

HATTERAS 50 CONVERTIBLE

REPRINTED FROM

# BOATING<sup>®</sup>

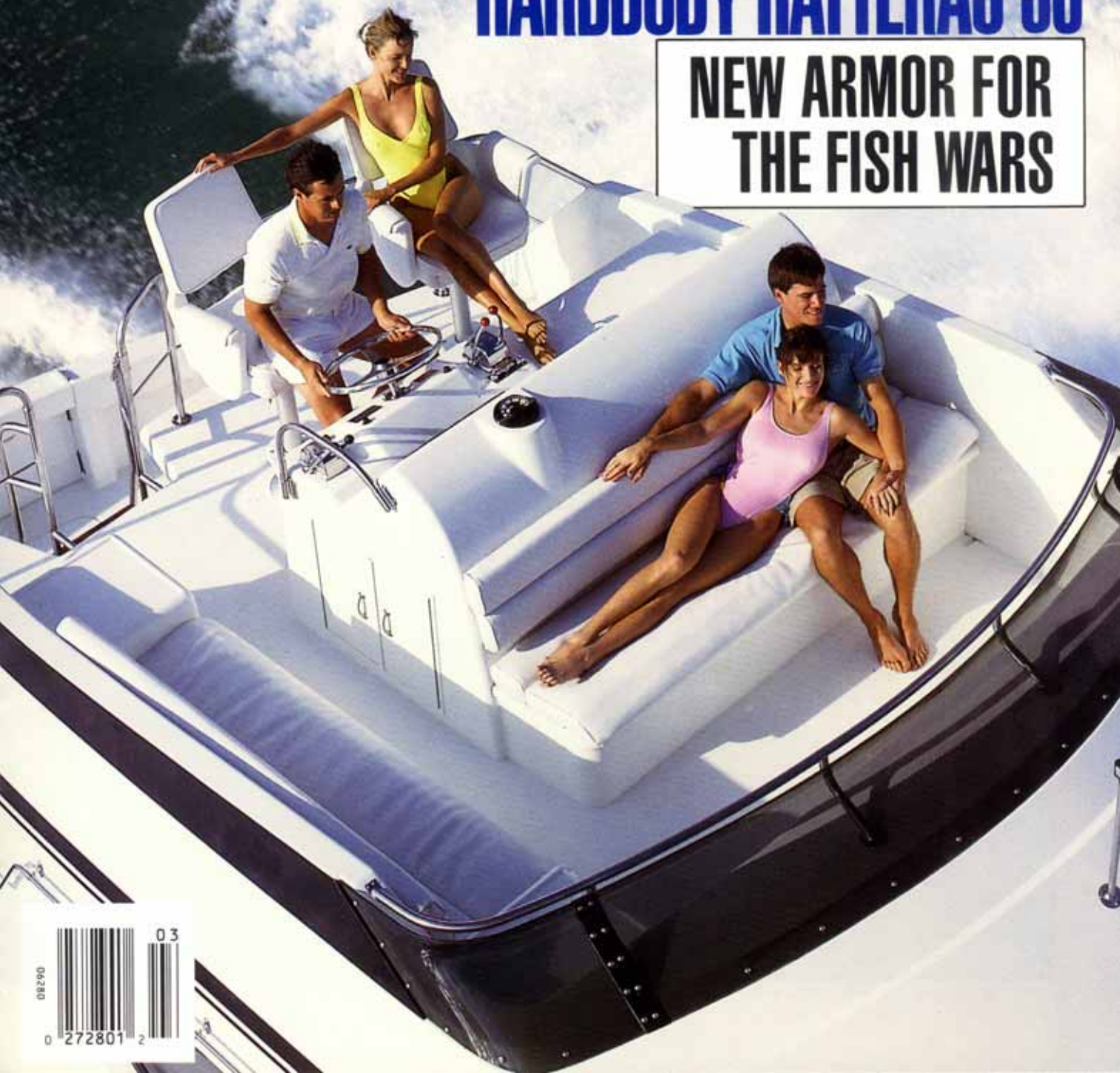
MARCH 1991

*The Journal of the Sport*

U.S. \$3.50  
CANADA \$3.95/U.K. £2.75

## HARDBODY HATTERAS 50

**NEW ARMOR FOR  
THE FISH WARS**



04280

0 272801 2



# HARD BODY

*Hatteras 50: New armor for the fish wars.*

BY PETER FREDERIKSEN

SOME BOATS HAVE to be dressed up with outriggers and tuna towers before I'd even consider them fishboats. Others, look like they could put a hurting on the fish population without even tossing a line in the water. The new Hatteras 50 Convertible fits the latter description like the rasp on a marlin's bill.

