

Sabreline 36 Flybridge Sedan

It has many of the benefits of a trawler yacht's ambience and layout, but underneath it all is a fully planing hull. Is this American cruiser the ideal fusion of old world and new? **REPORT BY MARK TURLEY**



The handsome Sabreline range of wheelhouse-style Maine 'lobster' boats and trawler yachts from the USA have endured only patchy availability in the UK market over the past decade or so. But their new distributors, Sea Ventures, intend to change all that.

Carefully cherry-picking from a line-up which extends up to 47ft, they are ensuring that the models hitting these shores are the ones which not only attract the most admiring glances but are extra practical and comfortable for serious passagemaking.

A case in point is the 36 Sedan, a design that resonates of the past but is in fact entirely new, offering rather more performance than you expect from what looks like a trawler yacht.

DESIGN & BUILD

Unlike Sabreline's original 36 (usually marketed as the 395 in the UK), which had the traditional trawler yacht semi-displacement hull shape, complete with a keel, the new boat has a full planing hull, with a deadrise of 18° at the transom.

Taking into account the anchor and bathing platforms, the boat's overall length is nigh on 40ft. Tunnels in the moulding keep the engines and shaft angles low, and the smart blue hull colour above the waterline is an

appealing choice from the options list.

Although pretty tall, the superstructure benefits from strong, clean, no-nonsense lines, topped by a well protected flybridge.

You can buy the 36 Sedan without the flybridge, in which case you are left with something a little sleeker but with just a single helm position in the wheelhouse. You can also choose not to have the extended overhang which (with its side screens) gives the cockpit some all-weather protection. But most buyers in the UK will probably want both.

Sabreline were first and foremost yacht builders, and it shows. Practically every bit of available space is given over to a locker or shelf, always with a fiddle, and the classic warm cherry joinery is of that solid style that will surely wear well for many years to come.

There's a choice of two interior layouts. One has a single cabin in the bows, with the galley also tucked down at the lower level forward. The alternative sees a second sleeping area installed here, while the galley moves up into the wheelhouse/saloon, opposite the helm.

The additional sleeper is barely a cabin in the true sense of the word, as it is simply curtained off for privacy and has very limited stowage of its own. But it is a whole lot more convenient than having to convert the saloon dinette every night when there are four on



above The angled inside console has spare space.

board, and when there isn't a full crew it could serve as a snug, or somewhere to stow bags.

There isn't a serious drawback to the arrangement, as moving the galley up does little to reduce the seating capacity of the saloon.



The boat manages to avoid looking boxy, and has a planing hull.

ACCOMMODATION

As we have come to expect from American builders, headroom is generous throughout the accommodation. It rarely dips below the 6ft 5in (1.96m) of the wheelhouse/saloon, except where a handy overhead grabrail is provided.

The saloon's window line has also been judged perfectly, and there is an uninterrupted view out even when you are seated.

The 'galley-up' layout, as on our test boat, does not really encroach on the main L-shaped saloon seating, and there is room for six to sit around the table. Besides being comfortable, the settee design incorporates proper drawers, rather than just top-lid lockers.

Opposite is a sideboard which will house a television, plus some handy open shelf storage and a sizeable area of fiddled countertop which could be useful for chartwork.

Adjacent to the helm station is a robust sliding door out to the starboard side deck, and to help matters at busy times the seat base can be dropped down out of the way.

The angled wood console has plenty of space for all the standard switches and gauges, and for a sizeable plotter/radar and other electronics.

Over to port, the galley is tidily designed and finished to match the quiet elegance of the rest of the saloon. All the facilities are electric, so the optional generator, or at least an inverter, is fairly essential.

Curiously the large fridge has no freezer compartment, but there is a useful amount of storage for everything from crockery to rubbish. The treaded steps that lead down to

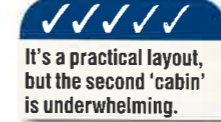
the cabins hinge open for extra stowage.

The second sleeping area is immediately to port, separated from the lobby only by a heavy privacy curtain, which ensures it is not claustrophobic when used as extra lounging space. Fully pulled-out, the berth is just about big enough for two; in any case it is probably best if you don't outstay your welcome, as there isn't a huge amount of storage here.

In contrast, the main cabin forward benefits from a cedar-lined hanging locker, several further lockers and a generous set of drawers under the central, good-sized double berth. There is sitting headroom to the head of the berth, but you will struggle for much of a view because the nice, chunky opening ports are located in the coachroof.

Doors from both the forward cabin and the lobby give access to the toilet compartment, which is largely moulded for practical reasons but retains an enhancing measure of cherry trim along with a Corian countertop.

