

DRESS BLUES

Hatteras 39: It's never off-duty.

BY PETER FREDERIKSEN

AN EXPRESS BOAT THAT'S SET UP TO FISH makes a lot of sense. Jump on in the morning, fire up the engines, head out and do it. When you hit the dock after getting even with the last bluefin swimming, hose it off and go back to the house or condo. This is express boat living because frankly, they're not as accommodating as convertibles. If the weather goes sour, even at the dock, you may be forced below. On the other hand, when you're working local waters and eat dinner at home, do you really need to take your washer and dryer fishing?

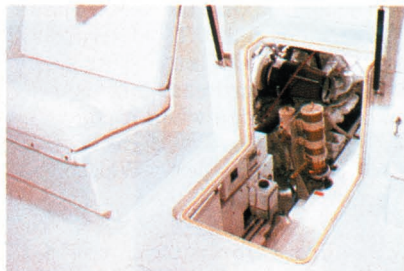
Hatteras doesn't think so, and their new 39 SX embodies this. Although this express is available with two standard interiors that crossover from cruising to fishing, our test boat, provided by Bob Hoste of Cape Island Marina and Yacht Sales, Waretown, New Jersey, was even more specialized.

Capt. Hoste knows how to rig a fishboat. Many of the Hatterases he's sold have gone on to clean up enough tournament money for their owners to buy a larger Hatteras.

GETTING INSIDE Consider the forward stateroom. While an island (as shown) or angled berth is standard, our test

boat had a traditional V-berth. It makes more sense for a fishboat. If you're headed offshore with four other guys doing the slow jog after dark to be on the grounds at first light, two can sack out on the V-berth and a third can use the dinette, while the relief man can nod off on the port lounge opposite the helm. This interior is as close as you can get to a his-and-her arrangement. He has the berths for taking the gang fishing overnight, and with the filler section, she still has accommodations for cruising. You just have to choose the days. The 39 SX has no aft or mid-cabin. This boat's mission is not a facsimile of a group rental bungalow at the Jersey Shore. Instead, Hatteras views their littlest boat as a marlin-raiser and tireless cruiser.

The galley has the usual trappings, like the two-burner Kitchen Aid electric cooktop and Sharp microwave. I especially liked the big, stainless-steel sink, although the overhead-mounted Nova Kool refrigerator and freezer aren't as convenient, especially reaching for the top shelf. No fid rails, but don't sweat it. Frankly, there's not much plastic laminated counter space, anyway. Unless your rules are different, nothing that can roll off ever is left out on the counter



EXPRESS LANE—Everything from the helm/transom-door sightline to the plastic beaded nonslip says the 39 SX was born for offshore duty. Top speed with 465-hp Detroit Diesels: 35.3 mph.

aboard my boat. That's what deep sinks are for.

IN COMMAND And fishing is what the topsides are for. Typically, an express fishboat will have a tower for better visibility and to hold outriggers and antennas. But you won't miss much if you choose to do without the jungle gym. The boat runs reasonably flat. It comes on plane quickly and stays there. The double bench seat gives you more freedom than a pedestal type, and it's the ideal perch when running on the autopilot.

But under way express boats lurch more than a convertible of similar length because the helm is closer to the water and the impact with seas is more abrupt. That why when going long distances, I find it less tiring to stand at the helm and wedge myself into a comfortable position. Aboard the 39 SX, the choice spot is with your back leaning on the smooth fiberglass below the windshield wing, though to cut down on surprises, I'd lower or move the emergency shut-offs for the Detroit Diesels and the Halon override pull.

From a fishing standpoint, the helm is positioned for an unobstructed view of the transom door simply by turning your head. You can stay at the wheel until the last instant when your help is needed at the transom. Makes fishing shorthanded more convenient than climbing up and down the flying bridge ladder.

Aft the helm seat, you'll want the optional wet bar (\$2,975), which includes bottle storage, a U-Line ice-maker and a refrigerator/freezer.

