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What sets the F530 apart is the use of glass in the saloon. The effect is astounding



You can have up to three side doors in the saloon; one next to the helm is standard

The aft galley can easily be opened up to the cockpit thanks to a top-hinged window



Sealine has always been a brand close to British boaters' hearts. So many people got into boating through a Sealine one way or another; the boats have been the gateway to a life on the water that many owners will never forget. Designing a new one is one of the toughest gigs going because you're always going to be caught between those who love the fresh, modern styling of the latest generation of craft and those who still yearn for the more traditional Sealines of old.

Personally, I feel Sealine has been on a massive upward trajectory in terms of product ever since the Germans took over, first with the F380 and then working with Bill Dixon on the S/C330, which swept to victory at this year's Motor Boat Awards. Bill's skills have been employed once again for the F530 and, given what he managed to do on a boat the size of the C330, it's mouth-watering to see what's in store for us on a boat of 53ft 1in (15.94m).

From the outset, it's been made very clear that the F530 is about space on board. This is a 50ft flybridge boat so most people will be living on board when they use it, in contrast to many sports cruisers of the same size that are used as glamorous day boats. Physical space is one obvious way of making a boat feel roomy, but what sets the F530 apart is the use of glass in the saloon. This is the first time that I've seen floor-to-ceiling panes of glass fitted to a boat of this size and price. The effect inside is genuinely astounding – so good, I opted to slot the boat into its tight stern-to-berth from the lower helm because the view out is that good. What's more, people always talk, misty-eyed, about the 'connection to the water' from within a boat, but on the F530, those gigantic panes of glass really do deliver breathtaking views out from the galley and dinette that make you stop and stare for a few seconds.

One potential downside of all this lovely glass is how quickly the saloon heats up – once static in our berth, it didn't take long for it to get uncomfortably warm inside, and that was on a relatively cool day. There is, of course, air-con to sort that out, and also the unique option of specifying up to three side doors in addition to the usual cockpit access. The small one adjacent to the lower helm is standard but you can also have a much larger one directly opposite, accessed by sliding the dinette bench apart, and a third one can be installed between the galley unit and the helm station on the starboard side. All these doors, plus the big doors aft which slide to starboard with a top-hinged pane of glass to open up the aft galley, mean you can get lots of natural ventilation through the saloon and access the decks in seconds from pretty much anywhere in the saloon. Clever stuff – but there's more. The helm seat pivots backwards on a substantial and beautifully made mechanism to sit flush with a fixed cushion mounted aft and create an aft-facing chaise longue. This is smart because on many flybridge boats, when the boat is stationary and the helm not in use, it's completely wasted space. Who wants to sit facing forward when all of the fun is going on behind you? This system makes use of the double helm seat, allows it to become part of the dinette and, though it's quite low set, the deep windows mean that's not too much of an issue.

CABIN FEVER

In contrast to the trick-filled saloon, the cabins are actually pretty formulaic in their layout and the way they work. The use of IPS has made space for a full-beam master cabin with its own ensuite and enough headroom to change at the end of the bed, though not around the sides. Forward is a perfectly comfortable VIP ensuite, which gets a lovely big bathroom that's shared with the twin cabin to port and used as the day



SEALINE F530

Can IPS drives and a striking new glass-rich design put Sealine back in contention with the big British yards?

Words **Jack Haines** Pictures **Paul Wyeth**

The U-shaped dinette is perfect for a private drink or even a meal for four in the sun

heads. The twin cabin is a treat, delivering good headroom, two generous side-by-side berths that are set at a comfortable height, and a sensible amount of storage.

There are changes to be made below decks, as there are all over the boat, in fact. The boat we tested was hull number one and still at prototype classification, and there are over 21 changes to be made between this and the first boat that we will see in the UK at the Southampton Boat Show in September. Some changes are minor, like hiding screw heads on the dashboards and covering GRP mouldings in vinyl, but there are some more drastic adjustments in the wings. One silly shortfall that needs addressing is how low the door frames are, which I had to duck under to access the cabins even though there is plenty of headroom to spare on either side. But, plans are in place to increase the frame heights to 6ft 4in from the next hull onwards. Good. In the UK, on the port side of the master cabin, as opposed to having a chaise longue to match the starboard side, there will be a two-person breakfast dinette with a built-in vanity unit. I'd say that's a far better use of space and a smart addition by the UK dealer.

