



The brief...

Sessa add a dash of Italian flair to the 40ft flybridge market with its new Fly 40. To understand the boat fully I sidestep Portofino and head to the hedonistic fleshpots that is Eastbourne to see if there's any substance behind the style. **Nick**

LOA: 41ft 3in (12.6m)
PRICE: from £414,916 incl. VAT
TOP SPEED: 28 knots
BUILDERS: Sessa Marine
ENQUIRIES www.bateswharf.com

If ever there was a segment of the market in need of a shot of barefaced excitement, the 40ft flybridge sector is it. The simple fact is that most 40ft flies are just too damn good to be truly exciting.

They are so finely honed, so perfectly proportioned to squeeze out every last ounce of cruiser. So while the interiors come packed with innovation and style the exterior design is left to tow the line rather than set the tone.

If anyone was going to break this stylistic conformity, it was probably going to be the Italians.

Design & build

From the home of 'form over function' thinking, Sessa already has a reputation for daringly different design. It is also a comparative flybridge newcomer and so unburdened by years of convention, something its Fly 54 ably demonstrates – a boat that not so much stands out from the crowd as walks off muttering something about sheep... With less GRP to play with, the Fly 40, inevitably, has less of the 54's visual impact, but it still stands out. The topsides include that familiar Sessa curve at the waterline, while the saloon windows drop invitingly to deck level. The transom is an elegantly formed reverse sheer moulding set between twin stainless steel transom gates, two slim black pillars rising to the flybridge overhang, offering a privacy curtain for the cockpit.

Optional hull colours help the boat's style-count and include a stunning metallic silver-grey, or the shimmering jet black of our test boat. Detail work is another high point.

Sessa Fly 40

Are 40ft flybridges just too functional? If anybody can add excitement it's the Italians

REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM



PHOTOS: Mike Jones



Beautifully stainless steel ports may not give the biggest aperture, but they look great, engine vents feature a matching slash of stainless steel, while the stanchions taper stylishly into thin air level with the cockpit. Every piece of deck gear is stainless steel, from the cleats and fairleads through to the wiper arms and even the anchor. The teak on the bathing platform and cockpit comprises of thick lateral slats rather than the usual slim longitudinal fillets employed by most builders.

On board, the straight cockpit bench features twin-tone upholstery, while the underside of the flybridge overhang is lined with dark brown soft touch vinyl inserts. Access to the flybridge is via an elegant stainless steel ladder, thick teak treads canted back far enough that it can be walked down like stairs, and there's no old fashioned radar arch, just a pared back plinth made of – you've guessed it.

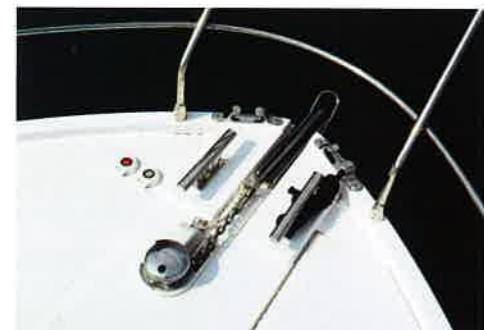
A single sliding door limits the size of opening between cockpit and saloon, but once inside you find yourself in a cool crisp haven of delectable materials. The layout is entirely conventional, saloon aft, raised helm, lower galley and two

cabins, both en suite, but the detailing is exquisite. From the Chenille fabric of the settee and shaggy tufted carpet over 'nut' wooden flooring to the deep brown GRP mouldings and pale hessian headlining panels with inset lights, the look and the feel is pure Italian. And the good news is that all this form doesn't come at the expense of function. The sideboard opposite the

"All this form doesn't come at the expense of function"

settee has masses of storage and there's a cupboard with secure dedicated crockery and glass stowage. There's also the option of a TV that retracts into the back of this unit. Workspace in the galley is a little limited but again there's plenty of storage, and a real treat

lies under the top tread of the steps down from the saloon – a 5kg washing machine. The guest cabin has space to stand and change, although headroom inevitably dips significantly over the twin single beds, but any deficit here pays off in the master cabin which benefits from masses of floor space and stowage. Both cabins are en suite with separate shower stalls, the master being slightly larger and private and the guest cabin accessing the day toilet compartment.



