



HARDY 65

A boat like this deserves a proper test, so with snow on the decks, we round the Isle of Wight in a Force 7 to see what it's made of

Words Jack Haines Pictures Richard Langdon

We have unfinished business with the flagship of the Hardy range. Back in 2013, we joined the original version of this boat – the Hardy 62 – on a trip from Southampton to Ipswich in an attempt to give it a proper test in what would hopefully be some challenging conditions. As it transpired, we left the Solent, crossed the wash of one tanker and then didn't see another wave for about 200 miles. The boat performed beautifully, topping out at 33 knots, but the millpond conditions offered nothing to challenge the boat's seakeeping.

Fast forward to March of this year and I am standing on a pontoon in Gosport that is covered in about four inches of snow and a howling wind is blowing flecks of the white stuff across the marina. Someone has built a mini snowman next to the shorepower outlets. The Hardy 65 has a snowy blanket draped over its broad shoulders and the bathing platform is like an ice rink.

The plan is to take the boat over to Guernsey early the next morning before she heads to her final destination of Jersey to meet her owner. The forecast is a world away from what we experienced on the 62, with winds mid-Channel of F7-8 gusting



Snow joke – an unusual sight during a test

SEE THE VIDEO



mby.com/h65





Sunshine warms the decks in Poole



Pushing through the surf in the eastern Solent



The galley-up layout works much better on this style of boat than the galley-down arrangement on the 62

The main deck layout is cosy and sociable



We topped out at 22.4 knots during the trip

In the dimly lit marina basin, the 65 cuts an imposing figure, towering over the pontoons

No.1. Gone is the bland woodwork and blue carpets, replaced with rich walnut cabinetry and white oak detailing. The silver carpet is plush underfoot and classy grey upholstery has added pop from tastefully bright scatter cushions. The layout is vastly improved too. The galley is now on the main deck, directly opposite the dinette, which works well on a boat where you may well be cooking when you're on passage. The old helm arrangement included three raised seats located centrally, which was great if you were driving but robbed the saloon of valuable light from the windscreen and made the entire area feel cramped. There is no longer an internal staircase to the flybridge – a shame, but the helm layout is much better.

Below, larger hull windows amidships have transformed the master ensuite, which is as beautifully finished as the saloon and has space for a lovely ensuite and walk-in wardrobe.

Mine and photographer Richard's cabin for the night is the VIP, which has a pair of twins that slide together to become a double (we left them apart) and a spacious ensuite of its own. The 65 has all the style and warmth that the original interior lacked. With steaming mugs of tea in hand and the heating doing its thing, the 65 is a fine refuge from the cold outside.

Even when split in two, the berths in the VIP are comfortable and – joy of joys – there are two charging points right above the bed and a handy fiddle to store glasses, books etc. Despite the wind screeching

through the surrounding halyards, we sleep well, knowing that morning will bring a test for craft and crew alike.

Scraping snow off the decks and through the scuppers is an interesting way to begin a sea trial, but that's what faces us before we set off. Decks cleared and engines warmed, Nick negotiates the tight network of pontoons and eases the boat out past the fuel pontoon. Portsmouth Harbour looks benign given the doom-filled forecast but a glance at the flags whipping around their poles at the entrance tells another story.

We edge into the Solent, which is eerily placid, but as we push east towards Bembridge the waves begin piling up, roaring up from the aft quarters with foam whipping off their tops. There is a steep following swell of around 3m which sends the bow barreling downwards before we meet the back of the next wave, the foredeck rising gracefully towards the sky. At the lower helm, we are safely insulated from the dreadful conditions as the boat dutifully chugs on without hesitation. It's whisper quiet, with sound readings barely reaching the mid-60s, a crucial asset for such a long-distance cruising craft. The Slepner fin stabilisers are doing a fine job of keeping us level – no mean feat on a boat that weighs around 45 tonnes and is being subject to an awkward quartering swell. So detached are we from what's going on around us that Nick is able to pad around the saloon in his slippers.

The 800hp MAN i6 motors push us through manfully as the swell yo-yos our speed over ground between 12 and

to 50 knots, 3.5m seas and temperatures barely creeping above freezing. Skipper Nick and I pore over the ominous predictions for the next day's conditions, conscious that our planned route would take us through the teeth of a strengthening mid-Channel gale. Will the boat cope? Without question. Is it sensible to head into weather of this nature and potentially endanger the boat, ourselves and anyone who may have to rescue us if something goes awry when the trip is entirely avoidable? No. The decision is made to head to Poole instead, but going around the south side of the Isle of Wight to poke the bow into the rough stuff and get a brief taste of how the boat deals with it.

