

A high-speed motorboat, the Sunseeker Tomahawk 41, is shown from a side profile, moving across the water. The boat has a white upper hull and a dark orange lower section. It features a large cockpit area with a black canvas top. A Spanish flag is flying from the mast, and a red ensign is visible at the bow. The boat is leaving a white wake behind it. The background shows a blue sky with some clouds and distant land.

*Boat Report*

# SUNSEEKER TOMAHAWK 41

*The raceboat styling of this capable sportscruiser is well matched by the pace of Mercruiser's high-tech new 300hp D-Tronic diesels. We tested the first boat with this installation.*





Above: the Tomahawk 41's main cabin features a large double berth, forward of the saloon area. Below: further aft is the galley, with good high-level lockers, while a break in the settee offers a handy bottle stowage.



Everyone is now so familiar with the style and execution of Sunseeker boats that their build quality and performance are often in danger of being underestimated. Similarly, such is the sophistication of most of today's marine engines that prospective purchasers can be excused for confusing the makes available.

But development continues apace. The Tomahawk 41, in the middle of the builders' High Performance range, has been around for a year now, but the one we tested in the Spanish Mediterranean was the first fitted with a pair of the brand new 300hp Mercruiser D-Tronic turbocharged diesels, with Bravo Three drives.

## Design

More closely than any other boat in the current Sunseeker range, the Tomahawk 41 can trace its

lineage back to the original collaboration between the builders and their resident design guru Don Shead. With an average deadrise of 22°, and a 13° transom angle, it is a good example of how the deep-vee hull concept is parlayed into production boatbuilding.

The hand lay-up comprises isophthalic gelcoat and resin, woven rovings, unidirectional fabrics and 12mm balsa core in the topsides, with bonded closed-cell foam girders offering structural support.

The longitudinal join between the hull and deck mouldings is neatly covered by a stainless steel styling strip with a rubber infill.

A comparatively wide beam for an overall length of 43ft speaks of a compromise between space and speed, but not to such an extent that handling suffers. And this Tomahawk is no wimp in the performance stakes, with an engineering package comprising either twin or triple installations, petrol or diesel.



## Exterior

Features of the exterior layout include a flush foredeck bordered by low-level stainless steel pulpit rails and accessed via eminently usable side decks, and a sizeable cockpit with plenty of seating and a sun deck over the engine compartment.

The topside mouldings run aft beyond the transom to encompass an integral bathing platform which protects the drives, and a sharply raked screen is offset by an equally acutely angled radar hoop to give the boat a purposeful and practical look.

Practicality is the keyword, in fact, with cockpit seats fulfilling dual roles. When facing forward, the starboard two-person helm position provides comfortable support; when reversed it leaves the boat to be driven from a standing stance while offering a more sociable layout behind.

Also, the aft seats can have their backs folded forward to elongate the sundeck or raked forward to act as lumbar supports to those catching the rays. There is a further seat forward to port, ahead of the moulded wet-bar and coolbox.

The helm station comprises a full set of analogue engine instrumentation and engine system monitors, set in a walnut fascia out of a GRP moulded console. Compass, log, depth-sounder, horn and fire-extinguisher are all to hand, alongside a wood-rimmed steering wheel.

The Morse engine controls, further to starboard, include sterndrive trim control toggles. Trim tab controls are flush-fitted alongside these, as is a VHF radio.

The cockpit comes with a waterproof carpet and is self-draining. It can be covered either by a suntop attached forward and aft of the radar arch or, while moored, by a tonneau. There is a dedicated stowing for the dining table, and lockers in the coaming on both sides, under the seats and under the sole.

The quest for flexibility has produced a proliferation of seat cushions which need to be lugged around the boat to fulfil various roles, and a



Clockwise from above: curtains give the forward berths some privacy from the saloon. The toilet compartment includes a shower and shaving point. Oval tables in the saloon drop to make twin berths if required. A cockpit canopy stows neatly on the underside of the colourful radar arch







large sun-cushion can be secured on the foredeck. We were not totally impressed with the fiddly, nail-breaking stud fixings used to secure the removable seat cushions to the engine hatches, but circuit breakers and shorepower connections are easily accessible within the aft part of the cockpit. All exterior deck fittings are in stainless steel, and the obligatory electric anchor winch comes as standard. A folding boarding ladder is recessed centrally within the bathing platform, with a hot-and-cold shower located in the step riser above.

