

Boat Report

# COLVIC SUNQUEST 50

*This is the first fully fitted-out cruiser to emerge from the Colvic yard. Will it outsell the mouldings produced for home completion?*





Colvic Craft are best known for supplying mouldings for completion by other yards or by DIY-minded owners, or, in the case of their Motoraway concept, for undertaking all the major engineering and structural work and leaving just the interior fit-out to others.

However, as the sizes of the boats in their range have increased, there has been more demand from customers for the builders to supply a fully finished package. So this is what Colvic have done with the new 50 Sunquest model.

We took the very first completed boat out into the North Sea to find out what you get for what appears to be a keen price.

### Design

John Bennett was commissioned to design the boat, and there is no mistaking its underwater lines.

The hull is medium-to-deep vee in form, with the panels being discernibly convex, and has a variable deadrise, of 21° amidships and 16.5° at the transom. Just two sets of sprayrails adorn the forward third of the hull, after which they fade out, while the topsides are broken up with two deep knuckles.

The bow sections have plenty of volume, and back at the raked transom there is a choice of bathing platform: the 'standard' moulding actually

*Above: the aft part of the Sunquest's saloon features a sumptuously upholstered dinette opposite an entertainments centre and two built-in armchairs. Below left: forward to port is a galley, with practical Corion worksurfaces and holly/teak flooring. Below: both part-moulded toilet compartments have separate shower stalls.*



makes the boat a 48-footer rather than a 50, whereas the extended one, as on our test boat will allow you to land a mini-RIB or wetbike.

But the platform is not the only part of the boat to feature an extension. The flybridge overhang has also been drawn out, to create an exceptionally large upper entertaining area above a well sheltered cockpit.

Underwater exhausts have been incorporated into the hull design, exiting several feet ahead of the transom.

### Exterior

The bathing platform extends the full beam of the vessel, which makes it the easiest boarding point, and there is a walk-through transom gate on either quarter.

Teak decking has been applied to the platform,

the cockpit and also, somewhat unusually, the flybridge. Also included as standard is the electrohydraulic passerelle/dinghy-lift built into the transom.

Having twin doors in the transom curtains the length of the aft settee, which has lockers beneath, but in the rest of the large cockpit there is plenty of room to set up a few director's-type foldaway chairs, which can be stored either in the handy cupboard built into the flybridge stairwell or in the lazaret beneath the sole.

Accessed via a large hatch supported by a gas-strut, this area is described by the builders as a crew's or children's cabin, but we would call it a lazaret with camping facilities. The fit-out includes a couple of bunks and fully upholstered panels but little else, and the hatch has to be left open to let in any natural light or ventilation, so its usage is best measured in terms of storage



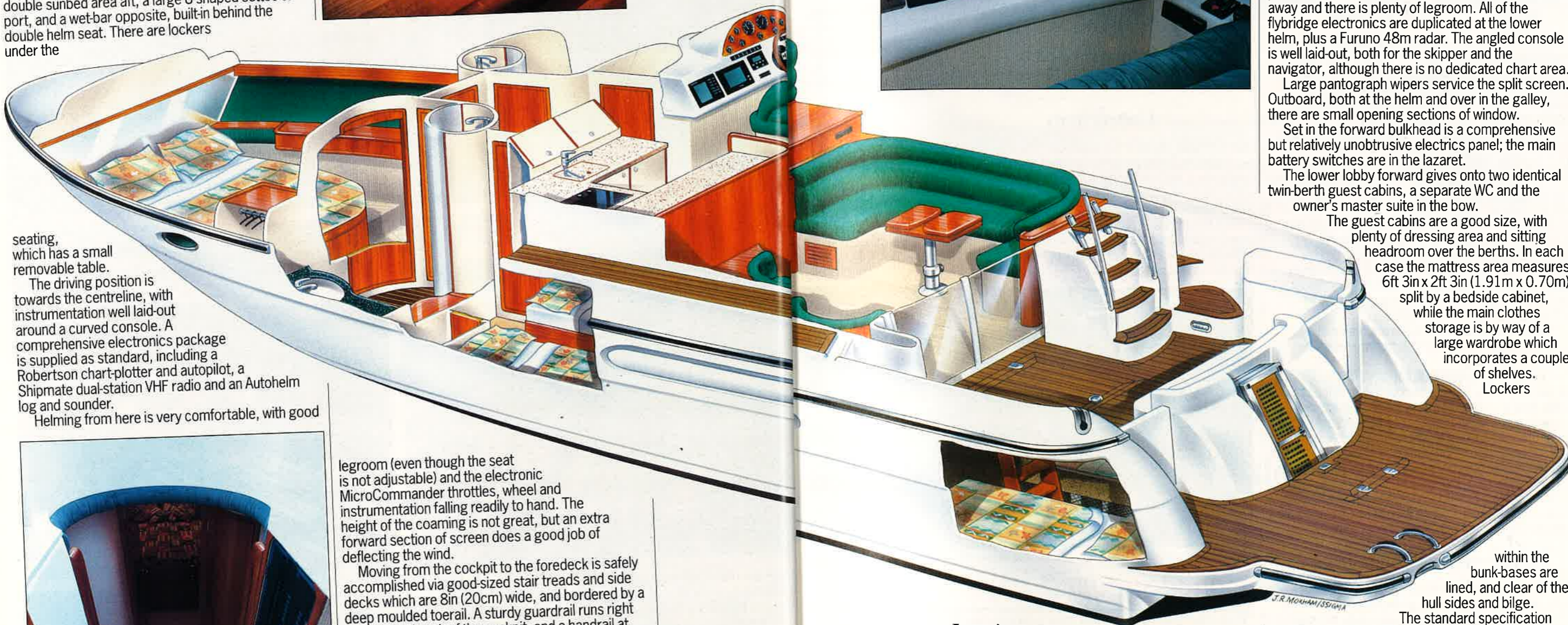
*Top: sliding doors open up the saloon to the cockpit, with its transom settee. Above: sleeping facilities comprise a pair of identical twin cabins (left) and a master double in the bow (right). Vanity units are neatly built into the joinery.*

