

Beneteau's New Generation

Swift Trawler 42

by

Jonathan Hutchings
Photos courtesy of Beneteau

Marion, South Carolina, is an unlikely place to find one of the US boatbuilding industry's cornerstone success stories. Yet this small southern town with its history rooted in textile manufacturing has re-invented itself as the home of Beneteau USA with its impressive range of production sailboats and, more recently, an impressive range of power boats. In Marion lies a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility with over 350 employees on its workforce. Opened in 1986, the Marion factory has expanded to produce all the Beneteau cruising sailboat models between 32 and 47 feet and, since early 2005, the remarkable Swift Trawler 42.

Franco-American Synergy

Groupe Beneteau, the French parent company and largest pleasure-boat manufacturer in the world with lines such as Lagoon, Jeanneau, Wauquiez and of course Beneteau, has perfected the art of efficient production boat manufacturing. All boats, whether constructed in France or the US, are built to the exacting CE standards. The early design, prototype and mould construction takes place in France using the significant technical resources of Groupe Beneteau. All woodwork is pre-cut in France in a dedicated woodworking factory that has high-tech features such as



Swift Trawler 42 on the Plane

Elegant Salon Furnishing



laser cutters and varnish waterfalls that recoat and dry huge sheets of wood within minutes. Wood parts are shipped by container to Charleston, South Carolina, and then trucked to Marion and assembled as cherry-finished mahogany units in dedicated modules alongside the production line.

Quality

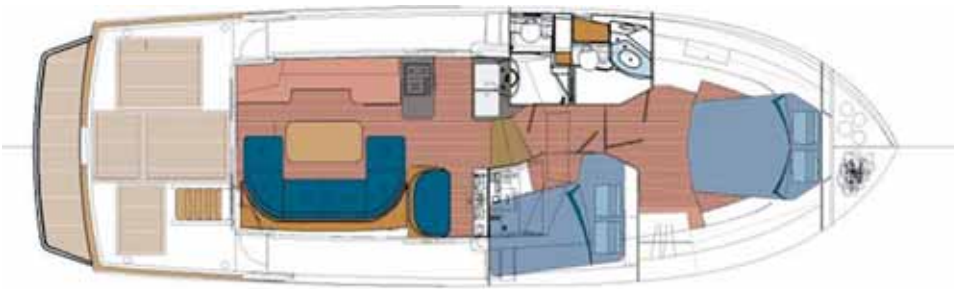
While the quality and sophisticated look of Beneteau's woodwork are well known,

few people know about the fascinating behind-the-scenes quality-control aspects of the production process. A climate-controlled storage room holds all fiberglass and balsa core until it is needed for a particular hull. The material is cut on computer controlled machines that maximize material use. The fiberglass cutouts are then stacked on carts, each piece having a numbered location in the boat it is destined for. A Swift Trawler 42 uses seven carts of fiberglass. An on-site laboratory tests all



Master Stateroom

Interior Layout



materials used in production, including burn tests on fiberglass plugs removed for the installation of seacocks to ensure proper resin-to-fiberglass ratios. When a boat is completed it is “launched” into a test pool housed within the main Marion factory. Here a precise series of systems checks and testing is done to ensure water-tight integrity above and below decks. Engines are run under load, and the boat is only released for trucking when it is deemed ready for its final sea trial conducted at the selling dealership.

Generations of Power

It is a little-known fact that Beneteau has

been building power boats since 1884, long before its reputation for pleasure sailboats developed. The early boats were fishing trawlers built for exacting North Sea and Bay of Biscay operations, so the pedigree of seagoing and workmanlike boats goes back generations. The decision to enter the highly competitive and demanding US market was spearheaded by the Swift Trawler 42 in 2003. Initially ten boats were shipped from France to see how the model would be received in the USA and to determine whether changes were necessary in styling and design. The plan all along was to produce the model at the Marion plant and the outstanding suc-

cess of those first ten imports meant that Swift Trawler 42 hull #1 USA rolled off the production line in early 2005.

