

BOAT REPORT

PRINCESS 315



THE LINE OF SUCCESSION

The Princess 30DS is dead. Long live the Princess 315. We spent a day as the guest of an owner who has recently made the progression from old to new. Would the newcomer prove a worthy successor to the popular model it replaces?

THE latest model in the Princess stable, the 315, replaces a well-loved and well-travelled predecessor, the 30DS. Over the 10 years of its production up to 1989, more than 500 of the 30s were built, and they continue to be responsible for introducing many people to the water. For our test of the new boat, therefore, it was appropriate that we chose one belonging to a couple who had previously owned a 30, and they kindly accompanied us on a chilly March day to show us how it compares.

Chris and Roger Street have been boating for many years. They graduated to their 30DS four years ago, and spent many hours cruising at home and abroad. They then found that their available spare time was increasing, and decided to switch to a sailing boat for a more leisurely approach to the water.

A Moody 34 replaced the Princess, but it was not a successful change. Every trip seemed to be fighting the tide or the wind, and journeys to favourite anchorages which used to take an hour suddenly took all day. So, when they heard of a replacement for the 30DS, they ordered one at last year's Southampton Boat Show.

Design

The most obvious development in the 315 is that it is designed from the outset as a flybridge-only boat. The 30DS, while occasionally built with a flying bridge, most often appeared in wheelhouse form.

Underwater there are further changes. As was its predecessor, the new model is available with either inboard shaft-drive engines or outdrives. However, to make further allowance for this, designer Bernard Olesinski has increased the planing area to carry the weight which will either be amidships or aft. The extra area also improves the load-carrying capacity of the hull, which means less reduction in performance when the inevitable equipment and crew accumulate on board.

Less obvious changes include rounding the corners of the three sprayrails and the chine



BOAT REPORT

PRINCESS 315



flat, to soften the ride in head seas, and increasing the waterline beam to reduce the heeling effect of the flybridge. The increased beam also gives extra internal volume.

The new boat has a reverse sheer underwater transom, to give increased planing area and apparent waterline length, without a corresponding increase in weight. The naval architect has to balance all the variables to give the improvements described, but without increasing resistance and fuel consumption.

Accommodation

The interior of the 315 is comprised of a saloon (with a possible three berths), a forward cabin (with one double), and the galley and bathroom. Outside you have a medium-sized cockpit and the flybridge.

The saloon has an L-shaped settee to port, facing a table which lowers to form the infill for a double berth. For normal day-cruising, the Streets found the standard table was getting in the way, so on came the folding table from their old 30DS. This clever design has leaves that pull out or fold in, allowing its size to be reduced when people are walking around.

The cushions have press studs underneath to stop them sliding about when used as a berth; anyone who has tried to lash down wayward cushions during the night will appreciate this point. Lockers under the seats are matched by further storage in full-length shelves port and starboard, a bottle locker to port, and a smaller locker outboard.

Opposite to starboard is a two-person settee which converts to a single berth by removing the corner cushion, allowing your feet to run under the helm seat.



Clockwise from left: the forward cabin has an angled double berth. Two settees in the well-lit saloon convert to berths for a further three. The single helm seat with low-set wheel is more comfortable than it looks. Teak joinery disguises the fridge and twin sinks. A hinged toilet lid doubles as a shower seat.



BOAT REPORT



Left: access to the Volvo diesels under the saloon floor is simple. Above: an electrical distribution board is neatly set into the helm seat.

Deep windows all round give a good view, with small sections of them sliding for ventilation. We liked the attractive overhead lining, and the recessed halogen lights which are both smart and efficient.

The helm position forward to port has only a single seat, but it is generously sized. The wheel is set low, and is non-adjustable, requiring you to sit with your legs either side of it, but in practice the position is not uncomfortable. The single-lever engine controls are well sited by your right hand, with the trim tab switches equally well placed to the right of the wheel. On the left-hand side is a row of ready-use switches, while ahead are the engine instrument panels and a clearly-positioned compass and rudder indicator. A small chart area has a hinged perspex lid, and a tray underneath that is unfortunately so shallow as to be virtually useless for storing charts.

Overhead in front of you, you find the echo-sounder, log and VHF. To their left is a space which could take a Decca, but which at present is filled with the radio cassette; this could have been better sited elsewhere. There is no obvious place to put a radar, except perhaps forward of the steps, or over to port. Set into the end of the helm seat is a well-equipped electrical distribution board, with circuit-breakers and meters.

Down three steps, to port, you find the galley. This is of reasonable size for a boat of this class, with a pleasant open aspect. The worktop area is good, and can be further increased by a hinge-down lid over the cooker. The latter has two gas burners and an oven, and is complemented by a pair of stainless

steel sinks, plus a large fridge below. A teak panel on the door of this matches the rest of the joinery, and is a nice feature. Storage is provided by several small lockers overhead, more lockers including a bottle store alongside the fridge, and a shallow cutlery drawer, though we would have liked a catch on this to stop it sliding open. We were pleased to see an extractor fan above the galley, which, with an opening portlight outboard, will keep the saloon free of fumes.

