



Boat Report

SUNSEEKER 375

Does the smallest of Sunseeker's cruisers benefit from the same style and attention to detail as their impressive motoryachts? We were invited aboard a new boat by its Poole-based owners.



Above: the 375's saloon settee seats six around a wonderfully chunky folding table. Below: aft of this is a twin-berth midships cabin (left), while forward is the master cabin with its offset double (right).

Some people just know when they are onto a good thing. MBM readers and Cruising Club members Ken and Rita Fairburn certainly do, having just taken delivery of their fourth Sunseeker, replacing their Martinique with a 375, the latest in the builders' Offshore Cruiser line-up.

With the combination of design talents to which the builders now have recourse — Don Shead for their performance hull lines and the innovative Ken Freivokh for interior styling, as well as a highly experienced in-house team — perhaps it was something of a forgone conclusion that the new 39-footer would be something special?

We joined the owners for a day's run out from their home port of Poole in Dorset to find out, and to see whether Sunseeker's interpretation of 'cruiser' is as lively as ever.

Design

The hull lines are in fact classic Shead, the underwater sections comprising an unfussy medium-to-deep vee running from the keenest of entries over the forebody to 20° amidships and 19° at the transom. Just two sets of his trademark parallel sprayrails are incorporated, the outer set running full-length and the inner pair fading out around amidships.

The topsides are given a split treatment, their reasonable bulk bisected by keeping what is perceived to be the gunwale line well below that of the actual deck. The upshot is that the softer lines above the gunwale become less obvious, allowing the volume of the interior accommodation to be maximised without much actual coachroof.



Above: the well appointed galley disappears into a sideboard when not in use.

Left: the owners of our test boat have incorporated a fold-out table in the cockpit, an arrangement inspired by that on their earlier Sunseeker Martinique.

Below: three tiers of walnut fascia give the helmsman a clear view of all instrumentation.

The side decks drop in height as they run aft to the break of cockpit, where a rakish screen with a smartly turned-out stainless steel frame is outdone only by the forward-raking cockpit arch.

Exterior

Sunseeker fully appreciate that if you are going to indulge in watersports then there is no sense in compromising on the bathing platform. On the 375, this area is not only a good depth but also teak-laid for comfort as standard. And although it nestles within the downward sweep of cockpit coaming and topsides, it extends just far enough to give you a foothold if you have to board from alongside.

The transom coaming and returns are finished with handrails, and a large boot-type locker in the



Sunseeker 375

Engines twin Volvo KAD42/DP diesels, 200hp at 3800rpm, 6cyl, 3.6lt.

Conditions wind W Force 4, sea slight. Load fuel 100%, water 100%, crew 4.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	sound levels dB(A)		
						cockpit	helm	saloon
2600	16.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2800	19.4	12.5	57	1.55	211	80	76	76
3000	22.2	13.6	62	1.63	222	81	77	76
3200	25.2	15.0	68	1.68	228	81	78	78
3400	27.6	16.2	74	1.70	231	82	79	80
3600	30.5	17.8	81	1.71	233	83	80	80
3800	34.2	24.0	109	1.43	194	84	80	80

Acceleration 0-25 knots, 14.0sec (*allows 20% margin)

Loa
39ft 0in (11.89m)

Hull length
35ft 9in (10.92m)

Beam
12ft 0in (3.65m)

Draught
3ft 3in (1.00m)

Displacement
7.2 tons

Fuel capacity
170gal (775lt)

Water capacity
30gal (135lt)

