



Waterline 30

Effectively the Seamaster 30 updated for the 21st Century, this practical riverboat has an impressive specification. **REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON**

York-based Waterline Leisure have been distributors of Viking riverboats for some years, so when increasing numbers of their customers began asking them for a larger model, they commissioned Viking Mouldings to develop and produce one.

The brief was for a 30ft inland cruiser that would provide plenty of accommodation and a high specification, but within reach of owners looking to trade up without forking out a six-figure sum.

The builders did not have far to look for their inspiration. Their factory in Essex occupies the site of the former Seamaster boatyard, renowned for producing good quality inland and estuary craft in the 1960s and 1970s. One of the most popular models of that era, the Seamaster 30, duly forms the basis of this 21st-Century offering.

We tested the Waterline 30 on Yorkshire's River Ouse.

DESIGN & LAYOUT

The boat follows a tried and tested path for inland cruisers. Inside, an aft-cabin layout means there is sleeping accommodation for four, in two separate en-suite cabins for privacy. Outside, a raised aft-deck helm position offers an ideal vantage point as well as enabling the helmsman to help with the ropework in locks.

Although the Waterline seems to have a higher freeboard than the Seamaster on which it is based, the hull is in fact an exact replica of the original designed by John Welch, featuring a shallow vee and a three-quarter-length keel.

Drawn from the original mould, the lay-up quantities are 19oz for the hull, rising to 27oz for the keel. One modification Viking have made, and a good one at that, is the steel bar that extends aft from the keel to protect the sterngear in the event of grounding.

Above the waterline, a single sprayrail drops away amidships while a slight flair at the bow diminishes to a small knuckle as it runs back along the length of the hull.

From the outside, the impression is of a fairly angular craft by modern standards. High stanchions, not far short of the coachroof, and large windows really stand out.

Access to the accommodation and the interior helm is either via an aft-cabin door or, we were pleased to note, a sliding door from the starboard side deck into the saloon. Moving around inside is easy with only shallow steps separating the levels of the aft master cabin, the central saloon and the forward cabin. ▶▶

worth a look



SLIDING DOOR

Very useful if helming inside on a grey day, this also relieves the aft cabin of through-traffic.



GALLEY

An excellent specification is typified by a domestic-sized cooker, including hob, grill and oven.

decks

The 9in side decks have high guardrails that make you feel a little enclosed, but are a good safety feature. Recessed handrails along the coachroof further aid your movement around the boat when locking along the river.

Standard deckware includes 9in bollard cleats forward and aft, 10in T-bar cleats for springs and a stainless steel bow-roller.

Steps in the aft quarters, one of which houses the gas bottles, lead down from the side decks to the bathing platform.

aft deck Accessed from the side decks or by ladder from the bathing platform, this incorporates the outside helm and seating for four people, and is enclosed by guardrails.

outside helm A fairly sparse console has only a start/stop button for the engine, a steering wheel and a throttle control.



accommodation

As standard, sleeping for four is provided by way of double berths in both the forward and aft cabins, each with an en-suite toilet/shower compartment.

But there is flexibility over interior fit-out, and buyers can specify options such as a convertible dinette in the aft cabin, vee-berths in the forecabin and a converting settee arrangement in the saloon to provide an extra occasional berth.

saloon Integrating the galley, inside helm and social area, the saloon still succeeds in feeling spacious. An L-shaped sofa will seat four around an occasional table that can be stowed in a sliding drawer.



galley Dominated by its cooker, the galley also offers plenty of workspace and sink with drainer. A good amount of stowage is provided, but no shelving or fiddled edges.



inside helm The console has basic engine instrumentation, and a shelf area offers space for any additional electronics. The large helm seat spills over into the galley area.



aft cabin This is the master cabin, with a good-sized double berth, a dressing table, a hanging locker and drawer unit.



toilets Each cabin has an en-suite compartment that includes a toilet, a shower and a moulded sink unit. Frosted windows offer privacy, and they incorporate vents.

Hand-crafted in teak joinery, the interior feels spacious, offering around 6ft of headroom and masses of natural light throughout.