rather than serious accommodation.

Various panels can readily be removed to get at the auxiliaries sited outboard, which include the batteries, the 6.5kVA encapsulated generator and the water tanks. A further panel to the rear gives access to the steering gear.

As standard the stairwell to the flybridge is half-staircase and half-ladder, although with teak treads for all steps; as an alternative, you can do away with the GRP moulded lower part and opt instead for the whole fabrication to be in stainless steel. Either way, the flight is set at an easy angle, and a helpful handrail borders the access hatch.

The layout up top incorporates a well protected double sunbed area aft, a large U-shaped settee to port, and a wet-bar opposite, built-in behind the double helm seat. There are lockers under the



seating, which has a small removable table.

The driving position is towards the centreline, with instrumentation well laid-out around a curved console. A comprehensive electronics package is supplied as standard, including a Robertson chart-plotter and autopilot, a Shipmate dual-station VHF radio and an Autohelm log and sounder.

Helming from here is very comfortable, with good

legroom (even though the seat is not adjustable) and the electronic MicroCommander throttles, wheel and instrumentation falling readily to hand. The height of the coaming is not great, but an extra forward section of screen does a good job of deflecting the wind.

Moving from the cockpit to the foredeck is safely accomplished via good-sized stair treads and side decks which are 8in (20cm) wide, and bordered by a deep moulded toerail. A sturdy guardrail runs right back to the break of the cockpit, and a handrail at chest height is provided along the flybridge moulding.

At the bow, a semi-enclosed electric vertical windlass handles the ground tackle, with the anchor itself being a smart stainless steel CQR model. Less good news is that the large chain locker is not segmented, which will allow the chain to become entangled with any warps that are dropped down here.

Mooring hardware comprises chunky 10in (25cm) cleats forward and amidships, and small 7in (18cm) ones astern; on a craft of this size, a further set at the aftermost end of the side decks would be an advantage. On each quarter, beneath hinged covers, are drum-ends for tensioning the stern lines.

**Left:** moulded steps lead down to the forward lobby. **Above left:** a wine-cooler built into the top of the cocktail cabinet in the saloon. **Above right:** the interior helm duplicates the electronic equipment at the flybridge station, and adds a Furuno radar.



glass, and a bucket-sized wine-cooler built into the work surface.

A small step up, a smart but practical all-electric galley lies to port, opposite a two-seater helm station.

The galley work surfaces are in Corian, and as with the rest of the boat the cabinetry is set off by well matched cherry wood. There is plenty of storage for victuals, as well as dedicated crockery stowage within sloping lockers beneath the windscreen. Beneath the two-burner halogen hob is a combined microwave/grill, and the sizable fridge has a freezer compartment. The sole is finished in an easy-to-clean holly/teak flooring.

