

Maritimo M50



A Classic

THE M50 PROVED A GREAT SEA BOAT DURING ITS FIRST COASTAL TRIP FROM THE GOLD COAST TO SYDNEY.

Maritimo's M48 flybridge cruiser was a great success story for the iconic Aussie boat builder. It was one of the company's most prolific models, with more than 100 sold internationally to buyers in Italy, Spain, the UK, the USA and the UAE, as well as of course, in Australia and New Zealand.

Ever since inception a decade ago though, Maritimo has never been a company to stand still; nor has it ever rested on its proverbial laurels. Refining, updating, and upgrading existing models in response to an ever more sophisticated market – and introducing new ones as tastes grow and change has always been company policy.

Given the success and popularity of the M48, at the very least it would be a hard act to follow, which obviously posed a considerable challenge to Maritimo's engineers and R & D folk. It also poses for us some pretty serious questions about whether the M50 is actually a better boat.

I won't keep you waiting any longer before getting on with this review; so will answer both those questions in brief right now.

The answer to whether the M50 is a better boat than the M48 is definitely yes – in several aspects.

And as to whether the name change merely indicates some different shiny bits designed to give the marketing department something to go on about, the answer is no! There's a great

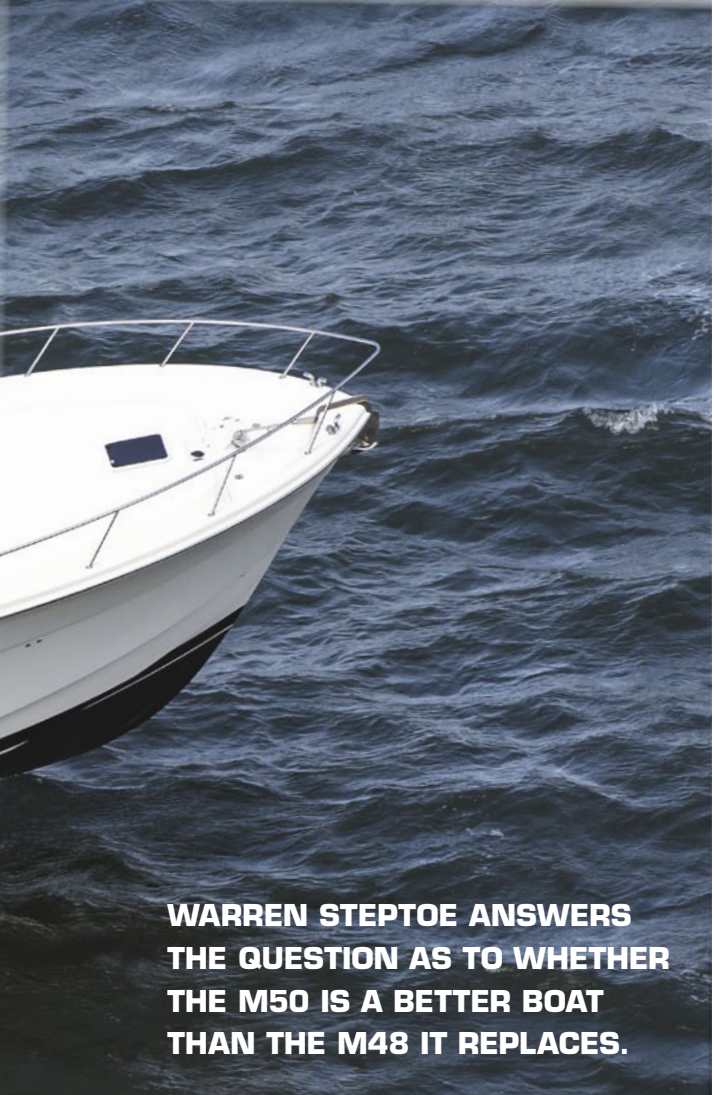
deal more involved in the evolution of the M48 into the M50 than that! Small though several of the changes may be, but some of them are none the less profound for it.

In theory, adding a couple of feet in length and a few inches of beam isn't a dramatic change to a 50ft boat, but initial trials showed a significant improvement in fuel efficiency.

One of the first M50s out of the mould was taken to Sydney under its own power from Maritimo's Gold Coast headquarters. That's a fair sea trial to check out any number of things including how the redesigned hull compares with the original on the open ocean; and how performance and fuel efficiency have been affected by the changes.

