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# POWER AND MOTORYACHT

JANUARY 1992



**THE VIKING 50'  
CONVERTIBLE.**

# Fish Tank

*What does an M-60 battle tank have in common with a Viking 50 battle-wagon? Join Mike Micciche aboard the Fishinhoff to find out.*

I remember back a few years ago, the local Army National Guard unit was giving a public demonstration of armored vehicles. I rode on an M-60 tank. It was a big green monster just bristling with firepower: a 90mm cannon, numerous machine guns, smoke canister launchers, laser sights, computer-generated range-finders

... it was indeed awesome. But I remember most the feeling of all that armor and steel barreling solidly over the terrain amid the roar and smell of its big diesel engine. I knew we could run over trees, walls, embankments, or nearly anything else that man or nature could throw in our path. It made me smile a sly smile.

One of the guardsmen recognized my grin as we growled along, leaving chewed grass and upturned soil in our wake. He slung a heavy arm around my shoulder, flashed a knowing grin of his own, and said sarcastically, "It's like ridin' around on a *tank*, ain't it?"

Oh yeah, man ... you know it.

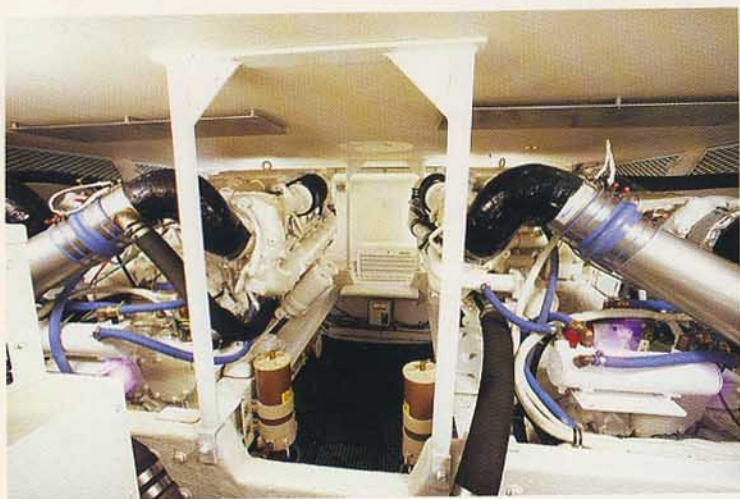


PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAN WEITZ

The owner himself teamed up with Viking's designer Susan Lockhart to decorate the boat; note the brass-tone mirrors in the saloon.



The heavily built,  
heavily armed,  
highly mobile 50C:  
Viking's version of  
the water-borne tank.



The low-profile MAN engines provide 85 more horsepower with more headroom and less weight than eight-cylinder alternatives.



There's room for 10 on the flying bridge.

#### TAKE A LITTLE OFF THE TOP

If there's any one compliment to lay on the Viking 50—one based on solid experience—it's that she's built like a tank. In these days of high-tech construction materials and cars with "crumple zones" instead of nearly-crash-resistant steel, it's refreshing to know that some boats are still built on the notion that a gale-driven sea hasn't gotten any kinder or gentler with the advent of featherweight composites.

Yeah, sure, Viking *does* use high-tech resins and materials to build its boats—and it employs state-of-the-art methods for doing so. But out test boat—a 1991 model named *Fishinhoff*—was solid. I said as much to Bill Gibbons, Viking's senior projects engineer, when we returned from our speed runs. "Sure is," he replied, "When we lighten these boats up, we take the weight off the top, not the bottom."

The boat weights in at over 58,000 pounds with full tanks, so you might think she could stand to lose a little, even if it did come off the  $\frac{5}{8}$ - to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hull bottom. But once you get a feel for her underway, any urge to put her on a diet would probably pass unmentioned. The *Fishinhoff's* low-profile, 10-cylinder MAN 2480LXE engines push her to impressive speeds, and her bottom design handles the power well.

Speeding down the narrow, serpentine leg of the Bass River that leads to the Viking plant in New Gretna, the big 50 eased into (very!) tight turns while roaring along at about 22-24 knots. It was like driving a big deep-V outboard: no lateral sliding (if there was, we'd have ended up in the reeds), and very quick return-to-center time on the rudders.

*Fishinhoff's* captain, Drew McDowell, gave me the helm for the run back up the river to the plant. As I pushed the throttles up and watched the shore on either side blur by just a few yards away, I remembered that day on the M-60 and bit my lip to keep the grin inside.

At full throttle on open water, the 50 C hit an impressive 41 mph (35.5 knots). Dropping back to cruise speed—2050-2100 rpm—yielded a net loss of only about four knots off the top speed, while cutting back fuel consumption by nearly 20 percent (from about 88-89 total gph to 71-72 gph). With that kind of speed and fuel burn, a day's fishing 100 or 150 miles offshore is unquestionably easy.

On the day of our test, time and tides worked to prevent us from heading out to open sea, which admittedly is the ideal way to test a bluewater fish boat. A stiff nor'wester blew hard and cool, and would have made for interesting conditions in the

Little Egg Inlet, north of Atlantic City, New Jersey. But we were pressed for time that day and Gibbons, Pat Healey of Viking, and Cap'n Drew assured me that the 50 could punch us through most of what Mother Nature could serve up on such a day and keep us dry and on an even keel while doing so.

The 50 C was introduced as the successor to the 48 C, long a bastion in Viking's line of convertibles. Credit for her rough-weather gutsiness can be given to her steeper forefoot and increased flare (compared to the 48) in the forward sections. Designers Bruce Wilson and Bill Healey also improved down-sea handling and

reduced back-down wash by refining and reshaping the transom and corners—adding a touch more lift here and reducing a bit of reverse chine there.

