

# Silverton 38SB

**MOTOR BOATS TESTED**

BOAT REPORT

SILVERTON 38SB

## FACT FILE

**Silverton 38SB**  
LOA: 39ft 11in (12.1m)  
PRICE: from £272,313  
TOP SPEED: 26.4 knots

**This American take on the flybridge cruiser might dare to be different, but don't discount its quirky looks as the design concept is extremely clever**

REPORT BY MARK TURLEY

If you're on the lookout for a new flybridge boat, we're guessing you will have a few, very basic, expectations. A flybridge, for instance, perhaps a couple cabins and, of course, side decks. On that last point you may well have dismissed this American cruiser at the first hurdle, which would be a shame, because what it loses in conventional decks it makes up for with design greatness. Oh, and it's actually far easier to get to this boat's foredeck compared with most other cruisers. Interested? You should be.

### Design & build

There is no getting away from the boat's distinguishing feature. Raised decks slope down from the flybridge, allowing the superstructure to push right out and take full advantage of the boat's beam. This is all well and good in theory but it's pointless if it makes a nonsense of practical, seaman-like aspects such as crew safety.

Fear not, this clever design won't disappoint you. Someone has considered the fact that most mooring work is centred around the flybridge; the skipper is almost always sat up here and the

crew start off from here too. With this in mind, instead of heading aft, down a ladder or steps, to get to the foredeck, here you simply make your way forward from the flybridge via gently-sloping decks accessed through port and starboard doors set in its coaming. The crewmember looking after the stern can still trot down the stairwell to the cockpit in the usual way. What's more, you don't lose out on flybridge space and there is loads of comfortable forward-facing seating, even if this has to make up for a lack of seating in the cockpit itself.

“Raised decks slope down from the flybridge, allowing the superstructure to push out”

That's not the end of the changes, though. The standard layout for the full-beam saloon involves a good-sized dinette to port, a proper three-seater sofa opposite, plenty of space in the

middle and no inner helm. We disliked the test boat's optional inner helm because it forces the dinette to shrink back, leaving you with a small sofa only large enough for three.

Another moot point is the lack of window area in the saloon. At a time when boat designers are pioneering the use of glass to afford owners amazing views, many American yards seem happy to keep the outside world out. Here glass is demoted to second place by the abundance of cushioned vinyl used to clad the sides and deckhead, creating a cosy but enclosed feel.

But let's finish on a high. Some of you may remember that the Silvertons which arrived on our shores in the early 1990s didn't exactly cover themselves in build quality greatness. Thankfully, the present generation

has upped its game. Mouldings are substantial and well finished – most lockers having interior liners for instance – and there is plenty of meat to the engineering.

### Design & build

Alternative design is surprisingly practical







The addition of an optional inner helm means the size of the portside dinette is compromised

## Exterior

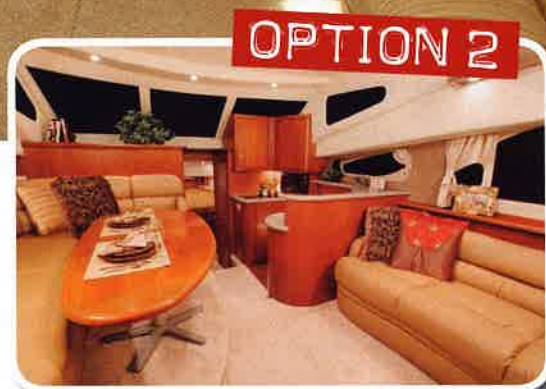
The large, uncluttered bathing platform allows easy boarding across the stern, and moulded steps are also let into the cockpit sides. A boot in the transom – to take the shorepower cable among other things – gets stowage off to a good start, and lined lockers are incorporated into the rest of the cockpit coaming. Bulkier items can be dropped down in the lazarette to keep the fuel tanks company, but just be careful that things don't end up interfering with the steering gear or manage to jump through the cut-out in the engineroom bulkhead.

The stairwell up to the bridge is easy to negotiate and there are plenty of handrails along the way. The raised side decks are just under a foot wide, and are easy to move along thanks to a decent moulded toerail and guardrails at just the right height. There are two hatches at the bow: one to hide the electric windlass – an optional

extra – while the other accesses the chain locker. The latter is huge, but it could do with a partition, so that whatever's dropped in cannot foul the chain. That said, the likes of fenders don't need to be stowed here as there is a fender well incorporated behind the settee to the rear of the flybridge seating. All of these added touches are thoughtful, practical and impressive.

