

Sea

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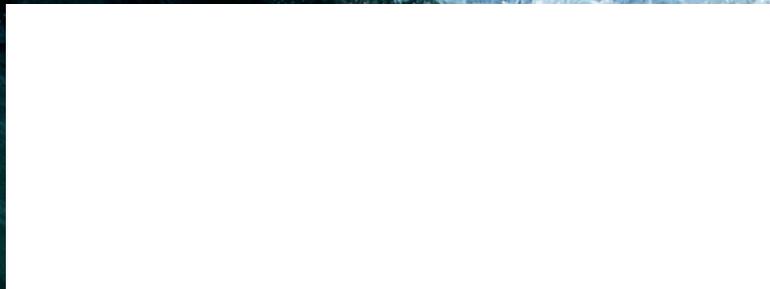
NAVIGATE THE INS AND OUTS OF A BOAT HAULOUT

NEW BOATS

- ◀ Tiara 39 Coupe
- Camano 31
- Palmer Johnson 63 Niniette

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CAMANO 31

REINCARNATION DONE WELL

IT TAKES A lot of courage for a boat builder to resurrect an iconic brand. It takes even more courage for that same builder to suggest the new boat is even better than the original. And it takes experienced boaters to know what changes to make so the new version is, in fact, better than the original. Lisa and Scott Helker, principals of Seattle's Waterline Boats, are courageous and experienced — and both qualities shine through in their reincarnation of the Camano 31.

A BIT OF HISTORY

The Camano was designed by Vancouver naval architect Bob Warman, and there are a couple of historical items that should be cleared up. When the boat was first designed in 1988, it was designated a 28, because Warman followed the custom of the day, whereby many designers and builders used the length on deck as the size designation. In fact, Warman himself changed the name to the 31, the length of the vessel overall, as production ramped up in 1989.

When the boat was first being produced, it was called the Camano Troll. A stripped-down version was known as the Camano Gnome. As

production continued, the only difference between the two was that the Gnome didn't have the command bridge.

Warman built about 128 Camano boats before selling the business, and by the time the tooling passed through various hands to the Helkers, about 270 had splashed.

WHAT DID NOT CHANGE

One feature Scott and Lisa decided *not* to change in their reincarnation of the 31 is what is referred to as Camano's Keelform hull. The hull, also designed by Warman, is technically interesting and is one of the major factors in Camano's success. It is unique among boats of this size and class.

The Keelform hull has displacement sections forward and planing sections aft — not an uncommon design feature. Most PT and Air Sea Rescue boats during World War II were designed that way, as are many current semi-displacements hulls. Most such hulls have little or no keel, and those that do use it only for directional control.

Camano takes that basic hull shape and applies its own unique touch: displacement keel sections that float about 25 percent of the hull's weight. This feature allows the vessel to move smoothly through its speed range without the "stern squat" that many semi-displacement hulls experience as they throttle up. The Keelform hull, therefore, uses less fuel for the same speed as most other boats in its class. The hull design provides good handling and stability through the boat's entire speed range, to 14 knots.

The Keelform hull brings other advantages to the table. It's the ideal place to put the engine, and an engine placed low in the boat significantly lowers the center of gravity. It also reduces the down angle of the shaft and improves the efficiency of the propulsion system. The shaft,



The new layout of the Camano 31, with the galley up instead of below and a separate shower space where the galley used to be, is far better for cruising boaters.



because more of it runs inside the keel than in other boats in this class, is less likely to get whacked by driftwood, which proliferates Pacific Northwest waters.

The new Camano retained the great visibility of the original, with the deckhouse containing more window glass than fiberglass. The overall vessel styling — a salty, purpose-driven appearance — has also not visibly changed.

The hull of the new 31 is solid glass with vinylester resin used in the outer layer of laminate, to assist in stopping water from wicking into the laminate. An internal all-glass hull grid adds to hull strength and stiffness. Vacuum bagging assists in resin infusion and reduces overall weight.

WHAT DID CHANGE

The change that is most obvious on entering the deckhouse is that the galley has been moved up and is now sited along the port side of the deckhouse. The original Camano interior design situated the galley down, port-side, forward of the helm, which, in the opinion of many experienced boaters, created problems for serious cruisers. When food

was prepared while the boat was underway, galley moisture fogged up the windshield, especially in cooler weather. Even the installation of a window fan didn't always keep the windshield clear. The galley-down location also meant there was relatively limited galley storage. The new galley, complete with drop-down enclosed shelving, has at least double the storage space and prep area as the old.

The space down and forward that used to be occupied by the galley is now a completely separate full standup shower, directly across the companionway from the toilet space. It is a huge improvement for any cruising boat, since it means someone can be taking a shower without, at the same time, occupying the toilet space. From an operational point of view, it's almost like having two heads on board.

