

MAINSHIP 390



Solidly constructed and seakindly, this American trawler yacht has already been chosen for service in British and Caribbean charter fleets, with a cost-saving management deal available to buyers.





Mainship are boatbuilders of consequence in the USA, but to date little has been seen of them in Europe. However this is set to change in uncertain terms due to the appointment of Hayling Island-based Opal Marine as UK concessionaires.

In just a few short years, Opal have become one of Britain's largest retailers of sailing yachts, with their Legend and Bavaria ranges offering a lot of boat for the money. Legend (known as Hunter back home) are a sister company to Mainship within the Luhrs Group, so there is a lot of sense in this move both for the manufacturer and for the agent.

Opal have an extra marketing lever up their sleeve, in that you can purchase one of their sailboats or a Mainship 390 motor cruiser as part of a Sunsail charter and management package (see panel, p40). This will offset the cost of running your own craft as well as offering the flexibility of being able to try other vessels in exotic locations such as the Caribbean.

Not that there was any balmy tropical weather for our test of the 390, the waters off Chichester Bar providing a cooler proving ground for a boat which fancies itself as a tough trawler yacht, albeit with a lower price tag than this style of boat usually carries.

Design

In plan view, the 390's hull has what naval architects term a 'cod's head' shape, with its beam being widest well forward and tapering to some extent back towards the transom. This means there is a huge amount of topside flair from what is a fine, deep forefoot, with the underwater lines terminating in a wide bustle of chine.

This does a good job of turning away much of the spray that can creep up the forward sections of boats operating in semi-displacement mode, while a further knuckle in the topside blocks any water that may have got past the chine, as

Above: the Mainship's saloon is simply laid out, with the settee to starboard able to be complemented by a couple of free-standing chairs otherwise used in the cockpit. Below right: sitting on the aft end of the settee, you can use the small desk tucked neatly into the aft bulkhead below the main electrics panel. Below left: the master cabin in the bow is pleasantly roomy, helped by the way the boat's wide beam is carried well forward.

well as serving a stylistic purpose.

The underwater sections have a convex medium deadrise at amidships, somewhat round-bilge in form, which culminate in a 2ft (0.6m) deep keel section that runs from the stem to just in front of the propellers. Deadrise at the transom is all but flat, due to the appreciable amount of rocker and this depth of keel, while the sizeable integral bathing platform has been pulled into the moulding to make it less likely to be damaged during berthing operations.

Above decks, the superstructure has classic trawler yacht lines, albeit topped by a rather bland wall of coaming to the front of the flybridge and an expansive-looking cockpit overhang. But its chunky appearance, with good high bulwarks and hefty guardrails, certainly enables the 390 to come across as purposeful.

Exterior

Indeed, this impression is backed up by solid fittings, and our test boat had aluminium guardrails fabricated to no less than 1 1/2in (37mm) diameter, with stainless steel also available as an option. They extend along the side decks back as far as the cockpit, and a second set which cordon off the rear overhang of the flybridge reach forward along the superstructure to act as handrails.

The side decks themselves, a couple of easy steps up from the cockpit, are a shade over 10in (25cm) wide, and bordered by a bulwark which makes them very secure indeed. The rails are taken slightly outboard, to increase the width of the walkway at waist height.

Right forward, a lengthy anchor platform protrudes over the stem. Ground tackle is handled by an optional Lewmar vertical windlass mounted atop the gunwale moulding, and there is a large hatch giving access to the fully moulded chain locker. In here too is a shorepower connector, and there is another at the stern, so a hook-up can be



Left: galley fit-out is on a domestic scale, including a full-size fridge/freezer, a gas oven and microwave, and even a built-in coffee-maker. Above: the shower cubicle in the toilet compartment is also larger than most. Above right: the inside helm installation is neat, albeit with no dedicated console for navigation equipment. Below: more space is available at the flybridge helm, in front of the single, central command chair.



made at either end of the boat without cluttering the deck or pontoon with a length of cable.

Mooring hardware comprises pairs of 10in bar cleats forward, midships and aft. The cockpit layout is seatless, with the resultant lack of stowage made up for by the deep transom coaming, incorporating a couple of lockers for ropes on either side of the central doorway to the bathing platform, plus a sizable two-part lazaret.