Performance & handling

Style isn't the only area where this Sessa differs from convention. While most flybridge 40-footers run on conventional shafts, the Sessa features Volvo's IPS pod drive system, complete with forward facing duoprops.

Just the one engine option is offered, twin IPS400, which utilises the D4-300 commonrail four cylinder 300hp turbo-charged and super-charged diesel engines. Despite being a couple of cylinders down on the D6 units more commonly found in this size of boat, the installation is surprisingly smooth and refined, noise levels at speed pegged comfortably below

80dB(A) at the lower helm while on the flybridge the motors are all but inaudible.

Pick up onto the plane is strong, and a top speed of 28 knots on test with three crew, less than half tanks and no gear on board suggests a low to mid 20s cruising gait, confirmed by 3000rpm equating to a comfortable 22 knots, at which point the motors are consuming 18.5 gph for a fuel burn rate of 1.2mpg giving a range just shy of 200 miles.

Throw the boat into a full lock high speed turn with finger light power steering and the turning circle is decidedly more stadium than sixpence.

It's perfectly adequate for a cruiser, but I suspect the steering lock is artificially limited to avoid the excessive heel that can afflict some IPS boats. Most owners won't even notice, but if you're expecting Ferrari performance and handling from your Italian stallion you're going to be a mite disappointed.

But what is impressive is how solid the boat feels. Even at the lower helm there is virtually none of the creaking and groaning of interior joinery that blights some boats of this size and type. And, of course, back in dock the standard-fit IPS joystick makes parking a point-and-go cinch.



On deck

We love the pull-down shade

Storage in the cockpit is limited to open-fronted lockers beneath the bench seat, although there is that huge lazarette beneath the saloon floor. A flybridge extending right out to the transom creates **plenty of space upstairs** as well as allowing for a neat **pull-down shade** from the trailing edge to shield the cockpit

from the sun's rays or prying eyes if berthed stern-to. The flybridge bimini folds away very neatly on top of the substantial rails surrounding the dinette at the aft end of the flybridge.

Further forward a **large sunpad** sits alongside the double helm, with a wet-bar directly behind. Pulpit rails extend well aft inspiring confidence although they are a little low and there's no inboard rail (it's possible to reach the flybridge coaming rail, but only if the flybridge cover is off).





Interiors

Good storage solutions and decent-sized cabins

For all the glitz and glamour, the layout of the Fly 40 is conventional and practical with **two decent sized en-suite cabins**. The master cabin is an excellent size with abundant storage, including a **full-height wardrobe** and matching shelved locker, augmented by a locker under the foot of the bed and a cavernous hold accessed by lifting the entire base of the bed on twin gas struts. The guest cabin is a little more compromised but still perfectly adequate and benefits from a small **hull window** as well as a porthole. The car-type stereo at the foot of one of the berths seems an odd location for all but the most dexterously toed. There's another **vast storage hold under the saloon floor** just forward of the engines, accessed by a large hinged trap in the saloon floor. The galley has plenty of drawers and lockers as well as a **large fridge freezer**. Work space is a little limited, but a small hull window lets in extra light and an opening port hole adds ventilation.



From the helm

Bizarre centrally mounted steering wheel but great all-round viz

The slight oddity of both helm positions is that despite both having a double helm seat, the **steering wheel is centrally mounted**. Indeed at the lower helm it's slightly to left of centre, while the throttles are off to the right. In practice it's not something that really causes an issue, it just feels a little strange on first acquaintance. The raised lower helm gives excellent visibility, thick quarter mullions being far enough

forward not to cause any issues and huge pantograph wipers clearing an excellent field of vision. A proper alarm panel for the four automatic bilge pumps is a reassuring sight. The low console on the flybridge puts the steering wheel between the helmsman's knees, although tilt adjustment helps and it's not as uncomfortable as it sounds. **Visibility is predictably excellent** in all directions from up top except

for the stern during close quarters manoeuvres. Because the flybridge access hatch is on the other side to the helm, there is no view of the bathing platform when reversing into a berth. The increasing tenor and volume of the deck crew's warning shouts relative to the closing gap do work excellently as pseudo reversing sensors however.



