

# Fairline

## Phantom 50

*The brand new flagship of the smaller Fairline flybridge range is designed to be everything you would want in a comfortable motor cruiser, without stepping into the 'luxury' class.*



**F**airline are realigning their two flybridge ranges, with the more opulent Squadron line-up to go no smaller than 52ft, and the Phantom models to peak at 50ft. This marks the new three-cabin Phantom 50 as the flagship of its range.

We were invited to the builders' new facility in Ipswich, to give the first of these boats a spin in a shifty North Sea.

### Design & layout

Designer Bernard Olesinski, who has been responsible for Fairlines for more than a decade, has followed his usual policy of making subtle modifications to the well proven formula of a medium-to-deep-vee hull.

He has extended the underwater sections right under the bathing platform, to give the Phantom 50 as long a waterline length as possible.

And more work has been done on the prop shaft tunnels, which help





## BOAT REPORT

to keep the drivetrain at an efficient angle and the engines as low in the boat as possible. Their design is hugely important in order to achieve a clean flow to the propellers.

Above the water, Fairline have pushed the split-window line hard. This not only gives the superstructure a distinctive look but in turn makes the interior light and easy to see out from, whether you are pottering in the raised galley or sitting in the

complete with large, separate shower cubicles.

Outside, the cockpit is large enough to allow some loose furniture to augment the transom seating, should the flybridge be too exposed for al-fresco evening dining. But the latter area is in itself roomy and sociable, with a good assortment of seating around the helm as well as a large dinette opposite an angled wet-bar.

Our test boat was

### Bathing platform

The bathing platform is teak-laid as standard, and being an integral part of the hull it extends virtually to the full beam of the vessel, which makes boarding easy when you are moored alongside a pontoon. The topside returns on both flanks are fitted with handholds.



The platform's depth, following the current trend, is generous enough that it can be used to land a tender. Two inset hatches give onto a wet locker and boarding ladder with teak treads.

### Flybridge

The teak-stepped stairwell makes getting to and from the flybridge extremely easy, helped by an array of grabrails to lend a steadying hand.

The designers have banished any thought of providing a completely separate sunbed, opting instead for plenty of seating and lots of room to move around. That said, the generous dinette right aft will convert into a sunpad when



required, and the arc of settee beside the helm flips up to turn it into a sunlounger. A moulded promontory

nearer the dinette houses the components for a wet-bar, and an optional electric griddle.

Both the skipper, sitting centrally, and his companion have clear access to their seats without having to ask each other to move. And the seats themselves are comfortable, with good high backs,

and handholds worked into them so that people standing behind can steady themselves. Between the seats is a handy 'bits' tray.

Although the console is arranged around the skipper's seat, there is plenty of room in front of the co-pilot to port for navigation instruments. To the skipper's right hand are the throttles, and just further over still is a perspex-covered area for a folded chart.



comfortable saloon.

There are three well-appointed, nicely proportioned cabins, in the standard layout comprising two doubles and a twin. Both of the former are fully en-suite,

### Cockpit

The teak-laid cockpit is almost completely sheltered by the flybridge overhang, so if you want to set this area up with a table and chairs, to supplement the comfortable transom bench,



they are not going to come to any harm.

Fairline have stuck with their nice idea of keeping the area beneath the stairs to the flybridge completely open, rather than boxed in. This makes for a greater feeling of space as well as providing an

out-of-the-way area for chucking down kit bags and victuals while you get them sorted.

Across the way, a cupboard in the superstructure return houses the manual bilge pump manifold, the fuel cocks and the controls for the engineroom fire-extinguishers. At either quarter, rope bins have been worked into the coaming to stow the lines.

On our test boat the optional crew cabin had been fitted, accessed through the cockpit sole. It is what an estate agent would call 'compact', with the loo tucked under the berth and very limited stowage. An access panel lifts out to enable you to get at the steering gear.

Having the crew cabin reduces the size of the adjacent lazaret, although

there is still loads of room for the standard 7kW generator and the battery boxes, while leaving space for a useful amount of loose gear. The large hatch is supported on gas struts, and the compartment is moulded out with small cut-outs so you can get at the bilge.