Yet there's a lot of competition in the 50-foot class these days. Post and Bertram build 50-footers. And we tested the Viking 50 in our January issue. Is there really room for another 50 convertible?

Definitely. The fact that

there are several top-quality 50-footers plying offshore rips and drop-offs shows how many bases the size can effectively cover. The length and girth, for instance, typically allow for three staterooms, a couple of heads, extended deckhouse and flying bridge, and most importantly, a cockpit large enough to swallow up a giant bluefin tuna. These accommodations heavily favor such boats for tournaments where you're likely to hire a professional crew so you can concentrate on the fishing and save your energy for winding the reel.

The 50 Convertible is a stretched 48 with changes in the aft hull shape. So, there's a lot more going on here than just two extra feet. By moving the Divinycell-cored bulkheads, Hatteras enlarged the engine room to accommodate a pair of DDC 12V-71TAs (which pushed our test boat to more than 37 mph). The increase in interior space, coupled with light ash joinerwork, continues a theme that began with last year's introduction of the 58 Convertible. I call it a posh "Palm Beach" look. I think teak interiors are great, but the 50, with a translu-

**SWIFT SHIP—Twin DDC 12V-71TAs push the 50 to 37.1 mph. Flying bridge windshield really works.**





*BRIGHT LIGHTS (clockwise from top left)—Light ash is a good-looking alternative to teak. Master and bow staterooms have private heads. Galley has top-of-the-line appliances and an island prep center.*

cent finish called “pearlence” on the ash, is love at first sight.

Regardless of this “new look” there’s a lot of old Hatt here. I say this with full confidence, because I spent years at the helm of that seagoing warhorse, the 53C, fishing offshore canyons where the nearest land was often a half-mile beneath the keel. And the keel is as good a place to begin discussing the 50 Convertible.

#### The Bottom Line

The solid-fiberglass keel may be the last thing a big-eye tuna remembers seeing before it is brought aboard, but the first time you’re out in any kind of slop that very same keel will give you a ride you appreciate. As far as keels go, the efficient foil shape doesn’t create much resistance because it’s not as large as the one on the 58C. Yet it provides plenty of directional stability considering the high speeds this boat is driven.

From a handling standpoint, the 50 is far more agile than its length would suggest. In the ocean off Stuart, Florida, for instance, the 50 seemed more

like a knowing thoroughbred, anticipating my every move at the helm, rather than the 31-ton beast it is. At 2400 rpm, the 50 gently banks into turns and the fluid Hynautic steering makes control effortless. I felt if a billfish surfaced suddenly I could maneuver this 50 to wiggle the baits in front of the fish’s nose before it had a chance to say no.

There are other 50-footers that are slightly faster than this Hatteras. For instance, in our test of the Viking 50 with 8V-92TAs, it topped out at 39.5 mph, 2.4 mph faster. But the Hatteras 50 is by far the heavyweight in its class, outweighing the Viking by two tons on test day.

Clearly, Hatteras doesn’t design its boats to be drag racers on the Intra-coastal Waterway. High reduction ratios mean maximum torque from *big* props and *extra-large* shafts. The weight penalty is easily offset by the real-world/open-ocean performance. You won’t have to cancel many fishing trips because of the weather with this Hatteras.

Winds out of the southeast present-

ed modest seas but every now and again we’d drop the bow in a hole behind one of them. Capt. Ron Locke indicated that during sea trials in genuinely rotten weather, he was able to get the 50 clear of the water on several occasions. Each time, re-entry was smooth. Even though we didn’t face such Victory at Sea conditions, I was able to bridge an occasional four-to-five footer. At full throttle, the 50 simply ate it up.

With the sea running on the beam, there was little rolling motion, though you could expect a tuna tower to increase the hamper. But the moderate 8-degree transom deadrise seems to provide the best of both worlds in terms of stability and all-weather top-end performance. And when it’s time to back down and gain some line, your angler had better be an Olympic-caliber winder. There’s no hesitation when the 1.97:1 transmissions get the reverse command. And if the fish spooks near the transom and makes a frantic dash up the starboard side, this 50 will match its agility and spin eagerly to keep the fighting chair

squared up to the fish. If you lose the fish, you won't be able to blame it on the boat.

### Subtle Changes

This kind of performance is made up of many elements. For instance, the 50 comes with five-bladed Rolla propellers, and the smoothness is uncanny. So is out-of-the-hole acceleration.

Hatteras also uses an underwater exhaust system that dumps the majority of the cooling water and exhaust gases *below* the boat where noise and smoke get buried in the slipstream. This system is so effective that only an insignificant portion spews from the recessed ports in the hullsides. In fact, if you're standing on the dock alongside the 50 you'll swear the Detroit's swallowed the waterpump impellers.

