

# Halvorsen 32 Gourmet Cruiser

The Gourmet trawler yacht is a Chinese takeaway cooked up by Australians. She looks a dish, but will she serve up a tasty cruising experience? **REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON**

Halvorsen's boatbuilding history is long and illustrious, but almost as confusing as their current naming policy.

The company was founded by a Norwegian in 1870, but the family moved first to South Africa before settling in Australia in 1925. Although they are still based there, the majority of their boats are actually built in a state-of-the-art facility in China.

Their classically styled trawler yacht range is not a million miles away from class leaders Eastbay in looks, but comfortably lower in price. It aspires to deliver a refined style of cruising — hence the curious Gourmet tag applied to their new 38ft and 32ft models, which are available in pilothouse and flybridge versions.

It is the smaller, single-cabin boat that spearheads the line-up's push into the

European market. At a starting price of £171,000, it needs to offer a significantly different cruising experience from its more mainstream European competition.

## DESIGN & BUILD

Halvorsen designs have always reflected purist, traditional styling, and the 32 Gourmet Cruiser fits this legacy like a glove. It's a handsome craft from every angle, but we still can't decide which view is the most beguiling.

Is it the deep blue simulated-clinker hull, fine at the bows and stepping down amidships? Or the tall, proud superstructure, teak-trimmed and finished with a peaked overhang? Perhaps the stern wins out, with its low, swept transom from which the hinged bathing platform hangs on a bully block and tackle? Even the cockpit is dressed up to the nines in teak, with a panelled pilothouse door.

However you look at it, there is plenty to keep the eye happy. And, judging by the admiring glances our test boat attracted at Lymington Town Quay in the Solent, our view is shared by many others — including a fair few yachties, wistfully dreaming of swapping their oilskins for something a bit more civilised.

Mirroring the boat's exterior character is a suitably traditional interior, complete with teak and holly flooring. Whilst there is plenty of room available for dayboating guests, the accommodation is only designed to provide the full cruising experience for two people.

A layout that provides for just a single permanent cabin within a length of 32ft has delivered a level of open-plan comfort below decks that many boatbuilders can only dream of; most feel they simply cannot afford not to provide a second, midships cabin. However,



the Halvorsen approach is reflective of the genre; the Eastbay 42 has a similar arrangement.

For those who like to welcome guests on board for more than the odd weekend, the occasional berth in the saloon might not be deemed enough. But for owners who generally cruise as a couple, a spacious, teak-adorned cabin awaits, complete with separate toilet and shower compartments.

The wheelhouse/saloon is equally roomy, stretching across most of the boat's beam and enjoying a wall of natural light. The downside is that the width left over for the side decks — although not particularly narrow for a modern cruiser — is a little tight on this style of boat, and further impinged upon by thick teak capping that you can't help but walk on.

However much we criticise this, we suspect that commercially it is the right decision; most owners will appreciate the additional interior space and quickly become

accustomed to the constraints on deck.

The visible quality of finish, with a propensity for sturdy mouldings, solid wood and stainless steel, continues if you look behind the scenes. Bilge areas are clean and tightly structured, while the engineroom, with its stainless steel fuel tanks, comes impressively clothed in metallic soundproofing.

Below the waterline, the builders have stuck with what they know best: a hard-chine semi-displacement hull, similar to that employed on Halvorsen's sister range, Island Gypsy.

This has a finer section forward, flattening away aft to allow for greater planing area and therefore extra speed. A keel deepens as

it runs aft past the sterngear, offering stability as well as protecting the props and rudders.

✓✓✓  
A great example of its type, with a stylishly traditional layout.

**ACCOMMODATION**

The one-cabin layout is not going to suit everyone but it does what it is designed to do: look after the skipper and first-mate.

The cabin has space to spare, and even the huge double berth can't spoil the party. Like the saloon, it is bathed in light thanks to four separate portholes and an overhead hatch.

From deckhead to sole, the compartment is adorned in teak and holly, and the slatted section around the head of the berth will surely be a wonderful sight to wake up to.

His'n'hers lockers and cabinets take care of storage needs, and there is good drawer space under the berth for bed linen.

