



SOCIATALUS

The Sabreline 42 Hardtop Express can entertain a dozen of your friends in style—while still running over 35 mph. By CAPT. STUART REININGER

SOCIAL STATUS



enjoy a party as much as the next guy, but I usually wait to whoop it up until after the day's work is done. This credo applies particularly to boat tests, which I take very seriously. So, I was more than a little surprised when I showed up at the dock to test the new Sabreline 42 Hardtop Express and found 11 people aboard, all in happy party mode. OK, it was the final day of the Miami International Boat Show, a good time to let off a little steam. But this was a *boat test*. "Do we really need to have twelve of us aboard?" I asked the builder's representative.

"Why not test the boat while it's doing what it's designed for?" he replied. Good point, I thought. And it shows New England savvy on Sabre Yachts' part.

Our ebullient crewmembers were all potential customers, and this was their demo ride. As soon as I came aboard, I could see that if they were looking for a boat to entertain their extended family and friends in, they had come to the right place. Even with all of us on the bridge deck, there was room for another half-dozen before elbows would begin to rub. I've been to Manhattan cocktail parties where there was less space. Half of us could've even sat down if we'd wanted to, on the aft L-shaped, Ultraleather-upholstered settee and the individual captain and mate seats at the helm.

The command bridge, as the manufacturer calls it, is the Sabreline 42's defining feature. There's a soft-top version available, but to my mind, the hardtop makes all the difference, giving this express yacht a topside salon which in essence becomes the boat's social center. Two overhead hatches that act as skylights supply light and add to the bridge deck's spacious feeling. The only thing that I would change here would be to extend the overhead handrail further forward. It ends somewhat aft of the console area, and if you're standing behind the helm seats, there's precious little to grab onto during an unexpected lurch except possibly the skipper's neck, which might create an issue.

A problem I've had on some hardtop models is restrictive sightlines aft, which can make backing a pain. But that's definitely not an issue here. From the helm, I could eyeball both aft corners, and the side windows slide open if neck-craning is necessary.

Sabrelines are built in Maine, and the 42, with its graceful sheer, not-so-sharp entry and moderate-V, 16-degree transom deadrise, holds true to its Downeast lobsterboat heritage of good looks combined with practicality. The accommodations below are carefully thought out and finished with the kind of craftsmanship that seems to be inherent to New England, as well. The interior is varnished cherry, and the woodworkers have matched the grain where the wood was cut or turned a corner. Cabin soles and step-downs are teak-and-holly, carefully applied. The top step in the three-step walkdown flips up to hold a wastebasket (another touch of Downeast practicality), while beneath the other two steps



HOST WITH THE MOST: The Sabreline 42 (off Miami at left) can entertain a crowd in its spacious bridge deck (inset), salon/dining area (top) and galley (background at right).

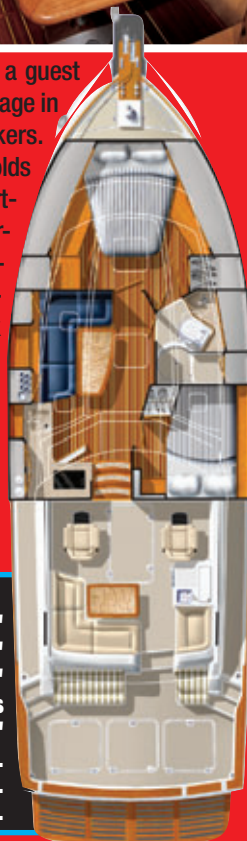


are gel-coated stowage bins. Why waste space? Just to starboard is the Plexiglas-covered AC/DC panel, right about where I would want it to be; a quick glance as you go below tells you the systems and battery status.

The master stateroom, equipped with queen-sized berth, is forward, with a guest cabin to starboard. There's plenty of stowage in both, including cedar-lined hanging lockers. Also, there are nicely carved wood handholds throughout. Both cabins share a comfortable head with a circular Plexiglas door-equipped shower stall. A-list gear here includes the standard, Swedish-built Scandivik shower mixer control, which I think should be on every boat but is rarely seen except in higher-end models. If an over-enthusiastic marine hot water heater has ever scalded you, you'll know exactly what I mean.

Downeast practicality extends to the 42's

Specifications:	
LOA	42'3"
Beam	14'4"
Draft	3'9"
Transom Deadrise	16 degrees
Bridge Clearance	13'3"
Weight (loaded)	29,000 lbs.
Water	160 gals.
Fuel	450 gals.



topsides, where strategically located stainless-steel handrails give you an assist up to the 16-inch-wide sidedecks—just wide enough to allow you to walk forward without crabbing sideways—with their deep, molded-in nonskid. (For an additional \$12,075, you can have teak-topped sidedecks, but besides lightening your pocket, you won't get the same anti-slip quality.) The stainless-steel bowrail hits you about waist level, making it highly unlikely that you'll take an unintended flip into the briny.

It gets even better as you go forward. The Muir MVA 1200 electric windlass with its rope/chain gypsy also has a manual backup (something I believe every powered windlass should have). Its up/down foot switches are slaved to a separate helm-mounted breaker, thus preventing them from accidentally being switched on by a short in the motor or a lead-footed passenger. The two spacious, flanking rode lockers are self-draining with bitter end tie-offs.

