

Boat Report

SUNSEEKER 46 MANHATTAN

The smallest option for devotees of the marque who want to switch from open-cockpit to flybridge cruising, this is arguably the most mainstream Sunseeker. How does it handle the challenge of Channel Islands waters?





Sunseekers are hard to catch for a boat test. They are out of the factory, sea-trialed, checked, cleaned and shipped to eagerly awaiting owners before a journalist can get the cap off his pen. On this occasion we struck lucky.

One example of possibly the most mainstream Sunseeker model, the smallest in their Manhattan flybridge class, had just been delivered to MBM readers Sean Morvan and his father Bill when they invited us out to St Helier to put her through her paces in their persistently awkward home waters around Jersey.

Design

As with all Sunseekers, the 46 Manhattan's hull and superstructure are designed by Don Shead.

The hull shape is medium-to-deep vee, set with deep tunnels. These allow the propellers a shallower thrust angle, for extra efficiency, while the engines themselves are installed beneath the cockpit, driving through vee-gearboxes.

Deadrise is a steady 19° from amidships to the transom, where a slight wedge is incorporated to compensate for the lift lost to the tunnels. Two pairs of sprayrails run parallel to the centre-line, the inner pair fading well before the tunnels, and there is a wide toed-in chine.

Placing the engines well aft reduces their intrusion within the accommodation, in terms of both space and noise, and sets them low in the hull.

The tunnels have short, moulded extensions protruding from the transom, incorporated, we assume, to ensure the rudders do not stall due to air being sucked past them from above once the hull starts to heel into a turn. It works exceptionally well, as the 46 steers some of the tightest turns we have yet come across with this hull configuration.

Exterior

There is really only one way to board the 46, and that is in true Mediterranean style: straight from astern onto the bathing platform, and thence

Clockwise from above: comfortable bucket seats face the main settee in the saloon. The double seat at the interior helm is not generous, and the breaker panel appears vulnerable. A deckhead hatch and sparse use of joinery give the master cabin a light aspect. Sliding open the door from the cockpit to the saloon creates an impressive entertaining area. Under the saloon is what most owners have fitted-out as a guest cabin. The galley has plenty of storage cupboards above the neatly covered sink and drainer.

through the wide doorway to the cockpit. This is all well and good in most instances, but Sean tells us he envisages having the air cowls in the topside modified to form a mid-height step for boarding from alongside. This could easily have been incorporated in the moulding, of course, especially given that there are plenty of helpful handholds.

The bathing platform itself is of a good depth. There is stowage for suitable-sized fenders, and the decking is finished in teak — as are the cockpit and the steps up to the side decks.

The transom bench in the cockpit has a pair of decent-sized lockers, but, as there is no lazaret, that is about all the stowage space. The two cupboards set into the superstructure simply house the switches for the battery and the manual bilge pump (with sump changover) plus a manual fire-extinguisher.

Guardrails of useful height, with intermediate wires, come right back as far as the short stairwells to the side decks, which are a comfortable 11 in (28cm) wide with a bordering toerail. A handrail is provided over the raised superstructure, but does not continue along the coachroof. This expanse is fashioned to take sunpads, with moulded-in drinks holders to compensate for its slight camber.

Right forward is an inset electric Simpson Lawrence windlass, feeding the ground tackle into a large, accessible but sadly non-divided locker. There are 10 in (25cm) cleats forward and aft, and two along each side deck, in recognition of the fact that single spring cleats are usually inadequate for a 45-footer.

For the ascent from the cockpit to the flybridge, Sunseeker have somewhat surprisingly stuck to a ladder, albeit wide-treaded and reasonably angled, rather than opting for the staircase which is now de-rigueur on similar craft. But there are well-sited handrails, and a sliding hatch at the top enables the cockpit to be battened down.

The flybridge layout has a good-sized L-settee to port, a single seat just ahead of this, and a fixed double bench at the helm. Fixed to the back of the latter is a wet-bar with a sink and coolbox, while a slideaway table can be used to infill the settee to sunbed proportions.

