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38 Sport Bridge Boat Test Report



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LEARNING FROM **EXPERIENCE**

By Tom Thompson

Silverton Marine has been building sedan cruisers for more than 35 years — and it seems that the more they build, the better they get. Case in point: the new 38 Sport Bridge, which has to be one of the best-conceived plans I've seen from this New Jersey builder. From a living standpoint, it's not only spacious and comfortable, but also quite elegantly appointed. As to performance, it moves out smartly and smoothly. Best of all, it doesn't come with a million-dollar price tag.

The 38 is the third in Silverton's Sport Bridge series that also includes 33- and 43-foot models. The most striking feature is an exceptionally large flybridge. There's comfortable seating for eight adults, including three abreast at the helm. An aft-facing bench backs up that seating, and another bench with a backrest along the port side faces forward along the aft bridge rail. Chances are the crew will fight for this spot because it's a great place to stretch your legs and enjoy the ride.

Along the port side of the bridge deck, there's a wet bar with sink and space for an optional refrigerator or icemaker. An electronics arch is standard; a bimini top and side enclosure panels are optional. The helm, has panels on either side that will take large-screen electronics displays such as a radar or chartplotter. Silverton offers several optional factory-installed Raymarine® electronics packages. As with most of the company's models, the 38 Sport Bridge features Silverton's SideWalk™ foredeck access. Stairways along each side lead down from the bridge to get to the sunpad or to handle the anchor and mooring lines at the bow.

On the main deck level, the bridge overhang shades the cockpit, where there's room for a couple of deck chairs and a cocktail table. The large storage bin in the cockpit sole can serve as a fishbox or be removed to provide access to mechanical space that includes an optional generator. An integrated swim platform is large enough to store an inflatable tender on its side.

As you enter the cabin, the first thing you notice is the abundance of natural light. Floor-to-ceiling glass sliding doors are at the aft. Windows run along both sides, including a pair of opening panels, and a vast expanse of glass comprises the windshield. The light plays on a superbly decorated space that combines the textures of



The flybridge of the 38 is perfect for entertaining your friends and family.

semi-gloss cherrywood, thick pile carpeting, UltraLeather™ and accent fabrics in an inviting way.

Forward and to port, the L-shaped seating group is placed on a pedestal to create the dining area, which features a solid cherry table on a fixed base. Opposite, there's a sofa that converts to a double bed.

A cabinet in the aft port corner of the salon houses both the boat's main electrical panels and the entertainment center. A 20-inch flat panel TV is mounted on the front of a large drawer. Pull it out and you'll find racks for CDs and DVDs, plus a place to keep other odds and ends. This is one of the cleverest media configurations I've seen. The TV, along with a Bose®3·2·1® AM/FM CD/DVD player with MP3 capability, comes with the boat.

The galley is a step down from the salon but open to it. A large expanse of Corian® countertop defines the space. Standard appliances include a two-burner range, microwave/convection oven and under-counter fridge with a separate freezer. The cherrywood motif extends to the abundant cabinetry, and the Amtico® floor is attractive and easy to clean.

On the lower deck, the master suite is forward and has a pedestal berth with innerspring mattress. A floor-to-ceiling hanging locker to port is cedar-lined, and there are storage drawers in the base of the berth. The second cabin is along the port side and has twin beds that can be converted to a queen with a filler cushion. The forward part of the cabin has stand-up headroom. The fiberglass-lined shower lies between the two cabins and is accessible from both. A compartment with a VacuFlush® toilet and vanity with a Corian countertop is on the starboard side, with doors to it from both the master suite and the companionway.

One thing is evident about the interior appointments throughout: Silverton has placed considerable emphasis on quality. The doors, for example, are solid cherry, not veneer-covered. The drawer hardware is epoxy-coated for smooth operation. Even the mirrored panels at the head of the berth in the master suite have beveled edges.

Sloppy days aren't the best for boating, but they can be good for a test. During our sea trial, we slugged through waves running three to five feet at about 15 mph. The ride was a bit bumpy, but not all that uncomfortable, and roll stability was very good. Pushing the throttles forward to 2700 rpm, we maintained the boat's cruising speed of

about 20 mph. The newly-designed Blount and Associates hull had a smooth entry into the oncoming waves and tracked well in following seas. The ride wasn't the kind you'd want to encounter every day, but it was nice to know that the 38 Sport Bridge could handle it.

Overall, the Silverton 38 Sport Bridge looks good and performs well. Inside and out, you can see that the company pays considerable attention to the way everything comes together.



A standard sunpad makes for a relaxing place to get away from it all.



The 38 Sport Bridge features a wide, spacious helm that provides plenty of real estate for your electronics. The gauges rest on rich burl paneling.

**LAKELAND
BOATING**





The well-lit salon of the 38 Sport Bridge is a study in expansive luxury.

No Worries...

A family-friendly layout on the new Silverton 38 Sport Bridge keeps the crew safe and the captain happy.

By Jeanne Craig

Boating is supposed to be the ultimate way to relax, but maintaining a laid-back attitude can be hard work for a skipper who regularly cruises with a big family. Passenger safety can be a nagging concern for this captain, particularly when the crew consists of his young kids and his elderly parents. So, how do you keep everybody out of harm's way and still have a great time?

