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BAVARIA 350

The 350 Sportline represents an impressive standard of construction and safety, combined with very good value for money

There can be few production yachts which have been run up on the rocks at speed and come away with only superficial grazes. Happily this did not occur during the *Yachting World* trial of the Bavaria 350 Sportline, but the Bavaria importers, Opal Marine, eagerly show a video of this test being carried out on one of their craft.

Bavaria have a range of nine models, built in Germany, from a 30-footer to a new 50-footer to be launched in September. All models are built to Germanische Lloyd standards, with foam sandwich in the topsides, local carbon fibre reinforcement and a Kevlar outer skin to protect the bow in collision. The keel step has a special flange to protect the keel bolts from undue sheer loads in the event of a collision.

The 350 Sportline we tested belonged to the Neptune School of Yachting. She

was purchased because, of all the yachts of this size and price, she needed the least alteration to comply with the Department of Trade and Industry's stringent regulations governing sail training vessels.

The hull has a modern look to it with short overhangs and a well-profiled cabin top. The model tested was fitted with a fin keel, although a wing keel, designed to provide the same righting moment as the fin, is available as an extra.

On deck

Essentially the 350 Sportline is identical to the standard model, except that it has a more basic specification. The standard 350 has teak decks whereas the Sportline version has these only in the cockpit and around the mast. Instead of custom-made deck hardware, the Sportline has an off-the-shelf variety.

The result is that the 350 Sportline costs about £11,000 less.

At the bow there is a massive stemhead fitting, combining a bow roller and a special pivoting dual-roller system which enables easy dropping and stowing of the anchor. It also doubles as the chainplate for the forestay and the twin-groove Furlex roller furling.

The mast is fitted with a removable inner forestay and twin swept-back spreaders which are attached to substantial chainplates with equally large internal bracing. The backstay is connected well above the deck to a strop attached to both sides of the transom and tensioned by block and tackle. A boom vang comes as standard.

In the cockpit, there are standard Lewmar winches and all the lines from the mast run aft (externally, along the cabin top) to Easylock stoppers. A particularly nice feature, common to all Bavarias is the locker in the cockpit coaming to stow the sheet ends.

Two shallow lockers are provided on either side of the cockpit and there are twin lockers aft. The emergency tiller, which fits into a socket on the aft end of the cockpit coaming, is stored in the starboard aft locker, while the port locker has an internal moulding designed to take two 13kg gas bottles. This locker drains overboard and we found the gas installation first class.

Over the 36in wheel are twin instrument displays. Autohelm ST series log and depth units are fitted as standard,



Powering through the waves, the 350 felt pleasantly stiff in the water



The deck near the mast is safe to work on

ON TEST

although there are two extra spaces to fill – ST wind or even GPS displays, for example. We found the engine control panel rather awkwardly positioned – at ankle level below the helmsman's seat. Generally the deck hardware seemed to be suitably sized and we liked the wide, uncluttered side decks. These were covered in an effective grey rubber nonslip material, of the same variety used on Dehlers.

Accommodation

Belowdecks the accommodation of the Sportline is identical to the standard version. Two standard layouts are available: the Lagoon has a double cabin forward and aft and twin head compartments, while the Caribic version, which we tested, has a single head forward and twin cabins aft.

The saloon seemed short on headroom, but this has been rectified on newer models as the cabin sole has been dropped by 3in. We thought the saloon had a pleasant ambience, with warmly coloured, red mahogany woodwork and natural light flooding in from an overhead hatch and transparent garage for the main hatch. Opening ports were fitted around the coachroof. The waterproof headlining was a foamy, fawn-coloured material.

Joinery and floorboards in the boat we sailed seemed robust; all cupboard doors were fitted with gas-filled struts to restrain their movement. However, although the galley and chart table

fiddles doubled as effective handholds, we felt that the saloon area could have done with more. Two batteries with screw seals, of 80amp/hr capacity for the engine and 120amp/hr for the domestic circuit, were firmly sited in the vented locker below the starboard settee. Batteries are wired so that the domestic circuit cannot drain the engine battery.

The galley work surface was in grey 1/2in thick formica, with two deep circular sinks, cold pressurised water and a chest-type cool box. Along the bulkhead by the stove a metal plate had been fitted by the owner in accordance with the DTI code. There was plenty of cupboard stowage for galley items.

Opposite was the reasonably deep, forward-facing chart table and waterproof fabric-covered navigator's bench. The electrics panel was fitted with pop-out circuit breakers and battery isolation switches.

In each of the aft cabins the most novel feature is the large escape hatch, facing into the cockpit at an angle, where it is partly hidden under hinged cockpit seats. This provides good natural lighting and ventilation as well as an emergency exit.

Forward, the head compartment is offset to port and there are large loops in the head inlet and outlet to stop syphoning. The forward double cabin has a reasonable amount of stowage and room to change with the door closed.

Under sail and power

Passing Chichester Bar beacon in 15 knots of true wind, we came onto the wind and the log edged up to eight knots. The 350's rudder seemed well balanced under working jib (a 130 per cent jib is standard) and her fully battened mainsail. She seemed stiff and, without easing the sheets, we were able to bear away without putting the gunwale underwater.

Auxiliary power comes from a 28hp Volvo and a saildrive. This takes a couple of seconds to bite, but we found that even with the propeller so far forward she was able to turn in her own length. The engine was well soundproofed and vibration-damped.

Generally the Bavaria 350 Sportline represents good value for money. ■

Dimensions:

LOA	36ft 7in	11.15m
LWL	29ft 6in	8.98m
Beam	11ft 10in	3.60m
Draught (fin)	5ft 5in	1.65m
(wing)	4ft 5in	1.35m
Disp	11,022lb	5,000kg

Sail area (inc 100 per cent foretriangle) 516ft² 48m²

Engine: Volvo 2003 28hp (20.5kW) saildrive

Price: £55,424 (ex VAT and delivery).

Built by: Bavaria Yachtbau GmbH, D-8701 Giebelstadt/Würzburg, Postfach, Tel: (0) 9334 1001. Fax: (0) 9334 8213.

Marketed by: Opal Marine Ltd, Sparkes Marina, Hayling Island, PO11 9SR. Tel: (0705) 466075. Fax: (0705) 461838.



Fully battened main comes as standard



Top, escape hatches to the cockpit are fitted in the after cabins. Above, opposing wood grains are an interior design feature