## Interior

There is a limited amount an interior designer can achieve on a boat of this size and configuration, bearing in mind that its main purpose is fun in the sun. However, the Tomahawk 41 has high-quality and well executed accommodation, comprising a large forward double berth, a saloon with seating which converts into further berths, a galley and a toilet/shower compartment, while offering a useful amount of full standing headroom. Our test boat featured a classically simple colour scheme of white overheads, white lacquered furniture detailed in black, white hide settees, yellow drapes and loose cushions, and a carpet of what used to be called 'mushroom' but may now have more exotic nomenclature. The deckhead is studded with low-intensity recessed lighting and two large circular hatches, while further natural light is supplied by four oval port lights. The overall effect is of an airy and spacious interior, good for its purpose of daytime relaxation and occasional overnighting.

The berth in the vee has stowage beneath it but is at a high level and has no other function. Curtains



**Above: the helm seats perform dual roles for extra versatility. Above right: analogue gauges are set in a walnut fascia. Left: seeking the sun in the Mediterranean. Below left: the aft seat-backs fold forward to elongate the sunlounging area over the engineroom. Below: we took the boat to 38 knots with 300hp Mercruiser diesels.**

give it privacy from the saloon three steps below, where radiused port and starboard settees have oval tables before them which will drop to make twin single berths if required. A television and stereo radio/cassette player are inset forward, and to starboard is a hanging locker.

Aft of this you find a very usable WC, with a seawater toilet, washbasin and shower with hot and cold water, mirror and shaving point. To port is the galley, where there is a sink, a gas hob and an electric refrigerator, and the high-level lockers for crockery, glasses and other items have fluted mouldings.

All lockers below-decks are lined, and access from the cockpit is via a wide, curved, sliding hatchway.

## Engines

Engine options are twin or triple installations from 230hp up to 435hp, on sterndrives. The 300hp D-Tronics utilise the same engine mounts as Mercruiser's regular big-block V8 petrol units, but look marginally more massive in-situ.

Gelled-out in red under its electrohydraulic opening hatches, the engineroom features automatic fire-extinguishers and bilge pumps, extractor fans, fuel filters with water separators, one starter battery for each engine and two for the ship's systems, a split charger system and a calorifier, all located outboard or forward of the engines and fully accessible for servicing.

The stainless steel fuel tanks give a cruising range of over 300 miles, and the freshwater capacity is sufficient for weekending. All tankage is enclosed, and AC and DC electrical systems are protected by circuit-breakers.



## Performance & handling

Today's benchmarks for user-friendly marine diesels are lack of exhaust smoke on start-up and under load, lack of intrusive noise, minimal delay in accelerating throughout the throttle range and speed potential to equal that of petrol engines.

Our experience with the new D-Tronic indicates that Mercury Marine now have a powerplant which meets or exceeds all of these criteria. Start-up was faultless, clean running obvious and power delivery instantaneous.

On loan from German dealers Sunseeker Yachtcenter Krick, our test boat had been employed the previous week to introduce the D-Tronic to Mercury distributors and selected European boatbuilders, and had therefore been





# Mercuriser D-Tronic 300

Having made their name, reputation and fortune from petrol engines, Mercury Marine have had an often chequered history where diesel power is concerned. Earlier attempts at clothing Renault and other motor manufacturers' units in Mercury's familiar black livery did not always meet the high standards demanded by the American market.

Now, however, with this turbocharged and intercooled 300hp unit based on the

proven 7.3-litre Navistar truck engine and marinised by MCA in Indianapolis, they appear to have got it absolutely right.

MCA have retained the original bore and stroke, but introduced new pistons and cylinder heads and chosen to use a Schnitzer turbocharger. Electronic fuel injection replaces a conventional injector pump, and a sophisticated engine management system monitors factors such as ambient temperature and even

altitude while controlling the rate of fuel flow to optimise performance, improve acceleration, limit noise and reduce exhaust emissions.

A double-stage fuel-feed pump diaphragm and piston raises pressure to around 40-50psi in the galleries around the piston head, and oil at 400-860psi activates the pistons in the injector bodies through an electronic valve rather than cams. Fuel reaches a maximum working pressure of 21,000psi at the point of delivery, while the boost pressure does not exceed 22psi.