The steps from the saloon hinge up to reveal a storage space running more than half the width of the boat, which will make a good glory-hole.

Opposite the galley is a comfortable-sized toilet compartment. The hinged lid over the WC enables you to sit down while showering, and the small perspex screen alongside will keep items on the worktop dry. The sink itself is sensibly deep, with an attractive shower tap. Two moderately-sized lockers take the gear, while another extractor fan clears the air.

The main cabin forward is a good size, with a large angled double berth. To starboard is a small dressing table, plus a full-height hanging locker. To port is a half-height locker, plus two smaller ones. Under the berth is a large drawer, plus two lockers with pvc liners, though access to these is not easy due to the heavy mattress. Two opening portlights and an overhead hatch provide ventilation and light.

Overall, the interior is attractively finished and fitted-out. Joinery is in teak, and the visible woodwork is good, though lifting cushions can reveal knocks and scratches obviously left by some of the other trades working in the interior after the furniture is in.

PRINCESS 315

Princess 315

Engines: Twin Volvo TAMD 41B, 200hp at 3800rpm, 6cyl, 3590cc.

Conditions: Wind N Force 3, sea slight. Load: fuel 50%, water 25%, crew 4.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	trim	Sound levels dB(A)				
							saloon	fwd	cab	ckpt	flybdg
1500	7.2	1.8	8.0	4.00	520	1.0	73	69	79	73	
2000	8.7	4.4	20.0	1.98	257	3.5	76	71	84	76	
2500	13.2	6.8	30.8	1.94	252	5.0	78	74	85	74	
3000	18.9	10.2	46.4	1.82	237	6.0	80	78	87	79	
3500	23.5	13.9	63.4	1.69	219	5.0	81	80	88	80	
3800	26.4	18.4	83.6	1.43	187	5.0	83	82	89	82	

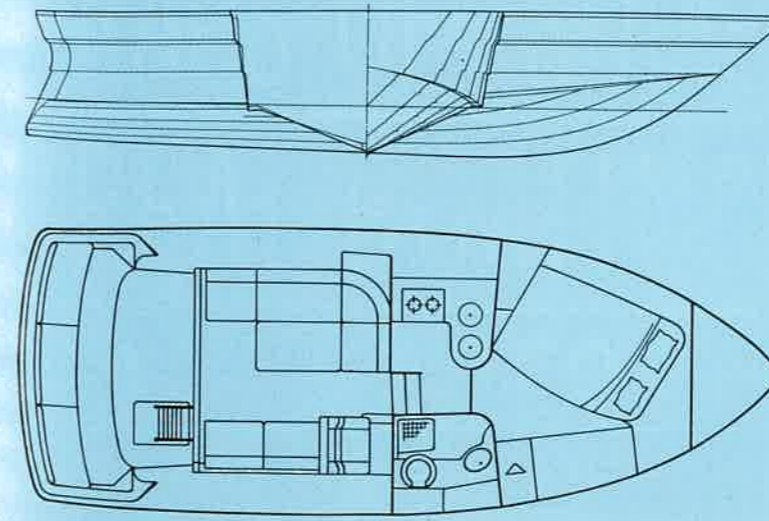
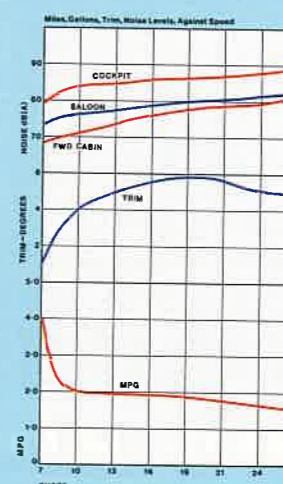
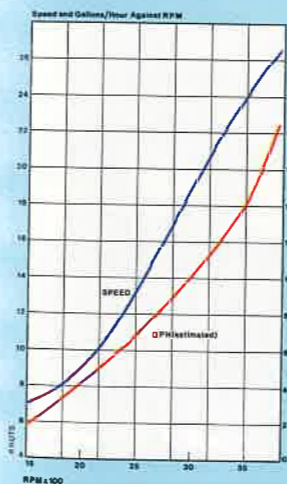
Acceleration: 0-25 knots, 13.5 sec.

Loa (inc platform)	33ft 0in (10.06m)
Hull length	31ft 0in (9.45m)
Beam	11ft 2in (3.42m)
Draught	2ft 11in (0.89m)
Displacement	5 tons
Fuel	2x65gal (590lt)
Water	65gal (295lt)

Price ex VAT with twin 200hp Volvo TAMD41 inboard diesels £71,350

Builder: Marine Projects Ltd, Newport Street, Plymouth, Devon PL1 3QG. Tel: 0752 227771.

Supplier: Solent Powerboats, Swanwick Marina, Southampton, Hampshire SO3 7ZL. Tel: 0489 885000.



