

NEW BOATS

By Jonathan Cooper

HELMSMAN TRAWLERS 43 PILOTHOUSE



Above: Three-quarter view of the Helmsman 43's workboat-style wheelhouse and easy-access steps to her flybridge from port- and starboard-side doors. Below: Like the lower helm, the flybridge offers captains unobstructed, over-the-bow visibility; The saloon takes advantage of full-beam width abaft the pilothouse steps, and a day head provides relief for guests who may be bunking at the convertible dinette, which can be cordoned off with a curtain.



QUICK HITS



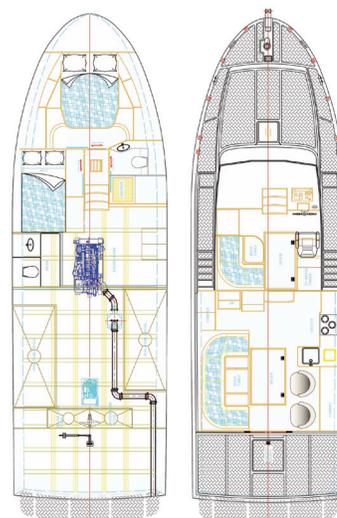
- Simplified moldings, fewer fiddles, and molded edges result in a cleaner interior look with less fuss, easier clean-up, and a nice balance of contemporary with traditional accents.

- A flip-up companion helm seat completes the L-settee in the pilothouse, affording one more seat as well as additional length for a pilot's berth for overnight passages or fidgety anchorages.

- The sturdy but lightweight mast is hinged to easily recline for tight bridge clearances or covered moorages.

- Full-beam saloon (due to no side decks amidships) that can be partitioned with a privacy curtain. With a day head (wet head) and drop-down saloon table the boat can comfortably accommodate seven adults.

- Fuel efficient at 8 to 10 knots, a top speed of 15 to 16 knots are available with the optional power.



Powered by the same Cummins QSB 6.7 common-rail engine that drives the Helmsman Trawler 38, the newer 43 improves upon its brethren with upgrades to accommodations and storage capacities, providing an additional cabin and greater range for owners. For anyone familiar with the Helmsman Trawlers line, the boats feature tried-and-true design qualities that are shared with an entire history of working boats: a low-rise pilothouse with reverse-rake windshield, substantial freeboard, and a high bow. The freeboard is apparent as you tour from stem-to-stern while enjoying headroom clearances throughout of 6-feet, 10-inches.

The 43 features a full-beam saloon and galley combination that can be converted into private sleeping quarters. The saloon table drops to become a queen-size berth and owners can hang a privacy curtain (provided by the manufacturer) that divides the saloon in half, lengthwise, allowing guests their privacy while still making the galley, pilothouse settee, and the helm accessible. The curtain encompasses the berth as well and creates one of the best features of the 43: A day head is tucked forward and to port but still feels private despite its proximity to the main dinette. In all, the boat handles seven adults comfortably, though the second, dedicated cabin will benefit from a rework, according to Helmsman Trawlers' Scott Helker, who says they have already implemented a design change to increase the berth size and the floor space of the second cabin.

The 43 features traditional teak interiors, satin varnished by hand, with louvered door panels, and a teak-and-holly cabin sole. There aren't a mess of fussy fiddles and trim pieces, and the simplicity gives the overall look a classic, cozy feel without being dated. Soft overhead panels are neatly installed and drop out for easy access to wiring runs. And to improve visibility from the saloon—and visibility aft from the helm—drop-down galley cabinets provide access to glassware and flatware. A TV cabinet (optional) in the saloon hinges down from an overhead box. Taking advantage of the full beam, the saloon and galley feel borrowed from a much larger yacht.

If I owned this boat, you couldn't get me out of the pilothouse. With a neatly laid out helm and comfortable L-settee/table combination, cruising companions will never lack for vistas or space for the occasional poker game, and the captain will never feel isolated. With the 43's reverse-rake windshields there is no glare from electronics at the helm, providing better visibility for safer nighttime passage. Port and starboard pilothouse doors make for simpler docking and communication with crew, though the owner of this boat spoke proudly of single-handing through the Ballard locks. "Some people say it's tougher handling without full walk-arounds, but we've had no issues so far and love the extra space inside," says owner Lee Stiles. One great addition to the pilothouse is an insert at the forward end of the settee that flips up, and with a 20-inch cushion, can convert to a long captain's berth.

Combined with her deep forefoot, sharp taper aft, low-deadrise transom, and hefty 40,000-pound laden displacement, it is no surprise that the 43's overall running feel is sturdy and stable. I wasn't able to vigorously test the boat in seas, but at an 8- to 10-knot cruise (with the standard 250-horsepower engine), fuel consumption hovers around 3.5 gph. For owners who need a little extra oomph, an optional engine package will push the 43 into the 15- to 16-knot range. At this owner's typical cruising speed, conversation was no problem in the pilothouse or saloon, registering 73 decibels underway.

The master cabin benefits not only from her generous beam carried fairly far forward, but also from the 43's freeboard and moderate bow flare, resulting in an inviting stateroom. The flybridge, accessed from proper, secure stairways both port and starboard, can support a 10½-foot tender and sports a typical centerline helm and L-settee combination. The boat that I tested had the optional U-settee with high/low table and a starboard helm, which make for excellent topside entertaining. I had no issues with the visibility from the second helm and the hinged mast eases access to covered moorings and passing beneath low bridges. ■

LOA: 45'
BEAM: 14' 2"
DRAFT: 4' 6"
DISPL.: 35,000 lb.
FUEL: 500 gal.
WATER: 200 gal.
POWER: 250 hp Cummins QSB 6.7
CRUISE SPEED: 8 Knots
RANGE: 1,000 nm*
Price: \$479,000 base price; \$530,000 as tested
Contact:
www.helmsmantrawlers.com
*Assumes 10 percent reserve