stairwell from the pilothouse, between the helm position to port and a wet-bar complete with fridge to starboard. An alternative is the steps from the cockpit.

The main seating area is a large dinette, whose moulded table drops to convert it into a sunbed. There is a further settee



Pilothouse

The pilothouse is dominated by a raised command centre; to call it a helm station would be to do it an injustice.

An electrically adjustable aircraft-style seat faces a semi-circle of console, at which Colonel White of Spectrum would

be quite at home. Everything falls conveniently to hand, while an angled overhead fascia houses the larger-screen electronics, again simply a fingertip away.

Our test boat had a full inventory of electronics, most of which come as standard, with a joystick helm control in the armrest coming as part of the Raytheon package. We were also



pleased to find a sensibly placed wet-card compass. A pantograph wiper and a no-nonsense demister serves each section of the three-part screen.

The L-shaped adjacent settee, set to port, completes a most convivial layout, allowing four or five people to spread out in comfort. The view from this position is altogether excellent, whether you are alongside or underway.

Gentle steps lead down aft to the saloon and forward to the sleeping cabins. A side door to starboard leads out onto the side deck, and a set of easily negotiated steps takes you up to the flybridge.



Toilet

The forecabin's en-suite, which also serves as a day toilet, is a roomy affair with a decent-sized separate shower cubicle.

For practicality's sake it is largely a GRP fabrication, but the use of cherry wood trim and Corian worksurface, as in the rest of the boat, plus retro-style chrome/brass fittings, gives it a character all of its own.

An extractor is fitted, and there is plenty of useful stowage.



would suggest easing off to around 2400rpm, for a steady 20.5 knots, whilst adding a further 100rpm gains you an extra knot at the expense of a slightly worse mpg figure. All this might seem quite sedate, but this is a 20-ton vessel, and it is performance that is sure to be used to the full rather than left sitting in a pair of expensive engines waiting to get out.

The hull is quick to get up and go, pushing up to 20 knots from rest in just over 11 sec, and having eased onto the plane the 530 sits there nicely trimmed without more ado.

Handling at speed is much as we would expect: apply the helm and the boat responds immediately. It can hardly be said to swivel within its own length, turning fairly wide and all but flat, but wind the wheel back again and you steady onto your new course quickly.

Interior and exterior driving positions are both very comfortable, with instrumentation and controls well placed, and visibility from

Master suite

Turn first left from the lobby at the foot of the stairs curving down from the pilothouse, and you enter what is unmistakably the master-cabin.

The berth is king-size at 5ft 0in (1.52m) wide, and there is huge amounts of clothes stowage, both in drawers and cedar-lined



wardrobes. The floor area is big enough to let you dance the night away in the privacy of your own cabin, and to help with this our test boat had a full entertainments package built-in.

On a more practical note, we were again pleased to find simple lift-up panels in the sole giving access to the bilge.

Set either side of a smart raised basin/vanity unit are independent toilet and shower compartments, the latter being moulded with a bathtub rather

than just simply a showering cubicle. Unlike the toilet compartment itself, there is no extractor here, which is a touch remiss.



finished in a rich blue Corian, and the effect is to give the sleeping cabins and associated facilities the ambience of a gentleman's club.

Performance & handling

Our test boat had one of the smaller engine options, a pair

of 450hp Cummins diesels. Volvo Penta TAMD 73P EDCs of similar horsepower are also offered, and if you want more performance then the alternative is a pair of 610hp TAMD 122P EDCs, although these will add a hefty £55,000 ex VAT to the all-up price.

Another addition to the basic price is a bow thruster, which most buyers are going to want

on such a large boat. That said, the 530 handles well at low speed, with plenty of directional stability. Given a conservative engine choice, both can be kept in gear where speed restrictions apply.

Indeed, the MPX single-lever throttles fitted to our test boat allow you to select an engine-idle rpm (there are three settings, triggered by a switch

on the throttle plinth), depending upon the conditions, which is useful when manoeuvring in windy conditions, when a few more revs can be beneficial as you go in and out of gear.

The accompanying table plots the boat's progress through the rev range, up to a top speed of just over 24 knots. For cruising we

Galley

Three different galley layouts are available, with different amounts of worktop and various locations of electrical equipment.

Options include a roomy breakfast bar arrangement, with stools, or a simpler peninsula layout, as on our test boat, again with stools if required. If you opt for either of these, you can specify a dinette table either in the saloon, as on this particular craft, or in the pilothouse.

