

Sunseeker San Remo

Little details could make all the difference in this most competitive of marine markets REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM

BOAT REPORT
SUNSEEKER SAN REMO



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The brief...

LOA: 51ft 8in (15.74m)
PRICE: from
£668,400 incl. VAT
TOP SPEED: 30 knots
BUILDERS:
Sunseeker International
ENQUIRIES
www.sunseeker.com

After all the fuss and furore over the launch of the new Princess V48 and Fairline Targa 48, it is easy to forget that Sunseeker got there first, launching its 50ft IPS600 driven two cabin sportscruiser back in January at the London Boat Show. We've been pestering Sunseeker ever since for a test and are the very first to be tossed the keys to this magnificent third element of the 'Prinfairseeker triumvirate'. We head out into the English Channel to see how it compares. **Nick**



It's all about the brand these days we're told, but what does 'Sunseeker' mean to you? Perhaps the most formidably marketed boat manufacturer in the world, the word Sunseeker is as recognisable as Rolex or Rolls Royce; and for much the same reasons, with its carefully cultivated and nurtured image of quality, luxury, flair and style. Sunseeker has a back catalogue of some of the most stunning boats ever to grace the marina. It has brought us such luminaries as the achingly pretty Tomahawk 37, the fabulous Superhawk 41, and the thunderingly aggressive Predator 108.

However, there have been blips, with over-complex design and the quest for more window area leading to boats that haven't quite hit the style bullseye. But anyone who has visited a boat show over the last couple of years will know that Sunseeker is rediscovering its mojo, with some sharp, performance-honed styling that is also confidently understated.

Design & build

The new confident Sunseeker is laid out in all its power and majesty in the San Remo. From the sleek deck profile that dips toward the prow in

trademark Sunseeker style to the carbon-look wrap on the gracefully arched side spars of the hardtop frame, this is a seriously good looking boat. The waterline sweeps up at the bow, reaching toward that dropped nose and the engine vents are carbon-look wrapped to match the hardtop spars and set into powerfully curved haunches. Gloss black hull sides complete the look and effectively disguise the long run of dark tinted windows. It looks lower than its rivals, leaner, sportier, more lithe. It looks... like a Sunseeker. Hallelujah! And that's a massively important point, as the

50ft sportscruiser market has never been so competitive, with Fairline launching its Targa 48 and Princess the V48.

Interestingly, unlike those boats, the San Remo is only available as an open hardtop, with no enclosed deck saloon option. Instead, Sunseeker offers the option of no hardtop at all, a popular choice in Brazil, apparently. The cockpit layout mirrors the open versions of the V48 and Targa, having a central sunbed aft with a garage under, and then a large dinette area trimmed in stone coloured vinyl opposite a wet-bar beneath that

PHOTOS: Graham Snook



open backed hardtop. Where it does differ is what's overhead. Where both rivals feature large canvas openings (you have to opt for the enclosed deck saloon coupe versions to get a solid sunroof) the San Remo has a large solid sliding panel made of real carbon fibre with glass inserts to let light in. Carbon fibre is used here for two reasons, it keeps the weight down at the highest point of the boat, drawing the centre of gravity down, and it's more resistant than GRP to warping and binding in hot climes. Actually, there are three reasons: it looks great, too. The rear, fixed section of roof also has inset glass sections that line up with those in the sliding panel when open. The roof mechanism should be reliable, too; the motor is so powerful that it's used to lift the swim platform on the Portofino 47.

The other big difference is in the crew seating around the helm. Where the Targa 48 and V48 have L and J-shaped seating respectively adjacent to their double helms, Sunseeker has opted for four forward-facing seats across the beam; the portside crew have to sit with their legs stretched forward, but it's a comfortable arrangement.

Rather than the sensible staircase of the Princess to the lower accommodation, Sunseeker has opted for open oval treads in dark wenge wood, backlit and floating on a single stainless spar. Less practical (there's no understairs storage) but far more theatrical, they mark the tone for an interior that cranks up the wow factor with wonderful pale figured anigre satin finished wood set off by wenge dark wood detailing and flooring, and backlit stainless steel trim inserts. Two big skylights set into the ceiling beneath the windscreen flood the saloon with light and those large hull windows offer a good view out. It's sharp and contemporary although Sunseeker can offer more conservative choices such as cherry, black American walnut, or even an oak satin finish in either white or yellow oak. At night the entire area is beautifully lit with LED lighting, and plenty of it, much of it independently switched to vary the mood.

The U-shaped dinette to starboard can be replaced by a straight settee, the backrest of which lifts to a Pullman berth which, by using a folding partition, converts this area into a third cabin at night. I'd stick with standard though, the dinette arrangement can convert for occasional overnighting and the deep leather

upholstery is inviting, making this a great area to tuck yourself away for an evening.

