

Diamond in the rough

This new V39 isn't eargerly awaited, it's the new jewel in the boating crown. Which probably explains why it's already sold out until autumn... REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM

What makes a classic? They are hard to define, but easy to recognise. From an E-Type Jag to a Dualit toaster, classic designs usually ooze effortless, timeless style, whilst functioning rather well too. But is it all down to simple, inspired design, or do elements like luck, the alignment of planets and short memories come into it?

Not many people realise that Porsche created the front-engine 928 back in the 1970s with the intention of replacing the ageing 911. Forty

years on, the 911 is still with us and the 928 is long forgotten.

When Princess launched the original V39 in 1994 as the very first of their 'V' series sportscruisers, it quickly became apparent that they had a classic on their hands. For many it was a perfect combination of size, style, layout and price, which sold in droves and evolved into the V40 and the V42, whilst maintaining its conceptual purity for over 15 years – an incredible run for a production powerboat.

But in 2009 Princess decided it was time for a ground-up replacement, and a brand new

V42 was launched. A very different beast to its forerunner, it took the V42 genre upmarket to a world of wide beam, twin heads, aft tender garage, and a price tag close to £400,000.

A gap in the range opened up for an entry-level Princess, not just to recapture the original V39's magic, but also to take the fight to the French. With brands like Prestige muscling in, getting customers on board at a lower level to then progress through the range becomes ever more important. A new hero was needed. Step forward then, the new Princess V39.



The brief...



Princess dip below a nominal 40ft and £300,000 for the first time in nearly a decade with their new V39. But can they recapture the magic of the original,

and is it a proper Princess? **Nick**

LOA: 42ft 6in (12.98m)

PRICE: from £282,000

TOP SPEED: 37 knots

BUILDERS: Princess Yachts International

ENQUIRIES 01752 203 888

Tel: www.princessyachts.com



Looks to kill

There are a few simple facts to lay down before we really get into the boat. Princess has put together an incredibly strong package of price, design and performance. And by that we mean it is a seriously good looking boat, with big engines offered at considerably less money than it might be. Princess clearly mean business with this boat, and while it has been priced to take on the French, the quality and style on offer will scare the hell out of everyone else.

From the rear three-quarter view, there's a grey accented sweep from the top of the windscreen down to the cockpit coaming that is pure visual poetry. The screen itself is set well back giving the foredeck a long, Jag-like nose and avoiding that awkward 'cab forward' stance that some builders employ to try and gain cockpit space. The flush hardtop glazing, one-piece windscreen and black vinyl sunroof combine to create another sharp automotive appearance. Topsides are smooth and high, yet

avoid any hint of slab-sidedness, and the buttresses either side of the bathing platform perfectly match the sweep of the hardtop.

It's not just in the looks department that the V39 breaks new ground. Vacuum-bagged resin infusion moulding techniques make for a stronger, lighter hull whilst also freeing up cabin space. Stepping on board via the optional hydraulic bathing platform, it's clear that all the form has not come at the price of function. A single step leads to the generously proportioned cockpit where a huge C-shaped seating area to port surrounds a teak table. Opposite, a large grey-fronted wet bar with a fridge, sink and room for an optional electric griddle takes care of any alfresco catering. A shallow step leads forward to the business end of the cockpit, with the helmsman facing a classy triple-tiered helm, individual helm and navigator's seats flanked to port by a short sweep of settee that allows three further crew members to enjoy the drive up at the helm area.

Down below, any lingering fears regarding cost cutting are put to rest. Matt cherry cabinetry, a feature panel above the backlit bar, high quality vinyl linings, Avonite worktops, glass splashbacks and soft leather all confirm that this is a proper Princess. Lit by the large overhead skylight, muted shades of cream and brown set off the deep cherry veneers. The effect is crisp, clean and modern without being cold and clinical; think boutique hotel rather than Swiss airport lounge. The physical space on offer is also worthy of note. On a par with the V42, there is full standing headroom throughout the forecabin, saloon, and deep into the mid cabin, a full sized heads with separate shower, and well appointed galley shows there's been no compromise anywhere.

"Priced to take on the French,
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SLIDING HARDTOP



SLIDING HARDTOP



SIDE DECK



COCKPIT



Exterior Deep lockers and solid fittings

They might not be as big or clever as the Sealine SC42's, but the V39's decks work very well. Conventional side deck access is easy and safe to use, non-slip treading is fitted everywhere that needs it, including the base of porthole apertures to assist clambering aboard. The sliding hardtop features a clever system that allows it to be opened in

any position without the internal headlining bowing. The standard table folds and our test boat came with the optional fixed-size table, which drops to form a sunbed. A point of tactile quality, the wet bar lids are double-skinned and a joy to use. You won't want for stowage with a huge locker, big enough to take a deflated dinghy, under the aft seats and accessible from both cockpit and transom. Another large locker under the helm seats is big enough to swallow a liferaft, while up front the deep anchor locker at the bow houses four useful fender holders.

