



BOAT REPORT

SEALINE 240 SPORT

You cannot get much newer than this package — Sealine's answer to cuddy cabin performance weekenders, powered by the first of a Volvo line of fuel injected petrol outdrives.

MANY boatbuilders have seen the light recently, and are turning their attention back to the lower end of their ranges in an attempt to woo the boating public at a more economical level. Sealine, however, are one who have never forgotten starter and trailable craft, even though investment further up the scale will invariably pay higher dividends.

Given that they already had two sportscruisers on the market, the 210 and 240 Senators, it was interesting to see them launch a second 240 model, with less onus on accommodation, at the Earls Court Boat Show in January.

We were invited to Sealine's West Country sales office in Brixham, Devon, at the end of last year to check out a pre-production 240 Sport, fitted with one of Volvo's new petrol-injected V8s.

Design

In sharing the same numerical designation, you might expect the two 240s to have a common hull, even if the superstructure and layout of the Sport model are less bulky.

Not so. The hull is in fact completely new, with the bottom sections carried on a much deeper variable vee, 25° amidships, 19° at the transom, to give more performance-orientated ride and handling.

The above-waterline styling maintains Sealine's penchant for rounded shapes, in profile and from all manner of other angles. The line of the low foredeck, the screen and the final run of coaming aft to the oval transom seem to have been scribed with one arc of the pen, or rather one computer-generated curve.

Beneath the water, the transom cuts off to the vertical; above, it incorporates fully the barely noticeable bathing platform. At the bow, the slight snout to the stem at foredeck level allows a bow roller to be set out of view.

Exterior

The bow roller is in fact an option, part of a ground tackle package which also includes the full works of electric windlass, anchor and chain. The 240 Sport's inventory has been kept relatively basic, Sealine's attitude being that it is pointless building in too many frills if the customer wants an out-and-out sportsboat, although its design readily incorporates a number of creature comforts if desired.

Also on the foredeck is a large segmented locker to house the ground tackle plus warps and a fender or two. The central panel of the foredeck has a good moulded non-slip surface, bordered on either side by handrails. Cleats here, amidships and on both quarters are the same sensible 8in (20cm) size.

Access to and from the foredeck is via a moderate-sized hinged centre portion of the wraparound screen, the steps up from the cockpit being moulded into the sliding companionway door. These are trimmed with teak tread, which keeps scuffing to a minimum as well as looking attractive.

The cockpit has a well-upholstered, bolstered feel, in accord with the boat's zipper image. The driver and co-pilot are well cosseted in adjustable stand/sit squab-type bucket seats, while the thwartships bench also has deep cushioned armrests with handholds. A small



The cuddy cabin format of the 240 Sport is a familiar one, but Sealine have produced a boat which is definitely one peg up on quality from many of the other choices seen around at this size. The clean styling of items such as the helm console and cabin door is assisted by the subtle use of ivory gelcoat, while the interior gets a mini version of treatment seen in much larger boats in the range.



table is provided, while those wanting the sunbed treatment will find a mattress area abaft the seat, surrounded by a stainless steel grabrail.

Further aft still is the bathing platform, which has plenty of handholds to help you reboard from the drop-down ladder. Again, the shower unit is optional.

There is a built-in locker on the platform, but the bulk storage is to be found in the bench seat-base: a full-width drawer slides out, so you do not have to remove the cushions. This is easy enough while the drawer is empty, but jam it full of too much heavy stuff and it may prove a touch awkward. Two-tiered cave lockers, one on each side, provide further cubby-holes.

Sealine have opted for an ivory-coloured gelcoat finish to the helm area, as well as using it

to break up other areas of plain GRP, a scheme which sets off the green colourway of the upholstery to good effect.

The helm itself is attractively laid-out, with the main bank of standard instrumentation, including a speedometer, set in an angled moulding. Ready-use switches run to the left of the padded wheel, while the throttle/power trim and trim tab controls fall comfortably to the driver's right hand. Space has been left at the console for the two most likely electronic extras, a VHF set and an echo sounder.

Interior

The flush deck and sharp lines of the sportsboat style mean that the cabin only just achieves



sitting headroom, but that is all that is needed. The vee-dinette seat cushions either side of the oval table drop a peg to achieve an extra few inches of headroom in its unconverted state; it makes up into a 5ft 9in x 5ft 4in (1.75m x 1.63m) berth, biased slightly to one side.

The galley moulding pinches a few extra inches to port, allowing room for both a stainless steel sink with pressurised water (hot and cold if a calorifier is fitted) and an under-counter niche for the optional single-burner spirit hob.

Another option is a sea toilet, which can be fitted into the enclosed moulding opposite.

Storage is provided by a couple of cupboards within the galley and four lined lockers beneath the seat-bases. The latter have their own section of cushion to ease access; battling with mattress halves in a small cabin can be awkward, to say the least.