Silverton's answer is the new 38 Sport Bridge. A mission of this sedan-style yacht is to make it easy for your gang to move about and really enjoy this luxury cruiser, even in unfriendly conditions. There's a real, home-style set of stairs that lead from the bridge to the cockpit, for instance — good news for those who have felt their blood pressure rise when junior headed down a steep ladder in a sea. For access to the foredeck, there's Silverton's patented "SideWalk" system. It consists of wide, molded steps that lead from the bridge to the bow. Easier to navigate than conventional side decks, the steps make it simple for your crew to go forward when it's time to handle lines or work the ground tackle. Those features — plus tall exterior rails, high freeboard (32 inches) in the cockpit and aggressive non-skid — can only help the skipper achieve that peaceful, easy feeling he's supposed to experience while cruising.

Sedan-style boats like this 38 have played a substantial role in Silverton's growth over the past few years. Not surprisingly, these models have proven to be most popular with families that have outgrown express cruisers; perhaps the same families that swapped the four-door sedan for the roomier SUV, the center hall colonial for the sprawling McMansion. Silverton's success with its sedan series is in part due to the fact that this New-Jersey based builder offers a lot of equipment for a competitive price: The 38 Sport Bridge retails for about \$313,000 with standard 385-hp Crusaders. Silverton also has a knack for

making boats that can stand up to the practical demands of a family, yet stand out as elegant cruising platforms in their own right.

In the cabin, for instance, all doors are solid cherry wood, the dinette lounge is covered with UltraLeather™ and the electric convertible settee is a high-quality Flexsteel model. Yet, the padded carpeting is protected with Scotchgard for messy spills. The galley looks slick with its curved Corian counter and wood sole, but the oversized sink and refrigerator emphasize its practical nature. Silverton is proud of the dinette located at the port side of the salon; it's raised to improve the view of passengers seated inside. Opening windows — protected by a polyurethane sealant — are nearby. It seems this type of feature scores big points with the ex-express cruiser crowd, the people who have spent too many seasons staring out at the side of the boat docked in the next slip.

This is a two-stateroom model with a "split" bathroom: there's a wet head to starboard and a shower stall to port. Both compartments can be accessed from the master stateroom in the bow; the wet head has a second entry from the companionway. Kudos to Silverton for putting thick (eight inches) innerspring mattresses on the queen berth in the master and on the twin berths in the guest stateroom. Cedar-lined hanging lockers, flat-panel TVs, pleasant overhead lighting and built-in bookshelves are nice touches in these spaces.

A most impressive place on the new 38 is the big, beamy bridge. A pair of lounges and a three-person bench at the helm can accommodate up to eight people, yet the captain won't have to give up any legroom for the comfort of his family. The helm is on center, with a ship-style wheel that imparts the "big cheese" status you've earned. Visibility forward and to the sides is quite good, as you can imagine. You'll probably have to stand up to see the aft quarter while docking, but fortunately the company designed the bridge canvas with 6'6" of headroom.

The test boat, provided by Comstock Yacht Sales in Brick, NJ, was powered by optional 425-hp Crusaders. It ran efficiently during our sea trial on the Metedeconk River. It's not a fast boat or one that's exceptionally maneuverable. Rather, the 38 just settles in, handles well and is fun to drive. Tabs are included, but we didn't need them on this run since the river was so calm. Top speed was 33.7 mph. Cruising speed is about 27 mph at 4000 rpm; at that pace, the boat should burn about 39 gallons per hour, according to Silverton.

If I could make changes to this sedan, I would ask for fiddles and handrails in the cabin, as well as substitutes for the sticky latches on the doors at the bridge (they open onto the SideWalks). Some of the stowage compartments are not finished with gel coat (under the helm, for instance), but I could live with those things in exchange for the attractive price and the well-done details, such as the powder-coated bridge rails and the steel beam engine beds. In all the 38 Sport Bridge is a fully-found sedan with solid performance and a practical, passenger-friendly layout. All good reasons for the skipper to chill out and get back to the business of having fun.



The 38's swim platform is convenient and safe.



A second stateroom provides stand-up room to change.



In the salon, the solid cherry dinette is but one of the high-quality touches you'll s

by Jeff Holland

I never thought I'd brag about being out on eight-foot seas aboard a Silverton, but there we were, off Lauderdale, in the new 38 Sport Bridge and having a dandy old time. Heading out the cut from Port Everglades, the horizon was lined with "walking elephants," the term the local boaters use when the waves of the Gulf Stream build up from northerly winds blowing against the current. Closer to shore, the waves were three to four feet at first, but soon grew to six- to eight-footers in the early December gale.

But the three of us were high and dry — Mike Usina, Silverton's VP of Sales and Marketing, Captain Rich Murray, who works with Sundance Marine, the Ft. Lauderdale-based dealership, and my surprised self. I say surprised because in the past, Silverton was better known for its affordability than for its offshore capability. Recent evolutions in the Silverton Corporation have produced a product that is remarkably upgraded in design and production. This boat took a beating with no slamming, jolting, creaking or lurching. Even in those seas, I felt in control of a boat with a steady ride and plenty of power to handle the conditions.

"Our company's going through a renaissance," Usina explained when we got safely back to the dock."there's a whole new team. Our head designer is 41 years old. Its a whole new group of people taking us to a whole new level. By investing more in the quality of components, it's become a much better machine."

