

New Boat: VanDutch 40

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Stealth Boat

A dazzling Dutch dayboat with dramatic looks and exceptional amenities invades the United States.

By Louisa Beckett

With its axe-sharp bow, angular lines and low, raked windshield, the VanDutch 40 stands out from every other boat on the waterway. “It looks like a stealth boat!” yelled a man from a passing center console as we ran up the ICW to Hillsboro Inlet in Pompano Beach, Florida. Ray Groot of VanDutch USA in Fort Lauderdale chuckled—he has been getting this kind of reaction ever since he introduced the VanDutch line in the U.S. this winter. “We have had people run out of their houses along the ICW as we cruise past,” he said. “Word of mouth has been great; they are telling their friends, ‘You have to see this boat.’”



The VanDutch 40 has an axe-shaped bow and clean lines (the cleats are flush-mounted) that make everyone look twice. The cuddy cabin is larger than you would think, and features a V-berth with fill-in cushion, galley and head.

Although a couple of boat lines with similarly edgy designs are available in Europe, the VanDutch series is the first real production offering of this style of vessel in the States. One of its main selling features, Ray believes, is the fact that the boats are built in The Netherlands, since to many yachtsmen, Dutch construction is synonymous with quality. Vanguard Dutch Marine—VanDutch for short—was founded in the small town of Heerenveen, Holland, in 2009 by two veteran boat builders, Henk Erenstein and Ruud

Koekkoek, who previously manufactured a very traditional diesel-powered dayboat. "They wanted to bring something very different to the market," Ray said.

Specifications:

LOA: 39' 8"
Beam: 11' 6"
Draft: 2' 9"
Displacement: 18,078 lbs.
Fuel/Water: 230/39 gals.
Power: 2 x 480hp Yanmar
24V Turbodiesel
Max/Cruise Speed: 40/30 knots
Range: 280 nm @ 24 knots
Price: \$789,000

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To that end, the partners hired Dutch naval architect Frank Mulder, known for his sleek and speedy yachts, to design a fast yet stable and seaworthy hull for the new line. The first boat, the VanDutch 40, was an immediate success in Europe; to date, more than 50 of them are in operation in the Mediterranean. Construction utilizes the latest materials and technology. The hull and deck are built of fiberglass composite sandwich with strategic areas reinforced by Kevlar. The boat is laid up with a vacuum-injection process that reduces weight while increasing strength and stiffness. Underway in the Atlantic off Pompano Beach in lumpy, three-foot seas, the 40 accelerated swiftly; we found that lifting the tabs to the midpoint helps keep that long, proud bow down as the boat comes onto plane. The stiff hull gave us a smooth ride through the swells, proving this boat is capable of doing a lot more than show off at idle speed in the ICW. Running at 23.7 knots at about 2050 rpm, we found the helm area to be remarkably quiet for an open boat; the raked, tinted windshield makes a good venturi. Even at wide-open throttle we could still carry on a conversation. Best of all, I felt chic at the wheel. Luxury and comfort are as much a part of VanDutch's mission statement for this boat as style and performance. The two-person helm seat has a footrest, which folds up against the console when not in use, so you can find the perfect driving position. At slow speeds and while docking, maneuvering is simplified by the boat's Easy Maneuvering System (EMS), which combines standard, joystick-controlled bow and stern thrusters. Mounted in the flat dashboard is a Raymarine C120 color multifunction plotter, which has digital tachometers among its many features. As a backup, Yanmar engine control displays are mounted to port of the driver. A Raymarine Tridata unit and ST8002 autopilot are also standard. In fact, the VanDutch 40 comes with an exceptionally long list of upscale standard equipment. "There are no options; it comes fully equipped and everything is standard," Ray confirmed, adding that the VanDutch 40 is also available in a rainbow of

colors. "You can choose any hull color you want from our list at no extra cost," he said. Well, there is one exotic option. The 40's deck is made of Esthec, an environmentally friendly alternative to teak. There are no bowrails forward (that would interfere with the boat's sleek looks), but the deck provides a good grip. The option is that you can order your Esthec with a custom design, or even a company logo, ingrained in it! LED underwater lighting is another standard item. The watersports platform has a clever retractable ladder mounted beneath the deck, and pop-up handholds give swimmers a good grip on re-boarding. All the cleats are also flush-mounted; raised, they are small works of modern art. The VanDutch 40's propulsion system incorporates V-drives, which allow the engine room to be positioned well aft. Its hatch, topped by a sunpad, fills two-thirds of the transom; the rest is reserved for a walkway to the cockpit. When the hatch is open, this restricts access slightly to one side of the port engine, but the rest of the machinery space is very accessible. The cockpit is laid out with crisply contemporary, yet comfortable furnishings. "The concept is minimalist—only what you need, no fancy stuff, but the best," said Ed Lea, VanDutch's North American distributor, who was also along for our ride. The large, L-shaped cockpit settee, upholstered in stain-resistant SilverGuard fabric, faces a stylish high-low table with built-in drinkholders. Serving meals here is convenient thanks to the wet bar unit forward. Concealed beneath a cushion, it opens to reveal a sink, single-eye stovetop and small fridge; a larger cool box is located under the helm seat, which opens hydraulically, so you never have to run out of cold drinks. A bimini top shades much of the cockpit. "It takes just five minutes to snap it in place," Ed said. Although VanDutch describes its 40 as a dayboat, there is a good-sized cuddy cabin below, capable of accommodating a couple for a weekend. Headroom in the entry is about 5 feet, 11 inches. A second galley with convection oven and standard espresso/cappuccino maker is opposite a private head/shower compartment. Forward is a clean, white, V-shaped settee with a fill-in cushion that makes it a double berth. The boat comes with all the important living amenities like air conditioning and a full stereo/TV/DVD entertainment system—including an Ad Notam Mirror TV mounted on the bulkhead (when you shut it off, all you see is the mirror). Boats bound for North America are all 110-volt-compatible, and come with a Mastervolt inverter, standard. Stylish and speedy, the VanDutch 40 is sure to become a fixture on the U.S. boating scene. Look for it at the Palm Beach International Boat Show this month. You'll know where it's docked by all the show-goers doing double-takes as they walk past.

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