



— Boat Report —

PRINCESS V39

The smaller model of the two launched so far in Marine Projects' new V-range take the company's sportscruisers into a different league, with classic good looks and dramatic interior styling.



Right: the boat's only WC has a separate shower stall with seat, and a covered toilet. Below right: the master cabin forward is well lit by a central circular hatch. Bottom: the L-shaped galley has plenty of worktop.



Top and above: interior joinery is in dramatic burr mahogany as standard, but our test boat came with the option of a lighter maple veneer. Above right: overhead lockers in the galley are top-hinging and not easy to use.

Marine Projects already have a range of open-cockpit boats, under the Riviera name, but the new Princess V39 and V52 sportscruisers are in a different league. Outside and in, the styling is modern and dramatic, satisfying the most demanding tastes, but at the same time these are practical cruising boats, with full headroom and plenty of space. They offer reliable, economical performance, while a Bernard Olesinski hull ensures the best possible ride under all conditions.

We took the smaller of the two new models out for a testing day off Plymouth.

Design

Underwater, the hull of the Princess V39 is based on that of the 385 model. This gives it a medium-to-deep-vee form, with a deadrise of 22° amidships reducing to 18° at the transom. Two of the three sprayrails fade on their run aft, with a

broad chine-flat to give extra lift and throw spray out and down.

Above the water the lines are modern and rounded, but not excessively so, since the builders have resisted the temptation to out-curve the opposition. The result is a form that is attractive but will not date, assuring any customer a good future resale price as with most Princesses.

The curve of the reverse transom flows into the line of the windscreen surround, whilst the screen angle itself leads the eye to the forward-raked radar mast. Customers can choose between an all-white boat or, at no extra cost, topsides in navy blue or burgundy. We felt the blue of our test boat was a major improvement over white, breaking up the tall topsides and giving a distinctive, businesslike look.

The layout of the V39 divides equally between cockpit and cabin. Outside it has seating for up to a dozen people, plus a spacious sunlounger on the foredeck. Down below are two double cabins plus a saloon and galley.

Cockpit

Getting aboard from alongside is not easy, because the topsides are tall, with the side decks nearly 5ft (1.5m) from the waterline and over 3ft (1m) from most pontoons. You look for a step in the sides to help you up, but when you use the recessed porthole amidships, there is nothing aft for your feet. The alternative route is via the bathing platform, but here you have to swing your leg around the side 'wings', which is not an easy manoeuvre. If you berth stern-to with a passerelle, of course, these criticisms become redundant.

The bathing platform itself has a teak surface, recessed into the GRP. A shallow centre locker will take some wet gear, while the boarding ladder slides out of a slot to port. A hot-and-cold shower is also set into a coaming recess here, and a hatch in the face of the transom opens to reveal stowage for four medium-sized fenders.

Substantial handrails on the 'wings' provide some security, and somewhere to moor the tender.

A hinged door to port leads to the cockpit, which is on two levels, with a single step between them.

The lower level, aft, has U-shaped seating for up to seven to starboard. The table can be dropped to turn the area into a sunlounger, or removed to stow in a locker under the rear cushions. Mooring lines can be kept here too, although the lid is wider than the removable section of cushion above it, which means you have to remove the cushion plus the corner section completely, just to get the ropes out.

To port are two lockers recessed into the side of the cockpit. These contain the battery switches and final shut-off valves, but they are in the bottom so you cannot put anything else in here. Forward is a corner-fitting wet-bar, with sink and fridge.

Two hatches are set in the cockpit sole. The aft one gives access to the engine and the forward one lifts on a gas strut to reveal aluminium fuel tanks port and starboard, plus a deep space in between which could be used for extra fenders or a deflated dinghy. To lift the hatches you have to roll back a carpet which is in one piece from the cabin door to the



Princess V39

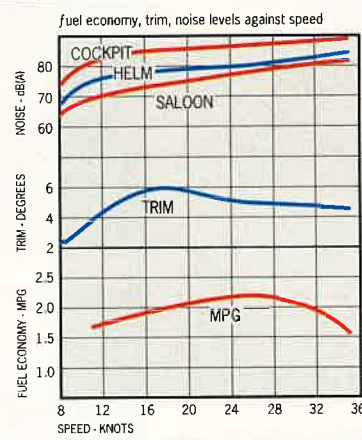
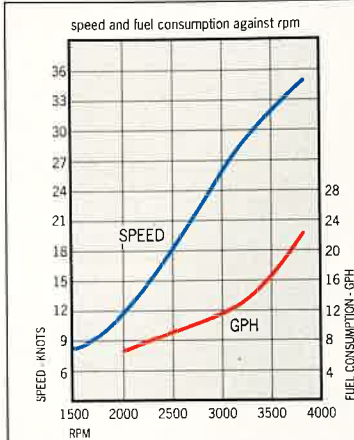
Engines twin Volvo KAD42 diesels 230hp at 3800rpm, 6cyl, 3590cc.
Conditions NW Force 4-5, sea slight. **Load** fuel 60%, water 50%, crew 2.

