

Monaro 24 Hardtop

THE LATEST FROM MONARO IS A COSY ALL-WEATHER, ALL-PURPOSE HARDTOP WITH FEATURES SELDOM FOUND IN BOATS THIS SIZE.



PETER VASSILOPOULOS PHOTOS

The 24 EXL Hardtop has the pleasing lines of a seaworthy boat and the performance to match—lively and easy-planing in smooth water, comfortable in the rough stuff.

THE NEW Monaro 24 hardtop is different. It incorporates two features which are seldom combined in boats of this size: a stand-up head and a fixed bulkhead to enclose the hardtop area. As for construction quality, workmanship and finish, Monaro again lives up to its excellent reputation. In the case of this test boat, the company was also happy to oblige the owner by including several items that weren't on the list of standard features or options.

DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION The Monaro 24 has proven to be a superb rough-water boat. The hull has a 20° deadrise which translates to a good ride in rough water. Of course, we're not talking gale-swept seas in the open ocean, but certainly demanding, inshore conditions that would keep lesser craft at the dock. The hardtop with its new bulkhead is integrated into the design in a way that retains a pleasing, nautical look in keeping with the boat's sleek, if conservative style.

The Monaro hull is hand-laid fibreglass with a heavy vinylester resin skin coat backing a top-of-the-line iso-NPG gelcoat, and alternate layers of mat and 24-ounce roving. Foam sound insulation also provides some reserve floatation. The three-

part deck and cabin and inner liner are fibreglass with balsa coring on the deck and hardtop. The liner includes the entire sole and bunks as a single, moulded module. For this special version, the hardtop bulkhead is also a moulded GRP sandwich with balsa coring. The bulkhead is glassed (tabbed) to the hardtop, the cabin sides and the sole. In order to tab components to the hull more securely than ever before, Monaro is now using biaxial fibreglass roving in addition to chopped-strand mat in the construction of these key secondary bonds.

Quality, high-density foam in the upholstered seats and panels ensures good shape retention and long life. Upholstered components are covered with premium vinyl, secured with stainless steel staples and fasteners. Grab rails, bow and stern rails are stainless steel and the windshield is tempered safety glass. Teak is used inside the boat for trim, panelling and finish. Durable arborite has been used for the head door, the port-side counter around the sink and over the starboard side lockers. Padded vinyl covers the interior walls.

ON DECK The sheerline on the Monaro 24 is a straight line that angles slightly from bow to stern. The flat foredeck and walk-abouts are quite gen-

monaro 24-exl hardtop

Hull length	23'7"
LOA	25'11"
Beam.....	8'
Deadrise.....	20°
Cuddy berth length.....	6'5"
Main cabin headroom	6'8"
Dry weight	4000 lbs
Fuel capacity 55 Imp.gals (250 L)	

Base priced \$53,825 Cdn
 Engine: 260hp Volvo 5.7 GL
 Built by Monaro Marine Ltd.,
 Richmond B.C.



Above: The mate's seat tilts forward to provide additional counter space.

Right: The teak bulkhead, doorway and cabinetry give the accommodations a warm feel. A recessed instrument tray improves the skipper's view over the dash.

erous considering the boat's size and modest 8' beam. Alternative access forward is via the forward deck hatch in the cuddy cabin. The helm station at the front of the cockpit affords excellent visibility through the windshield and generous windows on either side, as well as the aft bulkhead door and its window. Of course, the stand-up head to port precludes a bulkhead window which limits visibility in that quarter. There's comfortable seating for two at the helm and co-pilot positions, with space for perhaps two more on an occasional seat against the starboard side opposite the head. There are large lockers beneath the seats, and a sink with domestic water behind the mate's seat. The mate's seat tilts forward out of the way to make additional counter space at the sink when needed.

The dash on this particular boat incorporates an optional, recessed tray for mounting electronics. This central tray is now included on most Monaro 21 and 24 orders, although it remains an option. It provides the skipper and mate a better, less cluttered view over the dash and through the windshield. Instrumentation on the test boat includes a Lowrance X15 MT sounder, a Lowrance X85 GPS and a Ray Marine SL 72 radar. A feature sure to be appreciated by those who venture out during in the cooler months of the year is the defogger system for the windshield. Warm air from the bus heater is directed onto the inside of the glass through duct openings on the forward portion of the dash. The mate's seat offers a stainless steel grab rail and convenient side

pockets for loose items like sunglasses, log-books, and what have you. A larger storage area is located along the length of the galley, and there are other bins and shelving in the cockpit sides. The ice box is located under the helm seat in the long starboard side cabinet.

A new feature for the Monaro 24 is the extended swim step—now several inches longer to accommodate a large cooler. The cooler mounts on the step and is held in place by stainless steel carriage bolts through the transom.

Some Monaro 24 owners store over 400' of anchor rode, an anchor and a length of chain in the spacious forward anchor locker. This 24 EXL Hardtop carries the same amount of rode, but with the anchor stowed on a bowsprit instead of in the anchor locker, creating more stowage space for other items.

ACCOMMODATIONS The cuddy cabin provides comfortable sitting headroom on the full-length 6'5" bunks. Access forward is through a centrally located teak doorway with air vent louvres set into a teak bulkhead. Large, wide shelves run the length of the cabin, and are curved to the shape of the hull. These are used for storage, as are the spacious bins under the bunks (made even more accommodating thanks to the lack of a head between the bunks). A filler cushion converts the bunks to a large V-berth. The test boat is fitted with a three-speed bus heater for generous warmth in cool weather, and the heat is nicely contained by the bulkhead-enclosed main cabin/helm space. The cuddy is finished in pleasant aquamarine and soft greys.

UNDERWAY The Monaro 24 Hardtop provides a smooth ride. It took me a while to get used to the quick action of the Volvo

power steering, but I was impressed by the way the boat handled and responded to the helm. Crossing the wake of a large tug on the Fraser River, I felt only a soft, smooth bump—the boat feels rigid, solid and safe. With the bulkhead door closed it was extremely quiet, with it open, it was still by no means noisy. We ran up and down the powerband, feeling the acceleration onto plane and slowing to see how long it would remain there. It seemed reluctant to settle off the plane until slowed dramatically with



the throttle backed off to about 2200RPM. The Monaro 24 EXL cruised comfortably at 26 to 30kts with the engine turning 3200 to 3600RPM. Fuel economy is about 5GPH at about 26kts with a light load. The power specified for the test boat is a 260hp Volvo 5.7 litre carbureted gas engine with a duo-prop sterndrive.

This Monaro has been built for comfortable year-round use, with lots of storage space, stand-up head convenience and seaworthy design. It's equipped with good electronics including radar, auxiliary outboard for safety and slow running (fishing), an extended swimstep for a large cooler, insulated fish cooler or a storage box. It's a top-quality, locally-built boat ideal for serious cruising, fishing and all-around use. For more information contact Monaro Marine at 604-277-7433. Their Web site is www.monaromarine.com. 📍