The electronic management system undertakes 50 individual calculations per second, monitoring throttle position, turbo boost pressure and temperature, engine speed, injection timing and fuel temperature, so that the optimum load is delivered at precisely the right time.

The engine revs to a maximum of 3800rpm, delivers 270hp at the propeller, works on a compression-ratio of 15:1, and has a 4.11in bore and 4.18in stroke. It is available linked to Bravo One, Bravo Two or Bravo Three sterndrives, or as an inboard installation.

Measuring 47in long by 30in wide by 22in high, it weighs in at 1417lb dry, including the Bravo Three drive, and meets Bodensee Stage 2 and SAV1 standards for emission controls.

**Enquiries** Sowester Ltd, Stinsford Road, Nuffield Industrial Estate, Poole, Dorset BH17 0SW. Tel: 01202 667700.



'shaken down' by professionals.

The twin 300hp units were on 1.81:1-ratio Bravo Three drives, with twin contra-rotating, three-blade stainless steel propellers of 26in pitch. The flexibility of the installation made the Tomahawk 41 a pleasure to use throughout the performance envelope.

In a largely calm sea of less than 1m swells, we recorded a maximum speed of 38 knots. Before our arrival the boat had been timed at better than 40 knots, the difference probably being attributable to an intermittent fault at higher revs on one of the electronic engine management systems.

Boosted by the twin propellers on each drive, the hull developed immediate dynamic lift from its sprayrails to rise easily onto the plane. Once there it

ran flat and lazy, with the trim tabs remaining largely unused, save for balancing the boat in a cross-swell.

Perfect straight-line directional stability and precision in the turns engendered great confidence, and response to the throttles was instant, such that it was difficult to pick out any differences between these diesels and equivalent petrol units.

Low-speed manoeuvrability was as we expect from a twin-sterndrive configuration, the boat doing everything that was asked of it, ahead or astern.

Noise levels were consistent at 80-83dB(A) in the saloon and 82-84dB(A) in the cockpit. The fuel consumption figures we measured indicate a maximum of 34.3gph (156lph) and 18.8gph (85lph) at 3000rpm, a setting which gave 32.5 knots.

## Builders

Sunseeker International Ltd,  
27-31 West Quay Road,  
Poole, Dorset BH15 1HX.  
Tel: 01202 381111.

## Suppliers

Sunseeker Yachtcenter  
Krick GmbH, Germany.

## Sunseeker Tomahawk 41

**Engines** twin Mercuriser D-Tronic 300 diesels, 300hp at 3800rpm, V8, 7.3lt.

**Conditions** wind W Force 2, sea calm. **Load** fuel 50%, water 75%, crew 3.

							sound levels dB(A)	
rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	saloon	cockpit
2000	16.0	8.2	37	1.95	268	—	83	84
2250	20.0	9.7	44	2.06	282	—	80	81
2500	25.1	11.3	51	2.22	304	—	82	82
3000	32.5	18.8	85	1.73	237	—	83	84
3500	37.0	30.1	137	1.22	167	—	81	82
3750	38.0	34.3	156	1.10	151	—	82	82

**Acceleration** 0-25 knots, 11.7sec

(\* allows 20% margin)

**Loa**  
43ft 0in (13.10m)

**Beam**  
10ft 10in (3.30m)

**Draught**  
3ft 6in (1.09m)

**Displacement**  
8 tonnes

**Fuel capacity**  
226gal (1021lt)

**Water capacity**  
46gal (210lt)

**Price**  
from £137,460  
ex VAT; £154,750  
as tested

## Conclusions

In the Tomahawk 41, Sunseeker have once again produced a boat which delivers effortless performance and seems impossible to wrong-foot. The test conditions did little to tax its seakeeping capabilities, but it is unlikely that bigger seas would produce anything other than elation for the helmsman.

A more important question-mark concerns the engine options. With a triple Yamaha ME420 installation, delivering 54 knots, the boat retails in the UK at £165,720 ex VAT, and with twin 230hp Volvo Penta KAD42s the price is £137,460. The twin 300hp Mercuriser D-Tronic option we tested falls somewhere in between, at £154,750.

Power costs, but with a boat like this one extra performance justifies the difference.