Our test boat had yet to be fitted out with an electronics package so only had one of Cummins' neat little LCD display panels fitted in what looked like acres of dash space meant to ultimately contain three 15-inch display screens. Nevertheless, we were able to utilize Cummins' in-house telemetry and a handheld GPS sitting on the dash to check out some performance and fuel efficiency figures for ourselves when we finally exited the Coomera River's interminable 6-knot speed limit and progressively opened the taps.

Maritimo's sales and marketing manager Greg Haines was aboard and while we'd motored sedately downstream towards open water he'd been telling me about a comparison he'd



WARREN STEPTOE ANSWERS THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THE M50 IS A BETTER BOAT THAN THE M48 IT REPLACES.



Redefined

conducted (as a result of the impressive maiden voyage to Sydney) between the new M50 and some popular displacement cruisers. The M50 compared pretty favourably to put it mildly, he said, producing an improvement of up to 35% over several highly regarded boats. Our fuel efficiency/performance set-up on this day wasn't perhaps the ultimate in high tech - although accurate enough despite that.

Almost 30

At 7 knots (skirted lure trolling speed, the fishos aboard observed) we were burning a total of 11 litres per hour. At 8 knots this had increased to 18L/h, and at 9 knots to 25L/h. As Greg pointed out, this is not bad for a flybridge motor cruiser of any style, and remarkably good for a planing hulled boat. The hull was well and truly up and planing cleanly soon after; and the engine/hull package settled into a perceivable sweet spot at 15 knots through to about 18 knots. At 17 knots total fuel consumption was 110L/h. At 20 knots it had increased to 146L/h. Engine noise increased a little at 25 knots, while fuel consumption increased to 200L/h. "What can she do?" is the inevitable question from there and with the throttles on the stops the GPS couldn't be persuaded to pass 29.7 knots, at which speed the QSM11's were burning

260L/h. That's damn close to a genuine 30 knots as and when required and/or desired - an option displacement cruisers clearly can't match, as Greg smilingly pointed out. Before moving on to internal refinements, readers might be interested in hearing about a conversation that took place while we were tootling along inside the Coomera River's speed limit zone. Drive pods have taken boating by storm over the past couple of years so when a few negative comments surfaced amongst the Maritimo crew aboard I immediately pricked up my ears. Read into the conversation what you will while no doubt prospective M50 buyers will do their homework meanwhile; but the Maritimo blokes were far from full of praise for pod drives generally. And in particular were anything but enthusiastic about their use with Maritimo hulls; which apparently leave nothing to be desired in terms of outright performance and fuel efficiency when identically powered boats with shafts and rudders and pod drives are directly compared. To put it mildly, the Maritimo crew's negativity about pod drives is somewhat at odds with commonly heard wisdom from other similarly credible boating industry people. It's food for thought however the conversation's viewed, and I'd suggest is something people looking for a new boat need to talk to both sides of the topic at some length about...

ABOVE: THE M50 AND S50 ARE BASED ON THE SAME HULL WITH A SIMILAR INTERNAL LAYOUT.



ABOVE THE GALLEY SITUATED AT THE AFT END OF THE CABIN IS ALWAYS A STRONG SELLING POINT.

BELOW: THE AFT GALLEY HAS EASY COCKPIT ACCESS.

Having raised a bit of a contentious matter, let's forget about what's under the water awhile and focus on the M50's interior.

Full Beam Master

The M50's interior configuration is similar to the M48 in that it features an enclosed flybridge with internal staircase (it's definitely more of a staircase than a "bridge ladder") access from deck level inside the cabin.

In the M50 the walkaround side decks have been widened a little because how easy it was to go forward was apparently a very popular aspect of the M48.

As the old saying goes, "if it ain't broke don't fix it," and while I'm sure readers will agree; that says nothing about making "it" even better!

A comment which applies in spades to what is inarguably THE major change from the M48 in the M50. This is to be found downstairs below the saloon where an all-new full-beam

master stateroom is no less than 3.3 times the floor area of the M48's.

As you enter this amazing space you meet a bureau cum desk in what's effectively a foyer before stepping downstairs into the bedroom proper – or turning sharp right into an ensuite bathroom. This is surprisingly spacious, and is definitely more of a domestic size space than the maritime one you expect to find in a boat. An impression only enhanced by what non-sailors would, I think, consider a "normal" toilet, vanity, tapware, and shower recess.

Interestingly, Maritimo chose to locate the master stateroom's king size bed at an angle from portside rather than straight along the centreline or across the beam like so many other full-beam staterooms do. If taken aback initially, the angled bed quickly grows on you while you appreciate the space it provides for a sizable private lounge cum retreat along the stateroom's starboard side.

