

# La bella figura

The 30ft sportscruiser sector has a new champion: meet Sessa's exceptionally stylish C32

REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM

## The brief...



As the big players abandon the sub-35ft market, Sessa moves into the niche with its new C32. **Nick**

**LOA:** 32ft (9.75m)

**PRICE:** from £170,883

**TOP SPEED:** 32 knots

**BUILDERS:** Sessa Marine, Bergamo, Italy

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**T**he trend among popular British builders is bigger is better. You can see their point. Why build a 30ft boat when a 40-footer requires a little more effort yet sells for double the money?

Even Sealine, the doyen of the affordable mid-range cruiser, has abandoned the entry-level market with a product range that now starts at 35ft.

The cavernous hole that this leaves has been filled by Bénéteau and Jeanneau, which can produce small boats in enormous numbers, using economies of scale to profit in a way that the UK builders have never managed.

However, there is now another name to reckon with and it is one that oozes European spirit and creativity.

The brand new Sessa C32 is a twin-diesel hardtop sportscruiser that blends Italian

design flair with compact dimensions to bring some real style to the 30ft sector.

## Design & build

Given the Italian's propensity for prioritising appearance, it's no surprise that the C32 is a great-looking boat. Jet-black GRP cleverly disguises the bulk of the hardtop roof, drawing the eye to the sleek white lower sections and glossy black topsides inset with beautiful stainless-steel-bezelled portholes, which match the stainless deck fittings and even stainless pantograph wipers. It looks stylish, lithe and expensive, exactly as an Italian boat should.

On board, the cool styling continues. Sessa has used its unique transversely planked teak decking from its larger cruisers here, covering the wide bathing platform and cockpit sole. Upholstery consists of tan seat bases offset by



dark chocolate backrests. Fortunately, all this form is not at the expense of function, with a huge sweeping arc of seating and a solid teak table opposite the small wet-bar well able to look after six people. As is usually favoured by designers, a raised forward section to starboard, topped with a chaise longue, is worked in to create some headroom below decks, but that does mean there is no other forward-facing seat to join the single helm.

Down below it's much the same entirely conventional and eminently practical story. Most impressive is the headroom. Given the boat's sleek looks, Sessa has done incredibly well to deliver six feet across much of the cabin.

It's not just height the Sessa designers have found – the whole interior is well proportioned. Every section of the boat works, from the

converting dinette forward, galley to port, a decent-sized heads to starboard, and then a door to a very usable mid cabin with the traditional double berth running athwartships beneath the raised forward section of the cockpit. Ground breaking it may not be, but it's simple and effective.

What marks the C32 out against a hundred other boats with the same layout, however, is that extra style and flair. The black galley top and dark-chocolate leather upholstery look sensational against the satin walnut of the carpentry and hard wood floor. Flashes of stainless steel in the vertical grabrail next to the galley and beautifully shaped door handles add sparkle and texture. It's fresh and contemporary, but crucially it still feels like a boat, not a Manhattan loft apartment.

BOAT REPORT

SESSA C32

## Performance & handling

The joy of a 30ft sportscruiser should be in the driving. Small enough to handle like a sportsboat, but big enough to mix it with some genuine cruising capability, a good 30-footer will deliver thrills and ability in equal proportion. And the Sessa C32 does exactly that. The twin 200hp Volvo Penta D3 diesels fitted to our test boat are perfectly matched to the hull, giving plenty of urge onto the plane and cruising comfortably in the mid to high 20 knots zone. But what impresses most is the way that the boat handles. Whether diving through the high wash of our Sessa 52 photo boat, charging across the uneven chop of a Solent force 4, or twirling the helm from lock-to-lock carving tight turns for the video, nothing unsettles or wrong-foots it.

The high screens of the hardtop keep the forward section of the cockpit sheltered, even with the canopies off and the roof back, and noise levels remain constant.

The single fixed helm seat locates the helmsman well and features a lifting bolster, while the seating alongside will accommodate two or three crew in comfort. This is a boat in which you could cross the Channel one day, and take out for a fun blast for the sake of it the next.



See it at the  
Southampton  
Boat Show



Scan the  
QR code  
to watch  
the Sessa C32  
in action



[bit.ly/Mmj24M](http://bit.ly/Mmj24M)

PHOTOS: WILLIAM PAYNE



FORWARD VIEW



## Interiors

Practical and polished

Italian flair combines with a practical pragmatic layout resulting in a space that is a pleasure to live in. A large hull window let into the port side of the dinette gives a good view out, the aft cabin faring less well with

portholes that look stylish outside but are rather dark inside. The galley lacks countertop space but has masses of storage, and a gas hob makes it usable away from the dock without needing the weight and expense of a generator. More than 6ft feet of headroom across the main cabin is generous for the size of boat, and the converting dinette creates a 6ft by 6ft berth while the mid cabin berth is over 7ft long.



