

# SUNSEEKER

## PREDATOR 58HT

*This stunning sportscruiser is now available with an opening hardtop, so you can quickly open up or batten down as appropriate. Thanks to the helpful British summer, we were able to test it come rain and shine.*



When we first laid eyes on the Predator 58, then available only in open-cockpit format, we were hugely

impressed by its novel layout, with the diagonally-orientated saloon foremost among many ideas that created a lasting impression. That was last year, at the London

Boat Show. Things have moved on apace since then, and builders Sunseeker now offer the boat with an opening hardtop. Ostensibly this configuration is aimed at the American

market, where protection from the sun has become something of an imperative. Equally, closer to home, it allows the boat to be enjoyed to the full in the less solar-dominated British climate, where the sun might deign to shine occasionally but cannot be relied upon. We were given the opportunity

## Bathing platform & garage

Wide and deep, the beach-type bathing platform has plenty of room for several people to sit, perch, engage in watersports or hike the tender out of the garage. Finished in teak as standard, it houses a good, sturdy swim ladder complete with grabrails on each side, and a freshwater shower. A set of steps give direct access to the starboard side deck, and you can climb up to the port one from the

walkway past the garage. A multitude of handrails help you move safely about. Boarding from astern is easy, with a remote-controlled passerelle emerging from a hatch in the transom to complete a straight walk-through to the cockpit. The neat mini-LED lights along its length will guide you at night. The whole of the oval sunpad and transom structure lifts on hydraulic rams to reveal a garage that will take a RIB of up to 12ft (3.7m), in the case of our test boat an Avon

3.65. The recovery system of an electric winch and rollers is an optional extra. The garage has a false bottom, and a pulley system to help you lift it clear should the batteries or even the engines have to be removed. The cockpit table finds a home down here when not in use,

although to our mind it is a less than convenient spot. A dedicated liferaft stowage and a locker for the main battery switches are set within the outboard coaming in the walkway through to the cockpit, and a neat rope bin is incorporated adjacent to the sunpad.

## Cockpit

The versatility of the hardtop arrangement cannot be stressed enough, allowing you and your guests to continue enjoying outdoor entertaining in the cockpit without having to rely on the benevolence of mother nature. Six to eight people can sit

around the U-shaped dinette to starboard, either enjoying the sunshine with the sunroof open or protected from less welcoming elements with it closed. In any case, the extra height of the screen and coaming that is intrinsic to the design concept provides excellent protection from the wind when underway, while still allowing

everyone to see over the window-line.

The seat-bases house painted-out lockers and the manual bilge pump. Opposite the dinette is a sizeable wet-bar complete with a cocktail cabinet, a sink, an icemaker and a fridge, as well as an electric griddle for barbecuing.

and the time to experience both sides of this distinctive craft thanks to marque aficionados Stefan Wertan and David Ward, whose Predator 58HT High Energy, powered by twin 800hp MAN diesels, is their sixth Sunseeker to date.

## Design & layout

Designed by Don Shead, as are all Sunseekers, the hull is a medium-to-deep-vee form. The underwater sections have a deadrise of 20° amidships and 18° at the transom, with fine slicing sections forward and the marque's trademark parallel sprayrails.

The propeller shafts are driven through V-drive gearboxes, which has allowed the engines to be mounted right aft, putting the weight in the right place and freeing up as much interior volume as possible for the accommodation. Tunnels are

## Helm

Two things mark the helm position as typically Sunseeker: the hugely well bolstered seating arrangement and the unfussy but effective layout of the instruments and controls.

There is a contoured double or triple settee at the helm itself, with the squab of the driver's portion lifting to allow him to stand or perch for a view over the screen. Across the way to port is a further large single seat.

Instrumentation is laid out in

two straightforward banks. The nearer one carries the standard electronics package, which

includes radar, autopilot, GPS and VHF, while the engine gauges are set in a veneered panel topped off by a wet-card compass. A console return to the skipper's right provides a landing for the throttles, and the ready-use switches are rafted to the left of the angled leather-trimmed

wooden wheel. Everything is easy to viewable and comes readily to hand, and most of the two-part screen is well served by no-nonsense pantograph wipers. We like the way the whole console moulding has been designed to incorporate several flat areas and cut-outs rather than just curves, so that you can easily find places to put things down. To port there is also a large glovebox, with a perspex cover for protecting pilot notes, as well as a handhold.