Fully enclosed, the Sport Bridge provided plenty of protection out in the rough stuff. Opened up in good weather, this expansive flybridge would be the most pleasant area on the boat. You access it via an easily-climbed molded staircase leading up from the cockpit. There's a double settee facing aft of the helm seats. A wet bar with a Corian® countertop graces the port side.

The helm is centered, with an adjustable stainless wheel and analog gauges on the faux burlled-maple dash. There's room to mount a large chartplotter on one side and electronic displays on the other. The helm seat is flanked by guest seats, so three can sit at the helm at the same time. these seats are equipped with flip-up

bolsters for stand-up operation. Visibility is adequate across the bow, and as you might expect, visibility aft is obscured by the extension of the bridgedeck over the cockpit; however, you do get a good view of the starboard stern quarter down the staircase.

Gates on either side lead to Silverton's signature SideWalk that provides direct access from bridge to bow. A large sunpad graces that expanse. At the very bow, the anchor windlass is protected underneath a hatch next to the deep anchor rode locker.

Step back into the cockpit and you're in a pleasant space, protected overhead by the aft extension of the sport bridge. A large, gasketed hatch in the sole opens to reveal a removable storage bin. Lift out the bin and you have access to a large lazarette that houses the Kohler generator and the Glendinning cable retractor system.

A gate leads through the transom to the broad integral swim platform. There's additional storage inside the transom for fenders, dock lines, and other bulky gear.

Step through the concave sliding glass door into the main saloon, finished in deeply varnished Cherry paneling and cabinetry. The headliner has an attractive two-toned suede and vinyl finish and swoops up to forward-facing windows. A convertible sofa upholstered in beige UltraLeather™ to starboard sits across from the flat-panel entertainment system in the aft port corner. Forward of this is an L-shaped settee for seating at an adjustable dining table. this arrangement is on a raised platform to provide good viewing through the opening side windows while dining as well as to provide extra headroom for the amidships cabin below.

Across from the dinette is a well-appointed galley with a U-shaped Corian® countertop. the two-burner flush-top electric stove is across from a deep circular stainless steel sink. there's a good amount of storage available in the handsomely-finished cherry cupboards and the cabinets and drawers below. A side-by-side refrigerator/freezer is tucked underneath the counter, and a convection/microwave oven is mounted into the cabinet above.

A hatch in the carpeted sole of the saloon reveals the engine compartment where the twin Cummins 355-hp

diesels sit snugly. There's not a lot of headroom, but there's also less than three feet of draft. Still, there's adequate room for proper servicing.

The accommodations deck is two steps down from the galley. Note the good-looking optional Amtico flooring. The owner's stateroom forward features a queen-size island berth with an innerspring mattress and lots of storage underneath. There are large cedar-lined hanging lockers on either side and a large circular hatch overhead. A flat panel TV/DVD system is mounted into the aft bulkhead.

The head and shower arrangement on this boat is unique. There's a single head compartment to starboard and an enclosed shower stall to port. Each of these compartments is accessible from the master stateroom. The head is also accessible from the passageway, convenient to the main saloon. Likewise, the shower compartment is accessible from the guest stateroom amidships. The shower has a molded seat and a hand-held shower head.

The guest stateroom is tucked underneath the raised dining area, and has twin berths that can convert to a generous double-size berth with a filler cushion. Unlike many similar layouts in boats this size, this cabin actually has adequate elbow and headroom for changing clothes and an very nice, large cedar-lined hanging locker



A chef's galley up layout awaits you on the 38 Sport Bridge.

and drawers built in to the forward bulkhead. The berths aren't too claustrophobic.

Because it was blowing stink, the topography out off the mouth of the inlet kept us from doing much in the way of running anywhere near top speed, but we were doing a good 21.9 knots at 2700 rpm for a while out there, and running back and forth between the protection of the jetties, we reached 28.8 knots at 3000 rpm. Just inside was all no-wake zone, so we couldn't open up for the sake of the manatees. Still, doing nearly 22 knots in big seas was quite a thrill and the Silverton 38 Sport Bridge provided an impressive ride.



Boasting a queen innerspring mattress and acres of storage, the master stateroom makes relaxing so easy.

A FAMILY FOCUS

**POWER
& MOTORYACHT**

By Capt. Patrick Sciacca

Some boatbuilders concentrate on perfecting a boat's performance, while others are all about creating an eye-catching interior design. There are those that focus on giving a smooth ride, and even more are fixed on striking exterior lines. To me, it's a combination of all these elements that helps give one builder an edge over its peers. However, there are also the intangibles that can put one builder in front of the competition.

For instance, when I was a kid scampering along the docks in Point Lookout, New York, I saw many Silverton 34 convertibles. On the surface this appears to be no great shakes, but all of them had something in common: families. While the marina had a few go-fast boat guys bearing gray chests and big gold chains and beer-bellied anglers lying to each other aboard their sportfishermen, mom, dad, and the proverbial 2.2 children (where do the two-tenths come from, anyway?) always occupied the 34s. And it's the family appeal of Silverton's boats that has kept it a leading production builder for more than 35 years. A fall trip to Brick, New Jersey, gave me a chance to see if Silverton's latest launch, the 38 Sport Bridge, would be embraced by the next generation of boating families.