Price
£139,875 ex VAT



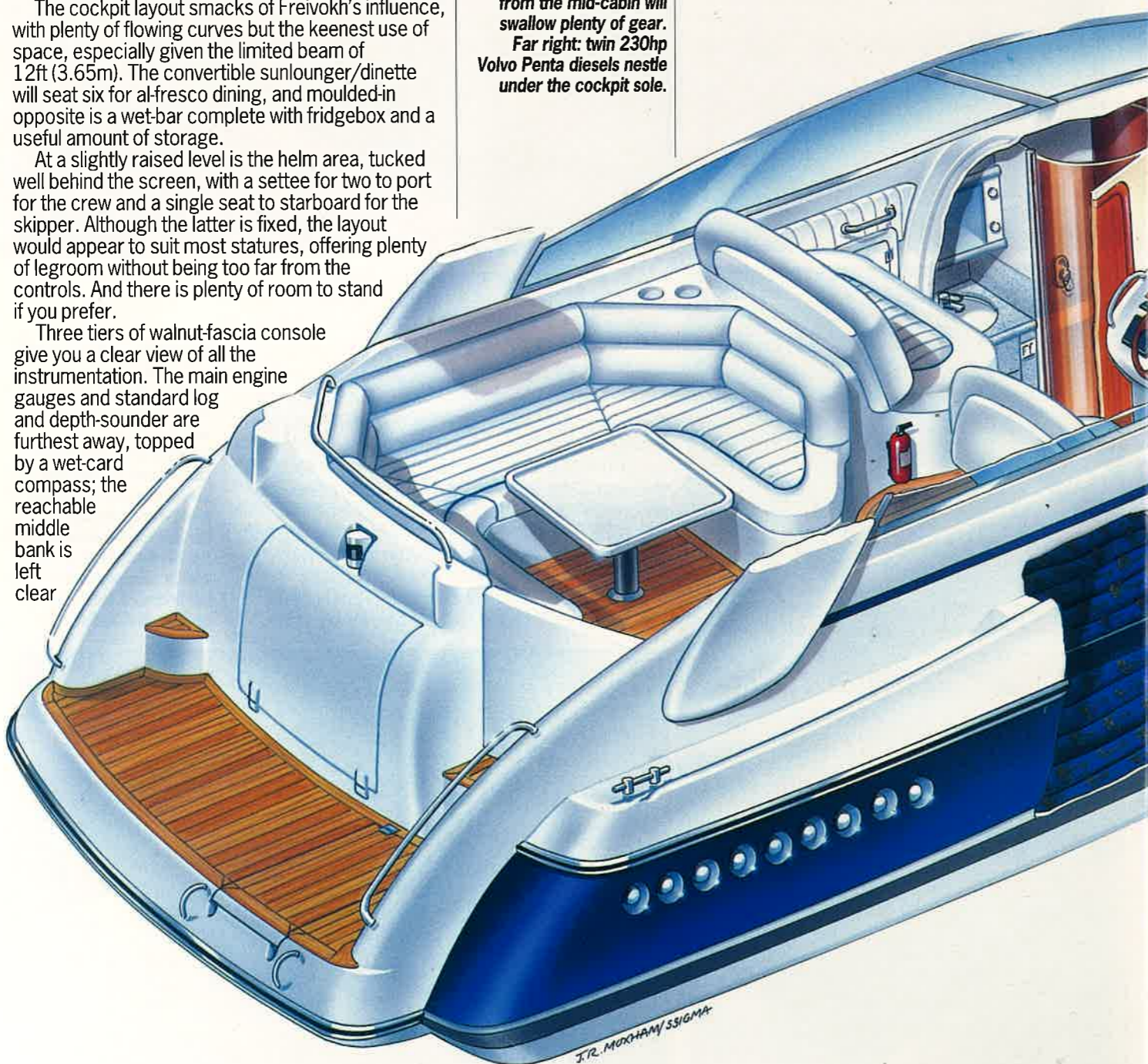
Above right: the 'glory hole' cupboard accessed from the mid-cabin will swallow plenty of gear. Far right: twin 230hp Volvo Penta diesels nestle under the cockpit sole.

transom structure will take care of a goodly array of fenders and cleaning gear.

The cockpit layout smacks of Freivokh's influence, with plenty of flowing curves but the keenest use of space, especially given the limited beam of 12ft (3.65m). The convertible sunlounger/dinette will seat six for al-fresco dining, and moulded-in opposite is a wet-bar complete with fridgebox and a useful amount of storage.

