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# PRINCESS 36

*Traditional lines and a luxurious interior  
make this one royal performer*

by Doug Dawson

**L**ast December when everyone in Canada was shoveling snow and freezing, my wife Brenda and I were sent on a mission to Marco Island, Florida to test the 36' Princess Riviera. Sounds like our generous publisher splurged for an all expenses paid trip; well actually, we were in Florida visiting my folks for Christmas and we took time out to drive down from Venice to test this Princess.

The test boat was powered by twin 250 hp Cummins Diesel inboards swinging four-bladed propellers. The third person aboard, Jim Clark, is the son of the owner Richard Clark, a go-cart manufacturer from Whitby, Ontario. This was their fourth boat and second Princess. Avion Yachts, the Canadian dealer for Princess, had taken delivery of this particular yacht in Fort Lauderdale and driven it across to the west coast. Because the pre-delivery adjustments on the motors were not all completed at our test time, the radar that we report

here is slightly less than the boat is currently doing.

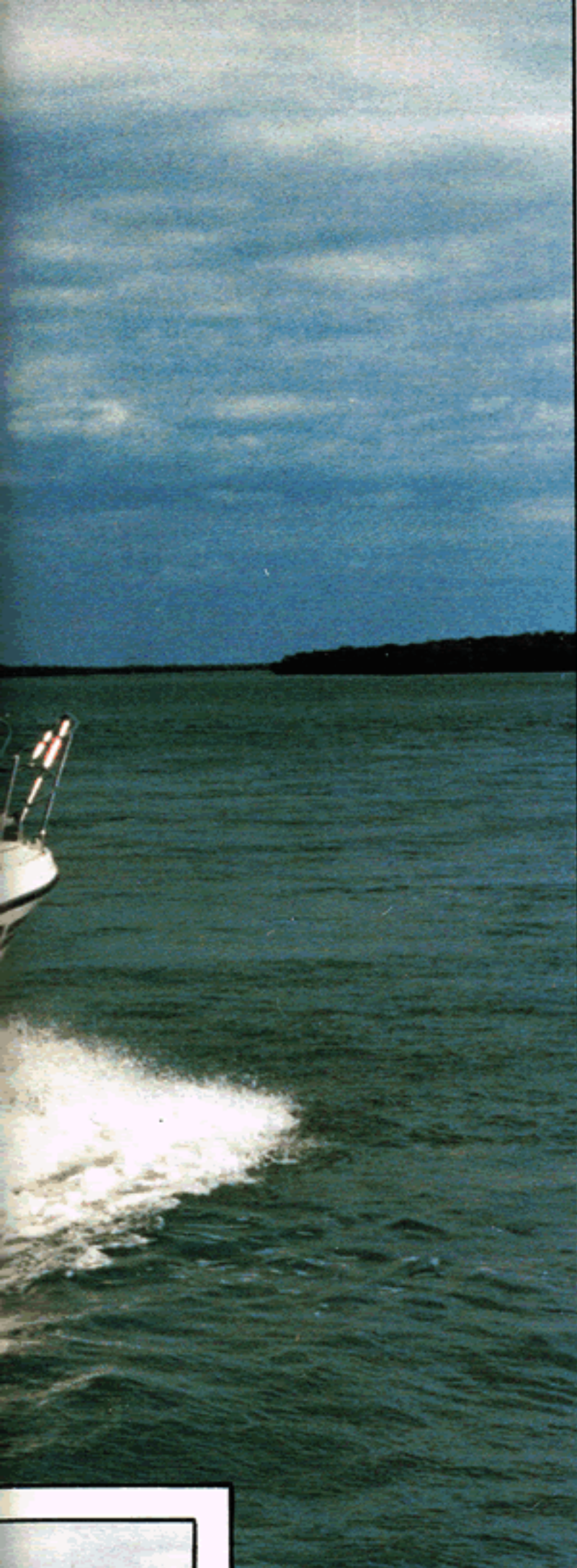
#### **Radar runs**

The greatest challenge to performing radar tests on the Princess was to get 12 volt power for our gun without a lighter, or tools to get at the batteries and dash connections. Jim came up with the idea of pulling the wire connectors off the wiper motors — eureka! — power.


