

Hinckley T38R Convertible



Making heads turn.

BY HEATHER FRECKMANN

"This is a very civilized way to go boating," said a man on the dock at Connecticut's Norwalk Cove Marina, gazing wistfully at us on a humid July morning. As we stepped aboard Hinckley's T38R Convertible, Scott Kinney, sales director and today's captain, nodded and chuckled.

"If you want to sneak into a marina, this isn't the boat to do it in," he commented.

There's no question that the T38R will attract attention. Its signature feature is a push-button, hydraulically deployed convertible top, which lifts, retracts and stows as effortlessly as one on a sports car, exposing the rich glow of teak in an expansive cockpit with horseshoe-shaped lounge seating for 10. A molded boarding step with teak treads provides dockside access, and a filler cushion completes the lounge when the step is moved to the opposite side.

Kinney fired up the twin electronically controlled, common-rail Volvo diesel engines, which rumbled to life beneath the broad sunpad-covered hatch aft of the cockpit. We took our places at the custom helm and companion seats, and before long we were slicing through the harbor, bound for open water.

If there was any smoke or vibration, it was imperceptible as the T38R soared smoothly onto plane and hit its stride at a comfortable 31 knots and 3250 rpm. While the top speed is 37 knots, the boat is most efficient at 31 to 34 knots, burning approximately 31 gph.

This is an exceptionally quiet-running yacht. Kinney and I could easily continue our conversation in normal voices, even with the top down.

With its sleek profile and classic lines, the T38R has the look of a thoroughbred, and it didn't disappoint. The lightest touch on the JetStick—or turn of the wheel—and the boat responded immediately, dipping its rail and making a tight, elegant turn.

Then Kinney showed me what the jet drives could do. He threw the T38R into reverse; below the waterline, buckets

dropped down over the jet wash, and the vessel literally stopped in its own wake. "Now that I've spent time on jet boats, I'd never own anything but," said Kinney, who lived aboard the T38R for six weeks. "No vibration—the jets increase the longevity of the engine since the impellers don't put on the loads that propellers do. And without struts, shafts and props, you can beach this boat."

The T38R also has a hydraulic-assist bowthruster that allows the captain to "walk" it sideways at up to 2 knots.

All in all, this yacht is all about performance and handling—with the option of entertaining or dining either al fresco or beneath the air-conditioned enclosure.

Hinckley outfitted this performer for cruising as well. Belowdeck, a V-shaped settee converts to a double berth, the head offers standing headroom and a shower, and the galley features a top-loading refrigerator box, a single-burner stove and plenty of storage. This surprisingly roomy interior space also incorporates Corian countertops, stainless steel sinks and hardware, Grohe fixtures, bronze fasteners, a cedar-lined hanging locker, varnished cherry woodwork, and teak and tulipwood flooring. One particularly nice touch was the electrical panel, conveniently located at eye level. Also, to reduce deck clutter, the anchor stows in a tidy bow locker.

It was a disappointment to turn the T38R back toward the marina. I was aching to point its distinctive nose toward the horizon. This yacht is in a class of its own. ↓

Specs

LOA.....	38'
Beam.....	11'
Draft.....	2'3"
Weight.....	21,000 lbs.
Fuel capacity.....	320 gals.
Base power.....	T/Volvo D-6 diesels w/Hamilton 274 waterjets (435 hp)
Base price.....	Contact manufacturer

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