

## Grand Banks Eastbay 39SX

## DOWN EASIER

Going the Down Easter one better. BY KEVIN FALVEY

I often wonder whether other magazines actually test the boats they review. For instance, *Lakeland Boating* reported that the engine hatch aboard the Eastbay 39SX was in the cockpit. *Duh*. It's in the cabin sole. Also, it listed the draft as 2'4". Well, that's the hull draft—without props. With wheels, you need 3'4" of water to run. *Sheesh*. Then *Motorboating* stated that the engines in its test boat, the exact same boat I tested, were 480-bhp Yanmar diesels. At least the writer got the Yanmar part right. Don't get me wrong. *BOATING* makes errors, too, but screwups such as these are all the more egregious when attributed to a boat like the 39SX. This Down East express cruiser boasts jaw-dropping good looks, cabinet-quality finish, and a burly build. That it rides a hullform designed by the deep-V gurus at C. Raymond Hunt Associates is more reason to cheer: The 39SX made mush out of chop and wakes, which I can vouch for because I actually tested it.

The 39SX isn't perfect. No boat is. Its anchor roller, custom-cast from a chunk of stainless steel, lacks a chain stop. The captain must cleat off a line to the anchor to secure it in the roller. Having to do so isn't unseamanlike—quite the contrary—but when a boat is priced, built, and marketed with luxury and convenience in mind, such lapses glare like a spotlight off a white

foredeck. Check out what else I discovered. I promise that I looked, grabbed, probed, and prodded everything from bilge to hardtop.

**TEA FOR TWO.** The twin 500-bhp 6CXM-GTE2 Yanmar diesels powering my test boat are no longer offered for the 39SX. The benefits of their replacements—the 480-bhp 6LY3A-ETPs, which cost \$30,500 more than standard power—include higher alternator output (80 amps vs. 55 amps), an electronic LCD readout on the engine, stainless-steel exhaust elbows, replaceable cylinder liners, and ceramic-coated pushrod tappets, all of which make these engines the ones to choose.

These engines are also more durable and more user-friendly. The performance of the 39SX with the 480-bhp models should be at least as good as the numbers I collected with the 500s. Despite the horsepower difference, the 480s wind up higher, to 3300 rpm, and spin larger 34½"-pitch props.

When I hammered my test boat's throttles, the 39SX crested its bow wake in nothing flat, providing excellent visibility from the helm. Inclination through the cruising range is 4 degrees. Make no mistake: The true character of this boat hides behind its staid and classic looks. It



## BOATING

### Certified Test Results

#### Eastbay 39SX

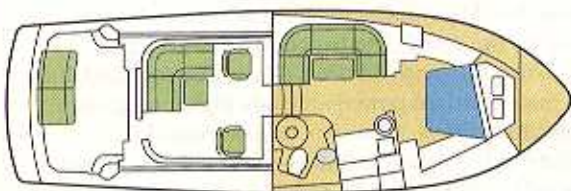


**HIGH POINTS** A cabin with an atrium? How thoughtful. Check those radiused windows in the aft bulkhead. Dockside, it exudes quiet repose, yet it provides an exciting ride.

**LOW POINTS** Servicing the genset's battery requires contortions. Please include an anchor rode chain stop as standard equipment.

rpm	SPEED			EFFICIENCY				OPERATION		
	knots	mph	gph	naut. mpg	stat. mpg	n. mi. range	s. mi. range	run angle	sound level	
900	7.5	8.6	3.0	2.5	2.9	789	908	0	73	
1200	8.8	10.1	7.8	1.1	1.3	356	410	0	73	
1500	10.1	11.6	12.3	0.8	0.9	260	299	3	77	
1800	15.5	17.8	16.9	0.9	1.1	290	334	4	78	
2100	20.5	23.6	23.8	0.9	1.0	273	314	5	79	
2400	25.2	29.0	32.1	0.8	0.9	249	286	4	80	
2700	29.2	33.6	48.6	0.6	0.7	190	219	4	83	
3000	32.5	37.4	50.7	0.6	0.7	203	234	3	85	

Advertised fuel capacity 352 gallons. Range based on 90 percent of that figure. Performance measured with three persons aboard, one-sixth fuel, one-eighth water. Sound levels taken at helm, in dB-A.



