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In motion or at rest, this coastal cruiser is a deft entertainer.

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Fairline Phantom 50 — By Tim Clark — April 2002

Action!

In motion or at rest, this coastal cruiser is a deft entertainer.

Especially aboard a large, powerful boat like the Fairline Phantom 50, PMY sea trials can seem like clips from an action movie. The location for the 50's performance was a stretch of the Atlantic off Deerfield Beach, Florida, at midmorning in late January under blue sky and billowing clouds. Above southeasterly seas averaging three feet, two principals sat on the flying bridge: Marina One sales executive Mike Hansen at the centerline helm and sales rep Mark Davies in the navigator's seat to port. Braced against the forward end of the wetbar behind them, your faithful correspondent played director, armed with a Stalker ATS radar gun and an electronic diagnostic tool monitoring fuel flow on the port-side 675-hp Volvo Penta D12 675 diesel below.

Written in outline form, the script read: 1000 rpm, 1250 rpm, and so on, up to WOT. There was little room for improvisation, but Hansen and Davies made an unusually high-spirited duo. When I announced our speed at 2000 rpm—more than 32 mph—Davies pumped a fist in the air and whooped. And before I had finished recording the fuel flow—49.4 gph, for a cruising range of 339 miles—Hansen turned with an eager grin and asked, "Twenty-two-fifty?" By the time we reached WOT (2300 rpm), the high-rise hotel I'd been training the Stalker on was growing taller fast. After scrawling down our top speed of 38.1 mph (which might have been faster on untroubled waters), I called out to Hansen, "That's it!"

Normally at this signal the skipper throttles back to a near idle, and the transformation from hurtling speed to bobbing calm is like the return to reality on a movie set after someone yells, "Cut!" But instead, without backing a millimeter off the Volvo Penta electronic controls, Hansen sliced 30 degrees to port, head-on into the weather, as if to declare, "This is reality, and let's enjoy it."

The 50 raced over the water with force and grace. When the occasional four-footer met the bow, we carved into its top, lifted only moderately, and came down in an even, cushioned motion—a dry, truly hydraulic landing controlled by hull designer Bernard Olesinski's deep-V forward, full-length spray strakes, and 18 degrees of deadrise aft. "Isn't this great?" asked a gleeful Hansen. I had to agree.

Next page > [Part 2: Attention To Detail](#) > Page 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6



POWER & MOTORYACHT

More of this Feature

- [Part 1: Fairline 50](#)
- [Part 2: Fairline 50](#)
- [Fairline 50 Specs](#)
- [Fairline 50 Deck Plan](#)
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Fairline Phantom 50 — By Tim Clark — April 2002

Action!

Part 2: Attention To Detail

We repeated the scene in the opposite direction, then went below for yet another take, this time recording sound levels on a decibel meter that never rose above 78 dB-A (65 dB-A is the level of normal conversation). As we traveled at more than 27 mph with the engines turning 1750 rpm, the sound level was a mild 74 dB-A. Exceptional visibility, side-by-side adjustable seats, and a skillfully organized instrument panel with plenty of room for flush-mounted electronics made the lower helm all the more comfortable.

More of this Feature

- [Part 1: Fairline 50](#)
- [Part 2: Fairline 50](#)
- [Fairline 50 Specs](#)
- [Fairline 50 Deck Plan](#)
- [Fairline 50 Acceleration Curve](#)
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Industry legend has it that Fairline designs such functional interior bridges because the weather in the builder's native Britain so often forces boaters below. But given the 50's rich amenities, you're likely to linger here even on fine days. The saloon is laid out conventionally, but with fashionable styling and expert fit and finish. To starboard, for example, a sideboard with a liquor cabinet and an optional icemaker faces cabinets with shelving for audio equipment, books, CDs, and videocassettes to create a svelte curving cul-de-sac of deeply lacquered honey-maple paneling.

The layout of the compact, efficient galley to port on the bridge level has a certain novelty. When facing the three-burner Kenyon stove, above a Sharp microwave/convection oven, the cook enjoys nearly the same prospect as the skipper. With a chart on the countertop, you could navigate while stirring a chowder. Aft, a Euro Engel refrigerator/freezer is tucked under more counter space beside a stainless steel sink. In this direction the cook can engage guests in the saloon and even enjoy a good view of the 21-inch Sony TV.

