



Talkin' Boats

Viking Design Manager David Wilson Explains the Evolution of the Gen II Viking 58 Convertible



Q: Can you share with us the thinking that drove the 58 Convertible's design process?

A: Right from the beginning, the philosophy behind the design and engineering was to build the most lean and efficient boat possible. We've incorporated advanced, lighter-weight boatbuilding materials and methods along with structural enhancements to achieve our goals in performance. We have utilized balsa and foam core; we have used additional core, changed laminates and took other steps to remove weight from the boat. This type of comprehensive engineering analysis is one of our strengths. We're an engineering- and design-driven company, and this becomes very clear when you experience the boat's performance.

Q: Does this efficiency also apply to the operating systems on the boat, including the propulsion?

A: Yes, systems and accessories on the boat were chosen and installed after thorough review processes. Our goals were maximum access, easy maintenance and durability. Everything from the generator and gyro selections to seawater systems

were scrutinized. We were given the task of making the boat as fast and efficient as possible with 10-cylinder engines. We were given a speed—42 knots—that we needed to achieve, and we did just that.

Q: This is the second-generation 58 Convertible. You were here when Gen I was built in the 1990s. How do the two boats compare?

A: The attention to the lean and efficient philosophy is greater now, but I believe what Bill Healey started in that generation was carried on into this generation. Many of the team members who helped build that boat are still here—Pat Healey, of course, and Lonni Rutt, Bill Heller, Don Gemmell, Drew McDowell, Al Uhl, Rudy Dalinger and Steve Walker are just a few of them.

Q: Let's take a closer look at key areas of the boat. What about the flybridge? How does yesterday's compare to today's?

A: Back then the side console design in the flybridge was suitable and popular. But we've moved onto a center console. With the center console design, you can move around 360

degrees. There is greater freedom; easier cleaning; improved visibility; enhanced seating. The other big improvement is the full use of toekick space, so all the furniture is "floating." You are gaining 4 to 8 inches at the base of the console, around the seats and other parts of the flybridge.

Q: What is the overall mission and purpose of this boat and who is it a good fit for?

A: It's a great size for the owner/operator. The husband and wife and the family can be self-sufficient on this boat without the need for additional crew. The technology and systems are advanced but simple to operate and maintain. The technology is not overly elaborate; everything has purpose. While she's a great boat for the family, the 58 can immediately be turned into a hardcore tournament fisherman.

Q: Talk about the layout. How are these areas different?

A: The cockpit and the mezzanine, no doubt, are two areas that have changed to a great degree. Adding the mezzanine has been very popular. On the surface, this may seem like it is our typical three-stateroom, two-head layout with a salon and a galley. But it is much more than that. We flipped the salon which aligned the salon door with the forepeak so you get that spacious feeling; when you're inside the salon you're effectively seeing all the way to the bow of the boat.

Q: Sum up how the 58 C fits into the sportfish history of this company?

A: The boat is the culmination of 55 years of boatbuilding experience. Each model gets better and better. I think those who love Vikings will become even more enthused about what we've done, and people new to Viking will be extremely satisfied and will want to stay in the family for a long time.