#### Monthly Payment \$3,582

(6.75% interest with 20% down on standard boat power, tax not included; 20-year loan to qualified buyers estimated by Excel Credit)

LOA	39'3"	bhp total.
Beam	13'2"	
Draft	3'4"	
Displacement (lbs., approx.)	29,000	
Transom deadrise	19°	
Bridge clearance	13'5"	
Max. cabin headroom	6'6"	
Fuel capacity (gal.)	352	
Water capacity (gal.)	301	
Price (w/standard power)	\$588,900	
Price (w/test power)	n/a	

**STANDARD POWER** Twin 455-bhp Caterpillar C7 in-line-6 diesel inboards.

**OPTIONAL POWER** Twin Caterpillar or Yanmar diesel inboards to 960

**CONTACT** Grand Banks Yachts, Dept. B, 2100 Westlake Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98109, 800/809-0909, www.granbanks.com.

boasts hard chines, lifting strakes, and 19 degrees of pound-reducing deadrise at the transom. Rev'er up, spin the wheel, and enjoy the way the 39SX leans and carves through turns. Head through the chop at 28 mph—you won't spill your coffee, and spray won't splatter the windshield. The 39SX delivers a thoroughly modern ride in open water, yet it's mannerly at idle speed, tracking easily with no need to oversteer.

**TIGER IN THE TANK.** The 39SX provides great living space and versatility, and it's permeated with that intangible "done right" feel. Shopping around? Check out Freedom Yachts' Legacy 42 (\$725,000 with twin 440-bhp Yanmar diesels). It's a bit longer and beamier but carries the same displacement. It uses its extra size to provide two staterooms, a door from pilothouse to sidedeck, and your choice of a galley-up or galley-down layout. The Legacy 42 also comes with a quiet, underwater exhaust. The Legacy 42's hardtop seals out the weather with canvas enclosure aft, whereas the 39SX has a solid bulkhead and door.

The 39SX is best suited for the cruising couple. Its accommodation plan puts a large salon, illuminated by large windows all around, and the helm together on the main level. Belowdecks are the dinette, galley, head, and master stateroom.

The salon windows open. Heavy interior curtains obviate the need for exterior canvas to keep out the sun's damaging rays. The center windshield pane is actually a deck hatch mounted vertically. Even though it's watertight, it opens for ventilation. The wetbar features a real granite top. Teak paneling covers the whole space.

There is no bulkhead forward of the helm. Therefore the lower deck galley and dinette are flooded with natural light pouring through the windshield. Plus there are three deck hatches in the cabin trunk. Belowdecks, the 39SX is as light and bright as an atrium.

Behind one raised panel door is the stateroom with its queen berth and large hanging locker. Behind another is the head. The galley features wood-paneled appliances, latches so heftily chromed they could be from a 1930s Kelvinator, and all the conveniences of home.

**PRACTICALLY SPEAKING.** Convenience extends beyond amenities to boat use as well. The large cockpit, serviced by a boarding door and teak grate platform, works as well for deck chairs as it does for fishing. Sole hatches provide access to the fuel tank and steering gear. Broad steps, wide sidedecks, and double-stanchioned, thigh-high railings make going forward secure. Much to my pleasure, there are two sets of spring cleats per side. The anchor locker provides excellent rode access as well as the room to stow a second anchor.

Engine access is via a gas-assist hatch in the salon sole. Internal sea strainers protect the engines: Most boats this size use less effective exterior strainers. Everything is bonded, the limbers are sealed, and access to most service points is good. However: Battery #3, the genset battery, located aft and to port, will require a trained monkey to remove. Still, this is a great engine room, as evidenced by the salt-eating demisters installed in the engine air intakes.

Looking to cruise in luxury and not look like every other boat in the basin? Take the 39SX for a spin. ↴



#### EXTRA POINT

Check out the isolation-mounted exhaust system, which cuts down noise and vibration.