

ABSOLUTE 58 BAVARIA E34 PRINCESS V65 SUNSEEKER PREDATOR 50

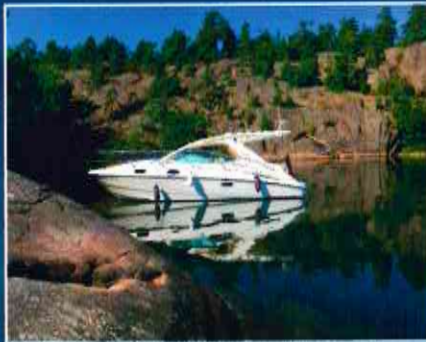
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SEALINE C430

Designed by naval architect Bill Dixon, the C430 offers a versatile layout, but does the voluminous interior lead to compromises out on the water?

Words **Jack Haines** Pictures **Richard Langdon**



Dark clouds are hanging in a menacing sky as a brisk breeze sighs through the swaying treetops lining the banks of the River Hamble around Mercury Yacht Harbour's basin. It isn't an ideal day for boating, and with the wind set to increase, it's looking likely that we're going to have the Solent to ourselves.

If this boat was a sportscruiser of old, then the prospect of peeping through a flapping letterbox in the canvas canopy and getting the odd soaking might lead you to retire to the warmth of the yacht club and see what the next day brings. However, the modern breed of enclosed hardtop sportscruiser, like the C430, turns this on its head. If, on marginal days, you really fancy getting the boat out and heading for a waterside lunch, you can do just that and wear nothing more than a T-shirt.

The Bill Dixon design majors on living space, so much so that if the weather is too miserable to even leave the berth, the C430 does a fine impression of a modern waterside apartment. It's certainly big enough. Standing next to it on the pontoon, you come to realise just how tall it is. It's 4in wider than the Jeanneau NC 14 and well over 1ft broader than Nimbus's slightly smaller 405 Coupé. You feel this size on the main deck, where those giant side windows and multiple glazed panels in the sliding sunroof ensure the interior is drenched in natural light. The saloon and cockpit merge effortlessly, partly because of the unobstructed threshold and partly thanks to the aft galley and its top-hinged window that opens the kitchen out to a slim bar area that serves the cockpit. This is a great spot for guests to congregate as food and drinks are prepared, and the spacious transom bench with wraparound backrests and a substantial folding table make the most of the boat's generous beam. Overhead, a canvas roof retracts at the touch of a button so you can switch between shade for lunch and exposure for an afternoon sun-worshipping session.

As an option, you can fit a wet bar with a sink and barbecue grill in the transom, providing a useful outdoor cooking area that keeps smoke and food smells out of the boat and doesn't eat into valuable space in the cockpit.

It's a remarkably easy boat to crew, with well-protected side decks that have great access via shallow steps up from either side of the cockpit. There are three substantial cleats dotted along each bulwark plus two extra ones low down on the stern, perfect for cross lines if you're berthing Med style. On the starboard side, a door adjacent to the helm means that the skipper can shout instructions to the crew easily or pop out on to the deck to get their hands dirty and take a line or two.

Sealine has sensibly placed the IPS joystick to starboard of the wheel, so the skipper can twiddle the controls and poke their head out of the door to check on proximity to a pontoon and talk to the crew while they're doing it. Edging out of our berth with the most powerful IPS600s burbling away beneath, they provide plenty of poke for slow-speed manoeuvres and shift the C430's 13-tonne weight around effortlessly. That said, in a stiff beam-on breeze, you might be thankful for the optional bow thruster on a boat with as much windage as the C430.

Helm door leads out to deep side decks with proper little bulwarks

Spacious and well-finished bathrooms



SPEED OF LIGHT

Sadly, the rest of the helm's ergonomics aren't quite as good. The helm seat is clever in that it swivels to face the dinette and creates a sociable seating area for when the boat is at rest, but the lack of fore and aft adjustment means that even taller skippers will be perched on the edge of the bench and reaching for the throttles, which are mounted on the top of the dash. When standing, everything including the chartplotter is within easy reach, but take a seat and you are marooned away from the major controls.

The plethora of glazing limits the number of blind spots, especially when looking aft from the helm, and the panels above mean that during hard turns to port, when the view is lost through the side window, you can still keep an eye on the horizon, but there is a huge blindspot behind the windscreen mullion closest to the helm. Clearly these mullions need to be beefy to support the attractive one-piece windscreen, but this one is large enough to eclipse the Isle of Wight ferry.

