

Boat Report

SEALINE BOLERO 28

A decade after their first 28-footer, Britain's most distinctive sportscruiser builders have launched another. Will the Bolero do for Sealine what it did for Torvill and Dean?





Sealine's original 28 (see 'Popular Cruisers' MBM Oct 95 p48) underwent so many changes, as well as growing to almost 32ft overall as the 310 Ambassador, that a true 28-footer needed to be brought back into the range. The Bolero, which made its debut at the Southampton Boat Show in September, does this job.

It will also fill the gap that will be left when the 270 Senator sports cruiser is phased out, with the additional benefit that it can accommodate a useful range of twin engine options, especially diesels.

Design

Part of the continuing success of the previous 28 and its successors was down to their extremely seakindly ride and performance, and Sealine International's design team have borne those boats' underwater lines in mind when coming up with this new hull. The vee sections cut a keen 28.5° amidships, flattening to 21° at the transom.

The topsides, deck and coachroof, meanwhile, have the bold curves that we now expect from every modern Sealine, except that the prominence of the anchor platform has been somewhat reduced by increasing the rake of the stem; nevertheless, the



ground tackle is still kept out of sight.

Noticeable towards the bows is the exaggerated knuckle in the topside, which has enabled the dinette down below not to be pinched into too tight a vee.

Exterior

In Sealine's usual practical fashion, the extensions to the topsides flanking the bathing platform have been kept short, making it easy to step around them when boarding from alongside. The transom is equipped with a shower, a covered boarding ladder and a useful array of handholds.

There are also wooden threads inset into the tops of the coaming to help with access to and from the side decks, and a good run of waist-high rail extending all the way forward from the cockpit arch, although it pinches in on the 6in (15cm) wide side decks to make it a bit of a shuffle to the foredeck.

Forward, a large locker hides away the standard electric windlass and provides useful fender and rope storage. The chain is unencumbered in its own separate compartment, which is good, but slightly better access to this would help.

Deck hardware consists of 8in (20cm) cleats fore, aft and amidships, plus a further 10in one centrally placed forward.

The cockpit is on one level, and features a recliner-type settee to port, opposite the two-seater helm, and a pair of facing bench seats aft which can be made up into a large sunbed area. This is done by unclipping and dropping the hefty, veneered table that can be set between them; it can also be stowed below, but it is big and heavy to lug about.

Overall, this is a good, versatile array of seating, with enough space left to enable you to move around easily. At the helm we found the fixed seat too tight to the console on our test boat, but Sealine say this is being modified on subsequent boats.

The console is well laid out, with an easily read run of inset instrumentation and ready-use switches for the basic essentials, including the twin wipers; everything else is activated straight from the breaker panel tucked out of harm's way just inside the companionway.

Trim-tab and power-trim controls are rather squeezed in between the wheel and the throttle plinth but not so tightly that they foul each other. The standard Autohelm log and depth sounder are fitted

Anticlockwise from above: the Bolero provides a soft, sure ride. Inset treads help you board from alongside. A user-friendly console has a chart area ahead. The midships cabin receives plenty of natural light. Space is tight in the toilet compartment. Engine service points are easy to get at. Plenty of joinery offsets grey interior mouldings.

to the left of the wheel, and there is space enough for a few more moderate-sized electronic heads. Just forward of this area is a perspex-covered chart moulding and compass.

Adjacent to the port-side walkthrough to the bathing platform is a small locker, housing the battery switches, which doubles as a step up to the side deck. Ahead of this is a wet-bar arrangement which can be fitted with a fridge.

Stowage is adequate, comprising a large locker beneath the back-to-back seat arrangement at the helm, a lockable cave within the starboard coaming which houses the fuelcocks and gas bottles, and a further void under the transom bench.

Borrowing from its larger flybridge sisters, the

Bolero's GRP cockpit hoop assembly has a built-in stowage for the aft part of the cockpit canopy, which simply rolls up into the hidden compartment when not in use; the forward, framed part folds back onto the GRP structure in the more conventional manner.

Interior

An attractive curved sliding door leads below, with the offset nature of the steps meaning you have to watch where you put your feet. Inside, a fair amount of wood and veneered joinery makes for a smart but warm feel when set against the grey wood-textured finish of doors and cupboards.

Immediately to starboard is a good-sized galley



area, incorporating twin sinks, a two-burner gas hob, a large fridge and a sensible array of locker and cupboard storage.

The dinette forward is a parallel-sided C-shape, allowing six people to dine in comfort without the usual awkward sitting area towards the break of the bow which so often forces you to sit cheek-to-cheek or, conversely, miles back from the table. The latter drops to form a berth which, at 6ft (1.83m) in length and an almost uniform 5ft (1.52m) wide, is closer to a true double than a made-up vee-berth.

Outboard of the seatbacks are a couple of lined lockers, large enough to take soft weekending bags, and a useful-sized hanging locker for smarter clobber. Further stowage is to be found beneath the seat-bases, these having a GRP liner whereas most others are nicely finished in wood.

In the saloon sole are hatches giving access to the bilge, shower pump and seacocks, as well as a large compartment near the dinette, to be used for stowage or for the holding tank if one is specified.

