

Belize 66 Sedan

Delivering comfort,
performance and a
style all its own.

by Arnie Hammerman



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BELIZE

Some boaters tired of the constancy of modern boats — many with similar looks — seek something different. These boaters appreciate the features, comfort and reliability new boats have but want a boat that stands out.

This is precisely why Belize Motoryachts was developed: To answer the demands of owners who'd been asking for a modern boat with a distinctive profile.



Wes Moxey, the current CEO of Riviera, started Belize while he was away from Riviera during the 2008 recession. The idea was to create luxurious cruisers that had remarkable styling yet remained practical and fun. Moxey knew the boats had to have the right combination of interior accommodations and outside living areas, while also remaining easy to manage, drive and use. When new owners took over Riviera in 2012, they brought Moxey back, and Belize came under the fold of Riviera. Belize yachts are now sold and serviced through Riviera's worldwide dealer network.

Unlike Australian-built Rivieras, Belize Yachts are manufactured in Taiwan. The first Belize was a 52 (now 54) that remains popular in both sedan and flybridge versions. The success of the boat brand intrigued existing Belize owners wanting to move up in size, as well as other buyers that admired the brand but wanted a larger boat. Belize's new flagship 66 Sedan — introduced in Fort Lauderdale last November — is meeting this demand and demonstrating that the concept works in a bigger boat. A Daybridge version of the Belize 66 is currently under construction and will have its world premiere at the 2019 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show.

The test drive

As the Belize 66 Sedan cruised through the channel to pick me up for a test drive it was easy to see that the boat looks different than most modern cruisers. Her nearly plumb bow and sleek, narrow entry give her a distinctive ship-like appearance. A soft curved hardtop with raked back radar arch, rounded hull windows and portholes seem a bit retro but somehow also modern. It's not just styling that sets this boat apart, I would soon see that accommodations, quality of finish, and performance round out the package.

Twin helm seats separated by a large console provide comfortable seating and easy access to the dash and controls.

The wheel is centerline with triple Garmin MFDs and an array of buttons and gauges in neo-retro leather covered pods. Throttles are to the left and the IPS joystick is opposite on the arm of the helm chair. Additional joysticks concealed in cockpit wing stations help when docking. Visibility is excellent from the helm and companion seat. The sunroof above provides light; however, we kept it closed while testing to measure sound levels, which reached only 73 decibels at full throttle (normal conversation is around 60 decibels).

The Volvo Penta IPS 1350s accelerated smoothly as we hit a peak speed of 40 mph and averaged 38 mph wide open. At a fast cruise of 34.5 mph (with 85 percent load) we used 82 gallons per hour providing a range of 450 miles. Slowing to a more reasonable 23 mph cruise burned 47 gallons per hour, and range increased to 524 miles at 90 percent of fuel capacity.

Testing maneuverability, I took hard corners at 29 knots and the Belize 66 performed admirably. Leaning steadily into the turns created tight little circles of about three to four boat lengths. Conditions were moderate with a light chop but slicing through the wake of a passing boat felt even and secure, with no slamming or fuss. Making figure eights, the boat tracked steadily regardless of the speed or direction of turn. At 69 feet, 3 inches long and 38 tons, the Belize 66 is a substantial boat, yet she handles easily and confidently. Driving this boat is a lot of fun whether out for a day cruise or making serious passages. With IPS and a bow thruster, docking remains simple and controlled.

The distinctive interior

Taking a look around, high-end furnishings, satin varnished American walnut panels, plush upholstery and stainless steel accents shine throughout. Adjacent the helm, the salon has plenty of seating, and a watertight door to port leads onto the teak clad side deck. The door can be pinned open, and a keyless

push button handle locks it from inside. The galley takes up the entire aft area of the salon, has room for two or more and is fully appointed. What I like about this layout is the ability to serve guests forward to the salon table or aft into the cockpit. Highlights are a double stainless sink with disposal, and drawers for refrigeration, freezers and dishwasher. Pull-out pantries include a tall pantry to port and a unique fold-out corner pantry.

Belize offers three different below-deck accommodation options that revolve around a full-beam master cabin with a king-size bed. All of the floorplans have a VIP double cabin forward and a twin cabin that can convert into a double, both with ensuite heads.

The vessel I toured had the Presidential layout, which features twin hanging lockers, a convenient desk/vanity with a chair and a massive full-beam head that takes up what would be the entire crew quarters under a different configuration. My Bosch laser tape measure pegged the cabin at 160 square feet — not including the head. I measured headroom of 6 feet, 3 inches in both the cabin and the head, however, a 6-foot, 4-inch-tall passenger onboard said he had no trouble. The master head features twin sinks, heated towel racks and a floor system with removable teak veneer panels hiding drains underneath for easy cleaning. The shower is more than 6 feet long and 3 feet wide. An access door leads from the master head to the engine room; this makes sense as this space becomes crew quarters or a utility room in alternate layouts. Additional engine room access is via a ladder from the cockpit.

The engine room is thoughtfully laid out with all sea strainers coming to a single access point except for those servicing the main engines. AC systems are to starboard, DC to port, and pumps and filters have their own centralized locations. Headroom is 5 feet, 8 inches or higher in some places, but a centerline tender garage restricts overhead space particularly above the 29kw Onan generator. One unique factor is that

the engines are not mounted parallel to each other. The port engine is farther forward than the starboard engine. Both run jackshafts back to adjacent IPS drives, so it doesn't affect performance. There is no perceptible difference even when turning in alternate directions, and it did not affect trim.

The outdoor space

The cockpit features covered seating and a varnished table with stainless drink holder insert. A flip-top buffet conceals twin electric grills with a fridge or icemaker below. The cockpit connects easily to the galley through a single glass and stainless sliding door and a pop-up window. Twin stairwells lead aft to the swim platform where one side provides a dry and safe place to stand while the other side drops down for tender launching. The garage holds a BRIG 330 (10 feet, 8 inches) or a Palm Beach 1200 (11 feet, 9 inches) tender whose folding transom allows for a 40-hp Yamaha.

Foredeck features include ample storage compartments on both sides, a Muir windlass with devil's claw and a custom chain washing system that sprays the chain with alternating nozzles in the bow tube. Special touches like the chain cleaner, a spotlight on the bow, and high-pressure fittings for pressure washing fore and aft demonstrate Belize's attention to detail. Ahead of the windshield, a center seating area can be set with a table underneath a lighted Bimini or can be converted into a large sunpad complete with drink holders and a four-speaker JL Audio system.

The Belize 66 Sedan offers boaters distinct styling, significant accommodations, quality construction, performance and versatility. Whether cruising the Great Lakes or heading out the St. Lawrence for saltwater (at 19 feet, 11 inches, she is too tall for the Great Loop rivers) this boat is a comfortable cruiser with a lot to offer, including an exciting look that stands out from the crowd. ★

Belize 66 Sedan



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 69'3"

Beam: 17'11"

Draft: 4'11"

Displacement:
76,000 lbs.

Fuel Capacity: 1,188 gals

Water Capacity: 185 gals

Power: T-Volvo Penta
D13-IPS 3-1350 (1,000-hp)

Base Price: \$3,150,000

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