

The New Helmsman Trawlers 31 Camano: An Impressive Redesign

March 26, 2016

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My first reaction is—don't confuse the Helmsman Trawlers 31 Camano with the legacy Camano 31. They may look alike, but the new version is significantly improved while at the same time maintaining the famous Keelform hull that made the Camano 31 such a well-regarded cruising boat.

Summary:

- So many improvements make this a whole new version of the 31 Camano at a relatively bargain value price.
- The 240hp Hyundai SeasAll V-270 V-6 diesel engine is amazingly smooth, economical and compact. A service and parts network is available – if you need it.
- The beautiful teak interior and galley-up layout, with separate head and shower areas are just right to entertain six and cruise with two to four.

Helmsman Trawlers 31 Camano—New and Improved

As I approach the [Helmsman version of the 31 Camano](#) at the dock, I immediately look for changes to this popular design. The railings are extended and upgraded to welded stainless steel, which provide safety and comfort when moving around on the side decks and on the bow. Stainless steel hand holds are in all the right places.

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Looking up to the flybridge, I see the new fiberglass folding arch for antennas and other gear. The large salon window now curves at the stern to match the arc of the stainless railing. Up on the bow, a new hatch is bigger, allowing more air and sunlight into the forward cabin, as well as providing an egress point in case of an emergency. The foredeck includes an anchor locker with washdown system. A samson post is aft of the windlass, for securing the anchor rode or tying up to the dock, and is significantly better than a large deck cleat.

The fiberglass swim step is solid, and you step aboard through a transom door. Three separate tough rub rails wrap around the hull, very handy if docking goes awry. At the base of the transom door, a stainless steel plate with the Helmsman logo is a welcoming sight.

Next, I notice the convenience features in this new design, many simple, but welcomed. For example:

- Fender holders are molded into the cockpit coaming at the stern, which now has stainless steel racks.
- The propane locker, which was previously built into the ladder to the flybridge deck, is now within the flybridge cowling, leaving the former locker available as a convenient line locker.
- The steps to the side deck are molded in.
- There is a shower faucet in the cockpit for rinsing or washing up.
- The lazarette has plenty of room to store crab traps and other gear.
- The optional hardtop adds to the lines of the boat and makes the cockpit a living space, especially welcomed in the northwest.
- The sturdy aluminum sliding door says “stout” and adds to the feeling of security.
- All of the windows are sturdy and well-made.
- The middle window at the helm opens, providing plenty of ventilation when desired.
- There are windows and port lights all the way around making the saloon feel larger than it is and providing a beautiful waterfront view.



The comfortable helm seat in front of the console with room for a large multi-function

Helmsman Trawlers 31 Camano Interior

Inside, the changes continue. Gone is clean white interior design of the legacy Camano 31. The new Camano 31 features significantly more teak, including a rich teak and holly sole. The sole has been dropped down two inches, providing additional headroom and making the boat feel even more spacious. An L-shaped settee is to starboard. The teak high-low table features a beautiful inlay

as standard, which is an expensive option on many other boats. The settee cushions pull out to offer sleeping space for occasional guests. Storage lockers are built-in below and alongside the settee.

The galley has been moved up to the main salon, and it occupies most of the port side. It is equipped with Corian counters, a three-burner Force 10 propane stove with oven, Nova Kool fridge and freezer, and a deep stainless steel sink. Dishes and glasses are safely stored in drop-down compartments. All the details are sure to keep the cook happy.

The helm is forward and to starboard. The helm seat is comfortable, and the instrument panel has enough room for a large multi-function display, autopilot, engine controls, and switches. Electronics are optional, and each buyer has the freedom to select their own components. On the port side, opposite the helm, is seating for the first mate, with excellent visibility.

The head compartments are forward and two steps down. The old wet head has been replaced by a split head: the toilet is to port and the shower is to starboard.

All the way forward, the nearly queen-sized berth is set to port. Gas-assisted struts make accessing the huge storage area underneath easy. This cabin is beautifully finished in teak, a substantial upgrade from the legacy Camano 31. Compartments and drawers are everywhere, including a cedar-lined hanging locker. The sleeping accommodations are spacious, a feeling reinforced by the large tinted hatch and port lights letting in plenty of light. On chilly days, a Webasto heater keeps the interior warm.



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The Hyundai 240 hp SeasAll engine is a remarkably compact package.

Helmsman Trawlers 31 Camano Engine Room

Improvements continue in the well laid-out engine room. Two floor hatches provide good access to the engine and other equipment. The Hyundai SeasAll V-6 is an amazingly tight package, so compact it allowed Helmsman to increase the size of the waste tank to 30 gallons and place it under the engine in the keel. This solved a big shortcoming with the legacy Camano 31, which only had a 12-gallon waste tank.

Some might have concerns about the new engine package. From what we saw, there is no reason to worry.

- Hyundai is one of the largest makers of marine diesel engines in the world.
- This engine is one of the most popular marine engines in Europe.
- It was designed with an easy-to-access water pump for impeller replacement
- A built-in oil change system is standard
- Its electronics allow you to monitor the engine system on an app on your smartphone, and it even maintains a log for the owner.

The engine is very smooth and quiet, and will push the famous Keelform hull to a cruise speed of 14-knots while burning 7.4 gallons per hour. When diesel prices go up, you can cruise at 2000 rpm making 7.6 knots and burning just 2.3 gallons per hour. Hyundai is firmly behind this engine and its launch in North America. In Seattle, Coastal Marine Engine is the Hyundai marine dealer.



Helmsman Trawlers 31 Camano Flybridge

A stainless steel ladder from the cockpit to the flybridge is easily navigated. On the flybridge, three sturdy chairs are mounted aft of the fiberglass upper helm station. And there is plenty of room for cocktail hour seating or kayak storage.

My overall report: Scott and Lisa Helker of Helmsman Trawlers and Waterline Boats in Seattle have done an impressive job of taking a popular cruising boat design and creating a whole new boat. The list of extensive improvements and the use of the Hyundai SeasAll diesel engine makes for an efficient design sure to please new owners as they explore the Inside Passage and the Salish Sea.

—Mark Bunzel

The Helmsman Trawlers 31 Camano is priced at \$269,000 with Webasto diesel-fired forced-air cabin heating. The cockpit hardtop option is \$5000. Electronics are optional.

For more information or to see the 31 Camano contact Helmsman Trawlers at 206-282-0110 or [Waterline Boats](#).

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