Inset into a veneered dash is a full line-up of engine instrumentation, together with Robertson's (now Simrad's) smartly matching speedo/log and echo sounder. A separate panel takes care of any additional electronics, over and above the standard package which includes radar, twin-station VHF and autopilot, plus useful-sized and well located wet-card compasses both up top and down below.

The driving position is fixed but certainly comfortable enough, with the wooden wheel and dual-lever Hynautic controls readily to hand. A short run of ready-use switches pans out on both sides of the wheel, the trim-tab rockers being the last in the line-up and easy to locate. Sean has had a bow-thruster fitted as an extra to Myanne.

Interior

As with the larger Mannhattans, much of the 46's interior styling is down to Ken Freivokh, working with Sunseeker's in-house design team.

A sliding, double-action stainless steel-framed door opens the saloon into the cockpit, creating an impressive entertaining area, with the saloon itself being furnished with a relaxed U-shaped settee to



Sunseeker 46 Manhattan

Engines twin Caterpillar 3208TA diesels, 435hp at 2800rpm, 8cyl, 10.4lt.

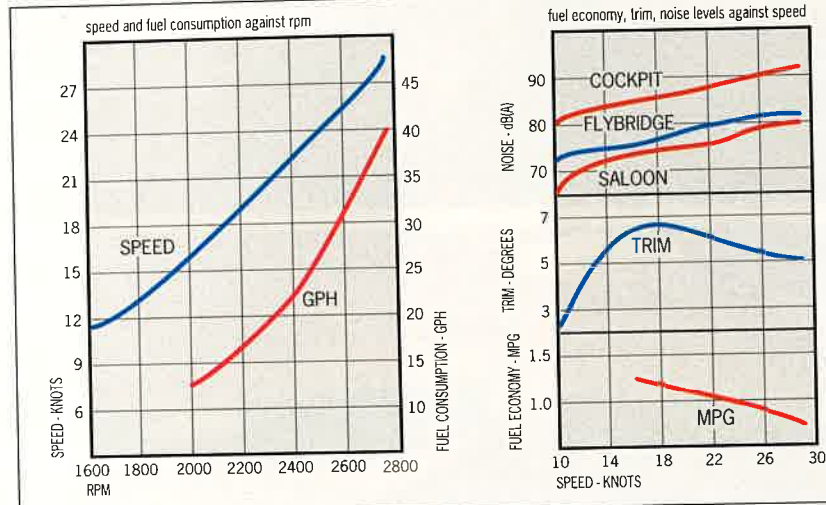
Conditions wind NE Force 2, sea slight. Load fuel 60%, water 50%, crew 2.

sound levels dB(A)									
rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	saloon	fwdcab	ckpt flybg
1600	11.5	—	—	—	—	3.0	69	68	83 74
1800	13.6	—	—	—	—	4.5	72	68	84 74
2000	16.2	12.8	58	1.27	367	6.5	73	70	85.5 75
2200	19.4	16.5	75	1.18	340	6.5	74	71	88 78
2400	23.4	22.4	102	1.04	303	5.5	77	74	89 79.5
2600	26.6	30.5	139	0.87	253	5.5	79	76	91 81
2750	28.8	40.0	182	0.72	209	5.0	80	77	92 82

Acceleration 0-20 knots, 10.4sec

(*allows 20% margin)

Loa
46ft 0in (14.02m)
Hull length
44ft 2in (13.48m)
Beam
14ft 5in (4.40m)
Draught
3ft 7in (1.10m)
Air draught
15ft 5in (4.70m)
Displacement
16 tonnes
Fuel capacity
362gal (1650lt)
Water capacity
99gal (450lt)
Price
£288,735 ex VAT
as tested



starboard and a neat pair of bucket seats opposite, set either side of an entertainment centre.

The joinery here and throughout the boat is in a deep golden cherry, well matched and nicely finished; light or dark burr and maple are also available. The chunky rolled fiddle around most of the surfaces is especially attractive, and the drop-down folding-leaf table, around which six people can sit comfortably, is impressive too.

The upholstery is in cream leatherette. Taking up the seat cushions gives access to the usual stowage lockers, but

these are simply painted out; some tidier finishing to the mouldings would not go amiss. Also the seatback cushions are just wedged in place, and fall in a heap when the base cushion is removed; a more permanent arrangement would be preferable.