The third major change made by the new builders was the replacement of the V-berth arrangement in the bow with a very comfortable pedestal double berth that angles along the port hull side. Another change in the stateroom space is the enlargement of the overhead hatch;

it is now big enough for a boater to scramble through to the foredeck in case of an emergency.

There's another change to the new 31 that only taller boaters will notice, and that's an increase in the salon's headroom, which leads to a volumetric increase in salon size and the feeling of increased spaciousness such a change makes. The new 31 has a fixed lower helm seat as well as a separate, port-side companion seat. A sliding aft deckhouse door replaces the older hinged model and allows for better use of cockpit space.

An overboard-draining forward anchor chain and fender storage locker, accessed through a foredeck hatch, is another welcome update. A raw-water washdown system is also plumbed into the locker area. The command bridge is large, comfortable and has a hinged arch that can easily support the radar, various antennae and satellite receivers. Another welcome update is the hinged opening center section of the windshield, which creates excellent ventilation when it's open even just a crack. Buyers of an original 31 could have any color hull they wanted — as long as it was white. Buyers of the



new 31 have a choice of hull colors available to them.

The quality of the woodwork's fit and finish throughout the new 31 is superior in every respect when compared with the original Camano.

UNDERWAY

We fired up the 270 hp V-6 3L (180-cubic-inch) Hyundai Seasall diesel and eased away from the dock. The Hyundai might not be that familiar to most North American boaters, but Hyundai is the world's largest manufacturer of marine diesels and marine generators, accounting for about 35 percent of the overall world production. While it is true that most of its engines have, to date, been used in large ships — Hyundai is the world's largest ship builder — what has been learned there will be a boon to recreational boaters.

Hyundai uses what it calls compacted graphite iron for its cylinder block, which it claims is lighter and stronger than the traditional gray cast used in most cast-iron engine blocks. The complete Hyundai engine in our test boat weighed in at only 736 pounds. By

comparison, Volvo's newest V-6, 4.3L gas engine tips the scales at 899 pounds. The Hyundai common-rail engine produces its maximum torque at about 1750 rpm and holds that until about 3750, providing a good, wide torque band, which is ideal for a trawler.

We moved away from the dock and set the engine to 1225 rpm, which gave us 5 knots while burning 0.38 gph. With the deckhouse aft door wide open, we checked our noise meter. It read 69 decibels, one decibel less than a normal conversation.

With the throttle set at 2000 rpm, the Hyundai burned 2.2 gph and pushed the boat to 7 knots. It took 2500 revs to get us to 8.1 knots with a fuel burn of 4.41 gph. When we advanced the throttle to 3000 rpm, the Camano made 9.4 knots while the engine burned 7.13 gph.

At 3500 rpm, the Camano moved along at 13 knots, while wide-open throttle, 3533 revs, brought 14 knots. Fuel consumption at 13 was 10.03 gph, and at WOT fuel burn was 10.83 gph.

The Keelform hull did a nice job of getting the vessel on plane at only 8.5 knots instead of the usual 13 or



SPECIFICATIONS

- > **LOA** 31 ft. > **BEAM** 10 ft., 6 in.
- > **DRAFT** 3 ft. > **LOA** 31 ft.
- > **WEIGHT (DRY)** 12,000 lbs.
- > **FUEL** 150 gal. > **WATER** 100 gal.
- > **POWER** Hyundai Seasall S270 V-6 diesel > **PRICE (BASE)** \$269,000

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Hyundai Seasall S270 V-6 electronically controlled common-rail diesel; dual-station controls; bow thruster; range; flybridge w/three pedestal helm seats; hinged radar arch and more.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Navigational electronics packages, entertainment electronics, battery packages, choice of hull colors, interior upholstery and countertop selections, galley configurations and more.

BUILDER

Helmsman Trawlers, Seattle; (206) 282-0110; helmsmantrawlers.com

WEST COAST DEALER

Waterline Boats, Seattle; (206) 282-0110; waterlineboats.com

14 knots required of other standard semi-displacement hulls of the Camano's size and weight.

THOUGHTS

The new Camano is, at least in the opinion of this writer, far superior in every respect to the original. The Helkers' knowledge and experience have led to a boat that kept all of the features that made the Camano a favorite years ago, and they made only changes and upgrades that add to the boat's operational ease and its value. The resale value of this new offering will likely remain very high.

The vessel is well built, comfortable, quiet, well laid out and very well finished. It gets good fuel mileage and has great visibility all around. It would make a great extended cruising vessel and also an excellent fishing platform. 🐟

➔ TESTER'S OPINION

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