Whichever layout you prefer, there is a three-burner hob and oven with extractor, a microwave, a fridge and freezer, a two-sink drainer and plentiful stowage, all built into the Corian worksurfaces.



Midships cabin

After the ship-like dimensions of the master-cabin, the midships guest cabin is best described as cosy.

The length of the twin bunks is adequate enough, and a modicum of storage is provided by way of a hanging locker, a drawer incorporated in the lower bunk-base and bedside cabinet, but occupants could really do with a bit more elbowroom.

A foot pinched off the main cabin would not be missed, and might allow more dressing space, a couple of extra cupboards and a shelf or two.

An office arrangement can be fitted in lieu of the bunks.



Saloon

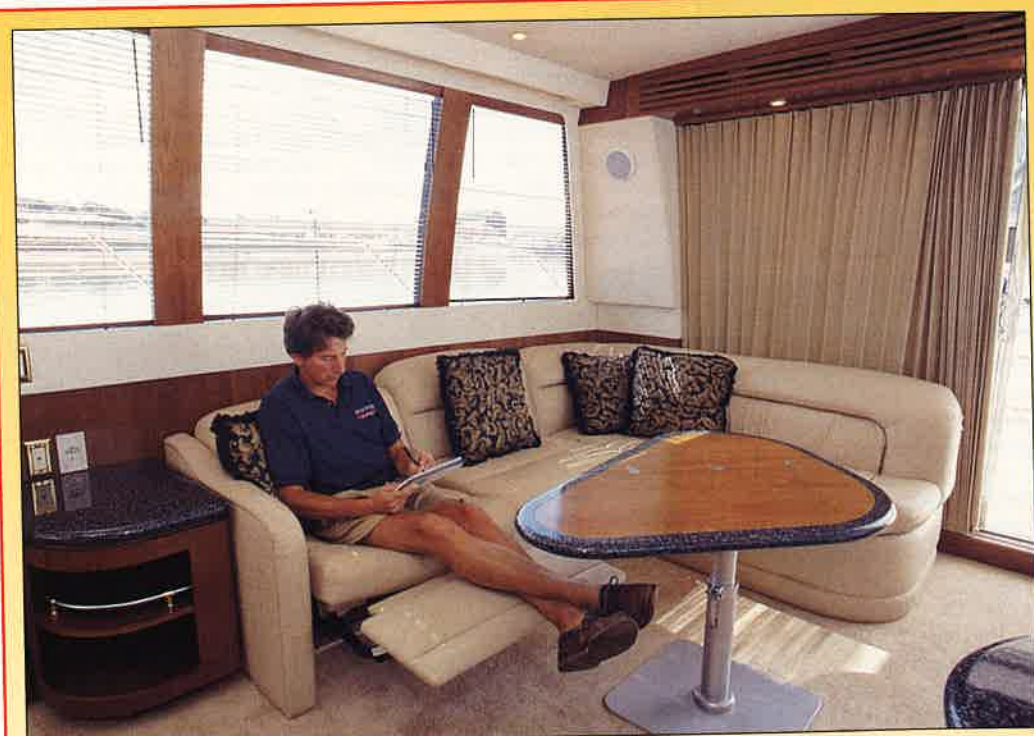
The sliding doors from the cockpit forward into the saloon open up a good half of the latter's beam to the sheltered aft deck, to give a real sense of space.

To starboard, the seating area feels more like a lounge than a dinette, especially given the reclining nature of a couple of the seats, although it has a folding and adjustable table.

On our test boat the entertainments centre was opposite, in a cabinet adjacent to the door, which is really the most useful spot, with a free-standing armchair between this and the galley peninsula, which incorporated a smallish cocktail bar.

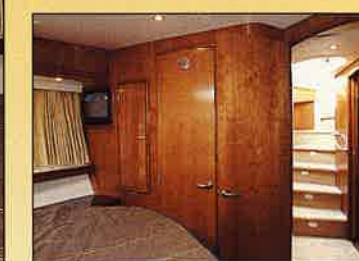
All the upholstery is in UltraLeather, a comfortable, easily looked-after imitation of the real thing. The deep windowline gives a good view out.

On the way up to the pilothouse is a sideboard for stowage, which also hides away the electrical panels.