Headroom is 6ft 4in (1.93m) in the saloon, and adequate elsewhere in the boat. The deckheads are finished in padded panels with inset spotlights. You climb onto a small raised plinth to reach the helm station to starboard, and then down several steps again to the galley. Opposite the helm is a run of sideboard that includes a bar unit as well as the crockery stowage, enabling most items to be got at both from the saloon and from the galley.

The helm has a none-too-generous fixed seat for two, with a cave locker beneath. Sean aims to have some extra form of storage, for almanacs and the like, built outboard of the seat. The layout of instrumentation and controls is good, and there is a useful adjacent chart area, with ample console space still left for electronics. The main breaker panel is a shade vulnerable, at knee-height and uncovered.

The pair of generous self-parking wipers, and just as importantly demisters, should ensure the screen stays clear. Ventilation is assisted by the neat, double-action side ports: you can ease them open one way to allow air in without too much of a draught, or too much moisture content, and then slide them back fully to let off steam once you are moored.

The galley, again finished in cherry, has a Corian work surface, inset with a stainless steel sink and drainer. As

Right: the 46 Manhattan's scalloped hull bottom allows the props a shallower thrust angle, and the tunnels have short moulded extensions to ensure the rudders do not stall when the boat heels into a tight turn.



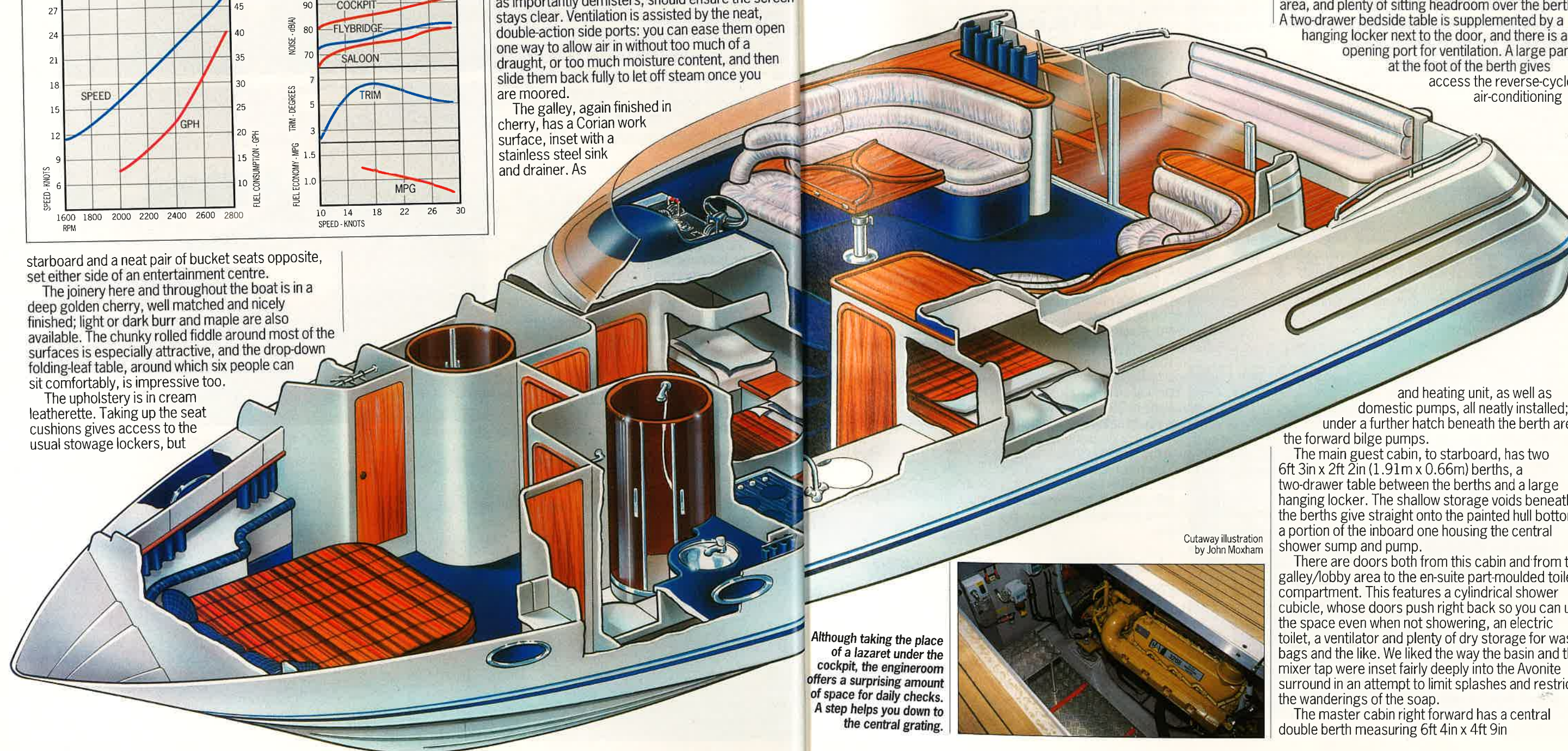
standard, a two-burner electric hob and microwave/grill are fitted, although Myanne has been upgraded with a four-burner hob and Panasonic combination oven/microwave and grill. This all-electric arrangement is fired by a 5kW generator located beneath the cockpit.

