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THIS WAY UP

BOATING[®]

SILVERTON 33: MAINTAIN A HIGH PROFILE

By KEVIN FALVEY

How many new 33' cruisers have six berths? Right, most of them. Now, how many can honestly sleep that number in comfort over a holiday weekend? Unless your last name is Sardine, you answered "none." Face it, boats this size cruise most comfortably when two's the crew.

That's why Silverton's 330 Sport-bridge is so refreshing. It wasn't designed in the maximum berths-per-foot mold. Instead, it fulfills a mission few other planing boats this size can: It enables couples to spend an extended amount of time aboard without filing for divorce. Does it fulfill this mission? You betcha.

Tradeoffs? Get used to longer running times—this is not a fast boat. But all that living space lets you actually enjoy cruising. Plus it has a great single-level interior layout.

Blow The Man Down

The 330 doesn't handle like the midcabin you may be leaving behind. It's tall for its LOA. At 10'3" from waterline to arch, it won't be going under low, fixed bridges. Windage is a factor, too. In close quarters, you'll need to judge—and use—the wind more than you may have in the past. Thankfully it's a V-drive inboard. Our test boat's twin 320-hp Crusader 7.4L MPIs and 18-by-22-inch Nibrall

propellers provided the torque bite and counterblast necessary for worry-free docking. Does height affect turning? At idle speed, the stern swings with metered precision. Cruising at 20 mph, it comes around after a short beat. Just don't try sharp, express boat-style turns when planing: The 330 heeled outboard when we tried them during our test. If you like tubing or skiing, buy a sport-model RIB dinghy. Wakes and waves? The 330 is a Moderate-V hull design carrying 16 degrees of transom deadrise. It also weighs in at more than 18,000 pounds loaded. With this combination, our test boat shouldered aside a typical ICW chop. For the larger tug and pilotboat wakes, we throttled back to ensure a smooth ride.

The 330's weight, wide chines, and shallow deadrise provided good stability while the boat was drifting beam-to. The motion was easy and it recovered quickly—perfect for open anchorage overnighting. Visibility is great at all speeds thanks to the flying bridge helm and the 330's moderate bowrise while achieving plane. And its scant 2'10" draft lets you get off the churned channel. For a boat whose mission is cruising there and being there—not getting there first—the Silverton's performance definitely meets the mark.

On The Level

"Belowdecks" is a term that sticks in the throat when discussing the 330. As on the comparable Carver 350 Mariner, the Silverton's cockpit and cabin are laid out on a single level. You don't stoop and step down to go below. Instead, you stroll through a full-height sliding glass door.

Think sunroom once you do: Light and space are abundant. It has 8'1" of headroom and an Cinemascope-size windshield forward (buy a sunshade to thwart fabric fade). The galley sports a 5-foot-long sliding port. There's even a skylight. And thanks to the V-drives and lack of a midcabin berth, the 330's salon is long enough to include a breakfast bar tailing off the galley's Corian[®] counter, this allows cruising couples to leave the convertible starboard-side dinette unconverted. This feature, along with the Ultraleather-covered reclining chair to port, makes the 330 a cozy cruising condo. You go from dinner time to TV time (13" color TV/VCR) without the hassle of reassembly.

I liked the portside galley's aft placement versus its forward location on the Carver. Aboard the Silverton you can run in for a quick tray of snacks without tracking sand or water

continued...

through the salon. Both boats feature faux-wood galley flooring that will wipe clean in a jiffy if you find yourself thirsty after a shelling expedition. Culinary cruiser? Add the dual-burner stove with oven and microwave. Order the 6.5-kW genset, 20k BTU, and two-zone air conditioning, and you can enjoy dinner and a movie in dehumidified comfort while on the hook. Rheostat-controlled halogen lighting provides a warm glow. The headliner is vinyl-covered wood. Built in sections, it allows easy removal for wiring access or repair—a gold-plate feature.

The head is also aft. Like the galley, its location is preferable to the more forward positioning found on the Carver. Its placement, and the ease with which you can enter the cabin, allow the 330's head to function like the day head of a large yacht: easy in, easy out. There's 6'6" of head room here and a stall shower. For dockside bathing, the opening port has a curtain, and there's an exhaust fan. I prefer 110v outlets installed in heads to be covered. The one aboard the 330 is not.

Forward, you get an honest-to-goodness stateroom complete with a companionway and full-size innerspring mattress. Silverton's installation of a shoe rack in the hanging locker was innovative. Normally, the space behind the rod is left dead. Not fond of rising with the sun? There's a venetian blind on the overhead hatch. A step to port helps you mount the mattress and serves as a changing stool. Read by the halogen lights or order the 9" TV/VCR. Just like home.