COCKPIT FORWARD



TRANSOM GATE



BATHING PLATFORM



WET BAR





From the helm

Sophisticated dash to suit skippers and navigators

Twin separate bucket seats are a real boon, offering a secure and natural driving position. An opening window next to the helm will be offered as an option. Lift-up bolsters allow the helmsman to stand at the helm, and an optional fold-out step will help those of a shorter stature. Beware oily sunroof rails if stood up however, we managed to wreck our favourite boating jacket after grease transferred itself to the sleeve. The dash itself is finished in a dark, soft-touch material that looks and feels classy whilst banishing windscreen reflections, the rest of the deckhead can be covered with a clip-in dark cover for the same reason; a sensible option. The triple-tiered display works extremely well and offers plenty of room for a full-sized plotter as well as positioning most of the major controls where they can be easily seen and used. Swapping the VHF and trim tab controls would help ergonomics at sea, as would isolating the wiper switches to make them easier to find.

Performance & handling

Performance and efficiency were the watchwords during the V39's development. The hull has been designed with a more variable deadrise than normal. Deep vee forward sections remain to assuage upwind performance, dropping back to 21 degrees at the midpoint as usual. However the aft sections flatten out to 15 degrees rather than the more

typical 18 degrees, giving more lift and thus improved economy and performance, allowing the boat to plane at lower speeds. Princess only offer one engine option, twin D6 330 diesels running on duoprop outdrives, seeking instead to carefully optimise the boat specifically to these engines. Certainly these six-cylinder units feel right, the boat rising purposefully onto the plane with minimal bow lift and responding keenly and quickly to the throttles.

DESIGN NOTES

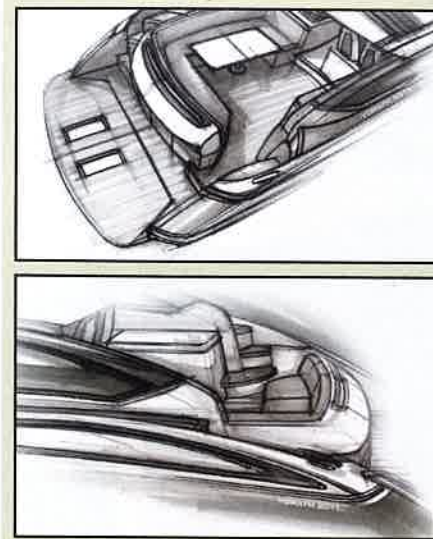
Eighteen months of development and a great deal of new technology has gone in to creating the V39 says Justin Olesinski, who works alongside his father, Bernard, at the renowned design consultancy. The chief ambitions were to build an entry-level boat that offered exceptional value, and it had to espouse all that is Princess. It would never compromise on quality, finish or design.

In order to achieve this, two particular elements were given attention during conception, bringing the build time down (building more boats spreads expensive development and labour costs), and maximising interior volume to create the ambience that Princess owners demand.

The aft hull section's deadrise drop from 18 degrees to 15 degrees results in a slightly flatter hull profile further aft. As a result the hull generates more lift creating a boat that will plane at lower speeds, hopefully use less fuel, and achieve higher speeds.

The design also allows more room for the interior, gaining more headroom and overall volume. Plus the boat had to look right, too. Styled by graduates of the Royal College of Art, inspiration was borne from both the new and the old. Look closely and you might even spot shades of a classic Riva in the elegant sweep of the transom buttresses.

There are also new techniques for the build process. Resin-infused hull lay up accelerates the early stages of the build process. A new system called 'Integrated Structural Tray' (IST) is used for the first time. IST replaces the old process of laying up the hull and laying in stiffening stringers before building on the sole mouldings. Now an entire tray containing the stiffening stringers, cabin sole, and even lockers and steps are created independently of the hull moulding and dropped in as one complete section afterwards. This one process alone goes a long way toward almost halving the build time of each boat.