For what is little more than a cuddy, Sealine have taken pains to ensure the same standard of finish as is found in their larger craft. For instance, the headlining is inset with strips to match that of the upholstery, an attractive touch.

Engine

Engine options come from the Volvo and Mercruiser line-ups, and include both petrols and diesels.

In the latter category, Mercruiser's five-cylinder 150hp unit is offered alongside Volvo's four-pot AD31, with the AD41 taking the boat into the 200hp band. Petrol installations start at a 205hp V6, whilst the most potent is one of the first significant developments from the OMC/Volvo joint venture in the USA, the 5.7Gi/DP: a petrol-injected 5.7lt V8 producing 270hp, on a Duoprop leg. It was this that was installed in the boat we tested.

Electronic fuel-injection has been a while coming to the marine market, although the automobile industry has been making increasing use of it over the past decade. The advantages over conventional carburation are a more accurate fuel mix leading to quicker response and better starting, with the safety bonus of lessening the chance of a vapour build-up from leaking or flooded carbs — not an everyday occurrence, but a consideration nevertheless. The metering system is also capable of looking after the hardware to some extent, with overspeed protection, rpm reduction in response to low oil pressure or high engine temperature, and other self-diagnostic capabilities.

Access to the 240 Sport's engine compartment is the simple matter of hinging up the combined sunbed/seat moulding complete; it is supported by a pair of gas struts.

The installation is neat, with wiring and cables ducted out of harm's way, and there is good working room right around the block and drive service points. A fuel/water separator is attached to the forward bulkhead, while the fuel cock is sensibly located in one of the cockpit's cave lockers, together with the battery isolator.

An extension of the cockpit moulding gives the engine compartment its own easy-clean liner, which in turn allowed Sealine to fashion-in storage wells on both sides of the engine and to the rear of the compartment, as well as a drip tray and bilge sump. The latter is serviced by an auto/electric pump, but the manual back-up

listed in the specification was missing from the pre-production boat we tested; an automatic fire-extinguisher is also listed.

Performance and handling

A big benefit of fuel-injection is that there is no messing with starting. Turn the key from cold and you are away, with none of that fast-idle throttle jiggling and waiting for the engine to warm through before dropping hesitantly out of neutral.

Having said that, you need to be wary when knocking such a lump in and out of gear while manoeuvring. The take-up is immediate and plentiful, the boat being on the move immediately.

And move we did, very smartly, into Torbay to try out the new 240 before the next full blast of winter frontal system caught up with us.

In fact, a squally Force 4-5 off the land gave us ideal test conditions. By keeping inshore we could give the boat her full head, clocking 38 knots, and by standing off a little way, allowing the fetch more room to build up, we were able to ascertain how well the new hull stacked up against its sister cruisers.

We were surprised and delighted, the ride proving comfortable, clean and free from slamming at any angle of incidence. The original Senator, whilst taking the motion, would have had to be reigned-in rather harder in these conditions; the new boat happily clipped over the wave-tops at a cruise setting of 3800rpm, giving 30 knots. Backing off to 3000rpm gave a most easy-mannered 22.5 knots.

Fuel-injection and 270hp on tap is obviously going to be a responsive package, but the power is fed in without a lot of drama and it is an easy drive, the Duoprop maintaining the power through the hard turns in the usual fashion. Our test boat had been fitted with the £563 ex VAT trim tab option but, although certainly of use, this need not be considered a must.

Fuel consumption flat-out was 17gph (80lph), slightly less than that of most carburettor-induced units of similar capacity.

So the 5.7Gi scores on responsiveness and consumption. Just how well the electronics are marinised, only time in the inhospitable salt environment will tell.

A good dollop of that environment having found its way into the innards of our sound meter the previous week, we can make only a subjective assessment of noise levels. They were certainly average-to-good, with the generous upholstery of the rear seats and sunbed providing effective insulation.

Conclusions

With the 240 Sport, Sealine have entered a market which hitherto has been dominated by United States manufacturers. And we are not just British flag-waving when we say hats off to the design team for producing a boat which maintains the Sealine style and fulfils its role as a sporty performer but can still claim to offer snug but usable overnight accommodation — in short, beating the Americans at their own game.

The boat is an extremely handy addition to the stable, and one which those clever men from Kidderminster hope will attract small-boat owners towards the bigger models in their line-up. □

Sealine 240 Sport

Loa 24ft 7in (7.50m).

Beam 8ft 2in (2.49m).

Draught 3ft 0in (0.91m).

Displacement 2.1 tonnes.

Fuel capacity 62gal (280lt).

Water capacity 19gal (86lt).

Price from £23,797 ex VAT;

£27,326 as tested with a single Volvo Penta 5.7Gi 280hp petrol.

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