Like the upper helm, the interior one has fixed seating, but again this does not appear to be a problem as the controls are a comfortable distance away and there is plenty of legroom. All of the flybridge electronics are duplicated at the lower helm, plus a Furuno 48m radar. The angled console is well laid-out, both for the skipper and the navigator, although there is no dedicated chart area.

Large pantograph wipers service the split screen. Outboard, both at the helm and over in the galley, there are small opening sections of window.

Set in the forward bulkhead is a comprehensive but relatively unobtrusive electrics panel; the main battery switches are in the lazaret.

The lower lobby forward gives onto two identical twin-berth guest cabins, a separate WC and the owner's master suite in the bow.

The guest cabins are a good size, with plenty of dressing area and sitting headroom over the berths. In each case the mattress area measures 6ft 3in x 2ft 3in (1.91m x 0.70m), split by a bedside cabinet, while the main clothes storage is by way of a large wardrobe which incorporates a couple of shelves. Lockers

within the bunk-bases are lined, and clear of the hull sides and bilge.

The standard specification includes reverse-cycle air-conditioning throughout the accommodation. But both cabins benefit from two opening ports for natural light and ventilation when this system is not running.

They share a well-proportioned, part-moulded toilet compartment, which comes with a separate shower cubicle and a smartly boxed-in electric toilet. The vanity unit's work surface is in Corian, and above is a commodious run of mirror-fronted cupboards. For ventilation there is an extractor, together with an opening port.

A similar layout is found in the master cabin's en-suite facilities.

The roomy cabin itself sports a central 6ft 4in x 4ft 6in (1.93m x 1.37m) double berth flanked by a

## Interior

Sliding patio-type doors, curved for style and strength, double back behind the stairwell to open up the saloon to the cockpit, making for a very handsome entertaining area.

Immediately to port as you enter the accommodation is a split-level bureau housing a multiplay CD-player, a television and a video-recorder, sandwiched between two large built-in armchairs. Opposite is the main dinette, sumptuously upholstered and capable of seating six comfortably. The lockers in the seat-bases are well lined.

Just ahead of this is a very elegant cocktail cabinet, with doors finished in toughened, bevelled

pair of dressing tables. Further aft are two large hanging wardrobes, with shelves, and a deep drawer has been incorporated into the base of the berth. Lifting the mattress reveals a hatch to the bilge and bow-thruster unit.

Headroom in this cabin is plentiful, as it is through the rest of the boat, up to a useful 6ft 6in (1.98m).

On the whole the boat's interior finish was of an excellent standard, especially that of the cherry joinery. The upholstery on our test boat was in a striking emerald green Nova-suede. Carpeting was of good quality, well bound at its edges, but in a rather less practical pale cream. We would have liked to see a few more hatches let into the forward sole to give better access to the bilge.

## Engines

Our test boat had what we would consider the normal engine installation, twin 420hp Caterpillar 3126 diesels. However, more potent options are available, totalling over 1300hp by way of twin Caterpillar 3196s, and other makes can be accommodated if an owner prefers.

A pukka dogged-down soundproofed door leads from the lazaret/cabin through to the engineroom, allowing sufficient access to most parts of both engines for all but major maintenance work. For this, the saloon sole will have to come up, although this is not a problem.

The only item that might be awkward to get at is the oil filter on the starboard engine, which is hemmed in by the fuel tank lying outboard. This aside, other service items appeared satisfactorily accessible, with the main raw-water filters, Separ fuel/water separators and sternglands easy to reach adjacent to the aft bulkhead.

The fuel cocks and changeovers reside in a coaming locker in the cockpit, together with the manual bilge pump.

A treadplate has been laid between the engines for access to the head of the compartment and the belts. Being screwed down, though, this makes inspecting the bilge and associated pump rather more time-consuming than it might otherwise be. The same applies to the pumps servicing the lazaret and forward accommodation, and it is to hoped the builders will rectify this.

The deckhead, tanks and bulkheads are largely covered in insulation, although one or two areas still needed finishing on the boat we inspected.

## Performance & handling

For the uninitiated, electronic throttles can take a little getting used to, although those on our test boat had been well set up. In unison with the 8hp bow-thruster, which is also included in the standard specification, they certainly facilitate low-speed handling.

