

BOAT REPORT

BEAUX BATEAUX 43



INTO THE FAST LANE



Colvic is one of the oldest names in the modern UK boating industry, Beaux Bateaux one of the newest. Between them they have produced a powerful challenger in the cruiser market, at the same time breaking with accepted production methods. Emrhys Barrell reports.

BOAT REPORT



Pictures: William Payne

Colvic's Sunquest range allows individual builders free reign within the constraints of the mouldings to create an interior unique to themselves or even that particular craft. Beaux Bateaux's approach to the boat we tested was to utilise the increasingly popular finish of ash, but to relieve this with an attractive teak inlay.

COLVIC are one of the great survivors of the industry. Concentrating solely on moulding in GRP over the past 28 years, they have provided hulls for countless amateur boatbuilders to fit out at home. Probably their best known craft are the Colvic Watson range. Sturdy trawler-style motorboats and motor sailers, these have graced front gardens from Land's End to John O'Groats, but the company also has a full range of sail and power models up to 50ft.

Until recently they have not been strong in the planing motorboat field, but under the Sunquest banner they have now produced a range of fast designs from 29-43ft, soon to extend to 53ft. Whilst these are still available for home construction (a description of the Motoraway concept is on p106), projects of this size are most suited to completion by professionals. Colvic have teamed up with a number of companies to do this.

The latest of these is Beaux Bateaux, and it was their version of the 43 that caught our eye at the Southampton Boat Show. Beaux Bateaux was formed by a team of ex-employees of Fairline Boats. Paying their old company the greatest compliment, they have taken the skills they learnt there, and moved half a mile up the road to start their own firm.

BEAUX BATEAUX 43



The boat we tested on a cold day in November was the first off the production line, but they are now up to boat number three, with orders for other models in the Sunquest range.

Design

The Sunquest 43 was designed by John Bennett, a name coming back into prominence in the fast cruiser market. Hull form is medium-to-deep vee, with a deadrise of 21° amidships, 17° at the transom.

Two sprayrails are moulded into the hull, but these are kept short, running from the stem, back about one third of the length of the hull. The wide chine flat runs full length, giving extra planing lift, and helping deflect the spray down and out. A pronounced knuckle runs 9in above the waterline and parallel to it, blending into the chine forward, with a second knuckle two-thirds of the way up the topsides. These reduce the spray creeping up the topsides, add stiffness to the flat panel, and improve the styling of the boat. The transom is vertical below the waterline, moving away from the reverse sheer on Bennett's recent designs, but has a raked profile above the water, with the bathing platform moulded integrally.

BOAT REPORT

Accommodation

The layout of the 43 follows conventional thinking, with aft cockpit, central saloon/wheelhouse, flybridge, and berths for up to six.

Entering the saloon from the cockpit, you find an L-shaped settee to starboard and, opposite, a large sideboard. This contains several lockers and drawers, ample for the cruising person's stowage needs, plus a locker for the TV and a cocktail drawer. It was good to see the drawers made from solid wood rather than plastic kits, and running on rollers for smoothness. Joinery here and throughout the boat is in ash, with a teak inlay, making this one of the most attractively finished interiors we have seen for some time. Alternatively, teak alone can be specified.

Forward to starboard is the lower helm position, with a two-person seat. The wheel is comfortably placed, with room for your knees, and the engine controls to starboard fall easily

to hand. To the right of the wheel is a competent panel of ready-use switches, while to the left is a section of indicator lights on an outline drawing of the boat. Known as a mimic panel, this is becoming increasingly common, and shows at a glance the operational state of bilge pumps, nav lights, engine-room blowers and interior lights. Ahead of the wheel are two panels of Volvo engine instruments, with between them, the steering compass. The latter could do with being more elevated for a better view.

To the left of the helm position is the chart area, well placed for either the helmsman or the navigator. The log, echo-sounder and autopilot are positioned overhead, in a console that needs a better angle, something which will be corrected on later boats. The radar and VHF are also overhead, suspended in a pod to port which at first sight is intrusive, but the positioning does work. To the helmsman's



Beaux Bateaux 43

Engines: Twin Volvo TAMD 61A, 306hp at 2800rpm, 6 cyl, 5480cc.

Conditions: Wind S'y force 4, sea slight. **Load:** Fuel 50%, water 25%, crew 4.

