



HinckleyYachts/photos

The Hinckley T43 underway (left) and its welcoming aft deck and saloon.



The Higher End

The new Hinckley T43 offers precision, comfort and style.

Buying a new Hinckley yacht means getting the full package, from thoroughly thought-out original concept through design, complex construction processes and painstaking quality control to delivery, sea trials and customer training. The boats are not inexpensive, but the company delivers handsomely at every level. Consider one of the company's new T43s, which I had an opportunity to sea-trial recently with her owners.

Concept

The T43 is an express yacht with comfortable cruising accommodations for a couple, a double berth for weekend guests, and a layout that can open up for sociable day-cruising or enclose its occupants in adverse weather. One of its nicest social features is a set of electrically actuated windows and door in the aft bulkhead that can open the saloon to the cockpit, all at

the same level. Powered by twin Cummins diesels with Hamilton jet drives, she's classically beautiful, fast even in sloppy conditions, and seriously maneuverable by joystick.

Design

The T43's hull shape comes from noted naval architect Michael Peters. It's a sharper V than those of other Hinckley models with jet drives. The deadrise of the running surface from the transom to the helm is nearly constant at 19 degrees, but from there the number increases to a wave-cleaving bow entry. Two lifting strakes on each side help the hull rise onto plane, but Peters has placed them under the saloon and the cabin, where much of the boat's weight is centered. The aft third of the bottom is unobstructed to provide clear streams of water to the jets' intakes. At cruising speeds of 20–25 knots, the boat runs slightly bow-proud (three



by John Page Williams

Hinckley T43 Stats

LOA: 43'9" **Beam:** 14'6"
Draft: 2'4"
Clearance: 13'6"
Displacement: 28,000 lb

Fuel: 500 gal
Water: 100 gal
Power range: 1,100–1,300 hp
Base Price: \$1,685,000

Local Dealer: The Hinckley Company, Annapolis
 410-263-0095
www.hinckleyyachts.com

degrees of trim), presenting that acute forefoot to the seas. This seaworthy running attitude also provides excellent sightlines from the helm.

The overall hull shape is the most obvious result of the design process. The reason it works, though, lies within the hard detail work that goes into balancing that shape's dynamic buoyancy with the weights and locations of all the boat's systems, accommodations and structural elements, plus the thrust of the jets at all speeds.

Construction

Hinckley builds its boats in a large plant in Trenton, Maine, between Ellsworth and Mount Desert Island. I visited it several years ago for an up-close education in the company's boatbuilding systems. They marry the best of Down East craftsmanship with modern systems and materials.

Over the years, the company's construction processes have evolved from traditional wood through open-mold fiberglass lamination to the sophisticated, patented Seaman Composite Resin Infusion Molding Process (SCRIMP) used by several other high-end builders. For the T43's hull, the SCRIMP lamination crew employs vinylester resin throughout to bond an Aramid fiber/E-glass outer skin, Corecell M foam, and carbon fiber inner skin together under vacuum pressure. Meanwhile, the crew uses SCRIMP to bond E-glass inner and outer skins to a closed-cell foam core in the complex mold for the deck. One critical element in the hull's layup process is substituting solid laminate "core deletions" in strategic locations in the hull to anchor through-hull fittings that range from large (bow thruster and water jets) to small (cooling water intakes).

Assembly

After curing thoroughly, the hull and deck go to separate assembly stations for precision installation of bulkheads and systems. Computer-driven design

dictates precision placement and shape of the cored bulkheads, which add structural strength to the hull as well as providing support points for wires, electronic cables and plumbing for fuel, water and waste, plus vents.

Systems? Look at Hinckley's five-page, densely worded Standard Equipment List for the T43 and consider how much work goes into bringing the gear on that list into functioning reality. Since assembly crews have open access to both sides of these hulls and the deck, this is the time when installation is easiest and most efficient. One of the most interesting stations is the area where a crew fabricates each boat's wiring harness.

Think modern automotive harnesses are complex? Try mating twin electronic diesels with alternators, electronic controls and an electronic JetStick II control system with software; an Onan 13.5 kW genset; two reverse-cycle air conditioning systems; six large house and starting batteries; a grounding bus system (much easier to install in an open hull); an inverter for the house batteries; a charger for the starting batteries; interior lighting everywhere (all LED); three sets of windshield wipers, plus a pump to bathe them in fresh water; 12- and 120-volt outlets in convenient places; a spotlight on the pilothouse roof; an aft deck floodlight; all of the electronics at the helm (Raymarine SONAR, GPS, RADAR and autopilot, interfaced with Standard-Horizon VHF at a minimum); an all-boat audio system; several TVs; a shorepower cord reel, with cord; four bilge pumps; an electric Vacu-Flush toilet; a 24-volt pressure pump for the 100-gallon water tank and the 17-gallon (electric) water heater; a two-burner electric cooktop and two-drawer refrigerator/freezer; a raw-water washdown pump at the bow; a bow anchor windlass; and various hydraulic systems; all controlled through a clearly organized distribution panel. And then there's the plumbing system. . . .

Moreover, it all has to work perfectly together, including the engines, jets, genset, tanks and, if specified, a Seakeeper M5500 stabilizing gyro (not on our test boat). Moreover the woodwork is solid (and some is ingeniously laminated); all of it is lovely, with lots of cherry complemented by teak and tulipwood. A perennial crowd-pleaser is the beautifully curved rail on the port side of the companionway from the saloon to the cabin.

Sea Trials, Training and Service

So how did our test T43 fare on sea trials? The Bay off Annapolis offered only a two-foot chop, which she ate up with that sharp forefoot at 25 knots. Her jet-driven wake was flat as she rose easily onto plane, and she ran efficiently at all planing speeds, with no worries about crab pot lines. Top speed with her twin 550-hp Cummins QSB 6.7 diesels was 32.2 knots (two-way average), with easy cruise at 20–25 knots. Not bad for a nearly 30,000-pound boat with cruising gear, 63 percent fuel, and full water. If that's not enough, Hinckley can sell you a pair of 650-hp FPT diesels to get even more.

Two attributes stood out. First, this boat is quiet, even at speed. We tested her both open and with her aft bulkhead glass closed up. Sound stayed within conversational levels the whole time both ways. The second is maneuverability. Leaving and re-entering her tight slip, our skipper showed off the JetStick II system, which has two low-speed modes, one that moves her in 6- to 12-inch increments and another in 1-inch increments (another mode offers H-Lock position-keeping in conjunction with the vessel's GPS).

The verdict: Hinckley's new T43 delivers exactly what her builder promises. That's a lot, but Hinckley has built its well deserved reputation on exactly that promise. For a boatbuilder approaching a 90th anniversary, that's impressive, and for customers who can meet the price, it's a delight. ↴