DINETTE



"It feels like a scaled down, million pound superyacht"



GALLEY



Interiors

More luxury hotel than B&B on water

Quality abounds. High grade materials, superb detailing, excellent fit and finish, and an abundance of headroom and elbow room create an ambience that is pure Princess. It feels like a scaled down, million pound superyacht rather than the smallest and cheapest of the range. The aft cabin is especially impressive, with great headroom

through the entrance gained by utilising the curved cockpit seat base above. Two single berths slide together to create a double, and the useful and usable settee area can be swapped for a small additional berth if desired. In the owner's cabin there's a plethora of storage, and the deck hatch is augmented by a large skylight, both concealed by a flush fitting blind. Detailing is everywhere, from the built-in iPod dock to the way the grain matches across a run of locker lids, from the classy glass splashback behind the galley worktops to the high gloss black floor tiles and Perrin & Rowe porcelain sink in the heads.

TOILET COMPARTMENT



MID CABIN



MID CABIN



FORWARD CABIN



BOAT REPORT PRINCESS V39



At the helm, visibility is excellent, slim mullions at the corners of the one piece gently curved screen affording a truly panoramic vista. Although both helm and navigator seats feature excellent lift-up bolsters, it feels entirely natural and very comfortable to drive the boat seated. The supportive bucket seats, angled footrest and tilt-adjustable steering wheel provide a well located and, for us, perfect driving position, although the shorter of limb might appreciate an adjustable helm seat.

A very blustery force 5 to 6 offshore wind provides us with properly challenging sea conditions in the form of a short, steep chop complete with some wind-blown white caps for effect. Downwind performance is serene, the retracted sunroof giving a truly open feel to the cockpit. In fact when we stop and turn in readiness to begin the photo session, we're

genuinely surprised at how lumpy the sea that we've just been cantering comfortably across has become.

Back on the throttles and cutting across and into the melee of churning waves with outdrive legs tucked in tight, there's a slightly harder edge to the ride than we'd expected. That said,

"Downwind performance is serene"

we were attacking the maelstrom harder and faster than you normally would, the D6 engines' willing us to push on. Tabbing down helps soften the ride, bringing the deeper forward sections of the hull into

play. Banking swiftly into turns, the electronic 'virtual' steering is light, fast and accurate, albeit with the merest hint of a delay before the boat responds to helm input.

Although the ride is largely dry, spray being thrown wide and clear, our high speed turns for the photo boat occasionally kick up enough

water to give the cockpit a serious dowsing. We learn quickly after the first time, the electric roof swiftly proving its watertight integrity, as the proper pantograph wipers do a sterling job of maintaining visibility.

It's a pity the wiper switches are part of a long row of rockers however, as a quick wipe requires seeking them out each time. They'd be much easier to find if they were grouped alone. On the subject of ergonomics, who thought that hiding the trim tab switches out of easy visual range alongside the helm seat base was a good idea? Swapping them with the VHF radio handset that lives just forward of the throttles would make them more convenient to use.

Returning to calmer water allows the V39 to demonstrate its performance potential. Cruising comfortably at 30 knots and 3,000rpm, that fuel-efficient hull proving its mettle with a 1.5mpg average at that speed. Proving that there's still plenty in hand, wide open throttle serves up an impressive 37 knots on the GPS flat out through a two-way run.

Evolution of the V

1994: First ever V, the 39, is launched, replacing the Riviera range. Out go angular windcreens and oak or teak interiors. In come thick arcs of aluminium and GRP cockpit screens, a forward-raked radar arch, coloured hulls and Burr Mogano or psychedelic Maple cabinetry. Shafts are replaced with efficient sterndrives allied to supercharged diesels.

1996: V40 is launched, with an extended bathing platform to accommodate a tender and passarel. Cockpit seating changed and a sunpad layout is offered. High gloss cherry cabinetry is now an option. More powerful 260hp engines come on stream. V-drive version offered with 370hp engines. Nearly 200 V39 and V40 models sold to date.

1999: Princess create the V42. Minor changes to interior, with aft cabin stretching to allow wider berths. Burr Maple disappears, two shades of cherry, 'natural' and 'dark', become the options. Sunbed and locker becomes a fully fledged tender garage. New 285hp KAD 300 diesels now fitted, pushing speeds past 35 knots.

2006: V42 Mark II arrives. Raft of changes keeps the V42 up to date, including a new 'soft touch' dash, L-shaped wet bar with electric griddle. Sunbed and V-drive options are canned. Below decks a neater finish allows flush fitting of a TV. New D6 engines arrive. Princess claim 310hp will be the largest option, but customer demand sees 350hp units fitted, top speed hits 40 knots.