							sound levels dB(A)		
rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	saloon	helm	cockpit
1500	8.3	—	—	—	—	2.5	64	68	74
2000	10.9	6.5	30	1.67	214	5.0	71	76	83
2500	18.0	9.0	41	2.00	256	6.0	75	78	85
3000	26.0	11.4	52	2.20	281	5.0	78	80	86
3500	31.6	15.1	69	2.09	267	4.5	80	82	88
3800	35.0	22.6	103	1.55	198	4.5	82	84	89

Acceleration 0-20 knots, 9.8sec

(* allows 20% margin)

Loa
38ft 11in (11.88m)
Hull length
36ft 7in (11.12m)
Displacement
7.5 tonnes
Beam
12ft 3in (3.73m)
Fuel capacity
160gal (720lt)
Draught
3ft 0in (0.92m)
Water capacity
74gal (333lt)
Price
£136,100 ex VAT
as tested



transom, an awkward procedure; dividing the carpet, or putting access panels in it, would help.

One step up leads to the forward area. This has an L-shaped seat to port, with an angled section allowing it to be used as a lounge, and the helm position to starboard, with a double seat facing a large console.

The wheel is set to the right, and the front of the seat squab here flips up, allowing the helmsman to stand and look over the screen or perch against the squab. The single-lever Morse engine controls are set to the right of the wheel, in easy reach whether you are standing or sitting.

Trim-tab switches are well placed below the controls, although the power-trim buttons are hidden behind the wheel. In fact there is room for the engine controls to be moved 2in (5cm) up, which would leave space for the power-trim switches to be relocated; surely keeping all these items together is essential for a boat with the sporting pretensions of this one?

A shallow chart tray on top of the console has a hinged perspex lid, and ahead of this are the engine instrument dials. To the left of the wheel is a good area for the radio, autopilot, chart plotter, echo-sounder and log, and across the top of the console is a row of 12 ready-use switches. An omission is a helm indicator, something which should be considered essential on an outdrive-powered boat.

The helm seat hinges forward to give access to a reasonable-sized locker. A hatch beneath the wheel gives access to the back of the console only, with no storage space.



Above: located under a hinged hatch below the aft cockpit, the engineroom has an aluminium treadplate and eggbox soundproofing. **Bottom:** all instruments are within easy reach at the helm, although the power-trim switches are awkwardly placed behind the wheel.

Deck

Access from the cockpit to the side decks is provided by a moulded step to port, but to starboard you have to climb over the seat. The decks are 6in-9in (150mm-225mm) wide, with a moulded gunwale lip. Good guardrails run right back to the cockpit, providing excellent security for anyone moving forward.

Sturdy stainless steel cleats, 10in (250mm) forward and aft, 6in (150mm) amidships, take care of mooring. And the anchoring arrangements are excellent, comprising an electric windlass set flush with the foredeck locker lid, and the chain and anchor stock running in a recessed slot in the deck.

The hinged lid of the anchor chain locker is large, but has no positive catch. There is ample room inside for the chain as well as mooring ropes and fenders, but no division between them, which could cause a jam if you deployed the anchor in an emergency. Also there is no pin or stopper to

