



## Boat Report

# MARIAH Z225 DAVANTI

*The smallest of this American range to offer practical accommodation also has a comfortable fit-out and sportsboat performance.*

Any company which has continually been expanding over the past few years must be doing something right. American builders Mariah are now producing around 4000 craft a year, with a comprehensive line-up of sportsboats up to 27ft.

The Z225 is the smallest to offer any real overnighting accommodation, but is still very much a sportsboat in both styling and performance.

### Design and construction

All manufacturers are happy to extol their build quality, of course, but few go to the trouble of illustrating it as painstakingly as Mariah, whose brochure is 'War & Peace' thick.

The boats emerge from the factory with a solid construction which is obvious immediately you step aboard, and even more so when underway. The substantial stringer arrangement is fully matrixed into the hull, with both bonding and foam, to give structural integrity and sound-dampening, while the topsides are of sandwich construction containing both foam and Coremat.

The Z225 has a medium to deep-vee hull, with the topsides running through aft to incorporate the bathing platform, and upwards beyond the gunwale fendering to push up the foredeck height. This allows comfortable sitting headroom below, and the fact that there are no side decks also helps to maximise the boat's internal volume.

### Exterior

Access to the foredeck is through a split screen, and a small fold-down step gives you the necessary leg-up. We were pleased to find grabrails on both sides of the moulded non-slip deck area.

Right forward there is a reasonable-sized locker and 6in (15cm) cleats, as on the quarters. At the break of the bow, stainless steel bars are let into the topside sheer as a belaying point for springs or fenders. Docking lights have been incorporated into the hull.

Aft, the bathing platform has a ladder, a number of suitably placed handholds and locker storage. The cockpit, which has a solid transom with no

walk-through, includes deep, comfortable seats either side of the padded enginebox, a drop-down set of back-to-back seats to port, and an electrically adjustable helm seat to starboard. This is a real bonus when you switch between standing and sitting, giving the appropriate legroom between seat squab and console. The wheel is also adjustable.

The console itself is well laid out, somewhat along the lines of a car dashboard. Ready-use switches are a fingertip's drift away from the helm, while a further knee-height fascia wraps around into the coaming sides and houses the sound system, the main breakers and, further back, the throttle, which we found a mite low when standing. The main console incorporates a compass, and the wraparound screen is serviced by a demister and a sturdy self-parking wiper on the driver's side.

With any smallish performance craft, where the motion can be unpredictable, it is essential that sharp corners and unpadded areas are kept to a minimum, and this the Davanti achieves admirably. Its seating is generously upholstered, and the coaming panels are fabricated in a heavy-duty material which we are told has a highly durable finish, called Prefixx, for stain and abrasion-resistance.

Stowage is found beneath the sole and the seat-bases, and in large moulded cave lockers. The coamings are also sculpted with drinks-holders and handy 'gloveboxes' for odds and ends, plus a number of grabrails.

### Accommodation

The cuddy cabin has ample sitting headroom. The after portion forms a sunken, snug but comfortable seating area, the seat-backs and bases being used to make up the infill for a double berth when required. A portable toilet fits neatly out of the way in its own compartment under the cockpit sole.

An alternative layout to the boat we tested also incorporates a small moulded sink and fold-down alcohol hob let into the bulkhead.

There are ample lined lockers beneath the cushion bases, and plenty of room to tuck things on the shelf formed by the seat backs. The cabin sides are warmly lined, while the deckhead has an aircraft-style module incorporating swivel lights, lightswitches, a 12V socket and 'bits' stowage.



### Engines

Power options run through the full line-up of both Volvo Penta and Mercruiser V6 and V8 petrols, culminating in the latter's 454 Magnum at 365hp. Our test boat had one of the new outdrives from the Volvo/OMC link-up, a 5-litre V8 married to a single-prop SX leg, rated to 205hp.

The insulated enginebox simply hinges forward for day-to-day checks, whilst further side pieces can easily be removed for major servicing, and a panel to one side for battery inspections. The fuel tank is accessed via a screwed-down panel further forward.

We were disappointed to find no fuel shut-off, a notable omission on many American boats, but this has since been rectified by the UK importers, Southwater Marine. The bilge is serviced by an auto-electric submersible pump.

### Performance and handling

Whilst looking like a sportsboat, and indeed handling like one, the 1½-ton Davanti is plenty of boat. To prove the point it did 35 knots flat-out, straight over any and all wakes, cutting but sticking, with an easy landing and without the faintest murmur.

The single-prop leg preferred to be wound back in before undertaking the hardest turns, but the boat seemed not to mind some abuse. And with plenty of padding and handholds available, the passengers should not worry if the skipper wants to have fun.

Trimming the leg back out again we clocked that top speed at 4400rpm — a few hundred revs down on its rated maximum, so there was probably a knot or two in hand. Dropping to 3800rpm brought 29 knots, and 3200rpm a comfortable 24 knots.

In the cockpit at this speed, the noise level was a reasonable 82dB(A), although at higher revs this rose a mite further than we would expect from what is an inherently quiet V8. Fuel consumption at 3800rpm was around 9gph (41lph).

### Conclusions

Mariah set out to produce a larger and more comfortable but sportsboat with a useful cuddy, and there is not much wrong with the result. It tries to be different from its US competitors, not least in its colour scheme and above-average fit-out, adding an air of solid refinement to an enjoyable craft. □

### Mariah Z225 Davanti

Loa 21ft 10in (6.65m).  
Beam 8ft 6in (2.59m).  
Draught 2ft 7in (0.78m) with the drive down.  
Displacement 1.54 tons.  
Fuel capacity 50gal (226lt).  
Engine 205hp Volvo Penta 5.0FL/SX petrol.  
Price £20,368 ex VAT.  
Enquiries Southwater Marine, Hamble Point Marina, School Lane, Southampton, Hampshire SO3 5NB. Tel: 0703 452255.

Above left: it looks like a sportsboat and handles like one, but at 1½ tons the Davanti is plenty of boat. Below left: the console resembles a car dashboard, and the helm seat is electrically adjustable. Below: the snug cuddy cabin has a seating area which infills to create the double berth.