I soon concluded the answer was yes, and there were several factors leading me to this decision. First, it's the way Silverton builds safety into its vessels. My test boat featured the trademark SideWalk, which provides molded stairways between the foredeck and flying bridge. The security afforded to kids who want to go forward to the standard sunpad and hang out or to the crew accessing the bow lines or optional windlass is of prime importance. In addition, the boat's one-inch-diameter 316 stainless steel bowrails encircle the molded steps and foredeck to ensure that everyone stays in the boat.

The same forethought that goes into the 38's safety features is found in this boat's build. The hull is solid hand-laid fiberglass below the waterline with a fiberglass-encapsulated wood stringer system that is laminated to the hull to further strengthen the structure. All bulkheads and built-in furniture are also glassed to the hull. On top of this, Silverton utilizes a four-step hull-to-deck securing

system that includes a polyurethane sealant, butyl tape, through bolting on six-inch centers, and additional fiberglass in critical areas for further strengthening. You can be sure that during your family's cruise, the 38 will be as sure-footed underway as your feet are on that stairway and the standard diamond nonskid.

The proof came to me while doing her sea trial. I took the wheel at the flying-bridge helm station (the 38's standard with Teleflex SeaStar hydraulic steering) and carved quite symmetrical S-turns without any feeling of tenderness or excessive leaning. Good sightlines here are available 360 degrees, and this is definitely the parents' play space. I noted, however, that when I throttled the Teleflex controls forward and put the wheel hard over for some more performance-oriented turns, the 38 required a little more than two boat lengths to complete the maneuver.

While the 38 is not geared for hardcore performance-oriented handling, her speed was admirable. With standard twin 385-hp Crusader 8.1 MPI gasoline inboards (twin diesels up to 440 hp apiece are also available), the 38 made an average cruise speed of 27.1 mph at 4000 rpm while burning 39.8 gph. When the engines hit WOT (5000 rpm), my test boat made a top average speed of 34 mph while burning 61.4 gph. The gasoline powerplants did offer a cool neck-snappin' hole shot (see specifications, this story), and the kids will like the occasional hair-raising WOT runs. I know I did. But a quick word on the 38's engine space: The powerplants are accessed via a hatch in the saloon on centerline. There's only about 3'5" of usable headroom here and a foot worth of space in front of the engines, plus saddle tanks restrict outboard access aft.

Going fast makes for some great on-the-water fun, but not every day on the water is flat-calm or even sunny for that matter. So, if the family's day or weekend on the water simply consists of stopping by the boat to whip up some lunch, play Scrabble in the saloon, or watch some tube, the 38 is up to the task. The saloon, which is set in warm cherrywood, features an UltraLeather™ settee on starboard that offers the best view of the standard 20-inch, flat-panel TV for those rainy-day movies. The dinette table,

to port and up a seven-inch step from the main saloon, is a great gathering place for that Scrabble game. In addition, the raised dinette offers clear vistas out the shapely side windows. My test boat's dinette table wasn't mounted and could possibly roll in bad conditions. Silverton says subsequent boats will have fixed tables.

The galley to starboard, which is an eight-inch step down from the saloon, is fully outfitted with standards such as Corian countertops, a side-by-side Nova Kool refrigerator and freezer, a Sharp microwave/convection oven, and a Princess two-burner electric cooktop. Suffice it to say, a family meal can be easily prepared.

Your family's day can conclude in peace and quiet in one of the two staterooms. The master forward features a queen berth, and there are two single berths for the kiddies aft to port. A split-head arrangement sits between the two staterooms, and access to the port-side shower stall is available from both staterooms. But it's a high 13-inch step up into the shower from the guest room, which could make for some stubbed toes on the little ones. From the master forward, it's a seven-inch step up into the stall. The MSD is accessed via the master forward and from the companionway. A family of four (and two-tenths, remember the 2.2 kids?) could have quite a fun weekend or do longer voyages onboard this vessel.

The 38 Sport Bridge is built by an employee-owned company. And that makes it a family of its own. So it's no wonder why the solid build, open layout, safety features, and quality gathering areas were designed into this boat: because it's what they'd want for their own families. And from what I've seen, I think my son will soon have memories of a new generation of Silvertons around our own marina.



*Above:
Silverton's
SideWalk™ molded-
in steps to the
bridge make
moving topside
safe and easy.*

*Right:
The optional
flybridge
refrigerator makes
al fresco
entertaining a
snap.*



By Jay Coyle

The goal of full-beam deckhouse designs is to provide cruising comfort by maximizing interior volume. The trick is achieving this without sacrificing exterior deck space or compromising styling and performance. It's an art form as much as a science, one that Silverton has mastered with its innovative Sport Bridge designs—and one in which the new 38 stands as the latest of a successful line.

In my estimation, one major source of the popularity of the Sport Bridge concept stems from Silverton's solution to the most challenging aspect of full-beam arrangements—that is, how to move from stem to stern without having to shimmy along a narrow hullside ledge. Silverton's SideWalk design is the logical answer for a boat this size. Molded-in steps lead from the aft cockpit to the bridge and a bridge-level side deck — or “SideWalk” — leads forward to the bow. The result is a more pleasurable boating experience, as cruising couples are able to work together when casting off or collecting docklines. It is also easier for the skipper to keep track of young ones on deck.