Accommodations below are finished to the same high level of attention to detail. A master in the forepeak, with en suite head and shower, encloses a queen-size island berth flanked by hanging lockers to port and starboard. In a pair of guest cabins to either side of the companionway, I especially liked the design of the lockers, which were three-quarters height on one side for hanging garments and divided into deeply recessed shelves on the other. While the twin-berth cabin to port accesses the guest head with shower via the corridor, the full-berth quarters opposite opens onto it directly.

One factor contributing to all this below-deck space was Fairline's decision to mount the 50's marine-grade alloy fuel tanks outboard of and even with the engines, as opposed to forward of them. Their location would have perplexed me had I not been accompanied by Fairline production manager Matthew Hayes when I discovered them. Hayes, who was waiting at Marina One as Hansen deftly backed the 50 into her slip, was apprenticed to Fairline's Oundle, England, boatworks at age 16—more than 11 years ago—and is expert in the 50's every aspect. When I remarked on the difficulty of servicing the outboard sides of the Volvo Pentas because of the fuel tanks, he led me into the saloon and began sliding around furnishings and rolling back carpeting like someone striking a set. In less than a minute he revealed hinged

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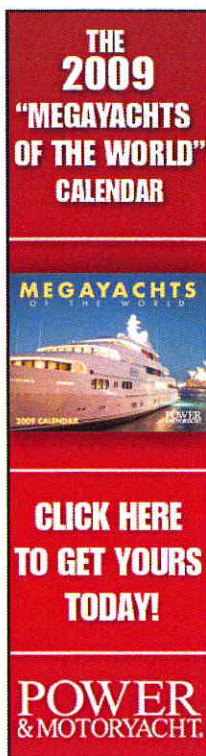
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panels in the saloon sole that provide lean-over access to the areas in question. Moreover, he pointed out that Volvo Penta assembles the engines for Fairline so that all frequently necessary maintenance can take place in the alley between the engines; only raw-water pumps and a few zincs are outboard.

Conventional access to the engine compartment is through a hatch in the cockpit sole. Once in the service alley, a man of average height needs to crouch only a little. Clearly labeled fuel-transfer valves are mounted high on the forward bulkhead above sea strainers at waist level for convenient inspection. According to Hayes, R & D flexible couplings on the prop shafts permit five thousandths of an inch in engine misalignment—a considerable span in that context—which makes annual engine realignments much quicker and easier. With Tides Marine dripless shaft seals and twin bilge pumps, the space should be easy to keep tidy, and just in case of accidents, Fairline has included a dregs pump for diverting oil or antifreeze spills into a bucket rather than into the briny.

Another hatch in the teak-covered cockpit sole reveals additional systems behind the scenes. The 42"x34" access on sturdy gas assists covers several cubic feet of fender stowage, along with a 10-kW Onan genset in a soundshield, a 70-amp battery charger, and a D.C. panel housing the battery isolator relays (all of which are conveniently controlled by master switches located at the lower helm).

As if the extra space below the cockpit weren't enough, there is an enormous amount of stowage—a 4 1½'x5'x2 1½' volume—beneath the transom benchseat. Fairline offers an optional crew cabin in this area (which necessitates removing one of the twin Glendinning Cablemasters), but as the quarters would certainly be cramped by American standards, preserving the space for stowing cockpit furniture strikes me as the better alternative. A table and some teak folding chairs in the cockpit would bring the 50's dining areas to three and make alfresco meals possible when you don't feel like making trips between the galley and the flying-bridge dinette.

Or maybe instead of teak you should get directors' chairs to lounge in over evening drinks while you plot courses to best exploit this able performer. When critics ponder actors' abilities, they often consider "range." The 50 has it: speed, toughness, and stability in agitated seas; style and polish inside and out; and a backbone of thoughtful technical systems. Guts, good looks, brains, and heart. What more could a director—or a skipper—ask?