And, of course, you have the considerable luxury of separate toilet and shower compartments. Simply but attractively finished with the expected teak trimmings, they complement the rest of the boat's traditional style.

A louvre door (something of a feature on



**below** There's only one permanent cabin, but it has plenty of space.

**below** Teak-trimmed WC.

**below** The cabin has a separate toilet and shower.



**below** The saloon stretches across most of the boat's beam, enjoying a wall of natural light.

**below** The galley is simple but well-equipped.



**below** Seating for four or five around a solid fold-down table.



the boat's cabinets and lockers) leads up to the wheelhouse/saloon. Bedecked in teak with contrasting ivory-coloured detailing, this is a tremendously bright and airy place, surrounded through 360° by trawler-style sliding windows.

This area is more than capable of seating four or five people in rich comfort. A soft leather settee is partnered by a solid table that folds in or out. Set on a wonderfully over-engineered stainless steel winch pedestal, it lowers to make up an occasional berth.

A coolbox and lined drawer are neatly integrated into the base of the seats, while the all important bar cabinet is situated to port near the companionway.

Opposite, a simple L-shape galley takes pride of place, with an open design that takes full advantage of the window area and the ventilation offered by the doorway. Workspace is pretty good, but it comes at the expense of a tiny sink.

A 12V microwave oven is fitted as standard, along with an electric hob that comes with a proper extractor set into its own teak cabinet. Further cabinets offer stowage at eye level and under the worksurface, while the refrigerator finds a home under the helm.

A neat feature of the helm station is a simple but effective sliding section of bench which turns it from a single-seater into a two-seater. Plain Cummins instrument panels sit on a slanted section of dash, leaving a large, flat, fiddled section as an ideal chart area.

A teak unit just above your line of sight is there to accommodate any additional navigation equipment, while an overhead hatch ensures the skipper gets as much light as possible.

✓✓✓  
Having just one cabin limits the market, but frees up lots of space.

**EXTERIOR**

Apart from the narrower than expected side decks, this is an easy boat to work on. From cockpit to foredeck, there is much to admire, in both aesthetic and practical terms.

Boarding is easiest via the central transom gate, but not much more difficult via the side decks, with their low freeboard aft and a handy step in the cockpit coaming.

Resplendent in teak decking and trim, the cockpit offers a deep, social haven surrounded by a good width of deck. The two benches flanking the pilothouse door are thickly upholstered and partly sheltered by the superstructure. More importantly, they face aft, giving their occupants one of the greatest views known to mankind: the crested wake of a motorboat at speed.

Lined stowage for smaller items lies within the seats while bulkier equipment will be banished to the full width lazaret.

A wall of guardrail protects you as you move forward past the coachroof with its handsome stainless steel dorade vents. The rail then sweeps up well above waist height around the foredeck's windlass and chunky stainless steel bollard cleat.

This is one of those boats that every time you stretch out to find a handrail or support, there always seems to be one exactly where you'd hoped (we wouldn't dare say expected) it would be.

**below** The foredeck and its twin lockers.



The rest of the deckware is also impressive. Chunky cleats come with stainless steel

rubbing strips to protect the teak capping, and there are additional horned fairleads cut into the transom.

✓✓✓  
It's easy to use. If you like the style, you won't be let down by detail.

**ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS**

Halvorsen offer a choice of single or twin Cummins turbo-diesel installations which complement the style of cruising this boat will normally be used for.

Our test boat came with the largest option, a pair of 4cyl 250hp lumps. However, twin 155hp engines look like an equally suitable match, and for those who are happy with the idea of displacement speeds a single 315hp unit should be more than man enough, with the bonus of lowering the purchase price by around £20,000.

Craft of this type often have far more engineroom space than more modern-style cruisers, and this boat is no exception.

Two hatches are cut into the saloon sole. The main one opens up a huge area, and the removal of two lateral supports gives you plenty of clear working room. The smaller one, further aft, allows quick and direct access to the batteries and master switches.

To help your journey down to bilge level, a

**below** The tall, safe stanchions.





**above** The aft deck has been left clear of any obstructions.



**above** Facing the stern: the best seats available in the house.

shallow teak and stainless steel ladder is thoughtfully supplied.

