



Helmsman 37 Sedan

This two-stateroom model offers all the classic features and benefits of a trawler with a little something extra

WHAT DO YOU DO when you're a life-long boater and find a great boat? You buy it of course. Then what happens if you get the opportunity to become the exclusive North American importer of that favourite boat of yours? You jump at the chance.

That's exactly what Scott and Lisa Helker, the husband and wife team of Waterline Boats LLC did with the new Helmsman 37 Sedan Two Stateroom trawler.

THE LITTLE THINGS This new twin stateroom offering has a couple of those

"why didn't I think of that?" features that sets a boat aside from others in its market segment, if even only for a short time. It can be something as small and inexpensive as a stainless steel cap on a fiberglass wear point. Such features, while not significant in the overall cost of a boat, shows that either the designer or builder has hands-on boating experience, something all boat owners like to see.

The new Helmsman 37 Sedan trawler contains two excellent examples of such features. The most significant is inside and amounts to a redesign of the traditional companion seat space located to the port side, directly across the salon from the helm station.

Traditionally, that space is fitted out with a padded bench seat facing forward, which works well while the vessel is underway, but not so well when the occupant wants to talk with others in the deckhouse. The new Helmsman has a very comfortable L-shaped settee with the base of the L running fore and aft, instead of that traditional companion bench seat. This allows the occupant to lounge comfortably and enjoy the conversation. There is also a small slide-out table that can be used as a chart or computer table, and seat an extra dinner guest. This feature adds dramatically to the "sociability" of the entire deckhouse.

The second design feature that sets ▶



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4



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[1] Aside from the unique L-shaped companion settee, the Helmsman's main saloon is very traditional. [2] The master stateroom features a queen bed, bookshelves and lots of natural light. [3] The second stateroom has a double bed and standing room in the dressing area. [4] The dining settee lies to port of the linear galley. [5] The helm is nicely integrated into the rest of the deckhouse.

the Helmsman aside is a small one, but one that will make a skipper's life easier if he or she opts to run the boat from the command bridge. The deckhouse roof covers the side decks and most of the cockpit. The handrails are fitted to the outer edges of the overhang, allowing the skipper to safely look over the side and directly down to the water. In fact, the set up is so good that fenders can be secured on the top-deck handrail and drop straight down into the water.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION This Chinese-built trawler's hull is a fairly traditional semi-displacement style with a relatively plumb stem and displacement sections forward flattening out to a shallow V aft. This allows for a relatively sharp entry, good for working through a chop, and a good planing surface aft. The combination offers good handling at slow speeds and a reasonable turn of speed—about 13 knots—with modest power. The relatively flat bottom aft gives good stability in a beam sea.

The solid-glass hull uses vinyl ester resin and a barrier coat to help protect against wicking, and is stiffened and reinforced with a grid of foam-cored stringers and a series of transverse box beams. Decks and structural bulkheads are honeycomb-cored glass.

The hull glasswork on our test boat was excellent—fair and without haze or print through.

ON DECK Access to the vessel is via the built-in swim step, into the cockpit. The vessel also has a pair of hull gates, port and starboard, to allow easy access to the walkaround side-decks if the vessel is tied side-to.

A set of stainless steps lead from the cockpit to the bridge deck and the upper helm. The deckhouse roof extends aft to cover most of the cockpit and out to cover each of the side decks. This creates good weather protection from the Pacific Northwest rain. The decks are wide enough to allow a complete walk around, fully secured by coamings and beefy, well-finished, welded stainless railings.

There is plenty of dinghy and toy storage up top, all inside the handrails. A barbecue, properly secured, could also be added up top. The

bridge deck has a settee that easily seats six and a pedestal table. With the helm station to starboard, captain and crew can sit comfortably and chat while underway. Forward visibility is excellent from the top deck, with very little bow "sight shadow."

THE INTERIOR A marine-grade, weather-tight door allows access to the deckhouse off the cockpit. The well-fitted and finished wood interior will make the traditionalist happy. The deckhouse layout, except for companion L-shaped settee noted earlier, is fairly traditional, with the galley—complete with granite counter tops, a propane stove, a two door fridge/freezer—along the starboard side and dining settee to port, directly across from the galley. The galley has plenty of counter top and storage space.

The dark wood combined with the colour of the soft materials gives the whole interior a warm, cozy feeling and plenty of window glass floods the interior with natural light, producing a cheery interior space even on cloudy days.

The two staterooms are down and forward, with the master being in the forepeak. A centreline queen bed, bookshelves with rails and plenty of storage make this a comfortable space. Two large trunk cabin port lights, port and starboard, and an overhead hatch allow plenty of natural light into the space.

The second stateroom lies aft of the master and is fitted with a double berth running athwart ships, similar to many express cruiser layouts, storage and, unlike many of the express cruisers, a full-headroom dressing area.

The two staterooms share a head, complete with a toilet, hand basin and a separate shower stall.