**“A moot point is the lack of window area in the saloon”**

Better still is the flybridge helm, which benefits from three armchair-style seats tucked in behind a generous spread of console. This is then set back behind a deep section of screen, giving you the feel of a cockpit rather than a flybridge. The rest of the flybridge is given over to some face-to-face seating and a wet-bar to port. The only problem is the lack of a table, possibly omitted as it would interfere with getting through to the port-hand side deck.



The standard saloon layout enjoys far more seating

The plethora of fixed seating means there is no space for a dedicated sunpad area up top, but the rear settee has a sloping backrest to one end, making a very inviting lounge. To really get the best out of the flybridge you might want to consider the full canopy set. Just to demonstrate

## Exterior

Great flybridge and stowage space



how substantial this fabrication is, it weathered March's severe storms without a popper out of place, and we even kept it up during our seatrials a few weeks later.



Comfortable certainly, but lacking a decent view out



The interior helm is good for visibility



There's plenty of work space in the generously sized galley

## Accommodation

Chopping a layout about almost always creates compromise, and here the only way to add in a workable lower helm would be to have a complete saloon re-jig, thus ensuring that focal points such as the dinette stay put and the four guests from the cabins can all get to enjoy a comfortable seat.

The interior gets off to a flying start, with gently-bowed patio doors adding a touch of style. Immediately to your right is that three-seater sofa, which folds out at the touch of a button to form a proper double berth, while on the other side of the saloon is a sideboard, which houses a standard-fit flat-screen TV, along with a comprehensive electrics panel conveniently hidden lower down.

Ahead of this is the dinette, which in this instance – due to the intrusion of the optional helm – is less accommodating than in its standard, full-length sister. It's still a convivial spot to sit and chat, but space to actually dine has become altogether more limited, however, the wrap-around galley, set at the forward end of the saloon, works well. A slight dip in the sole hides the galley from the saloon but there is masses of space to the galley-up arrangement boasting plenty of Corian work surface and storage too. The cook gets a good view too from their own side window. Cooking appliances are all electric, which means there is a certain reliance on either shorepower or a generator, although for simple tasks, such as boiling a kettle, the standard spec includes an inverter.

The inner helm station sits to port and comes with a dual helm seat. The controls and instruments are spread right across the whole console in such a way that you wonder whether the builder couldn't decide who was going to sit where. We were also puzzled by the fact that the seat base has lifting squabs which, if utilised, push your head into the deckhead. We'll be kind and reason that they may be there to make it easier to access the locker in the seat plinth.



There's a comfortable leather sofa to starboard



You'll get a fantastic night's sleep in the forecabin's queen-size island berth



Two single berths in the midships cabin will convert easily into the boat's third double



Both cabins share en suite access to the shower compartment



The smart toilet cubicle



## BOAT REPORT

### SILVERTON 38SB



The flybridge triple helm is a real boon and there's plenty of other seating too



The rear seat doubles as a sunlounger and it's a lazy lean from here to the wet-bar

Both cabins work well, and if you take your sleep seriously you will appreciate the forecabin's queen-size island berth that holds its width right up to its head. It also boasts a full sprung mattress. The only thing we didn't like was the pelmet above the head of the bed, which makes it awkward to sit up. As expected on this boat there are deep drawers and lots of lined storage too. The cedar-lined hanging lockers are impressive.

The two singles in the midships cabin have an infill to convert to a double, but while the cabin is a good size with a reasonable amount of storage, it's rather plain and lacks detail. For instance, a couple of shelves around the berths for odds and ends would be handy.

Both cabins share the same ablution facilities, but these are split between a shower and a separate toilet compartment; the former being en suite to both cabins so you can dive from shower to cabin without using the companionway. The toilet is en suite to the master cabin as well. This is supplied with a VacuFlush electric toilet and warm wooden joinery.

#### Accommodation

The interior helm doesn't do the saloon any favours



“The bowed patio doors add a touch of style”

#### Engine options & access

All UK boats will be offered with three diesel options, so if you come across a petrol boat you'll know it's a grey import. Our test boat had a pair of 370hp Volvo D6s, while 380hp and 440hp Yanmars are also available.

Engine access is best achieved via a lift-out hatch in the saloon sole, although there is a crawl through from the lazarette.

A short but necessary run of steps helps you down from the saloon on to a wide rubber treadplate between the engines. From here you can check the centrally set raw water strainers and primary fuel filters, and with plenty of space over and around the engines, everything else is within easy reach. The boat's water tanks are set outboard.