Now, keep in mind these were low revving diesels. At 2000 rpm we were well up on plane and banged off 24 mph, more or less agreeing with the speedo — 22.5 knots. At full rpm of 2200, the radar gun flashed 30 mph as we passed under the bridge upstream, then 32 downstream. After talking with Peter Bell of Avion Yachts since, they say the boat is now reaching 35 mph.

#### **Acceleration**

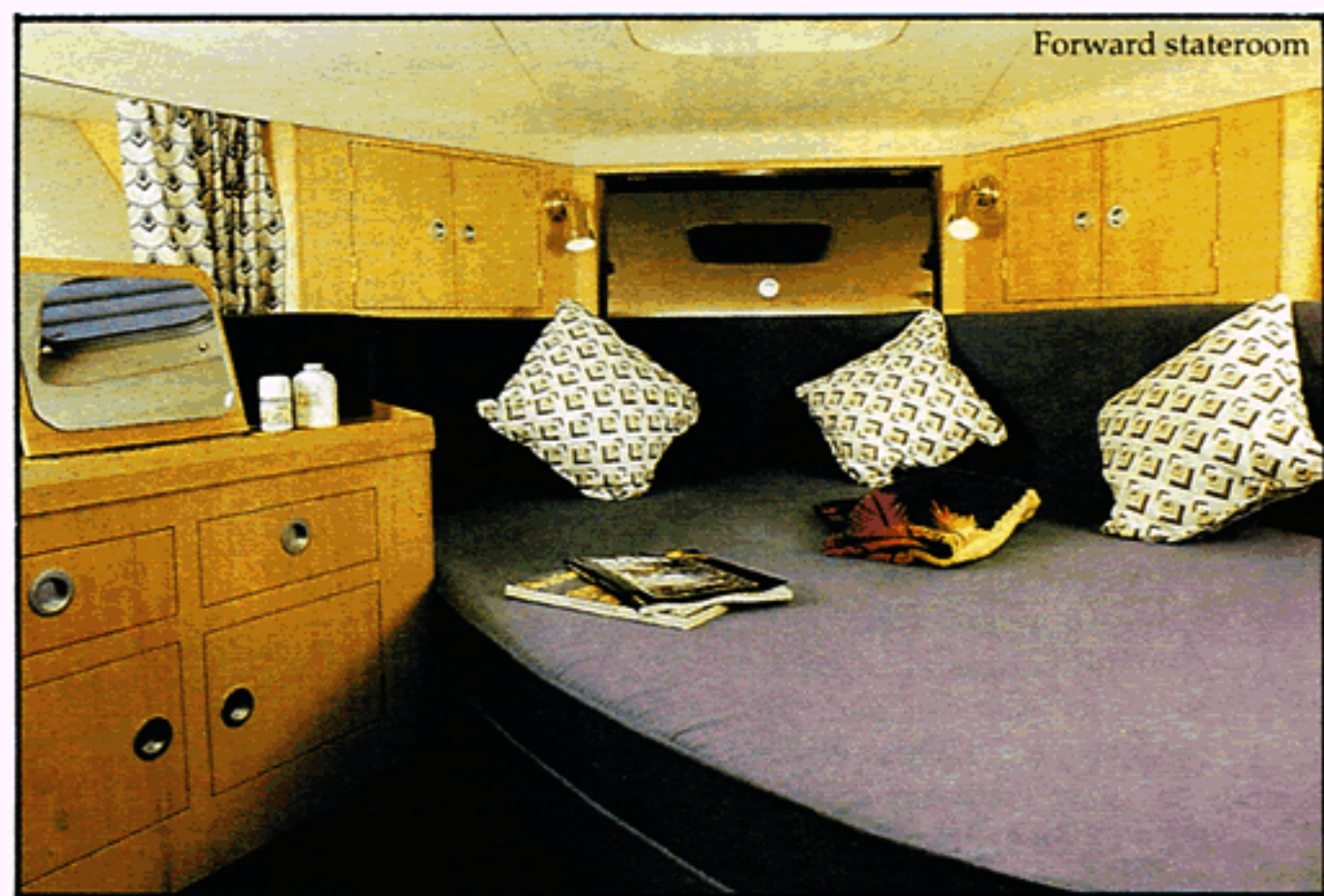
The second challenge was to endure the small boat traffic passing under the bridge where we were