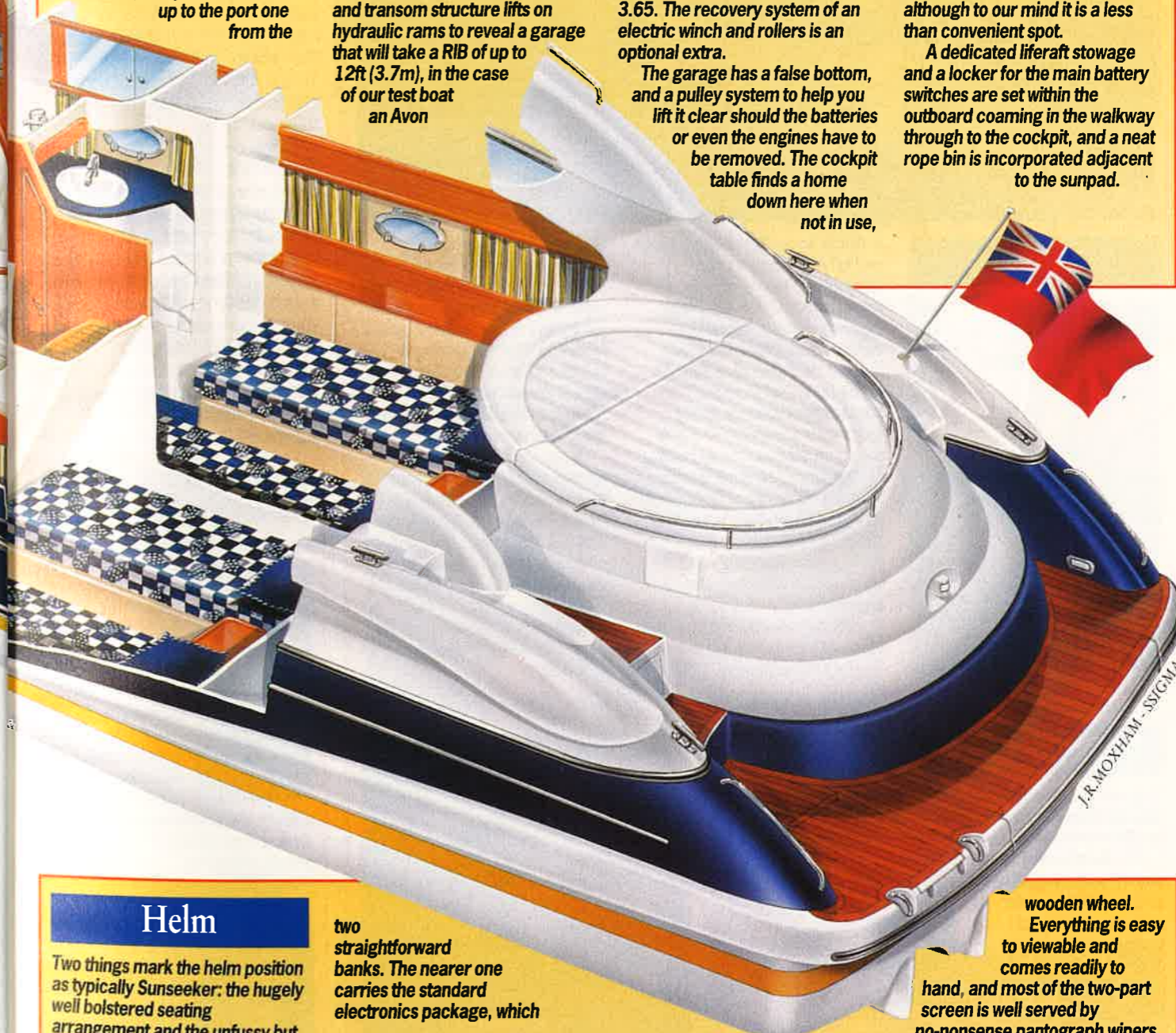
