

# Galeon Galia 990

Rarely has a 33ft sportscruiser offered so much bang for your buck. But is this Polish-built newcomer's performance a match for its more established rivals? We headed out into a Force 6 to test its mettle. **REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON**



**A**s British boatbuilders have continually lengthened their waterlines in recent years, they have left gaps at the smaller end of the market to be filled by yards from overseas.

Polish builders Galeon are one of the many rivals stepping into the breach. Their range of 25-40ft motor cruisers are making a fine impression thanks to their high level of finish and smart detailing.

They also seem to represent great value for money. If you want good news for bank balances across the land, look no further than the Galia 990, a 33ft diesel-powered sportscruiser with a starting price of less than £90,000.

But is there a hidden price to pay for choosing an inexpensive boat from an unproven, east-European marque? Taking a 990 out in a stiff southeasterly outside Poole Harbour would ask it some hard questions and leave it no place to hide.

## DESIGN & BUILD

Galeon's styling skills are still developing — witness the recent arrival of the more curvaceous 330 flybridge cruiser — but the 990's lines are less smooth and flowing than those of its market rivals.

To use football analogy, it is a tale of two halves. The topsides have a lean look that seem to predate the more pronounced and

intricate deck level mouldings.

The sharp, low entry is reminiscent of a 1980s Tremlett, but if you don't like the aesthetics perhaps the optional blue gelcoat colour will mask the hull's slender form.

Back on deck, the arched section of side deck that runs above the bared ribs of the engine intakes is rather more modern, but the overall design is not particularly fluid. The clean curve of the transom contrasts with an intricate superstructure full of busy lines, and a pronounced beak at the bow.

However, it is clear that the designers have put in some quality time at their drawing board, and also probably ventured out to sea in their creation. Practicality and good sense

shine through, everything is expertly finished, and the quality of the mouldings and the materials used shines through.

The amount and the grade of the stainless steel fittings is especially impressive, and the interior has plenty of mahogany, with soft, fiddled edges.

Only the bilges let things down slightly. For the most part it is painted-out, but peer behind the scenes and the some of the sheen diminishes, its place taken by raw GRP and swarf.

The cockpit layout is unlikely to cause UK builders any sleepless nights, but it is tidily arranged. A split-level sole means that the helm position is raised up from the social seating area behind it, which of course creates more space for the midships cabin below.

The balance between the cockpit and interior space is generally well proportioned, delivering plenty of space below decks. That feeling is helped by the width of the accommodation, especially in the companionway between the galley and toilet compartment, and by the fact that Galeon have not tried to squeeze in a separate forward cabin.

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Stuttering styling is outshone by fine finish and practicality.

**ACCOMMODATION**

An all-mahogany fit out, stretching from sole to deckhead detailing, creates a warm ambience for the four-berth interior. Bare mouldings appear to have been banned, in

favour of what looks suspiciously like high-quality alcantara to fill any odd gaps between the cabinetry.

Instead of trying to squeeze in a master cabin, the designers have opted for a simple open-plan layout forward, allowing a good sweep of seating to wrap itself around a splendid-looking fiddled table.

The table's stainless steel pedestal and solid mahogany surface have a quality feel, but there is more: a button allows its height to be adjusted electronically, so there is no scrabbling around underneath when you want to convert the dinette into a 6ft 2in x 6ft 2in berth.

Long shards of side window and an overhead hatch help to counteract the weight of the mahogany.

The midships cabin lies behind a proper doorway, but feels cosy rather than particularly enclosed. There is a decent amount of height over the large double berth, enough to allow you to sit up at either end, and portholes let in natural light.

Unless you are sleeping, you will spend most of your time around the entrance, where a small bench and a hanging locker complement the standing headroom.

Headroom is also good in the toilet and shower compartment, although its width is conspicuously tight for a boat of this length. On the plus side it is tidy, with its fair share of mahogany trim.

The adjacent galley suffers no such limitations. With a good run of cabinets and worktop, it provides a place for everything and ensures that it stays there. The crockery

lockers above the Corian countertop have removable slats, and below all this the fridge is joined by a large cupboard and drawers.

The standard Wallas diesel-powered cooker might not find favour with everyone, but it has the advantage of tying in with the optional warm-air heating system.

Between the galley and the forward dinette, a rounded cabinet conceals a wet-bar.