More than three hundred V42s are sold, taking the total tally to over 500 boats in 15 years
Read the full used boat report on the V39/V40/V42 series on page 86

Specification & value

It's important to realise that this nominally 39ft boat is in fact 42ft long. With that in mind, the style and the space become much easier to understand. Conversely, what then becomes harder to figure is the price. With twin D6 330 sterndrive engines, hardtop, electric roof, teak cockpit deck, teak table, and real wood veneer cabinetry all standard fit, she comes out at £282,000 including VAT, £30,000 less than a smaller Fairline Targa 38 with the same engines, and nearly £100,000 less than the admittedly bigger Sealine SC42! Princess Yachts International tell us that production has already sold out until the autumn. We're not surprised.

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LOA	42ft 6in (12.98m)
HULL LENGTH	38ft 15in (11.63m)
BEAM	12ft 5ins (3.81m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 4ins (1.02m)
AIR DRAUGHT	10ft 17in (3.10m)
DISPLACEMENT	9.1 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	143 gallons (650 litres)
WATER CAPACITY	73 gallons (332 litres)
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	8.2in (21cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 4in (1.96m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 2in x 4ft 6in (1.88m x 1.37m)
MID CABIN BERTH	2 x 6ft 4in x 2ft 5in (1.93m x 0.74m)

PERFORMANCE

Engines	2x Volvo D6-330 DPH EVC-EC with duo prop outdrives
Configuration	330hp @ 3500rpm
Conditions	north force 5 to 6, sea state moderate
Load	fuel 50%, water 20%, crew 4

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	LPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
1,500	9	4	18.2	2.3	263	73
2,000	12	10.5	47.7	1.1	126	78
2,500	20	15.4	70	1.3	149	83
3,000	29	19.8	90	1.5	172	80
3,500	36	27.7	125.9	1.3	149	83
3,600	37	28.9	131.3	1.3	149	85

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. These figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temperature, crew numbers, hull fouling, fuel quality and other issues. Noise readings in dB(A) were taken in the saloon.

PRICES

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with Volvo Penta D6-330 EVC 330hp	£282,000
BOW THRUSTER	£3900
JOYSTICK ENGINE CONTROLS	£10,632
HULL COLOUR (STEEL GREY)	£2304
SLIDING DOUBLE BERTH TO MID CABIN	£702
HYDRAULIC LIFT BATHING PLATFORM	£17,400
COCKPIT TABLE SUNBED CONVERSION	£1,296
4KW GENERATOR	£9,174
CERAMIC HOB	£342
LED TV AND DVD IN SALOON	£2,010
RADIO/CD IN FORWARD CABIN	£462
IPOD DOCKING STATION	£234
AUTOPILOT	£5,190
RADAR/CHART PLOTTER/GPS (12" SCREEN)	£5,928
HOLDING TANK	£2,058

BOAT AS TESTED £343,632



Enginebay

Well lit, accessible, and neatly laid out, the engine bay is as thoughtfully detailed as the rest of the boat. All wiring and pipework is carefully labelled, there's room to get between and around the engines and sound deadening is comprehensively applied. A gas strut assisted cockpit hatch, with fender stowage set into its underside, gains access via a three-rung ladder, flat white flooring avoids having to stand in the bilge, and a high vertical section of treadplate allows this area to be used as additional storage.

THE VERDICT

Replacing a best-seller is always hard work. The V42 missed the mark back in 2009, but the new V39 doesn't just hit the target, it absolutely decimates it. Princess has created a fresh and exciting sportscruiser that not only blends a perfect cocktail of size, style, pace and space, but exudes a depth of quality and breadth of capability that's every bit the match of its seven-figure sisters. The fact that it's all done at a price which undercuts all of its rivals in the process is frankly astounding. Are we witnessing another genuine classic in the making? Without doubt, the answer has to be a "yes".



Meet the family



BIGGER

Princess V42 from £375,420
LOA 44ft 6ins (13.56m)
£100,000 provides extra beam and length, a sunbed, dinghy garage, and en suite to the mid cabin but surprisingly little extra cabin space.



FLYBRIDGE

Princess 42 from £401,256
LOA: 44ft 3in (13.5m)
The best-selling 40ft flybridge since its 2004 launch offers an unbeatable mix of on-board space and luxury allied to a smooth hull.

The rivals



Fairline Targa 38GT from £277,080
Similar concept but slightly smaller and feels it. Option of much larger D6 400 engines giving circa 45 knot performance with seakeeping to match. Base price is with smaller D4 engines.



Sealine SC42 from £373,584
Put simply, longer, beamier and chunkier. You get masses more space in this SC42, but it's slower and ultimately lacks the sheer class of the Princess.