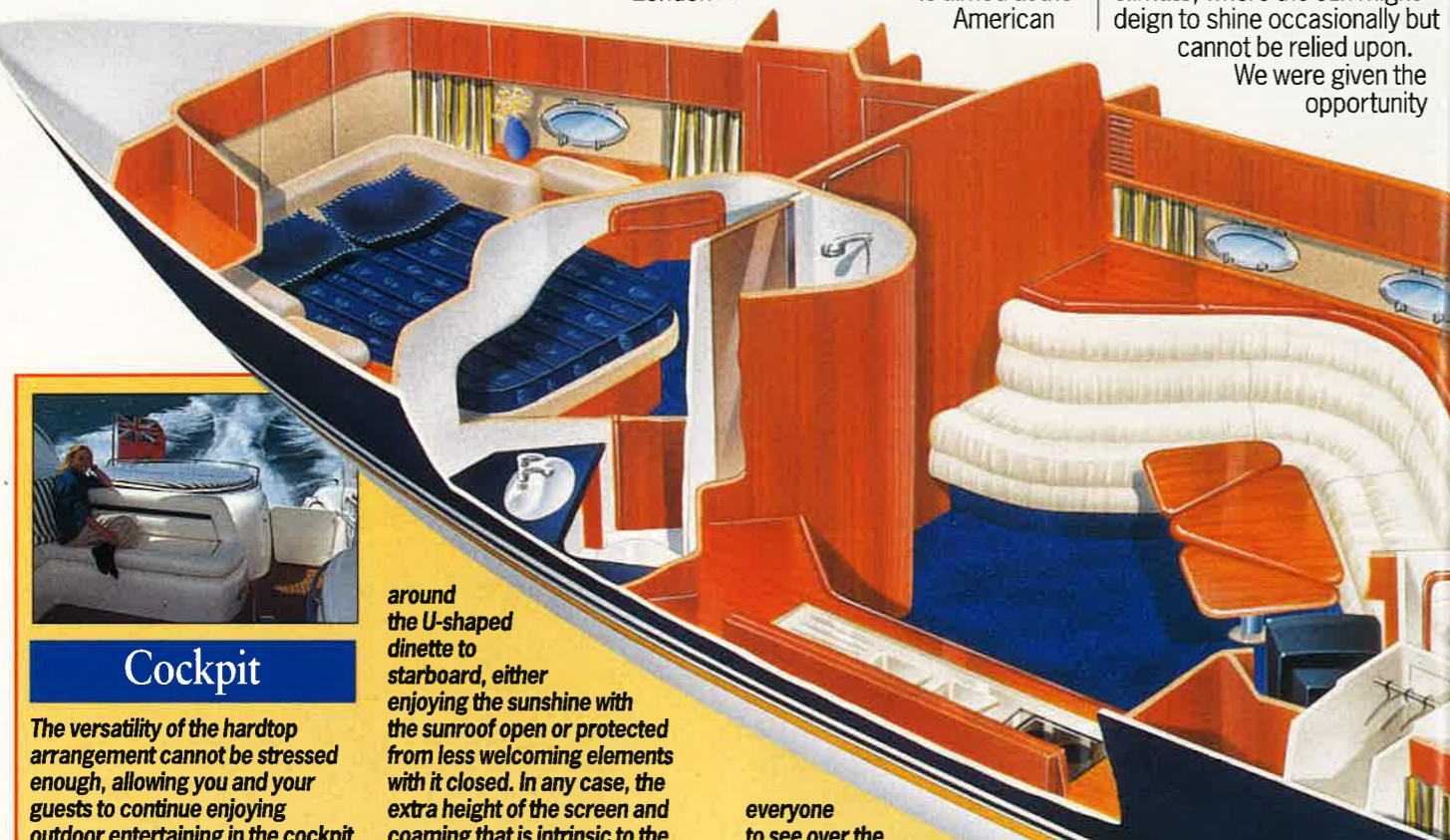
## Decks