### Decks

A couple of decent steps lead from the cockpit up to the 10in (25cm) wide side decks.

With the guardrails extending right aft, and a deep toerail, no-one is going to feel nervous about venturing forward. To lend further security still, a handrail is provided inboard, running along the main superstructure, and there are

further rails on the coachroof.

At the bow, there is plenty of room to work on the flat, with the vertical windlass half-submerged under a two-part hatch that gives onto the chain locker. The latter is not segmented, alas, but a couple of fender baskets are fitted.

There are two sets of 10in (25cm) cleats amidships, as well as at the bows and stern.





with twin Volvo Penta D12s, totalling some 1350hp, which are the most potent engine option of the three currently offered. The other two are 480hp TAMD 74s and 615hp D12s.

## Performance & handling

Olesinski's tweaking of the Phantom hull seems to have worked admirably. Not only do you get the comfortable, well mannered, poundless ride for which his designs are noted, but you get it over a greater range of speeds than ever.

This is noticeable not least when you back off the throttle, which in a great many boats would induce some wet and unwieldy behaviour. The top speed we recorded was 32.2 knots, but when working our way back through the rev range we thought the hull still felt to be on the plane right down as low as 14 knots, which we achieved at 1400rpm.

In addition, for fuel-conscious cruising, the 21 knots we clocked



## Saloon

The large sliding door from the cockpit into the saloon is biased to starboard, so the comings and goings do not disturb those seated on the main U-shaped settee to port.

Opposite the latter, and nicely angled towards it, is a sideboard unit with room for a television and entertainment centre. There is also a further two-seater settee.

By extending the wooden table, which is fitted with fiddles, and pulling across the smaller settee, seven or eight place settings can be fitted in for dining. The voids within the settee base are lined out for stowage.

Further forward, a peninsula-shaped bar breaks up the midships part of the saloon, and can be equipped with an icemaker or fridge to complement its range of dedicated glass and bottle

stowage; there is further storage outboard, and within a cupboard set in the adjacent helm seat plinth.

Headroom runs to 6ft 5in (1.96m), and the deckhead is thoughtfully provided with an inset handrail. In fact, Fairline's design team have installed a flow of grabrails to take you right through the boat, including one around the raised galley surround and banisters down the stairs towards the cabins.

The large, two-tier side windows give excellent visibility out when you are seated, and there are sections in both tiers that open electrically.

A large hatch within the sole allows access to what Fairline call the 'service room', with some extra general stowage, room to fit an additional freezer or linen cupboard, and space down either side to slot the compressor units if the optional air-conditioning is fitted. It is a bit of drop down inside, even though a ladder is provided.



## Port cabin

The port cabin has clear standing room towards the door as well as sitting headroom above the two 6ft 4in (1.93m) x 2ft 0in (0.61m) berths.

To supplement the decent-sized combined wardrobe and shelf unit, a couple of deep, lined lockers are built in beneath the inboard berth. For empty bags and the like, there is also a locker in the sole close to the door.



## Forward suite

The double berth in the forward cabin is an excellent size, at 6ft 4in (1.91m) long and 5ft 0in (1.52m) wide, with a comfortable padded surround to lean against while you enjoy an early morning cuppa. For the most part, there is 6ft 5in (1.96m) headroom.

Side tables have been incorporated, complete with small lockers for keeping safe personal effects. Clothes stowage is catered for by two good-sized hanging lockers, a couple of drawers built into the bunk base, and a range of eye-height lockers along either side of the cabin.

The en-suite WC has just the right proportions to allow one



## Interior helm

The inside helm position has two nicely contoured adjustable seats, the skipper's located inboard as is currently the trend. However, Fairline have not left a handy gap between the seats, as on some of their other recent models, so a co-pilot cannot squeeze out without disturbing the helmsman.

The console is well thought-out, with plenty of easy-to-reach angled fascia, and a neat pull-out chart table which drops down in front of

the co-pilot. Also in front of his position is the main breaker panel, protected by a clear Perspex screen.