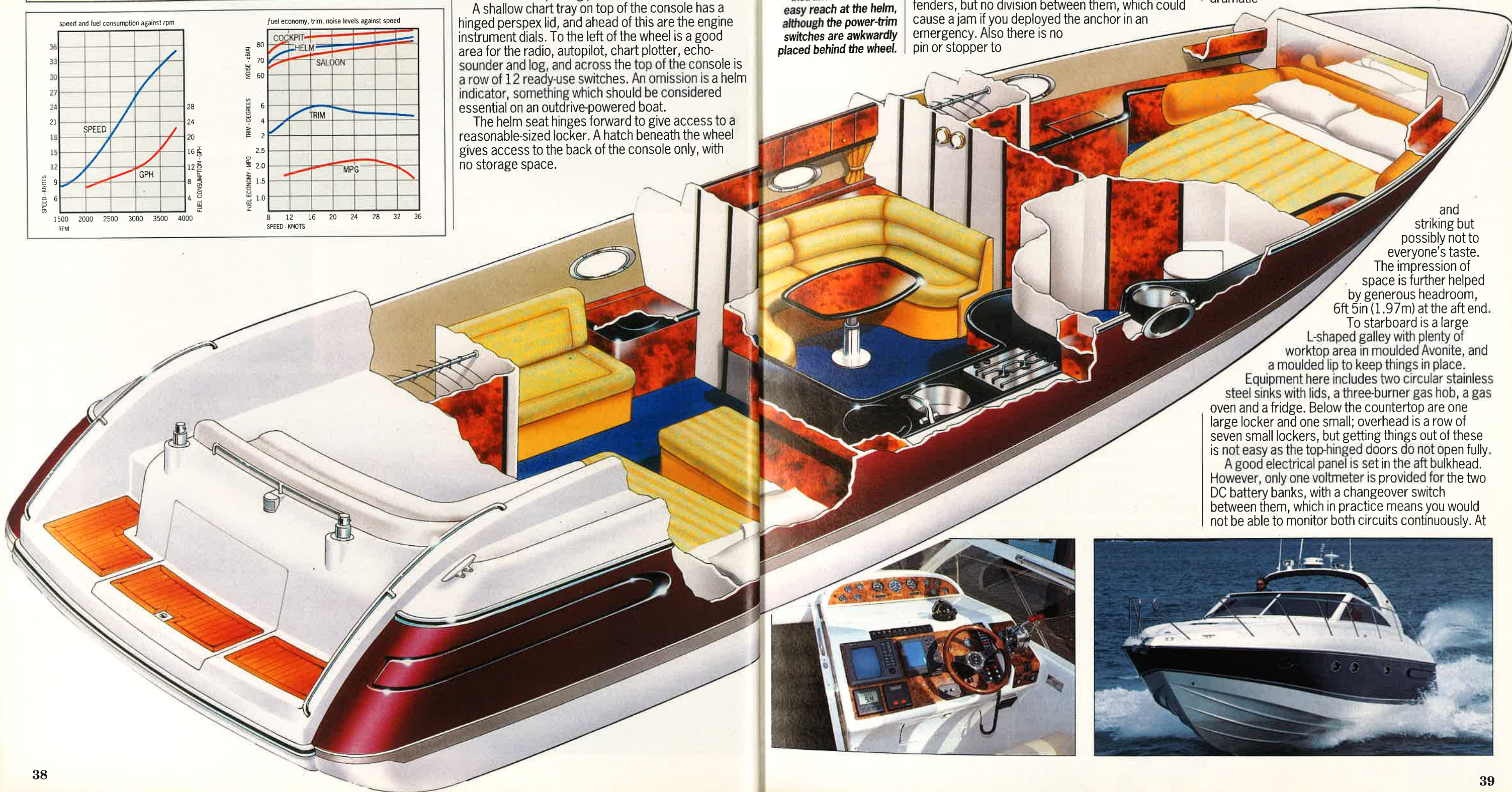
hold the anchor in the raised position.

The coachroof has a recessed sunlounging area for up to four people. The non-slip of the sidedecks extends to cover part of this area.

Accommodation

The curved sliding door which leads from the cockpit into the accommodation can be held open by a fiddly catch right down at the bottom, but this would be difficult to operate in a hurry or with wet fingers. The door has a curved handrail on it, but you have to lean forward to hold this; in general, it is not easy for passengers to stand while the boat is underway.

Five steps lead down into the saloon. Here, the bright and open feeling was helped on our test boat by the light maple veneer, an option chosen by the owner; the standard wood is burr mahogany, more dramatic



and striking but possibly not to everyone's taste. The impression of space is further helped by generous headroom, 6ft 5in (1.97m) at the aft end.

To starboard is a large L-shaped galley with plenty of worktop area in moulded Avonite, and a moulded lip to keep things in place.

Equipment here includes two circular stainless steel sinks with lids, a three-burner gas hob, a gas oven and a fridge. Below the countertop are one large locker and one small; overhead is a row of seven small lockers, but getting things out of these is not easy as the top-hinged doors do not open fully.

A good electrical panel is set in the aft bulkhead. However, only one voltmeter is provided for the two DC battery banks, with a changeover switch between them, which in practice means you would not be able to monitor both circuits continuously. At



the same time, the voltmeter itself has a 0-30V scale for what are 12V circuits, so the variation between 12.5V (fully charged) and 11.5V (fully discharged) is barely 1mm, almost impossible to detect.

At the forward end of the galley, a pier projects into the saloon, incorporating a large cocktail cabinet. Opposite to port is a curved settee, with room for five people to sit around a table that can be raised or lowered. Overhead are five small lockers, while under the settee are a further four, two of which are lined and two straight to the hull.

A door to port leads to the aft cabin. This has two single berths amidships, a full-height hanging locker, a seat and a vanity unit with a moulded Avonite top and sink. Headroom is 6ft 3in (1.92m) over the entrance, but reduces to 4ft 0in (1.23m) over the berths.