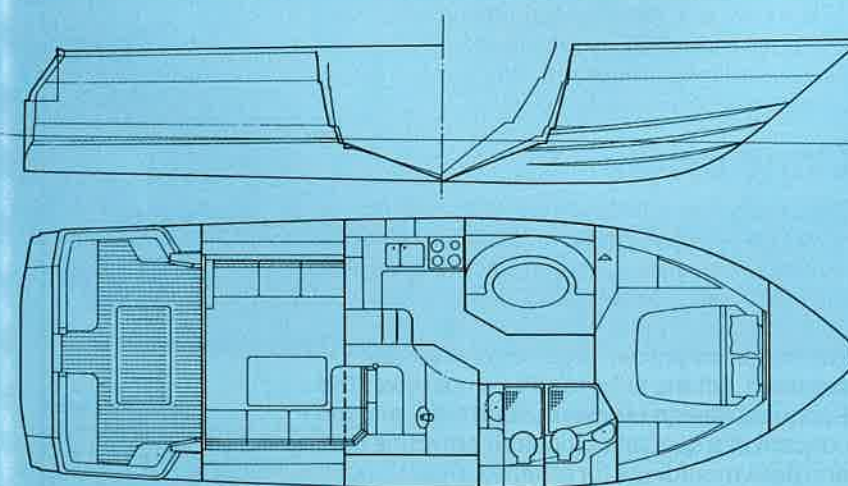
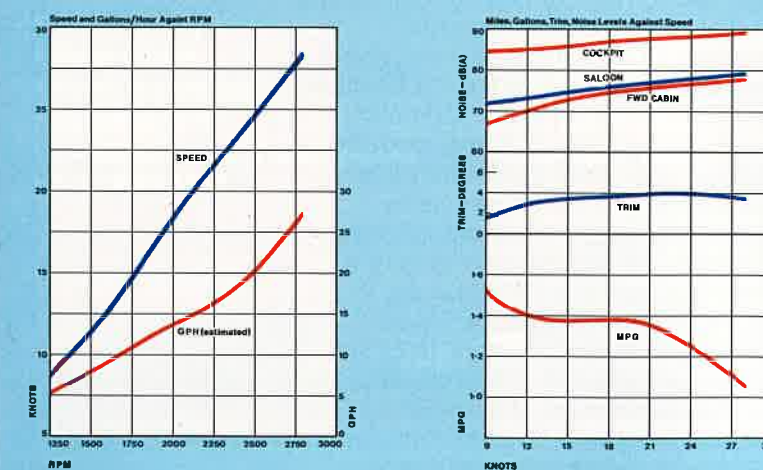
rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	trim	Sound levels dB(A)			
							saloon	fwd cab	ckpt	flybdg
1250	9.0	5.9	26.8	1.52	395	1.5	72	67	85	76
1500	11.3	7.9	35.8	1.43	392	3.0	73	69	85	76
1750	14.8	10.8	49.2	1.37	356	3.5	75	73	85	76
2000	18.7	13.5	61.4	1.39	361	3.5	76	75	87	77
2250	21.5	15.9	72.4	1.35	351	4.0	77	76	88	78
2500	24.8	20.0	90.7	1.24	322	4.0	78	77	88	79
2800	28.2	27.5	125.0	1.03	268	3.5	79	78	89	80

Acceleration: 0-25 knots, 13.5secs

LOA	43ft 0in (13.10m)	Fuel	2x130gal (1180lt)
Hull length	42ft 6in (12.96m)	Water	100gal (450lt)
Waterline length	36ft 6in (11.13m)	Designer	John Bennett & Associates
Beam	13ft 10in (4.21m)	Price with 306hp Volvo TAMD 61As	£156,070 ex VAT
Draught	3ft 8in (1.12m)		
Displacement	11 tons		

Builder:

Beaux Bateaux, Nene Valley Business Park, Oundle, Peterborough PE8 4HN. Tel: 0832 274199.



BEAUX BATEAUX 43

right, the side window slides to allow him to speak to the crew on deck. Below the chart area is the main electrical distribution panel, behind a perspex door that is going to be re-sited to improve its opening.

Down three steps, the galley is found to port. This is a bright and open area, though with only average work top space. Equipment is comprehensive, with a four-plate electric hob, run from the standard generator, a microwave/convector oven, large fridge and double sink. A large locker under the worktop is backed up by three smaller lockers overhead, and a cave-locker with sliding doors outboard.

Forward of the galley, still on the portside of the boat, is the lower dinette. This has an attractively-shaped settee, with room for four or five people, and a very pretty table which could be lowered to make an occasional double berth. Alternatively this area can be used for a twin-bedded guest cabin. Further lockers overhead add to the stowage space.

Opposite the dinette area is the starboard guest cabin. This runs partly under the saloon, giving 6ft 1in headroom at its forward end, reducing to 4ft over the athwartships double berth aft. A hanging locker and drawers provide stowage. Hatches under the berths lead straight into the hull at present, but plastic 'bin bags' will be fitted to these in future, giving extra storage space.

Forward again to starboard is the main toilet compartment. This is compact, but makes excellent use of the space, by siting the basin in a recess, and mounting the WC out to the side of the hull. Two lockers provide ample stowage, while an opening portlight provides light and ventilation.

The spacious master cabin is in the bow of the boat. This has a large double berth, plus en-suite bathroom. Stowage is provided by a narrow hanging locker, dressing table with lockers underneath, and three more overhead holds each side. A hatch in the forward bulkhead gives access to the anchor locker, but regrettably, this has no seal to keep out damp and smells. The standard of glasswork revealed up here is good, with the inside of the hull gelled out. Ventilation in the cabin is provided by an overhead hatch, and opening portlights either side. Additional light comes from attractive brass eye-ball lights overhead. The en-suite bathroom is a good size, with 5ft 11in headroom, two large lockers, and an opening portlight.

