



FACT FILE
 Sea Ray 335
 Sundancer
 LOA: 33ft 4in
 (10.16m)
 PRICE: £163,500
 TOP SPEED:
 40 knots

**MOTOR
BOATS
TESTED**

Sea Ray 335 Sundancer

If you're looking for an open-plan sportscruiser with versatile accommodation, the 335 could be just the ticket

REPORT BY MARK TURLEY

American boat ranges can be packed so tightly together it's impossible to see a chink of light, never mind an on-board upgrade, between them. Sea Ray are a prime example with different models every foot or so. The pay off is different layout options offered without sharp increases in cost. We tested the 325 Sundancer

model last year, and now comes this (slightly) longer and beamier 335. In essence both follow much the same idea – namely open-plan interiors and sportscruiser cockpits – but what does the 335 offer that its smaller sibling can't?

Design & Build

Whether it's the 325, the 335, or just about any other boat of around this size, American craft favour skippy side decks on this type of boat, preferring to gain access to the foredeck through an opening portion of windscreen. Doing away with side decks means there is a few extra inches to play with in terms of cockpit width and internal volume. That said, most models still only manage to provide comfort for two across the helm, whereas most European sportscruisers around this size usually manage to squeeze in some sort of lounge on the opposite side of the companionway. In this instance, the emphasis has been on a decent-sized wet-bar which includes

“The styling of the 335 is incredibly easy on the eye”

space for a griddle. The rest of the cockpit comprises a convertible dinette with facing bench seats.

The interior is open-plan in so much that the midships area – which is often a fully enclosed cabin on European craft – is kept part-and-parcel of the saloon, complete with an L-shaped sofa. This 'conversation pit' as the brochure dubs it, turns out to be a vital social element and makes up to a curtained-off berth, while up in the bows is a permanently rigged double.

As to the overall look of the boat, the 335 has some of the 'easiest on the eye' lines around; a gorgeous curve of the whale-back gunwale sweeping gently down to the bathing platform

so that the proportion of the structure above to the hull below, is nicely balanced. The upright ports are a smart finishing touch that adds a degree of interest to the topsides.

The underwater hull carries a 21 degree deadrise – which is the norm for this type of boat – but to gear it up for the European market the engine line-up includes a diesel package amongst the petrols and it is this that caught our eye.

Design & Build

Interesting looks.
 Typical US-mould
 in terms of layout

✓✓✓✓

Exterior

The stepped rake to the topsides does a good job of disguising the 32in deep bathing platform and makes boarding hazard-free. If the platform appears on the generous side there is a good reason





An open-plan forward cabin delivers space but, devoid of any shape to the sofa, its social graces are lacking...fortunately a comfy midcabin comes to the rescue



Good storage in the well-appointed galley



Plenty of headroom and light for the midcabin-cum-conversation pit



Toilet but no separate shower

for this as apart from providing a decent area to board and swim-off, there is a comfortable two-person wide 'dickie' seat that pulls out of the transom coaming. At first it looks gimmicky but, in fact, it's a great spot, and it's just a matter of swivelling round to chat to those in the cockpit while either keeping an eye on the kids swimming or for a bit of contemplation. A further inset locker here provides for a fair bit of stowage and there is plenty more beneath the facing dinette seats in the cockpit. The cockpit is a good size, and with the wood table dropped and the infill in place it forms a well-protected sunbed.

As mentioned earlier, there is no provision for any seating down the port-side, this being the preserve of an Avonite topped wet-bar arrangement. This includes a sink, space for a griddle, fridge and additional stowage; all of which smacks of a thirty-something trying to deliver the goods of a larger boat. The seating at the helm has two commodious seats that are adjustable. At a push you could probably squeeze an extra cheek or so on the end if a third person

“The galley is excellent for a boat of this style”

wants to check out what is happening up-ahead of the boat. The sliding companionway hatch locks in situ to form the steps up and through the screen. A stainless balustrade is there to lend a steadying hand but it would have been good to

find some grabrails along the coachroof, otherwise it is a matter of relying on the guardrails further outboard.

