

Sealine C39

REPORT BY MARK TURLEY



The first of a new coupé range from British builders Sealine International offers comfortable all-weather cruising for four people, and an intriguing set of propulsion options.

Unveiled in time for this year's round of autumn boat shows, Sealine's latest model is a two-cabin 'coupé', designed to marry the feel of a sportscruiser with the convenience and comfort afforded by a fully protected helm.

The emphasis on performance is highlighted by the fact that no fewer than three alternative forms of propulsion are offered: conventional outdrives, Arneson surface-drives, or the Trimax fixed surface-drive system developed by Fabio Buzzi,

arguably the world's leading expert when it comes to speed on water.

The surface-drive is often seen in racing and ultra-high performance applications, but rarely in leisure boats. Its essence is that the propellers are set to run only semi-submerged, rather than dunked fully beneath the boat. This reduces the amount of drag-inducing ironmongery associated with shaft-drive arrangements.

We experienced all three different methods of propulsion when we attended

the C39's launch in Mallorca, although we spent more time evaluating the conventional outdrive one which we expect to be the choice of most UK buyers.

DESIGN & LAYOUT

The idea of the coupé is to provide as versatile a living and helming area as possible, making it tempting to go boating whatever the weather or climate.

Want to feel the warmth of the sun? Then push the button to open up the electric sunroof. Need to shelter from the rain (or perhaps had enough sun)? Then close it up. As an option, the toughened glass can be fitted with a tinted filter, to stop the cabin becoming overheated when it is closed.

This is an interesting compromise

between inside and outside helming, but less than 50% of the roof trundles back. With the side windows only cracking open a small amount, you always feel like you are in a wheelhouse rather than a cockpit.

The C39 also features a development first seen on the F42/5, where the transom seating and bathing platform is engineered to extend a couple of feet further aft, effectively increasing the size of the cockpit.

Perhaps Sealine have missed a trick here, however, as the saloon's curved sliding doors do not open up the whole of the aft bulkhead, so the interior seating is not fully adjoined to the cockpit. Double folding doors might have been better.

The interior accommodation features a single-level, open-plan saloon,

incorporating the helm station and galley, opening out into the cockpit. Each of the two sleeping cabins has an en-suite WC.

In the boat's outdrive and Arneson form, the hull is a straightforward medium-to-deep vee shape, with a deadrise of 24° amidships and 19° at the transom. Two sets of sprayrails fade as they run towards the transom and drives.

However, to accommodate the Trimax system, which involves a race-bred design of fixed surface-drive and rudders, the hull is modified to incorporate both a step (to increase the efficiency of the planing surface) and two enclosed tunnels, in which the shafts and propellers run.

This version also has a slight hooked extension to the transom, to trim it

efficiently, and two neat recesses for fully retracting the trim tabs once on the plane.

POWER OPTIONS

Both the Arneson surface-drive boat and the closed-tunnel boat we tested had twin 370hp Cummins diesels fitted. The main alternative to these is the more potent Yanmar 6LY2s, which are rated to 440hp.

The outdrive boat was fitted with a pair of 285hp Volvo Penta KAD300s, although a Mercruiser 300 B3X installation of similar power will also be available.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Of the three different propulsion options, the more conventional outdrives are likely to be most favoured by European buyers. ▶▶

worth a look



SURFACE-DRIVES

A welcome high-performance option, but how many buyers need more than 35 knots?



SUNROOF

An electric sunroof can open the helm and saloon seating area to the elements.



EXTENDING COCKPIT

At the push of a button, the cockpit gains an extra couple of feet in length when the boat is moored.

accommodation



The C39 is designed to allow four people to cruise in comfort, by way of two en-suite cabins.

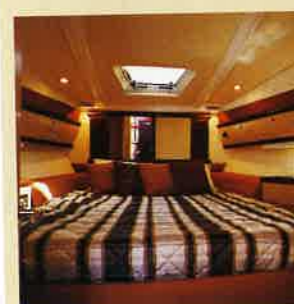
There is good headroom of 6ft 5in (1.96m) in the open-plan wheelhouse/saloon, but the use of rather bland laminates offset by stained wood trim appears to be aping the work of American boatbuilders.

Opposite the settee, a sideboard houses the electrical panel and optional ice-maker, while its fiddled worksurface will take a television. Ahead of this, the galley comes well appointed with all-electric appliances (a 3.5kVA generator is fitted as standard) and storage.

The two cabins boast plenty of hanging locker space. Clothes storage is better in the mid cabin, due to a chest of drawers, but you cannot sit up in bed if you sleep with your head to the bulkhead end.

The respective en-suite WCs are reasonable in size, although we are surprised that neither has the benefit of a separate shower cubicle. Pedestal-mounted glass sinks brighten up the practical mouldings.

saloon The L-shaped settee is convertible for an occasional extra overnight guest, while the dinette table is cleverly engineered to extend at the flick of a wrist.