A NEW DIRECTION

Though it's loosely based on the 62, the 65 feels a world away from its ancestor in nearly every department. In the dimly lit marina basin it cuts an imposing figure, towering over the pontoons with its prominent bow and lifeboat-like inwardly raked front screens. The warmly illuminated interior extends a toasty hand and pulls me inside, and this is where the biggest changes have occurred over hull



The galley works well on the move

So detached are we from what's going on around us that Nick is able to pad around the saloon in his slippers

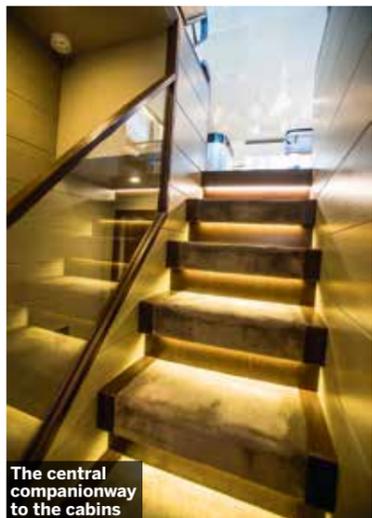


Passing the snow-covered cliffs of the Isle of Wight

26 knots. The 65 is packing 400hp less per side than the 62, which had the 1,200hp MAN units and a top speed well into the thirties. This 65 has a heavy specification including half a tonne of Corian alone. Add stabilisers, air con, a hydraulic bathing platform, crane, a tender with a 25hp outboard, a potential fuel load of 6,100 litres and 1,000 litres of water and the motors have their work cut out to shift the boat's bulk. They struggle at times, especially heaving the boat out of deeper troughs, where the 1,000hp units would make easier work of it.

A SOLID CONTENDER

As we round the island, it offers some protection from the wind and conditions ease, so we up the speed. We top out at 22.4 knots but it feels like the boat is barely moving given how smooth the ride is. Ease the throttles back to settle at 1,200rpm and the 65 slips along at around 10 knots, returning just shy of 1mpg and a range of over 1,000nm. It's built to go places.



The central companionway to the cabins

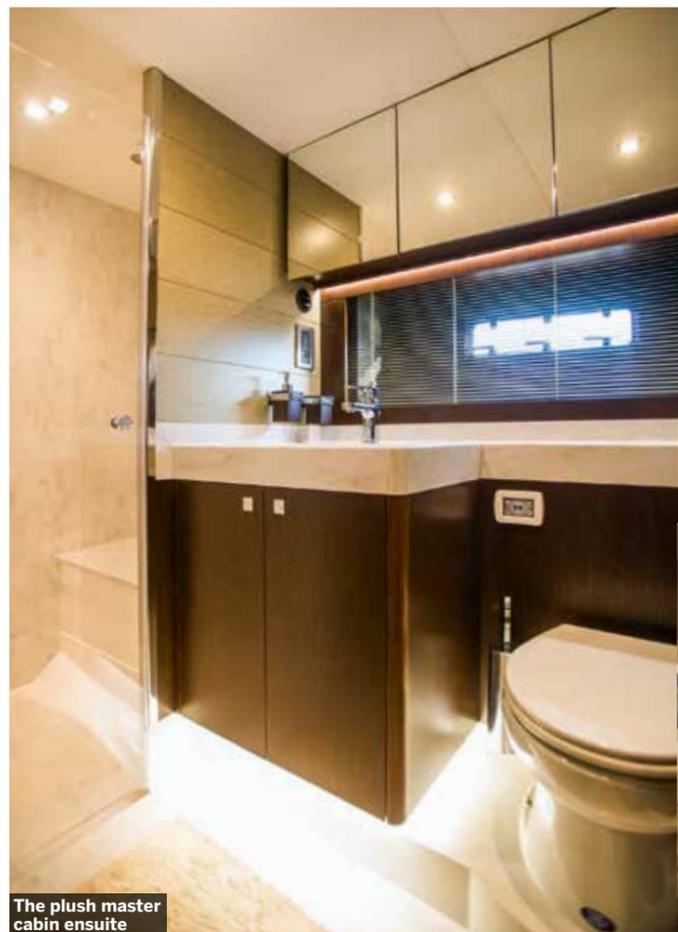
The kettle goes on as we approach Ventnor and we relish the relative calm away from the seething seas left behind.

