

Pacific Nor'West

Boating

Adventuring Afloat in the Pacific Northwest

BOAT REVIEW

North Star

A Northwest Classic:
At Home on the Salish Sea

DESTINATION

JONES ISLAND

(On A Very Lucky Day!)

FEATURE

HELMSMAN 37 SEDAN

A New Approach to
a Proven Concept



Down the Ways!



A NEW APPROACH TO A PROVEN CONCEPT

Helmsman 37 Sedan

BY C. LEGGS

Those of us lucky enough to live near the Salish Sea are privileged to enjoy some of the finest recreational boating waters anywhere in the world. Our playground is the maritime equivalent of skiing in the Swiss Alps, bicycling through the French countryside, or mountain climbing in Nepal. We may not have the largest fleet of boats anywhere on the planet (and that's yet another advantage), but our idealized boating environment has inspired the design of a disproportionate number of cruising boats that are especially well-suited to Pacific Northwest conditions.



ROOM TO RELAX OUT OF THE WEATHER IN THE COVERED COCKPIT, CIVILIZED STAIRS TO FLYBRIDGE. (ALL PHOTOS BY C-IMAGES)

Semi-displacement trawlers have long been popular among boaters who enjoy spending a couple of weeks at a time, or more, on extended summer vacation cruises. The hulls have earned a legendary reputation for running both comfortably and economically, although at the acknowledged sacrifice of raw speed. The semi-displacement combination of a sharp entry, pronounced keel, moderate draft and decreasing deadrise in the aft sections responds well to the short, steep chop that characterizes our inland waters, yet is able to handle downright nasty conditions if called upon to do so. Over the last 40 years, many of the most popular trademarks in the Pacific Northwest have featured semi-displacement hulls.

Trawler superstructures express a variety of popular concepts, with various boaters preferring styles known as "aft cabin," "tri-cabin," "pilothouse," or "sedan." This issue's new boat feature examines the Helmsman Trawlers 37' Sedan, a new offering that seems well poised to become a frequent choice among new boat buyers in our region.

Built on a semi-displacement hull, the Helmsman Trawlers 37 includes a boat deck that overhangs the much of the cockpit, as well as the side decks aft of the lower helm. One of the rumors we locals enjoy fostering is that "it rains almost every day in the Pacific Northwest." Our tales of non-stop precipitation may be deliberately designed to conjure up images of some old guy (wearing a robe and sandals) trying to gather up two animals of every sort, thereby discouraging excessive immigration to our region. As much as we may joke about our often wet weather, the fact



remains that finding a dry place to stand on deck can be especially appreciated by boaters in our area. The overhanging boat deck addresses that need very nicely. A number of builders have used this design before, although the common designation for the configuration (named after a continent due north of Africa) is actually trademarked by Grand Banks.

Even though the Helmsman Trawlers 37 (like nearly all trawlers) is manufactured in Asia, importer for Helmsman Trawlers is Waterline Boats, located on Westlake Avenue in Seattle. Scott and Lisa Helker, owners of Waterline, deliberately incorporate features that will be especially appealing to Pacific Northwest buyers. Even though the Helkers are the national distributors for the brand, they are especially committed to their own regional market.

The 37' Helmsman Trawlers Sedan is available with either one or two staterooms. While the hulls are identical, on the two stateroom version the cabin structure is 4" longer and the boat deck overhangs the cockpit by an additional 12". We toured the two stateroom model during our recent visit to Waterline Boats.

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BULWARKS CONTINUE ON BOTH SIDES OF FOREDECK, UNTIL ONLY A STEP OR TWO AWAY FROM THE BOW.



COVERED SIDE DECKS SHELTER DECKHANDS DURING A RAINSTORM.



MANY OWNERS WILL CHOOSE TO STOW A DINGHY ON THE SWIM PLATFORM, ESPECIALLY WITH OPTIONAL SIDE GATES.

SPECIFICATIONS AND DIMENSIONS

LOA: 38' 11"
 LOD: 36' 9"
 Beam: 13' 11"
 Draft: 3' 6"
 Displacement: 28,000 lbs. (half load)
 Fuel: 360 gal
 Water: 160 gal
 Waste: 45 gal

LAYUP AND PROPULSION

Helmsman Trawler hulls are built with solid fiberglass laminates, (no chop, no coring). Maximum hull strength and integrity is enhanced by the use of a molded FRP "grid" for stringers and frames. Vinyl ester resins are used in the layers nearest the premium gelcoat to help prevent blistering. An epoxy barrier coat and bottom paint help reduce maintenance. Helmsman maximizes waterline length, thereby enhancing fuel economy and performance, with a hull extension supporting the swim platform. The hull is a full keel design, with a stainless steel rudder and skeg protecting the prop.