*Dynamic performance combined  
with superb, spacious  
accommodation make the  
Princess 36 a regal choice.*







bouncing the radar signal. The third was to bear a novice sailor in a 10-foot "foam thing", who insisted on tacking up current under the bridge — hardly a breeze. Diesels are not renowned for their jack rabbit starts and the numbers proved it. Two runs at 0 - 20 mph averaged 12 1/2 seconds. Zero - 25 took over 17 seconds. Because the top speed was 30 up and 32 down, zero - 30 took more than 1/2 minute and more patience and time than we had to suffer the "foam thing".

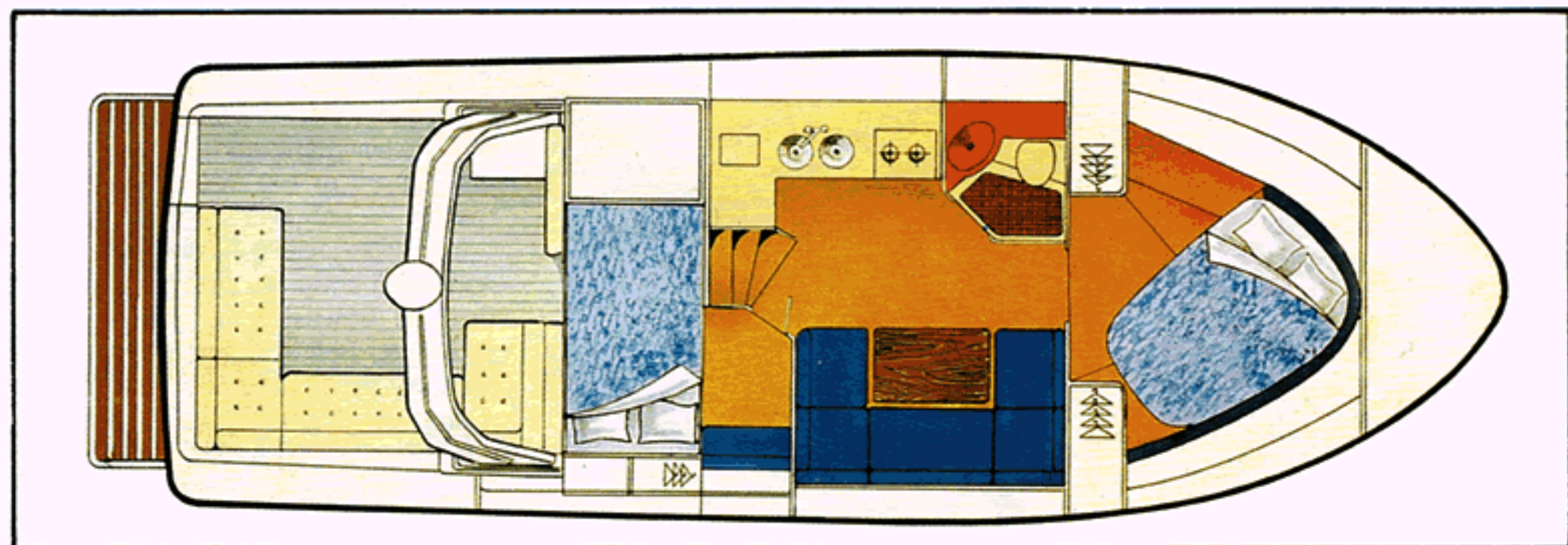
**Photos**

For running shots, we usually locate the camera aboard a second boat. In this case, I sold Brenda on the idea of shooting from the bridge fender — that's the wooden bumper pilings that funnel the boats between the foundation abutments. Brenda wasn't too thrilled with the narrow walk high above the current, nor the seagull whitewash. I should have taken a picture of her, eh Jim?

