

Boat Report

CRANCHI GIADA 29

We took advantage of the summer's spell of Mediterranean weather to test the latest Italian sportscruiser on the UK market.





sections below giving a keen, wave-slicing edge. Incorporated in the vee are three pairs of sprayrails, toeing inwards, the inner two fading aft.

In common with many other boats in the range, the Giada's lay-up includes a measure of Kevlar/GRP mat in high-stress areas, for increased strength without bumping up the overall weight.

Exterior

The cockpit is split-level. The upper area features a semi-recliner settee opposite a single helm seat, with a flip-up squab for those who prefer to perch. The lower area has a comfortable U-dinette to port, which the drop-down table and its cushion infill make into a sunbed.

At the helm, the wooden wheel is accompanied by a couple of veneered fascias on the console, with a narrow perspex-covered area of limited use between them. Throttles and wheel are readily to hand whether you are sitting, perched or standing, the power trim buttons conveniently placed just ahead of them and the ready use switches adjacent. Space for navigation instruments is limited to a band of fascia just outboard of the throttles, making them a little awkward to view and operate.

The compactness of the helm area is mainly due to the useful moulded steps just to its left, which lead through the split screen onto the coachroof and foredeck. This arrangement is the easiest way forward, although the sidedecks are still negotiable at 5in (13cm) wide.

The coachroof area has a moulded non-slip finish,



Clockwise from left: Cranchi's latest model is craned into the water in Southampton. The lower level of the Giada's cockpit has a dinette which converts into a sunbed. In the bow, the interior dinette is large and comfortable. Plenty of stowage is available in the moulded WC.

To British boaters, possibly the best-known Italian manufacturers are Cranchi, with a line-up that runs from a 21ft sportsboat to their flagship Mediterranée 40.

Most of the whole range are permanently on show, undercover, at their new UK demonstration centre, Merlin Quay Boat Park in Southampton, where they can be whisked into the water as and when required. So it was here that we went to try their newest model, a 30-footer.

Design

The Giada 29 has a set of soft, clean cockpit and topside lines, sitting on a medium-to-deep-vee hull of variable deadrise, from 23° amidships to 17° at the transom. The latter is cosseted by topside returns to incorporate the integral bathing platform.

The bow quickly fills out above the chine to give plenty of reserve buoyancy, the topsides broken up with a number of spray-deflecting knuckles and the

and gently slopes to an integral windlass well and chain locker (the electric Lofrans unit, like the telescopic davits in the transom coaming, the VHF and the Brookes & Gatehouse combined log/sounder on our test boat, are optional extras).

In true Mediterranean style, the pulpit at the bow is split to facilitate boarding, and even incorporates a purpose placed tread. The protective curved screen is topped with handrails, and the stubby wings at the break of the cockpit are furnished with grabrails. Cleats are of 8in (20cm) calibre.

Opposite the dinette in the after section of cockpit is a wet-bar, with a locker, a coolbox and gas bottle storage beneath. The coaming just abaft of this has a moulded step, offering a leg up to the sidedeck.

The main areas of cockpit stowage are within the aft settee base and beneath the sole, where a hatch gives access both to the fuel tank and to a general storage area.

Interior

A wide, sliding moulded door leads to a steep set of stairs, made a little trickier still by the way they taper on alternate sides rather than being straight. It is an interesting design, but you can easily be wrongfooted. A dedicated handhold might also be an advantage.

The stretch down is due to the floor pan being kept very low in the hull, to give headroom of around 6ft 2in (1.87m) without compromising the sleekest of coachroofs.

To port lies the galley, with access to the toilet/shower compartment opposite.

The former is equipped with a two-burner hob, a stainless steel sink and mixer, plenty of variously sized stowage lockers and a neat extra-deep drawer for bottles. A small sideboard unit just forward of the toilet bulkhead hides a useful-sized fridge.

The fully moulded WC, also adequately proportioned, benefits from plenty of stowage, and an opening port provides ventilation.

Forward, the U-dinette is of a good size, with wide, comfortable cushions. The table drops to form a 5ft 8in x 5ft 6in (1.72m x 1.67m) berth, while the lockers beneath the seat-bases are thoughtfully fitted with removable cloth bags, an arrangement which keeps clothing better aired than simply stuffing it straight onto a painted-out hull.