BOATING CERTIFIED TEST RESULTS

Silverton 330 Sportbridge

RPM	SPEED		EFFICIENCY						OPERATION	
	KNOTS	MPH	NAUT. GPH	STAT. MPG	N.M.L. MPG.	S.M.L. RANGE	S.M.L. RANGE	RUN ANGLE	SOUND LEVEL	
1000	6.3	7.3	4.8	1.3	1.5	225	259	0	82	
1500	8.3	9.5	7.0	1.2	1.4	201	231	0	82	
2000	9.0	10.4	12.6	0.7	0.8	122	140	3	82	
2500	11.3	13.0	20.4	0.6	0.6	94	108	5	89	
3000	17.5	20.1	29.0	0.6	0.7	102	118	2	90	
3500	23.0	26.5	39.4	0.6	0.7	99	114	1	92	
4500	27.3	31.4	49.8	0.5	0.6	93	107	0	93	
4160	27.8	32.0	53.6	0.5	0.6	88	102	0	93	

Advertised fuel capacity 189 gallons. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with two persons aboard, full fuel, full water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.



LOA	35'4"
Beam	12'4"
Draft	2'10"
Displacement (lbs., approx.)	16,300
Transom deadrise 16'	
Bridge clearance	10'11"
Minimum cockpit depth	2'9"
Max. cabin headroom	8'1"
Fuel capacity (gal.)	189
Water capacity (gal.)	104
Price (w/ standard power)	\$129,995
Price (w/ test power)	\$136,685

Standard Power: Twin 305-hp Crusader 5.7L TBI gasoline inboards.

Optional Power: Twin gasoline or diesel inboards to 640 hp total

Test Boat Power: Twin 320-hp 7.4L MPI Crusader gasoline inboards, with 454 cid, 4.25" bore x 4.00" stroke, swinging 18" x 22" NiBrAl props through V-drives with 2:1 reductions.

Standard Equipment: (major items): Anchor, line, chain, and roller; helm weather cover; transom electrical stowage locker; transom shower; transom door; wet bar; AM/FM CD stereo; custom blinds; cherry laminate cabinets;

Space Maker

So how did Silverton get so much usable space out of a 35'4"-by-12'4" cruiser? They put in a Sidewalk®. That made the catwalk to the bow higher, providing more beam with which to lay out the cabin. Here's how it works.

A five-step ladder molded into the house's aft bulkhead provides bridge access. To get to the bow, walk down the gently inclined walkway to port or starboard. Safe and easy. Single-handed docking? You can go from helm to bow in a walk.

Our test boat's bow was equipped with a windlass and remote spotlight. The standard fender baskets need to be moved aft; they hinder access to the cleats. There's no sunpad here, but that's okay. There is one abaft the helm's aft lounge where two can tan.

Other crew? Array them about you in the deep, high-backed L-lounge. Even though the flying bridge sports 15 drinkholders, only six people can sit here comfortably. Add the ice maker to the wet bar and stay up top all day. Forget something? A square 11-inch hatch in the sole serves as a dumbwaiter to the salon. Just don't step in it. The Carver's additional length, on the other hand, allows for a second path to the bridge via a ladder in the salon.

A stainless-steel framed venturi windscreen ringed our tester's helm. This is rugged enough to grab in a lurch and provides some spray protection. Silverton offers a flying bridge enclosure. But you can't mount a windshield

wiper on canvas, so plan on laying over if it rains. The electronics package (Raytheon GPS, VHF, and Raydata) will help. The Carver's full windshield affords better weather protection.

Burn a sick day and extend the weekend? In a quiet cove? Just the two of you? Check out Silverton's 330 and you might be persuaded.

Most boats look like... well, boats. Inside and out, they all follow certain design conventions. The pointy end goes first, there's usually an enclosed cabin and so forth. The bottom line is, most boats look about the same.

The Silverton 330 Sport Bridge is different. For starters, the outside has a decidedly Euro/contemporary look. Its sleek styling blends lines and curves in a way that is unique. The 330 even has the appearance of motion while it rests at the dock. It's a fresh approach that may take some getting used to.

The flybridge, or Sport Bridge as Silverton calls it, is a gathering place. It has comfortable accommodations for at least eight people, not counting whoever decides to use the sun pad. The two large bench seats can also double as sun pads. The starboard-side helm position features an adjustable seat and plenty of room for electronics and accessories. A wet bar comes standard and can be equipped with an optional refrigerator/ice-maker. There's also an AM/FM CD stereo receiver, one of two that are standard on this boat. And yes, you'll never be far from a place to put down a drink securely—there are 15 drink holders.

The foredeck, which makes use of Silverton's trademark SideWalk®, is an easy stroll from the bridge along either side of the boat. No need for ladders or climbing over, around or through. If you're so inclined, the cockpit is spacious enough to do some casual fishing, and there's a walk-through transom door to the integrated swim platform.

What really sets the 330 apart, though, is the inside. You enter through a sliding door off the cockpit. What's this, no stairway to the deep recesses of the hull? A simple one, two, three steps and you're at the main level belowdecks. And that's where you stay—it's as simple as that. The entire cabin of the 330 Sport Bridge is on one floor. While the term “condo on the water” is usually overused, in this case it's an apt description. Just as



(above) The open and airy salon keeps all living space on one level.



(above) The fully-loaded portside galley.



(above) The helm has plenty of room for electronics.

with the SideWalk® abovedeck, there's no climbing.