We plan to make a photography pit stop in Yarmouth, aware that it could be quite tasty inside the harbour given the rising tide and direction of the wind. The Hurst narrows are a confused mass of boiling chop, green water dashed with foam that fidgets and spits as we carve through. We edge into Yarmouth with the wind gusting to 40 knots. Nick eyes up the fuel pontoon at the southern end of the basin but the prospect of having to heave the 65 off the pontoon with that breeze on the beam isn't a pleasant one. We abort the plan and Nick wrestles with the throttles to turn the boat within its length and get clear of the harbour – next stop Poole.

We regain our composure and set a course west, passing back through the Hurst narrows and down the north channel around the Shingle Bank. In the lee of land, the conditions ease off again so we relax into a 16-knot cruising speed. The layout of the lower helm is tuned towards passagemaking and the ergonomics are superb. The single Besenzoni helm seat is fully adjustable and allows you to slide yourself close enough to the dash that everything from the wheel and throttles to thruster controls and chartplotter buttons are no stretch. Though the Raymarine MFDs are touch sensitive, the panel of proper buttons between the wheel and throttles mean you don't have to lean out of the seat to use them. The view forward through the battleship windcreens is excellent and on the leg to Poole, I sit in comfort with all the boat's crucial information being fed to me via the various screens split between the dash and a panel overhead. For long journeys, it's ideal. The only action needed is to adjust the autopilot as we approach one of many lobster pots strewn across the bay.

A camera in the engineroom means the skipper can keep an eye on the machinery but this doesn't stop Nick and his slippers popping down to peer through the watertight door to ensure all is well.

A full-height door in the cockpit leads down a steep staircase to the lazarette, if you can call it that. It's more of a workshop-cum-storeroom with standing



The plush master cabin ensuite



Holding station in the shelter of Poole Quay

headroom, a sink, lots of storage and room for extra fridges, a watermaker and the washing machine. The machinery space is similarly practical; the engines are mounted a good distance away from each other with masses of space to inspect around all sides of both motors. The four aluminum fuel tanks feed into a fuel-polishing system and a suite

of Racor fuel filters with clear bowls for quick inspection. There is a changeover system that means you can quickly bypass and clear blocked filters on the move.

The sea has a final tantrum as we pass down the main channel into Poole with breakers angrily sweeping across the banks of Hook Sands. The Hardy remains unflustered, ploughing on with the quiet



The much improved full-beam master



The VIP cabin is a versatile sleeping space



A pair of bunks in the third cabin

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE HARDY 65

UTILITY ROOM

The sign of a true cruising machine, the lazarette has full standing headroom, extra storage for all the cruising stores you could dream of and space for a washing machine and watermaker.



TAKE COVER

The cockpit covers extend all the way around to the side decks so you can totally enclose the area on cold days. The broad decks are well protected until you reach the foredeck.



LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE

Subtle backlighting is used to great effect throughout the interior. Use of lighting is just one improvement inside the 65 over the 62. It's a wonderful place to spend time.



ENGINEROOM

The machinery space is accessed via a watertight door in the utility room and it is a typically practical installation. The smaller lumps mean there is even more space to move around and daily service checks couldn't be easier. The area is brilliantly lit and finished with intumescent Flo-Coat and fire-retardant soundproofing.





The grey topsides look purposeful but the traditional Hardy blue has more charm

The spacious flybridge includes a spot aft to stow the tender, launched via a crane

There are cameras mounted above both anchors so the skipper can check that they are positioned correctly from either helm station

The 65 has barely broken a sweat in ironing out some truly horrendous conditions

determination that it has demonstrated throughout our five-hour passage.

We trickle through the narrows and into the sanctuary of a chilly Poole Harbour with an icing sugar-coated Isle of Purbeck as our backdrop. We may not have crossed the Channel, but the flicker of satisfaction after completing a tough journey is still present. The 65 has barely broken a sweat in ironing out some truly horrendous conditions and it has proven its ability to travel serious distances while cosseting its crew in total security and comfort. The only real question mark is whether the 800hp engines are the best match for the boat and I'm inclined to suggest that, with

a spec this heavy at least, the 1,000hp units would offer the extra potency that is so welcome in the conditions we experienced.

