

POWER & MOTORYACHT

THE ENGINE ISSUE

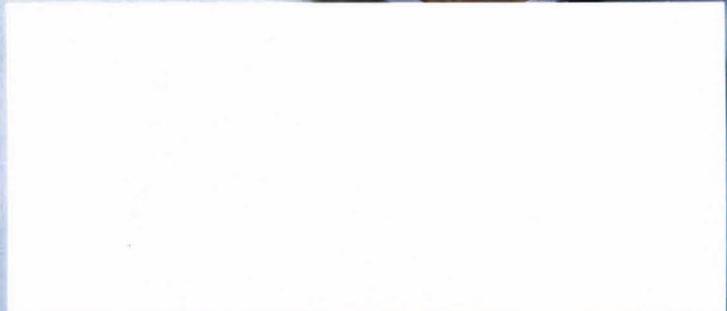
How To Keep
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STILL ON COURSE

DESPITE CHANGES IN OWNERSHIP, THE **SEALINE BRAND** CONTINUES TO DEVELOP EXCITING NEW BOATS, AND THE **F380** PROVES THAT SOLID CONSTRUCTION AND PERFORMANCE WILL NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE. **BY ALAN HARPER**





LOA: 37'4"
BEAM: 12'4"
DRAFT: 3'1"
DISPL: 21,605 lb.
FUEL: 240 gal.
WATER: 83 gal.
TEST POWER: 2/330-hp Volvo Penta D6 diesels
STANDARD POWER: 2/260-hp Volvo Penta D4 diesels
PROPELLERS: Volvo Penta G8, Nibral
BASE PRICE: \$547,479 (approx.)
PRICE AS TESTED: \$616,437

The first Sealine I ever took charge of was also the first boat I ever tested as a greenhorn magazine writer, more decades ago than I care to admit. It was a neat little 26-footer with a surprising amount of accommodation space, twin gasoline outdrives, a good seagoing hull, and the sort of lively, positive handling that puts a big smile on your face. I took to the boat immediately, and once I'd gotten used to the light steering, was throwing it about as if I'd been doing it for years, dancing in the wake of a photo boat, my anchor practically overhanging his transom.

When we got back to the dock after the shoot I prodded the photographer for his opinion, fishing for compliments about my magnificent driving skills. He just looked at me in his ponderous way and said, "You were a bit close."

A lot has changed since then, not least with Sealine. Once one of the "big five" British boatbuilders, the company built a solid reputation for style and innovation and prospered throughout the 1980s and '90s. But then the founder sold up and a succession of ownership changes heralded a slow decline—that is, until the Hanse Group bought Sealine out of bankruptcy in early 2014 and moved production to Greifswald, on Germany's Baltic coast, where it joins a portfolio of brands that includes Fjord, Moody, and Dehler. Hanse builds some 600 boats a year, sail and power. One of the designs the Germans took with them was the Sealine S380, a well-regarded sports cruiser whose Richard Crocker hull serves as the platform for this new flying-bridge yacht.

And what a flying bridge. The designers set out to create a class-leading top deck, and there is little doubt that they've succeeded—with its extraordinary length and generous beam the flying bridge both looks and feels like it's off a 50-footer, and thanks to an unusually deep wraparound windscreen and handrail it feels secure enough to support whatever antics the helmsman might be getting up to. Another stated aim of the design department was all-round sightlines from the main deck, and here again they've pulled it off: form follows function, and the saloon is admirably bright, with only the flying-bridge steps interrupting the view from the helm.

The F380 has a roomy two-cabin layout down below, with an open-plan galley on the port side at the bottom of the companionway. The forward cabin has a surprisingly generous en suite head and shower compartment, and while placing the berth well forward has made it rather high, there are two steps up each side, so access shouldn't be a problem. Good-sized opening portholes and a clear hatch overhead add to a sensation of spaciousness.

On the starboard side the twin cabin looks a little tight, but it has 7 feet of standing headroom by the door and more than 3 feet of sitting headroom over the berths. An infill piece can be dropped into place to transform the two separate berths into a double—which at 6 feet 7 inches by 5 feet is somewhat bigger than the one in the owner's stateroom. Meanwhile, a convertible dinette in the saloon creates another small double berth which although rather short and narrow would probably be adequate for children.

If the F380's interior has a flat-pack look about it, that's perhaps inevitable when all the veneered components are computer-cut, edged, drilled, collated, bar-coded, and assembled in a digital woodshop which is among the most advanced I've seen anywhere. The pieces are mated at right angles with dowels and glue, just like you'd expect, but the assemblies are solid, and these rigorously planned production methods reduce waste and keep costs down.