Everywhere you look, the quality of the finish is high. Ports are finished with mahogany beading, while many of the

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No glossy veneers. Just simple lines and solid mahogany joinery.

lockers have interior lights, automatically illuminating upon opening.

**EXTERIOR**

The split-level cockpit may not dazzle, but it does what it does very well. The level of fit and finish is good, helped by the teak sole and table. Smart LED courtesy lights illuminate your way at night.

A U-shaped sofa provides the main seating area with tidy locker space provided underneath. This also drops down to a sunpad with the aid of the teak table.

Opposite, the wet-bar comes only with a sink as standard, but there is room for a refrigerator and grill if required. Its smart granite top looks good, and matches the carbon detailing on the radar arch.

It is tempting to gravitate towards the excellent twin bucket helm seats, the



navigator's position being every bit as good as the helmsman's. Set before you, a two-tier console provides room for both traditional and modern navigational aids, with a chart table and dedicated space for a 10in chartplotter.

If you board via the deep bathing platform, you cannot fail but be impressed by the curve of transom that leads you round to safe, inset stairwells up to the 8in side decks.

Unfortunately, the chunky guardrails that line the side decks start a fair way forward, leaving you unprotected on the aft stretch.

But there is a small grabrail on the outboard side of the radar arch, and the cockpit canopy offers a line of handholds when it's raised.

At the foredeck, two hatches flank the electric windlass, allowing good access into the anchor locker. Forward of the locker, the guardrails part to provide a clear run forward

to the pulpit, which is handy when you are picking up a buoy, but a safety chain would be welcome.

**ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS**

The outdrive engine options list reads like a Volvo Penta brochure, showing no fewer than 11 choices. Two are for petrol installations, and another two for single diesels, leaving seven different twin-diesel set-ups ranging from a total of 340hp to 620hp.

That's quite a range, but most buyers will quickly home in on two or three of the twin-diesel options.

Our test boat's twin 230hp KAD43s did a worthy job, and delivered a level of performance that questioned the need to make the 60hp jump up to KAD44s.

Entering the enginebay is no mean feat. There seems no easy way to lower yourself in, and when your feet do eventually touch down, it will probably be on a cable track that has unhelpfully been laid across the

only obvious spot to stand.

With a bit of deft footwork, however, the bay can be reasonably inspected, and the fuel lines are sited so that they can be reached from cockpit level.

The bay is quite tidy, and covered with a neat insulating finish. Battery banks are set to each side, and the cockpit table has a dedicated stowage.

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Plenty of power options, to fill a tidy if unfriendly engine room.

**PERFORMANCE & HANDLING**

Poole Harbour entrance and a billowing southeasterly wind, don't go together particularly well if an afternoon of laid-back cruising is required. But for testing a boat's performance they're a match made in heaven. Recording useful speed data might be tricky, but you can quickly find out about a hull's capabilities.

The 990's vee form is not particularly deep, but bashing into quite a fierce 6ft-8ft chop didn't deter it. Our 50ft photoboat appeared to be struggling rather more than this plucky sportscruiser.

The Galeon also accelerated resolutely across a beam sea and ran before the wind with no ill-effects. The conditions made themselves felt, but the hull remained magnificently composed, pushing great clouds of spray upward and outwards, some of which did find its way back on board.

The 230hp KAD43s have enough power to break out of any hole, but we backed off to 2500rpm, allowing a steady 17-18 knots progress into the chop. At this setting, the 990 felt as if it could run all day, needing very little adjustment to the outdrive legs to create the right cruising trim.

Running for home, with a following sea, we pushed on to 34 knots, and it felt as if there was plenty in reserve. The manufacturers' claimed top speed is 38 knots at 3950rpm.

We did get caught out once, shipping green water into the cockpit; we certainly noticed this, but the boat didn't seem to; it was only once we were back at base that we discovered signs of fairly serious leakage around the windows.

Within the shelter of the harbour, but unencumbered by speed limits, we decided that 3000rpm, delivering 27 knots, would make a useful cruising speed in calm conditions.

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Raucous conditions bring out the best in this tough cruiser.



above The two-tier console incorporates a chart table.



above & below The bucket helm seats are augmented by a U-shaped aft sofa, while a wet-bar offers refreshments.



below The midships cabin and narrow WC both have good headroom. The galley offers lots of stowage and a Corian worktop, with a diesel-powered cooker.



below An open-plan forward layout features a fiddled table that can be lowered electronically. Warm mahogany is everywhere and bare mouldings are few.