**Maneuvers**

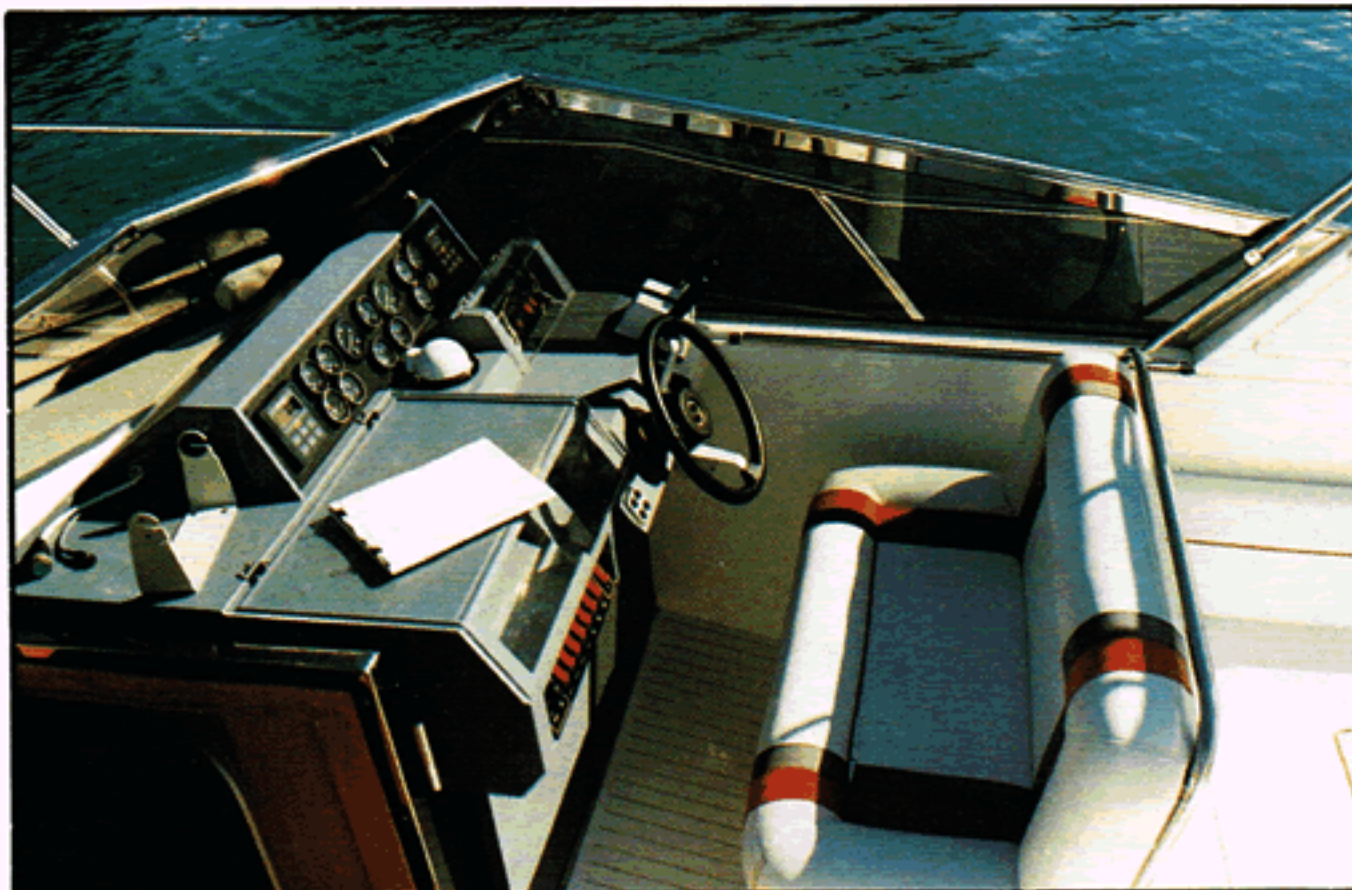
The 36' Princess stayed on plane at 1600 rpm which incidentally measured 18 mph on the radar. We just happened to go under the bridge at the time, so aimed the gun. She stayed on plane in real tight figure eights at 1800.

