

BOARNSTREAM RETRO LINE 50

If boating is all about relaxation, then this sedate, effortlessly splendid Dutch cruiser is just the ticket

Text: Jack Haines Photos: Lester McCarthy



Some have likened owning a boat to standing under a gushing hose whilst tearing up £50 notes. Why then, do we still head out onto the water in droves at any given opportunity? Some do it to get adrenaline coursing through the veins, others for the sense of isolation and adventure, but most of us stand beneath the boating hose in pursuit of relaxation.

QUIETER CRUISER

Boarnstream's Boarncruiser Retro Line 50 opens up new realms of relaxed cruising thanks in part to the astonishingly quiet engines. The twin Perkins 150hp lumps top out at a creamy 2,450rpm – a cooling duct check is essential to make sure the engines are even running. Cruising at seven knots we measured a mouse-like 63.5dB(A) at the helm, quieter even than the stunningly refined Linssen 500 (MBY January 2005). Manoeuvring out of the very tight boat shed on test could have been nerve jangling with the none-too-potent throttles and a wheel that wouldn't feel out of place on the *Mary Rose*. Thankfully, though, hydraulic bow and stern thrusters come as standard and can manfully heave the 31-tonne cruiser about. The way the Boarnstream options list works they give you a boat with everything fitted and you take off what you don't want, so you're starting off with a pricier boat but it's still nice to see the final number dropping as opposed to rising for once!

ON THE WATER

Unlike a faster boat of this size you don't need to constantly be part of the driving experience. The 50 is designed to be an easy drive with the stabiliser fins caressing the water to ensure the ride stays as smooth as possible. Generally, the boat tracks straight but some more feel in the steering would be welcome for when you're threading the boat through more narrow areas or coming in to berth.

You do feel detached from the action with the engine and rudders feeling like they're miles away but this just adds to the lethargic cruising prowess of the big Boarnstream. Yes, if you heave the wheel hard over to one side it will wallow over and then turn eventually but we are beginning to miss the point of this boat. Set the revs at 2,000rpm and waves will be shrugged off with aplomb – and let's not forget that she is an RCD Category A vessel either. If you like your boats a little more schizophrenic though, tick the aluminium hull option on the specification sheet (around €70,000 more) and opt for triple Volvo IPS500 engines and the 50

will hit 28 knots flat out. The steel vessel felt just the ticket on the sedate waterways though as we glide past sailors who give us a nod of approval – try that at 28 knots!

At the helm, the seat is excellent, extremely comfortable and the dash has been dusted with some of the sensible Dutch steel magic too. The soft touch, anti-glare material that the yard have used looks extremely classy. Couple this with the beautiful switches that have been milled out of aluminium (an expensive alternative to tacky black rocker-switches) and the upmarket feel is complete. Boarnstream sink all of the Raymarine electronics in to the dash too, something which I have never come across but it's a decision that leaves a pleasingly clean finish. The buttons bulge out of the dash like boiled sweets and urge you to press them.

To stand at the helm, there are two pop-out footrests, helpful for peering over the windscreen surround. The final touch at the helm is the beautifully engineered cabrio roof. The operation and movement are flawless but the cloth doesn't look very attractive in its folded state – a tonneau cover would be useful to tidy things up. All of the helm is a comprehensively specced wet-bar; it is in fact, more of a mini-galley. Perfectly located to serve guests seated on the transom dinette, it's also close enough to the helm so the helmsman can get a bite to eat while keeping an eye on things.

The side decks are not only wide but they also have chunky, waist-high guardrails to help you all the way forward as well as a handhold on the coach roof. Deep lockers set into the side decks are perfect for fenders and lines. A small handle on the underside of the locker lids means you can drape the fender line over so you don't have to drop in to the locker every time you want to grab one. These details pop up all over the place; the mooring gear is ship-worthy with huge stainless steel fairleads and in the cabins the beds not only have ventilation in the bases but have mini slatted supports beneath the mattress as well. Boarnstream have gone a long way to ensure crewing and life on board is optimal.

SIT BACK AND RELAX

Below, the muted and traditional class of teak and varnished wood on deck is replaced with the edgier cool of light carpet and dark wenge wood. The test boat was fitted with the optional Grand Reserva interior package. The €175,000 cost of the pack is very hard to swallow but there's no denying that the look and feel is fabulous. The large windows are what make the saloon. The only way they could get more natural light in would be to remove the coachroof. The layout, although completely

WITH ASTONISHINGLY QUIET ENGINES SHE OPENS UP NEW REALMS OF RELAXED CRUISING

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BOAT REPORT



Despite having to navigate the stairs to use it, the galley is impressive. Worktop and storage space are plentiful and the neat handhold at the aft end is a reassuring detail.