The throttles are set centrally, in true flightdeck style, so that both occupants can easily get at them, as with the ready-use switches running ahead of them.

Standard electronics include an autopilot, log and sounder, as well as a dual-station VHF. A wet-card compass tops off the console. We were pleased to find the screen armed with blowers, to minimise misting-up should you find yourself battened down.



at 1700rpm gave a very creditable 0.83mpg — not bad for a 50-footer, even if there were still some ship's stores to come aboard.

Jack it up a bit further, a setting of 2000rpm allows you to get around at just shy of 27 knots. And, with noise levels very well contained, passagemaking at this pace is a fast, comfortable affair.

Our test day presented us with a typical Force 3-4 sea state that clearly wasn't going to tax the boat at all, even when we pushed offshore. But, bearing in mind the hull's pedigree and set-up, it is unlikely to be caught out in anything stiffer.

Handling was precise, and we were surprised how little bow-drop there was through the turns, making it easier to maintain speed and giving a dry ride to boot. Of course, there is a lot of boat and a lot of power here, but it is easily controlled with nicely set up EDC throttles and smooth steering.

Both helm stations are well configured for skipper and co-pilot, even if we felt that the interior helm seats could be raised slightly to give a better view past the bow without obliging you to sit bolt-upright; Fairline tell us they have this modification in hand.

Nudging back up the River Orwell from Harwich to Ipswich is a

pleasing, warm but smart feel to the compartment, which has an opening port, an extractor and an overhead hatch to let in extra light.



## Galley

Rather than being sunken, the galley is raised, residing at much the same level as the helm station. This permits the cook a good view and there is room for two to work without being a nuisance to each other.

The worksurfaces, which are Avonite and benefit from fiddles, run in parallel rather than round in a U-shape, although the outboard end has a cupboard built in, using the void beneath the side deck. Also worked into the coaming here is the extractor unit.

Built in beneath the ceramic hob is a combi microwave/oven, while the one-and-a-half-bowl sink lies opposite.

Stowage is plentiful and varied, with plenty of deep drawers, cupboards and a waste bin. One of the two curved-fronted lockers towards the screen is fitted out for crockery stowage, while the other would be good for frequent-use items such as coffee and tea jars. For cutlery, there is a drawer built into the helm plinth, easy for people laying the table to get at.

If you cannot do without your domestic white goods, the

stairwell leading forward can house a washing machine in preference to more storage —



and of course there is the option of putting a freezer in the 'service room' under the saloon.

## Starboard suite



The starboard cabin's 6ft 4in (1.91m) x 4ft 0in (1.22m) double berth is located outboard, but is open at the forward end so it is possible to slip in and out of bed from this side without necessarily disturbing your partner. However, if it is to bring them a cup of tea then warn them about the fairly limited headroom before they sit up!

The cabin is well appointed, with a useful amount of

clothes storage by way of a cupboard with hanging space and shelves, a useful fiddled shelf outboard beneath the two opening ports, and a lined compartment under the sole for bags.

A hinged portion of bulkhead behind a mirror allows ready access to the underside of the helm console if necessary.

The en-suite WC, which will serve as the boat's day toilet, is

much the same size as the forecabin's, allowing use of the shower cubicle and the vanity area and sink by two different people at the same time. But some extra room beneath the countertop has allowed for an extra bin locker, for use as a small laundry basket, perhaps.

Again, there is a hatch augmenting the opening port and extractor.