At a slightly raised level is the helm area, tucked well behind the screen, with a settee for two to port for the crew and a single seat to starboard for the skipper. Although the latter is fixed, the layout would appear to suit most statures, offering plenty of legroom without being too far from the controls. And there is plenty of room to stand if you prefer.

Three tiers of walnut-fascia console give you a clear view of all the instrumentation. The main engine gauges and standard log and depth-sounder are furthest away, topped by a wet-card compass; the reachable middle bank is left clear



for big-box electronics (radar and/or chart plotter); while the area adjacent to the wooden wheel is devoted to ready-use switches, whilst still leaving room for extra pieces of hardware such as an autopilot and VHF.

The screen is serviced by a pair of useful-sized wipers, and there is a small perspex chart area to port.

Cockpit stowage is plentiful and easily accessed. The forward seat plinths have good sized hatches in their front faces, there is a useful cave locker tucked into the coaming beside the crew settee, with a false bottom beneath which you find the vented gas bottle stowage, and a further locker near the transom door houses the shoreside connector, heavy-duty breakers and battery

switches. The U-seating aft also has a full run of lockers underneath, topped by lids which are a good size, have proper handles and relocate easily. Our only criticism was that the dedicated stowage for the cockpit table leg and canopy struts are located in the bottom of these lockers, so that other gear would have to be hiked out first. To get around this, the Fairburns have incorporated a clever fold-out table on their 375, a much slicker arrangement inspired by that on their earlier Martinique.

Safety when moving forward is helped by the uncluttered 8in (20cm) side decks, handholds on the cockpit arch, and guardrails which extend well aft, although these have no second rail or wire at intermediate height. All deck areas, including the shallow coachroof, have a moulded non-slip finish.

A useful array of 11in (28cm) cleats, including two on each side to handle springs, are located atop the pukka toerail. Up at the bow, a large hatch gives access to a cavernous chain locker, unfortunately not segmented, and the vertical windlass is tucked beneath the hatch out of view.

Below: the 375 is a joy to drive, running as if on rails with sharp and predictable handling at high speed.



Interior

A longish but easily ascended run of stairs leads from the smart stainless steel-framed sliding companionway door down into an extremely handsome main cabin area.

Well finished high-gloss cherry is used throughout the interior to excellent effect, giving a warm, super-chic ambience without being too heavy. All hidden compartments are painted-out, with hatches and the surfaces beneath seat cushions tidily trimmed with a vinyl covering. For the most part, headroom is just over 6ft (1.83m).

The well-appointed galley, to port, battens down

to disappear completely from sight behind a sideboard and a curved sweep of worktop. A twin-burner gas hob and knee-height oven/grill are included as standard, these being substituted by an electric hob and combi/microwave should an owner opt to have a generator fitted, and the refrigerator is of useful capacity.

Whilst there is room for crockery as well as smaller items in a line of eye-height cupboards, storage for bulkier items is a little limited, with the largest cupboard actually housing the television set which is included as standard. To ease the rubbish-disposal problem which is so rarely addressed effectively on boats, the Fairburns asked Sunseeker to incorporate a neat bin arrangement in the void beneath the sink.

To starboard, a U-settee arrangement runs around a wonderfully chunky table which folds out lengthways to seat six for dining, or converts to make a comfortable-sized double berth. There is a smattering of useful storage in painted-out lockers beneath, and a run of shallow cupboards above, all wood lined; the latter also house the electric panels.

A trimmed hatch towards the rear of the saloon sole hides the shower sump and seacocks.

There are a couple of opening ports and a pair of small overhead hatches in the main cabin, but no extractor fan in the galley. If you are boating in the Mediterranean during summer, this area will struggle to catch much by way of cooling breeze.

The rear portion of the accommodation is taken up by a twin-berth midships cabin to starboard and an adequate-sized toilet compartment with a neat separate shower cubicle to port.