Our test boat's twin installation meant the compartment was fairly well packed, but moving around and getting to most parts of the engines was relatively easy — apart from the outboard side of the starboard unit. The search for the starboard side dipstick is probably still going on as you read this, which seems rather unnecessary as Cummins will 'hand' some or all of the service points on their diesels (so that they are on the inboard side of both engines) for a relatively small charge.

✓✓✓  
**Installation is tidy and spacious. Some things are hard to reach.**

In contrast, fuel filters and balance pipes are well positioned for viewing and adjustment.

**PERFORMANCE & HANDLING**

Like most semi-displacement craft the Halvorsen is quite happy plodding along at low speeds.

Keeping below 8 knots has a huge influence on economy and therefore range. Moreover, with sound levels staying low, around 67-72dB(A), longer cruises will glide past peacefully.

However, with 500hp on tap, you will probably surrender to the temptation to push

**below** There is a huge engine hatchway, and useful steps down have thoughtfully been provided.



on to the boat's 17-knot top speed.

The ride gradually stiffens as you progress up from 1800rpm, but feels slightly strained until you reach 11 knots at 2400rpm. At this point the bow begins to lift, the ride tightens and the Cummins move enthusiastically on to around 15 knots at 2800rpm.

The remaining 300rpm drags out the last couple of knots, with the hull staying rock-steady all the way. That said our advice is to stick to 2600-2800rpm, where the effort: speed ratio feels more balanced and the trim tabs easily manage the bow.

At these speeds, and within the confines of the wheelhouse, the Solent's playful chop and bluster went by unnoticed. Sound levels well below 80dB(A) compare well with other contemporary 30ft cruisers.

If you are on deck things might be a tad different. Perhaps in a further attempt to lure yachties over to the dark side, the hull returns quite a wet ride. But if anything this enhances rather than detracts from its feeling of seaworthiness, in the same way that it does on a Nelson.

With only a gentle flare at the bow to push wash and spray out, and the hull perhaps running faster than its original design had in mind, a set of spray-deflectors have been bonded on just above the waterline. But

clearly they do not have the required effect. Better to roll with it, and make use of the effective two-speed self-parking wipers.

With these to help him, the helmsman's lot is a happy one. The view in all directions is excellent, and the seating position is first-class. The big teak wheel spins effortlessly, allowing you to turn the boat more tightly than you might expect, and as ever the stainless steel Morse controls are a joy to use.

Heading back up the Lymington River at the end of our sortie, the boat tracked beautifully at a tickover speed of around 4

knots, and was indecently easy to manoeuvre into the various berths.

**SPECIFICATION & VALUE**

Boats of this type usually carry a premium when compared to more populist craft and this is no exception. However, one look at the quality of materials used should convince you that comparisons with a Bénéteau or Sealine are not entirely fair.

So what cost individuality? Well, with prices starting at around £157,000 with a single engine and £170,000 with a twin set up, the answer is an extra £50,000 or so.

This is a fairly substantial premium by standards but not quite as much as we were expecting. When you consider that the standard inventory includes trim tabs, bow-thruster, teak and holly flooring, stainless steel fuel tanks, shorepower, battery charger and leather upholstery, things are looking brighter by the minute.

The only fly in the ointment is that, as goes the standard specification is, the options list still contains some features that you will probably want, such as the coloured gelcoat teak decking and an electric windlass. Altogether these put the overall price up by around £10,000.

Unfortunately if this is the style of boat you are after, there are very few true competitors. Two boats that do match up in terms of size the Corvette 32 and the Hardy 32, have very

different layouts and do not offer the same classic style. A more direct rival would have been the Grand Banks 32, but this went out of production several years ago.

At least Halvorsen residual values seem to hold up well with later models still fetching £120,000 to £130,000 on the secondhand market.

Running costs will depend very much on how you use the boat. Cruising at speeds in the low teens returns 1mpg, while lower speeds bring greater range. So, if economy is key, you might as well fit the smaller engines and keep your purchase price down as well.

✓✓✓  
**Pricy, but still decent value given the high quality of the boat.**

**Verdict**

If you are already a fan of this type of boat, you don't need us to extol the virtues of the Halvorsen 32 Gourmet Cruiser. For the record, though, it more than lived up to our expectations of a solid, seaworthy and unusually handsome craft.