Away from the dock, the virtues of the underwater exhaust system are clear. Reduced back pressure and substantial engine room vents help deliver full power. There's less smoke to dirty the transom or gag the fishing team in the cockpit, and what little comes from the side ports gets trapped and diverted by the bilge rails. The process breaks much of the sub-surface friction to make the hull especially slippery. At 1800 rpm, for example, this boat literally bolts out of the water. The faster it goes, the more slippery it becomes.

And it does it all quietly. In fact, this 50 tested quieter than some gas-powered models half its size. Tearing up the St. Lucie River not far from Stuart Hatteras (the home dealership of our test boat), the sound of water rushing by the hull all but muffled the engine noise. And this was at full throttle.

The engines may have had a lot to do

## PROPULSION AND PERFORMANCE Hatteras 50 Convertible

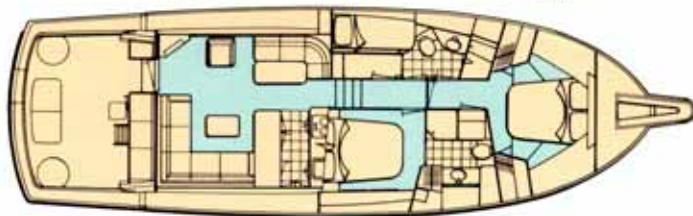
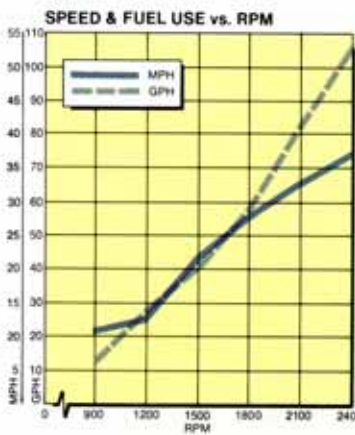
**Standard power:** twin 720-hp DDC 8V-92TA diesel inboards

**Optional power:** twin 780-hp MAN D2840 LXE; twin 870-hp DDC 12V-71TA diesel inboards

**Test boat power:** twin 870-hp DDC 12V-71TA diesel inboards with 852 cid, 4.25" bore x 5.00" stroke, swinging 33" x 35" five-bladed Rolla propellers through 1.97:1 reduction

speed			fuel use		efficiency			operation		
rpm	knots	mph	% of max.	gph	% of max.	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. ml. range	angle	sound level
900	9.3	10.7	29	12.8	12	0.72	0.63	579	3.0	72
1200	11.0	12.6	34	27.8	27	0.39	0.45	316	4.5	73
1500	18.6	21.4	58	40.8	39	0.45	0.52	364	5.0	81
1800	24.3	27.9	75	57.0	55	0.43	0.49	341	5.5	84
2100	28.4	32.7	88	81.4	78	0.35	0.40	280	4.0	85
2400	32.2	37.1	100	104.4	100	0.31	0.35	247	4.0	85

Advertised fuel capacity 890 gal. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with two persons aboard, 7/8 fuel, 1/8 water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.



<b>LOA</b>	50'10"
<b>Beam</b>	16'1"
<b>Draft</b>	5'5"
<b>Displacement</b> (lbs., approx., 1/2 load)	62,000
<b>Bridge clearance</b> (to top of flying bridge windshield)	14'0"
<b>Freeboard forward</b>	6'6"
<b>Freeboard aft</b>	3'8"

**Standard equipment (major items):** Fiberglass pulpit w/roller, anchor and rode; ss hardware; entertainment center w/ Mitsubishi TV and Yamaha stereo system; sliding side windows w/tinted safety glass; Sub-Zero refrigerator/freezer; Sharp Carousel II microwave/convection oven; Roper electric cooktop; Emerson disposal system; 2 Vacu-Flush MSDs; 19.9-gal. Bradford-White water heater; Lunaire reverse-cycle a/c; 20kw Onan generator; U.L. listed fiberglass

<b>Max cabin headroom</b>	6'6"
<b>Fuel capacity (gal.)</b>	890
<b>Water capacity (gal.)</b>	184
<b>Base price</b> (w/DDC 8V-92TAs)	\$670,800
<b>(w/DDC 12V-71TAs)</b>	\$757,200
<b>Designer</b>	Jack Hargrave, Hatteras Design Team

fuel tanks; Racor fuel/water separators; electric fuel priming pumps; auto. Halon system; oil changing system; Hynatic steering; Morse controls; Bennett trim tabs; Dytek 50 amp battery charger; 2 Marinetek transformers; seacocks on all underwater through hull fittings; trolling valves; engine synchronizer; VDO instrumentation; Ritchie compass; recessed fishwells; bait prep center w/tackle stowage; transom door w/gate.

with this. The 71s sound different—less whine—more rumble—than the 92 series. If you ordered the boat with 8V-92TAs, I wouldn't be surprised if sound levels changed, but I'm confident the 50 would remain among the

quietest big sportfishermen.