Specification & value

A starting price of about £415,000 will put a reasonably equipped boat on the water but factor in another £20,000 for the Elegance Pack (upgraded galley surfaces, leather inserts to rails, console and table, and that shaggy saloon carpet) and the Cruise pack (bow thruster, colour chart plotter at both helms, and the flybridge bimini). Antifouling is the only other essential, a disappointing £2000 extra (does anyone ever order a 40ft flybridge boat without antifouling?) Beyond that, add another £15,000 if you want the hydraulic platform of our test boat, and £6000 for the teak laid platform and cockpit. The beautiful silver-grey hull colour is £12,000, the black hull of our test boat a more reasonable £4700. Spec'd up to the level of our test boat you're knocking on the door of half a million pounds, and that doesn't include a generator or air conditioning. Not cheap for a 40-footer then (the Prestige 450 starts at £445k) but justified by the quality and the level of detailing, from the stainless deck fittings to the rubber-edged hatches to stop lids from rattling.

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	41ft 3in (12.60m)
HULL LENGTH	36ft 9in (11.26m)
BEAM	12ft 7in (3.90m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 7in (1.10m)
DISPLACEMENT	10.5 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	196gal (890lt)
WATER CAPACITY	79gal (360lt)
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	10in (25cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 4in (1.93m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 4ft 8in (1.98m x 1.41m)
MID CABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 2ft 2in (1.98m x 0.66m)

PERFORMANCE

Engines	Volvo Penta IPS400 – pod drive
Configuration	4 cyl 3.7 litre, 300hp @ 3,500rpm
conditions	Variable 2/3 – sea state slight
Load	fuel 45%, water 0%, 3 crew

RPM	KNOTS	LPH	GPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
1000	6	7	1.5	4	628	68
1500	9	18	4	2.2	345	78
2000	11	36	7.9	1.4	220	76
2500	16	66	14.5	1.1	173	75
3000	22	84	18.5	1.2	188	77
3500	28	114	25	1.1	173	79

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. These figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temperature, crew numbers, hull fouling, fuel quality and other issues. Noise readings in dB(A) were taken in the saloon.

PRICES

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with twin Volvo Penta IPS400 diesels	£414,916
CRUISE PACK	£13,158
ELEGANCE PACK	£7263
TEAK BATHING PLATFORM & COCKPIT	£6316
SALOON NUT FLOORING	£1368
STERN BLIND	£3684
WASHING MACHINE	£1264
STAINLESS STEEL ANCHOR	£474

BOAT AS TESTED £470,337

*Boat as tested price may include alternative options



Enginebay

The enginebay (right) is the one area where the perceived quality and attention to detail slip a little. The access hatch isn't massive, there are no steps to help you in and there is nothing to stand on but the bare bilge of the boat. Better to focus on the neat lazarette and systems bay under the saloon sole (above).



THE VERDICT

Fashions come and go, but style is enduring. And the good news is that the Sessa Fly40 is a stylish boat, rather than a fashionable one. Better yet, beneath the sheen and the shine there's a practical layout, excellent build quality and useful breadth of ability. It's neither a rule breaker nor a rule re-writer, but it is a boat that you'll take real pleasure in owning, and one that you'll find yourself pausing to take one last look at every time you leave it.

Meet the family



SMALLER

Sessa C38 from £294,916

LOA: 38ft 5in (11.70m)

Hardtop sports cruiser with ingenious sliding bulkhead and adaptable interior.



BIGGER

Sessa Fly45 from £592,373

LOA: 46ft 10in (14.27m)

Similar styling but with the option of a three-cabin galley-up layout.

The rivals



Princess 42 from £426,336

LOA: 44ft 3in (13.48m)

10 years in production and due for a change, but still a force to be reckoned with.



Bavaria Virtess 420 from £348,212

LOA: 44ft 7in (13.6m)

Bigger, three cabins and pod drive. Great value but lacks the exquisite quality of the Sessa.