Attention to detail is mighty impressive. Notice how the seating at the coffee table is reclined but the seating forward is more upright and suited to dining.



The huge skylight and saloon windows are fitted with classy electric blinds.



Despite being an odd shape the VIP berth has good storage beneath.

A CLOSER LOOK WITH JACK HAINES

RECESSED ELECTRONICS
The 'extra mile' ethos of Boarnstream is highlighted by the helm electronics. Taking time to recess them in to the dash is a hint of their fastidious attention to detail.

ALUMINIUM BUTTONS
The joy of using these lovely milled switches over the black rocker variety is huge. Each one has its own engraved label. Details like this are what make this boat so enjoyable.

STAINLESS STEEL
The way this separate guardrail section and seat raise and arch out of the deck make an interesting feature out of what can be a forgotten part of a boat. Boarnstream have gone to extra lengths again.

THE ENGINE ROOM
Superb once you get inside – there's plenty of space between and around the engines to make any necessary checks. Lighting is good and the installation is totally in line with the build and detail on the rest of the boat. On the downside, checker plate on the floor could hurt knees and access through the cabins isn't ideal for keeping cream carpet clean.

THE ONLY WAY THEY COULD GET MORE LIGHT INTO THE SALOON WOULD BE TO TAKE THE ROOF OFF

open to customisation, worked really well on the test boat. Immediately to starboard as you descend the stairs is a low coffee table with comfortably laid-back seating. Opposite, however, is a proper dinette, with a larger, higher table and more upright seating for when you want to eat. The two areas work beautifully, both benefiting from the light dished out by the huge panes of glass.

The galley, which is set forward on steps leading down to the VIP cabin, has loads of worktop space, storage and a full-size fridge and freezer. Crucially, its location means that food can be prepared without the cook feeling isolated from the saloon.

AND SO TO BED

The VIP cabin works well despite some curious proportions. The berths are very high and it is an effort to haul yourself up on to them but once tucked up in bed they are exceptionally

comfortable and at 6ft 3in long shouldn't leave many feet dangling off the end. The plus side to them being set high is that there is room beneath to fit a generous amount of cupboard storage. The adjacent heads is nicely finished but is too small to afford a separate shower stall and makes do with a slightly low-rent, pull-out shower head.

Drift across the saloon, past the gorgeous Bang & Olufsen stereo and seriously cool pyramid-shaped speakers and you find yourself in the aft master cabin. It's superb, with lots of space and headroom, and a surprising amount of light bursting in through the square skylight in the transom. The cabinetry is a bit of a let down, it all felt a little too mass-produced for our liking – a strange contrast to the flawless construction elsewhere. In the ensuite, however, the trend towards fine quality returns. White tiling and dark wood cabinetry giving a clean look while the funky



The plush ensuite has a wonderfully large shower cubicle.



The luxurious and spacious aft cabin is more befitting of a 60-footer.



The canopy can either drop vertically to enclose the helm set and wet-bar or stretch to the transom and protect the seating there as well.

In its folded state the cabrio roof could do with a tonneau cover to tidy up the material and cover the mechanism.

The very wide side decks could not be safer to navigate together with waist-high guardrails and a handhold on the superstructure.

The superb wet-bar is so well specified that it means the journey below to the main galley will be a rarity.

Breaks in guardrail on both sides mean a stainless steel boarding ladder can be dropped in which is great for crewing and easy access to the decks.

STABILISER FINN CARESS THE WATER KEEPING THE RIDE AS SMOOTH AND EASY AS POSSIBLE

silver basin and enormous shower cubicle are right on the money. The third cabin is a typical bunked guest cabin, perfect for kids but comfortable for adults to spend the odd night in too. It is from this cabin that you gain access to the engine room, via a padded door that blends in to the cabin walls and then through a watertight door to the machinery. The engine room itself is excellent, lots of space, with clear inspection points and handholds everywhere. But mechanics will have to tramp through the saloon with their grubby toolboxes, which may not do the plush cream carpet and walls any favours.