Before buying, check the price list and you'll see that centre rails come as part of the sunpad option; which seems a bit mean

when most boats seem come equipped with foredeck cushions as standard.

A foredeck hatch hides the windlass (also not standard), while the chain itself is accessed through a screw-down hatch. Cleats are adequate

in stature but without a full run of guardrails you run out of things to hang fenders off once you hit the midships mark. A couple of well-positioned beackets accessible from the cockpit would help.

Exterior

Fun transom seat lifts a decent deck area



with a decent run of worktop still remaining even once the single sink and inset electric hob are taken into account. As elsewhere, there is no shortage of storage on this boat while managing to find space for a microwave and a decent fridge and a rubbish receptacle. Plus, those cool ports allow the cook a bit of ventilation.

Accommodation

Plenty of different sleeping areas but small dinette



Engine Options & Access

Sea Ray is very much tied in with MerCruiser (they share the same parent company) so it will come as no surprise that apart from the one Yanmar diesel package, which sports Bravo 3 legs, petrols govern with horsepower ranging from twin 260s to 320hp. However, these are not simply outdrive orientated. We were surprised to learn that V-drive installations are also offered, which is something we find counter-intuitive given the type of boat and the inherent inefficiencies of shafts over sterndrives. On the other side of the coin, there are few 34-foot sportscruisers on shafts, which makes for an interesting alternative even if it means running with one of the petrol options.

As to access, the whole rear portion of the cockpit – seats and table included – lifts on a hydraulic ram. Often with this arrangement,

whereby a major chunk of cockpit opens, overhead clearance can be restricted, but not here. There is plenty of clear space over the top and round the sides of the engines, even with the fuel tanks lying outboard. The raw water strainers and primary fuel filters are located centrally and easy to get at, and there is space towards the head of the compartment for a generator if required.

Engine Options & Access

Disappointed at one diesel option. Good access



Performance & Handling

The 600hp dished out courtesy of the two Yanmars is handled by Bravo 3 twin-prop legs, and although there is certainly no shortage of pace – hitting the 40-knot mark in far from ideal conditions – there isn't the instant take-off you might expect. Once up and running there is plenty of acceleration, and if you can remember to put the tabs down before opening up from a standing start, then so much the better.

Test conditions were untidy, it has to be said, and it is all credit to the boat that when we clocked our speed we were running at a comfortable 32 knots rather than the low to mid twenties we had assumed we were doing. We also liked the fact that for the most part it was a commendably dry ride, despite a decent Force 4 to 5 breeze, although the rear cockpit was party



Good headroom and access to the engine bay

to finding some spray at times.

Handling in general was steady and it is unlikely the hull is going to be wrong-footed by over-zealous winding on of the wheel; tucking into turns without going too acute and then powering out without fuss. What is also satisfying is that you can settle down to an easy run at between 22 and 28 knots and you can expect to get a good couple of miles to the gallon.

American manufacturers are noted for



Roomy helm with plenty of space for electronics



The sociable seating is let down by a small table



The deep bathing platform and quirky fold-out transom seat ring the changes on this Sea Ray 335

BOAT REPORT

SEA RAY 335

looking after the skipper and the 335's helm is no exception. The seats are deep and comfortable plus they have lifting squabs as well as being adjustable fore and aft.

Handily, the wheel is adjustable too and there is loads of readily viewable dash space above for navigation electronics, which is sometimes an oversight on other craft. There are a few handy

cubby holes too, for loose bits and pieces.

One thing UK drivers might find a bit odd at first, however, is the separate levers for gear and throttle shifts, but they are easy to get to grips with.

Performance & Handling

Plenty of pace, and it handled the conditions well



Specification & Value

This is a massively competitive market, especially when you top-up the US offerings with half-a-dozen European ones. However, noticeable by its absence in the European line-up is Sealine's two cabin S34 which has been discontinued in favour of the new (and distinctly pricier) SC35. A straw pole on price, drawn from the more premium end of the market, pitches the 335 about right, but with the current weakness of the US dollar you might feel you're due a better deal.