Engines

Twin Volvo TAMD 61s were fitted to the test boat, although other options are available. The installation under the saloon is a tight one, though good access to the top of the engine is provided by two large hatches in the floor. These lift up complete with carpet, and can be opened without having to remove furniture, a good feature that gets increasingly forgotten

BOAT REPORT

in today's style-conscious interior designs. Access to the rear of the engineroom is via a manhole at the aft end of the saloon. As you climb in here, you stand on the substantial battery box, which gets in the way. This will be moved into the lazarette. The batteries it contains are three 200Ah units, split for engine start and domestics.

The engineering is good. Large sea-inlet strainers are connected to the engine with reinforced rubber hose. The large Racor fuel filters are not easy to get to at present, but moving the batteries will improve this. A good fuel change-over system is fitted, accessible from the cockpit. The fuel tanks port and starboard are aluminium, white enamelled to improve the finish down below. Fuel lines are copper, well-clipped out of the way.

Engineroom insulation is white plastic-faced foam rubber, and this proved most effective during our trials. The boat is divided into three watertight compartments, each with its own automatic electric pump, with a switchable manual back-up unit. Two automatic fire-extinguishers complete the engineroom specification.

Exterior

The cockpit is deep and secure, with cushioned seats across the stern, and lockers underneath. A walk-through transom door leads out onto the bathing platform. This is set in a recess in the transom, and usefully, it does not run right out to the side of the boat—handy if you are leaving a tight berth where you might clip the pontoon. The exhausts are run down to the stern in GRP boxes, which reduces noise when at rest, and fumes when underway. Six fender stowages, and a pair of davits as standard, complete the hardware out here.

A hatch in the cockpit sole gives access to the lazarette. The hatch is supported on gas struts, and we were pleased to see a good rubber seal round the rim. Inside you find the aluminium freshwater tank. The sender unit on this is vulnerable, and should be moved or protected. The standard Vetus 6kVA generator is also located down here, but there is still plenty of room for stowage of dinghy, outboard, cockpit covers and other equipment. Access to the steering gear is good, but a box should be built round this to protect it, and this is being done on future boats.

A stainless steel ladder with teak steps leads up to the spacious flybridge. We were pleased to see the large access hatch here, which avoids you banging your back as you climb through. Gas struts hold the hatch open, and a lip and seal stop water running down below. The flybridge itself is deep and secure, with good all-round rails. The helmsman and navigator are provided with sumptuous deep bucket seats, while the rest of the passengers have an L-shaped lounge behind. The driving

position is good, with well-placed Morse engine controls, and a good view.

Getting out of the cockpit onto the side-decks is helped by teak non-slip pads on the coaming, and strategically-placed grabrails on the cabin. The side-decks themselves are 12-14in wide, with a moulded non-slip surface and a wide gunwale lip. The non-slip is carried over the forward coachroof, a useful safety feature if you should have to change sides in a hurry. Guardrails are solid stainless steel tubing, with a solid lower rail. They are a good height, (30-33in), but could do with being more firmly mounted forward. Mooring is taken care of by 12in stainless steel cleats, forward, midships and aft, while an electric winch handles the anchor.

Handling and performance

For all the blustery wind, we were unable to find any serious waves on our trials, but previous runs on other versions of the Sunquest 43 have shown it to be a capable sea-boat. Handling in the marina was excellent, with well set-up controls, and good response both to rudder and engines.

Out on our tests, the Beaux Bateaux clocked up a maximum of 28.2 knots, with the 306hp TAMD 61s spot-on their rated 2800rpm. At this speed our estimates show a likely fuel consumption of 27.5 gallons per hour, giving 1.03mpg, and a maximum range of 270 miles. Dropping down to 2500rpm and 25 knots improves these figures to 1.24mpg and 320 miles respectively, while at a comfortable 2250rpm and 21.5 knots you should be getting the best figures, of around 1.35mpg and 350 miles. Noise levels were generally good, with maximums of 79dB(A) in the saloon, 80dB(A) on the flybridge. These improved only slightly at 21 knots, to 77 and 78dB(A) respectively. Out of the cockpit, matters were a lot noisier, showing 88-89dB(A), and this was despite the transom exhausts which according to our figures scarcely helped matters, even at tickover. Beaux Bateaux offer Elastomuffle silencers as an option, and these would appear to be a good idea if you intend spending time in the cockpit whilst underway.

Conclusion

The Beaux Bateaux 43 shows an excellent standard of finish, particularly for a first boat from a new company. The engineering is good, the attention to detail likewise. The basic specification is high, with such items as generator, davits and electric windlass as standard, yet the price is still competitive. The Sunquest design is powerful and safe, and the concept of a specialist moulder providing hull and deck mouldings for others to fit out certainly seems to have worked. ■