The after section of the lazaret gives onto the steering gear, which is protected by a useful shelf moulding, whilst the larger forward area is a much larger space, laid-out to take the optional generator as well as being fitted as standard with the battery charger and mains switches, twin water tanks and a manual bilge pump. You can also just get at the after end of the fuel tanks from here, although the associated stopcocks are bemusingly sited behind screwed-down side panels, an arrangement which would benefit from a simple modification.

An arcing stairwell leads up to the flybridge, punctuating the middle part of its extended deck and thus limiting the space available for free-standing furniture or sunlounging. That said, there is no shortage of seating or stowage, with two 6ft-long bench/lockers facing each other across a central table.

Folding out to make a larger dinette, as well as having a useful handrail, the table is more utilitarian than pretty. Further practical considerations are the good protection afforded by the coaming, and the way the navigation light and antenna mast hinge down readily to reduce the boat's air draught.

Forward, the central helm position has its own command chair, and the console gauges, gearshifts and throttles are split either side of the stainless steel wheel. The instrument arrangement is clear enough and a compass is included as standard, there being sufficient extra room to





the screen or down from the deckhead. The starboard and central sections of the screen are cleared by able self-parking wipers, and a hatch beneath the helmsman's feet gives onto a storage compartment and the water tank. Further hatches beneath the carpeted sole forward allow access to the bilge and seacocks.

Joinery throughout the boat is finished largely in teak veneers, to a most adequate standard for 'family' use. The deckheads are moulded with fabric panels, with the one in the saloon being thoughtfully fitted with a run of handhold. Further handholds are incorporated in the joinery adjacent to the stairwell leading down to the two forward sleeping cabins.

As with the saloon, both cabins afford plenty of standing headroom and space, given that the usable length of the 390 is really only around 35ft (10.6m). One reason, clearly, is the huge beam the hull carries so far forward.

The main cabin, right forward, is particularly pleasant and

mount a good array of electronics as required.

There is plenty of space to sit or stand at the helm, and when berthing starboard-to you can keep an eye on that quarter by peeking down the stairwell.

Interior

A patio-type door leads from the cockpit into the saloon, and there is also a useful door from the starboard side deck to the interior helm position.

The saloon layout is simple, featuring a straight run of settee with a table to starboard, aft of the helm, and a sideboard, which incorporates an audio-visual entertainment centre, extending forward into a galley along the port side.

The settee can be fitted-out as a sofa-bed if required, and there is room for a couple of director's-style chairs (which can also be used in the cockpit) to be positioned here to complete the seating for a dinette.

You can perch on the aft end of the settee to use the chart or desk area which is tucked into the aft bulkhead. Protruding above this is the main electrics panel, which is nice and accessible but would look less intrusive if it was recessed behind a perspex door.

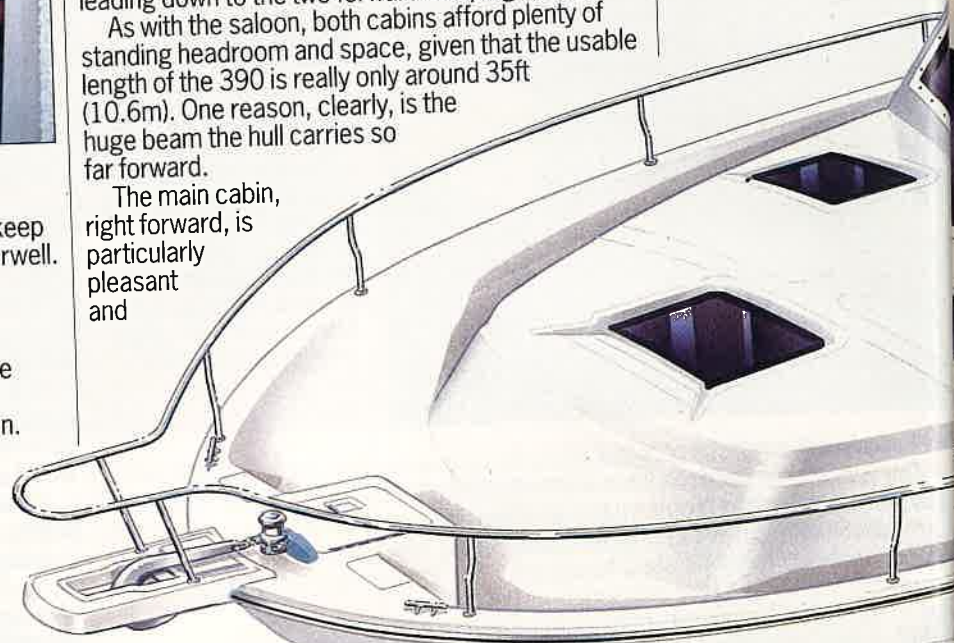
As with most American boats, the galley equipment is of domestic scale, incorporating a full-size fridge/freezer, not just a gas oven and hob but also a microwave, and even a built-in coffee-maker. There is loads of cupboard and drawer storage both above and below the Corian-type worksurfaces, and we were pleased to find a remote gas shut-off solenoid which can isolate the LPG bottle located in a locker on the flybridge.