The galley opposite is slightly compromised compared with its rivals; there's no space for a dishwasher for example, but it's perfectly adequate and beautifully formed with dedicated space for all the crockery and a specially shaped drawer for the posh Sunseeker cutlery. Likewise the forward cabin, with its scissor berths that hinge together to form a double, feels a touch tighter; with the beds together the en suite door won't open fully, and there's less storage. The en suites

themselves lack the floor space of the Princess, the forward one having the rotating shower screen of a smaller boat compared with the big separate walk-in shower the V48 boasts. As a result, there's

no room for a "Jack and Jill" door from the saloon, the larger owner's en suite serving a dual purpose as the day heads (toilets).

But the biggest compromise is the full beam owner's cabin itself. That raised floor of the forward port cockpit section gifts this area standing headroom inside the door, and a sunken well at the foot of the bed means you can stand here too. Anywhere else is a stoop if you're tall and, on the starboard side of the bed, even if you're short. This is the price you pay for those sleeker lines and lower deck profile. Is it worth it? If, ultimately, accommodation is your priority you'll be beating a path to your Princess dealer. For everyone else, the style of the boat will be worth every lost inch in a cabin that still feels perfectly roomy and in which you'll spend most of the time horizontal anyway. This is a sports cruiser after all.

"It looks sportier and more lithe than its rivals"



On deck

Style and substance deliver total confidence

Sunseeker must have been listening to us. Following some criticism of the Portofino 40's deck arrangement, you get a good 11 in on the side decks here and pulpit rails that stretch right back to the cockpit and make moving forward far more confidence inspiring than with many previous models. However, handrails the length of the

hardtop would improve matters still further. Unlike the Princess and Fairline, Sunseeker does not offer an enclosed cockpit coupe model for the San Remo, instead going the other way with a roofless open cockpit version. For once, if you do opt for the hardtop, you actually get a real carbon fibre structure rather than a wrap. And it looks the business. On a practical bent, the anchor locker is huge, but with no partitions it's not ideal for warps. There's liferaft storage under the aft sunpad and the tender garage will handle a Williams 325 RIB. A hydraulic bathing platform is also an option.





"The helmsman's seat is fixed but comfortable"

From the helm



Plenty of room and excellent visibility

The Princess V48 has twin individual helm seats that will slide, the Targa 48 the option of a pair of wonderful adjustable "Recaro" style chairs, but on the San Remo it's just a simple double bench fixed in place apart from a lift bolster (that's in one section so if the helmsman wants it up then it's up for the navigator too). That's not to say that the helm is uncomfortable, there's plenty of room and the visibility is excellent. A single piece windscreen helps and although the thick and steeply raked starboard mullion is mildly obstructive it's not something that you notice in practice. You will notice that the skylights set in the deckhead can bounce sunlight off the inside of the screen into the helmsman's eyes however, but it's an easy fix by covering them with dark non-reflective mats. Old fashioned rocker switches are banished in favour of smart flush round buttons and the wipers feature an intermittent setting and a wash/wipe button (rather than the usual wash only), great for a quick one touch clearing of salt spray. Swap the fixed bench for a couple of decent chairs and this would be a great helm.



Interiors

Style and finish is the ace in the pack

Given that the layout is virtually identical to the competition, it's fascinating to see how each boat has quite a different character. While the

Princess trumps the Sunseeker for space and storage, the Sunseeker manages to never feel lacking in these areas (unless you've just got off a V48 of course) and adds masses of style and finish. Where the Princess is conservative with a

small c, the Sunseeker is decidedly avant-garde, fusing modern, stylish materials and illuminating it with big hull windows throughout, creating a fantastically airy, attractive and inviting space. Sunseeker is also prepared to undertake a degree of custom build. Want that mid cabin settee swapped for a storage cabinet? The factory will do it, for a modest charge.



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Performance & handling

The San Remo weighs in at about 16 tonnes dry, about the same as the Princess and 3 tonnes more than the Fairline. Fitted with the same Volvo Penta IPS600 engines (the only option for all three boats) ultimate performance is fractionally behind the competition, 30 knots versus the 32 I achieved from the Fairline, and 33 from the Princess.

However, figures only tell part of the tale because where the Sunseeker scores is in the ride. Thundering through a choppy Force 4-5 the San Remo keeps up a comfortable mid-20 knot pace where milder (but still choppy)

conditions had me backing off in the V48 out of mechanical sympathy. There's a very real feeling of the Sunseeker slicing through the water rather than bashing over it. It gives a strong sense that in the inevitable accommodation/sea keeping trade off, the latter won.

Interestingly, I found exactly the same with

"It has plenty of bite out on the water"

the Sunseeker Portofino 40 last year, compared with the Princess V39. Anyone that thinks Sunseeker is all bark needs to feel the bite of this boat out on the water.

There's little to choose between the three in terms of handling, the vectoring thrust of the IPS pods endowing all with light, precise steering and nimble cornering.