#### Engine options & access

Easy access, and the engineering looks robust



Access to the twin diesels is best achieved through a lift-out hatch in the saloon sole



The slightly bowed patio doors add a touch of class

#### Performance & handling

A piercing northerly was making itself all too evident on the day of our test and the consensus was that the flybridge canopy enclosure would remain in place; not exactly pretty but wholly practical. It never complained or looked vulnerable once as we pushed the Silverton around in the chop, but the best reason to opt for the enclosure is that it allows you to do away with



Crewmembers will find it easy to get to the foredeck

the expense and intrusive nature of the interior helm. If you do opt for the inside helm, visibility – given the limited window line – is actually pretty good, while the solid build returns a quiet ride.

The boat's performance is sound rather than exciting, our test achieving a top speed just shy of 27 knots with a 22-knot cruising speed. However, this is a heavy boat for its length, borne out by the lack of squeaks and groans down below and the solidity of the underlying ride, while all that canvas up top won't help. All this adds up to comfortable cruising but a rather heavy fuel consumption, no doubt due to the engines working fairly high up the rev range for the moderate 20-knot return. Trotting along at this

sort of speed, the ride was extremely comfortable through the chop we encountered, and the hull answered the helm in good order, nipping round commendably quick for a boat of this size.

#### Performance & handling

Reliable, clean ride. Great outside helm



#### Specification & value

The base price for the 38 is enticing, and it includes a bow thruster. However, there are some must-haves on the options list rather than standard spec, such as windlass and the cockpit canopy. It is also annoying that commissioning and RCD certification get lumped on the bottom line to the tune of nearly £6000, a rather odd way of pricing the boat given that it is illegal to sell a

boat in Europe without it being CE marked. Overall the 38's price is pretty keen compared with European flybridge boats of a similar size.

#### Specification & value

Not expensive but an odd way to tot the prices up



## Verdict

So, those side decks aren't such a bad idea after all. The big question here is, can you live without an inner helm? If you can, simply enjoy all that extra space created by the full beam superstructure. Yes, we'd like better windows but overall it works way better than you would imagine.

7/10



## Silverton 38SB technical data

### specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	39ft 11in (12.1m)
HULL LENGTH	36ft 10in (11.2m)
BEAM	14ft 4in (4.3m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 4in (1.0m)
AIR DRAUGHT	14ft 11in (4.5m)
DISPLACEMENT	12.2 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	310gal (1408lt)
WATER CAPACITY	92gal (416lt)

### key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	11in (28cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 6in (1.98m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 8in x 5ft 0in (2.0 x 1.5m)
MIDSHIPS BERTH	6ft 2in x 2ft 4in (1.8 x 0.7m)

### performance

ENGINES	twin Volvo D6 370 diesel					
CONFIGURATION	6cyl, 5.5lt, 370hp @ 3500rpm					
CONDITIONS	wind NW'ly, Force 4/5, sea moderate					
LOAD	fuel 100% water 100% crew 2					
Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2000	9.4	8.8	40	1.07	265	73
2500	12.6	15.4	70	0.82	203	76
2800	16.8	20.6	94	0.81	201	77
3100	21.9	24.6	112	0.89	221	78
3300	24.7	28.6	130	0.86	213	79
3450	26.4	33.4	152	0.79	196	80

Range figures above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. Figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temp, crew numbers, hull fouling, etc. Noise readings in dB(A) were taken in the saloon.

### prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with twin Volvo 370hp diesels	£272,313
COMMISSIONING & CE CERT	£5960
BOW THRUSTER	standard
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	£2318
FLYBRIDGE CANVAS PACKAGE	£5300
INTERIOR HELM	£12,248

BOAT AS TESTED £316,715



ENQUIRIES  
Dickies International  
Tel: 02380 211398  
www.dickies.co.uk

### the rivals



CARVER 380  
From £225,000

All sorts of flybridge layouts are available here, but it has a conventional interior with two cabins sharing one toilet compartment.  
Tel: 02380 253005  
www.marinamarbella.com



BÉNÉTEAU TRAWLER  
SWIFT 42  
From £247,000

If you're looking for something really different how about Bénéteau's take on the trawler yacht. Great space and pace is on offer here.  
www.beneteau.com



REGAL 4080  
From £295,600

A chunky American flybridge cruiser that also does away with an inner helm. Good build quality too but that same lack of saloon window area.  
Tel: 01932 242977  
www.regalboats.com