In the Family

An important objective of Beneteau’s marketing is to keep in the family those boaters who have enjoyed years of fun and quality time on their Beneteau sailboat but who now seek a power cruising alternative. The Swift 42 breaks the mould of “Grandpa’s 8-knot trawler” with a sophisticated planing underbody that cruises comfortably in the upper teens and maxes out at 25 knots when driven by the twin 370hp Yanmar diesels. If the fuel budget dictates less speed, one can choose the optional 200 hp Yanmars that still push it at a respectable pace. Beneteau’s motto “The sea demands the best” dictates the qualities in a boat we all want to see: comfort married to seagoing safety. The Swift Trawler 42 marries those qualities perfectly.

Elegance and Sophistication

A walk through the Swift Trawler 42 starts at the teak-covered swim platform mounted on a formidable stainless steel bumper with integral boarding ladder. Stepping up from the swim platform into the rear cockpit, which is also teak soled, one is aware of a covered area prime for daytime relaxing or the cocktail hour. The saloon table is easily moved out to the aft cockpit for dining at anchor. The cockpit area may be enclosed with canvas or mesh screens to provide sun, wind or bug protection. Huge lockers under the cockpit floor hide away all that necessary but unsightly boating gear.

A sliding door with integral bug screen allows, entry to the main salon where the elegance and sophistication of the styling is breathtaking. The large tinted windows all around bring a light and airy feel to the interior and show off the cherry mahogany finish to its best. A plush u-shaped seating area to starboard faces a

drinks cabinet, storage area and refrigerator to port. Moving forward, the lower helm station has good visibility and space for an array of electronics. To port is the galley with sink, range and storage. Sliding doors on either side give access to the side decks. A short stair well between the galley and helm leads to the accommodation consisting of two cabins each with 6'7"-long berths. The main cabin has an en-suite bathroom, and the second cabin's head is across the passage.

Safety First

Back on deck the Swift Trawler 42 has wide walkways enclosed by 30-inch-high bulwarks on both sides of the hull taking one forward under cover toward the bow, or entry to the forward end of the saloon. Safety at sea is a primary consideration of the design, so there is none of the "high-wire" clinging to the non-existent side decks seen on so many sport cruisers these days. The functional fiberglass side and fore-decks with non-skid are easy to maintain and cooler underfoot than sun-drenched teak. The fly-bridge is accessed through a hatch from the rear cockpit. There is space on the boat-deck to stow a dinghy and outboard, easily brought aboard by a gantry crane operated from the mainmast. Top deck controls, bar fridge and plenty of seating complete the picture. With a maximum displacement of 33,000 lbs the Swift 42 can be hauled on a dock-side boatlift for dry storage.

Enjoy the Ride

"Out on the Bay"... "Down the Ditch"... "Across to the Islands"... these are all phrases that slip off the tongues of wannabe cruisers. The Swift Trawler 42 satisfies all of these desires in a compact and affordable package. It is a new generation cruising powerboat meeting the needs of those who plan their cruising agendas in hours and days rather than weeks and years. It is an easy to maintain, lock-up-and-go boat with a minimum of

exterior wood and maximum of fun attitude. Pull the throttles back, ease into the anchorage and the Swift 42's traditional trawler plumb bow will have the unknowing thinking you took days to get there rather than hours. As the saying goes "Life's a journey, enjoy the ride." Not difficult here!




For more information on Beneteau power and sailboats contact the Virginia Beneteau Dealer:

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on a new career in the marine industry. He and his wife Anne sailed their own yacht across the Atlantic and then worked in the Caribbean charter yacht business. The couple recently established Annapolis Yacht Sales South in Deltaville, Virginia, where they represent Beneteau, Sabre and other fine brands of yachts.

As headmaster of one of South Africa's top private schools, Jonathan Hutchings experienced the miracle of South Africa's transition to democracy before embarking

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