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Today’s boat lifts offer boaters sleek, versatile and innovative ways to protect their investment. p. 38

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PORT OF CALL
Port Clinton, OH: This Lake Erie city is centrally located to enjoy all that the Western Basin has to offer. p. 46

SPOTLIGHTS
AVIARA ★ BOSTON WHALER ★ JEANNEAU ★ SEA RAY
Delivering comfort and pizazz.

Belize 66 Daybridge

by Arnie Hammerman

by Arnie Hammerman

Boat Test Photos Courtesy of Belize 66 Daybridge

BELIZE 66 DAYBRIDGE

 Styling that stands out.
 Solid performance; smooth and comfortable even in rough conditions.
 Full-beam master and multiple cabin layout options.
 Attractive finishes with multiple gathering areas.
 Tender garage discreetly holds a 10-foot, 6-inch RIB with a 40-hp Yamaha.

Watch the video at LAKELANDBOATING.COM!
The Belize 66 Daybridge made a big splash during her American debut at the 2019 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, a year after the Sedan version arrived (check out Lakeland Boating’s story in May 2019, p. 40).

The new Daybridge model shares many great features with the Sedan but has added benefits. The bridge expands the usable interior of the main deck by converting the lower helm station into more living space. The Daybridge provides unprecedented visibility when cruising, as well as an open helm station. A retractable sunroof in the coach roof below creating a smooth, sculpted look. Other Belize hallmarks are boastful accommodations, luxurious finishes, and boats that are easy to operate and fun to drive.

A true test
To run the Belize 66 Daybridge I met up with Chris McCafferty, international sales director for Riviera and Belize, on an overcast, blustery November morning in Stuart, Florida. The Belize 66 is a substantial vessel, 69 feet, 3 inches overall, with a beam of 17 feet, 11 inches, and a dry weight of 85,000 pounds. In a tight slip with gusts of wind streaming our lines, things looked precarious, but getting out of the slip and turning the boat on axis 360 degrees proved easy. McCafferty used the IPS joystick wing station in the cockpit and I carefully removed the lines from the pilings, hauling up fenders as we crept out under control. We then safely piazzotted through the wind, demonstrating that two people can easily handle this boat.

Evoking the relative calm of the protected waterway to port, McCafferty half-heartedly asked me if I wanted to stay inside. He knew I wanted to test the inlet since facing adverse conditions is a rarity when reviewing boats. Having just delivered a powerboat from New England, I understood how rough it could be outside St. Lucie Inlet and wanted to see how the Belize would manage. The wind blew steadily at 18-25 mph, gusting to 30 mph. Large waves piled up on the bar as we cruised out at 22 mph. Having grown up on Lake Michigan, I have experienced short wave periods and steep chop, and this was an excellent test of difficult conditions comparable to those on the Great Lakes.

Once outside, 6- to 9-foot waves flowed into our bow, but the Belize smoothed through without a shudder. The boat has a bridge clearance of 25 feet, 2 inches, and we were 15 feet off the water on the substantial Daybridge but barely rolled thanks to the hull form and a Seakeeper 16 gyrostabilizer. The motion felt fine and spray didn’t make it up to the helm where we sat protected.

Having proven enough, I nodded to McCafferty. Finding an opening in the wave pattern, we turned quickly across the seas and headed downtown. I took the helm, carefully surfing back in with a quartering sea — this was fun! Twin Volvo Penta IPS 1350s at 1800 RPM pushed us at a safe cruise of over 20 mph at 64% load, burning 51 gph. Back inside the inlet, we continued testing in the relative calm. Starting from a dead stop, acceleration was smooth coming up on plane with little perceptible hump. Decelerating down from speed, we glided easily, passing underneath a bridge without pushing much water. Running figure-eights at 28 mph, the boat leaned gently in and lost less than 5 mph, even during hard cornering. Turn diameter was a tight two boat lengths, and lost speed resumed equally once centered. Overall, the Belize 66 Daybridge handles exceptionally well and is a pleasure to run.

Checking boxes
When it comes to accommodations, the Belize 66 delivers. Several cabin layouts are offered with three or four cabins and optional crew quarters. The boat I tested had the “Presidential” full-beam King bed master, which measured a roomy 150 square feet. Six feet, 3 inches of headroom was fine for me but could be limiting for some. The master head is also full beam and features a spacious rain shower.

The main deck of the Belize 66 offers a cozy cockpit seating area equipped with a fridge, icemaker and outdoor BBQ adjacent to a sizable, fully equipped galley. The foredeck bow lounge has adjustable-backed cushioned seating, a table, speakers, drink holders and a sunshade. Built to exacting standards, Australian engineering combines with Taiwanese craftsmanship delivering proven quality. The finish is luxurious and well-appointed throughout, with high-end furnishings, satin-varnished American walnut panels, plush upholstery and stainless steel accents.

For anyone in the market for a boat this size, the Belize 66 Daybridge checks a lot of boxes and is worthy of a serious look. ★

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