Ventilation around the galley and saloon area in general is provided by sliding side windows, and also by an opening centre portion of windscreen.

The helm seat, which can be dropped neatly away to give clear access through the side door, is a comfortable, high perch complete with a fold-down footrest. The large vertical wooden ship's wheel is comfortable to get to grips with, and wood somehow feels right for a boat such as this.

The twin-lever throttles mounted on either side of the raised instrument fascia and switch panel have a professional look. Apart from a compass, navigation equipment is not part of the standard specification, and there is no specific console on which to locate it, although smaller instrument heads can go adjacent to the wheel and there is plenty of clear space to bracket-mount gear on the flat areas running up to

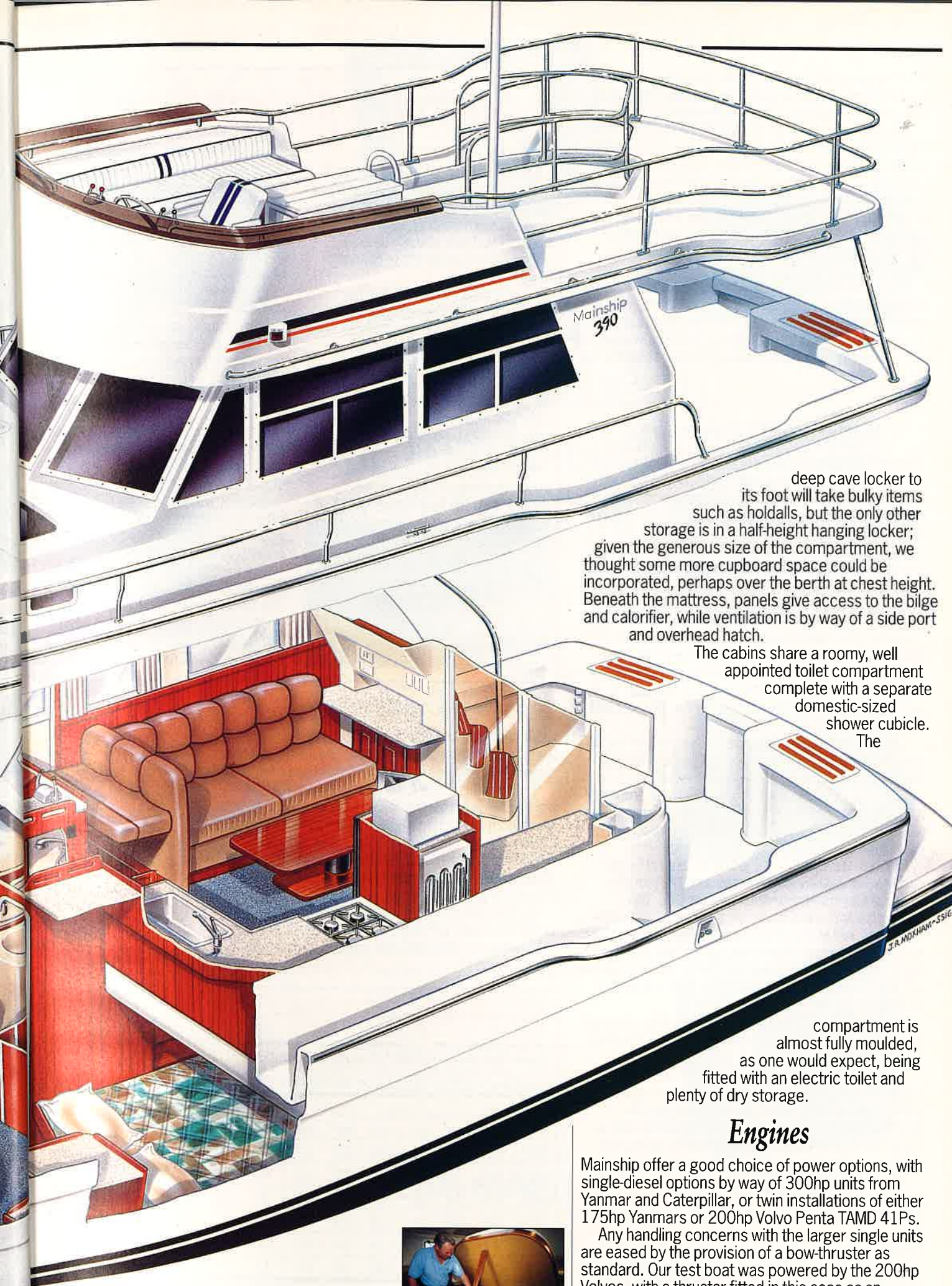
Left: engine checks are facilitated by the wide squatting area between the power-units, which on our test boat were twin 200hp Volvo Penta diesels. Bottom right: lifting the mattress in the forward cabin reveals the bilge and seacocks.