At the standard price of \$339,000, the Helmsman Trawlers 37 Sedan is delivered with a 5.9 liter, 230-HP Cummins QSB diesel. The boat we inspected at Waterline included several desirable upgrades, including a 380-HP Cummins Quantum Series turbo diesel. A stainless steel shaft features a dripless seal. Every boat comes prewired and plumbed to accept an optional generator. Included in the base price is a Vetus bow thruster with a 7-inch prop.

ON DECK

If we called for a show of hands by everybody who would rather spend the day cruising than sanding, just about every hand in sight would go up. The exterior of the Helmsman 37 Sedan has no wood to worry about. Nonskid decks, as well as sturdy stainless steel sliding door frames, aluminum window frames and aluminum doors, make the Helmsman 37 a wash and wear boat. Apply a coat of wax once in a while, and this vessel will continue to look "like new" for many, many years.

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ABOVE: SELF TAILING WINDLASS AND SAMSON POST HELP MANAGE GROUND TACKLE.

RIGHT: STARBOARD BOW LOCKER HOLDS DECK GEAR, CHAIN LOCKER IS TO PORT.



BELOW: UPPER HELM, ON STARBOARD SIDE OF FLYBRIDGE



There are six hawseholes in the bulwarks, trimmed in stainless and located at appropriate intervals. Cleats are stainless, with bollards on the foredeck. A Lewmar V4 windlass with 200-feet of high tensile chain hauls the standard 45-pound Bruce anchor.

The lower deck is uniquely designed without the customary "step up" near the pilot door. As a result, there is greater safety on the foredeck, with deckhands enjoying the security of bulwarks almost all the way to the forepeak. Additional on-deck safety is assured with the use of seriously sturdy stainless steel handrails, with polished welds.

Access to the flybridge is via a ladder on the starboard side of the ample cockpit. There are useful "wings" on each side of the flybridge cowling, providing additional options for rigging fenders from the upper railings. Helmsman left plenty of space to install a davit crane and chocks aft of the fold-down radar mast, but the swim platform is large enough that many boaters will elect to stow the dinghy across the transom. There is plenty of guest seating around a table on the flybridge, as well as an "entertainment locker" that could be optionally fitted out with a barbecue or a beverage bar.

INTERIOR TRIM AND LAYOUT

Nobody will inspect the interior of a Helmsman Trawlers 37 Sedan unless they have been impressed with what they observed on deck, so only about 99.9% of boaters checking out a new Helmsman Trawlers 37 Sedan will venture through the cabin doors.

The word "awesome" is so over-used that it has become virtually meaningless in most contexts, but it's the first word that comes to mind and ultimately the most appropriate adjective with which to describe the interior of the Helmsman Trawlers 37 Sedan. Nautical ambience abounds. The teak solids and veneers seem particularly well finished, with a traditional teak and holly sole accentuating the effect. The cabin windows are very tall, yet designed with enough separation to allow the main cabin to provide adequate structural support for the flybridge and boat deck above. Very classy stainless steel port-

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LARGE SOCIAL GATHERING AREA ON UPPER DECK.
BELOW: EFFICIENTLY ARRANGED, UNCLUTTERED
ENGINE ROOM.



lights with screens provide cross ventilation just aft of the lower helm. The upgraded interior on the boat we inspected on the dock at Waterline featured genuine leather upholstery, in a soft tone that accented the teak walls and joinery perfectly.

The salon and galley are in the main cabin, as well as the lower helm in the starboard forequarter. Another of the upgrades on the vessel we inspected was a suite of European designed LED interior lights. Very swanky, but not overstated. In conjunction with the reserved but stylish window treatment, the designer LED fixtures make a dramatic interior statement.

The salon is arranged with a U-shaped convertible settee in the aft port quarter, and a galley directly across the companionway to starboard. Notable features in the galley included novel upper stowage lockers that increase available daylight and visibility by pivoting up to a horizontal position when not in use. The optional Toshiba 24" flat panel TV is in one of the lockers, where it can be easily viewed from the settee. Granite is the standard material for countertops, and the galley is configured with a Princess propane range as well as a dual door Nova Kool refrigerator/freezer.

One of the more unusual design aspects of the Helmsman Trawlers 37 Sedan is the second settee on the port side of the main cabin. It's opposite the helm and permits passengers to gather near the skipper while underway. A pull-out tabletop can be employed for charting purposes and there is a dedicated chart locker just forward of the second settee. If there's a downside to the second settee, it might be that there is only a single pilothouse door, next to the starboard helm. But that's less critical on a boat with a flybridge than on a boat without; there's a strong probability the skipper even won't be at the lower helm if a situation arises where he or she might be needed to assist with lines on the port deck.