There is an extractor fan over the hob, and a small opening port outboard above the sink. Storage is

most adequate, with a combination of variously-sized cupboards and drawers.

A door from the aft end of the galley leads to the 'optional crew/guest or utility room' running to port beneath the saloon; most 46 buyers to date have opted for the guest cabin.

Although snug, it has a good-sized double berth measuring 6ft 3in x 4ft 7in (1.91m x 1.37m), standing headroom to the fairly pinched dressing area, and plenty of sitting headroom over the berth. A two-drawer bedside table is supplemented by a hanging locker next to the door, and there is an opening port for ventilation. A large panel at the foot of the berth gives access the reverse-cycle air-conditioning



Cutaway illustration by John Moxham

Although taking the place of a lazaret under the cockpit, the engineroom offers a surprising amount of space for daily checks. A step helps you down to the central grating.



and heating unit, as well as domestic pumps, all neatly installed; under a further hatch beneath the berth are the forward bilge pumps.

The main guest cabin, to starboard, has two 6ft 3in x 2ft 2in (1.91m x 0.66m) berths, a two-drawer table between the berths and a large hanging locker. The shallow storage voids beneath the berths give straight onto the painted hull bottom, a portion of the inboard one housing the central shower sump and pump.

There are doors both from this cabin and from the galley/lobby area to the en-suite part-moulded toilet compartment. This features a cylindrical shower cubicle, whose doors push right back so you can use the space even when not showering, an electric toilet, a ventilator and plenty of dry storage for wash bags and the like. We liked the way the basin and the mixer tap were inset fairly deeply into the Avonite surround in an attempt to limit splashes and restrict the wanderings of the soap.

The master cabin right forward has a central double berth measuring 6ft 4in x 4ft 9in

(1.93m x 1.49m), with shelves and overhead cupboards outboard. Joinery here, as through the rest of the sleeping cabins, has an off-white lacquer finish and less wood trim, to make up for there being less space and light. The main clothes stowage is down to a pair of good-sized wardrobes, one for hanging and the other with shelves. A large single drawer is tucked into the foot of the berth, but other voids can be got at only by lifting the mattress. A pair of opening sideports are supplemented by a circular deckhead hatch.

A door to port leads to the en-suite toilet/shower compartment, which matches the guest facilities.

Engines

Myanne has a pair of Caterpillar's 3208 V8 diesels, rated in their turbocharged, aftercooled guise to 435hp apiece. The alternative installation is twin 550hp 6V-92TA two-stroke Detroit Diesels.

For day-to-day inspection and normal servicing, you reach the engines through a cockpit-long central hatch, supported on gas struts. For more major work, two side panels can be unbolted and lifted clear. A mid-height step protrudes from the central grating, and a removable box for spares stowage is usually located here, with securing straps.

Given that the engineroom is basically located where you would normally expect a lazaret, which should make it rather cramped, we were pleasantly surprised to find routine checkpoints and most service items readily accessible. Certainly, making your way to the outboard side of the engines requires a fairly tight squeeze past the encapsulated generator to the rear of the compartment, but with the fuel tanks located beneath the saloon sole instead of in the wings, it remains possible.