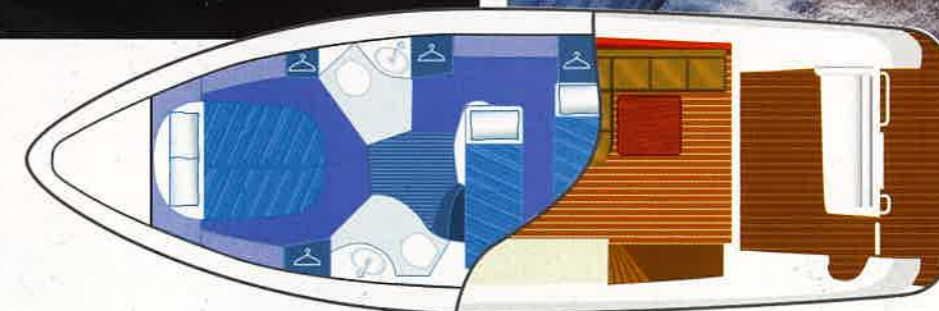
forward cabin Besides a comfortable double berth and good headroom, this boasts the roomier of the two en-suite WCs, with its plinth-mounted glass sink.



midships cabin This is laid out with twin berths, but an infill makes up a double. There is no sitting headroom with a bulkhead to act as a backrest.



galley Under the Corian worksurface there is nicely thought-out storage. Appliances include a combined microwave/oven, a two-burner hob and a large fridge.



doors, whereupon noise levels in the saloon are 80dB(A) or less.

For the most part the hull runs dry, and any spray is efficiently dispatched by the single large wiper. We were also pleasantly surprised at how little spray was sucked back into the cockpit, and the occupants of the transom seat enjoyed the whole of our sea trial without even getting slightly damp.

The helmsman sits almost amidships, with a co-driver for company, on a double seat which is adjustable fore and aft, and sculpted so that you are not sliding into each other. Outboard is a handy chart area.

The driving position sees the wheel, instrumentation and throttle and power trim controls where you want them, with

just the VHF set (which comes as standard) being a bit awkward to grapple with down at knee level.

Visibility ahead and across the bows is fine at speed, but it is necessary to take a good look out of the side windows before applying any helm, because once you put on any amount of heel the window line

cuts off the view.

Manoeuvring in displacement mode is not a problem, and visibility is unimpaired even astern. And if necessary, of course, you could always stick your head through the sunroof.

Specifications & Verdict

decks

Boarding via the bathing platform when moored alongside is easy, because the decking extends fully outboard.

A locker just inside the cockpit conveniently houses a switch that will turn on all pre-selected lights, so you are not left stumbling around in the dark if you return to the boat at night. A remote-controlled option is also available.

Pushing the button to extend the length of the cockpit means there is space to set up the table, although it might be hard to find stowage for a couple of fold-up chairs.

Cleats are of a decent size, and include two sets on each side for springs. The ground tackle is handled by a vertical windlass stepped into a foredeck well, but the cavernous chain locker is not segmented.



side decks These are not wide at 7in (18cm), but the guardrails are inclined outwards and the superstructure inwards, so walking is not difficult. An inboard handrail helps.



cockpit A hydraulically operated hatch just behind the antenna arch opens to reveal a simple awning arrangement, which can be swung out to provide shade.

We suspect the more exotic surface-drive arrangements are geared towards Sealine's expanding American client base.

Not that there is too much black art to the engineering, or even the handling, of the Arneson and Trimax systems, but the price differential is large — especially in the former case, at an extra £60,000!

For all that, the two surface-drive boats we tried managed only a couple of knots more than the outdrive boat's 35 knots, although this is likely to be improved upon as the propellers are tweaked, with 40 knots envisaged from twin 370hp Cummins.

The conventionally driven C39



helm The console has an upholstered look, which will vary depending upon which electronic navigation package is preferred. Where the smaller Raymarine RL72 plotter is specified, rather than the 82 shown here, a lower, less intrusive moulding can be fitted.

has plenty of grunt to push it smartly onto the plane, and then keep it clipping along at whatever speed the conditions permit. An easy 3200rpm gave a comfortable 26 knots

over the quite short chop we encountered, although there is plenty of speed differential in hand both ways.

The boat is responsive, and happy to be pushed to the throttle stops should the need for speed rear up. But drop back down to cruising pace and calm descends once more, especially if you shut the patio

engineroom

Access to the engine space is simple, thanks to a large gas-strut supported hatch in the cockpit sole and steps down to a non-slip treadplate in front of the engines.