What makes this all possible is some design sleight-of-hand, not the least of which involves the SideWalk®. By employing this innovation, the Silverton designers were able to push the cabin out to the far reaches of interior hull space. With some skillful arranging of mechanicals and the power components, they were able to keep everything on one level. It really does feel like an apartment rather than a boat.

Just because you're down below does not mean you're in the dark. A wrap-around windshield serves as a skylight to let the sun shine in. The aft area of the main salon has 6'5" of headroom and the cathedral ceiling forward soars more than 8 feet. There are also window panels along each side of the cabin. You'll find nothing of the sort in your typical express cruiser.

The cabin is open and airy. The main salon is decorated in light-colored fabrics and materials, offset by attractive cherry wood trim and cabinetry. The galley, located aft and

to port, is a complete kitchen. It has a sink, two-burner stove, dual-voltage refrigerator and a coffee-maker, all standard. There's room for a pair of bar stools at the forward end of the countertop to make a cozy dining area for two.

Just forward of the galley is a seat that folds out into a recliner; expect frequent battles over who gets to use it. This throne sits next to an entertainment center that holds an optional TV/VCR combo and a standard AM/FM stereo receiver with a CD changer.

On the starboard side of the main salon, opposite the galley, is an enclosed head that features a separate stall shower, an opening window, and, as a welcome feature, an air conditioning duct. There's also a vanity and a separate towel storage locker. The freshwater tank indicator is here, allowing you to immediately check to see if there's enough onboard water before you take your shower.

Just forward of the head is a seating/dining area. The cherry dining table is in two sections. This versatility lets you open up the area as much as you want. The table leaves store conveniently behind the seat. You can also convert the seat to a double berth.

A pocket door sets the forward berth off from the rest of the cabin. The focal point is a double-size berth with inner spring mattress. A floor-to-ceiling hanging locker complete with shoe rack is to starboard, and a low cabinet sits to port. There's also drawer space under the berth.

Access to the engine compartment is through a large, gas-strut assisted hatch that's well scuppered and insulated. There are storage compartments in the transom for fenders and lines. You will also find the shore power hookups here. Cables enter through a hawsepipe aft, and you can coil excess cable out of the way.

I had fun running the 330 Sport Bridge. It's a sprightly boat that belies its 35'4" length. Cruising speed is about 27 mph while turning 3400 rpm. Wide-open throttle will take it up to 34 mph. The hull holds plane down to around 1800 rpm.



(above) A double-size berth with inner-spring mattress will ease your nights aboard.



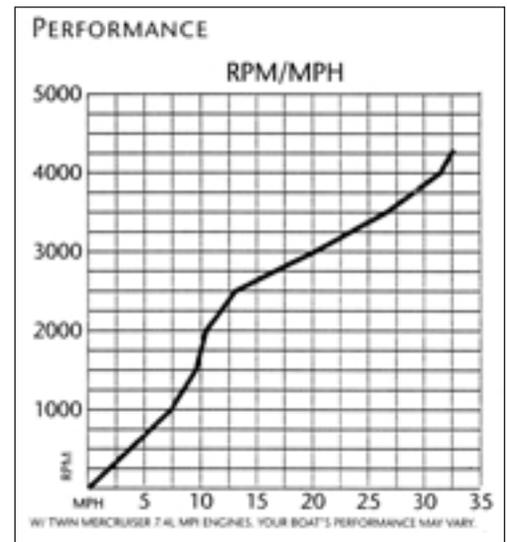
(above) The head boasts a separate stall shower.

From a mechanical standpoint, the Silverton designers did a few things differently, too. Instead of the common 1.25-to-1.5-to-1 engine-to-prop speed ratio, they used 2-to-1. When this is coupled with a larger, 19-inch diameter wheel, it improves the mid-range response as well as fuel economy. The 330 handles like a sportboat in the turns. Steering is crisp, tight and responsive.

Two things are conspicuous in their absence. First is the wind. The 330's flybridge has a venturi windshield that works. It's a bit higher than most, but it won't block your vision. While you're seated and the boat is at cruising speed, nary a hair on your

head will be mussed. The second missing annoyance is noise. Between the deadening of the engine-room sound and the positioning of the flybridge seating high and forward, the whir of the engines is hardly noticeable at all.

Silverton's 330 Sport Bridge makes an ideal boat for a couple, with or without kids. There's just enough room to be comfortable, and the overall size makes handling easy. The interior dimensions are such that you won't start to feel claustrophobic toward the end of an extended cruise. Features and amenities, performance and power, not to mention the price, make the 330 a boating value if you're looking to spend more quality time afloat.



Standard Equipment:

- two AM/FM stereos w/CD • dual voltage refrigerator • two-burner stove • recliner • Bennett trim tabs

Optional Equipment:

- TV/VCR combo • generator • air conditioning w/reverse cycle heat • engine freshwater cooling • microwave oven • electric head • bridge and cockpit carpeting • extended swim platform • available power: twin Crusader 5.7L TBI or 7.4L MPI or twin Yanmar 300.

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