

A real evolution of styling, appointments and performance

By George Sass, Jr.

If the theory of evolution were applied to boatbuilders, Sabre would certainly be one of Darwin's darlings. The Maine company's conservative, lean business approach has kept it vibrant for more than three decades as it has evolved from a sailboat-only builder into the power-and-sail builder it is today.



The Sabreline 42 Hardtop Express has a much more refined profile than previous models from the builder.

Sabre's first powerboat, the 36 Fast Trawler, was introduced in 1984. It was an aft-cabin model with a few quirky sailboat-type appointments, and it lacked some of the features necessary to compete in the powerboat marketplace. Since then, each new launch in the Sabreline series has improved upon the last, leading to the 36 Express Mark II introduced four years ago. That deep-V hull offered a splendid ride and characteristics the in-house design team applied to the 42 Sedan, the 36 Sedan and now the new 42 Hardtop Express, a refined, well-designed and traditionally equipped express cruiser.

One of the first things that struck me about hull number one was her profile. The rendering does not begin to do this yacht justice. Her coachroof is more fluid than that of her siblings and is a refreshing change compared with the harsh right angles on some boats in this class. Her stainless-steel engine vents, which on previous Sabres were FRP grills on the hull sides, are above the deck. This not only helps to keep saltwater mist out of the engine room, but enhances the boat's look. The leading edge of the grill masks the angle of the windshield's leading edge, and the after edge of the grill masks the windshield's after edge.

Sabre also skipped the spar treatment on its other models and designed a beautifully molded FRP unit. Even the exhaust ports have evolved, from stainless-steel oval fixtures into ports that are molded into the transom's side corners. This Sabre, like her siblings, has the same crisp, clean look of a Brooks Brothers suit, but she is accessorized with Prada shoes and a Ferregamo tie.

My second "wow" moment came after I stepped aboard and passed through the canvas enclosure onto the covered helm deck. A 9 1/2-by-9-foot area easily holds an L-shape settee and teak table, a smaller settee and a wet bar. Our test boat's helm deck was capped in teak, a \$9,940 upgrade.

The two standard Stidd helm seats are an upgrade compared with seats on previous models. The FRP electronics box will easily absorb a full complement of electronics, including some of the larger screens being produced today. An opening center windshield and large side opening windows direct breezes toward the



The master stateroom (bottom) is forward of the saloon (top). The guest stateroom is amidships, to starboard, which means guests in both staterooms should enjoy a good amount of privacy.

helm seats. The center portion of the windshield opens and has a wiper, an unusual combination on boats in this class. Breakers for lights and equipment are to starboard of the wheel, and engine and gear controls flank it. My preference is the optional single-lever controls, which reduce the risk of a high-speed shift and provide slightly more horizontal surface for smaller electronics.

Engine access is through the helm deck sole, which conceals an aluminum ladder. Thanks to deep prop pockets, the shaft angle is minimal. Our test boat had twin 500 hp Yanmar diesels, an upgrade over the standard 440 hp Yanmar diesels. The single 450-gallon fuel tank under the cockpit eliminates the need for a manifold and allows a good amount of space for servicing the outboard side of the engines. Compared with the 42 Sedan, the forward engineroom bulkhead on the Hardtop Express is moved aft. Thus, servicing the forward portion of the engines will be a little difficult, but doable.

Although our test boat was hull number one, she needed little improvement down below. When I was aboard hull number one of the 42 Sedan a while back, I found a few rough corners of joinery, but there was nothing like that on this model. The satin-finished cherry was flawless.

The space planning belowdecks is also tough to beat. The L-shape galley is adequately sized, yet not so big that it takes away from the saloon, specifically the settee. The stainless-steel microwave convection oven, Corian counters, Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer and two-burner ceramic electrical stove are evidence of Sabre's realization that today's powerboat market requires high-quality appointments.

Also gone is Sabre's typically bulky entertainment center, replaced by a flat-screen television on the bulkhead opposite the settee. Recessed hinges are installed instead of the exposed hinges previous Sabres had on their locker doors.

The guest stateroom, which is to starboard, has a double berth that can be recessed during the day to provide additional floor space. The owner of hull number one is having a desk installed with the necessary plug-ins for his computer. Another choice comes with the space Sabre allotted for the optional combination washer/dryer under the forward portion of the master stateroom's island berth. I'd sacrifice the drawers beneath the berth for the washer/dryer, since there is plenty of stowage elsewhere. The boat's single head can be accessed from the master and passageway. A hatch, opening port and air-conditioning vent should keep things cool and fresh.



Entertaining on the bridge deck should be easy, even under way. Sound attenuation is excellent.

Also worth noting is the evolution in hull performance this yacht represents for the builder. Her deadrise aft is 16 degrees, and her combination of a modified deep-V and two half-moon pockets provides a very good running attitude. Draft is a minimal 3 feet, 9 inches. Expect a top speed around 32 knots with the 500 hp Yanmars at WOT and no stores on board. Also look for a cruising speed around 25 knots with a whisper-quiet atmosphere. With the boat at optimum running angle, skippers should experience minimal pounding.

With an all-up price around \$610,000, this Down East-style express yacht should be a powerful player in the marketplace.

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Sabreline 42 Hardtop Express

LOA: 47'4" (w/swim platform, bow pulpit)

LWL: 38'3"

Beam: 14'4" max.

Draft: 3'9" max.

Deadrise: 16 degrees

Displ.: 29,000 lb. (full load)

Fuel: 450 gal.

Water: 160 gal.

Black Water: 30 gal.

Gray Water: N/A

Designer: Sabre Yachts

Engines as Tested: 2x 500 hp Yanmar 6CX GTEs

Optional Power: 2x 465 hp Yanmars; 2x 450 hp Caterpillars

Transmission: ZF 280

Gear Reduction: 2.27:1

Props: 4-blade 26" x 35"

Generator: 12.5kW Westerbeke

Steering: Teleflex Hydraulic

Engine Controls: Teleflex Cable

Base Price: \$495,000 w/440 hp Yanmars