Visibility is good and the trim tabs can be pretty much ignored, requiring only the occasional mild tweak to keep things on the level, while noise levels benefit from engines buried aft under the dinghy garage, never breaking 80dB at the helm even flat out.

It's a fun drive, living up to the sports styling, but the hull gives the boat real reach too.



Enginebay

As ever with sportscruisers of this size equipped with both IPS and a dinghy garage, it's the garage that compromises an otherwise spacious engine bay. For obvious packaging reasons, the garage has to be kept as low as possible, and hence while there is plenty of space around the engines, getting to them requires a degree of agility. Getting around the front of the engines requires limboing beneath the vee of the garage floor while the route around the back requires a scramble over the generator. On the Targa 48 it's possible to unbolt a centre section of the garage floor in about 10 minutes, allowing service engineers to stand between the engines. No such facility exists in the San Remo, although pre-determined cut outs mean the whole floor could be removed in the extreme situation of an engine needing to be removed.



Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	51ft 8in (15.74m)
HULL LENGTH	45ft 7in (13.9m)
BEAM	14ft 1in (4.30m)
DRAUGHT	4ft 3in (1.30m)
DISPLACEMENT	16 tonnes (35,274lb)
FUEL CAPACITY	290 gal (1,320 lt)
WATER CAPACITY	71 gal (322 lt)
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	11in (28cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 6in (1.98m)
FORECABIN BERTH	2x 6ft 7in x 2ft 6in (2.01m x 0.76m)
MID CABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 5ft 0in (1.98m x 1.52m)

PERFORMANCE

Engines	Volvo Penta IPS600 – pod drive
Configuration	6 cyl 5.5 lt, 435hp @ 3,500rpm
Conditions	South-west force 4/5 – sea state slight
Load	25% water, 50% fuel, four crew

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	LPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
1,000	6	1.3	6	4.6	1,067	69
1,500	9	4.6	21	2.0	464	68
2,000	10	10.6	48	0.9	209	72
2,500	14	17.2	78	0.8	186	75
3,000	21	25.1	114	0.8	186	75
3,500	28	33.4	152	0.8	186	78
3,620	30	36.3	165	0.8	186	79

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH and 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 Penta IPS600 diesels	£668,400
Mediterranean Package	£108,488.
This includes the following: air conditioning; generator upgrade; hydraulic passerelle; bow thruster; hydraulic lifting bathing platform; tender recovery system; safe; deck wash; docking winches; BBQ grill; icemaker; bow sunbathing cushions with folding back rests; LED deck lights; "sail canopy" bimini;	
Hull band in black	£3,072

BOAT AS TESTED £777,960*

*Boat as tested price may include alternative options

Specification & value

The base figure for the San Remo is £668,400 including VAT compared with £492,000 for the Fairline and £516,000 for the Princess.

However, the Sunseeker comes with a far greater standard specification. Want a generator on your Princess? That will cost you £11,000. On the Sunseeker it's standard. Want televisions and Fusion hi-fi systems in all cabins? Figure on about £3500 for the Fairline, £7000 for the Princess. On the Sunseeker they are standard. And so are scissor berths in the forward cabin, a teak laid cockpit, two 12in colour Simrad navigation screens, a radar, Harmon Kardon cinema surround sound to the saloon and leather upholstery. Even a holding

tank, optional on the Fairline and Princess, is standard on the Sunseeker. Spec a V48 to that level and the price disparity drops to 18%.

But take a look at the nav lights. They're stainless steel housings on the Sunseeker instead of plastic. Have a close look at the cleats, every one is etched with the Sunseeker logo. Open the electrics panel to find a sophisticated iPhone-style touch screen Ships Monitoring System, open a wardrobe to find illuminated hanging rails, turn the steering wheel and the weighted revolving Sunseeker logo in the centre remains upright. And let's not forget that carbon fibre and glass roof panel where the others use vinyl. There is some serious attention to detail going on here, none of it cheap.

THE VERDICT

The San Remo faces formidable competition as the Princess V48 and Fairline Targa 48 are both fantastic boats. And on a spreadsheet they blow the Sunseeker out of the water. Deader, slower, with far less headroom in the mid cabin; it would be an easy boat to overlook. But to do so would be a massive mistake because in the flesh and out on the water it is a very different story. Lower, sleeker, sexier, it fights back with a wonderfully stylish interior, fantastic seakeeping, a comprehensive standard specification, quite delicious attention to detail, an open mind to owner customisation and perhaps the strongest brand image of the three. Dismiss it at your peril.

Meet the family



Sunseeker Predator 53 from £976,800
LOA: 60ft 2in (18.35m)
First rung of the Predator ladder, the 53 has big engines (up to twin 800hp), an enclosed deck saloon, and three permanent sleeping cabins.



Sunseeker Portofino 40 from £406,800
LOA: 41ft 0in (12.5m)
With very similar styling to the San Remo, the Portofino 40 marks the entry point into the Sunseeker range.