roomy. A large central double berth is flanked by cedar-lined hanging lockers, and cupboards with fiddled surfaces to keep books and knick-knacks in situ.

There are also drawers within the base of the berth, and lifting the mattress reveals a pair of handy bins, ideal for spare bedding and the like. Natural light is provided by small ports and an overhead hatch.

The second cabin, back amidships, also sports a good-sized berth, no less than 6ft 8in (2.03m) long by 4ft 10in (1.48m) wide. A



deep cave locker to its foot will take bulky items such as holdalls, but the only other storage is in a half-height hanging locker; given the generous size of the compartment, we thought some more cupboard space could be incorporated, perhaps over the berth at chest height. Beneath the mattress, panels give access to the bilge and calorifier, while ventilation is by way of a side port and overhead hatch.

The cabins share a roomy, well appointed toilet compartment complete with a separate domestic-sized shower cubicle. The

compartment is almost fully moulded, as one would expect, being fitted with an electric toilet and plenty of dry storage.

Engines

Mainship offer a good choice of power options, with single-diesel options by way of 300hp units from Yanmar and Caterpillar, or twin installations of either 175hp Yanmars or 200hp Volvo Penta TAMD 41Ps.

Any handling concerns with the larger single units are eased by the provision of a bow-thruster as standard. Our test boat was powered by the 200hp Volvos, with a thruster fitted in this case as an optional extra.

Access to the engine compartment is through a



lift-clear panel in the saloon sole, and down a short run of steps. This gives on to a wide squatting area between the engines, clear of the bilge.

Although partly taken up by the holding tank and battery box, this still allows plenty of room to move around and reach the necessary daily inspection points and service items, including the pumps and belts right forward. The outboard sides of the engines are a little tight to get at, but additional hatches in the sole allow for a two-pronged attack; the stern glands and main fuel/water separators, located right aft, are no problem.

The compartment's bilge houses an electric bilge pump, but this was the only one in evidence. We were rather more impressed with the large-capacity fire-extinguishers fitted, and the automatic engine shut-down facility which comes into play should a fire be detected.

Performance & handling

The day of our test produced a nice southerly blow, topping off an underlying southwesterly swell, all of which made for an ideal range of test conditions, especially given our proximity to the Chichester Bar on the approaches to Hayling Island.

On our initial sortie, taking the sizable slop on the nose, we took things somewhat cautiously, but it soon became apparent that the hull was happiest perched up and running pretty well flat-out, rather than at slower, semi-displacement speeds.

Indeed the ride proved most comfortable, and for the most part extremely dry, given the short, steep bucking seas. The chine and prominent forward flare pushed any water well out for normal running, and just a slight touch of tab helped to find a keener set to the bow sections.

Once clear of the worst, we chose to take the sea smack on the beam for our speed trials, and again the 390 took this with ease given the awkward conditions. The hull stayed well mannered and easy to control on the straight, whilst turning responsively when we needed to head back on a reciprocal course.

