

BY ROGER MCAFEE



Ranger 25

An excellent entry-level fast trawler that's trailerable

The Ranger 25 is a fiberglass cruising boat that doesn't have to live in the water. The ocean-capable mini-yacht lists a trailer among its options and even has the bulk of the lighting required for towing built right into the boat hull. It is built by Ranger Tugs of Kent, Washington, a company owned by the David Livingston family, known for the popular Livingston line of fiberglass dinghies.

The R25 was first introduced as an unfinished boat at the 2006 Seattle Boat Show. Within nine months, 30 boats were on order. The launch of the R25 was eerily reminiscent of the introduction of the Nordic Tug 26, some 26 years earlier when Nordic walked away from the 1980 Seattle show with 54 orders. When Nordic stopped building their 26-footer, a void was created in the market, and Ranger stepped in to fill that gap.

Design/Construction The R25 sports a jaunty, salty look, based on the tugs of a couple of decades ago. The colours are retro as well—dark blue hull, white deck house and

beige accent strip, grooved to resemble the planks of wooden boats. While the vessel is small at 24' 7", it has a husky, broad-shouldered look about it. Bright, shiny, highly polished bronze portholes and port lights in the cabin sides give the vessel a unique touch. Adding to the overall classic look is

the fake smokestack and the eyebrow over the wheelhouse windows.

While the look is reminiscent of the "good old days," construction is right up to date. The hull is solid, hand-laid fiberglass, both below and above the waterline. The decks and cabin are glass, cored with



Gunkholers will find plenty of space up top for storing kayaks or a tender.

Nida-Core foam. All windows are top quality Diamond Sea-Glaze.

The hull is semi-displacement with planing sections and a reverse chine aft. This design combination provides good speed with modest power and excellent stability both at high speed and at rest at anchor or the dock.

On Deck The decks are finished with a molded-in non-skid pattern. Substantial stainless steel hand rails make boarding the vessel, either through a transom door accessed from a roomy swim grid or through a step cut into the coaming on either side of the hull, just at the aft cabin bulkhead.

Moving forward from the aft cockpit along the narrow side deck is made



When not in use for seating, the lid on the aft cockpit bulkhead lifts to reveal a fish cleaning station.

possible by a cabin top handrail, but this manoeuvre should not be tried while under way. On the foredeck, handrails provide good security. The foredeck can also be accessed via an overhead hatch from the fo'c'sle.

The aft cockpit bulkhead contains a locker whose top can serve either as a fibreglass fish cleaning station or a double transom padded seat with cushion and seat back.

The engine is accessed through a hatch in the cockpit sole, and a second hatch provides access to the batteries.

NEIL RABINOWITZ

Below Deck Getting into the cabin from the cockpit on smaller boats (remember, this is only a 25-footer) almost always requires the boater to duck through the doorway. The Ranger 25, however, has a raised cabin top over the doorway, removing that potential head-knocking problem.

On entering the deckhouse, the first thing one notices is the entire house is flooded with natural light. There are 10 windows and two bronze portholes in the cabin sides, plus a large window in the

cabin's aft door and a bronze port in the cabin aft bulkhead. There are four overhead skylights in the main cabin, one in the fo'c'sle and one in the combined head/shower space. The flood of daylight gives the impression that there's more window than fibreglass in the deckhouse.

The layout is typical of boats of this size; the dinette, convertible to a berth, is along one side (port), and a stand-up, enclosed head/shower and galley are along the other. A Wallas diesel-fired ceramic cooktop ▶

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provides cooking heat as well as domestic heat when the top is in the down position. The galley also features a stainless steel sink and small fridge.

Ranger designers have allowed space for a quarter berth, with the entrance aft of the dinette and stretching forward under the seats. Kids will love this space: their own “fort” on the water. Otherwise, it’s likely to be used for storage. The vessel can sleep four in relative comfort, with a fifth squeezed into the quarter berth.

The helm station is forward of the galley and the lookout seat forward of the dinette. Visibility from both positions is excellent all around.

In an effort to keep costs down, the builder used unfinished teak in the test boat. The woodwork was good and an owner can finish it in whatever way he or she wishes. A teak and holly veneer cabin sole promises good wear with a “shippy” look, but the fuzzy fabric (sometimes referred to as “mouse skin” or “rat fur”) glued to the side walls—even in the galley area—should be rethought by the builder. It is very difficult to clean and will retain cooking odours.

With basic galley amenities and room to sleep four comfortably, the R25 is well suited for family weekend escapes.

Power The Ranger 25’s standard engine is a 75-horsepower Yanmar diesel, but the one we tested was equipped with an optional 110-hp Yanmar. The engine fired quickly and spooled up nicely without any smoke. These Yanmars are strong, tough engines, without the typical diesel vibration and “thump.”

We also had a chance to go on board

All around windows and two skylights in the R25’s deckhouse provide excellent visibility and lots of light.

another identical Ranger powered with the new 2.0-litre, 130-hp Cummins Mercruiser, complete with a smart panel that updates the skipper with information about the engine’s condition and operation.



NEIL RABINOWITZ (3X)

This engine has almost the same specs as the Yanmar but appears to run smoother and quieter.

The test vessel was equipped with both electric stern and bow thrusters.

Under Way As expected with the two thrusters, moving away from the dock was no problem. At a 800 rpm idle the small trawler moved along at four knots, burning just less than 1.9 litres per hour (0.41 Imp. gal) according to Yanmar's fuel curves. At 2,500 rpm, the vessel moved along at 9.5 knots, consuming about 9.84 litres per hour (2.16 gal). At wide open throttle, 3,400 rpm on our test boat, we topped out at 17.4 knots and were burning just under 23 litres per hour (5 gal).

Sea conditions during the test were moderate, and the vessel handled them well. We added in some wake and found that, even with the added wave height and sea confusion, the vessel remained stable and well behaved.


We cranked the helm hard over to port while slowly accelerating to full throttle. The R25 picked up a very slight list to

starboard until the engine reached 1,000 rpm and then flattened out. It stayed perfectly level as it spun around in little more than its own length. We then straightened out and, after reaching full speed, cranked the helm from hard port to hard starboard. The vessel carved the turns cleanly, without fuss or muss. These tests give a good indicator of a vessel's dynamic stability. The R25 is rock solid. Performance and handling with the Cummins Mercruiser is just about the same except that the top speed is about 0.6 knots faster.

In Summary The Ranger 25 is an excellent entry-level fast trawler. It is, in the opinion of some, a better introductory vessel than the original Nordic 26. Solidly built, the R25 is fast, handles well and is relatively inexpensive to operate. The engines available are well proven and reliable, and the new Cummins Mercruiser smart panel feeds constantly updated, reliable information to the skipper about the engine.

The ability of the vessel to be stored on a trailer further reduces operating costs, while at the same time allowing the vessel

to be towed to distant cruising grounds. Tow vehicles get much better mileage than boats cruising on their own bottoms.

Price, as tested, including trailer, is USD\$153,687. 

Ranger 25

LOA	7.5 m	24' 7"
Beam	2.6 m	8' 6"
Draft	0.66 m	26"
Displ.	2,608 kg	5,750 lbs
Fuel	284 L	62.5 Imp. gal
Water	113.5 L	25 Imp. gal
Holding Tank	113.5 L	25 Imp. gal

Built by

Fluid Motion, LLC
Kent, Wash.
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