

TEST – FLIPPER 900 ST

a small cabin cruiser with extraordinary qualities.

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Agile, fast, spacious, and well-refined, the Flipper 900 ST, successor of the 900 DC, is an excellent example of how a good project can be carried out in the best way without skimping on quality and substance.



We had already tested the 900 DC, distinguished by remarkable sports performance and extraordinary building quality. Now, it's the turn of the Flipper 900ST which, although belonging to a completely different boat type (it's, in fact, a cabin cruiser), is however based on the same philosophy. The Swedish shipyard designs and builds these boats without skimping on materials and processing so that the result can fully satisfy the owners with an uncompromised product.

Despite the similarity of the name between the two models, the hulls are different and specially designed to deliver distinct behaviours and performance at sea. The shipyard, in fact, designs and builds different hulls for each model, paying particular attention to the optimization of weights, balance, comfort, usability, fuel efficiency and performance. The result is clearly perceivable when sailing. Seen from a distance, the Flipper 900 ST can be recognized by her rounded windowed deckhouse, completely open towards the stern, and her three-section windscreen: a sloppy glance might take it for other market products, but a more precise and in-depth view allows to discover what this boat is capable of.



The observer can therefore discover that the solid teak that covers the deck, the side-decks, the gunwales, the stern staircases, and platforms is offered as standard on all models; it is a precise of the manufacturer to make its own boats immediately recognizable.

The compact size of the Flipper 900 ST has not prevented the designers from creating a cockpit that, in terms of dimensions and furnishings, has nothing to envy to much larger boats.



The stern sundeck, wet bar, dining table and sofas are all comfortable and ergonomically well-designed. The teak table, equipped with glass holders and handrails, is electrically adjustable in height. When lowered, it turns into a large sundeck with cushions.



In both dining and sunbathing use, the backrest of the two co-pilot two-seat bench can be moved forward with a simple pantograph system in sturdy stainless steel. The wet bar is surprising: the top that covers it, blocked by a stopper, can slide rightward and unveil a sink and a cooking plate, thus functioning as a worktop if necessary; otherwise, it can be positioned vertically on the wall to keep the passage towards the stern clear.



As simple as smart, this solution allows to solve the usual space problems in the galley. Designers have, in fact, managed to create useful storage compartments everywhere: on the floor, under the sofas, in the pieces of furniture, in the platforms and even in the large stern garage (outboard propulsion translates into space-saving tanks and systems), thus offering many useful storage solutions.



A completely enclosed boat would not be particularly successful on the Italian market. This is why a generous portion of the roof can be opened to uncover almost the entire cockpit, from the windscreen to the stern sofa: furthermore, this solution allows to feel the wind in your face in the stand-up driving position.



The helm station is rather comfortable and ergonomic, both in the sitting and stand-up driving position, probably a little low compared with the height of the dashboard: it is probably sized to the standards of build of the Nordics.



The almost full-beam cockpit results into rather narrow side-decks yet made safe by the abundant presence of handrails. The most comfortable access, however, is offered by the central section of the windscreen and the three steps (obviously covered with solid teak) integrated into the deckhouse structure.





The entire bow deck of the Flipper 900 ST is dedicated to the sundeck; during our test, the boat was devoid of cushions, but this allowed us to better notice the large, fixed windows and the wide opening manhole that flood the interiors with a considerable amount of air and natural light.





In the stern, the side-decks widen into an area occupied by a large chain locker which also hides an anchor windlass; the anchor (in this case a beautiful Ultra Marine stainless steel one) is placed in view in its bow; for safety and practicality purposes, the stainless steel rail is interrupted at the sides of the bow to allow easy passage to and from the ground.

Interiors

Given the compact size of the Flipper 900 ST – just 9 meters in length, as suggested by the name – the space available below deck is surprising and cleverly arranged. Although the interior layout is like the only commonly found on this type of boats, it is the balance between elements that makes a difference. Firstly, it is unusual for the bow cabin to be closed by a door: this space is normally unique, at the expense of privacy.



What is a little sacrificed is the entrance, equipped with a couch, a wardrobe and access to the second aft cabin. Positioned under the cockpit, the master cabin is inevitably low in height but offers a wide surface, hidden from the outside. Without forgetting a very important detail: the furniture and interior walls are all made of brushed solid

teak obtained from unique slabs to obtain uniformity and continuity in the natural flames, a true luxury commonly found on superyachts.



A door located in the entrance opens to the head that, rather wide, is entirely covered by glossy gelcoat for easier cleaning; it is equipped with a folding bench that covers the toilet and a large window with blackout blind.

A hand shower added to the lavabo mixer, a black waters control and indicator and a heating nozzle complete the equipment. In the bow, the master cabin – spacious and flooded with a considerable amount of natural light by both side and ceiling windows – has a double function: bed and dining area, simply removing the central part of the mattress, and raising the table. This solution is certainly nothing new, but the size of the cabin makes everything very comfortable.

The three sofas hide some voluminous and easy-to-reach storage compartments. What is striking in these Flipper models is the high quality of both materials, finishes, wood and fiberglass details and accessories. The shipyard has not made any compromises in terms of

quality and substance. The Flipper 900 ST, in fact, is not a boat for everyone. She is designed for a selected niche of users who can really appreciate her characteristics.



We test the boat in Genoa on a nice sunny day. The sea is, however, rough and the waves progressively raise until they reach 2.5 meters in height. The Flipper 900 ST seems not be disturbed by this and, instead, shows a positive behaviour. Quieter and less extreme than the 900 DC's one, the hull still delivers exciting performance at high speed and great stability at cruising speed.





The tight turns performed in perfect circles of about 25 meters produce less pronounced roll angles than the 900 DC, but the feeling is always that of extreme handling and safety in every maneuver, even the most risky ones.





Cavitation and absent yaw also characterize the tighter turns, a sign that the hull lines are designed with seafaring attention. As for safety, as we have already mentioned above, the high sides and the presence of numerous handrails make life on board serene and protected.





The twin 200HP outboards are more than enough to deliver considerable performance, with a top speed of 38 knots and powerful acceleration. Resulting from a right installed power/waterlines and weight/mass distribution ratio, fuel consumption is rather low: at a cruising speed of 20 knots, the engines use less than 50 l/h.

In conclusion, the Flipper 900 ST, like her sister, has convinced us completely. It is a really small yacht with extraordinary qualities.



Test Conditions				
Wind	15-20 knots			
Sea	2.5 m waves			
Fuel	300 l			
Water	0			
Passengers on board	3			
Hull	dirty			
Engines	2 x Mercury XL DTS 200 HP			
Rpm	Speed	l/h	l/Nm	Range
600	3	4.4	1.5	259.1
1000	5.1	7.4	1.5	261.9
1500	7	12	1.7	221.7
2000	8.4	19	2.3	168
2500	10.5	26.4	2.5	151.1
3000	15.3	36.6	2.4	158.9

3500	21.6	50.2	2.3	163.5
4000	26.9	68	2.5	150.3
4500	30	84	2.8	135.7
5000	35.1	120	3.4	111.2
5200	38.1	128.6	3.4	112.6
Min. planing speed – trim 0		9.2 knots at 2,200 rpm		
Min. planing speed – trim +26		8. knots at 2,150 rpm		