Accessed to port of the companionway is the midships cabin. This has standing headroom to the dressing area, which is fitted with a split hanging/shelf locker and a small seat. The mattress measures 6ft 3in x 4ft 0in (1.90m x 1.22m), with some cave-locker stowage at its foot.

The interior is fitted out on a number of mouldings, including the headlining with its inset spots and softening fabric panels. Ventilation is provided by a couple of opening ports and an overhead coachroof hatch.

Engines

Although just three engine options are listed, all from Volvo Penta, between them they cater for most people's requirements. The most potent installation is a pair of V6 205hp petrols, while the others are diesels: either with a single 230hp KAD42 or, as in our test boat, a pair of the uprated four-cylinder AD31s. These now push out 150hp through Duoprop legs.

Access to the engines is through a gas strut-

supported hatch to the rear of the cockpit. This gives good enough servicability to the front of the units, including the raw-water strainers, and to the fuel/water separators to the forward bulkhead, but much of the rest is pretty tight for someone of average athleticism.

You can remove a portion of the seating to take up a further hatch, and the transom bench has been given a removable liner for quick access to the oil dipsticks and the top of the engines. But what is really needed is a modification allowing the seat and sole moulding to hinge up for day-to-day inspections, and especially for any impromptu maintenance that might be required while underway.

Outboard of the engines themselves are the calorifier and batteries. The battery isolator is located within the cockpit seating, and there are remote fuel cut-offs at the helm.

Foam eggbox-type noise insulation covers the deckhead and forward bulkhead, and a good-sized electric submersible pump services the bilge.

Handling and performance

Just for a change, the Solent was as flat as mill pond for our test. The trickiest moment we could lay on was to land the Giada awkwardly off the sizable wash thrown up by ferries, but this was to little avail, as the boat happily sprinted and turned over and around them without a murmur.

It was an easy drive, light but predictable on the helm and responsive to the throttles, lifting without undue fuss onto the plane albeit perhaps without the teeth to pitch your passengers out of the stern. We recorded a 0-20-knot acceleration time of 10sec.

It takes a while to work out the trim tabs because, like most Italian manufacturers, Cranchi tend to arrange the controls differently from UK builders, although we understand future boats will be wired in the 'usual' convention. In any case the Giada could be trimmed easily and effectively with the drives; whether side-to-side or lifting the bow as required, there was plenty of scope, with the Duoprops doing a first-class job of keeping the power on through the hardest turns.

With a crew of four, and half-tanks, we measured 32 knots flat out. At this speed, our own trials on the AD31s indicate fuel consumption of just under 13gph (59lph). Easing back to 3800rpm, just a few hundred off maximum revs, gave an easy 27 knots, and cruising at 3400rpm a steady 24 knots, with consumption down to 9gph (20lph).

Noise levels at the helm hovered around 80dB(A), but in the rear seats we measured 84dB(A) at cruising speeds and a rather more intrusive 87dB(A) flat-out. One or two lengths of rubber on which to bed the hatches would probably take the edge off this.

Conclusions

Our main reservations concern the restricted access to the engines for day-to-day inspection, and on a more finicky level the chic but impractical steps to and from the accommodation. But the former is a design modification which may already be in hand, and the latter are easier once you get used to them.

All-in-all, the Giada is a welcome addition to the 30ft market, offering useful and well-appointed accommodation, a nicely proportioned cockpit and sound performance, all with a certain style which the Italians always bring to their boating. □

Cranchi Giada 29

Loa 30ft 6in (9.30m).
Hull length 29ft 0in (8.85m).
Beam 10ft 6in (3.20m).
Draught 2ft 3in (0.70m).
Displacement 3.3 tons.
Fuel 73gal (330lt).
Water 29gal (130lt).
Engines twin Volvo AD31/DP 150hp diesels.
Price from £49,860 ex VAT from the factory, with twin Volvo petrol 434/DPs; £56,655 as tested.
Builders Cantiere Nautico Cranchi, Via Nazionale, 45-23010 Piantedo (SO), Italy. Tel: (39) 342 683.359.
UK concessionaires George Gould Marine, Sides Tumble In, South Stoke, Goring on Thames, Berkshire RG8 0JS. Tel: 0491 873387.