



Above and

Trading up, trading down — the new Hinckley T48FB may



Beyond

be a small family's perfect boat. By Dennis Caprio
Photography by Billy Black



Tiny snowflakes cast a sheet of gauze over Somes Sound and disoriented me. The loss of visual references always does this, and I needed a while to let the chart plotter and compass return my sense of reality. I eased back the throttles. Outside the heated pilothouse of our Hinckley T48FB *Courtship* on this third day of February, the temperature was about 25 degrees Fahrenheit, but we'd shed our gloves and winter jackets long ago. This must be what boatbuilders mean by the word *luxury*. On the other hand, if I'd known that she was headed for the Bahamas, I might have postponed the sea trial to see how well the air conditioning works. *Sigh*.

Never mind the air conditioning. I'm certain that it functions as expected, because everything else aboard the T48FB worked as well as the builder's reputation suggests it should, even in the cold. The four-panel curved sliding glass doors between the cockpit and the salon rolled quietly and easily aside to let us in, to breathe in that new-boat smell, as well as an air of traditional New England style and hospitality. I fully expected to find bowls of steaming clam chowder resting atop the dining table on the starboard side of the salon — a tankard of hot buttered rum too.

The table in question fitted nicely into the line formed by the inboard end of the settee. Lowering it to the stops converts the dinette to a berth — you know, for when your daughter and son-

in-law bring the grandson for a weekend cruise. Don't worry about its glossy finish. As smooth and shiny as it is, Hinckley's varnishing team has made it durable enough to use. Even without the chowder and rum, I longed to settle into the thick cushions — either side, really, because the curved settee opposite the dinette tugged at me equally hard, and I couldn't dislodge Sammy Cahn's lyrics, "Oh, the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful ...," from my brain. The T48FB didn't have a fire, but its reverse-cycle central heating system had the same comforting effect.

Her interior wood was nice too, in the style of N.G. Herreshoff. Cherry solids and veneers made the interior feel a bit like an old-fashioned, but way upscale, seaside cottage. The high-gloss finish invited me to touch the surfaces, not merely to detect flaws because I refused to believe my eyes, but simply to enjoy the feel of fine varnish.

An acre of glass, some sections of it opened by electric motor, reinforced the cottage-style ambience, the way a screened-in porch does on an early autumn morning or at the gloaming — when the windows that have been installed for the coming winter look out at a beautiful scene. Aboard the T48FB, the view circled the compass, and I had no trouble seeing the transom from the helm. In typical Hinckley fashion, the dashboard stood proud a few degrees from vertical, putting



Charlie and Posy Dana relax in the cockpit of *Courtship* somewhere in the Bahamas, which is a perfect jet-boat location.



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	dB(A)
600	4.4	1.8	61
900	6.7	5.7	65
1200	8.8	11.0	65
1500	10.5	20.0	67
1800	14.4	32.0	71
2100	24.0	53.0	75
2380	33.4	80.0	77

TEST CONDITIONS: Speeds were recorded by GPS in Somes Sound off Southwest Harbor, Maine, in flat seas and wind of 5 knots with full fuel, 50 percent water and seven people aboard. Sound levels were recorded at the inside helm with doors and windows closed. Fuel readings were taken from the Volvo Penta electronic engine-monitoring system.



LOA: 48'10"
LWL: 44'8"
BEAM: 15'5"
DRAFT: 2'7"
DISPL.: 39,900 lb.
FUEL: 700 gal.
WATER: 150 gal.
DEADRISE: 19 degrees
ENGINES (STD.): 2 x 715 mhp
 Cummins QSM11 6-cylinder diesels
ENGINES (as tested): 2 x 800 hp
 Volvo Penta D13 diesels
JETS: 2 x Hamilton HJ364
BASE PRICE: \$2,295,000



THE JET AGE

The past and present of jet drives and Hinckley.

Hinckley set the yachting world ablaze in 1994 with the introduction of its 36-foot Picnic Boat. Designed by Bruce King, this new model's remarkable resemblance to Ben Hinckley's first-ever boat built early in the 1930s likely wasn't accidental.

The Picnic Boat's delicate beauty attracted a lot of attention, but her single jet drive (prior to JetStick controls) deserves at least as much credit for the yacht's success in the marketplace. (See "The King of Picnic Boats," a feature about the original at yachtingmagazine.com.) For the past 18 years, Hinckley has been a champion of jet drives and continues its commitment to the system aboard the T48FB. I've had a love/so-what relationship with jets for about 20 years. The maneuverability that Hinckley's JetStick system allows makes me giddy, but the sluggish initial acceleration of water jets has always disappointed me. I'm pleased to say now that the newest systems, coupled to the beastly torque of modern diesel engines, have made me less conscious of the instantaneous bite of props and go with the flow of high-volume, big-thrust jets — the Hamilton units aboard the Hinckley among them.

