

TWO-TOOL FIXES FOR THE OFF-SEASON // 16 DON'T-LEAVE-POR-T-WITHOUT-'EM TOOLS

Sea[®]

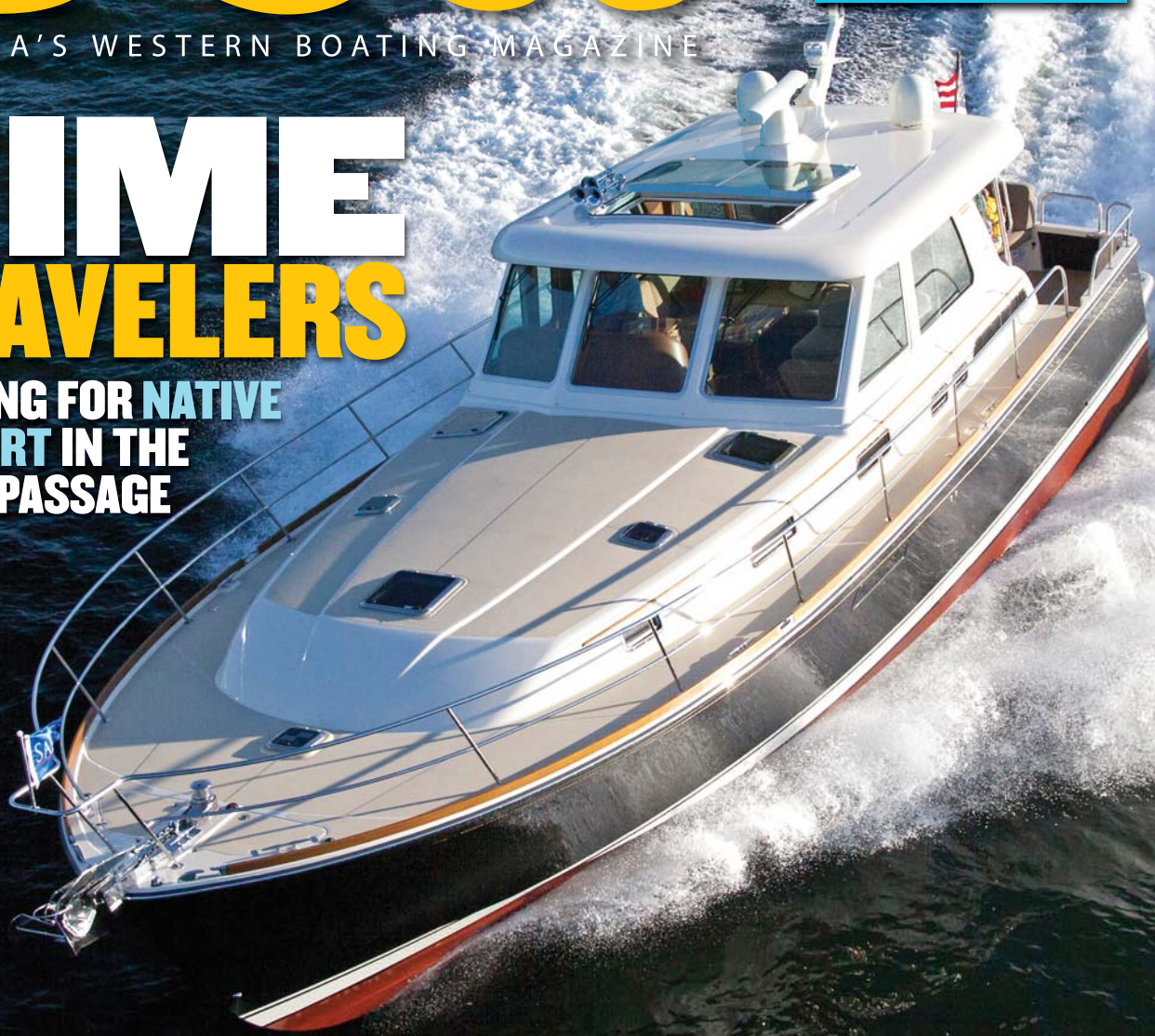
AMERICA'S WESTERN BOATING MAGAZINE

OOPS!

FROM 3 KNOTS
TO 0 IN HALF A
BOAT LENGTH

TIME TRAVELERS

CRUISING FOR NATIVE
ROCK ART IN THE
INSIDE PASSAGE



NEW BOATS SABRE 48 SALON EXPRESS
SALISH SEA IS48 // ZEELANDER Z44
TIARA 3600 CORONET // MANGUSTA 80

1,000s OF NEW & USED
BOATS FOR SALE INSIDE



SABRE 48 SALON EXPRESS

MAKES GETTING THERE MORE THAN HALF THE FUN

As I walked down the dock at the Ft. Lauderdale boat show, I wondered how we were going to get the Sabre 48 Salon Express out of its tight berth and into open water for our early morning test. Boat-show boats are packed in like sardines, and for a moment I thought I'd be disappointed by a canceled run. But then I remembered this was a Sabre, built specifically and solely with ZF Marine pod drives and joystick control, so getting away from the dock was not only anxiety free, it was just the start of the fun.