One part of the boat that doesn't need to change is the wonderful foredeck seating area. This is unique in the class and really rather special for a boat of such a size where normally you have a sunpad and maybe a stubby bench if you're lucky. The F530's U-shaped dinette is perfect for a private drink or even a meal for four in the sun, and you can drop the table and make a sunpad if you want to as well. On top of all that there are pop-up deck lights for softly illuminated nightcaps and a repeater head unit so you can control the music that's pouring out of the pair of speakers mounted up front.

The flybridge feels larger than that of a 53ft boat and the space is proportioned sensibly between sunbathing spots forward and a six, maybe eight-person dinette on the port side. The wet-bar is tucked right aft where smoke from the grill can easily escape over the stern and the whole area can be covered by a two-part bimini or an optional hardtop.

As part of the major changes for the aforementioned UK boat, it will have the updated (and brand new) Volvo Penta IPS700 and IPS800 powerplants. This is important because the IPS600 units, which are only 435hp

per side, felt overwhelmed by the heft of the F530. The Prestige 500 uses the same powerplants but it is over two tonnes lighter than the Sealine and still manages to achieve 29 knots, whereas we struggled to hit 24 knots on the F530. That was with a boat empty of cruising gear and with no fouling on the hull and no tender – though it did have a full tank of fuel – so performance could drop down to just over 20 knots with some cruising weight added and a mid-season beard.

The 600hp IPS800s should rectify this and make for at least a 32-knot top speed, giving you a perfectly respectable 25-knot cruise no matter the load or fouling. Having said that, though the 600s were working their hearts out to power the F530 along they stayed very quiet while they were doing it. Sound levels at the lower helm especially were very civilised and made conversation easy even at the top of the rev range.

The steering was definitely set to lazy mode with a sharp initial turn in that soon flattened out to give the F530 the sort of turning circle that makes an oil tanker look agile.

Both helm positions are comfortable and stylish, though part of the 21 changes include some aesthetic tweaks here and there and an adjustment of throttle location closer to the wheel on both. The upper helm console is also going to be dropped down a touch and the seat brought up a little to give a clearer view over the instruments out to the bow. It's not bad at the moment but those changes will help.

VERDICT

How does the F530 stack up in terms of value for money? We were given a price by the UK dealer to match the spec of our well-equipped test boat of £766,165, which includes big-ticket extras like a hydraulic platform and passerelle, crew cabin fit-out, full teak, generator and air-conditioning. This is approximately £20,000 less than a Prestige 500 with a similar specification and, well, a whole lot less than the Princess 52 that weighs in with a starting price north of £800,000. That, however, does get a pair of meaty 670hp engines as standard and the fit and finish are in a different class to the other two.

The price feels about right for what you get, as long as some of the scrappy finishing on the prototype is ironed out for the production run, which we're assured it will be.



The VIP ensuite enjoys plenty of space and also acts as the day heads





A CLOSER LOOK WITH JACK HAINES

STEPS TO THE SEA

The optional hydraulic bathing platform is a very worthwhile option with particularly neat integration of the bathing ladder so it slides out as the platform deploys.



TAKE A SEAT

The helm seat drops back to make this aft-facing chaise longue. This is a good way to make use of the helm seat, which is usually redundant when the boat isn't moving.



WET-BAR

The flybridge wet-bar is in a good position aft on the top deck. It's tucked out of the way so that smoke and cooking smells from the grill can drift away from the boat.



ENGINE ROOM

Thanks to the entire cockpit sole lifting up on hydraulic rams, access to the engine room is excellent. There's plenty of space around each block and good access to the pods themselves. The hatch opens so wide that plenty of natural light can make its way in as well. Something I would like to see change is the material around the engines as it's pretty hard on the hands and knees.



UK boats will get a breakfast dinette instead of a chaise longue on the port side



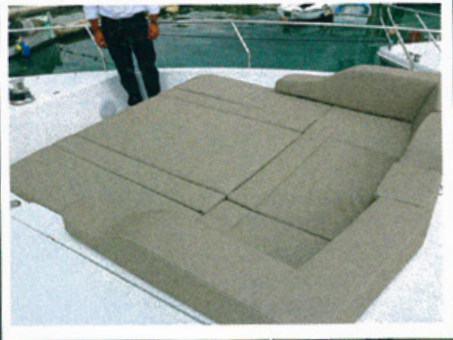
Headroom in the VIP is good despite the well in the deckhead caused by the foredeck seating