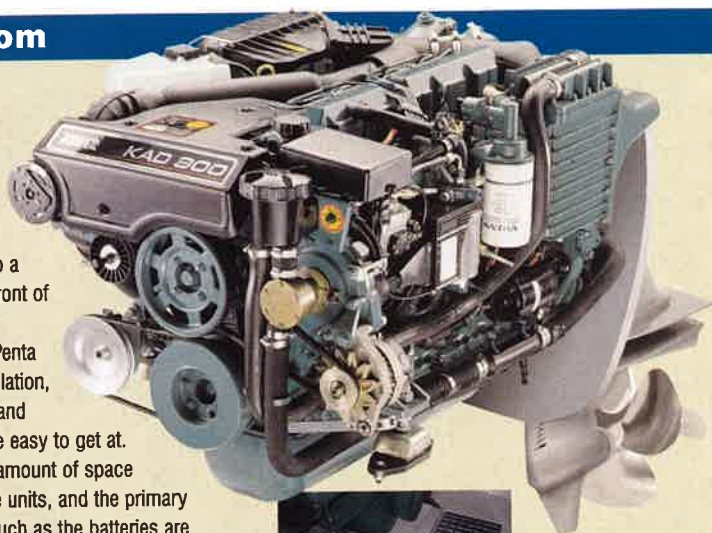
With the twin Volvo Penta KAD300 outdrive installation, all day-to-day service and maintenance points are easy to get at. There is a reasonable amount of space round and between the units, and the primary filters and ancillaries such as the batteries are to hand.

With the alternative Cummins diesels and surface-drives, things were a little more cramped.

A separate compartment, accessed from a hatch in the saloon, houses the generator and the fuel tanks, leaving some space for storage.

Both areas have a GRP liner to aid cleanliness and keep everything clear of the bilge.

below The deck hatch gives good access, and day-to-day service points are easy to get at.



left A treadplate aids access to the twin engines.

test data

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2000	9.7	9.0	41	1.08	198	71
2400	13.1	13.8	63	0.95	175	73
2800	19.3	16.5	75	1.17	215	76
3000	23.2	17.6	80	1.32	243	77
3200	25.9	19.1	87	1.36	250	78
3600	30.7	21.6	98	1.42	261	80
3900	34.6	25.3	115	1.37	252	82

range in miles, allows 20% margin.

noise in dB(A), in saloon with door closed.

conditions wind southerly Force 2-3, sea slight.

load fuel 100%, water 100%, crew 6.

specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	39ft 3in (11.96m)
HULL LENGTH	37ft 0in (11.28m)
BEAM	12ft 3in (3.74m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 9in (1.15m) with outdrives down
AIR DRAUGHT	11ft 6in (3.50m) with mast down
DISPLACEMENT	9.0 tonnes

FUEL CAPACITY	230gal (1046lt)
WATER CAPACITY	83gal (380lt)
ENGINES	twin Volvo Penta KAD300 diesels 6cyl, 3.59lt, 285hp at 3800rpm
BUILDERS	Sealine International Ltd, Whitehouse Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 1HT. Tel: 01562 740900
PRICE	£197,988 inc VAT as standard

the rivals



WINDY 37 GRAND MISTRAL
£189,950 inc VAT

a classy hardtop rather than a fully enclosed wheelhouse



MAREX 330
£140,000 inc VAT

a wheelhouse with a big sunroof but more limited cabin space



AQUADOR 32
from £120,000 inc VAT

a much smaller alternative with shaft drive, but still two cabins

conclusions



above The cockpit, like the wheelhouse, can be opened or closed to the elements.

LAYOUT

The wheelhouse keeps everyone sociable, and out of the elements when necessary, but even when fully opened up it still feels quite enclosed — no bad thing in British waters but frustrating in sunnier climates. The SECS system saves the day as far as cockpit space is concerned.

BUILD

Very much on the plus side you have excellent engine access and a good standard of engineering, but the swing to laminate-fronted joinery instead of wood makes for an unspectacular finish.

PERFORMANCE

We were quite happy with the 35 knots top speed and the high-20s cruising delivered by the outdrive package — and the surface-drive options are quicker. Handling is responsive but not skittish.

mbm verdict

It is for their radical move in offering alternative propulsion systems that Sealine will grab most attention, and they should be congratulated most heartily for it.

Although the boat runs and handles well with the conventional outdrive installation, to our mind Fabio Buzzi's simply engineered Trimax surface-drives are a step in the right direction for performance cruising, doing away with leaving expensive sterngear at risk in an inhospitable environment.

Still, with the best will in the world, there are very few times when speeds in excess of 35 knots are going to be required, or indeed relished, in the cruising conditions we usually encounter around the UK. So we expect outdrives to be the most popular choice for British buyers.

A boat is always something of a compromise, and in trying to offer both protection from the elements and access to them you can end up compromising the compromise still further. However, the C39 offers a workable layout for fickle-weather boating, with the bonus of a real turn of speed compared with other boats of this style.