Twin portholes over the retreat's chaise lounge and another single one portside forward of the bed open for natural ventilation, and insect screens for all three are on the options list if a natural airflow might sometimes be preferable to controlling the climate with the air conditioning.

To sum up this new master stateroom in a few words – it will sell a lot of Maritimo M50s!

Like the M48, the M50 still has a roomy double berth VIP cabin in the bows (which I thought notable for how "square" it seems, unlike so many bow cabins which can't avoid their being at the literal pointy end,) with a smaller bunk bed cabin along the starboard side of the companionway. These two cabins share a second bathroom which, like the main one, is too big to call a head.

Like the master suite's this is absolutely a bathroom and although the floor plan reveals it's actually a little smaller, it is much the same size as the main ensuite with, in the test boat, a virtually identical décor. No doubt Maritimo will happily arrange décor to suit any owner

The way the M48's galley was situated at the aft end of the cabin was always a strong selling point and once again, well enough has been left alone there. New bi-fold doors in the





aft cabin bulkhead mean the galley can be connected directly with the cockpit, or separated.

Stylish Galley

Our test boat's galley flooring was very stylishly done in honey and oak. This particular boat was optioned with a Miele upgrade including a four-ring ceramic cooktop with touch controls instead of the usual knobs, and a convection/microwave oven. The galley's pantry and fridge and freezer space are all quite generous – a description as "domestic size" tempts again...

Another interesting feature of the galley is the way the dishwasher has been set up 'island style' slightly off centre in the galley's floor space where it very effectively multitasks as an additional preparation bench and handy serving space set right beside to and fro traffic.

The stairs up to the 'bridge occupy the galley's portside. And no, they're no ladder, they're stairs! But we'll stay 'downstairs' now to check out the lounge and dining area forward of the galley.

Our test M50's interior cabinetwork, (non carpeted) flooring and the bridge stairs were all done in a high gloss finish involving no less than 13 coats of a top quality polyurethane. Durable; and very nice.

You actually step up into the lounge/dining area from the galley. Apparently the flybridge floor had to be raised slightly to maintain ample headroom in the saloon, and of course in the master stateroom below. This was incidentally achieved without making the M50 any higher overall than its predecessor. The saloon's dining table ingeniously folds out to accommodate more diners, or compacts to afford extra lounge space.

A wine rack and the bar fill space from the bridge stairs forward to the dinette lounge portside. The bar fridge is supplemented by an icemaker. (The galley freezer incorporates a second icemaker in case supplies can't be maintained by the one in the bar.) More bottle space and a capacious glass rack are located forward in the opposite corner of the lounge/dining space to the dinette lounge.

Our test boat's entertainment package was by Bose and, as sound systems do in today's world, it naturally has an I Pod dock too.

Lifting the lounge seating away along both sides and opening what at a casual glance you might take to be cupboard doors in the lounge/dining area reveals a distinctly practical side to the M50's nature. Monitors and switching for all the boat's 240V and 24V circuitry is conveniently located here. While removing the lounge seating and backrests provides sensibly easy access to various pumps, filters and other essential equipment. Servicing and breakdown repairs to these should never be a problem in this boat.

In keeping with this line of practical thinking, I was impressed with the robust stainless steel handrails provided for the bridge stairs, which could be closed off at the top with a similarly sturdy gate. People expecting to have small children aboard may ask for the lower space between the rails to be made a little more secure, however. I shouldn't imagine this would present any problems at all for Maritimo's fit-out people.

Command Centre

Upstairs, the 'bridge looks entirely comfortable in any combination of its command centre and upstairs living and entertaining area roles. A pair of super comfortable looking and highly adjustable Recaro seats serve the helm and a

ABOVE: THE ALL-NEW FULL-BEAM MASTER STATEROOM IS NO LESS THAN 3.3 TIMES THE FLOOR AREA OF THE M48'S.

BELOW: LIKE THE M48, THE M50 STILL HAS A ROOMY DOUBLE BERTH VIP CABIN IN THE BOW.





ABOVE: THE BRIDGE PROVIDES A COMBINATION OF THE COMMAND CENTRE AND UPSTAIRS LIVING AND ENTERTAINING SPACES.

navigator. And the way the cabin superstructure projects aft until it's almost over the transom shelters the cockpit underneath it from the sun and other less desirable elements, while providing a roomy open air upper level deck which will, I suspect, be where the barbecue is located.