The master ensuite is a little tight but storage is impressive

Good to see the twin berths set at a decent level and not too low

Here you can see the foredeck seating collapsed into its sunpad position



Four people can sit next to each other facing forward at the flybridge helm



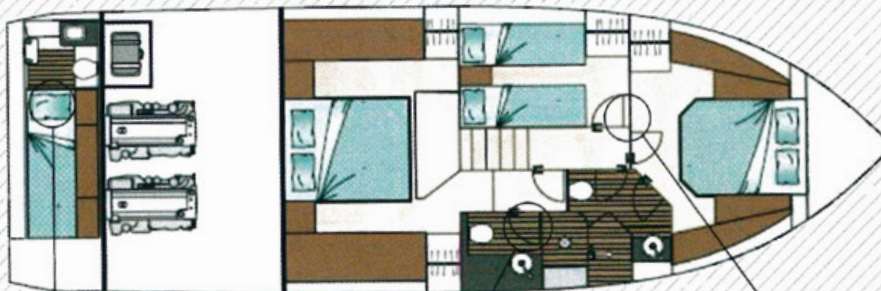
Windows are fantastic on the inside but take some getting used to from the outside

Having cleats low down by the bathing platform and higher up on the aft quarters means you can be much more versatile with your mooring arrangement

THE DATA

LENGTH OVERALL 53ft 1in (15.9m)

BEAM
15ft 2in
(4.63m)



If you don't spec the crew cabin you can just have storage here if you'd prefer

The narrow master ensuite is quite difficult to negotiate as the door gets in the way

Doorway heights are going to be increased to 6ft 4in throughout the F530's interior

FUEL CAPACITY
351 imp gal (1,600 litres)
WATER CAPACITY
168 imp gal (766 litres)
DRAUGHT
18ft 9in (5.72m)
RCD CATEGORY
B for 12 people
DESIGNERS
Sealine & Bill Dixon
DISPLACEMENT
16.5 tonnes (light)

The saloon windows are a revelation from within and the foredeck area is unique in class

The blueprint for the F530 is brilliant and there are some genuinely interesting and innovative features. The saloon windows, though a little incongruous from some angles on the outside, are a revelation from within the boat and in the foredeck living area it has something that is – until the Sunseeker Manhattan 52 and Fairline Squadron 53 come out, at least – unique in class.

This, added to the excellent flybridge and spacious cockpit, gives you plenty of options for relaxing on deck, and a main deck that connects that interior and exterior faultlessly thanks to the aft galley.

The changes that the first boat to the UK will have to do need to happen, especially the increase in height of the door frames and the larger engines. Those IPS600s may be okay if you plan on keeping speed to a minimum inland but for offshore work, they will indeed struggle.

Final judgment will have to wait until we see the UK boat later this year but if the changes are in place, then Sealine could well be on to another winner with the F530. **MBY**

Contact Penton Hook Marine Sales.
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Web www.sealine.com

THE HELM VIEW



This leather panel will be switched for wood going forward, which is a shame because I think it looks good

The tiered dash is sensibly organised and easy to use

The throttles are well positioned on the dash and fall to hand comfortably

PERFORMANCE

TEST ENGINES Volvo Penta IPS600. Twin 435hp @ 3,500rpm. 5.5-litre, 6-cylinder diesels

FIGURES	ECO					FAST			MAX
	1,000	1,500	2,000	2,500	2,900	3,100	3,300	3,500	
RPM	5.7	7.9	10.0	12.0	16.4	18.5	21.1	23.3	
Speed	6.0	21.0	42.0	80.0	112	131	149	167	
LPH	1.3	4.6	9.2	17.6	24.6	28.8	32.8	36.7	
MPG	4.3	1.71	1.08	0.68	0.67	0.64	0.64	0.63	
Range	1,212	480	304	191	187	180	181	178	

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)

Helm	52	61	63	64	66	66	67	68
Cockpit	68	71	74	77	78	79	80	81
Saloon	53	65	64	67	68	70	73	75

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on readings from onboard fuel gauges, your figures may vary considerably. All prices include VAT. 90% fuel, 0% water, 5 crew, no stores or tender, 21°C air temp, F1 + calm for sea trials.

THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from	£548,544
Price as tested	£766,165
Hydraulic bathing platform (600kg)	£20,023
Table in cockpit + engine hatch	£2,652
Generator 13kw	£19,018
Icemaker on flybridge	£1,463
Dishwasher	£1,819
Air-conditioning	£22,766
Raymarine GS165 at upper helm	£6,857
Crew cabin fitout	£5,944
Foredeck table	£3,474

= Options on test boat

RIVALS

Prestige 500
Price from €685,440
Powered by IPS600 and has separate master cabin access.
Buy the test: mby.com/p50

Princess 52
Price from £822,000
An absolute class act. More money but beautifully done.
Buy the test: mby.com/p52