### In Control

Low noise levels make operating the 50 a pleasure. And the flying bridge layout complements the ride. While the arrangement is familiar, Hatteras still tosses in a few surprises. We all know how a venturi-type wind-screen is supposed to divert air over the helmsman's head. And we all know how it really doesn't do much unless your face is right next to it. Since the typical helm on a convertible is positioned well aft, the venturi principle doesn't offer much protection.

Aboard the 50, Hatteras designed the wind-screen with enough rake to match the flying bridge eyebrow. This looks good, but more importantly the upper edge curves outward and it makes a difference. In fact, throughout the test, I didn't have to reverse my Pirate cap to keep it from blowing overboard.

Lockers beneath the bench seats forward of the helm and to starboard provide stowage for loose items and fishing rods. There's more stowage below the helm and in another side locker. Two molded consoles to starboard can be outfitted with an ice-cube maker, cooler or deep-water fishfinder.

While the helm has plenty of space for the Morse and trolling valve controls, electronics, a Ritchie Powerdamp compass and VDO gauges, I wasn't overwhelmed by the helm and companion seating arrangement. My experience has been whenever

there's a seat outboard of the centerline helm chair, whoever is sitting there is up and down repeatedly and a constant annoyance to the helmsman. However, starting with hull #4 (we tested hull #2) the console will be

moved forward four inches and the aft stainless railing will be moved back a bit. This will give more room to walk behind the helm seat without disturbing the skipper. I'll like that better.

### TCB

There's little to complain about in the 135-sq.-ft. cockpit. I thought the fishwell was on the small side (4'7" x 1'9" w x 1'3" d). And both livewells are scheduled to be enlarged with eight more inches of depth. But I have no complaints about the fishing center and bait-rigging station. If you order the optional drop-in freezer (\$2,040), the compressor will be installed in the engine room where it belongs. Other desirable options include four flush rodholders (\$335), cockpit controls, (\$1,525), saltwater washdown (\$1,465), coaming padding (\$945) and a sunshade (\$1,950). Average cockpit depth is 2'2" and the reach to the waterline is just 3'4".

Engine room access is through a wide door in the cockpit. There's a grabrail to make your descent quick and easy, and a pair of teak steps and a nonslip rubber mat provide safety underfoot.

Headroom in Detroit City is 5' and the workmanship is top-shelf. You can get around three sides of the 12V-71TAs and all daily checks are inboard. Dual spin-on lube filters for the starboard engine are outboard, so you have to allow a little extra time when you change the oil. The port oil filters, however, as well as both secondary fuel filters, are inboard and a snap to drain and change.

Each engine is outfitted with a pair of Racor 1000MA fuel/water separators. A Racor 900MA guards the 20kw Onan. Flojet priming pumps are standard.

All mechanical, electrical and plumbing installations are done in Hatteras style. Huge Perko raw-water strainers,



heavy-duty fuel manifold system, batteries in fiberglass boxes, well-marked electrical distribution centers, fuel hoses and electrical cables fully supported and protected against chafe, massive foam-cored engine beds with steel inserts. It's a tech-head's dream room.

### First Cabin Comfort

Despite all the light ash woodwork, the Corian counter-tops, the appliance-packed color-coordinated galley, the entertainment center and plush furnishings, two items stand out in my mind. And that's the bright red portable Halon and dry chemical fire extinguishers that are installed in full view near the salon door.

You see, as gorgeous as this convertible is, Hatteras never loses sight of what an ocean-going vessel is all about. Safety is paramount. Throughout the boat a portable fire extinguisher is never more than a few feet away in full view. This, in addition to the main Fireboy Halon system in the engine room. Such a ship-like approach to production boatbuilding is unrivaled, yet is typical of the way Hatteras does things.

Hatteras boats don't come cheap. Our test boat, for example, bases at \$757,200. You can save \$80K if you choose the smaller 8V-92TAs. With the smaller engines this 50 falls in step with the Viking 50 (\$674K), Bertram 50 (\$702K) and Post 50 (\$620K).

But I'd order the 12V-71TAs because the Hatteras 50 Convertible is made for them. This boat was made to own the best 50 feet at any dock. And with any luck, this 50 Convertible could wind up owning the ocean, or at least a large share of the fish in it. ⚓

*For more information, contact: Hatteras Yachts, Dept. B, Box 2690, High Point, NC 27261; 919/889-6621.*



Copyright © 1991 Hachette Magazines. All Rights Reserved.

# Hatteras