Engines

Power on our test boat came from a pair of 200hp Volvo TAMD41 inboard diesels, and these will probably be the most popular options. Alternatives include the lower-rated 150hp TMD41s, also inboard-mounted, plus three outdrive options. These are 145hp or 211hp petrol units, or 130hp AD31 diesels.

The inboard engines are mounted under the saloon, and easily reached through three hatches after rolling back the carpet. The resulting access to the top and inside of the engines is good, though as you step down between them you either have to stand in the keel, possibly getting wet feet, or on the engine-bearers, risking stepping on the fuel lines. Also down in the keel is one of the boat's three electric bilge pumps, serving three watertight compartments. We were concerned to see how small this pump was; on a boat of this size, larger units should be fitted.

Access to the sea-inlet strainers is good, together with the fuel filters on the aft bulkhead, though no change-over system is fitted between port and starboard tanks. The tanks themselves are of mild steel, which is somewhat surprising — stainless steel or aluminium are more normal these days, removing any problems of corrosion. Noise insulation consists of foam on the bulkheads and tanks though, again surprisingly, none on the underside of the hatches or sole.

Exterior

Stepping out of the saloon you enter the cockpit. This is a good size for entertaining, with a full-width rear bench seat. Lockers under this take ropes and loose items, with additional lockers in the 'wings', port and starboard for the gas bottle and shoreline. A hatch in the sole gives access to the lazarette on the inboard-powered boat, or the engines on sterndrive models.

In the lazarette you find the aluminium water tank, plus the hot water calorifier and battery box. The batteries serve two circuits, one for starting up, one for domestics. At the rear of the lazarette you have good access to the steering gear, which also includes an emergency tiller, should the hydraulic system fail. A sensible washboard stops loose items jamming the steering. The standard of engineering revealed down here was generally good, with wires run in conduit or clipped out of the way, but some of the secondary glassfibre work was roughly finished on items such as the cockpit drains, which could snag clothes or unwary hands.

Back out in the cockpit, steps lead over the transom to the bathing platform. This is a good size, with teak gratings that will be kind to bare feet, and strong steps and a ladder leading into the water. We were surprised that no fender stowages are fitted on the transom,

BOAT REPORT

◀ these awkward items having to be stored in the lazarette instead.

A ladder from the cockpit leads up to the flybridge, where you find an L-shaped seat/lounger to port, and a central swivelling bucket-seat for the driver. The engine instrument panel is protected by a hinged perspex lid to keep off the worst of the rain and spray. A shallow tray to port, also with a perspex lid, takes a handheld VHF or other loose items. The engine controls are well positioned to starboard, and a good rail all round provides security when moving about.

Down at deck level, steps and well-placed handrails help you out of the cockpit onto the wide side-decks. Further rails along the cabin side, and substantial 24in-high solid guardrails with a lower wire, make moving forward safe. We were pleased to see the side-decks run at one level, without a step half-way along to trip you up. Moulded-in non-slip and a moulded gunwale lip add to the feeling of security here.

On the foredeck, a standard electric winch handles the anchor, which has a self-stowing stemhead fitting. There are 10in cleats to take the mooring lines forward and aft though, surprisingly, additional cleats amidships for springs have to be ordered as extras.

Handling and performance

Manoeuvring out of Hythe Marina Village, the 315 responded well to either engines or wheel. Out on the open water, the diesels gave a satisfactory response onto the plane, confirmed by the acceleration time of 12.3sec to 20 knots.

Top speed we recorded was 26½ knots, with 50% fuel, four crew and cruising gear, though Princess claim that the boat should be capable of 30 knots when lightly loaded. Either way, this is a more than adequate speed for most people, for whom the ability to keep up good average speeds in a wide range of conditions is more important.

We were unable to find any seriously taxing waves, but those we did encounter proved no problem, and the hull felt comfortable and precise, tracking straight and turning well.

Predicted fuel consumption figures show 1.43mpg at the maximum 3800rpm, giving a range of 187 miles. These improve to 1.69mpg and 220 miles at a comfortable cruising speed of 3500rpm and 23½ knots.

Noise levels at these speeds were good on our meter, with 82 and 81dB(A) in the saloon, 83 and 81 on the flybridge, though out in the cockpit the comparatively short exhaust runs, with no silencers, gave figures that were on the high side, at 89 and 88dB(A) respectively.

Just for the record, we measured what happened on one engine only, where, in common with most twin-engined boats, the

315 dropped off the plane. Speed was 8½ knots at full throttle. As you would only be drawing fuel from one tank in such circumstances, your range would effectively be reduced to 75 miles or so, even on full tanks, which highlights the need for cross-connection of the fuel supplies.

Conclusion

In its design and layout, the 315 proves a worthy successor to the 30DS. Comfortable accommodation for two to five people is matched by an excellent performance and stylish modern lines. The boat has room for a party of eight or more, yet can be comfortably handled by just two people. Some of the detail points could do with improving, but these would be easily rectified, and it is obvious that Marine Projects have once again provided the right boat for the market at the right time. ■

Below: a dressing table and full-height hanging locker in the cabin are practical internal touches to this stylish flybridge design.