Sea Ray's spec for the 335 leaves just the usual suspects to add in; a bow thruster, heating and, rather annoyingly, a windlass. Plus, you need to

decide on whether a generator is required to keep the all-electric galley in play (on the other hand, an inverter will sort you out a cuppa if that is all you require).

Specification & Value

US exchange rate doesn't seem to affect imports



Verdict

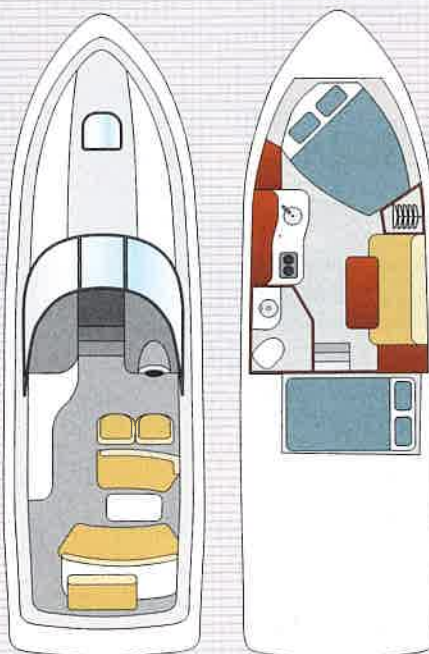
First off, you have to be a fan of the open-plan interior to get on with the likes of the 335. But even so the dinette, which should be the heart of the saloon in our view, isn't hugely inviting. In terms of exterior styling and performance we have few complaints and the quirky dickie-seat folding out from the transom is a cute idea. However, some keener pencil-sharpening over the price would have pushed up the 335's overall score.

6/10

MBM rating



Sea Ray 335 technical data



key dimensions

WATER CAPACITY	29gal (132lt)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 4in (1.93m)
FORWARD BERTH	6ft 4in x 4ft 8in (1.93 x 1.42m)
MIDSHIPS BERTH	6ft 4in x 3ft 6in (1.93 x 1.07m)

performance

Engines	twin Yanmar T6LPA-STZE 300hp diesels
Configuration	6cyl, 4.16lt, 300hp@3800rpm
conditions	wind NE'ly, Force 4/5, sea moderate
Load	fuel 100% water 100% crew 3

Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2700	22.8	10.6	48	2.15	286	81
3000	28.4	13.5	62	2.10	279	83
3400	32.0	20.0	90	1.60	213	83
3800	40.0	27.6	124	1.45	193	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 cockpit.

specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	33ft 4in (10.16m)
HULL LENGTH	30ft 8in (9.35m)
BEAM	10ft 5in (3.18m)
DRAUGHT	2ft 5in (0.74m)
DISPLACEMENT	6.4 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	166gal (757lt)

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with twin Yanmar 300hp sterndrives	£163,500
COLOURED HULL	£3080
BOW THRUSTER	£2768
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	£2768
SHOREPOWER	standard
HEATING/AIR CON	£3150

BOAT AS TESTED	£175,580
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ENQUIRIES Marina Marbella Tel: 02380 453005.
www.marinamarbella.co.uk



the rivals



MONTEREY 335

From £165,418
A practical twin helm provides good visibility throughout, and below decks a double berth and sleeping area under the helm offers lots of space.
Tel: 02380 452255
www.southwater.com



CRUISERS 340

From £169,995
Two option interior with a dinette and fixed mid berth or a lounge and converting mid cabin. Good sized galley and toilet with a separate shower.
Tel: 01415 522005
www.prosser-marine.com



SESSA C35

From £138,164
A European take on the US-style open-plan interior but hosting a separate midcabin. The Italian 35 also boasts a large split-level cockpit.
Tel: 01323 470066
www.bateswharf.co.uk