Jet drives have always given yachts exceptional maneuverability, but nothing as good as you get from Hinckley's proprietary JetStick. As far as I'm concerned, it's about the easiest and most intuitive control I've ever used. And no one can deny the convenience of very shallow draft and the worry-free romp through a field of lobster traps.

When the weather turns nasty, the comfortable salon beckons. Lowering the table converts the dinette area into a berth.

all of the important data within the helmsman's peripheral vision. Custom chairs — two at the helm and one opposite — promise the guests a seat near the action.

Down a few steps from the salon, the U-shape galley basked in the flat light pouring through the tall windshield, side windows and a portlight near the forward bulkhead. Although I couldn't see the outside world from the lower deck, I didn't feel imprisoned below. Substantial fiddles will keep the chef's ingredients on the counter, but I would suspend preparation of my meal the instant the skipper decided to make time in snotty seas. As seakindly as this Michael Peters hull is, speed in rough going has a way of defeating any fiddle, these among them.

In addition to dry-stowage cabinets, the galley has a two-drawer over-under U-Line refrigerator and a top-loading freezer. This setup ought to satisfy most experienced cruisers' requirements, because these folks know which ingredients to stock for simple, but tasty, meals. Owners who cruise the T48FB from home port may want to prepare some of their meals in the shoreside kitchen, freeze them and pop them into the boat's Sharp stainless-steel microwave-convection oven. These quickly prepared eats will give them more time for fun.

A small stateroom opposite the galley would be good for occasional adult guests or a couple of children. Its limited amount of stowage may make long-term occupation impractical, unless one found other areas in which to stow



Ergonomics at the helm leave nothing to be desired (above left). Hinckley's T48FB shows off her aggressive side in Bahamian waters.

luggage and clothing. The head that goes with this stateroom also serves as the day-head. If I were negotiating to buy a T48FB, I'd ask if the yard could turn this second stateroom into a den furnished with a Pullman berth, a sumptuous lounge chair and a solid-fuel heater — simply for the fun of it. The master combined coziness with space and had a human-size en suite head. Even the shower stall seemed large enough to prevent the user from bouncing off the enclosure at every

turn. Tall hanging lockers, one port and the other starboard, are deep enough to hold dressy duds for a fancy dinner ashore when the mood strikes. Drawers under the V-berth will swallow foldable clothing, towels and bed linens.

Although we didn't have any seas to speak of during my sea trial, I know from talking with Michael Peters that the T48FB is designed to be a seakindly yacht. The warped-plane convex sections soften encounters with the waves, and the 19-degree

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Want to go for a swim or make a quick inspection of this yacht's jets? It's as easy as dropping the teak-covered swim platform. That teak step makes it easy to get back aboard.

T-SERIES TREAT

YOU CAN SEE MORE PHOTOS OF THE T48FB AND READ ABOUT THE FIRST PICNIC BOAT AT YACHTINGMAGAZINE.COM.

deadrise of the aftermost part of the planing surface gives the yacht enough bearing to cope with her payload and provide initial stability when she's ghosting along at displacement speed. She banked predictably into high-speed turns, didn't skid and held her course well in a straight line. She didn't scrub off much speed in the turns, her big Cummins diesels unobtrusively humming below the cockpit sole. A large panel in the sole lifts electrically to give access to the engine room. Hinckley understands the importance of service and has arranged the machinery space to allow the owner to perform routine checks or a professional mechanic to complete more complex service. Everything is labeled and easy to locate, and the area is well finished.

February in Southwest Harbor, Maine, isn't a good time to experience the view from — or the functionality of — the flying bridge, but I'll wager that it's up to the builder's high standards. In fact, Eric Goetz built the flying bridge of carbon fiber to reduce weight aloft. We didn't get to play with the hydraulically operated swim platform. It lowers to the static waterline, allowing swimmers to nearly float aboard. A step between the fixed forward part of the platform and the movable end gives swimmers a leg up, so to speak.

The T48FB seems ideal for all one's shoal-water exploring in the Bahamas, along the west coast of Florida and in the Keys and the Intracoastal Waterway. After all, I was happy on her off the coast of Maine in February, so I'd be happy with her anywhere — as I suspect her owners are too. **Y**

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