Fairline Boats Phone: (843) 342-3453. Fax: (843) 342-3483. www.fairline.com.

Next page > [Fairline Phantom 50 Specs](#) > Page [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)

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[HOME](#) > [BOAT TESTS](#) > [FAIRLINE](#) > [FAIRLINE PHANTOM 50](#)

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Fairline Phantom 50 — By Tim Clark — April 2002

Action!
Specs

Base price: \$895,950 with 2/615-hp Volvo Penta D12-615 diesel inboards

Optional power: 2/660-hp Caterpillar 3196 diesel inboards or 2/675-hp Volvo Penta D12-675 diesel inboards

Standard equipment: Lofrans electric windlass; 10-kW Onan genset; 8-hp Sloopner bow thruster; dual-station Shipmate VHF; Raymarine ST6000+ autopilot and ST60 Tridata display; 21-inch Sony TV/VCR; 2/VacuFlush MSDs; teak-laid swim platform, cockpit, and flying-bridge steps; Tides Marine dripless shaft seals

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 51'11"

Beam: 14'10"

Draft: 4'0"

Weight: 38,150 lbs. (approximate, dry)

Fuel capacity: 575 gal.

Water capacity: 158 gal.

Test engines: 2/675-hp Volvo Penta D12-675 diesel inboards

Transmissions: ZF325A

Ratio: 1.73:1

Props: Teignbridge 28x37 4-blade nibrals

Steering: Teleflex Sea Star power-assisted

Controls: Volvo Penta single-lever electronic

Optional equipment on test boat: Glendinning Cablemaster; U-Line icemaker;

Sony AM/FM stereo/10-CD changer; flying-bridge refrigerator and De-Detrich

griddle; Whirlpool washer/dryer; leather upholstery

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- [Part 1: Fairline 50](#)
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1000	12.9 (11.2)	11.6	1.11 (0.96)	573	498	73
1250	16.0 (13.9)	22.8	0.70 (0.61)	363	316	72
1500	20.9 (18.2)	30.6	0.68 (0.59)	353	307	74
1750	27.1 (23.6)	37.6	0.72 (0.63)	373	324	74
2000	32.4 (28.2)	49.4	0.66 (0.57)	339	295	76
2250	37.4 (32.5)	65.6	0.57 (0.50)	295	257	78
2300	38.1 (33.1)	66.0	0.58 (0.50)	298	259	78

Conditions: temperature: 82°; humidity: 81%; wind: 10-15 mph; seas: 2-4'; load: 280 gal. fuel, 158 gal. water, 3 persons, light gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured w/Stalker radar gun. GPH measured with Volvo Penta electronic diagnostic tool. Range: 90% of advertised fuel capacity. Decibels measured on A scale. 65 dB is the level of normal conversation.

Next page > [Fairline 50 Deck Plan](#) > Page [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)

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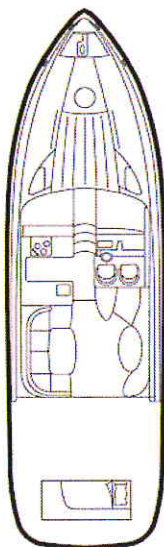
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Action!
Deck Plan



Next page > [Fairline 50 Acceleration Curve](#) > Page [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)

- [PMY Resources](#)
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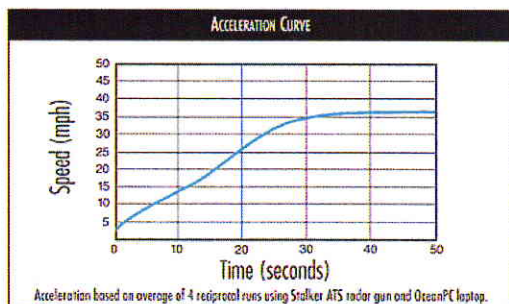
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[HOME](#) > [BOAT TESTS](#) > [FAIRLINE](#) > [FAIRLINE PHANTOM 50](#)

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Fairline Phantom 50 — By Tim Clark — April 2002

Action! Acceleration Curve



Next page > [Fairline 50 Photo Gallery](#) > Page [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)

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