POWER OPTIONS

Although many Seamasters were fitted with twin engines, the focus on river cruising and the emergence of the bow-thruster means only a single engine is deemed necessary to provide full control

of the Waterline 30.

Our test boat came with the 52hp Nanni diesel and no thruster, although the standard specification is to be a 32hp Nanni with a thruster.

HANDLING & PERFORMANCE

The builders have enjoyed something of a head start by using a proven hull, known to offer good directional handling and stability through the marriage of a

shallow-vee hull and a keel.

As soon as we moved away from our mooring, the boat's good manners became evident. At the sparse but functional outside helm, the wheel and throttle control can be reached comfortably when standing, and with a couple of dabs of throttle we were clear of the jetty.

With a maximum speed of around 7 knots at 3000rpm, the Waterline is not quick by any means, but nor does it need to be. Instead, the rev range allows a steady, controllable increase from 2.5 knots at tick-over (900rpm) to an acceptable river speed of 4.5 knots at 1600rpm.

Noise levels are low: no more than 65db(A) at the outside helm, 69db(A) in the saloon and 70db(A) in the aft cabin at 5 knots.

Putting the throttle controls astern will bring you to a halt easily, and thereafter show only a slight sign of prop walk to starboard.



specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic	ENGINE	single 52hp Nanni diesel
RCD	design category D	BUILDERS	Viking Mouldings, Unit 11, Ongar Road Trading Estate, 20 Ongar Road, Great Dunmoor, Essex CM6 1EU. Tel: 01371 875214
LENGTH OVERALL	30ft (9.14m)	SUPPLIERS	Waterline Leisure, Acaster Malbis, York YO23 2UY. Tel: 01904 702049. www.waterlineleisure.co.uk
BEAM	11ft 6in (3.51m)	PRICE	£79,995 inc VAT
DRAUGHT	2ft 9in (0.84m)		
AIR DRAUGHT	8ft 2in (2.46) with screen up		
DISPLACEMENT	3.0 tonnes		
FUEL CAPACITY	50gal (227lt)		
WATER CAPACITY	50gal (227lt)		

engineroom



A double hatch in the saloon sole opens up a roomy enginebay. All sides of the single diesel can be got at, and access to the service points could not be better, with filters, seacocks and batteries all easily to hand.

Fuel and water tanks sit on either side, inaccessible, while the standard-fit calorifier sits snugly at the forward end.

A separate hatch for the shaft, stern glands and throttle cables is in the companionway aft.

the rivals

RENAISSANCE 30 £92,925 inc VAT

Four/five-berth boat that can get under Osney Bridge on the Thames. Tel: 01932 226266. www.waltonmarine.co.uk

SHEERLINE 950 £86,950 inc VAT

A large open cockpit, and four berths despite having no aft cabin. Tel: 0118 9403211. www.valwyattmarine.co.uk

HAINES 29 £82,217 inc VAT

Hardtop style, and a good level of interior fit-out. Tel: 01692 582180. www.hainesmarine.co.uk

conclusions

LAYOUT

With two good-sized en-suite cabins and a sociable saloon, this is a boat for easy living. We would like to see a little more attention to detail in the galley and at the inside helm.

BUILD

A contributing factor to the popularity of this boat will surely be its incredibly full standard specification, which includes everything from mooring spikes to Eberspächer heating, and from a first-aid pack to a shorepower connection.

PERFORMANCE

You get economic cruising at under 1gph, with all the power you will ever need on the river and easy manoeuvring. After a day's cruising, we returned to base feeling every bit as relaxed as when we had left.

mbm verdict

The Waterline 30 provides a useful step up in size for existing owners of Viking of similar riverboats.

We tested boat number one, which meant there were a few aspects that needed revising, but no more than would normally be expected.

Two areas that really separate this boat from the crowd are its price and its specification. That Viking and Waterline have managed to put together such a complete package at the price they have is impressive.

Yes, there are prettier 30ft aft-cabin boats, and even some with a little more space, but not to the same specification without a £20,000 hike in price.