As far as handling the Princess when underway, she tracked straight and climbed gradually without sticking her nose high in the sky. When turning in the tight Intercoastal chan-



*Below, the 36 has a large stateroom forward and separate guest cabin aft, as well as a spacious dinette and wide galley.*





*Single lever controls and engine instrumentation are conveniently placed.*

nels, the circles seemed larger than other 36'ers. Docking these twin inboards with single lever controls couldn't have been easier. Using single levers prevents shoving the throttles by mistake.

#### **Sound levels**

Later that afternoon, Brenda acted as pilot along the Intercoastal while I ran around with the dB meter. At 1600 rpm, the meter read 80 at the helm, 92 at the aft seat and a very quiet 75 in the cabin. At the cruising speed of 2000 rpm 81, 90, 79. Then at full rpm of 2200, the external sounds rose only slightly to 83 and 94 but the cabin sound level moved up significantly to 85. These diesels were quiet and when traveling they did not stink.

#### **Helmstation**

The compass, depth sounder and speedo, were flushmounted in the dash and protected from the weather by white vinyl boots. The typically European chart protector had been modified with a curved down front that also doubled as a door over the electronics. Breaker switches included windshield washer to clear the salt water off the windshield.

The Cummins motors were controlled by Volvo shifts, and a Volvo padded steering wheel. All the ignitions and resets were protected under a second curved acrylic lid.

A padded ridge on the edge of the seat added comfort as did the angled foot rest. The all stainless windshield frame was kept solid in the corners by

a full length piano hinge. A stainless cap topped off the frame.

In the bright Florida sun, my eyes would have been happier with a gray non-reflective tint, instead of the stark white fiberglass below the windshield. A vinyl boot covering the Bosch wiper motor hid the clutter.

I found the seat a little too close to the wheel for standing, similar to other British boats I've tested. The

seat was not adjustable to shove back. Visibility was excellent whether sitting or standing.

The fiberglass here on the dash was tinted with a gray-blue that reduced the glare for the helmsman. The instruments were balanced on both sides of the rudder angle indicator.

From underneath the dash, a heavy curved acrylic door slid out to close off the companionway. Its leading edge was reinforced by a stainless steel channel into which the lock was mounted.

#### **Transom**

The swim platform fiberglass frame with four teak grids rode 11" above the water. The vee-shaped transom reinforces more than the flat. The flagstaff base was welded into the corner of the taffrail for simplification. A toerail was molded into the edge of the deck to keep feet where they belong.

#### **Cockpit**

The transom gate mounted on two hefty stainless steel hinges allowed easy access through the 16-inch wide opening from the platform. The fend-

*Continued on page 156*



*Incorporated in the hull are propeller tunnels to give maximum propeller efficiency and performance.*





Plenty of seating abounds in the cockpit. A wet bar with sink and refrigerated ice box complete the picture for lengthy cruising.

ers were basketed in a stainless steel rack inside the cockpit under the port side deck. This location hid the fenders as opposed to exhibiting them in the popular external fender baskets. The manufacturer displayed the *Princess* wordmark on each fat fender, so these showy bumpers shouldn't be

hidden. All hatch gutters were scuppered overboard. The cockpit sole was molded to look like white Nautalex which is patterned like teak.

In the European styling, the cockpit was bordered with 14' of seating — a U-shaped lounge that even came with a pullout panel to form a double

width bed across the transom for tandem sunning. The teak flip-flop cockpit table opened to serve well over five-feet long. Along the port side, a molded step with courtesy light eased entry. On this step, Hawkeye noticed some flaws in the glass. The side deck was molded with a very fine non-skid. The port deck bar featured a stainless steel sink and the sailboat type top loading refrigerator box.

**Companion seat**

The back of the companion seat was rigged with an elastic topped vinyl pouch for small stuff. An old idea I hadn't seen on a cruiser for quite awhile was hinging the forward edge of the seat; so when unlocked, it folded forward, thus revealing a deep storage box ideal for canvas. Not to be outdone by the helmsman's chart table/electronics cupboard, the companion seat boasted a deep chart storage compartment, like a monster glove box. The bottom of the box was equipped with two fiberglass slats that lifted the charts off the bottom keeping them out of accidental dampness. A solid fiberglass radar arch was

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equipped with a stainless steel rail on the leading edge as a handhold — clearance 6'4".

