



# ICON STATUS

HINCKLEY DEBUTS A NEW FLAGSHIP FOR ITS PICNIC BOAT LINE, A 40-FOOTER  
THAT MAKES STYLE, PERFORMANCE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP LOOK EASY.  
BY JEANNE CRAIG

LOA: 42'0"  
Beam: 12'10"  
Draft: 2'2"  
Displ.: 25,000 lbs.  
Fuel: 375 gal.  
Water: 80 gal.  
Power: 2/480-hp Cummins diesel  
w/HamiltonJet 322 drives  
Price: \$1,249,000

# P

Peter O'Connell was standing beside Hull No. 1 of the Hinckley Picnic Boat 40, talking about his weekend aboard the exciting build that had just hit the water. While cruising on the new flagship of an iconic series, O'Connell, the company's CEO, decided to make a run to Block Island for the night. He made a reservation and headed to the marina. When he arrived, he discovered the dockmaster had assigned the 40 a high-profile slip on a T-dock near the facility's entrance. "He told us he was not about to hide this boat in the back of the marina," said O'Connell with a smile.

I took in the boat that was tied up at Hinckley's shipyard in Portsmouth, R.I., and understood why. The 40—the largest model in the lineup to date—was certainly made to be seen. The flagship looks a lot like the other models in the series; that is, it's a lobster-boat inspired craft with the tenor of a proper gentleman's motoryacht. The 40 has that curved sheer and signature toerail, the brightwork warmed by coats of varnish, and the smooth hull surface that's striking because it seems to take the paint just so. But as I'd learn, that patina didn't happen by chance. It's the result of construction techniques that are relatively forward-thinking—more so than you might imagine in a boat that appears to make everything look so easy.

"We want to keep things simple for the owner, so we designed this boat to be easy to handle and use," said Scott Bryant, Hinckley's vice president of product development. He was at the dock, along with Peter Saladino (the company's chief marketing officer), and the pair was eager to get aboard the 40 and take it for a sea trial on Narragansett Bay. We said goodbye to O'Connell and Bryant stepped to the helm, where he would demonstrate that point about effortless handling.

Like the first Picnic Boat that debuted almost 25 years ago, the new 40 is powered by jet drives and Hinckley's patented JetStick steering. Two decades ago, this propulsion was highly unusual on a mid-sized recreational boat. And yet it was a game-changer because it offered those who love the water a chance to explore the crannies of a coastline aboard a shoal-draft vessel that was highly maneuverable and efficient. It was a simple idea, but Hinckley did it elegantly. As a result, the Picnic Boat spawned imitators, although over time, it's maintained its place as a true original.

The 40—with a draft of just 2 feet, 2 inches—features the builder's newest iteration of JetStick, the joystick-operated steering and control system. With military specification hardware, it's more robust and offers greater precision and response. To emphasize this point, Bryant expertly maneuvered the gleaming boat out of the slip and down a fairway flanked by extraordinary racing sailboats



and custom yachts. "Even a seasoned skipper might think of this place as a high-anxiety marina," said Saladino. And yet Bryant manned the helm with low-key cool, directing the boat with gentle twists of the stick.

Once in the bay, he switched from the JetStick to the throttles so we could measure the boat's speed. The 40 had standard power—twin HamiltonJet 322s powered by 480-hp Cummins diesels. On open water, Bryant gave me the wheel so I could experience the new Dynamic Steering system, designed to automatically adjust steering tension and sensitivity based on speed. If anything, it brings the boat driving experience closer to the one you have at the wheel of a car. It was fun to put the boat into hard turns at a decent clip. "People have the impression jets won't corner," said Bryant. And yet the Michael Peters-designed modified deep-V hull on this 40 held its balance and control and behaved beautifully with nary a slip.

Our sea trial revealed a few nice surprises, including a top-end speed closer to 36 knots—a full knot faster than the builder recorded in its initial test run. As we cruised along the Rhode Island shoreline on a beautiful summer day, Bryant explained that the 40's strong performance was the result of that forward-thinking construction.

Hinckley flexed its expertise with advanced composite materials and build techniques on this Picnic Boat. The hull, for instance, combines an inner layer of carbon fiber with an outer layer of Kevlar (and healthy doses of Corecell foam core). Interestingly, the cloth is laid

up dry in the mold, so fibers can be aligned in the right direction. "That enables us to get the perfect resin-to-glass ratio, to optimize weight and stiffness," said Bryant. The structural grid is also laid up dry in the hull. Then, everything is vacuum-infused with epoxy. "We basically retooled the factory to build parts infusing epoxy instead of vinyl ester [used on previous Picnic Boats]. As a result, the boats are stronger and more durable." The company is so confident in the structural integrity of this 40 that it guarantees the hull and deck for life. In the end, this construction method enabled Hinckley to pull a lot of weight out of the boat, while adding strength and enhancing performance. Says Bryant, "When people ask us how we were able to get such good efficiency, I say through technology and innovation, not by throwing beautiful things off the boat."

It's true the 40 is not light on creature comforts. It was made to be an entertainer, with all the appointments of a luxury craft, now arranged in a reimagined cockpit. Unlike the original Picnic Boat, which directed passengers down the center of the deck—and, unfortunately, right through the middle of the conversation area—the 40 keeps foot traffic to the starboard side of the boat, where an open walkway makes it easy to move fore and aft. The social areas—furnished with lounges, good legroom and expandable tables—are set to port. There's one in the aft cockpit and another in the pilot-house, just aft of the helm. The skipper, by the way, has excellent sightlines, thanks to a huge windshield and big windows to port and



The cockpit layout creates a clear walkway to starboard; cherry wood is standard in the cabin, but teak is an option on the semicustom 40.

starboard—the one beside the helm slides open.

The 40 has its share of cool features, although my favorite is the powered hullside door. It opens with the click of a remote and slides neatly into the gunwale, rather than opening into the cockpit, so usable space isn't sacrificed. There's also an extended swim platform, SureShade retractable sun shade in the cockpit and CZone in the cabin—this digital switch interface replaces the traditional fuse panel and controls of all the onboard electrical systems, from pumps and lights to electronics.

The 40 is a day yacht at heart, but if the mood strikes for a night aboard, there's a comfortable cabin with a convertible berth forward (at 86 inches wide at the top, it's larger than a California king), a full galley and an exceptionally large head—it's so roomy, in fact, it really can double as a changing room. And then there is the interior woodwork, which is beautifully finished, as you'd expect in a boat built by one of Maine's premier yards. "The experience you'll have on the 40 is still very Hinckley," says Bryant. "We just arrived there a little differently on this boat." □

**Hinckley Yachts, 207-244-5531; hinckleyyachts.com**



RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE	dB(A)
600	4.0	1.0	2,375	68
1400	8.0	5.0	534	66
1800	9.0	9.0	364	69
2200	12.0	15.0	280	72
2600	19.0	22.0	312	77
3100	31.0	38.0	288	81
3300	35.0	47.0	263	81

**TEST CONDITIONS:** Performance data was supplied by Hinckley Yachts. Range is based on 90 percent of the advertised fuel capacity. Sound levels were measured at the helm; 65 dB(A) is the level of normal conversation.