Armed with the SideWalk solution, Silverton's next challenge was to package the 38's full-bodied features in a stylish exterior envelope. Given that the Sport Bridge concept was a step beyond mainstream convention, Silverton's designers were not obliged to adhere to the status quo. Although Silverton hints at the design's Euro-styling, I believe credit is due to the builder's own homegrown ingenuity—and design team. They have done an excellent job of creating a “modern” product designed to please American yachtsmen as well as a wider international audience.

The 38's large windows and hullside accents all work together to complement her rakish appearance, negating the tendency for such designs to look bloated. Instead, her slight reverse sheer leads the eye to believe that she is longer than her length overall suggests. The one feature that I will concede is “Euro” is her transom platform design, a portion of which wraps around and stands proud of her hullside. While this look is popular where stern-to mooring is common, i.e., Europe, Americans will have to take care around pilings. Silverton has thoughtfully incorporated a stainless steel chafing guard with this in mind.

But it is the 38's innovative exterior deck layout and interior arrangement that set her apart. Her bridge control station is forward and has helm and companion seating. A

seating area aft has a wet bar that can be fitted with an optional refrigerator. Below, the cockpit is large enough for a table and chairs and has a spot for an ice maker. Optional canvas/Strataglass enclosures are available for both the bridge and the cockpit. The foredeck is for sun worshippers and is fitted with a sunpad. Those who intend to swing on the hook will want the optional Maxwell anchor windlass; specify the full-chain rode if you are serious about spending time anchoring out.

A curved sliding glass door leads from the cockpit to the main cabin. A settee to starboard converts to a full-size berth and is positioned to take advantage of an entertainment center with a 20-inch flat-panel TV. A raised dinette area, an arm's length from the galley, can seat four comfortably. A two-burner cook-top, a microwave-convection oven and a dual voltage refrigerator/freezer are standard. (Those who opt for the lower control station, an option designed with the northwest U.S. and international markets in mind, will sacrifice the dinette.) The forward stateroom has a queen-island berth. A mid-stateroom with two single berths tucks under the main cabin, where a filler section can be installed to create a full-size berth. The split head and shower compartments have dual access.

Also well worthy of note are the 38's interior outfitting and fit and finish. Innerspring mattresses, hardwood soles and designer fabrics feel good to the touch. Cherry cabinetwork, cedar-lined lockers and Corian countertops please the eye.

The 38's hull and superstructure are built with a combination of mat and woven roving. The solid fiberglass bottom is supported by a network of stringers and web frames that are laminated by hand over plywood forms. Plywood structural bulkheads are fiberglassed to the hull. The hull-deck joint is bonded, mechanically fastened and fiberglassed from the inside where accessible. Exterior decks and portions of the superstructure are cored with balsa; many smaller parts are created using a resin transfer system. A barrier coat of vinylester resin in the hull laminate reduces the chance of blistering and the 38 is coated with bottom paint and water-tested before it is shipped from Silverton's Millville, New Jersey, facility.

The machinery space is reached through a hatch in the cabin sole, although a portion of the sole can be removed for complete access if necessary. Serviceable items appear accessible; exposed areas of the bilge are finished with gelcoat. Engines are mounted on powder-coated steel beams that are in turn through-bolted to hearty fiberglass/



The head provides voluminous storage and is very roomy.

plywood web frames. A 10 kw generator in a sound shield is positioned in the lazarette with access from the cockpit. An Oil X-Change-R system and a Glendinning Cablemaster are desirable options.

Donald L. Blount & Associates has been assisting Silverton with its hull designs for the last few years. The goal has been to craft hull forms with maximum usable interior volume that perform well at speeds in the 25 - 30 knot range. Blount's design team was responsible for the 38's shape from her chine down and for estimating her weight and center of gravity. She has a moderate entry with spray-control rails forward and an efficient 12-degree transom deadrise. Approximately 35 percent of the propeller diameter is recessed in pockets, which allows for a draft of just under 3 feet.

Our test boat was powered with a pair of 370 hp Cummins. While a passing cold front whipped up 4- to 6-foot seas and made data collection impractical, I had an excellent opportunity to gain a feel for the 38. I was quite impressed with her performance: stable and predictable in all directions. With the winds and seas out of the northeast, I ran south comfortably at 21 knots. While I eased her back a bit as I turned into the seas, she shouldered through the slop without hesitation. Our

progress generated a bit of spray now and again; however, given the conditions and her size I would consider her relatively dry. She is also relatively quiet—I noted 79 dB(A) in her main cabin while running offshore at 2500 rpm.

In fair weather Silverton suggests a top speed of 30 knots is possible with the 370 hp Cummins. In my view this package or the 440 hp Yanmars is the right choice for the 38; Silverton expects the Yanmar package to deliver a few extra knots at cruising speed. Silverton indicates that gas power is still the most popular option for its boats under 39 feet, and the base price of the 38 with gas power is around \$300,000. Still, I believe the 38 deserves the investment in diesel power—particularly if your float plan includes the Bahamas. While power-assist steering is offered as an option, it should not be necessary on a boat this size. Given diesel power, I feel the same way about the optional bow thruster. I would opt for the Glendinning synchronizer.

If you are looking for a competitively priced, stylish design suited for family cruising, it's hard to beat the Sport Bridge layout. Consumers have voted with their checkbooks. Since introducing the Sport Bridge design in 1998, Silverton has delivered several hundred between 33 and 41 feet.



The split head/shower layout gives you space and privacy.