The cabin has somewhat tighter headroom than the rest of the accommodation, but its berths, separated by a mini table, are of adequate dimensions at 6ft 4in x 2ft 3in (1.92m x 0.69m). The inboard one has painted-out lockers underneath, complete with false bottoms to keep gear clear of the bilge, and the aft-most section houses an electric bilge pump.

A hanging locker is also provided, but this pales into insignificance when compared with the major storage 'glory hole' cupboard that stretches beneath the cockpit. Equipped with shelves to take any extra clothing, it will also swallow every other piece of kit you are likely to bundle aboard.

The toilet compartment is a predominantly moulded affair, made less plain by an Avonite countertop. There are cupboards both above and below, but only an opening port and no extractor.

Completing the accommodation is the master cabin forward, with its offset 6ft 5in x 4ft 4in (1.96m x 1.32m) berth and just enough clear dressing room, plus a seat to perch on. Storage comes courtesy of a hanging locker, a couple of drawers beneath the berth (the owners' option in preference to a larger locker) and a run of eye-height cupboards outboard; bulkier gear can be stowed in a locker beneath the forward end of the berth.

On subsequent 375s, Sunseeker have further improved the storage space in this cabin.

Engines

The Fairburns had their 375 fitted with a pair of 230hp Volvo Penta KAD42 diesels. Other options are twin petrols, up to 660hp.

Lifting a good-sized manhole hatch in the cockpit sole allows you to nip down onto a treadplate towards

the front of the engine compartment, for daily checks or more major servicing. There is room both between and outside the engines and, rather unusually, plenty of space over the top of them as well.

The Racor fuel/water separators are readily accessible on the forward bulkhead, and set back from the treadplate so they do not catch you on the back the whole time. The sides of the compartment leave plenty of room for the calorifier and the well secured battery boxes.

Insulation is not greatly in evidence, with just the forward bulkhead covered in a foil-faced foam. On the safety front there is a good-sized overhead extinguishing system, and the automatic bilge pump, whilst only moderate in capacity, is just abaft of the treadplate and therefore easy to clean and check over. The fuel cocks are readily accessible beneath a separate cockpit hatch.

On the whole the installation appears well engineered and neatly executed, with even hidden areas tidily finished.

Performance & handling

Poole is one of our favourite spots for boat testing. On the one hand, the conditions around the headland at Old Harry quickly pick up as soon as there is any wind, and the reflected waves from the foreshore usually manage to pep up the residue of any swell from the Channel, giving us a useful test track to assess a boat's handling. On the other hand, the shelter afforded by the headland allows test runs to be conducted in comparative calm.

We were not to be disappointed, either in the conditions or in the easy work the Sunseeker made of the assorted sea-state. The hull seemed to enjoy the romp over the wave-tops, from whichever direction, with the throttles set at a comfortable 3400rpm to maintain a steady 27.5 knots.

Of course, it is not just the hull that has to be in tune; equally important is how the occupants fair. But even with the boat almost flying, the landing was cushioned and uncomplaining.

On any Sunseeker, the best place to be is in the driving seat, and the 375 is nothing short of a joy to drive — and so easy too, running as if on rails with pin-sharp and predictable manoeuvrability at high speed. The controls are all easy to reach, with throttles, power-trim and tabs falling comfortably to the right hand while the left gives fingertip control to the lightly worked wheel.

At our 3400rpm fast cruising speed, with legs just cranked out past the vertical, the 'effort' is measured in a consumption figure of around 15gph (73lph). Drop the revs back to 3000rpm and you will be able to maintain a most relaxing 22 knots, whilst for a spurt across the bay we measured a maximum of 34.5 knots, to which the 375 simply hums.

We were equally happy with cockpit noise levels within the unobtrusive 80-84dB(A) range.

Conclusions

Given the ever upward spiral in the size and luxury of their hugely impressive motoryachts, it is good to see Sunseeker putting as much effort into the design and build of what is now their smallest offshore cruiser.

In terms of layout, the 375 cuts just the right swathe between interior and cockpit space, accomplishing this in real style and with excellent finish. And as for performance, well, that is what Sunseeker have always done best. □

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