The C430 is available with IPS500 or 600 engines, and when the first one arrived in the UK with the larger units, some rather punchy performance claims were being bandied around. Forty-one knots was the initial figure, and then a prop change brought that down to 37 knots – still impressively rapid for such a sizeable beast. On the day, in an F3 with an irritable chop, we managed 35 knots on the nose, 20% fuel and 90% water, which still isn't bad going. During our test of the Jeanneau NC 14 (MBY, May 2014), we managed a top speed of just 30 knots with the largest IPS500 engines, which puts the C430's lively performance in perspective and will be of particular interest if you're in the business of getting places quickly. In reality, the low-down shove and torquey mid-range grunt of the 435hp motors is more useful than outright speed anyway. It's pretty efficient, too, returning over

1mpg all the way up to 30 knots, although its most efficient planing speed is 25 knots.

The handling is smooth and well weighted in a slightly lifeless IPS way, but even flat out, it steers predictably and never threatens to lose its grip on the water. It's not particularly engaging, but the boat is agile enough to hand-steer through the worst chop and should be a bit of a laugh in a following seaway.

With such a wide beam and relatively shallow hull shape, the C430 struggles at times to soak up the worst of the bumps when faced with a messy head sea. We experienced some nasty slams on a couple of occasions, and you have to pay attention when turning against the sea as it's easy to land on those broad chines. It didn't help that the trim tabs were out of action during our test so we were forced to travel with a higher running attitude than ideal for the conditions. If we had been able to angle the hull down and get the finer forward sections to cleave the water, rather tackling the chop on the flatter mid sections, the chances are we would have enjoyed a considerably softer ride.

COMFORT AND JOY

There is comfort in abundance below decks, however, where the C430 is available with either two cabins, like our test boat, or a three-cabin layout that sees the midships double split down the middle, allowing for either two double cabins or a double and a



The saloon is bursting with natural light

It's agile enough to hand-steer through the worst chop, and should be a laugh in a following seaway

twin. The versatility of the sleeping spaces doesn't stop there because in the forward cabin, you can opt for a fixed double with a vanity unit or scissor-action berths.

Sealine deserves credit for the cabin configurations on offer, allowing the customer to choose between six good-sized berths or a two-cabin arrangement that feels seriously indulgent on a boat of this size. It's a warm, welcoming interior in the glossy walnut and cream upholstery of our test boat. There's a pleasing sheen to the cabinetry and a tactility to door handles and handholds. This extends to the pair of bathrooms on board, which get deep sinks, plentiful artificial light and classy teak detailing in their shower compartments.

One of the smartest innovations is on the foredeck, where Sealine has taken the current trend for foredeck seating and run with it, offering a spacious fixed sunpad with a bench at its forward end and cushions that mount on the inside of the bow rails facing the other way to create a great little socialising space overlooking the bow. A couple of pop-up lights add a final sprinkle of fun so that you can use it after dark or better still, as the perfect spot for a sundowner.

SEE THE VIDEO



mby.com/c430

The full-beam master can be swapped for two double guest cabins



Single side access to the cockpit from the transom



Scissor-action berths are an option in the VIP cabin

A CLOSER LOOK
SEALINE C430

OUTBACK GRILL

Putting the wet bar on the transom allows for a bigger unit without pinching space in the cockpit. It's more than a token effort thanks to its large sink, grill and food prep station.



ON A SWIVEL

This clever pivot mechanism is a great way of ensuring the bench doesn't go to waste when the boat isn't on the move, and makes for a sociable seating area.



OPEN WIDE

With the cockpit doors open and window up, guests will naturally congregate around this area, and serving them here or at the cockpit couldn't be easier.



ENGINE ROOM

A hydraulic ram takes all the backache out of lifting the engine hatch and reveals a bright space that is easy to move around in. Access to both sides of the motors is good and the same can be said for the IPS pods themselves. The grate between the engines at the base of the access ladder is murder on the knees, though.



The C430 is a tall boat so some colour on the topsides might help to break up the monotonous white

The glazing in the sunroof means that natural light can pour down over the helm area even if the roof is closed

The galley is a good shape to be used at sea and the fiddled tops are good to see



A prop change brought the speed down to 37 knots – still impressively rapid for such a comfortable thing

VERDICT

At the end of our sea trial, we head-back to the Hamble with spots of rain falling on the windscreen. It's a pretty miserable late autumn day but even on a day like this, the C430 feels warm and welcoming, so imagine what it's going to be like on a proper summer's day. With an interior as light and spacious as this, we can see owners using the boat all year round as a waterside apartment regardless of whether they take it out to sea or not – for a 45ft sports cruiser, it manages the home-from-home feel better than most. There are question marks over the boat's ride but it's hard to come to a

definitive conclusion without the trim tabs working as they can have such a dramatic effect on the way the boat behaves. We know Sealine can build an effective hull – the SC35 and S330 both ride remarkably well despite their beamy designs – and it may be that the C430 can do the same with a bit of help from its trim tabs.