The little insignificant side locker was designed with a fiberglass door finished in and out, an insert that created the storage space, plus a third piece of glass that formed a 3" high searail. On top of all of that, it was scuppered.

### Galley

I found on entering the cabin the threshold noticeably high and the four-foot companionway steps quite steep. On the port side, the galley featured a high wooden searail around the edge. The all wooden cutlery drawer was divided into seven compartments — not with plastic inserts. A two-burner flush mounted electric stove had the British label on the breaker "Cooker". The under-counter fridge was disappointingly small for a 36' party boat, as was the general galley storage. The roll-out bar did not steal some precious space.

### Head

The wooden interior panelling flowed forward from the galley around the head compartment. The



*The advanced modified deep-V hull has a reverse sheer transom which extends planing length.*

door was mounted in an aluminum extruded frame. Inside there's a coral fiberglass vanity combined with fiberglass and formica walls making good sense for easy housecleaning. The hip room was just over three-feet square with "nogin" clearance of 5'6". Why was the floor made of teak? The

shower curtain should keep the spray from escaping under the only door.

### Dinette

Directly opposite the galley and head awaited a very traditional face-to-face dinette with a heavy oak framed searail table on a single pedes-

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tal. Of course, it was convertible to a double bed measuring seven-feet long. I could not find how to access the space under the seats. Throughout the cabin the carpet extended up the walls about 3" creating a kick panel.

**Forward stateroom**

I stepped over another high threshold this time in the solid forward bulkhead. This seems to be the month for contemporary styled boats that are traditionally decored in wood. What seemed to confuse the decor was the decade gap between wooden walls and cabinetry clashing with a busy zig-zag gray/beige/pink and blue pattern on the dinette and bed. The 5'9" high ceiling was constructed of beige vinyl stretched on hardboard panels, then spotted with brass swivel lights. This then contrasted with a modern full-sized mirror on the forward bulkhead. Well-built, but which decade are we in?

**Aft stateroom**

The standing area beside the double bed measured 3' x 2' with 6' head-



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DECKERT, Sally - On Saturday, in her 55th year. Beloved wife of Christopher. Dear mother of James and Kimberly. Daughter of John and Mary. Burial in the family plot.

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## PRINCESS

room. Also back here, there was a one-person seat, hanging locker and window to the cockpit. It seems European yachts are proportioned with larger cockpits and smaller interiors than North American yachts.

### Hull bottom

Upon returning to the dock, we hauled out the Princess in the boat lift to protect it from salt and low tide. This afforded me the unusual opportunity of inspecting the bottom immediately following the sea trials. Under the swim platform on fiberglass extensions, the rudders were mounted behind the transom and the propellers and shafts were recessed up into the half tunnel, thus providing some protection from logs, etc. The trim tabs were built doubly strong with twin hydraulic rams. The reason we didn't smell diesel exhaust when underway was because the exhaust ports were recessed in the lower corners of the hull sides below water level. In this position, the slipstream pulled away and buried the exhaust. Wide chines and three pairs of strakes lifted and stabilized this deep vee.

### Conclusion

I was very impressed with the maneuverability and performance of this Riviera-styled yacht, but my feelings about the interior were as mixed as the traditional and contemporary decor. The hot sun and the smooth ride on the Princess in Florida at Christmas were easy to take. I just wish Santa had delivered the "foam thing" somewhere else.

### Manufacturer's Specifications

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| Length        | 36'      |
| Beam          | 12'      |
| Displacement  | 6.4 tons |
| Fuel Capacity | 180 gals |

Boat supplied by Avion Yachts

Photos by Brenda Dawson

*Doug Dawson is a well known in Canadian boating circles, not only for his hard hitting and knowledgeable boat reviews, but also for his association and committee work on behalf of the industry. Raised in Keswick on the southern shore of Lake Simcoe, he is a member of one of the oldest and most respected names in Canadian boating. Doug and his wife Brenda have operated Computer Boatbuyers access to the inventories of most marinas and dealers across Ontario. He also publishes the annual Boat Value Book, which is a "bible" of buying and selling information for dealers.*

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