So it's perhaps a surprise in a shipyard where expenditure is kept under such close control to find that the F380 also exhibits some



Engine Special: Dock and Drive

Since we tested the F380, Sealine has begun offering its 'Dock & Drive' electronics package as a competitively priced option. It makes a lot of sense. Based on off-the-shelf Volvo Penta EVC parts and technology, it offers joystick control for maneuvering using independently mobile stern drives—itself a very worthwhile extra—but also includes "powertrim assistant" and "cruise control."

The two latter features are nice to have, but they also offer real benefits in efficiency. Stern drive trim is as much an art as a science, and getting it even slightly wrong can impact significantly on fuel consumption. Volvo Penta's is a smart system that automatically adjusts the drives during acceleration and continues to match drive trim to boat speed underway, to help you get the most mileage out of every gallon.

And the cruise-control function promises to take the trial and error out of setting the correct engine speed, particularly in choppy conditions, when it can be difficult to use the throttle levers with any precision. The feature is operated via a rocker switch on the front of the throttle module, which is positioned to be at your fingertips when you place your palm over the top of the housing. With a secure grip you can use the switch to make tiny adjustments to engine speed, and the function switches off as soon as the levers are reengaged. The feature is also likely to be useful at marina speeds, allowing you to fine-tune your vessel's progress to suit more crowded and confined spaces.

serious attention to detail. There are reassuringly sturdy handrails at both companionways, and a useful tray complete with drink holders set into the center of the folding saloon table. In the forward cabin, bedside lockers not only conceal electrical sockets that allow you to charge your phone overnight, they also feature a slot for the cable so that the lid closes properly. The teak step in the bow pulpit and its attendant cleat make bow-to mooring safer and easier, while both the cockpit and upper helm seats have reversible backrests, which immediately transform the seating arrangements.



The saloon of the F380 transforms to suit its owner's needs. It can seat six guests for meals or convert to a double berth. The cocktail cabinet (inset) rounds out this entertainment space.



Meanwhile, the hinged backrest in the flying bridge sunbed turns it into a comfortable and secure chaise longue. This quickly became my favorite spot on the boat.

Favorite, that is, apart from the helm seat. The

F380 is an absolute blast to drive. This one, the first, had the big six-cylinder Volvo Penta D6 diesels, each residing in a tightly packed but well-engineered machinery space under a large hatch in the cockpit sole. While a 32-knot top speed is more respectable than remarkable, the way it gets there is pretty noteworthy—it took around 12 seconds to plane off from a standing start, thanks at least in part to Sealine's use of acceleration-boosting DPH duoprops. That gives you an idea of how alert the boat is to throttle inputs, but it's when testing the helm response of this tight-turning stern drive that the real fun begins. In hard turns the boat exhibits an exquisite amount of agility, and the turning circle felt only slightly wider than the boat's length.

When you've got the acrobatics out of your system, the F380 also shows itself to be a responsible and versatile cruising machine, happy to plane at any speed above 15 knots and with a useful cruising range comfortably in excess of 200 nautical miles. I found that performance and handling at pretty much all speeds were best with the drives trimmed all the way in and the trim tabs at about half-mast, which gives you the option of trimming the bow both up or down, to adjust for both following and head seas. It was a great ride, which brought a big smile to my face, and reminded me of that 26-footer I tested all those years ago.

A lot may have changed for Sealine since then, but perhaps not as much as you'd think. With its lively handling, brisk performance and excellent accommodations, the sporty little vessel was a winner that made a lasting impression. This new F380 not only shares all these attributes with her diminutive predecessor, she adds the

advantage of size. She's a truly spacious, practical, and capable family cruiser, with a sparkling personality underway. □

Hanse Yachts U.S., 978-239-6568; www.sealine.com



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE	dB(A)
600	3.7	2.6	307	57
1000	6.0	3.7	350	58
1500	8.0	4.8	360	63
2000	9.3	7.9	254	67
2500	15.3	14.8	223	74
3000	24.0	22.7	228	75
350	32.3	32.8	213	78

CONDITIONS: air temperature 64°F; humidity 73%; seas: 1'; load: 206 gal. fuel, 16 gal. water, 5 persons, 50 lb. gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured w/ Raymarine GPS display. GPH provided by Sealine. Range is based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity. Sound levels measured at the lower helm. 65 dB(A) is the level of normal conversation.

NOTEWORTHY OPTIONS: Engine upgrade to 330-hp Volvo Penta D6 engines (\$28,862); Navigation Package including Raymarine i70 display, HybridTouch plotter, autopilot at both helm stations (\$20,925); Cruising Package including 35-pound Delta anchor and 98' of chain, trim tabs, 5-hp bowthruster, covers, fenders, warps, boathook (\$19,482); Comfort Package including LED exterior lighting, saloon refrigerator, teak deck on flying bridge, upgraded mattresses, entertainment system, and saloon TV (\$14,287)