Equally practical is the L-shaped lounge opposite the helm. The lid rises on gas struts and rods and gaffs stow inside. The optional curved lounge (\$2,050) is useless for fishing and unless you curl like an eel, you can't

HIGH POINTS: *Imron-finished exterior glistens when new and will still gleam when the five-year engine warranty runs out.*

LOW POINTS: *4'8" draft. With five-bladed propellers, shallow water is far scarier than 6 to 8s offshore. If you run across the Bahama Bank, don't slow down.*

CERTIFIED TEST RESULTS Hatteras 39 SX

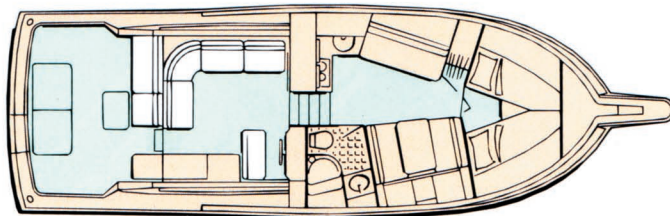
Standard power: twin 314-hp DDC 4-71TI diesel inboards

Optional power: twin 3116TA or 3208TA Caterpillar diesels; twin 485-hp DDC 6-71TI diesel inboards

Test boat power: twin 465-hp 6-71TI Detroit Diesel inboards with 426 cid, 4.25" bore x 5.00" stroke, swinging 32" x 47" five-bladed Rolla propellers through 3.0:1 reduction

rpm	speed		% of		fuel use		% of		efficiency		n. mi. range	operation—	
	knots	mph	max.	gph	max.	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	angle	level		angle	level
900	7.8	9.0	25	5.0	9	1.56	1.80	645	1.5	77			
1200	8.3	9.6	27	11.6	21	0.72	0.83	296	5.0	81			
1500	15.8	18.2	52	17.6	32	0.90	1.03	370	4.5	82			
1800	21.6	24.8	70	25.0	46	0.86	0.99	355	4.5	86			
2100	26.3	30.3	86	35.0	64	0.75	0.87	310	4.5	89			
2450	30.7	35.3	100	54.6	100	0.56	0.65	232	4.5	91			

Advertised fuel capacity 458 gal. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with two persons aboard, ½ fuel, ¼ water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.



LOA	39'0"	Max. cabin headroom	6'5"
Beam	13'5"	Bridge clearance (to top of windshield)	8'9"
Draft	4'8"	Fuel capacity (gal.)	458
Displacement (lbs., approx., ½ load)	30,500	Water capacity (gal.)	117
Freeboard forward	5'7"	Base price	\$361,800
Freeboard aft	3'4"	Designer	Hatteras Yachts

Standard equipment (major items): Fiberglass pulpit; ss hardware; Hynatic hydraulic steering; Pompanette bench seat; Morse controls; 3 windshield wipers; Halon system; Bennett trim tabs; 8kw Onan genset; raw water strainers; Racor fuel filters; 3 auto. Rule bilge

pumps; portable bilge pump; engine alarm system; Magnetek Powerformer; Atwood water heater; Dytek 40-amp battery converter; Vacuflush MSD; entertainment center; microwave; electric cooktop; Nova Kool refrigerator and freezer; fishbox; transom door; boarding step.

snooze on it either. But its sweeping shape matches the curvaceous lines of the 39 SX so it's bound to be popular with the cruising set.

Fishermen will also want the optional cockpit bait center with sink, tackle storage and prep station. Add the optional freezer (\$1,895) on the starboard side and you could fish or cruise for weeks on end.

If you're more serious about cruising, you can switch the fishing amenities for additional seating in the cockpit. But the way Capt. Hoste set up

this 39 SX, it makes more sense to cruise the fishboat, rather than fish the cruise boat.

GOING...GOING... With 465-hp 6-71TI Detroit Diesels turning 32" by 47" five-bladed Rolla wheels on 2¼" shafts through 3.0:1 reduction gears, the lightly loaded test boat reached 35.3 mph. The deep gearing means that loaded to the gills, the 39 SX will likely turn in similar performance numbers. The downside of the deep draft is offset by the knowledge that in rough water, make it *ugly* water, you won't have to slow this ride down.

I was also impressed by the quietness of the boat. When you slap it around or thud off three-footers, you hear nothing but the engines under your feet. Hatches don't clatter, doors stay shut and you feel resolute at the helm, a sensation not common on express boats that give you top speed but pay back with a lighter, noisier, more frantic ride.

With a base price of \$361,800, and a test boat price of \$398,700, the 39 SX is an expensive express. Of course, like larger Hatterases, it comes standard with a gorgeous Imron paint job and high-tech engineering. With or without a tower, it has plenty of mettle. The wider Blackfin 38 Combi with 6-71TIs is another pricey express with a base price of

\$419,320, which includes more standard equipment than the 39 SX. Tiara's 3700 Open with 3208TA Caterpillars, usual options and electronics comes in at \$388,662. Hard charging express boats don't budge when it comes to cost. But the newest Hatteras brings a familiar feel to the party. What a way to express yourself. ⚓

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