



Second coming

The Sealine F48 is classy, customisable and a real contender for the flybridge crown REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM

The brief...



God, it's said, is in the details. With this in mind, we decided to check out the new Sealine F48 to see whether it really is divine. **Nick**

LOA: 48ft 10in (14.90m)
PRICE: from £545,280 inc VAT
TOP SPEED: 30 knots
BUILDERS: Sealine International, Kidderminster
ENQUIRIES www.sealine.com

Back in 2009, Sealine's brave new motorboat world was in full swing. Led by the new angular styling of designer Carsten Astheimer, and underpinned by the capable hulls of naval architect Richard Crocker, the SC35 hardtop was selling like the proverbial warm buns and a revolutionary take on the flybridge cruiser was about to be unleashed. The flybridge in question was the F46 and it did indeed look different to the Princess and Fairline norm. It had a coloured hull, pod drives and lots of glass. It had oodles of space on deck and it was arguably the boat that forced other builders to up their game in flybridge design. Would there have been a Fairline Squadron 42 without the F46? Probably not. But there were problems, too. Sealine, usually so good at getting the cruising necessities right, forgot to give the F46 any stowage. The

huge glass below-deck atrium, created by a towering windscreen, became a sweltering greenhouse in the summer, and the master cabin was ideally suited to people under 4ft. Another issue was the finish, which didn't always reflect a boat with a £500,000-plus price tag. When the cheaper and more perfectly formed F42 was launched the following year, the F46 fell off the new boat radar. Fast-forward three years and the F48 has emerged, based on the same excellent hull and deck of the F46, but promising to right the on-board wrongs of its predecessor.

First impressions

At first glance not much seems to have changed beyond a new and striking blue hull colour, but step on board and it's clear that this is, in fact, a very different boat in three very distinct ways.

Let's start with the layout. The F46's atrium has been replaced by a cosy-dinette-cum-lower-saloon that you will want to retreat into. Over to starboard, the galley now includes a huge floor-to-ceiling fridge-freezer with space for an optional dishwasher slotted beneath the dinette. Further forward, the layout remains broadly similar to before, with an island double in the forecabin, and separate en suite shower and heads either side. But back aft the owner's stateroom has been transformed – there is now real stand-up headroom, so it's now possible to cross the foot of the bed without stooping. The floor is flat, the hull windows far larger and the resultant ambience is a huge improvement over the F46. It now feels like a proper master stateroom.

Step up to the saloon and the reasoning behind the new-look master becomes clear. Sealine has used the surprisingly comfortable four-helm-seat arrangement from the SC42, which includes a floor almost level with the seat squabs, to maximise headroom beneath. So that's phase one of the game change. Phase two is improved quality and detail. There is now stowage – it's worked into every conceivable void, so while there is no one vast locker, there are lots of places to squirrel gear

away in. The finish is considerably better, too. Real-wood veneers replace laminates, stainless steel handrails are wrapped in stitched leather, the TV is inset within the saloon's handsome sideboard (rising at the touch of a button), wood fillets grace the headlining, grab handles are inset into the saloon ceiling, low-level lighting illuminates the steps and – joy of joys – there are concealed door hinges. This, then,

is a half-million-pound boat that feels like a half-million-pound boat. Exactly as it should. So now we've got a layout that works well and a quality of finish that's on par, we're class competitive. But it's a tough audience and a hard-fought market. What's needed is an edge. And Sealine has found one and it's called choice. Don't like that L-shaped dinette opposite the galley? Then you can have a fully enclosed second cabin with adult-sized bunks instead. Or even, if sir prefers, a small office complete with Pullman bunks to add duality of purpose. After all, if you wish, you can lose the extra helm seats up top and put a dinette in there instead. The decks were never an issue for the F46, but improvements have still been made. The flybridge mouldings have had some weight taken out of them, while the sunbed aft can be swapped for an alfresco entertaining area. A small sunbed can be added forward by the helm to deliver some loafing space. With an extensive choice of wood and fabrics, the F48 is the closest thing to a semi-custom build you are likely to find under 50ft. Now that's quite an edge.

Performance & handling

The interior may be a transformation from the F46, but we're glad to report that the handling isn't. It's as comfortable, dry and sure-footed as it has always been. Cummins Zeus pod drives deliver smooth, quiet power with finger-light steering lock-to-lock, and joystick control makes close-quarters handling so easy that it feels like cheating. For once we actually tested a boat with the smaller engine option, but they were still pumping out 480hp each and hit 30 knots with ease. Comfortable cruising in the mid-20s is aided by that incredible forward window line, which still delivers class-best visibility and is simply a joy to behold. Even with a slimmed-down flybridge, the ride is still noticeably bow up, but it is easily managed by the integral Zeus trim system. >>>



See it at the Southampton Boat Show





"It feels like a half-million pound boat should"



MASTER CABIN



FORWARD VIP



NEW CABINERY

Interiors

Flexible saloon layouts and real wood veneers

Choice is the name of the game for the accommodation. With a dinette, cabin or office option opposite below decks and two saloon layouts, buyers have more choice than ever before, while they are now handed a master cabin of real quality. Sealine has elevated the interior to a level expected on a boat of this size and price, with mahogany cabinetry combining beautifully with high-gloss and satin finishes, or oak veneer is a no-cost option. A big sideboard answers saloon stowage problems.