ENGINES AND PERFORMANCE We fired up the Cummins MerCruiser 5.9 litre (359 cubic inch) diesel and it started, from cold, without smoke, shiver or clatter. It ran smoothly and very quietly at idle. Our noise-measuring device read 68 dBA—quieter than the 70 dBA reading of a normal conversation.

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ABOVE This single Cummins MerCruiser 380 hp diesel offers modest speeds, but good fuel efficiency.

weighs in at about 1,350 lbs and produces 380 horsepower, making it a popular choice in smaller powerboats. The modern common rail fuel delivery system not only helps reduce fuel burn, but also helps the engine run more quietly. During our entire test, the engine performed very well.

We idled away from the dock at 600 rpm making 3.5 knots and burning 0.5 gallons of diesel per hour. We made 4.3 knots at 800 revs and burned 0.7 gph. With the engine ticking over at 1,100 revs we made 5.6 knots and burned 1.0 gallon per hour. The noise level was at just 71 dBA.

When we cranked the engine up to 1,500 revs our fuel consumption went to 2.0 gallons per hour and our speed to 7.2 knots. Fuel consumption went to 5.6 gph at 2,000 revs and our speed moved up to 8.8 knots. An increase in engine speed to 2,500 revs brought just a hair less than 10 knots with a fuel burn of 10.2 gph. Wide open throttle at 3,050 revs gave us a fuel burn of 18 gph and a speed of 12.7 knots.

ON THE WATER When we finished our speed runs we took the way off, cranked the helm hard over, held it there and slowly increased the

throttle setting. The vessel leaned slightly into the turn and completed the manoeuvre without cavitation, skid or chatter. Clearly the hull design and drive line are well-matched. All speeds during our tests were measured with an independent GPS and fuel consumption figures came from the engine computer.

It became clear as we ran our tests that the new Helmsman 37 hull design is operationally very efficient at about 1,100 revs. At that engine speed our test vessel was making 5.6 knots, or 6.4 miles per hour, and was getting 5.6 miles per gallon. This is excellent mileage, particularly when one remembers that this is a normally-built vessel with a solid glass hull, and not some lightweight experimental craft designed to wring the best mileage out of every drop of fuel.

We also noted that at this speed the vessel was very quiet. And while this speed may seem slow to many power boaters, a sail boater who could maintain this speed hour after hour would think all his Christmases had come at once! This new 37 footer would make an excellent boat for a boater switching from sail to power.

IN SUMMARY This new Helmsman 37 is a must see for anyone considering

a two-stateroom trawler in this size range. It is well-built, well-finished, and has a very efficient hull design. Judicious use of the throttle yields what can only be described as remarkable fuel mileage. The companion L-shaped settee is a stroke of design genius and the fit and finish throughout is excellent. The use of traditional woods give a nice ambience to the interior, while, at the same time, good sized windows, hatches and port lights bath the inside with natural light.

This vessel will make a good choice for a boater wanting to downsize or for one with a smaller trawler wanting to move up. It appears to be an excellent coastal cruiser that will be well-suited to the Pacific Northwest.

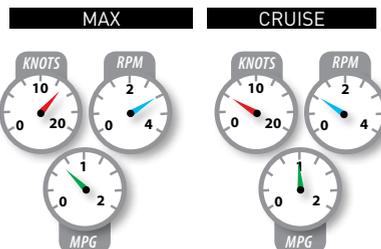
At a price of about \$350,000 depending on electronics it represents good value for money. ☺

THE STATS

LOA	11.88 m	38'1"
LWL	10.51 m	34'7"
Beam	4.26 m	13'11"
Draft	1.06 m	3'6"
Displ.	12,700 kg	28,000 lbs
Bridge clearance (mast down)	3.73 m	12' 4"
Fuel	681 L	180 USG
Water	548 L	145 USG
Waste	170 L	45 USG
Power	Cummins MerCruiser 5.9 380 HP	

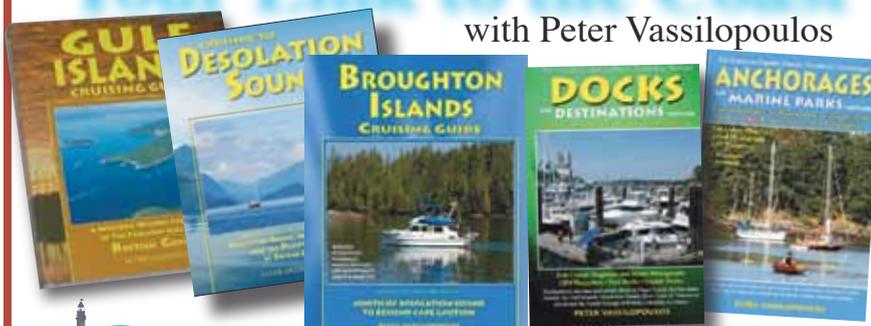
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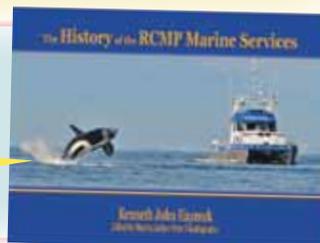
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