A Great Value

By Tom Thompson

When it comes to building sedan bridge cruisers, Silverton Marine has an impressive track record that spans more than three decades. The company recently released the third version in its Sport Bridge series of boats that feature extended flybridge space. The new 38 Sport Bridge fills the gap between the existing 33 and 43 foot models. It's not only spacious and comfortable, but also nicely appointed. The performance numbers are nice, too. But the best feature could be the bottom line: it doesn't come with a seven-figure price tag.

Silverton's Sport Bridge series features an upper deck that is larger than most boats in its size range. Proportionally speaking, you'll usually find this amount of space on larger motoryachts. The helm has three-abreast seating and there's room for five more behind it. An aft-facing bench seat backs up the helm seat, and another bench along the aft bridge rail faces forward. Whether at anchor or under way, there's a great view for anyone aboard. The aft bench has a backrest on the port side, probably making it the most desirable seat in the house to stretch out and enjoy the ride.

Also on the port side of the bridge deck, there's a wet bar with a sink and a space for an optional refrigerator or ice-maker. An electronics arch is standard on the boat; a bimini top with side enclosures is an option.

Space is abundant at the helm, too. There are panels on either side of the instruments and controls that will accommodate large-screen electronics such as a radar or chartplotter. Several factory-installed Raymarine electronics packages are available as options. As with most of Silverton's newer model boats, the 38 Sport Bridge features the SideWalk™ to access the foredeck. Easy-to-traverse stairways lead down each side of the boat from the bridge to get to the sunpad or handle lines forward.

For those times when you want to get out of the sun but still be outside, the bridge overhang shades the 38's cockpit. The deck space will accommodate a couple of deck chairs and a cocktail table. A large, removable storage bin in the cockpit sole can be a fishbox, if you're inclined to wet a line occasionally. When you take it out, you'll have access to the aft mechanical space that holds, among other things, an optional generator.

Farther aft, the integrated swim platform has a folding, three-step boarding ladder. The platform is deep enough to hold an inflatable boat on its side.

LET US ENTERTAIN YOU

The most striking feature of the 38 Sport Bridge cabin is the amount of daylight that fills it. There are floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors with a screened panel at the entrance from the cockpit. Windows run the length of both sides. One on each side opens for cross-ventilation. Across the front, the angle of the windshield works as a skylight to flood the space no matter what time of day. The light plays on the elegant appointments that combine the textures of high-gloss cherry wood, thick pile



carpeting, UltraLeather™, and accent fabric. As you face forward from the cockpit entrance, there's an L-shaped seating group with a solid cherry table as its focus built on a pedestal in the forward port corner. Along the starboard side, there's a sofa that converts to a double berth. A cabinet in the aft port corner holds the boat's main electrical panels and the entertainment center.

The AC and DC panels are hidden behind solid cherry wood doors. Above them, a 20 inch flat panel TV hangs for all to see. But wait, here's the clever part. Give a slight tug to the TV's frame and the wood panel on which it's mounted moves forward toward you to reveal a drawer. Inside are storage racks for music CDs and DVDs, plus a place to keep audiovisual odds and ends such as the remote controls. The TV along with a Bose® 3.2.1® AM/FM/CD/DVD player with MP3 capability comes with the boat.

WHAT'S COOKIN'?

The 38 Sport Bridge galley, at the forward starboard corner, is a step down from the saloon level yet completely open to it. The space is defined by a large expanse of Corian® countertops. All the fixins are there to make all the fixins - a two burner range, a microwave/convection oven, and an under-counter refrigerator with a separate freezer compartment.

There's plenty of cabinet storage space, and an Amtico® wood floor complements the cherrywood motif.

KICK OFF YOUR SHOES

The lower deck has two staterooms - a master forward and one for guests on the port side. The shower portion of the split head is located between the two staterooms and can be accessed from either. The toilet and vanity compartment is on the starboard side and has a door from the companionway and another from the master suite.

The master suite has a pedestal berth with an innerspring mattress. A cedar-lined floor-to-ceiling hanging locker is in the aft port corner and there are storage drawers in the berth base. The twin beds in the guest stateroom can be converted to a queen-size berth with a filler cushion. The forward part of the cabin has stand-up headroom.

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

It's quite evident on this boat that Silverton continues to place great emphasis on the quality of interior appointments. All passageway and cabinet doors are solid cherry, not veneer-covered. Drawers operate very smoothly, thanks to epoxy-coated hardware. Even the mirrored panels at the head of the master berth have beveled edges.

These are the little details that are the beauty of this boat. They're touches that you might not notice right away, but they give the 38 Sport Bridge a special quality.



SILVER *Service*

BOATING

by Kevin Falvey

If I were a psychiatrist using word association to evaluate an experienced boater, I'd expect certain responses to specific prompts - I'd consider it normal to reply "60' sportfish" after I said "I-beam engine beds spanning two bulkheads." After all, tough-as-barnacles convertibles need robust engine installations to withstand long runs through rough seas while keeping torquey diesels securely in place. If, however, my patient owned a Silverton 38 SportBridge, he could answer "sedan cruiser" and his response would be correct. That's because robust-as-it-gets engine mounting is one feature of Silverton's new sedan.

Convenience is also stressed, as evidenced in the now familiar Silverton SideWalk™ with its raised sidedecks, easy bow access and enlarged interior volume. Plus, the 38 Sportbridge has frameless windows with panels that open to provide ventilation. Moreover, instead of one big Lexan cat's eye per side, the 38 Sportbridge's windows are different shapes and sizes. This breaks up the design's more typical overlarge wedge profile.