Working your way forward along the side decks is safe and easy, thanks to the 12in (30cm) wide footfall, good-height guardrails outboard and handrails incorporated at chest height along the superstructure.

The long expanse of coachroof, with its moulded non-slip finish, is scalloped to give a central flat area. This is in turn moulded to take a double sunpad, with

cut-outs for glasses and other bits. The huge foredeck locker will swallow any number of cylindrical fenders, and incorporates a separate bin for the anchor chain fed from the vertical windlass. Another thoughtful feature here is a freshwater wash-down facility, usually seen only at the transom.

Mooring hardware is most adequate, with two sets of 10in (25cm) bar cleats at the quarters, one on each side to take springs and a pair at the stern for head ropes.





## Saloon



A sliding up-and-over hatch gives you full headroom as you descend the sweep of wide wooden companionway steps from the cockpit, helped by curved handrails on each side. And this mini-staircase sets the scene for one of the most interesting of saloons, being spacious and super-chic but at the same time warm and inviting.

The large L-shaped dinette, set at an angle rather than simply running fore-and-aft, makes for a stunning centrepiece, set off by the huge dog-leg sideboard which hides away the galley and entertainments centre. The layout opens out before you, and helps to draw you in.

The triangular shape of the

folding table allows easy, uncramped access around it, but hinges out to form a major dining table when required, with stools joining the settee to make up the numbers. And the lighting is tailored to focus attention on this side of the saloon, with a small rotunda of spotlights set into the deckhead over the table.

A run of lockers passes overhead behind the settee, and there are tidily finished lockers in the seat-bases themselves, the end one being furnished with nothing less than a vacuum cleaner and its attachments.

A bordered hatch to the forward end of the saloon gives easy access to the bilge and seacocks.

## Galley & entertainments centre

Opposite the dinette, the massive sideboard, nipped into a dog-leg shape at each end, hides any hint of the galley facilities it incorporates.

The halogen hob and one-and-a-half-drainer sink are hidden under gas strut-supported countertops, and domestic-sized fridge/freezers and a combi microwave/oven are concealed within the cupboards.

General stowage is supplemented by dedicated crockery lockers, a neat rubbish bin and a cocktail cabinet, complete with a wine rack.

In the chest-high cabinet near the companionway, angled towards the settee, is the entertainments centre, including a television and sound system. Adjacent to this is the covered electrical panel, which even has a fan system for ventilating the bilges.



incorporated, nevertheless, to keep the installation as low as possible and the shaft angle to a minimum.

Much of the 58's exterior styling is down to Sunseeker's in-house design team. The moulded curves of the topsides and deck moulding have an eye-catching dash and cut, and aft of a garage for a mini-RIB the lines sweep down to a beach-type bathing platform at water level.

The helm position and the cockpit entertaining area, with its wet-bar and barbecue, can be battened down or opened up to the elements at the flick of a switch, thanks to a well designed electric-powered sunroof which rolls to and fro.

Down below, the interior design skills of Ken Freivokh have created a sumptuous layout which is different but ergonomically practical, with a spectacular angled dinette facing a neatly hidden galley and entertainments centre in the saloon. Forward is a master suite whose facilities include a separate shower, and aft of the saloon are two further sleeping compartments, both with full standing headroom despite being

## Midships toilet

En-suite to the starboard cabin but shared by the port cabin and for general use during the day, the midships toilet compartment has much the same facilities as those found in the forward suite, including a large separate shower

cubicle, an Avonite worktop, good stowage and plenty of elegant and practical touches.



## Forward suite

Due no doubt to the hull's fine bow sections, the double berth in the forward cabin has had to be set fairly high. With its generous dimensions of 6ft 4in (1.93m) by 4ft 9in (1.45m), it certainly dominates the compartment, though there is sufficient room to gain access to either side, where bedside table-style plinths are provided.

Eye-height lockers run outboard above the opening side ports, and clothes stowage is most adequate, comprising a couple of hanging lockers, a variety of shelved cupboards and a shoe locker.

The en-suite toilet compartment is a good size, and has a completely separate shower cubicle which is cleverly moulded with an integral rack for toiletries.

The countertop is of Avonite, and the sink sits nicely within it so that splashes not end up on the wood-finish flooring. An electric toilet is fitted as standard, its mechanicals largely hidden

within a moulding. Stowage is plentiful, and the compartment is fitted with an extractor as well as an opening port.



beneath the cockpit.