Flat-out, we clocked 17 knots on our radar gun, and around 3400rpm gives an easy 14 knots for cruising purposes. If time is on your side, then cutting back to 2600rpm, for a speed of just under 9.5 knots, will start to make useful fuel savings and extend your range, from tanks which are not over large. We found the boat quite evenly trimmed at this setting, even at a speed that most hulls would find awkward.

Noise levels at cruising speed were fine, although they tended to become intrusive in the saloon when we were running flat-out.

Venturing back in towards the harbour, with the not inconsiderable seas dead astern, we again started tentatively. However, we soon had the throttles all but wide open and, although we had to show some nimbleness at the wheel at times, the hull was quick to respond and straighten up.

The flybridge helm proved sheltered and felt safe in these conditions, while visibility from the interior one was good all-round, affording a clear view over the bow as well as to those often awkward aft quarters.

Nudging back along the fairly narrow, shallow channel into Sparkes Marina, the hull kept a useful grip on the water, especially given the amount of top-hamper exposed to the wind.

Booking a place in the sun

The Mainship 390 has been selected by yacht charter and management company Sunsail to be included in their worldwide charter fleet of over 700 craft, mostly sailing boats. Two have already been delivered to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands.

These boats are available for purchase in the Yacht Partnership programme. Under this scheme, you buy the cruiser but it serves in Sunsail's worldwide fleet for five years, which should at least cover the outgoings on your investment by putting it to good use for the quite considerable time when it would otherwise be lying idle.

Not only does this give you a guaranteed income during this period, with the boat looked after



and hirers vetted by Sunsail, but also a package of sailing benefits, including free and discounted charter. So you can go cruising either on your own vessel or on another of equivalent size in a choice of exotic destinations from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean.

In addition, Sunsail are now moving into powerboat charter in the UK, with bases at Port Solent in Portsmouth Harbour and Largs Yacht Haven in Ayrshire. Here, they are offering a Home Waters Management programme for owners of a Mainship 390.

The company look after all the marketing and charter preparation, while you pay your other running costs, and the income from the boat is shared. You can use your craft as often as you wish, and can reclaim your VAT to make a further contribution to your costs.

For further information, contact Graham Laver, Sunsail, The Port House, Port Solent, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 4TH. Tel: 01705 222225. Fax: 01705 215650.

Conclusions

If the 390's trawler yacht styling catches the eye, it lives up to this initial impression, delivering all the benefits usually associated with this type of craft.

The fit-out is more American condo-style than traditional, but then the price is clipped accordingly, and the charter/management package makes it an even more tempting proposition. The standard of finish is of the practical variety rather than deep-gloss, and this comes together with a simple, robust sort of engineering.

On the performance and handling front we were well impressed, although of course purchasers will have to be satisfied with speeds of no more than 17 knots.

Builders

Mainship Corporation, 255 Diesel Road, St Augustine, Florida 32086, USA. Tel: (1) 904 829 0500.

Suppliers

Opal Marine Sparkes Marina, Wittering Road, Hayling Island, Hampshire PO11 9SR. Tel: 01705 466075.

Mainship 390

Engines twin Volvo Penta TAMD41P diesels, 200hp at 3800rpm, 6cyl, 3590lt.

Conditions wind S Force 4, sea moderate. Load fuel 90%, water 100%, crew 4.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	sound levels dB(A)			
							saloon	fwdcab	flybg	ckpt
1800	6.5	3.6	16	1.81	361	1.0	77	72	66	80
2200	8.3	4.9	22	1.69	339	2.0	80	73	68	83
2600	9.3	7.0	32	1.33	266	4.0	81	74	68	84
3000	10.9	10.0	45	1.09	218	5.0	82	76	69	86
3400	14.3	13.8	63	1.04	207	5.0	84	80	71	87
3800	17.0	19.8	90	0.86	172	5.0	87	83	72	90

(* allows 20% margin)

Price £140,500 ex VAT as tested

Loa
39ft 9in (12.12m)

Hull length
34ft 9in (10.60m)

Beam
14ft 2in (4.32m)

Draught
3ft 8in (1.12m)

Air draught
12ft 2in (3.7m)
with mast down

Displacement
10.0 tonnes

Fuel capacity
250gal (1135lt)

Water capacity
108gal (490lt)