GALLEY



NEW FINISH



TOILET AND SHOWER



LOWER DINETTE



FLYBRIDGE HELM

Exterior

Sleek, safe and sheltered



COCKPIT WET-BAR



SUN LOUNGER

Foot-wide deeply bulwarked sidedecks and a full-length pulpit high enough to reach without stooping make access forward effortless. Twenty inset LED pin lights along the toerail look fabulous at night. The flybridge is huge, deep, safe and sheltered, and the ability to swap the aft sunbed for an extra entertaining area makes a lot of sense for northern European markets. And check out the slim stainless steel fillets set into the windscreen mullions - classy. An optional hydraulic bathing platform can handle a small RIB.

From the helm

Panoramic viz down below

Huge wraparound windows with clear glass give a view from the lower helm than can only be described as panoramic - this is a flybridge boat that you'll positively want to helm from down below. Helm seats are comfortable and sociable, two optional seats to port allow four crew to sit together facing forward on passage, which is an attractive feature. Two large pantograph wipers deal with what little spray is induced, although an intermittent wipe setting would be a bonus. Up on the flybridge the visibility is, of course, better still, combining with joystick control to give confidence to close-quarters manoeuvring.



PORT SEATS



HELM

Specification & value

Sealine has often tried to position itself alongside the other established big British names, sometimes leading to overly ambitious prices. Now it finally has a boat that can stand toe-to-toe with the mainstream, Sealine has done something rather interesting with the cost. To illustrate, let us consider the (admittedly slightly larger) Princess 50, which offers a whole lot less layout flexibility. Even if you opt for the larger 600hp diesels, the F48 still undercuts it by nearly £200,000. In the 50ft flybridge arena that has to make the Sealine a serious contender.

At the other end of the spectrum, Bénéteau will save you about £70,000 by opting for its brand new GT49 Fly for £475,000. But while it is a spacious and good-looking boat, it has smaller engines and lacks the depth of finish of this new Sealine.

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	48ft 10in (14.90m)
BEAM	14ft 8in (4.48m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 10in (1.15m)
DISPLACEMENT	16.5 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	330gal (1,500lt)
WATER CAPACITY	111gal (505lt)
WIDTH OF SIDEDECKS	12in (30cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 4in (1.93m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 5in x 4ft 6in (1.96 x 1.37m)
MID CABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 4ft 10in (1.98 x 1.47m)

PERFORMANCE

ENGINES	Twin Cummins QSB 5.9 480hp Zeus QSC 8.3 600hp Zeus						
CONFIGURATION	8 cylinder 5.9lt 480hp @ 3400rpm						
CONDITIONS	force 2-3 variable, sea slight						
LOAD	fuel 50%, water 0%, crew 4						

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	LPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
2000	12	14	641	0.9	238	70
2500	17	22	1011	0.8	211	73
3000	25	31	1421	0.8	211	75
3400	30	42	1931	0.7	185	77

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 twin 480hp engines	£545,280
COCKPIT BARBECUE	£570
LED LIGHT PACKAGE	£1528
TEAK SIDEDECKS	£9623
CERAMIC STOVE AND MICROWAVE	£1223
DISHWASHER	£1223
7KVA GENERATOR	£13,874
HOLDING TANK	£2396

BOAT AS TESTED £575,717*

*Boat as tested price may include alternative options



Enginebay

Pod drive places engines aft to the benefit of noise reduction and cabin space but to the detriment of storage, as the lazarette found in similar-sized shaft-drive craft is full of Cummins. A large locker under the cockpit seats helps and it is also accessible from the transom. Engine access is good, the wide beam providing plenty of space around the motors.

THE VERDICT

Always the bridesmaid, never the bride, Sealine has – at the very least – turned out something of a Pippa Middleton with its latest model. We were a little sceptical when we heard about the “new” F48 and Sealine’s avowed new luxury crusade, but the F48 is a real game-raiser and, we hope, marks a new era for the company that may finally put it where it has always wanted to be: shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the “Big four”.

Meet the family



BIGGER

Sealine T50 from £677,640

LOA: 50ft 6in (15.41m)
Sleek styling, galley aft and a wonderfully agile hull, but its future must be in doubt with cheaper F48 pushing into its size sector.



SMALLER

Sealine F42 from £441,480

LOA: 44ft 7in (13.60m)
Truncated version of the F48 only lacks the dinette/office/third cabin. 2011 Motor Boat of the Year winner.

The rivals



Princess 50 from £778,020

LOA: 50ft 5in (15.39m)
Larger than the Sealine, and the benchmark 50ft flybridge. Huge boat with supreme build, finish and seakeeping.



Bénéteau GT 49 Fly from £474,437

LOA: 51ft 2in (15.6m)
Lacks the depth of finish of the Sealine, but overall quality is right up there. A stylish and very roomy 50-footer at a bargain price.