Forward cabin

The bow cabin's berth is as big as the master cabin's, at no less than 6ft 4in x 5ft 0in (1.93m x 1.52m), although the clothes storage is nowhere near as commodious, with just a couple of drawers at the foot of the bed and a hanging locker.



Engineerom

A large gas strut-supported hatch in the cockpit sole lifts to give access to the spacious engineerom, allowing you to nip down onto a central treadplate.

The area immediately around the hatch is half lazaret, half auxiliary machinery, with the 8kW generator tucked into the starboard corner. The fuel tanks form a sort of bulkhead between here and the main engine compartment forward.

Sited back near the tanks are most of the ancillaries you need to get at easily, including the battery switches, fuel shut-offs, water and fuel filters and raw-water strainers. The steering gear would ordinarily be accessible from the lazaret-type area, but due to the encroachment of our test boat's crew cabin it has to be reached through cut-outs.

Working room around the engines themselves is fine, even outboard; the water tanks are slimmer than the



fuel tanks usually found in this location. The batteries are shelved fore and aft, and are easy to get to, as are the sternglands.

The size of the hatch should make it a reasonably easy job to get large,

hefty gear in and out if required, without having to dismantle the extremely solid-looking aluminium deckhead over the engines.

Towards the head of the compartment is the holding tank system for the Vacuflush toilets, as well as the calorifier and a thoughtfully built-in toolbox.

Foil-faced foam insulation covers most bulkhead surfaces, and a huge, no-nonsense fire-extinguisher is located forward. A closed-circuit television camera can be set up so the helmsman can keep an eye on the engineerom from the helm station.

The bilge is serviced by two submersible pumps and a manual one, worked from the cockpit.



the pilothouse is extremely good all round, whether on the plane or not, and even astern.

In the pilothouse particularly, it is simply a matter of settling into your contoured seat and flying by joystick. Our only misgiving concerns the rather small double-gauged engine instruments, no doubt chosen because of their styling, which are awkward to scan quickly.

Noise levels are commendably low, especially in the pilothouse.

Conclusions

The aesthetic appeal of some of Carver's earlier designs is of course all in the eye of the beholder. But we make no apologies for appreciating the newer, softer lines they are now introducing across the range, including on the 530.

This is a most likeable boat inside too, with the pilothouse its trump card. The fit-out and engineering are heavy-gauge,

whilst details like having cupboards wood-lined make all the difference. The only disappointment is the twin-bunk guest cabin, which appeared compromised given the size of the rest of the accommodation.

The days of our test threw up nothing which was likely to trouble

a boat of this size, but it appears there is little that would cause it a problem in any case, what with plenty of boat in the water, an even weight distribution and capable rudders.

In short, this is a big, spacious and comfortable cruiser that will not mind being used. □

CARVER 530 VOYAGER

PERFORMANCE & CONSUMPTION							SOUND LEVELS dB(A)			
rpm	knots#	gph†	lph†	mpg†	range*	trim	flybg	master	saln	plthse
1500	10.2	8.2	37	1.24	657	1.5	65	70	71	65
1750	11.8	12.1	55	0.97	514	3.5	67	71	72	68
2000	15.3	18.3	83	0.84	445	4.0	68	72	72	69
2250	18.3	23.9	110	0.77	408	4.0	69	75	74	70
2500	21.6	32.0	145	0.68	360	4.0	70	78	77	71
2650	24.1	38.8	176	0.62	330	4.0	72	80	79	74

Measured by radar gun. † Calculated from engine manufacturers' figures. * Allows 20% margin.

ACCELERATION ~ 0-20 knots, 11.1sec

CONDITIONS ~ wind westerly Force 2, sea slight

LOAD ~ fuel 25%, water 50%, crew 3



BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

DIMENSIONS

LOA

53ft 9in (16.38m)

HULL LENGTH

50ft 3in (15.32m)

BEAM

15ft 4in (4.67m)

DRAUGHT

4ft 9in (1.45m)

AIR DRAUGHT

19ft 0in (5.79m)

DISPLACEMENT

19.3 tonnes

FUEL CAPACITY

665gal (3028lt)

WATER CAPACITY

165gal (757lt)

ENGINES

twin Cummins 450Cs

6cyl 8.3lt diesels

450hp at 2600rpm

PRICE

£376,995 ex VAT
as standard

SUPPLIERS

CYS Yacht Sales,
Shamrock Quay, William
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Southampton, Hampshire
SO14 5QL.
Tel: 01703 235421.

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