At the forward end of the saloon, to starboard, is the boat's only toilet compartment, accessible from both the saloon and the forward cabin. There is plenty of space inside, with a semicircular cylindrical shower stall and seat, a manual toilet under a lid, and an attractive moulded washbasin. The latter has a locker underneath, plus three small ones above.

The master cabin, forward, has a large central double berth. To starboard at the aft end is the door to the WC, to port a three-quarter-height hanging locker. Further limited storage is provided by two drawers under the bed, plus four overhead lockers port and starboard. There is a large additional space available under the bed, but this just goes down to the unpainted hull, with only a small hatch for access. Light comes from a circular hatch overhead, plus two ports.

Engines

Power comes from a pair of outdrives, the options being 275hp Volvo petrols, 230hp Volvo KAD42 diesels or 270hp Mercruiser diesels. Our test boat had the KAD42s.

The engines are located under the aft cockpit, accessed via a hinged hatch. There is good room to stand in front of them for service work, on an aluminium treadplate, but your ankles are right next to the drivebelts and pulleys, which should be shielded (this could easily have been achieved by bending a raised flange on the treadplate). The other problem is getting down in the first place; there are no steps provided, and inevitably you end up standing on the plastic covers over the electrics.

You have good access to the fuel filters, outboard to port. The fuel is carried in plastic-coated copper pipe, and shut-off valves are located in the cockpit above. The tanks have a transfer-pipe between them, but there is no changeover system.

Three 114Ah batteries, one for engine-start and two for domestics, are mounted outboard to port, under a GRP top-hat. Strangely this is held down by self-tapping screws, making routine service access difficult; clips or bolts with wing-nuts would be better, and more secure.

An automatic electric bilge pump is sited between the engines, and there are further units in the aft cabin and forecabin bilges. But these are all 1100gph models, not really man enough for a boat of this size. Certainly in the high-risk engine compartment a larger unit should be fitted, plus a manual back-up. Two automatic fire-extinguishers are mounted over the engines, attached to the underside of the hatch.

Eggbox soundproofing is applied to the underside

of the hatch, the forward bulkhead and some of the underside of the cockpit sole, but there are gaps and uncovered areas.

Handling and performance

Driving one of Olesinski's sportscruisers is always a delight, and the V39 was no exception. The conditions were nearly perfect for boat testing, with a fresh breeze, a short chop and some long rollers underneath. It could have been rougher, for the ultimate challenge, but these were still typical Channel-crossing conditions and the Princess coped with them admirably.

The demands of accommodation volume mean the hull has a comparatively broad beam, but even so it headed into the waves at a steady 25 knots, with a minimum of pounding and the legs just trimmed in. Spray was kept well down, except when we were cornering hard into the seas, when some heavier spray was flicked aboard.

Beam-on to the rollers, the hull's dynamic stability kept it from rolling. Downwind it galloped over the waves, holding full throttle, with the legs trimmed out and no sign of broaching or burying the bow. The match of engines and hull is excellent, with ample torque and power in reserve, allowing the helmsman to balance speed to the conditions, slowing down for the bigger waves and accelerating in the lulls.

We were particularly pleased with the Morse controls, giving more precise control of throttle and gears than the standard Volvo units. The power-steering is light and precise, allowing you to drive with one hand on the wheel and one on the throttles.

Our impressions as to performance were confirmed when we carried out speed trials in the sheltered waters of Plymouth Sound, not least with an acceleration run of 0-20 knots in 9.7sec.

The top speed we recorded on our radar gun was 35 knots exactly, at which the engines were pulling 3600-3700rpm. Slightly down on the maximum of 3800rpm, this suggests a step down in propeller pitch might be beneficial in the long run, to take account of extra load and hull fouling. Also our test boat was fitted with optional stainless steel props, rather than the standard aluminium, which in themselves might have grunted down the engines.

A realistic top speed would be 32 knots at 3500rpm, with a comfortable cruise being 26 knots at 3000rpm. Estimated fuel consumption is 15gph (69lph) at 32 knots and 11.4gph (52lph) at 26 knots, giving an economical average of around 2mpg and a range of over 250 miles.

Noise levels were high, due partly to exhaust noise and partly to the whine of the superchargers. At the helm, the figures were 80dB(A) at 26 knots and 84dB(A) at 35 knots, in the cockpit 86dB(A) and 89dB(A) respectively. Extra attention to soundproofing would at least reduce the whine.

Conclusions

The V39 is a worthy addition to the Princess range. Classic good looks, dramatic interior styling and an excellent standard of finish are matched by more than adequate accommodation and performance at a realistic price.

Its obvious home is the sunny waters of the Med, but the owner of our test boat plans to stay based in the West Country, a ready reminder that sportscruisers need to be as versatile as possible in the varied European market. □

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