After a perfect pirouette, we finessed our way toward another dock to pick up other people who were coming along but were running late. As we waited, we engaged the Skyhook GPS-based dynamic positioning system, which comes standard. Using the pods and the QSC8.3L 550 hp engines, the boat stayed perfectly still once the Skyhook was enabled. Despite only a few feet of maneuvering room and wakes from large boats pushing us, the Sabre stayed put. No stern or bow thrusters are needed to keep station like a pro.

Our test boat is the sixth hull of the Sabre 48, which is an impressive rate of production given the design had been introduced only six months earlier. "This new model is not really being affected by the down economy," said Bentley Collins, Sabre's vice president of sales and marketing. "We've been building non-stop since its introduction."

The Sabre 48 is a mix of traditional Down East styling and high-tech construction, and it is custom-built with shallow pod-drive tunnels — traditional shaft drives are not an option. The mod-

ified deep-V hull has a 23-degree dead-rise amidships, which tapers back to 14 degrees at the transom, and a moderate sheer. The construction is a solid-resin infusion with biaxial stringers bonded to a foam core to reduce weight. The result is a lighter, stronger boat that runs with smaller engines and has better fuel economy.

ON BOARD

Boarding is easy from an ample swim step that is not counted in the overall length of 47 feet, 6 inches. Initially, this boat was designed as a 46-footer, but it grew once it was measured with the bustle that extends the running surface and increases buoyancy aft. The bustle is required due to the weight of the engines that are far aft in the hull, and the result is a boat that is nearly 48 feet without the swim step.



Billy Black photos

ABOVE The main deck, including the cockpit when the aft door and window are open, is one open living area — a space within a space. Belowdecks is a galley and two staterooms.

The transom door leads into a spacious cockpit with an L-shaped settee and a double seat across a table. Two low steps on either side of the cockpit lead up to the deck level. The decks are wide and clear with oversized stainless handrails the entire length to the bow, and there are good-sized chocks and mid-ship cleats. Forward is a Quick windlass and a double anchor roller, along with two large lockers for fenders and lines. An opening door to starboard allows the helmsman to quickly step out and help with lines during docking. It's handy, if a bit tight, with limited space between the small door and the Stidd helm chair.

Aft, a stainless steel-and-glass door leads from the cockpit to the salon. An

electrically operated window next to the door also joins the interior and exterior. It's a part of designer Kevin Burns' concept of "a space within a space" where the cockpit, salon and helm become one open living area. The salon has an L-shaped settee and a folding high-low pedestal table to starboard. An electric switch slides the second amidships port-side settee to reveal steps down to an area that can be configured in a variety of ways. Some owners use it as a third or grand-kids' cabin complete with nicely finished drawer storage, a berth and a TV. Some people create crew quarters by adding a head, which has standup headroom due to the raised crew seat across from the helm up above. Other owners have skipped the head and added a workbench,

using this area to store tools, toys or even a washer and dryer. A manual override as well as an escape hatch through the salon sole are backup ways to exit the downstairs cabin in case of a loss of power or a malfunction.

Sabre encourages owners to specify their choice of electronics with dealers when the boat is commissioned, and there is no factory standard. Our test boat dash includes dual Garmin 7215 multifunction displays. The rest of the instruments, including the joystick control, are easily within reach, and even short people have a clear view from bow to stern.

Forward to port and five steps down is a straight-line galley, which removes kitchen clutter from the social space but still has plenty of light, so the cook doesn't feel buried in the hull. There is an electric two-burner stove, a microwave/convection oven, standup refrigeration, solid counters, and loads of storage in drawers and lockers.

A shoji screen door leads directly from the galley into the master stateroom, with a large berth and more shoji-accented lockers. A beautifully finished en suite head includes a glass sink, hand-cut tiles, an electric freshwater head and a spacious separate shower compartment. I did notice that the distance between the foot of the master bed and the counter in the galley is maybe 4 feet, which might create unwanted disturbances when guests decide to make themselves coffee before the owners are up and about for the day.

The second cabin, also with a shoji screen door, an island berth and a head, is in the bow. Dovetailed drawers, Ocean Air screens and blinds on windows and hatches, a fine cherry finish and excellent use of LED lighting create a luxe atmosphere throughout the entire cabin area.

UNDER WAY

We crept out of the show and into the Lauderdale channels, heading out to open water where a 1-foot chop and an 8-knot breeze welcomed us to calm conditions. The boat was whisper quiet once the aft door was closed and the water noise eliminated.