A separate shower cubicle is incorporated here, complete with a seat and hanging space in a wet locker, and you get an electric toilet as



It's a practical layout, but the second 'cabin' is underwhelming.

standard. Other welcome features here are plenty of stowage and an extractor fan.



above The all-electric galley is tidy and practical.

EXTERIOR

The 36 Sedan is blessed with wide side decks, protected by a deep gunwale so that you feel safe when moving about. Teak decking, and teak taffrails inset into the cockpit coamings, give the boat an immensely solid feel.

Bonuses are the steps over the cockpit coamings to ease boarding from a pontoon, and the deep wooden treads and stainless steel rails which help you climb the kindly-angled ladder up to the flybridge.

Up top, the skipper and co-pilot each get an adjustable seat. The former has quite a command station at his disposal, with twin-lever throttles plus plenty of angled console for adding electronics, while his

below The second 'cabin' is separated from the lobby only by a curtain...

below The WC is largely moulded...



below ...but there's a fine master cabin with a generous berth and stowage.

below ...with Corian and cherry trim.



below Benefiting from warm, solid joinery, the wheelhouse/saloon is well designed with a low window-line, good stowage and fiddled countertops.



above The helm seat folds away for access to the side deck door. A central treadplate helps you move between the engines, and a toolkit is even provided.

companion has to make do with a less glamorous Perspex-covered chart area. Both enjoy the protection of the good deep screen.

For your guests there's a comfortable bench settee with some stowage underneath, while a pair of cupboard doors reveal a whole load of extra room within the forward coaming.

In true American style, the cockpit is left devoid of fixed seating. You can of course arrange your own loose chairs, and there's plenty of lazaret space in which to stow it, but many UK buyers might prefer some fixed seating, especially as there's a wet-bar moulded in adjacent to the flybridge ladder.

The lazaret is accessed by no fewer than three gas-strut supported hatches, and it is conscientiously finished, with the steering gear thoroughly boxed in.

It is equally shipshape up at the sharp end, where two hatches let onto large, deep, separate lockers. There's an extra internal hatch for access to the separate chain locker.

✓✓✓✓
Solid design and finish, but cockpit seating would be welcome.

space enough to move between the engines as well as get right outboard of them, even with the presence of wing tanks here.

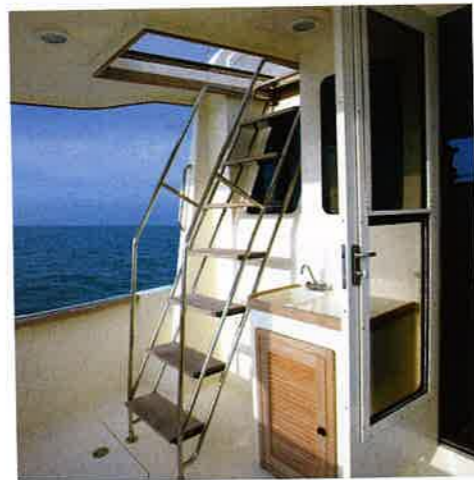
Most daily inspection points and service items are easy to get at — in fact the primary fuel filters are in the lazaret, so you don't have to brave the engineroom at all if these need attention at sea.

The only moot point is how you are going to top up the oil, as the fillers are tight to the deckhead. Our test boat had the optional Reverso electric oil-change system, which could handle this chore; otherwise, you might have to unbolt some of the saloon furniture to extricate additional floor panels.

This aside, the installation is on a par with the no-nonsense approach taken to the rest of the boat, with all pipes and cables well secured and comprehensive noise insulation.

✓✓✓✓
Shipshape installation, with easy access to almost everything.

below It's an easy climb from cockpit to flybridge.



ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

Sabreline do not believe in offering too many engine options, but Yanmar's 6LY series of diesels hit just the right note.

The standard fitment is a pair of 315hp units, which will push the boat up to 25 knots and allow it to cruise at around 21-22 knots. If you want more performance, you can upgrade to twin 370hp units, which took our test boat to the 30-knot mark.

A central panel in the saloon sole lifts on a gas-strut, and steps then take you down to a central treadplate in the engineroom. There is

below Up top, both skipper and navigator get an adjustable seat, and the latter also has a chart area.



PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

If you jumped aboard the new 36 without any prior knowledge of its performance, you would probably expect a begrudging 20 knots with the wind behind you. You will be pleasantly surprised as, with the more potent engine option installed, the hull pushes readily not just beyond 20 but all the way to 30 knots.

Of course, this is a sleight-of-hand trick, as what you have here is a fully planing hull, albeit one that is topped off with a trawler yacht superstructure.

Given the comfortable, solid ride, you are likely to find yourself setting your cruising speed as high as 25 knots, in the 3000-3200rpm band.

