

MOTOR BOAT & YACHTING



PRINCESS V62 FULL TEST

V FOR VICTORY

Fast, agile and beautifully engineered – the best British export since the Spitfire?



Flying Sorcery

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By packing in such a lot of accommodation and still maintaining performance levels, Princess have pulled off a spellbinding piece of wizardry with their V62. But is it too good to be true?

Text: David Marsh Photos: Lester McCarthy



AT A GLANCE

Length 63ft 7in (19.39m)

Flat out 37.1 knots

Test engines

Twin 1,200hp MTU

Price from £1.10 million

inc UK VAT (1,015hp CAT);

£1.14 million inc UK VAT

(1,200hp MTU)



Conjuring tricks are sleights of hand, not real magic – the challenge is making sure that no one notices. Boat interiors are very much like that. You can't magic space from thin air, so if a designer wants to pack more in than the competition – an extra cabin, heads compartment or dinette, say – there are only two options: make every area smaller, or make the boat more corpulent and risk damaging its ride and handling.

Either way, you hope no one notices.

Yet true magic does seem to have found its way on board the V62. This boat handles like a dream and there's definitely no sign of corpulence. Its three cabins and two heads, and in particular its spacious cockpit, all feel at least as roomy as its rival's counterparts. Yet whichever competitor it's pitted against, it emerges smelling of roses. Azimut's spectacular 62S feels equally spacious, but if you want a third cabin you have to lose the lower dinette. Sunseeker's new Predator 64 has no lower dinette at all, with the third bunk-bed cabin taking this space. Fairline's Targa 64 sports a huge galley, but that gets scythed in half if you specify the tiny lower dinette. It's only the Targa 64's unrivalled third ensuite heads that the V62 has no answer for. Otherwise, on the V62, you get it all: a non-bunk-bed third cabin, a full six-person dinette, a spacious cockpit and a great big galley, too. Magic indeed.

Silence is golden

Having conjured the most remarkably well-balanced above-and-below-decks accommodation I've seen on a sportscruiser this size, Princess have added two other things that could easily be deal-makers for some buyers. The first is uncanny peace and quiet. Fitted with twin 1,200hp MTUs, the largest of the two engine options, our V62 produced such remarkably low noise readings that I rechecked the calibration on my two sound meters after the test. Princess have taken a giant leap ahead in this area. For instance, the outgoing V65 and Fairline's Targa 64 are not noisy boats, just about par for the course. Yet at any given speed, compared with these two boats the V62 generates around half the noise at the helm or in the saloon, and a little more than half in the cockpit. As a result, it's an amazingly relaxing boat to cruise aboard, even hurtling along well above 30 knots. On board, I could barely believe my ears. Just like a large, whisper-quiet luxury limo, it's bound to make a huge difference to how fatigued you feel at the end of a long trip.

Princess's other eye-watering proposition is the V62's current price tag. Powered by the entry level 1,015hp CAT engines, the V62 kicks off with an inc VAT price of £1.1 million. That's a cool half million less than the Azimut 62S. Even if we dodge exchange-rate issues and stick to comparing Sterling-priced boats, Fairline's Targa 64 is £300,000 more with the same 1,015hp engines. Sunseeker's Predator 64 gets closest, but fitted with the 1,200hp engines that power the fastest V62, it's still £220,000 extra.

In times gone by, we might have attributed a degree of that price gap to variations in behind-the-scenes finish or perhaps differences in specification. Not on this boat, though. The V62 may be competitively priced, but Princess don't charge extra for the hi-lo bathing platform as Azimut do on the 62S.



The V62 helm has space for a small chart.

+ We like

The V62 is an implausibly competent and well-rounded sportscruiser. For its intended purpose, it's as close to sportscruiser heaven as you could expect.

- We don't like

The fact that the near-faultless V62 makes it difficult to produce a critical, fault-finding boat test report.



Princess have conjured the most remarkably well-balanced above-and-below-decks accommodation I've seen on a sportscruiser this size



Leather sideboard inlay is a nice detail, helping to keep things in place under way. The V62 has a good assortment of handrails, including one behind the helm.