Let's hope so, because the boat offers levels of comfort that few rivals can match and in a part of the market where most people are looking for creature comforts rather than a hard-edged performance boat, Sealine is on the right track. **MBY** **Contact** See Sealine website for dealers. Web: www.sealine.com



THE HELM VIEW

The one-piece windscreen is appreciated but this mullion is way too big and produces a massive blindspot



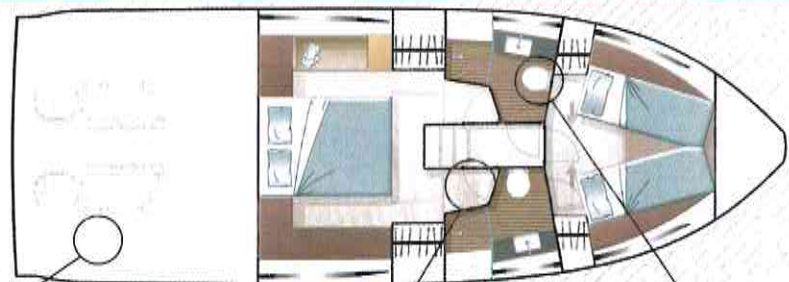
There's quite a lot of glare off this panel if you don't opt to have the second multifunction display

The joystick is in a sensible location that allows the skipper to poke their head out of the side door

THE DATA

LENGTH 44ft 4in (13.55m)

BEAM 13ft 9in (4.2m)



There is the option to have the smaller 370hp IPS500s for a claimed top speed of 30 knots

Even if you opt for the full-beam master cabin, there are two separate entrance ways

The size of the bathrooms on the C430 is impressive. Both are finished well, too

FUEL CAPACITY
241 imp gal (1,100 litres)
WATER CAPACITY
98 imp gal (450 litres)
DRAUGHT
3ft 6in (1.07m)
RCD CATEGORY
B (for 12 people)
DESIGNERS
Bill Dixon & Sealine
DISPLACEMENT
13.2 tonnes

PERFORMANCE

TEST ENGINES Volvo Penta IPS600. Twin 435hp @ 3,500rpm, 5.5-litre, 6-cylinder diesels.

FIGURES	ECO	2,300	2,500	2,700	2,900	FAST	3,100	3,300	MAX
RPM	1,330	2,300	2,500	2,700	2,900	3,100	3,300	3,500	
Speed	8.4	14.8	18.5	22.1	25.3	28.6	31.2	35.0	
LPH	15	73	83	93	103	119	133	169	
GPH	3.3	16.1	18.3	20.5	22.7	26.2	29.3	31.2	
MPG	2.55	0.92	1.01	1.08	1.12	1.09	1.06	0.94	
Range	491	178	195	208	215	211	206	182	
SOUND									
Helm	62	72	74	75	75	76	77	80	
Saloon	65	72	73	73	75	76	72	82	
Cockpit	72	79	80	82	80	81	81	84	

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures: imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and factors in 20% reserve. Figures taken from on-board readings, yours may vary. Prices include 20% VAT, F3 and slight chop for trial. Four crew, 20% fuel and 90% water on board.

THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from **£446,270 inc 20% VAT**
Price as tested **£557,561 inc 20% VAT**
Navigation pack (Raymarine i70 MFD, Axiom Pro 9 chartplotter, 260 VHF & autopilot) **£11,454**
Cruising pack (10kg anchor, electric windlass, extra cleats, interceptor trim system, adjustable steering wheel, cockpit canopies, screen cover, fenders & lines) **£12,982**
Comfort pack (opening ports in VIP cabin, teak platform and cockpit, sunroof, foredeck cushions & mosquito nets) **£16,254**
Hydraulic bathing platform **£23,891**
Air conditioning **£21,709**
= Options on test boat

RIVALS

JEANNEAU NC 14
Price from **€361,200 ex VAT**
An extremely handsome IPS-powered rival with a very clever interior. Only available with two cabins, though.

NIMBUS C405
£458,637 inc 20% VAT
A pricey alternative but beautifully put together and the solid, shaftdriven hull offers year-round usability.