**SPECIFICATION & VALUE**

With prices starting at just £87,153 inc VAT with a single diesel installation, and a little over £100,000 for our twin-engined test boat, the four-berth 990 is unquestionably good value for money.

A fairly basic standard specification will require a bit of work to bring it up to a respectable cruising inventory, with the addition of a bow-thruster, trim tabs, an electric windlass and canopies adding around £7,000. Even so, rival builders on both sides of the Atlantic struggle to get close.

For sure, the Galia 990 does not match up to the suave style and quality of boats like the Fairline Targa 34, but then there's a massive £60,000 separating them.

For the real competition, the focus needs to be on Germany and Italy. Bavaria's handsome 32 Sport is a thorn for Galeon, with its better interior accommodation, and excellent handling and looks, for £125,000. Similarly, the Sessa 30, a neat example of understated Italian design, costs around £118,000.

Both of these boats come from ranges that allow you to trade up to larger sportscruisers

in the future, which the 990 cannot do. But on a price-per-foot basis, the Galeon has them beaten.

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**Limited specification, but then the price is almost on the floor.**

**Verdict**

This is a tough market sector for a young manufacturer to crack, but the Galia 990 gets most things right.

The hull delivers speed and seakeeping in equal measures, the fit and finish are a class above those of its mainstream American competitors, and the layout is both practical and appealing.

But the boat's biggest asset is its price. At a little over £100,000, this is one of the best-value sportscruisers around.

All that really counts against it is a slightly unsophisticated design (it looks a lot better with a blue hull), and the question-mark that hangs over the long-term desirability of a relatively unproven brand.

Then again, if Galeon continue to produce boats as desirable and affordable as this, the name will soon become much more familiar.

**MBM RATING**

**7/10**



**Galeon Galia 990 technical data**



**specifications**

BUILD	glass reinforced plastic
LENGTH OVERALL	33ft 1in (10.10m)
BEAM	10ft 3in (3.15m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 5in (0.76m)
DISPLACEMENT	5.8 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	154gal (700lt)
WATER CAPACITY	77gal (350lt)

**key dimensions**

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	8in
HEADROOM IN FORWARD CABIN	6ft 2in
HEADROOM IN MIDSHIPS CABIN	6ft 0in
FORWARD CABIN BERTH	6ft 2in x 6ft 2in
MIDSHIPS CABIN BERTH	4ft 2in x 6ft 7in

**performance**

**engines** twin Volvo Penta KAD43/DP diesels.

**configuration** 6cyl, 3.6lt, 230hp at 3900rpm.

**conditions** wind southwesterly Force 5, sea moderate.

**load** fuel 90%, water 75%, crew 2.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range
2500	17.0	9.5	43	1.79	220
2700	21.0	10.3	47	2.04	251
3000	27.0	11.7	53	2.31	284
3500	31.5	16.5	75	1.90	234
3700	35.5	19.8	90	1.79	220
3950	38.0	23.3	106	1.63	200

Range figures above are in miles, with 20% margin.

**prices**

STANDARD BOAT	
with single 260hp Volvo Penta diesel	£87,153
with twin 230hp Volvo Penta diesels	£102,549
LAUNCH & COMMISSIONING	standard
DELIVERY	standard
BOW-THRUSTER	£2659
TRIM TABS	£1194
WINDLASS	£2613
TEAK COCKPIT SOLE	£3173
TEAK DECKING	£1166
COLOURED GELCOAT	£653
<b>BOAT AS TESTED</b>	<b>£113,354</b>

**ENQUIRIES** Marine Sales UK Ltd, Lake Shipyard, Hamworthy, Poole, Dorset BH15 4DT.  
 Tel: 01202 6877990. www.marinesales.com

**the rivals**



**BAVARIA 32**  
**from £125,000**

With Volvo Penta's new 260hp D4s fitted, this boat has an added dimension. Smart styling and two separate cabins also make it worth the extra money.  
 Tel: 023 8045 0001.  
 www.ancasta.com



**SESSA 30**  
**from £118,000**

Despite smaller engines, this is a very tidy performer. Its accommodation includes two separate cabins, and it looks will stand the test of time.  
 Tel: 01932 571141.  
 www.bateswharf.co.uk



**SEA RAY 335**  
**from £123,843**

With the pound strong against the dollar, now is a good time to buy American. This high-quality boat has a cavernous interior and a superbly social cockpit.  
 Tel: 023 8045 3005.  
 www.marinamarbella.co.uk