## Engineroom

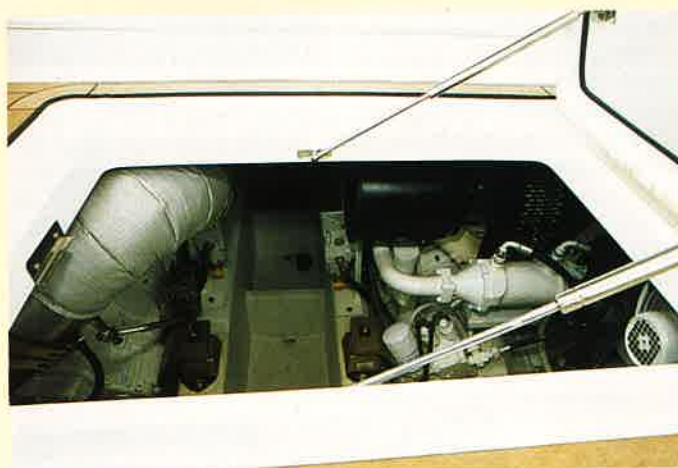
A gas strut supported hatch in the cockpit, just ahead of the one that opens up the lazaret, gives access to the enginespace. As usual, the saloon sole can also be lifted out for any major engineering operations.

There is certainly room enough to get around the two engines, although a treadplate across the bilge areas would not go amiss, especially since you have to make your way between the units to

inspect the raw-water strainers right forward.

The primary fuel filters are set inboard and accessible, and there are no maintenance items that cannot be got at readily, even though the fuel tanks are in the wings.

There is around 1ft (0.3m) between the belt end of the engines and the forward bulkhead, which is not too bad, and the shaft logs, which on future boats will be of the low-maintenance non-drip type, are also easily reached.



fair old haul at low speed, taking an hour or so, but the boat stayed true in the water without continuous attention to the helm, making steering a relaxed operation. Speed at tickover is around 6 knots.

## Conclusions

Fairline seem to have spent some time deciding exactly where

a boat of this size should fit in their model range.

It could of course have been used to ease customers into the more upmarket Squadron range, but then again it would have been foolhardy to neglect those potential buyers who want a comfortable three-cabin boat without paying the premium for a grander fit-out.

The new Phantom 50 seems a neat answer. It gives you everything you might reasonably want from a craft of this size — plenty of well proportioned accommodation and deck space, a high level of fit-out and the promise of fast cruising — and if you really want that little extra panache, the Squadron line-up starts with a 52.

## BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

## RECREATIONAL CRAFT DIRECTIVE

Design Category B: Offshore (offshore voyages in wind up to Force 8)

## DIMENSIONS

### LOA

50ft 1in (15.24m)

### HULL LENGTH

49ft 0in (14.94m)

### BEAM

14ft 0in (4.27m)

### DRAUGHT

4ft 0in (1.20m)

### AIR DRAUGHT

17ft 0in (5.16m)

### DISPLACEMENT

17.3 tons

### FUEL CAPACITY

480gal (2180lt)

### WATER CAPACITY

132gal (600lt)

## ENGINES

twin Volvo Penta D12 EDCs  
6cyl 12.0lt diesels  
675hp at 2300rpm

## PRICE

£464,060 inc VAT as standard

## SUPPLIERS

Peters plc, Chichester Marina,  
Birdham, Sussex PO20 7EJ.  
Tel: 01243 511381.

## BUILDERS

Fairline Boats plc, Oundle,  
Peterborough PE8 5PA.  
Tel: 01832 273661.

## Fairline Phantom 50

### PERFORMANCE & FUEL CONSUMPTION

sound levels dB(A)

rpm	knots#	gph†	lph†	mpg†	range*	trim	saln	mdcab	flybg	ckpt
1200	11.4	12.3	56	0.93	357	3.5	70	70	68	81
1400	13.8	16.2	74	0.85	326	4.5	71	72	70	82
1600	19.1	22.0	100	0.87	334	5.0	72	72	72	83
1700	21.1	25.5	116	0.83	319	4.5	72	73	72	83
1800	23.4	28.2	128	0.83	319	4.5	72	74	72	84
1900	25.2	32.3	147	0.78	300	4.5	73	74	72	84
2000	26.8	37.3	170	0.72	276	4.5	74	74	73	84
2200	29.9	50.6	230	0.59	227	4.5	77	76	75	86
2350	32.2	57.2	260	0.56	215	4.5	78	78	75	88

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

CONDITIONS wind southwesterly Force 4, sea slight

LOAD fuel 100%, water 75%, crew 2