Ventilation and light are well provided in the main cabin area by stretched oval ports in the topsides, a pair of opening ports above the galley and a couple of hatches in the GRP and fabric panelled deckhead. This onus on natural light continues through to the midships cabin, which has no fewer than three ports: two outboard and one looking into the cockpit.

This cabin has a dressing area with full headroom, and a generous 6ft 4in x 4ft 4in (1.93m x 1.32m) mattress area with good sitting headroom. Stowage is restricted to a hanging locker and a small covered 'bits' tray above; beneath the berth there is access to the bilge and fuel tank, and at its foot is a compartment housing a calorifier and water pump.

Completing the accommodation is the toilet compartment, which can be entered either from the midships cabin or from the main saloon. Here, it appears, Sealine have had to remove the inch or two they have added to good effect in other areas. Normal ablutions can be carried out as required, but this is no place for the well-built, or for energetic showering, and headroom falls below 6ft (1.83m) due to the depth required for the shower tray. Even so, the moulding includes a useful amount of dry storage, a covered sea-toilet and ventilation by way of an opening port.

Engines

Engine options come in similar powerbands from Mercruiser and Volvo Penta. There are single petrol or diesel installations at 220hp and 280hp respectively, twin 205hp petrols or twin 150hp diesels. Our test boat had the latter, Volvo AD31XDs on Duoprop legs.

Access could not be simpler, a matter of hiking up the cockpit hatch on its gas struts and hopping down into the fully-lined compartment, where there is plenty of standing room forward of the engines. Even so, the transom bench which hinges independently of the hatch could do with a means of securing it clear, otherwise the gelcoat could be damaged by the surfaces scraping together.

There is plenty of space to get right around the engines for maintenance, with the fuel/water separators conveniently tucked to one side on the forward 'bulkhead'. Most of this division is actually formed by the metal side of the water tank, which is not insulated and must surely augment noise levels, although admittedly these are creditably low.

On both sides of the engine compartment, the

GRP liner has been fashioned into covered lockers, the port one holding the batteries while the other offers useful stowage for such things as top-up oil and spares.

The bilge here is serviced by both an automatic submersible pump and a manual one located in the cockpit. A second electric unit takes care of the forward bilge.

Performance and handling

From Sealine's base on the River Hamble it takes a good 20 minutes to potter down to the Solent, and on many outdrive boats this can be something of a chore as they yaw to and fro necessitating continuous corrections on the wheel. Not so, with the Bolero, whose deep vee hull gives good slow-speed directional stability.

Out in open water we were greeted by an almost mirror-calm surface, most unlike the Solent and its approaches. Fortunately the RNLI were out conducting trials, and charging across the wake of a 25-ton lifeboat which was travelling at semi-displacement speed allowed us to gauge the Bolero's seakeeping comfort.

In this respect, the boat would appear to match its much-praised forebears, giving a soft, sure ride and powering through whatever disturbed water we could find, at any angle of attack. We found it similarly well mannered through the turns, and all-in-all an easy drive; set the legs at 0 or +1 and forget them, although a tweak of tab is usually going to be required to level-up any crosswind lean.

The 150hp Volvos bought us up to 20 knots from standing in a reasonable 13 seconds, and were happy to keep up this jogging speed at a shade over 3000rpm. Setting the revs at 3500rpm brought 24 knots, 3800rpm an effortless 27.5 knots, and flat-out at 4300rpm just under 33 knots. This is actually a couple of hundred revs over the quoted maximum, but Sealine explain that they expect to lose the difference once the test boat is fully equipped with its owner's gear and laden with cruising quantities of fuel and water.

Against our expectations, noise levels were extremely good, registering 78dB(A) at the helm and 82dB(A) towards the rear of the cockpit pretty well right through the rev range and picking up a couple of decibels only when the taps were fully open.

Our fuel consumption estimates are around 11gph (50lph) for cruising at 3800rpm and 9gph (40lph) at 3500rpm, giving good economy and a useful range.

Conclusions

The Bolero successfully fills the role for which Sealine groomed it, that of a roomy, manageable 28-footer which is happy to take a wide variety of engine options.

The rather different detailing of the main cabin, notably the parallel-sided dinette and the many ports and hatches, creates a spacious and light feel which is not always evident in sports cruiser accommodation. And on the performance front, the deep-vee hull is well mannered and fun to handle.

Although immediately recognisable as one of the Sealine family, the Bolero's styling has a more muted, subtle tone than we have seen on many of their recent craft, which can only widen its overall appeal. We expect to see more of the same on subsequent models. □

Sealine Bolero 28

Loa 28ft 11in (8.81m).
Hull length 27ft 4in (8.33m).
Beam 9ft 11in (3.02m).
Draught 3ft 1in (0.94m).
Air draught 9ft 3in (2.82m).
Displacement 4.0 tons.
Fuel capacity 93gal (425lt).
Water capacity 37gal (170lt).
Engines twin 150hp Volvo AD31XD/DP diesels.
Price from £49,114 ex VAT with a single 280hp Mercruiser petrol engine; £64,273 as tested.
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Tel: 01562 740900.
Suppliers Sealine Sales (UK) Ltd, Hamble River Boat Yard, Bridge Road, Swanwick, Southampton, Hampshire SO3 7EB.
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