The optional upgrades on the 37 Helmsman we inspected included a well-matched suite of electronics. The lower helm featured a Simrad NSE12 multifunction display with 3G radar, depth sounder, AP24 autopilot and an AIS transceiver. An ICOM VHF with digital select calling features completed the electronics inventory.

The extremely nautical decor of the upper deck continues below. The master stateroom is most forward, and a clever positioning of the guest stateroom (with a double berth) permits the master stateroom dimensions to rival most single stateroom designs. A walk-around queen is on centerline, surrounded by a plethora of lockers and drawers. Bookshelves, or stowage counters, are on either side of the master berth. Generously proportioned portlights and a large overhead hatch bring lots of natural light into the master stateroom.

The head is aft of the master stateroom, making efficient use of space by locating the Masterflush™ marine toilet inside the shower stall. While somewhat unusual, the idea maximizes the amount of standing room in the head and, upon consideration, is actually quite practical. There is a built in medicine cabinet, as well as a deluxe hand basin.

One of the more innovative aspects of the Helmsman 37 Sedan is the second stateroom. Borrowing a trick from the express cruiser playbook, the guest stateroom is most aft on the lower deck, with the bunk running athwartship under the deck above. This permits the use of a legitimate double mattress in the guest stateroom, something particularly unexpected in a two stateroom version of any 37-foot boat. Just inside the door to the guest stateroom, there is a good-sized area in which to stand and dress. The entrance area to the second stateroom is also rigged to double as an on-board office, using a desk with a flip-up working surface.

CONCLUSIONS

We see a bright future for this newest addition to the Helmsman Trawlers fleet. There is a steady demand for boats that will cruise comfortably, yet fit into a 40-foot slip. Helmsman has taken a proven design concept, executed it at a high level, and included some innovations that are both useful and unique. Looking for a good boat to spend a weekend at Poulsbo, a week in the South Sound, or two weeks or more exploring Canadian coastal waters? The Helmsman Trawlers 37 Sedan will lend itself to the task with a high quality experience and no shortage of style.

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ABOVE: GALLEY IS TO STARBOARD IN THE MAIN CABIN.



LEFT: LOWER HELM INTEGRATES A TRADITIONAL NAUTICAL THEME WITH THE MOST MODERN ELECTRONICS.

BELOW: MASTER STATEROOM IS LARGE, DELUXE, AND COMFORTABLE.





PILOT SETTEE, OPPOSITE HELM, WITH PULL-OUT CHART TABLE.



SETTEE IN THE AFT PORT QUARTER OF THE SALON, WITH OPTIONAL LEATHER TRIM.

Base price on a new, two-stateroom 2012 Helmsman Trawler 37 Sedan is \$339,000 — and at that price the vessel is adequately equipped (except for electronics). The single stateroom model is available at a base price of \$319,000. We suspect more boat shoppers will opt for the package we examined at Waterline Boats which included the larger engine, full electronics, leather upholstery, additional stowage lockers, custom European salon lighting, and other significant options at a price of \$390,793. Bringing a boat of this size to market, very well equipped and “under 4” is likely to generate a lot of interest among value conscious boat shoppers. And (especially these days) who isn’t conscious of value.

For additional information, just “click” on the Waterline Boats ad in this publication or visit the web site www.waterlineboats.com. Waterline’s phone number is 206-282-0110

PERFORMANCE AND FUEL CONSUMPTION

On a recent run from Seattle to Anacortes, Scott Helker reported the following observations aboard the Helmsman Trawler 37 Sedan, equipped with the optional 380-HP Cummins diesel.

| RPM | GPH | KTS | |
|------|-------|------|----------------------------|
| 800 | 0.6 | 4.3 | |
| 900 | 0.7 | 4.8 | |
| 1000 | 0.9 | 5.7 | |
| 1100 | 1.0 | 6.1 | |
| 1200 | 1.3 | 6.6 | |
| 1300 | 1.5 | 6.8 | |
| 1400 | 1.9 | 7.3 | |
| 1500 | 2.3 | 7.6 | |
| 1600 | 2.9 | 8.0 | |
| 1700 | 3.8 | 8.3 | |
| 1800 | 4.6 | 8.5 | |
| 2000 | 6.8 | 8.9 | |
| 2250 | 9.1 | 9.7 | |
| 2500 | 11.6 | 10.1 | |
| 3050 | 20.00 | 13.5 | 98% load at full rated RPM |