



LIFE
on the
COAST

BOATS

SABRE 38 SALON EXPRESS

BY PETER BASS

LAUNCHED IN JULY 2012 and introduced at the annual Maine Boats, Homes & Harbors Show in August, the new Sabre 38 Salon Express is the latest in the Sabre family of power yachts. The series ranges from 38 to 54 feet, and all models are powered by the latest generation of pod-drive propulsion systems from Cummins or Volvo Penta.

As with the 48 Salon Express, which was introduced in 2011, Naval Architect Kevin Burns, head of the Sabre Design Team, started with pod drives as the exclusive drive train. Both the 48 and the new 38 were designed to operate optimally with this system, with the engines and drive pods close-coupled together all the way aft in the boat.

Other yacht builders have not chosen this route; their designs require engines mounted in a more conventional mid-vessel location connected to the pods via jack shafts. This configuration does not take full advantage of the space, storage, and sound-suppression options that derive from the close-coupling of engines and drives.

In the Sabre 48, the close-coupled set-up results in a large storage/utility room or additional stateroom, depending on the owner's desire. In the 38, some of the space is needed for mechanical systems, but a great chunk is available for a second, semiprivate stateroom, the likes of which would be impossible in a straight inboard or non-close-coupled pod-drive installation.

While this contributes to the "wow" factor in the 38's interior, it is just part of the package. Burns and his colleagues have created an innovative and adaptable living space that begins at the sliding transom seat in the cockpit and flows to the forepeak bulkhead. In fact, with a movable forward cabin bulkhead panel between the galley and master stateroom in the "down" position, the indoor and outdoor living and social spaces are visible from stern to stem, providing a revolutionary sense of spaciousness for a small express yacht.

The 38's power is twin 300-hp Volvo Penta D4 engines coupled to IPS 400 pod drives. This gives the yacht similar performance to the larger Salon Express yachts in the series; cruising speed



SPECIFICATIONS

Length 38' (w/o anchor pulpit or swim platform)

Beam 13'4"

Displ. 21,500 lbs. (est. full load)

Power Volvo Penta 300-hp D4s with IPS 400 pods

Fuel 300 gals.

Water 100 gals.

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is in the mid-20-knot range, with a top speed of just over 30 knots. At 25 knots and 3,170 rpm, fuel consumption is 22.5 gallons per hour, or 1.1 nautical miles per gallon and a range of more than 300 miles. Think Boothbay to Northeast Harbor for lunch with three-quarters of your fuel left.

New on the Sabre 38 is the Lenco Auto Glide, an automated trim-tab system that “learns” the optimum running angle for fuel efficiency and automatically compensates for weight shifts and sea conditions. The system is easy to override and can store two skipper-preferred favorite settings. The system has its own GPS receiver for speed calculations, receives rpm and fuel-burn information from electronic senders on the engines, and checks it all 25 times per second. The skipper can concentrate on the safety and enjoyment of his passengers without having to fiddle with a manual tab system.

The new 38 Salon Express displaces 21,500 pounds and has a base price of \$525,000, versus 28,000 pounds and \$640,000 for the 42, the next larger yacht in the series. Thanks to the closer coupling of the engines and pods on the 38, and the sliding transom seat, the total space for each yacht compares favorably, although the 42 has a truly private second stateroom.

Sabre has long set the standard for comprehensive information on its web site, and a recent redesign has made it even better. In particular, the 360-degree virtual tour illustrates the two nifty features mentioned above, the movable section of the bulkhead that separates the galley and master stateroom, and the guest “nook” under the salon. Go lose yourself in the tour; it is not only informative but a lot of interactive fun. ★