The vectored thrust of pod drives

is more efficient, and higher speeds can be reached with less horsepower and, therefore, less fuel. The engines on the 48 are close-coupled with the drive units, so they are well aft, below the cockpit sole, which led to some concerns about the center of gravity and running trim angles. The builder must have done it right, because the overall running angle of the 48 is just 4 degrees up from static attitude. Burns paid special attention to the sight lines, and visibility from the helm in all directions is excellent at low speeds and on plane. The boat popped up on plane within a few seconds at 14 or 15 knots, which was the only time visibility forward was momentarily obscured.

The Sabre 48 cruises at 25-27

TESTER'S OPINION:

This is a comfortable all-weather boat that will do equally well in the cool Pacific Northwest as the heat of Mexico. And with all its cruising power and range, it should easily be able to visit all points in between.

knots at 2400-2500 rpm where, depending on payload, it will burn 36-40 gph. Wide-open throttle will generate almost 34 knots, at which point fuel burn jumps to approximately 60 gph. This information is based on the 550 hp engines. Although an upgrade to 650 hp Cummins is an option, Collins noted that the difference is only about 1 knot at the top end, so it's unlikely many owners will be choosing that route. At 5 knots, the cruising range is around 1,800 nautical miles, and at cruising speed, you should be able to travel in excess of 350 miles before needing to fill up.

Once out in open water, our test boat took tight turns at high speeds and sliced through the waves with barely a shiver. We looked for ways to challenge the hull, and soon a couple of 80-foot sportfishers with high wakes obliged and provided us a perfect test environment on an otherwise flat ocean. I braced



myself, but once we reached the wake, the result was anticlimactic as the boat cut through the disturbed water as if on a rail.

From a dead stop, it brought all of its roughly 35,000 pounds of dry weight up to speed in a blink, and like a jockey on a thoroughbred racing horse, the weight of the dozen people aboard was nothing more than a rounding error. The power this boat exudes combined with the smooth ride made me wish we could stay out and avoid going back to the show at all.

Sabre is a Maine boat builder that has been turning out sailboats since the 1970s and added fast trawlers in 1989. Today, it still builds offshore sailboats as well as modified-V, planing-hull luxury powerboats. Forty years of boat building is evident in the excellent wood craftsmanship and traditional styling. But Sabre has kept its finger on the pulse of technology, too — not just in the build process but also in how the boats are used. That's why Sabre now offers its proprietary LaunchPad with every new boat. This iPad 2-based information system holds the equipment manuals for engines, pods, gensets, water pumps, battery chargers and more. In addition, preloaded apps help new owners find marinas, services, and tide and weather information. The iPad can also be used to report service issues by sending a written description of the problem along with an image or video back to the factory or dealer. All communications and service records are maintained via this platform, so the next owner has a comprehensive history of everything that has been done to keep the boat in good condition.

The base price of the Sabre 48 Salon

SPEC BOX

LOA 47 ft., 6 in. BEAM 15 ft., 4 in.

DRAFT 3 ft., 9 in. DISPLACEMENT 34,700 lbs.

FUEL 525 gals. WATER 160 gals.

ENGINE Twin Cummins QSC8.3L, 550 hp

BASE PRICE \$950,000

CONSTRUCTION

Dry-stack resin infusion is a process whereby materials are loaded dry into the mold and then infused with resin. This process is cleaner and greener and uses less resin to make the boat lighter, faster and more fuel efficient.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Twin Cummins QSC8.3L 550 hp engines w/CMD Zeus pod drives, integrated steering and trim tabs, CMD helm w/joystick, Onan 11 kw genset, 3 AGM deep-cycle house batteries, 2 AGM Group 31 engine-start batteries, one Group 24 genset-start battery, Skyhook GPS dynamic positioning system, 44-pound plow anchor and dual anchor roller, Quick electric anchor windlass, 20-gallon hot-water heater, Isotherm standup refrigerator/freezer and more.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Fuel-polishing and oil-change systems, 650 hp engines, custom hull and deck colors, crew quarters w/additional head, Freedom dinghy lift, Ultraleather upholstery, Seagull water purifier, washer and dryer, central vacuum system and more.

BUILDER

SABRE YACHTS, South Casco, Maine; (208) 655-3831; sabreyachts.com.

WEST COAST DEALERS

JK3 YACHT SALES, San Diego; (619) 224-6200; jk3yachts.com.

JK3 YACHT SALES, Newport Beach, Calif.; (949) 675-8053; jk3yachts.com

BELLINGHAM YACHT SALES, Bellingham, Wash.; (360) 671-0990; bellinghamyachts.com

Express is \$950,000, and our test boat is closer to \$1.2 million. It is a well-built, posh coastal cruiser that is good for couples who may sometimes have the grandkids along or a professional skipper. This is a comfortable all-weather boat that will do equally well in the cool Pacific Northwest as the heat of Mexico. And with all its cruising power and range, it should easily be able to visit all points in between. 🐾