So I discovered robust construction, convenient design, and improved aesthetics. What else did my boat test reveal?

HAMMERS DOWN

I found that the 38 Sportbridge's massive engine beds do more than just puff its owner's pride. Clear the slip, press the levers, and you'll see what I mean. At 2700 rpm, the twin 355-bhp Cummins diesel inboards had me charging across three-foot swells at a vibe-free 25.5 mph. When I shifted into reverse, I hardly felt the transmissions change their direction of rotation. And while observing the engines as a crewmember put the boat alternatively in forward and reverse, I noticed little movement. Boats with lesser mounting beds display more vibration, allow you to feel the change in shaft

rotation as a big clunk, and have motors that may move as much as several inches on their mounts when shaft direction changes. Time in service or rough seas only exacerbates these problems. If you haven't guessed, I'm impressed to see this type of installation aboard a cruiser.

The helm layout is equally impressive. You command from a center seat of a three-person bench that features individual armrests for each passenger, a comfortable detail. In front of you is plenty of room for a complete suite of electronics. Guests can lounge on other settees arrayed around the flying bridge, one of which sports a headrest. To keep the party going, there's a wetbar with a solid surface counter, deep sink, and refrigerator. However, there should be a sea rail installed atop the wetbar's counter - I hate it when dip hits the deck.

Now check the bow. It's an easy glide down the ramps that lead forward from the flying bridge. There are two hatches here, one concealing the windlass and the other providing access to your rode. Look inside and you'll see that wiring coming through the bulkhead is chafe-protected, a feature - and an ABYC recommendation - that many cruisers I test forsake. Another bow highlight is the sunpad, which is mounted with a track rather than snaps, so it doesn't billow when wind gets under it while underway.

Let's inspect the cockpit. Head back up to the flying bridge - this is a raised sidedeck design, remember - and then down the stairs. The cockpit is big enough for a set of wicker furniture from which to view the sunset. Stowage lockers are built-in, and your dock lines pass through a pair of hefty hawse holes, made from highly polished stainless steel. These are as yachty as they are functional.

Head for the cabin. A sliding screen complements the companionway hatch. A welcome touch for cool nights. Inside, you'll be struck by the subtleties of the 38 Sportbridge's decor. Vertical surfaces are matte finished and horizontal surfaces are gloss finished. Windows are



hung with curtains. Stateroom and head doors are solid cherry with raised panels. And although cabinetry is veneer, each is framed in solid gloss cherry. Even the air conditioner return is well hidden. The overall look is residential.

Of course, I don't have a couch that electrically converts to a bed in my house. Nor does my home theater system reside within a neat cabinet, revealed only when a secret button is pushed. The 38 Sportbridge has both, though the latch for that secret TV housing isn't strong enough to hold the TV in place during an extended rough-water cruise. (Silverton says this latch has since been replaced.)

The galley is U-shaped, with a two-tiered solid surface counter. It's well-equipped with an overlarge sink and sea rails atop the cabinets in addition to the expected complement of appliances. Hardwood flooring is standard.

Take two steps down to the staterooms and head. Guests stay in a split berth with decent headroom and are served by a cedar-lined hanging locker and three deep drawers. Unfortunately, the reading lamps are

poorly positioned. As captain, you sleep in a queen island berth and have private access to both the head and shower. The 38 Sportbridge features the split head design - separate shower and commode. It's functional, yet the beveled mirrors stress that the 38 Sportbridge is about much more than function.

BUYING IT

If I were you, I'd also shop Meridian's 381 (\$342,840 with twin 330-bhp Cummins diesel inboards). It's offered with less power but is 4,600 pounds lighter. It sports the traditional look and direct access from cockpit to bow of regular sidedecks. And it comes standard with Docking On Command (DOC) a bow and stern thruster system. A thruster is optional aboard the 38 Sportbridge. Carver's 38 Super Sport (\$343,691 with twin 370-bhp Volvo Penta diesel inboards) comes with standard air-conditioning and a genset, optional items on the Silverton. In the end, you'll need to ride before you buy. So get out there and drive three dealers into therapy.



SPECIFICATIONS

Length Overall	39'9"	12.11 m
Beam	14'4"	4.37 m
Draft	2'11"	0.89 m
Deadrise		12.5°
Approximate Weight (Dry)	26,900 lbs	12,201 kg
Fuel Capacity	372 gals	1,408 L
Water Capacity	110 gals	416 L
Holding Tank Capacity	40 gals	151 L
Sleeping Capacity		6
Headroom	6'6"	1.98 m
Clearance Height-DWL (w/ light)	14'11"	4.55 m

Power Options:

Gas:

Twin 8.1L MPI	385 HP	287 KW
Twin 8.1L MPI	425 HP	317 KW

Diesel:

Twin Cummins	355 HP	265 KW
Twin Yanmar	370 HP	276 KW
Twin Yanmar	440 HP	328 KW

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

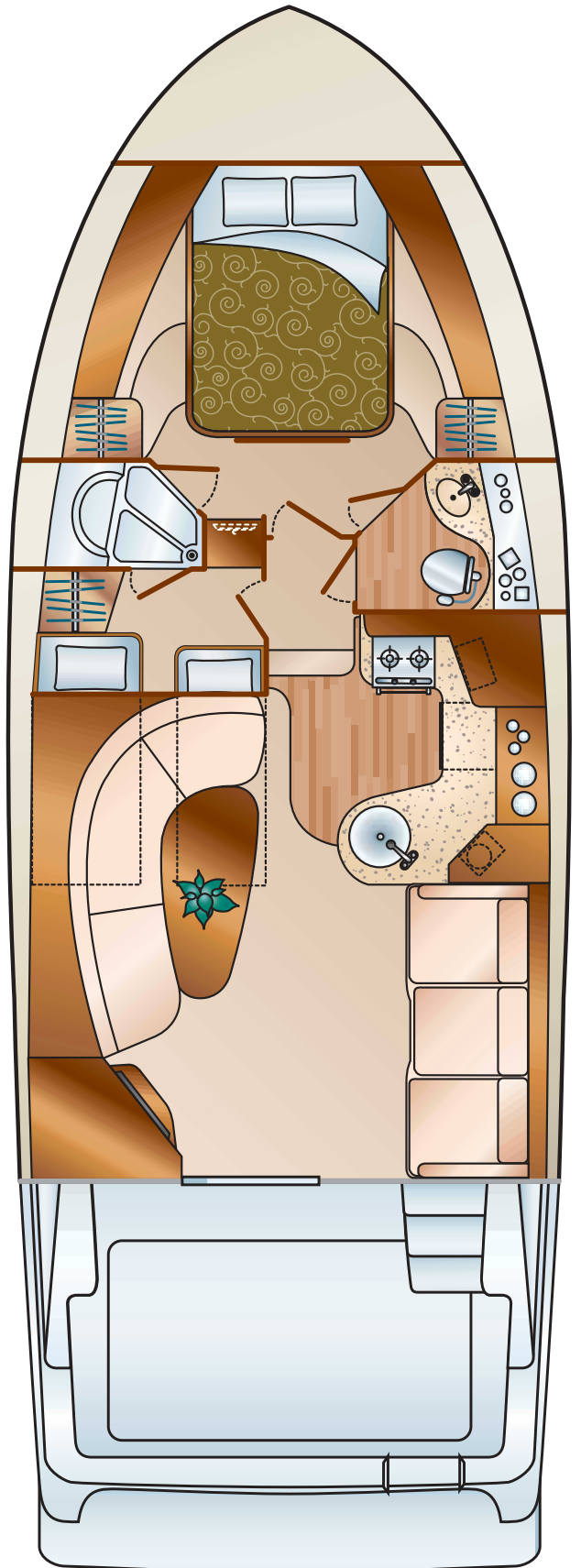
(Major items): Bose®3.2.1® AM/FM/CD/DVD stereo in salon; 20" Flat Panel TV in salon dual-voltage, full-size refrigerator/freezer; innerspring mattresses in both staterooms; Corian® countertops; Glomex® TV/FM antenna system; dripless shaft seals; VacUFlush head; microwave/convection oven

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Electronic Engine Controls; Lower Station; Air Conditioning; Icemaker; Central Vacuum System; Full Flybridge Enclosure

COMPANY HISTORY

Headquartered in Millville, NJ, Silverton is one of the leading builders of aft-cabin family cruisers. Innovations such as the SideWalk, a molded stairway on the side of the flybridges, and newly designed interiors have brought the company into the new millennium with style and elegance without losing sight of value. The company employs over 450 people, and has been in business for over 36 years.



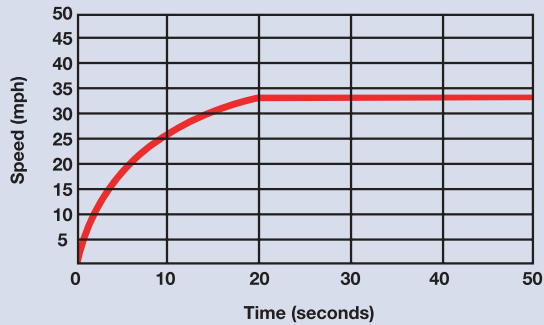


A thrilling combination of performance, elegance and style, the Silverton Thirty Eight Sport Bridge is truly in a class by itself.

POWER & MOTORYACHT

Test Performance Data

RPM	MPH/KTS	GPH	MPG/NMPG	SM RANGE	NM RANGE	Db
1000	5.8/5.0	4.8	1.21/1.04	405	349	59
1500	7.2/6.3	6.4	1.13/0.98	377	328	62
2000	8.8/7.7	11.4	0.77/0.67	258	225	67
2500	10.1/8.8	19.0	0.53/0.46	178	155	74
3000	15.8/13.7	26.4	0.60/0.52	200	174	78
4000	27.1/23.6	39.8	0.68/0.59	228	198	81
5000	33.8/29.3	61.4	0.55/0.48	184	160	83



Acceleration based on average of 4 reciprocal runs using Stalker ATS radar gun.

Conditions: Temperature: 55°F; Humidity: 60%; Wind: 10-15 mph; Seas: Calm; Load: 372 gallons fuel, 110 gallons water, 3 persons, 100 pounds of gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured with Stalker radar gun. GPH taken from Techmate fuel-measuring tool. Decibels measured on A scale. 65 dB is the level of normal conversation. All measurements taken with trim tabs fully retracted.



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