Everywhere I looked, there was evidence that Princess had upped the ante. Now, their behind-the-scenes finish is almost as good as their visible finish. For instance, a number of drawers had plush padded-leather linings inside. Wherever possible, Princess had incorporated drawers under berths and settees, instead of less accessible top-opening lockers, so very few storage areas involve a wrestling match with an unco-operative cushion and a loose plywood lid. Even the smallest of eye-level locker doors benefit from a pair of good-quality gas struts. The larger wardrobe doors and those with heavy mirrors attached had four sets of sturdy-looking soft-close hinges ensuring that they don't droop over time. Although Princess have chosen to sidestep some of boating's more whimsical delights, such as multi-coloured lighting, the practical detail they have loaded the V62 with is exactly the sort of thing that I would want on board my boat.

Driving the V62

It seems incongruous describing a 24-tonne sports cruiser as being a huge amount of fun to drive. Yet what veteran Princess designer Bernard Olesinski has produced is – remarkably – a 63ft 7in (19.39m) boat that is more enjoyable to drive, more agile and more finely honed than a lot of 50-footers. There's no downside either – the V62's remarkable grace does not come at the expense of poor directional stability, or knife-edge handling that requires constant attention or correction. If you don't believe in true magic, you may well do after a spin on the V62.

Its wonderful agility is supported by a slew of other benefits. The V62 only has a single main window each side of the hardtop and the helmsman's all round view out is good and safe. The large sliding sunroof helps, too – as the

Our V62 produced such remarkably low noise readings that we rechecked the calibration on our two sound meters after the test

boat heels into the tighter turns, even a shorty like me can see out through the opening. Those amazingly low sound levels reduce driver fatigue no end. In fact, so low is the engine noise inside that the loudest sound is the slap of the waves on the hull, just where they initially impact about a third of the way back along the boat. For sports cruisers with large open-plan spaces below and forward of the windscreens, that sound is largely unavoidable in choppy conditions.

As a driver, what else do I like? Big, comfy fully adjustable seats, an adjustable wheel, a clearly visible compass, plenty of handrails, and adjustable vents that blow cool draughts of air onto the helmsman and their sidekick when inclement weather forces you to close the sunroof and electric side windows.

By way of producing a credible, balanced boat report, I'd like to offer my most serious criticisms of the V62. The fiddly windscreen-wiper buttons, and the diddy MTU engine gauges that Princess fit are pants. They have positioned the starboard wiper button to the right of the wheel (above the screenwash), and the port control button miles away to the left of the wheel. If you had to use both hands to wash/wipe your car windscreen on a long, intermittently rainy trip, you'd soon get grumpy. Surely these controls should be grouped together? Princess may not be responsible for MTU's fiddly, stiff-buttoned, unintuitive mini-gauges, but do yourself a favour and specify the usual, excellent full-size MTU engine-monitoring screens, which are much more useful and effective. As criticisms go, pretty damning stuff, don't you think?

Propelled by the largest 1,200hp MTU engines, our V62 achieved 37 knots. Roger, the head honcho at the Princess Swanwick office, reckons these are the engines to plump for, rather than the smaller 1,015hp CATs. Given his tremendous experience, those amazing noise levels and the modest price difference, it looks like a done deal. Still, as a potential owner, I'd be interested to know how the smaller CATs performed. In theory, the V62 would lose three knots with the C18 CATs. However, we've achieved some impressive test figures with these engines. For instance, the Azimut 62S (which Azimut claim weighs 27.5 tonnes) achieved 34.7 knots with the C18 CATs. More impressive still was the fuel economy: 50.5gph at 25 knots vs 58.7gph for the V62 at the same speed; or 76.0gph vs 83.3gph at 33 knots in the 62S's favour. These are all recorded fuel-flow figures too, not less accurate theoretical predictions. In my



Under way, free-standing stools tuck tightly in between curved table legs.





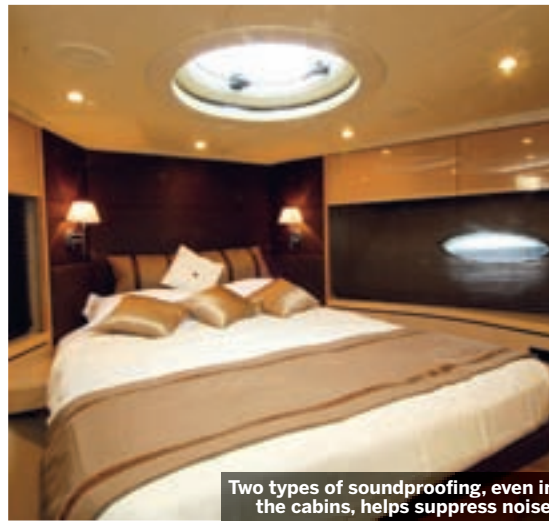
Generous 6ft 5in (1.96m) headroom in owner's cabin, with the same in the galley, dinette and forward cabin.



