

MARLOW EXPLORER 53E

Livability and more!

Story & photos by Capt. Tom Serio



Shhhhh! Don't tell Editor Kate of *Lakeland Boating* magazine, but I'm going to change this Boat Test from a sea trial to a livability trial. It's to your benefit, trust me. In a nutshell, for a sea trial, I peruse the

builder's website, receive the standard/optional features listings, and get its speed/fuel burn numbers. Once onboard, there's a detailed walk-through and then I head out for speed runs and handling.

This assignment was to sea trial a new Marlow Explorer 53E, as well as perform the photoshoot for this article. A nice double-header in one trip.

With the weather prognosticators calling for showers and wind, and against a tight deadline,

Marlow's team suggested I bring an overnight bag in case we got bumped to a two-day visit. Therein lies the rub, as I was allowed to stay onboard the very Marlow Explorer 53E I was reviewing.



HIGH COMFORT QUOTIENT

Relaxing onboard for the evening and bunking overnight allowed me time to enjoy the yacht and check out the different areas. Working at the dinette table and grabbing a few minutes of shuteye on the salon couch were good tests. There were a couple of sudden yet heavy rain showers before sunset, so I took advantage of the large hardtop and plush Stidd helm seats to enjoy the quiet of Marlow's Snead Island yard after-hours while relaxing to the patter of raindrops. Sipping a cognac and enjoying a Dominican cigar would have been perfect!

Thanks to the extended flybridge deck, sitting on the aft deck's cushioned transom seat with high-gloss teak dining table is another comfy spot. Transit the wide covered side decks up to the foredeck and kick back on the center observation seat built into the Portuguese bridge. I like the center seat versus split seats as it keeps everyone together. Point is, there are so many places to relax on

the 53E — either at the dock, on anchor or cruising — that it may be hard to choose. And that's just on the exterior.

INSIDE SCOOP

Inside, the salon is just as inviting and comfortable, with 6 feet, 8 inches of headroom and rich teak hardwood finishes that add ambiance and warmth without the old stodgy feel that other woods may emit. It feels like a home living room. A starboard L-settee is thickly cushioned and a perfect spot to view the aft corner 42-inch TV. To port is an equally plush bench sofa. And all around are cabinets with dovetailed drawers, a teak coffee table, storage under the seats and more. The slotted air conditioning plenums above the windows channel the chilled air evenly across the room for maximum comfort. Various lighting selections include ceiling spots, trim/accent rope lighting and stylish wall sconces.

There's a lot going on a few steps up in the dinette/galley area. First, a U-shaped

dinette is nestled on the port side, with comfortable seating for five around the fiddled teak table. With fold-down edges, the seating becomes great loungers, so sit back with a good book.

To the right is the passageway to the lower stateroom accommodations. And on the starboard side, next to the sliding deck door (there's a deck door on the port side too), is a "mini helm." It's smaller than usual but packed with all the electronics needed for safe passage, including a 17-inch Garmin multifunction display, CAT engine monitor, Lewmar bow/stern thruster joysticks, Twin Disc throttles, etc. An additional control is the emergency steering pump joystick, good to have a backup. This is a perfect station for long passages or when you're docking and need to be close to the docklines. A stool is supplied for seating here or at the dinette. Up top, a flybridge helm is fully packed and great for day operations.

Just behind the mini-helm is the

full-function U-shaped galley. From snacks to multi-course meals, there's everything you need here for any culinary mood. With openings fore and aft, the chef stays in contact and as part of the conversation with guests. Four fridge/freezer drawers have teak wood frontages that allow them to blend in with the overall décor. A full-sized oven, five-burner flat cooktop with pot holders and overhead microwave take care of cooking duties. A huge stainless sink with split covering board makes for easy cleanup. There's no lack of space thanks to the expansive counterspace and upper/lower cabinets.

LOOK BELOW

Marlow never disappoints on the lower accommodations. With painstaking accuracy, curved teak wood features such as the light soffit over the master berth and cabinet doors are expertly rounded. Sure, these could have been flat components, which would take less time to manufacture and likely less expensive, but then it wouldn't feel special. With many subtle niceties built in, builder David Marlow wants each yacht to be better than the last. Even at 53 feet, Marlow wants this to be your "yacht."

Maximizing space in the full-beam midship main cabin, the king berth is

centerline with walk-around access. Outer drawers and lockers line the path to the "Jack & Jill" ensuite head, with individual toilets and sinks along with a center shower stall.

In the crown is the VIP stateroom with step-up centerline berth, private access to shared head (with shower stall) and lockers. Four drawers pull out from under the berth. A neat feature are the twin mini bunks above and to the side of the main berth. Perfect for young children who need to stay with adults, these bunks can also be used for additional gear stowage; they're not Pullman style so they stay in place.

Off the companionway to port is a twin berth cabin with a lapstrake teak finish wall, a large porthole and a hanging locker. Individual GE washer and dryer units are recessed in companionway cabinets — a nice must-have for any extended cruising.

TEST IT OUT

Proving that the 53E is a nimble craft, Bill Thomas of Marlow Marine displayed the control he had via the remote Yacht Controller system in not just backing out between the corner slip and another Marlow, but how he docked around a dogleg turn. Literally, with only a few inches to spare, the twin CAT C12.9 1,000-hp engines responded when

asked, accompanied by a few tugs on the thrusters to settle us in with nary a scratch.

Also impressive about those six-cylinder engines are the numbers. At 10.5 knots, the range is an impressive 1400 nm. Step it up to 1600 RPM (57% load) for 16.3 knots and 502 nm. Of course, when needed the 53E hits 26.2 knots at wide open. Nice to have that cut of speed if necessary.

There's plenty of room around the powerplants to get at the two Onan 13.5 kw generators, strainers, filters, Naiad stabilizers and other gear.

After a hot shower and solid sleep, the only thing I didn't have onboard for breakfast was coffee, so chilled orange juice had to suffice.

If you're looking for a manageable cruising yacht or live-aboard that's easy to handle and maintain, can satisfy your social and personal needs, and can deliver long-range operations, the Marlow Explorer 53E is a solid contender. It's got livability! ★



MARLOW EXPLORER 53E

» SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 61'8"

Beam: 17'3"

Draft: 4'6"

Weight: 66,000 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1,200 gals.

Water Capacity: 300 gals.

Power: 2 x CAT 12.9 1,000-hp diesel engines

MSRP: Contact Marlow Yachts

MARLOWYACHTS.COM

» DEALER

Marlow Marine Sales

800-362-2657

MARLOWMARINE.COM



Open bridge or three-sided integrated window frames available

Egress door from engine room to main shower

Lazarette has workbench and room for a freezer

Hull color is Whisper Grey AwlGrip



Hardware for dinette table fold-down edges is large and hits knees