Convincing the rest of you is a rather harder task. That traditional styling means that, even with 500hp on tap, you are never going to be part of the sleek and sporty brigade. Instead, the boat encourages you to relax into a slower way of life and enjoy your surroundings as others look on, sometimes with envy and always with respect.

Likewise, although the interior lacks some of the glamour of more modern craft — not to mention a guest cabin — it is second to none for space, build quality and character.

If you can live with these limitations on berths and speed, and can afford the premium price, it is hard to think of a better boat to pump your £170,000 into.

**MBM RATING** 7/10  
✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

**Halvorsen 32 Gourmet Cruiser technical data**



**specifications**

|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| BUILD          | glass-reinforced plastic |
| RCD            | design category B        |
| LENGTH OVERALL | 35ft 0in (10.5m)         |
| BEAM           | 12ft 0in (3.72m)         |
| DRAUGHT        | 3ft 8in (1.16m)          |
| AIR DRAUGHT    | 7ft 9in (2.4m)           |
| DISPLACEMENT   | 7 tonnes                 |
| FUEL CAPACITY  | 158gal (719lt)           |
| WATER CAPACITY | 75gal (340lt)            |

**key dimensions**

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS    | 0ft 8in           |
| HEADROOM IN WHEELHOUSE | 6ft 7in           |
| HEADROOM IN CABIN      | 6ft 5in           |
| CABIN BERTH            | 6ft 3in x 5ft 2in |

**performance**

**engines** twin Cummins 4BTA 3.9 250B diesels. configuration 4cyl, 3.9lt, 250hp at 3000rpm. conditions wind southeasterly Force 3-4, sea slight. load fuel 75%, water 75%, crew 2.

| rpm  | knots | gph  | lph   | mpg  | range | noise |
|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| 800  | 4.8   | 1.4  | 6.2   | 3.36 | 530   | 67    |
| 1400 | 7.2   | 2.8  | 13.0  | 2.57 | 406   | 69    |
| 1800 | 8.5   | 5.2  | 24.0  | 1.56 | 246   | 71    |
| 2200 | 9.6   | 8.8  | 40.2  | 1.09 | 172   | 75    |
| 2400 | 10.7  | 11.0 | 50.4  | 0.97 | 153   | 75    |
| 2600 | 12.8  | 14.0 | 63.8  | 0.91 | 143   | 75    |
| 2800 | 14.6  | 17.6 | 79.6  | 0.83 | 131   | 77    |
| 3100 | 17.1  | 22.2 | 101.0 | 0.77 | 121   | 79    |

Range figures above are in miles, with 20% margin. Noise figures are in dB(A), recorded in the pilothouse.

**prices**

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| STANDARD BOAT                 | inc VAT  |
| with twin 150hp Cummins 155Bs | £171,515 |
| with twin 250hp Cummins 250Bs | £179,131 |
| LAUNCH & COMMISSIONING        | £1,175   |
| DELIVERY                      | POA      |
| COLOURED GELCOAT              | £3,560   |
| TEAK COCKPIT DECKING          | £3,783   |
| ELECTRIC WINDLASS             | £3,818   |
| BOAT AS TESTED                | £190,292 |

**ENQUIRIES**

Lansdale Marine, Marine Works, Itchenor, West Sussex PO20 7AL. Tel: 01243 513678. www.lansdalemarine.com

**the rivals**



**CORVETTE 32**  
from £185,990 inc VAT  
A fast trawler hybrid with an aft-cabin layout that offers four to six berths, plus a flybridge and a great deck area. Tel: 01932 243722. www.boatshowrooms.com



**SABRELINE 34**  
from £233, 238 inc VAT  
Very well put together boat. Extra beam gives space to deck and interior. Price drops without flybridge. Tel: 01243 512611. www.northshore.co.uk



**HARDY COMMANDER 32**  
from £155,000 inc VAT  
With a sea-kindly hull, you get a clever layout of cabin, dinette and saloon which can provide up to six berths. Tel: 01692 408700. www.hardymarine.com