CONTROL PANEL



HEADS



GALLEY



MIDCABIN



COCKPIT

## Exterior

Optional cruise package is a must-have

Five-inch-wide sidedecks are on the narrow side but are well protected by high guardrails that extend past the trailing edges of the hardtop and right back to the transom, offering a safe and secure route forward. Vinyl sliding sections to the hardtop create a large opening and feature arched metal braces to stop the material sagging. Specifying the 'cruise package' adds forward sun cushions, a top-loading cockpit fridge and the teak cockpit table. With a bow thruster also included, it seems good value at under five grand.



SUNROOF



HELM

## From the helm

Great rear three-quarter viz

A gold instrument cluster looks classier than it sounds, while black sections beneath the screen banish windscreen reflections. The single bucket helm seat comes with a lifting bolster, but there's no fore and aft adjustment. Visibility is very good, with long side windows allowing excellent rear three-quarter visibility, further windows let into the sides of the hardtop aiding peripheral vision.



COCKPIT



## Specification & value

For UK buyers, the value for money Sessa represents is very much at the mercy of euro exchange rates. These rates have not done the boats many favours, but things are now looking up with a stronger pound. UK dealer Bates Wharf will supply a Sessa C32 to a high specification for well under £200,000 inc VAT. That doesn't make it the cheapest boat in its class, but it's very competitive price, and one that fairly reflects the quality and capability of the boat.

## Technical data

### KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	32ft 0in (9.75m)
HULL LENGTH	31ft 2in (9.5m)
BEAM	9ft 10in (3.4m)
DRAUGHT	2ft 11in (0.9m)
DISPLACEMENT	5.7 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	113gal (515lt)
WATER CAPACITY	24gal (110lt)
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	5in (13cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 2in (1.88m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 0in x 6ft 7in (1.83 x 2.01m)
MID CABIN BERTH	7ft 2in x 5ft x 0in (2.18 x 1.52m)

### PERFORMANCE

Engines	Volvo D3-200 DPS outdrives
Configuration	2.4L, 5-cylinder, 200hp @ 4000rpm
Conditions	North west force 4, sea slight to moderate
Load	fuel 100%, water 0%, crew 3

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	LPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
2000	8	3.3	15	2.4	217	78
2500	13	5.7	26	2.3	208	78
3000	20	8.8	40	2.3	208	79
3500	26	13.2	60	2.0	181	80
4000	32	20.2	90	1.6	145	80

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 Volvo D3-200s	£170,883
CRUISE PACK	£4868
HULL COLOUR (BLACK)	£3115
LEATHER UPHOLSTERY TO SALOON	£1461
STAINLESS STEEL ANCHOR	£604
COCKPIT CANOPY ENCLOSURE	£2093
TEAK LAID COCKPIT	£604
NAVIGATION PACK	£2950
ANTIFOUL	£1598
COMMISSIONING	£1043

**BOAT AS TESTED £189,219\***

\*Boat as tested price may include alternative options



## Enginebay

Hydraulically powered engine hatch is augmented by smaller manual hatch, ideal for a quick check and absolutely essential should the batteries fail. Space forward of the engines is partitioned off to give additional storage, or just somewhere to get into while working on or inspecting engines. Volvo Penta D3s are a good fit with plenty of room to get around them.

## THE VERDICT

There's a strong argument to be made that 30 feet is the perfect size for a small sports cruiser – big enough to accommodate twin diesels, standing headroom, a separate mid cabin, capable enough to go cross-Channel and yet small enough to be managed easily by a couple, and keep the price realistic. Many feel it's a shame that stalwarts of this market have abandoned it in search of richer pickings. But with boats as good as the C32, we've no need to mourn the loss of this segment and every reason to rejoice.

## Meet the family



### Sessa C35 from £212,600

LOA: 37ft 2in (11.33m)

Update model, with clever modular interior, the sliding bulkhead adapting cabin space for day living or sleeping.



### Sessa S26 from £61,200

LOA: 25ft 1in (7.65m)

A cuddly cabin sportsboat rather than a cruiser, but brimming with Italian flair and some real overnight luxury.

## The rivals



### Cranchi 32 Zaffiro from £180,000

A neatly designed sports cruiser with lots of cockpit space, it lacks a hardtop option and the Sessa's sense of detail below decks.



### Bavaria Sport 31 from £134,300

High-sides give great accommodation, still an excellent sea boat. Improved level of finish. Base price shown is with single engine.