That said, the hull feels equally at home lower down the rev range, managing to keep a good trim so that even in the mid-teens it resists falling into a hole of its own making. It also turns nice and tightly, but with little heel.

Conditions on the day of our test were hardly taxing, but as we headed out of the Solent towards The Needles there was a short chop that would quickly bring to light any shortcomings in ride comfort and seakindliness, not to mention any squeaks and rattles.

The 36's hull design and build quality sailed through this benchmark test, making clean, authoritative progress over the messy sea with never the hint of any complaint. Noise levels were average, only creeping towards intrusive as we pushed up to full revs.

Both helm stations are commendable, offering excellent visibility, especially over the quarters and astern. The only point we would make is that, for a cleaner look at the horizon from the interior helm, it helps to drop the bow a bit using the trim tabs.

✓✓✓✓
A pleasure to drive, with unexpectedly good performance.

It is easy to manoeuvre using the twin-lever throttles, and the boat responds smartly to the wheel.

SPECIFICATION & VALUE

At first glance the Sabreline 36 Sedan appears keenly priced, with a starting figure of £248,985 inc VAT with twin 315hp Yanmars. This price does include the 'optional' flybridge but still leaves a fair few elements of the fit-out that you may not have counted on paying extra for.

The handsome extended hardtop, although integral to the design, raises the price a further £8,812 for example. And the mast adds a barely credible £5,011 — if you don't have it, where do you mount your antennae?

Unless you can make do with a single cabin, you'll also have to factor in £3,801 for the 'galley up' layout that frees up space for the guest cabin. Moreover, the 5kW generator, which is effectively a necessity considering the all-electric galley, adds a whopping £8,985.

Although many potential buyers will expect to pay extra for a bow-thruster, at £4,465, they might be surprised to be asked for a further £3,445 for an electric anchor windlass.

As a result, the actual starting price for a sensibly equipped Sabre 36 Sedan is £287,499, and our test boat totted up to just shy of £300,000 with its 370hp engines.

Even so, the boat represents fair value for money. The Sabreline's level of fit and finish lifts it well clear of the cheaper Bénétiau Trawler 42, and into contention with the similarly priced Grand Banks 36 Classic.

And unlike some more contemporary designs, we reckon its timeless shape and

rock-solid build quality will help it retain much of that premium for years to come.

Verdict

Although Sabreline are not very well known on this side of the Atlantic, as a potential purchaser you are not wholly diving into the unknown.

This is a well-regarded, and clearly well-built, model from a yard that certainly knows how to put together solid, seaworthy boats.

For around the same price you might expect to pay for a typical modern flybridge boat, it offers the style of a traditional trawler yacht.

Bearing in mind that its overall length is nearly 40ft, the 36's only major shortcoming in our opinion is its very much 'occasional' second cabin.

In other respects, it is ideally suited for the north-European style of boating. It certainly looks good and performs well.

MBM RATING 7/10
✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Sabreline 36 Flybridge Sedan technical data



specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	39ft 11in (12.20m)
HULL LENGTH	36ft 0in (10.98m)
BEAM	12ft 6in (3.81m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 4in (1.02m)
DISPLACEMENT	7.7 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	250gal (1125lt)
WATER CAPACITY	83gal (375lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	10in (25cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 5in (1.96m)
FORWARD CABIN BERTH	6ft 8in x 4ft 10in
MIDSHIPS BERTH	5ft 11in x 3ft 4in

performance

engines twin 370hp Yanmar 6LY diesels.
configuration 6cyl, 5.2lt, 370hp at 3300rpm.
conditions wind northwesterly Force 2, sea slight.
load fuel 50%, water 75%, crew 4.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
1500	8.9	4	18	2.23	442	68
2000	12.3	10	45	1.23	244	74
2500	18.5	18	82	1.03	204	76
2800	22.0	23	106	0.96	190	78
3000	24.1	26	123	0.93	184	79
3200	27.0	30	136	0.90	178	80
3400	29.2	34	155	0.86	170	83

Range figures above are in miles, with 20% margin. Noise figures are in dB(A), recorded in the saloon.

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with twin 370hp Yanmars & extended hardtop	£265,403
LAUNCH, COMMISSIONING & DELIVERY	standard
ANTIFOULING	standard
BOW-THRUSTER	£4,465
GENERATOR	£8,985
ANCHOR WINDLASS	£3,445
BLUE HULL GELCOAT	£2,263
FREE-STANDING MAST	£5,011
ELECTRONICS PACKAGE (Raymarine ST60 Tridata & Simrad VHF radio)	£1,658
BOAT AS TESTED	£298,007

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