This was very ably demonstrated by our skipper Iain Smallbridge, the man responsible for Colvic's fit-outs, whose deftness of hand was not be shaken by wiggling the considerable bulk of this 50-footer through the tight gaps and turns of Fox's Marina in Ipswich.

Once out in the open River Orwell, the hull was happy to amble along at displacement speeds with little recourse to the helm. And after clearing Felixstowe docks we worked the throttles through the rev range to get our performance data.

The hull eased itself up onto the plane with little discernible hump to give a top speed of 28.5 knots, while 2400rpm gave a sound cruising speed of 24.5 knots, with an estimated fuel consumption equating to 1mpg.

Leaving the throttles at this setting for handling trials, we found the hull predictable, responsive to the helm and well mannered, albeit with a fairly large turning circle and steering which was on the heavy side.

Both helm positions were comfortable to drive from. Visibility from the interior helm was fine, with no obstruction from the bow itself or from the fender baskets, which are located quite far from the break of the bow.

The sea state, in little more than a Force 4, did not bother this 50-footer in the slightest, the hull giving a clean, dry, soft ride even through any of the larger waves.

Noise levels were good throughout the accommodation, and just slightly intrusive as usual on the aft deck.

## Conclusions

Our test boat, the first Sunquest 50 to be presented as a finished package by the builders, is well engineered and handsomely fitted-out both for robustness and practicality. Underway, it exudes the same solidness.

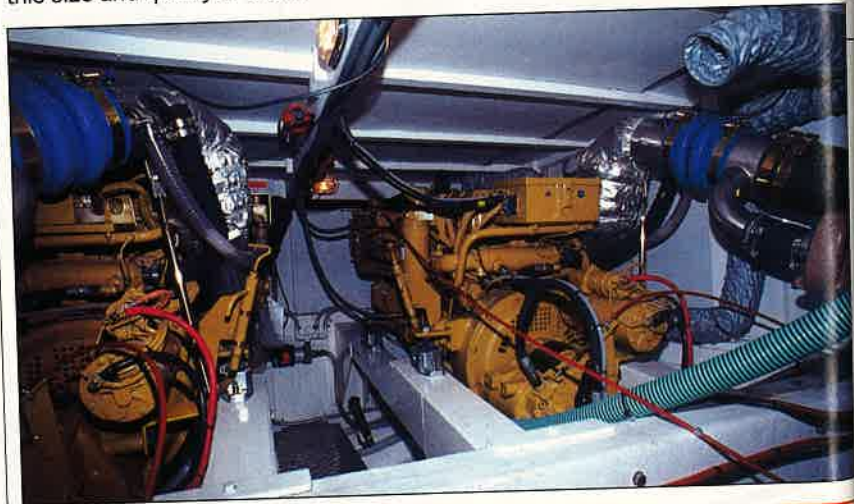
The layout is well proportioned and very comfortable, and the high specification is not reflected in the price, which is extremely keen for this size and quality of craft.



Above: set in the forward bulkhead near the helm position is a very comprehensive electrics panel. Below: twin 420hp Caterpillars were installed in our test boat.

## Builders

Colvic Craft plc, Earls Colne Industrial park, Earls Colne, Colchester, Essex CO6 2NS. Tel: 01787 223993.



## Colvic Sunquest 50

**Engines** twin Caterpillar 3126 diesels, 426hp at 2800rpm, 6cyl, 7.2lt.

**Conditions** wind NE Force 4, sea slight. **Load** fuel 50%, water 50%, crew 5.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	sound levels dB(A)			
							ckpt	flybg	saloon	fwdcab
1600	12.2	8.1	37	1.51	459	3.5	80	68	72	67
1800	15.2	13.0	59	1.19	362	4.5	81	69	73	70
2000	18.1	16.7	76	1.08	329	5.5	82	70	74	72
2200	21.4	20.7	94	1.03	308	5.0	84	71	75	74
2400	24.5	24.9	113	0.98	298	5.0	86	71	78	76
2600	27.8	29.5	134	0.94	286	4.5	86	72	78	76
2750	28.5	35.6	162	0.80	243	4.5	86	72	78	76

(\* allows 20% margin)

**Loa** 50ft 0in (15.24m)

**Hull length** 44ft 9in (13.64m)

**Beam** 14ft 8in (4.46m)

**Draught** 4ft 0in (1.22m)

**Displacement** 15 tons

**Fuel capacity** 380gal (1725lt)

**Water capacity** 122gal (555lt)

**Price** £295,000 ex VAT

as tested with standard fit-out