

Story & Photos By Evan Seys

Sea Trial: Power



Mainship Pilot 30 Rum Runner Classic

Once again, I headed for Granville Island and Freedom Marine on Foreshore Walk to do a boat test, this time a trawler from Mainship. They should call this area “the Marine Mall” or something, because if you want to buy a boat, this is where you will probably end up.

I found Don Young, owner of Freedom Marine, at his office and we went down to the dock to see the boat: a Mainship Pilot 30 Rum Runner Classic. The first thing that struck me was the pale blue hull that seemed to perfectly set off the rest of this tough-looking vessel. The rear entry is a nice solid door with quality fittings. As I entered the cockpit area, I was astounded at the headroom. Don is 6'3" and I would say there was another 5" above him before reaching the hardtop.

THE INTERIOR

I was expecting a cuddy cabin, and maybe a nominal loo and a sink, but what I saw below through the slide-away entry was amazing. In the portside galley area there is a microwave and countertop stove, along with a refrigerator, sink, and hot and cold water. Forward is the dinette area with a full 6'3" headroom. There's a very nicely made drop-leaf table, allowing seating for four comfortably for dinner and probably eight for drinks. Ahead of that was half a bed. Don showed me the ingenious method of making up a queen-sized island bed, which just blew me away. And it had a sprung mattress too. From the first impression that this would be a great fishing boat, suddenly I was thinking how lovely it would be for two to spend a week away in the islands.

The cherry wood interior is light, yet



Mainship Pilot 30 Rum Runner Classic.

warm and cozy, and to starboard there is a pine-lined hanging locker. There are numerous opening (and screened) portholes to give light and air on those sultry evenings in Desolation Sound. And speaking of sound, there is a nice stereo/CD installation with speakers both below and in the cockpit.

The head is all fibreglass and so there are no nooks and crannies to trap water and dirt after showering.

THE COCKPIT

Two captain's chairs sit up high and give a great view for the pilot and copilot, and astern of them are two decent-length benches. Beyond the covered area, the aft section is where the fishing and/or sunbathing can be done. In front of the helmsman the dashboard is hinged to

allow for ease of installation of instruments and so on, and what I like is the fact that each new owner gets a full diagram of all original wiring. In addition, all other components fitted by Freedom are also documented in a diagram, so there is never a problem when future installations need to be done.

The area of the cockpit under the hardtop is nicely protected from the weather by quality canvas aft, which is sealed at the sides to stop water ingress, even in lousy weather and doing 20 knots. The central heating system, piped through ducting to the feet of both helmsman and copilot as well as down below, is worked off the engine cooling system and bus heaters. Keeping the canvas shut in mid-winter will keep this area cozy. The windshield has an opening



central panel that looks as tough as a submarine door, and there are two fans up high alongside small opening portholes (again screened) to keep the area cool in the summer and the wind-shield clear in winter.

Freedom Marine includes a chartplotter by Garmin in the package and they tell me that you can literally hand over the cheque and go boating. You will not have to worry about life jackets, flares, or any other equipment, as it is mostly already there. Even radar is set up, and you would only have to buy the Garmin sender unit to have that combined in the chartplotter. Raymarine 215 VHF is there, and a full array of instrumentation is included. There is nothing to do but get out on the water! Even an electric windlass and anchor, controllable from inside, are fitted, and a stainless propane BBQ is already on the stern.

MECHANICAL

Power is from a 315-hp Yanmar tucked in the centreline below the cockpit sole (keeping the centre of gravity low) and is controlled by fabulously light micro controls on the starboard side of the helm seat. The ZF 63 A gearbox puts the power to the five-bladed 22x24 HyTorq prop via a dripless shaft log. Access is by a large gas-strut-assisted hatch between the benches and gives excellent room for

Clockwise from above:

The made-up bed on a stout frame still leaves seating, and the table can be left in place.

Lift the half bed (on gas struts) and below is the HW tank and bow thruster. The bed then folds out in seconds.

The captain's chair and benches with drop-leaf table.

servicing. I particularly liked the fact that *everything* seems to be labelled.

But I suppose the most impressive thing about this boat is the economy. I found that the semi-displacement hull would continue to plane at a speed as low as 7.5 knots, and at 2,000 RPM and 10.5 knots would manage to travel nearly 650 statute miles (1,046 km) on a tank of 175 US gallons (662 litres). They tell me that is using only 2.6 gph. Maximum speed is just over 30 mph (48 kph) but she is so comfortable at low and easy speeds that I see this boat as the ideal commuter boat for an island cottage owner. I think maybe if I have a complaint, it would be that a bit of extra soundproofing could be fitted in the engine compartment; but compared to most boats of this type she is very acceptable anyway. I am being picky, because the boat makes me want to see perfection.

ON THE WATER

I have already mentioned economy but when I took over the helm, the boat told me all sorts of different stories. The ride is as comfortable as would be expected from an 11,000-lb boat. Mind you, we have to add 1,000 lb to that for the hardtop, so this is no lightweight runabout, but rather a solid comfortable cruiser that should take waves in her stride. We found a large Silverton cruiser to play with in the bay and headed for her wake. About 200 metres away I started to think that there had been a major sub-sea earthquake, and this was the resultant tsunami. I desperately wanted to back off the throttle, but Don told me not to worry, just go for it! We took the wave and hardly bounced. So then I turned the boat to have another go and there was very little lean into the corner. This must come from the semi-



The whole dash, including the wheel, is hinged. Note the fan and small port up high.

displacement hull and it made for very unusual, and nice, cornering angle. The central tunnel in which the propeller turns may also have something to do with it. The boat has a keel and so tracks really well, and she also has a sand foot to protect the prop from logs, and yes, sand and so on. One very good reason for having the single engine: it can be protected from much of the damage that can cripple twin-engine boats. The four-hp bow thruster means that maneuvering in tight spaces is simple too, and this is almost a must in the docks at Granville Island, I can tell you. Space for mooring boats is getting to be in short supply, so spaces are getting smaller all the time.

I got off the Mainship and onto the Silverton and I watched as Don put the smaller boat through its paces in the huge wake, and I could tell that she would take almost anything. This boat is built very solidly indeed and will get to where a boater needs to go in almost anything this area throws our way.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

At close to \$200,000 this 30-foot vessel is as tough as nails and will last a lifetime. The engine gives remarkable economy, and she can be used as a commuter boat, fishing machine, or comfortable and ingenious cruiser for two. So, if you take all this into account, value for money is actually very good. Yes you can go out and buy new boats for a lot less, but they may have gas engine(s), they

may be lightweight, and you may have to struggle to enjoy a day away in it, let alone a week. The Mainship Pilot 30 Rum Runner Classic hardtop does it all, in spades. Check it out at Freedom Marine on the Granville Island "Marine Mall." She is a classic down-East lobster boat design, which proves itself sturdy and economical once again in 2006.

Oh, and by the way, as a treat Don

had laid out two crab traps in English Bay courtesy of Bonnie Lee Fishing Charters on Granville Island, who kindly lent us the traps and their cleaning table to dress a great haul of fresh crab for my meal tonight. The boat is lucky too!

To find out more about Mainships, please call Freedom Marine at (604) 609-0985 or visit them at 1521 Foreshore Walk on Granville Island in Vancouver. ■

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