VERDICT

We didn't get a chance to test the aluminium version but the 50 seems to have been created to live at a slow pace. It is reassuring to know

that there is an all-aluminium, fire-breathing speed machine option in the range but this steel version is as laid back as the aluminium version will be exhilarating.

Journeys may take a little longer but that just means there is more time to admire the scenery and the beautiful detailing on board. The stainless steel pulpit and the woodwork used on the wet-bar and windscreen surround are just a few of the many beautiful touches. In fact, with the sun beating down on our backs and the engines murmuring gently behind us, at times it felt more like we were stationary and the world was creeping slowly by. If you want a boat that you can relax on, look no further.

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THE HELM VIEW



Despite the amount of mullions the helmsman's view forward is very good.

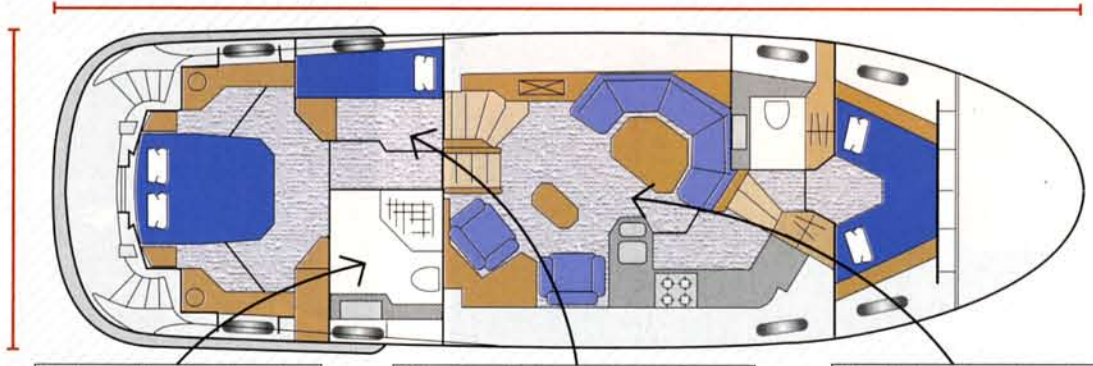
Engine gauges would be better if they were angled towards the helmsman.

This area is the perfect place to perch the horizon and is made safer by a chunky handhold.

THE DATA

LENGTH: 49ft 1in (4.99m)

BEAM: 5ft 7in (4.80m)



Master ensuite is stunning and also houses the washer/dryer

This is the cabin through which mechanics must go to access the engine room

Aft-cabin layout is great for privacy but the saloon is very sociable

FUEL CAPACITY: 374 imp gal (1,700 litres)
WATER CAPACITY: 263 imp gal (1,200 litres)
DRAUGHT: 4ft 1in (1.25m)
RCD CATEGORY: A (for 12 people)
DESIGNER: Werner Design/Boarnstream, 2009
DISPLACEMENT: 31.9 tonnes light

TEST FIGURES	ECONOMY						FAST						MAX
	1000	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2500	2800	3000	3200	3500	
Speed	5.2	5.9	6.4	6.9	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	
Trim	10°	10°	0°	0°	0°	10°	20°	20°	20°	20°	20°	20°	
GPH	1.0	1.8	2.8	4.0	5.6	7.6	10.0	14.0	18.0	22.0	26.0	30.0	
MPG	5.2	3.3	2.3	1.7	1.3	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	
Range	1,555	980	683	516	373	275	215	158	115	85	65	50	
SOUND LEVELS													
Helm	61												
Cockpit	66												
Sunbed	60												

THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from **£997,244** (Single Perkins 225hp)
Price as tested **£1,280,631** (twin Perkins 150hp)
Grand Reserva interior trim €175,000
Cabrio roof €50,227
Radar, autopilot, VHF standard
Generator standard
Air-conditioning standard
Stabilisers standard
Generator standard
Bow/Stern thruster standard

RIVALS

LINSSEN GRAND STURDY 500
Price from **€1,013m** (twin 170hp Vetus)
The direct rival. Superb build quality and very low noise levels.
Tested MBY January 2005



AQUANAUT PRIVILEGE 1500 AK
Price from **£575,950**
Represents strong value for money but build quality is high and design intelligent to boot.



Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for a 20% reserve. Figures calculated through the propeller law curve as test boat was not fitted with fuel flow meters, your own figures may vary considerably. All prices include UK VAT 5% fuel, 50% water, 2 crew, minimal stores, 14°C air temp, flat calm water. Force 1 for speed sails.