VERDICT

The 62 proved that Hardy could build a boat of this size and dynamic capability, but it lacked the finesse that anyone willing to part with over £2 million would expect. The 65 is a different beast altogether, still immensely capable and a true oceangoing Category A cruiser but with the high-class, top-quality interior that it so richly deserves. **MBY**
Contact Hardy Marine. Tel: +44 (0)1473 694674. Web: www.hardymarine.co.uk

THE HELM VIEW

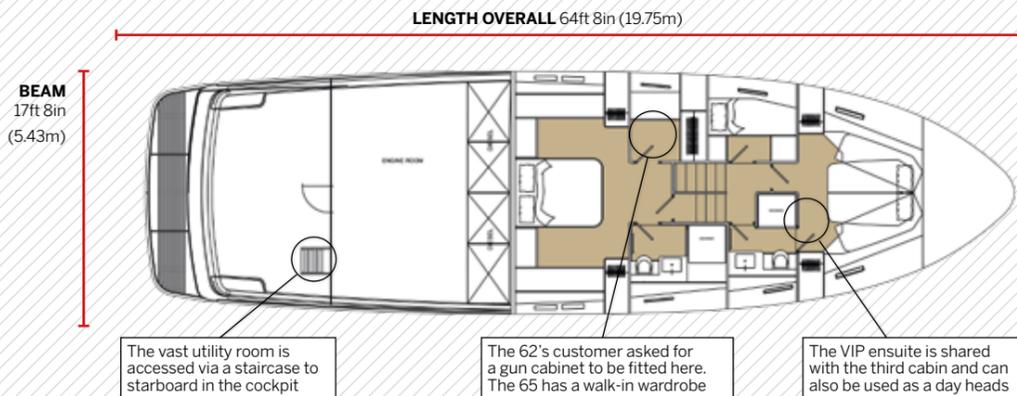


The view out over the imposing bow is tremendous, like helming a battleship

This boat only had one helm seat fitted but it is possible to order two if you would prefer

This bank of soft keys allows you to control the MFDs without having to move from the helm seat

THE DATA



FUEL CAPACITY
1,342 imp gal (6,100 litres)

WATER CAPACITY
220 imp gal (1,000 litres)

DRAUGHT
5ft 9in (1.8m)

RCD CATEGORY
A for 10 people

DESIGNERS
Andrew Wolstenholme & Hardy

DISPLACEMENT
45 tonnes (loaded)

PERFORMANCE

TEST ENGINES MAN i6 800. Twin 800hp @ 2,300rpm. 6-cylinder, 12.4-litre diesels

	ECO	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	FAST	2,200	MAX
RPM	1,000	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,370
Speed	6.7	9.7	12.2	13.2	14.0	16.1	20.1	22.4
LPH	30	46	72	109	152	220	250	300
GPH	6.6	10.1	15.8	24.0	33.4	48.4	55.0	66.0
MPG	1.02	0.96	0.77	0.55	0.42	0.33	0.37	0.34
Range	1,090	1,029	827	591	450	357	392	364

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)

Helm	53	56	59	62	63	64	67	70
Saloon	59	62	65	68	69	71	73	76

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles, allows for 20% reserve. Figures based on readings from on-board fuel gauges, your figures may vary considerably. All prices exclude VAT. 60% fuel, 100% water, 4 crew, cruising stores, tender and 2 liferafts on board. 1°C air temp. F4 + slight conditions for sea trials

THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from £1.88m ex VAT
 Price as tested £2.17m ex VAT

Hydraulic passerelle	£25,940
Hydraulic bathing platform	£14,000
Flybridge crane	£22,100
JCS joysticks (flybridge/cockpit/wireless)	£19K
Seafresh 72lph watermaker	£10,820
Wasp fuel-polishing system	£9,480
Additional Onan 8kW 'night' generator	£15,800
Camera installation inc FLIR nightvision	£22K
Sleipner Vector fin stabilisers	£60,900
Raymarine satellite TV domes	£10,760

■ = Options on test boat

RIVALS

OUTER REEF 650
\$2.8m ex VAT

More traditional but voluminous and comfy with a speed of over 20 knots with 1,100hp engines.

FLEMING 65
\$3.88m ex VAT

A pricey alternative but the standard spec is staggeringly comprehensive and build quality is through the roof.