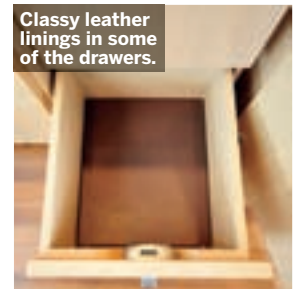
All berths are 6ft 3in (1.91m) long.



Both ensuite heads are roomy affairs with good stowage.



Two types of soundproofing, even in the cabins, helps suppress noise.



Classy leather linings in some of the drawers.



Supremely practical fiddles in most eye-level lockers.



Sideboard unit (to right) adds considerably to overall galley stowage.



What Bernard Olesinski has designed is a 63ft 7in boat that is more enjoyable to drive and more agile than a lot of 50-footers

Sadly, no rough stuff on our test day but the V62's agility and composure in calm conditions is truly wonderful.

experience, the C18 CATs are also very responsive engines, reacting faster to a handful of throttle. So while it's clear that the V62 works brilliantly with the MTUs, it may be that the CATs prove to be a good match, too.

Above and below decks

Builders who cheat to achieve that extra magical space inside are usually exposed once wardrobes and locker doors are opened to reveal that thongs and cigarette papers are the only cruising items you'll be packing. Not on the V62. While the cabin storage below decks is about par for the course for a big sports cruiser like this, the cockpit is something of a superstar. Too many big sports cruisers rely on the tender garage for the majority of their deck storage, creating a day-to-day access nuisance that can drive you mad. By contrast, the V62 has a large L-shaped locker running under the cockpit seats, a dedicated parking spot for the liferaft, plus an invaluable big fender (or folding bicycle) sized locker under the cockpit seats. There is a smattering of smaller lockers too, plus the ubiquitous wet-bar. If you have trouble with storage on the V62, you probably need a bigger boat.

The galley deserves a special mention. It packs a fair amount of storage into its L-shaped form, but it's even more generous than it first appears, courtesy of the neighbouring sideboard that sweeps round the bulkhead, opposite the dinette. This unit contains more fiddled shelving alongside Perspex holders for tumblers and bottles. Plus, it provides a useful over-spill counter if the chef manages to fill up the sparkly black countertop. I'm a big fan of the deep Perspex fiddles that Princess fit inside their lockers, which are more effective

than thin metal bars or solid (i.e. non-see-through) fiddles. Stir in twin sinks, a domestic-size fridge-freezer, and a moulded locker under the galley floor, and there's little beyond a built-in ice-cream maker for a good cook to long for.

Unless you're determined to have a permanent crew member on board, I wouldn't opt for the crew cabin. The descent down the lengthy vertical ladder is not the easiest, and with no cabin gobbling up space, access to the batteries, steering gear and the generator alongside (behind the engine room proper) would probably be easier. Space and service access in the engine room is okay, although it hasn't got the space-to-spare feel of the Azimut 62S.

Unlike on the 62S, you can't reach the port side deck directly from the cockpit on the V62 unless you clamber across the seating. Instead, you need to swing around the bathing platform. But the benefit is enormous – a far larger and much more sociably arranged U-shaped seating area. Given how easy it is to move safely and quickly around the V62's decks, with its steps inclined gently down to the bathing platform and its abundant handrails, I reckon it's an almost entirely one-sided trade.

Easy movement makes for easy mooring, too. The extra pair of cleats mounted low on the transom corners are ideally placed to take the archetypal crossed lines needed for stern-to berthing. There's space for a Williams 325 tender in the garage, but also room for a PWC on the hi-lo bathing platform. In an MOB situation, being able to rapidly launch the jet-RIB, and having the option of dropping the platform into the water to recover a weakened or unconscious crew member, is a fantastic safety feature that would give me peace of mind.



Playtime! Garage hides Williams' superb 325 jet-RIB.



Note the dedicated liferaft locker under seat.



Service access is generally okay, but there are roomier rivals.

Datafile Princess V62

Verdict

You know you're on to something special when the biggest criticism you can level at a boat is 'fiddly windscreen-wiper controls'. Still, Princess have always had the knack of designing and building boats with very few flaws – boats that may or may not appeal on a subjective level because of your individual fondness for a particular style, but certainly ones that give you almost nothing to complain about.