This 'roof' completely blocks any view down into the cockpit from the helm; which to my mind indicates this boat is definitely not intended for serious fishing as much as very comfortable cruising and entertaining. Although an additional set of throttle and gear controls portside beside the saloon doorway in our test boat may well belie that particular thought.

These were presumably placed to facilitate docking and while hardly the control stick each side of the steering wheel professional game fishing skippers habitually prefer, they would do a pretty fair job while fishing, too. A locker below these cockpit controls opens to reveal shutoff valves for the fuel supply and engine room air.

The cockpit follows the same line of thought. Our test boat featured an optional lounge and table across what's high enough to almost be a mezzanine deck. There's an engine room hatch and a hatch accessing a lazarette belowdecks (hand laid teak decks in the boat reviewed) here with a step each side down to a transom deck which, while again not as roomy as a dedicated fishing 'cockpit' would serve well enough for that purpose for many people with the simple addition of a rail across the back.

Alternatively, the moulded pod forming the lounge seat in the centre part of the transom bulkhead in the boat reviewed can

instead be optioned as a livewell/fish box and/or refrigeration space. So while clearly not a "bluewater sportfisher" as such, people who like their fishing should nevertheless be able to set up an M50 for fishing.

Our review boat took the standard transom deck a step further with a 1.5 metre wide swim deck at the extreme aft end. This could be raised and lowered into the water by 450kg-rated rams capable of lifting most PWCs. Speaking of which, the foredeck has a reinforced davit mount and is, I note, spacious enough to accommodate both a sizeable tender dinghy AND a liferaft.

Venturing down into the engine room finds a neat set-up indeed, and yet again, in the engine room a very practical side of the M50's nature is revealed. Engine fluid checks are ready to hand, both battery banks are easy to get at, simple removable floor panels in the engine room floor access the bilge proper, the shafts and seals are in plain view, and so is a clear panel forming a sight gauge in each fuel tank, both of which can be removed to clean the tanks out if necessary. Our test boat even had a Karcher pressure cleaner installed in a compartment in the cockpit, with an outlet set up so the cleaner head could reach the ground tackle right at the pointy end of the foredeck. Pretty; AND eminently practical – it's a very appealing combination isn't it!!!

So it's hardly surprising that before the first M50 was completed at Maritimo's Gold Coast shipyard, two had been sold sight unseen at America's Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. A worthy successor to the M48's success story? I think so!!!

PPB

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Boat Design Name:.....	Maritimo M50.....	Drive Train:.....	Shaft.....	Windows:.....	Alfab.....
Year Launched:.....	2013.....	Propeller:.....	Tainbridge.....	Porthole Hatches:.....	Lewmar.....
Designer:.....	Bill Barry Cotter.....	Generator:.....	Cummins/Onan.....	Heads:.....	Planus.....
Interior Designer:.....	Dave Stewart.....	Inverter/Charger:.....	Enerdrive.....	Woodwork:.....	Maritimo / teak.....
Builder:.....	Maritimo.....	Air Conditioning:.....	Cruise Air.....	Davit Crane:.....	Davco.....
LOA:.....	16.15m.....	Watermaker:.....	Idromar.....	Stainless Steel Fab:.....	Maritimo.....
LOH:.....	16.15m.....	Bow Thruster:.....	Vetus.....	Saloon Doors:.....	G James Glass.....
Beam:.....	5.20m.....	Stern Thruster:.....	Vetus.....	Trim Tabs:.....	Lenco.....
Draft:.....	1.30m.....	Anchor Winch:.....	Muir.....	Helm Chair:.....	Recaro.....
Displacement (dry):.....	22000kg.....	Anchors:.....	Bruce.....	Upholstery:.....	Bayline.....
Max Speed:.....	29.55 knots.....	Steering:.....	Maritimo power assist.....	Search light:.....	Jabsco.....
Cruise Speed:.....	26 knots.....	Engine Controls:.....	Volvo.....	ELECTRONICS	
Construction:.....	GRP.....	Lighting:.....	Dream lighting LED.....	Entertainment Systems:.....	Bose.....
Fuel Cap:.....	4000 litres.....	Paint (Topsides):.....	Dupont.....	Systems Management:.....	BEP.....
Water Cap:.....	800 litres.....	Paint (Antifouling):.....	International.....	Base Price of Boat:.....	\$Aus1,390,000.....
Engines Make:.....	2 x Cummins QSM11 @ 715hp.....	Hatches:.....	Bomar.....	Price As Tested:.....	\$Aus1,682,000.....
Gearboxes:.....	ZF.....	Wipers:.....	AM.....		

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