

JIM MARTENHOFF ON:

THE BERTRAM 28' FLYING-BRIDGE CRUISER



1 The deep V hull boards across the wake of another boat with incredible smoothness. 2 Flybridge ladder can be lowered and raised. 3 Dining area is spacious and comfortable. 4 The forward galley gives the full complement of primary and secondary working space. 5 Built the great and fish-board engine facilities open to give full access to the engine compartment. 6 The contractor's inside on the flying bridge is complete but simple for ease of observation. 7 Watch for the forward cabin which gives ventilation for the cockpit V-bank area. 8 Visibility from the flying bridge is a major safety factor in this 28-footer's operation on any water and at the dock.



The hour-long run at idling speed down the Miami River from Biscayne's boat center to Biscayne Bay is a good opportunity to check a boat's handling characteristics. And the new Berman 28' Flying Bridge Cruiser handles beautifully. There's no leaning; the Tachis steering works so smoothly a Rigo's touch on the helm brings a precise correction; the boat will hold over with both of the wheel. At about 800 rpm, or 107, five or six knots, the boat handles so well in ordinary riding circumstances for the helmsman that the only thing I missed was the optional Berman Thrust Top (S22A) to keep the sun off our prospering faces.

In open water the boat also shows off performance starting with a lively idle rpm phase, following through with no signs of quaking and steady level running rpm. The 22-horsepower, deep-V hull has a lot of horizontal plating surface on the running strakes, a keel-edge, sharply raked bow that makes a soft entry and extraordinary firm under the forward slant. Result is a soft, comfortable ride—can that probably would be dry even in choppy going, though we only had four waves to tack her against. Her steep keel-edge and high-chine suggest inboard handling in turns and listing in heavy seas, but the actually built stability and don't list at all. Biscayne's Chuck Townsend, who accompanied me on this evaluation, suggested that the considerable plating surface on the underwater strake helps keep her running level. At full speed in a light breeze the boat runs about 100 rpm, but goes no lower than 1700 on each engine at water low long you hang in the sun. The running radius is three to four boat lengths, and the corner cut of turns is either decisive or easy as the gnat is.

From the comfortable bridge, which seems large for a 28-footer, visibility is excellent. There's room to stand or sit at the wheel without straining to reach the controls, which is especially important because a cabin steering station is a \$1000 option. At the bridge a slight bobbing effect is noticeable underway in a chop, but it's smooth, not jerky, and a characteristic of virtually all small flying-bridge hulls. Also characteristic—but this time of Biscayne's—the hull trim itself, which is to say, held underway, is as vigorous as children's behavior. The powered 215-hp MerCruiser inboards routinely specify below-dieck and push her at 15.5 knots uph, drawing 16418 Federal three-helix prop through 3.5:1 gear reduction. Rated performance showed only 1800 and 1600 of the 4000 turns the engine in the boat we tried are supposed to get, so the eight to 10 knots uph with these running rpm. Apparent slip figures to be nearly perfect, which is a bit high but probably not worth trying to reduce considering her construction.

My checklist examination revealed a difference about assembly details. She's completely bonded to minimize electrical problems; glasswork is flawless; interiorwork is equally good, and you can get at things in the Biscayne 28. All through-hull fittings soundlike, for example, are readily accessible to the engine compartment, including the water discharge. You can reach the bilges forward through a hatch near the entrance in the forepeak which permits removal of the bilge if there's an electrical failure. Another hatch beneath the cabin sole covers the stainless 27-gallon fresh water tank which, incidentally, is filled directly at the rack and supplies a manual water system. Back hatch on the boat is reached to prevent leakage with covers or drains, and the bow hatch drops down tight on a gasket.

Everything about the boat seems designed for practical functioning aboard with a minimum of fuss and maintenance. Engines and fuel tank can be removed without tearing the hull apart if the solitary need arises. Access to the bow deck along the side decks is good. The sturdy ladder to the bridge is easy to use and pinned in place with stainless fastenings so it can be removed in a second to get at the port engine. You can also reach behind the fore panel or remove the bridge instrument panel with relative ease. And the underside of most hardware items—backed with aluminum plates—can be reached for repair or replacement. Most boxes have double latches and the fuel fill can be reached under the stainless covering head. Finally, the small triangular area between the boat's bottom and the sides of the strakes are fitted and glassed over to eliminate leaks. The fun is the fun of thinking that next time making the Biscayne 28 Flying Bridge could run at the Biscayne in her class I've seen. □

SUMMARY

Specifications: BODIES: Berman Yacht Corp., 3363 NW 21st St., Miami Fl., 33142, (305) 491-2600. SEAS: 27', DEPTH: 27", HULL MATERIAL: Fiberglass, WOOD: approx. 7000 pounds. POWER: two 215-hp MerCruiser inboards, 160 CAPACITY: 160 gallons. TOP SPEED: 15.4 knots uph. PRICE: \$21,492.

Hull Construction: Fiberglass hand built lay-up in two layers and three of roving in between. Base coat of one and roving between the two work stripes.

Assembly: Hull and deck mold are mated and joined with stainless steel joints. They fully bonded with glass. Carbon-fiber cabin window frames are installed. Cockpit is self-burying with large leaning posts, and all fittings all have gaskets with O-rings.

Hardware: High quality chrome plated bronze items are installed, one on each side; two aft with handrails and springline cleats are stainless. Bulkhead stanchions with chrome brass sheathings. Everything is through-bolted, having aluminum backing plates, and for the most part is accessible for maintenance and repair.

Accommodations: The design has two forward air baffle and two on the rearward strake. Cabin is exceptionally roomy for the boat's size with contemporary headroom. Cabin below forward deck is flat but comfortable. The cockpit is very large. There's good afterside work space and ample storage.

Electrical System: It's simple and good. Batteries are protected by acid-accepting with stainless cathode under the cabin sole. Fuse panel with emergency cut-off is forward cabin bulkhead. Having two spare connections. The 120-volt emergency is protected from water. One circuit-breaker protected and has a safety light in the engine compartment which covers only the steering compartment and two double outlets. High quality lights meet International Rules.

Fuel System: Although fuel is well isolated, fuel controls accessible from aft unless fuel is non-siphon system. Copper lines are properly installed, but tank gauges where they pass through bulkhead. Fuel tank is substantial and you can get at it for repairs, not fuel with flexible connection is also copper.

Performance: The photos actually will surprise—with no top line, and a highly maneuverable at very slow speeds. She comes down off plane as smoothly if it's impossible to tell when the stage is leaving.

Options: No power options. An accessories list at factory-installed options includes: double of stern, inboard fuel, battery-powered winch, 247' extra large pump, 1221, 110-v AC electric refrigerator in place of radio, 1221, 110-v shore power system, 1122, remote radio, toilet with discharge and hand board discharge, \$100.