Talk about spacious; on the other end of the boat, the whole aft cockpit is really three flush hatch covers that, when lifted,

expose enough free space to stow the worldly belongings of most of the live-aboards in my social circle. The engine room is big as well. There's room to move around and decent headroom; at a shade over 5'7", I can almost stand straight and perform any maintenance functions or minor repairs that are necessary.

The electrical and piping layout here is about as good as it gets. Every pipe and valve is labeled and color-coded, as are the wires, which are also nicely tied off, secured and chafe-protected where necessary. Getting into the machinery space to begin with can be uncomfortable, though. The engine room hatch is located in the bridge deck sole and must be completely removed to gain access, and the thing is heavy. I wouldn't mind seeing it hinged and outfitted with a pair of compression rods to make lifting it easier, or even an electro-hydraulic lift. There's a solid stainless, five-rung ladder down, but there's nothing to grab onto except the edge of the deck while climbing onto it. If you're a bit out of shape, it can be difficult.

Getting back to those 11 folks on board for our test run off Miami; I figured the load would definitely take the glitter off the boat's performance. According to Sabre, in preliminary sea trials, the 42 equipped with a pair of 500-hp Yanmar 6CX diesels (a \$19,470 upgrade from the standard 440-hp Yanmar 6LY diesels) topped out at 37 mph at 3000 rpm. That was with half a load of fuel and two people aboard. Now, I was about to run the boat with the same power package, but with full tanks (450 gallons) and 12 souls aboard—grunt and groan city, I thought.

For starters, it jumped on plane in a shade under seven seconds; I've done worse than that in sportboats. It didn't take much longer for the 42 to top out at 35.6 mph—as measured by my trusty Garmin GPS—at 2950 rpm. Go figure. Less than two mph loss in speed with an additional 1,800 pounds, figuring an average 150 pounds per person (OK, this is America, make that 2,000 pounds), and not even counting the weight of the additional fuel. That says a lot about this boat. One reason the 42 performed so well, of course, is that it's a hefty piece of machinery that displaces 29,000 pounds. Therefore, the additional weight was not a very high percentage of the whole. But this yacht is

also extremely well-designed with an advantageous hull/drive-train marriage.

As we ran on in a moderate chop, I put the boat through its paces: full-power lock-to-lock turns; maneuvering with one engine down; hard backing and all the other things that I wouldn't dare do on my own boat—hold onto your drinks, folks. I wasn't surprised that the Sabreline pulled it off flawlessly, and not a drop was spilled. Even in a trough and a crosswind, there was no bucking or stiffness in the steering—a testament to top-grade hydraulics and installation. Hands-free at the helm, the 42 still held course for almost a minute before gradually deviating. While the boat didn't quite jump onto plane with one engine down, it maneuvered well both into and out of the dead prop. It will not only get you home on one wing, it will also allow you to back into the slip with just a little rudder and bowthruster action (the thruster was a \$6,955 option).

There are a few other things about this boat that scream quality, including the umpteen coats of varnish on the cap rail and a flawless gel coat that speaks of excellent mold preparation, just to name a couple. Essentially, this is a sociable boat. Everything about it invites conviviality. Its performance and comfort under way adds to the feeling that everything's as it should be. And there are at least 12 people who think so. For all I know, the other 11 are still partying on the Sabreline 42. I had to leave. *~*

Base Price (w/test power): \$495,000

Standard Equipment (major items): Muir MVA 1200 anchor windlass w/rope/chain gypsy; Lewmar Coastline polished aluminum hatches w/screens; teak toerail; teak cabin side eyebrow; Stidd 500 series helm and mate seats; cockpit wet bar w/sink and Corian countertop; two overhead Lewmar #60 hatches; twin Bennett drop-fin trim tabs w/dual actuators; triple windshield wipers w/washers; Ritchie Navigator compass; horn; Westerbeke 12.5-kW genset; varnished cherry interior; teak-and-holly cabin soles; Scandvik shower mixer control; Jabsco Quiet-Flush electric toilet; Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer; Panasonic microwave/convection oven.

Optional Equipment (major items): Teak bridge deck; Glendinning cord reel w/remote for 50-amp cord set; icemaker under helm seat; Taylor Tundra freezer; Corian galley counter; Sturdy AccuSync engine synchronizer; Reverso oil-change system; Side Power bowthruster; air conditioner/heater systems; hot and cold transom showers.

Warranty: Five-year hull and structural warranty; component warranties per individual manufacturers.

Sabre Yachts, P.O. Box 134, South Casco, ME 04077. (207) 655-3831. Fax: (207) 655-5050. www.sabreyachts.com.

Power: (2) 500-hp Yanmar 6CX diesels turning 26" by 35" bronze four-bladed props through a ZF 280 gear with a 2.27:1 reduction.

Performance:

RPM	MPH	GPH	dB-A
900	8.6	2.9	72
1200	10.0	6.7	74
1500	12.5	12.0	75
1800	18.0	17.5	84
2100	24.5	23.5	85
2500	30.7	35.9	87
2800	33.0	44.6	89
2950	35.6	54.9	90

Speeds measured by GPS in the Atlantic off Miami Beach, Fla., in 10-12 mph winds and 1' to 2' waves with 12 people aboard, full fuel and no water. Sound levels recorded at the helm.