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FEBRUARY 2026

# Lakeland BOATING



**MARLOW**  
Fit for an  
active lifestyle. **53E**

## SHOW-STOPPING NEW SHOWS

Three new in-water boat shows have debuted on the Great Lakes.

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**BOAT TEST**

*Story & photos by Capt. Tom Serio*

# *Marlow 53E*



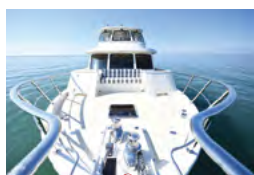


Building the yacht that  
will fulfill your *dreams*.

*Any* astute followers of this publication, even disciples of the Marlow brand, will realize that the Marlow 53E Semi-Enclosed Bridge is not a new model. Yours truly has written about them over the years. So, what gives?

First, understand that no two Marlow yachts are alike. There are either subtle differences between them or glaring changes. This 53E has a bit of both.

The saying goes, “You don’t get a second chance to make a first impression,” but by the end of my visit, I had multiple first impressions. Let’s get into it.



## Marlow 53E

### SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 64'11"

Beam: 17'3"

Draft: 4'6"

Displacement: 70,800 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1,200 gals.

Water Capacity: 230 gals.

Power: 2 x Volvo D13  
900-hp diesel engines

Price: Contact Marlow

**MARLOWYACHTS.COM**

### CONTACT

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800-362-2657

**MARLOWMARINE.COM**



Booth-style galley table is a space-saver.

VIP berth is oriented further aft to fit a larger bed.

Owner's input to customizations that work for them.

## Seeing is believing

The first task at hand was to photograph the yacht for this assignment. I typically give the vessel a quick walk-through to see what I'm dealing with. Spacious salon with L-sofa to fore starboard corner, a couple of swivel barrel chairs to port, a 50-inch TV in the aft port corner — pretty standard stuff. Three staterooms, Volvo engines and a semi-enclosed bridge. Check, check and check. Throughout the yacht is teak woodwork in a satin finish, glossy teak and holly flooring, and Ultraleather surfaces. I'm thinking a classic 53E for an older cruising couple used for day trips or the milk run to the Bahamas.

Boy, was I ever wrong! This is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It's not always about purchasing a yacht to be on the yacht. For this very active couple, it's about how the yacht expands their horizons (both literally and figuratively) and their desire for adventures.

## Big dreams

This 53E was a long time coming for the owners, having seen their first Marlow at the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show 16 years ago. Spending over an hour with the late David Marlow that day, the owner had a good sense of David's passion for the boat.

"It was infectious!" he says. He told David that one day he would own a Marlow, and after a two-year build, it's here.

This is the couple's second Marlow (they had another 53 previously), so expectations certainly had to be high. But confidence had to be high as well, knowing that a brand-new 53E would suit their needs.

Notable is the aft-deck dining table. Typically affixed with posts mounted to the deck, these posts are L-shaped and mount in the base of the settee. When unlocking the tabletop pins, the top slides aft toward the transom bench seat, thereby creating an unobstructed deck for the couple to use for their workouts of yoga, Pilates and TRX (suspension training using body weight).

With the table back in place, the owners can clip on a hammock that hangs from side to side over the transom settee, using the table to hold a cocktail while listening to Soca ("soul of Calypso") music. Cool idea!

## Have it your way

Customization was important to these customers as they tend to spend extended periods onboard and with

another couple. Storage for gear and provisions was key, and lockers, cabinets and under-seat compartments were maximized for that reason.

Measuring extended cruising periods is in months, not days or weeks, for this couple. They can be found from Florida's west coast to the Florida Keys and off to the Bahamas, maybe even to New England. Long-range cruising is part of their program.

They enjoy shallow-water cruising, thanks to the 4-foot, 6-inch draft, and anchor out often with the pulpit fitted with dual windlasses and anchors. A custom boarding ladder that fits into the integrated swim platform makes access to the water easy, as they like to spearfish, hunt lobsters and get in some underwater photography. A rain-shower head is recessed in the cockpit ceiling for rinsing.

Cooking up the day's catch in the full-function U-shaped galley is a pleasure. The appliances include a Miele oven and four-burner flat cooktop, four-drawer Sub-Zero fridge/freezer combos, and a Fisher & Paykel dishwasher. Don't overlook the over/under cabinets and spacious Caesarstone countertops.

What is unique for Marlow is the booth-style seating in the galley. Comfortable for four people, the orientation offers more space for a wider staircase to the lower deck while taking in the view from the forward windows. Access to the side/fore decks and Portuguese bridge with center bench seat is via port and starboard doors.

## Down under

Below are three custom staterooms accessible by a common staircase. There's a full-beam primary stateroom with a king berth, 10 drawers and multiple closets, and a separate head with a center shower stall. It's a sizable room, thanks in part to the 6 feet, 6 inches of headroom.

Forward is the VIP stateroom with an oversized center berth (the berth is oriented further aft to fit a larger bed) and a full head with a shower stall. Stone flooring with metal trim accents, along with teak trim and mirrors, makes this head feel like home.

The hidden built-in GE washer and dryer are across from each other in the hall cabinets.

Under the hall deck is a drop-down machinery space, with access to the bow thruster motor, pumps and filters.

Being seasoned, knowledgeable, hands-on boaters, these owners had input on how the engine room was set up. There are several added workbenches in front,



behind and outward of the engines. There's even one with a toolbox secured to it, so commonly used tools are within reach. No dragging around a toolbox.

Working with the Marlow commissioning team, the owners were able to see exactly where each item was to be placed. Access to the steering mechanisms and other systems is through the lazarette.

Maintenance checks are easy with fuel filters, dipsticks and ancillary systems all within reach.

Powering the 53E are a pair of Volvo Penta D13 engines, rated at 900 hp each. We ran a reciprocal course to get some running averages in the back bays of Tampa Bay, Florida. At 1800 rpm, we saw 17.8 knots, burning 45 gph; not a bad cut of speed for a 70,800-pound yacht.

Wide open produced 26.4 knots at 2350 rpm, at a rate of 90 gph. With almost full fuel and no tabs, the results were impressive. Also impressive was the handling and stability in tight turns at speed (almost no leaning), thanks to the Naiad stabilizer fins and Marlow's proprietary Velocijet strut keels. House power comes from twin Kohler 16kW generators.

### Up top

Another option available to the owners was the semi-enclosed bridge. No need for a lower helm station that reduces usable space in the galley, this composite structure is enclosed on three sides, offering excellent protection from the elements. The aft wall was left open with the intention of allowing the owners to experience it open before they decide to close in or leave as-is. A Bimini curtain can be installed to close it off if desired. There's a door already framed and in place. An Aritex davit for storing water toys on the bridge aft deck is handy. Additionally, there's a propane grill station with sink and storage, perfect for a meal up top.

The Marlow team installed a removable ladder from the bridge deck to the hardtop to lower the light stanchion for low bridges, in case the Great Loop is in their future.

You'll note that this patriotic American owner wants to show his colors a bit, so they had the hull bottom painted in blue, with a vivid red boot stripe separated by the Oyster white hull. A little red, white and blue tribute.

When you set your course toward the horizon, knowing that there's some uncertainty yet adventures ahead, you want to do it on a craft you know will get you there and back. This couple is Chill-Laxin' and LTD (living the dream) on their Marlow 53E. ✦

