



LIBERTY 45 WALKAROUND

While many make the claim, the Liberty 45 represents a *true* walkaround. Many expresses and cuddy cabin boats claim to be walkarounds simply because they provide access to the bow — usually not much wider than your foot. But that's not at all the case with this little beauty.

I particularly appreciate that the only steps aboard are the three steps up to the helm deck. And the starboard-side helm console frees up loads of guest space and provides easy access to the steps down into the cabin. Unlike many large open boats, the Liberty 45's deck runs flush from stem to stern. Besides making fishing a full 360 degrees around the boat a breeze, the flush deck adds to the boat's super-clean appearance.

No matter how aesthetically pleasing the new Liberty 45 walkaround appears, its beauty pales in comparison to its performance. Running out of Lake Worth Inlet in Palm Beach, Florida, when it's blowing a steady 30 knots from the northwest is never a good idea. With the Gulf Stream

pushing steadily north right offshore, a north wind makes for one rip-roaring, wind-against-current ride. Out of consideration for the owner's new boat, I stayed close enough to shore to slug it out with the relatively minor three-to five-foot seas. In those attenuated conditions, I found that the Liberty trolls and drifts in a beam sea with the stability of a cement barge. Heading up-sea, the razor-sharp bow cut into the waves perfectly, providing a smooth ride. And the same oversized chines that make this boat so stable knocked down the spray to the point that even in the winds, we never got a drop on the EZCY enclosure — remarkable.

However, seaworthiness doesn't qualify as this boat's best performance facet; I've never experienced an inboard-powered 45-footer get up on plane like the Liberty 45. The jump was virtually instantaneous, taking a mere three seconds to plane, four to reach 15 knots and nine seconds to 20. The boat tops out at 37.7 knots with a pair of 435 hp diesels linked to Volvo Internal

Performance System (IPS) drives. Of course, those diesels have both mechanical superchargers and twin turbochargers, so they respond like a nitro-fueled dragster. But even that's not all! I can't help but be thrilled by the fuel economy. Cruising at 30 knots in a 45-foot, diesel-powered, offshore fishing boat while burning only 25 gph? That's total, not per engine! The word "extraordinary" doesn't even come close. Research shows comparable 45-footers weigh between 2,000 and 26,000 pounds more than the Liberty 45, and many don't ride nearly as well.

But the IPS drives contribute more than just performance; moving the engines and drives under the deck creates a truly mammoth storage space beneath the bridge deck. On this particular boat, the owner uses this compartment to store rods and just about everything else. And since this is a custom boat, you could easily ask the builder to turn this space into a master cabin, tackle workshop, dive center or even a wine cellar. The possibilities are endless.

Down the substantial ladder to belowdecks, you'll find a cavernous dinette area that easily seats six or seven average-sized adults. Headroom at the base of the access ladder easily exceeds nine feet, with space above the dinette — which converts into a berth when you lower the table — reaching just more than six feet. A comfortably spacious head and handsome but simple galley round out the living accommodations.

Liberty is a very small, family-owned company. But with a Webb Institute grad designing the boats and a Liberty team dedicated to old-world-style craftsmanship, you get a tremendous boat for your money!

— Dean Travis Clarke

SPECIFICATIONS

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| LOA | 45' |
| BEAM | 15'8" |
| DRAFT | 3'6" |
| DEADRISE | 20 degrees |
| WEIGHT | 22,000 pounds |
| FUEL | 500 gallons |
| WATER | 100 gallons |
| POWER | T 435 hp Volvo IPS 600 diesels |
| PRICE | On request |

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