As standard these guest cabins are a mirror image of each other, with twin fore-and-aft berths, but on our test boat the starboard one had been fitted out with an athwartships double, whilst the port one had been specified with a desk opposite a settee/bunk arrangement.

High Energy's accommodation is finished in high-gloss cherry with cream leather upholstery, the standard of workmanship being exemplary. Stefan and David report that the high-gloss polyurethane finish of Sunseeker joinery is extremely durable, and say their previous boat, a Camargue 55, had barely a mark on it after three years of hard use.

## Performance & handling

Engine options, all twin diesels, run from a total of 1360hp to just over 2000hp. Our test boat was in the central powerband, being equipped with a pair of 14.6lt MANs producing 800hp apiece.

Our two days out on the boat gave us good reason to appreciate the hardtop concept. The first delivered strong winds and rainfall so we were battened down, with the perversely named 'sunroof' doing a perfect job of keeping the driving rain at bay. But when the skies cleared on the second, the push of a button allowed the sunlight to pour in.

However, we still had enough wind, by virtue of a Force 5, to bring to the fore any vices.

The low-speed sortie down from High Energy's berth at Ocean Village marina to Southampton Water gave every

indication of good directional stability, with little or no recourse to the wheel required. When we opened her up it was the same, an arrow-straight flight following a gentle lift onto the plane.

At 1800rpm, which gives 25 knots, you hardly feel you are moving at all, so it makes sense to round up to 2000rpm and settle back to cruise comfortably at just under the 28-knot mark.

You can put the wheel over

one-handed, with no grappling necessary, but it pays to warn your crew before doing so, as the Predator belies its 58ft and nips around like a sportsboat. Indeed, it is just as easy and responsive to drive, with none of the laboured turns you get with some other boats whose props are run in tunnels. It simply carves round as tight as you like, never picking up any spray or needing to be fussed over — a point-and-press boat,

## Port cabin

The non-standard layout of High Energy retains only one of the single berths, with the inboard one replaced by an extremely useful office-type set of cabinetry, where the owners do their passage planning.

But the missing berth is reinstated by virtue of a fold-out top bunk outboard, which in its hinged-down position doubles as a backrest for the lower berth, forming a settee.

All this has been very neatly and tidily executed by Sunseeker's joiners, as has the wardrobe near the door and a bedside table.



## Starboard cabin

On our test boat, the starboard one of the twin midships cabins is fitted out with a double berth running across the boat, measuring 6ft 3in (1.91m) by 4ft 4in (1.32m), rather than with twin bunks.

There is also a side table unit and an extra-large wardrobe, partly fitted out with shelves. This layout works to good effect, making for a roomy sleeping area which is en-suite to the day toilet compartment.



## Engineroom

A hatch in the cockpit sole, supported by a gas strut, gives access via a short ladder into a veritable Aladdin's cave of an engineroom, where everything gleams and sparkles.

The compartment is so capacious that it is not dominated by the bulk of the MAN V8s, which are mounted back-to-front, with the gearboxes towards the front of the compartment, as demanded by the V-drive configuration. There is room to work right round them if required, despite the fact that most



of ancillaries are oversized compared with what most boatowners are used to.

All the tanks are located across the forward bulkhead, which frees-up space outboard for such items as the battery boxes, and a 20in (50cm) wide treadplate between the engines allows you to get right aft, where a large central strum-box houses two

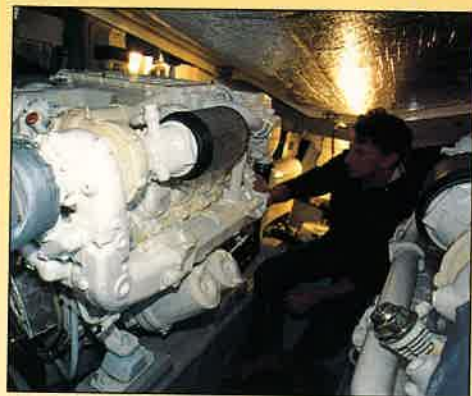
submersible bilge pumps as well as the manual pick-up. To starboard of this is the generator set, a 9kW unit fitted as standard.

