

A BOAT FOR ALL SEASONS

The Sargo line of sterndrive family cruisers is designed for comfort and performance throughout the year.

By John Wooldridge



Remember those weekends, particularly during the early or late weeks of the typical prime boating season, when you canceled your boating plans because the weather forecast was less than pleasant for one of the two (or three) days? An all-season design like the Sargo 31 has the features to help optimize your comfort and protection for that forecast, and the performance gives you a wide range of options for fuel efficiency and schedule-keeping speed. The idea that the Sargo line of family cruisers might add weeks or even months of on-the-water good times makes great sense for your return on investment and especially for your ability to spend the maximum amount of time together on the water with friends and family.

Sargo boats are created by the Sarin family, three generations of boat builders in the industry since 1967. From its factory on the western shore of Finland, the company has produced three distinct ranges of boats, including a line of vessels for professional government, law enforcement and life-saving users. The Sargo line and its related Sargo Explorer line are well known to European boat owners ranging from Greenland to Italy, and the company has been active in the U.S. market since 2008. Suffice it to say, Sargo boats are meant for use in some of the more extreme, short-season climates around the globe.

There's nothing even remotely Eurostyle about the Sargo 31. Its design lines flow from Scandinavian workboat traditions, with bows well flared for good buoyancy and lift in a seaway

as well as for a drier ride. The sheer springs higher from about amidships, and the stem is sharp and shaped for speed. The angled-forward pilothouse reduces glare looking forward, and the wide side decks connect the fore and aft decks on a single level. Bulwarks are high and handrails are plentiful. For those times when a little family fishing is planned, safe angling all around the deck house is a given.

There's a built-in bench on the forward edge of the coach roof, and a very handy split bow pulpit can be equipped with a ladder for beach boarding. Large cleats are positioned atop the bulwarks, and the amidships cleats make it easy to get a line on the dock when you're single-handing.

The model I reviewed was a 31 Explorer Aft Door, and it included an appearance package upcharge (\$11,000) that packaged a gray hull, black powder-coated rails and on-deck hardware (even the antenna) for a very contemporary look. Walnut graces the interior of the salon in this package, a nice change from the standard teak panels and furniture, and you have to see the brushed aluminum, leather-covered handrails used throughout to appreciate what they add to the clean, stylish Scandinavian interior design.

The aft door option (\$14,168) opens from the salon directly to the aft deck. All of the Sargo models I've inspected have standard sliding forward doors for access to the side decks, but the aft door is a convenience all will appreciate. The typical Sargo 31 layout includes a U-shaped dinette across the back of the salon and a mini-galley forward and to port,



Above and opposite page: The efficiently arranged salon offers comfort and all-season protection from the elements during the day, while the V-berth is cozy and comfy at night.

but the optional aft door layout features a C-shaped dinette to port (with electrically adjustable hi-low dining table and a forward convertible seat back that shifts aft to create forward-facing passenger seating) and a very well-equipped galley (three-burner gas stove, gas oven, fridge, and large sink) abaft the helm. A pair of fold-down wood countertops hide the range and sink when not in use for a clean, contemporary look, and there's plenty of storage beneath the sink, under the cabin sole and inside the dinette settee.

With the exception of the two pillars just ahead of the aft bulkhead corners, the salon is blessed with an abundance of windows (tinted all around except forward) for near 360-degree visibility, including a swing-up window opening on the aft deck. A wide, manual sliding sunroof locks open in two different positions to flood the salon with natural light and ventilation, and one option includes three clear panels set into the sun roof for excellent light even when it is closed on rainy days.

When conditions outside are less than hospitable, Sargo offers Webasto heating and air conditioning (12,000 BTU)

options to keep the climate in the salon family friendly. The Webasto units get power from either an optional Fisher Panda genset at anchor or an inverter drawing down the house batteries while underway. A 4kW diesel-fired heater is available for those who do their cruising in more northern climes.

Forward, down near-centerline stairs, accommodations include a V-berth cabin in the bow (each side measures six feet, six inches long, and a filler cushion converts the berth into a double), a wet head to starboard, and a storage cabinet to port. The amidships cabin is located under the salon sole and dinette and is accessible through a lifting hatch in the dinette bench. Storage in the forward cabin is beneath the berth (although some room is lost to the bow thruster and battery installation) and under the deck, while storage in the amidships cabin includes two big storage lockers with shelves. Natural ventilation forward is well thought out with two portholes and an overhead hatch. All of the openable windows have mosquito screens, even in the head.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 32'7"
Beam: 10'8"
Draft: 3'4"
Displacement: 11,244 lbs. (dry)
Fuel/Water: 110/26 gals.

Power: 1x Volvo Penta D6-400 DP sterndrive (tested)
Cruise/Top Speed: 15-34/37 knots
Range: 225 nm at 26 knots
MSRP (base w/single D6): \$276,187

Contact: Skarne Marine, LLC
 164 Rogers Avenue
 Milford, CT 06460
 (203) 283-5300
 info@sargousa.com
 sargousa.com



Propulsion choices include three single-engine and two twin-engine Volvo Penta installations with Duoprop sterndrives. Single-engine power is based on the D6 engine with outputs of 330, 370 or 400 horsepower and top speeds of approximately 32, 35 and 37 mph respectively. Twin-engine power is based on the D4 engine with total outputs of 450 and 600 horsepower. Top speeds in this case are 38 and 42 mph. Twin engine installations are available with larger fuel tankage, 154 gallons versus 110 gallons.

Some boat owners insist on twin engines when headed out into long stretches of open water, and the Sargo 31 has the room for a brace of Volvo Penta in-line D4 diesels in a massive space beneath the aft deck. The lockable, gas strut-supported hatch allows easy access to the main engine(s) and the genset for daily inspection and maintenance. A water-separating diesel fuel filter is standard as is the fire extinguisher mounted in the engine room.

Powerful and agile, driving the D6-400 equipped Sargo 31 was a breeze thanks to the flawless hydraulic steering. With a transom deadrise angle of 19.5 degrees, the deep-V bottom made short work of the heavy wind chop we encountered. At the helm, the leather covered stainless steering wheel included a knob to make fast directional changes possible, a real convenience when backing a single stern drive. Both the binnacle and the 4-hp bow thruster were within easy reach for minute adjustments in tight quarters. A 12-inch Garmin 7412 chartplotter is standard, although Sargo offers an upgrade to either two 7412s or a larger 16-inch 7416 screen.

Taken all together, the features and performance of the Sargo 31 Explorer Aft Door is well suited for a family of four that doesn't want to give up their time together on the water for a less than sunny forecast. 🌊

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