This boat, however, offers something extra special, something far beyond the mere absence of fault. The whole package hangs together in such a supremely balanced way, that it's bound to put the wind up its obvious rivals. Whereas most competitions involve a weighing of pros and cons, pitch the V62 against its opponents, and in no crucial department that I can think of does it seem to take a beating of any real consequence. Having comfortably held its own in general terms, it then wades in with its three killer features: that magical extra space on board, easily the lowest sound levels we've ever recorded on a big sports cruiser, and an amazing starting price that will have you believing that Princess forgot to add the VAT.

Personally, I've always had a soft spot for sports cruisers with an indulgent dollop of flamboyance. Since 2006, I've had the pleasure of nosing around various Azimut 62Ss, and three years later the fabulous owner's suite still takes my breath away. Yet if I had to choose a single big sports cruiser to own and run, it would now be the Princess V62. Actually, make that any sports cruiser of any size. It's as close to my idea of sports cruiser heaven as I've seen. **MBY**

Thumbs up or thumbs down?

THUMBS UP

- Remarkable value for money
- Well-balanced accommodation
- Exceptionally low noise levels
- Abundant cockpit storage
- Handling: fluid, precise, enjoyable
- Good top and cruising speed

- Superb, practical galley
- Easy movement around decks
- Hi-lo bathing platform

THUMBS DOWN

- Fiddly windscreen-wiper controls
- Nothing else of significance!

Rivals



Azimut 62S from £1.60 million inc UK VAT (twin 1,015hp)

Versatile deck saloon and fabulous owner's suite. Unlike the V62, the lower dinette disappears if you want a third cabin. Economical yet strong 34.7-knot performance with the only engine option: 1,015hp CATs. *MBY* tested February 2007



Fairline Targa 64 from £1.42 million inc UK VAT (twin 1,015hp)

Like the V62, the Targa 64 sports a below-decks galley and three roomy cabins. However, the payback for the unrivalled third ensuite heads is that the huge 'full galley' is cut in half if the tiny lower dinette is specified. *MBY* tested November 2007



Sunseeker Predator 64 from £1.30 million inc UK VAT (twin 1,100hp)

Tri-cabin 64 is replacement for the Predator 62 that *MBY* tested in February 2007. The innovative 64 sports an optional small flybridge. Huge areas of glazing ensure a great view out.

Data

Overall length	63ft 7in (19.39m)
Beam	16ft 5in (4.99m)
Displacement	20.1 tonnes light, 23.5 tonnes loaded (loaded = light + 100% fuel & water)
Draught	3ft 8in (1.13m)
Air draught	14ft 3in (4.85m) ex antenna, radar etc
Fuel capacity	750 imp gal (3,410 litres)
Water capacity	110 imp gal (500 litres)

Test Engines

Twin 1,200hp MTU 8V M83 1,200hp @ 2,450rpm V8-cylinder 17.8-litre diesels

RPM	1,800	1,900	2,000	2,100	2,200	2,300	2,400	2,470
SPEED	24.9	27.3	29.6	31.0	32.8	34.5	36.0	37.1
TRIM	5.0°	5.0°	4.5°	4.5°	4.5°	4.0°	4.0°	4.0°
GPH	58.5	64.2	69.1	76.7	82.5	89.2	95.5	100.5
MPG	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.38	0.37
RANGE	255	255	257	243	239	232	226	221

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on readings from on-board fuel gauges – your figures may vary considerably
100% fuel, 80% water, 4 crew, Williams tender, safety stores, no liferaft 18°C air temp, 1,025mb pressure light chop, Force 3 for speed trials

Gentle cruising	24.9 knots, 255 miles @ 1,800rpm
Fast cruising	32.8 knots, 239 miles @ 2,200rpm
Flat out	37.1 knots, 221 miles @ 2,470rpm

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)	Saloon	Cockpit	Sunbed	Helm
Slow cruising @ 25 knots	62	75	73	62
Fast cruising @ 33 knots	67	79	78	67
Flat out @ 37 knots	69	79	79	69

Sound levels measured with sunroof open and cockpit door closed

Price from	£1.10 million inc UK VAT (1,015hp CAT)
Price as tested	£1.22 million inc UK VAT (twin 1,200hp MTU)
Designer	Bernard Olesinski & Princess, 2009
RCD category	B (for 16 people)
Contact	Princess Motor Yacht Sales Tel: +44 (0)1489 557755 Website: www.princessyachts.com

Layouts



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PRINCESS

V62



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