There is plenty of space around everything for maintenance work, including the steering gear and the multitude of pumps and ancillaries, with all wiring and cables ducted and switches set behind protective covers.

A central portion of treadplate lifts to give access to the raw-water filters, while the fuel/water separators are easy to get at towards the head of the compartment.

The drives and shafts have protective treadplate covers to stop anybody accidentally coming in contact with them, although the sternglands are left accessible for inspection and maintenance.

As much of the compartment as possible is covered in thick foam insulation, and we were pleased to see that the extinguishing system has a Seafire automatic shutdown system for the huge engineroom fans, as well as for the engines themselves, thus ensuring that the extinguishant is not purged from the compartment as soon as it is activated.



but exhilarating nevertheless.

At full throttle the tachos showed 2400rpm, which on further investigation indicated the engines were over-revving slightly. This might mean the props are slightly under-pitched, and the builders are apparently conducting further trials which should add a further knot or two at the top end. Even so we clocked a shade under 35 knots, and Stefan told us this was a knot down on normal, suspecting that one of the props had suffered a slight ding a few days previously.

Very much on the plus side was the lack of a backdraught which can so annoyingly suck exhaust and spray into the cockpit; the

transom and sunbed were completely dry when we got back in after our test runs. Our only real criticism concerns noise levels, which, although not exactly high, were rather more noticeable than we had expected, especially given the quality of the engine installation.

The driving position is excellent, with all the controls close to hand, although the long foredeck needs dropping a shade with the tabs if you prefer a seated position. In any case, in the sharp popple we experienced, it made sense to apply a little tab to allow the hull to deliver its full slicing action.

Low-speed manoeuvring is

helped by the 10hp bow-thruster which comes as standard, although with its 22-ton displacement and the deep wedge of hull the boat keeps up into the wind very well.

## Conclusions

From stern to stern, and from engineroom to shower cubicle, Sunseeker have brought out something even more special than their usual fare with the Predator 58.

Of course, it is all too easy to overdo superlatives when faced with nearly 60ft of luxury performance sportscruiser, but clearly this is a design that works immensely well, from its hull shape and its hardtop concept through to its interior layout, furnishings and functional detail. It is also an effortless pleasure to drive.

The hardtop, with its opening sunroof element, gives this type of vessel a whole new extra dimension, both in looks and use, and no doubt this is something we will see more of. It is also good to see, too, that such a major manufacturer is happy to accommodate the substantial modifications specified by some of their customers, which will surely help to keep them sunseeking.



### BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

### DIMENSIONS

#### LOA

57ft 11in (17.65m)

#### HULL LENGTH

56ft 0in (17.07m)

#### BEAM

15ft 1in (4.59m)

#### DRAUGHT

4ft 5in (1.35m)

#### DISPLACEMENT

22 tonnes

#### FUEL CAPACITY

627gal (2850lt)

#### WATER CAPACITY

143gal (650lt)

#### ENGINES

twin MAN D2848 LE403s

8cyl 14.6lt diesels

800hp at 2400rpm

#### PRICE

£558,325 ex VAT

## SUNSEEKER PREDATOR 58HT

### PERFORMANCE & CONSUMPTION

### SOUND LEVELS dB(A)

rpm	knots#	gph†	lph†	mpg†	range*	trim	saloon	helm	cockpit
1400	16.7	22.8	104	0.73	366	3.5	78	80	82
1600	20.5	26.4	120	0.78	388	5.0	80	82	83
1800	25.2	35.2	160	0.71	357	5.0	80	82	84
2000	27.7	46.2	210	0.60	300	5.0	80	82	83
2200	31.6	55.0	250	0.57	287	4.5	80	82	83
2400	34.8	71.3	324	0.48	244	4.5	80	82	84

# Measured by radar gun. † Calculated from engine manufacturers' figures. \* Allows 20% margin.

CONDITIONS ~ wind northwesterly Force 4-5, sea slight

LOAD ~ fuel 60%, water 25%, crew 5

### BUILDERS

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