Most servicing points, such as the raw-water strainers and fuel/water separators, are near the centre of the compartment, and not only the dipsticks but also the primary fuel filters are handed.

One of the main problems with a V-drive train, whereby the shaft runs back under the engine, can be access to the stern gland, but this is not the case here. There is plenty of room, by way of the inboard bearers, to inspect and service them.

With the engines essentially back-to-front and a number of ancillary items, such as the steering gear, located at the rear of the compartment, even abaft of the generator, we were pleased to find that belt-guards had been fitted. However, the generator needs some lithesome negotiation if you want to reach the rudder gear and bilge pumps.

One feature which irked us was the location of the batteries. There being nine of them to house, the lower in the boat the better due to weight considerations, but their chosen location under the central grating seemed too close to the bilge for comfort.

In general the installation is well found and neat, with wiring and cables ducted out of harm's way, and the fuel cocks being only item we had any trouble finding. Simple eggbox-type foam insulation is fitted to the deckhead, and two 2.0kg fire-extinguishers are provided.

Performance and handling

Just a few days before our excursion from Jersey, the ferry *St Malo* came to well-publicised grief on the rocks around the Corbière light. After such a timely reminder of the challenges of navigating Channel

Islands waters, we were thankful that our host had been boating in these parts for some 25 years.

And if the Morvan family know their home waters, they also have a keen eye for a boat. They have previously owned both a *Spearfish* and a *Huntsman* from the Fairey stable, a *Powles 38* for some 11 years, and most recently a *Princess 470*. The latter, although a comfortable sea boat, tended to be wetter than they had hoped in the hectic conditions they often ran into, so of the *Sunseeker*?

Well, it is still early days, but Sean and his father appear generally happy with *Myanne's* handling. Their delivery trip from Poole to St Helier, in progressively worsening conditions, culminating in a Force 4 wind-against-tide seaway through the Race, made for a useful 100-mile commissioning voyage which they completed in four hours berth-to-berth, with a commendably dry ride.

Our own sortie proved less taxing, with very little wind, but the waters are always shifting here, and what are placid conditions to hardened Jersey salts can make for a reasonable seaway to gauge a vessel's handling.

The first point to make is that the 46 is a point-and-press boat. Steer it where you will, and it is not going to get stuck in a rut or become dogged by any quartering waves, at least nothing we could find. We found *Myanne* responsive to the throttles, pushing up to 20 knots from rest in ten seconds dead, but precise and crisp rather than tender or twitchy, negotiating full-power 180° turns in less than two boat lengths.

As with most relatively deep-vee boats, the 46 runs with a fair amount of trim, lowering her nose by a couple of degrees for head-sea work, in which Sean says she is a mite firmer than the *Princess 470*. Visibility from the interior helm is good, and unrestricted even with the tabs off.

With the engines slightly down on their 2800rpm rating, we may have been losing a knot on top speed, our radar gun showing a shade under 29 knots flat-out. For cruising, 2400rpm gives an easy-feeling 23.5 knots, a speed the boat, engines and crew will be happy to ride for serious passagemaking on an estimated fuel consumption of 23gph (105lph), which equates to the good news of a mile per gallon.

At 2600rpm there is a shade more exhilaration, with speeds approaching 27 knots, leaving plenty of water behind. Backing off to 2200rpm keeps you steadily on the plane at 20 knots, while even 2000rpm allows you to settle to a constant 16 knots plus without squatting or dropping off the plane.

Noise levels in the accommodation were good, and on the flybridge much the same, only once rising above 80dB(A) when flat-out. The cockpit is a different story, with readings quickly reaching the mid-80s. The simple answer is to retire to the spacious flybridge.

Conclusions

If you ignore the 46 *Manhattan's* pedigree for a moment and compare it to other like-sized craft, there is plenty of smartly dressed, suitably appointed, well engineered boat in its length, albeit for a premium.

At the same time, for *Sunseeker* devotees considering the shift from open-cockpit to more commodious flybridge accommodation, it has all the panache you would expect from the marque, with no compromise on performance or handling. □

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