#### THE CRUISING LIFE

Very often, the life of a convertible sport-fishing yacht is limited by her non-fishing owner to cruising from marina to marina with an occasional hop to the Bahamas or the Keys. Thus, the cockpit of a cruising convertible is more likely to suffer damage from unremoved high heels than from a green wahoo or dolphin, and bill marks on the side or transom would be unheard of. That, however,



The mid-ship master suite features queen-sized bed, built-in vanity and spacious private head.



The forward suite offers two man-sized bunks, plus plenty of drawer and hanging storage.



A 6'4" headroom in the master bathroom makes it look cavernous. Vacuum-flush heads save water and look good.

is not the case aboard *Fishinhoff*. She is a fishing boat that also happens to be a nicely appointed cruiser.

One look at her and it's clear she's owned by fishin' folks: PipeWelders tower...Rupp outriggers...International chair...plenty of rod holders...and way more computer-driven electronics than on that M-60. And this year, all that equipment will see lots of use in waters other than those around the New York Bight.

*Fishinhoff's* owner, Philadelphia businessman John Vidinghoff, plans to take her south this winter—first to Palm Beach for some sailfishing, then down to the Keys where she'll be used mainly as a "lodge" for some light-tackle and tarpon fishing. From there it's on to the Caribbean to get in on the hot action off Mexico. Then she'll then return to southern New Jersey for the white marlin season next summer.

Thus far, *Fishinhoff* excels as a pasagemaker, Vidinghoff reports. At presstime, the boat had just arrived in Palm Beach with not a lick of trouble. "I hate to say it, but I think I'd go with those MANs over every option they offer," he said, referring to the low maintenance required on the engines. "Drew said that the starboard engine was down only about a quart of oil after three

solid days of running. And that was it."

#### "VIKING WORKED WITH ME"

Dependable engines are no doubt a god-send. And engine rooms designed around solid powerplant performance and minimal routine attention—i.e., small engine rooms—are all well and good too. That is, until you have to get down there to change filters, work on the genset, replace an impeller, or (and it happens) perform an overhaul.

But in the machine spaces, as in every other corner of the 50, Viking leaves nothing to chance. More-than-extra room is available under, around, in front of, and behind the engines for working and cleaning up. Decks and sides are fully gelcoated, making it easy to wipe up spills and spot leaks. Forward there's a wide open bulkhead on which various pumps, filters, and control units are or can be mounted. Two 110-volt exhaust blowers and a pair of fans in the forward corners help ventilate the space.

On many boats, the advantages of a big engine room are offset by less above-deck room or a high profile. Happily, neither is the case here. Viking's new plan allows generous headroom and abundant square footage throughout—which Vidinghoff and Viking designer Susan Lockhart have decorated tastefully.

Gentle-but-not-too-conservative patterns and colors, brass-mirrored panels, and custom artwork highlight this 50's decor. Personal touches are added by fine crystal and porcelain. And amenities such as SeaLand VacuFlush commodes and a Friedrich Grohe faucet add a touch of luxury to necessity.

But even without Lockhart's creative hand or Vidinghoff's taste for Herrand porcelain and Lalique crystal, Viking's craftsmen do a job well enough to stand on its own merits. Cabinetry and woodwork are first rate: fine urethane finishes, smooth joints, and plugged screw ends satisfy the scrutiny of critical eyes.

Woodwork on the outside, however, is nowhere to be found. "I wanted it that way," Vidinghoff said. "It's too much trouble keeping up exterior woodwork like ladder steps. So Viking developed a special powder coat for the ladder to the flying bridge. Now we don't have to carry two sets and change them off when they get dull. Viking worked with me."

This is Vidinghoff's fourth Viking. For him, loyalty has its roots more in the integrity of the product than the name it bears. Obviously, Viking's done him well; he's not the kind of man to go back if they didn't. That says it all right there. Now if Viking only built battle tanks...□



The private port guest stateroom has upper and lower berths and full-size hanging locker.

## VIKING 50 CONVERTIBLE

**Boat type:** convertible sportfisherman

**Standard Power:** 10 cyl. MAN 2480LEs, 845 bhp

**Notable standard equipment:** Cruisair reverse-cycle zoned A/C; remote oil change system; full bait-prep center; VCR, color TV, and stereo with cassette deck; washer and dryer; convection/microwave oven; Viking visual systems alarm panel; electrical systems panel with LED load/current indicators and battery voltage indicators; VDO instrumentation

**Notable optional equipment on test boat:** PipeWelders tower; Rupp outriggers; 72-mile Furuno radar, two furuno LC-90 lorans, Furuno color video sounder, SEA VHF and SSB radiotelephones, DataMarine Dart 2800 electronic chart machine, depth/speed/sumlog, Dytex seawater temperature recorder; SeaLand VacuFlush heads; International fighting chair and helm seats.

**Hull type:** reversed-chine, modified-V with 15.5 degrees deadrise aft.

**Designer:** Bruce Wilson and Bill Healey

**Construction:** solid fiberglass hull with Baltek coring in hullsides, deck, and deckhouse

### SPECIFICATIONS

**LOA:** 50'7" 15.45 meters  
**Beam:** 16'4" 4.99 meters  
**Draft:** 4'9" 1.49 meters  
**Approximate displacement:** 58,814 lbs. 26,678.03 kilos  
 w/full tanks

**Maximum saloon headroom:** 6'4" 1.93 meters  
**Fuel capacity:** 805 gal. 3,046.92 liters  
**Water capacity:** 208 gal. 787.30 liters  
**Sleeping capacity:** 8

### DRIVE TRAIN

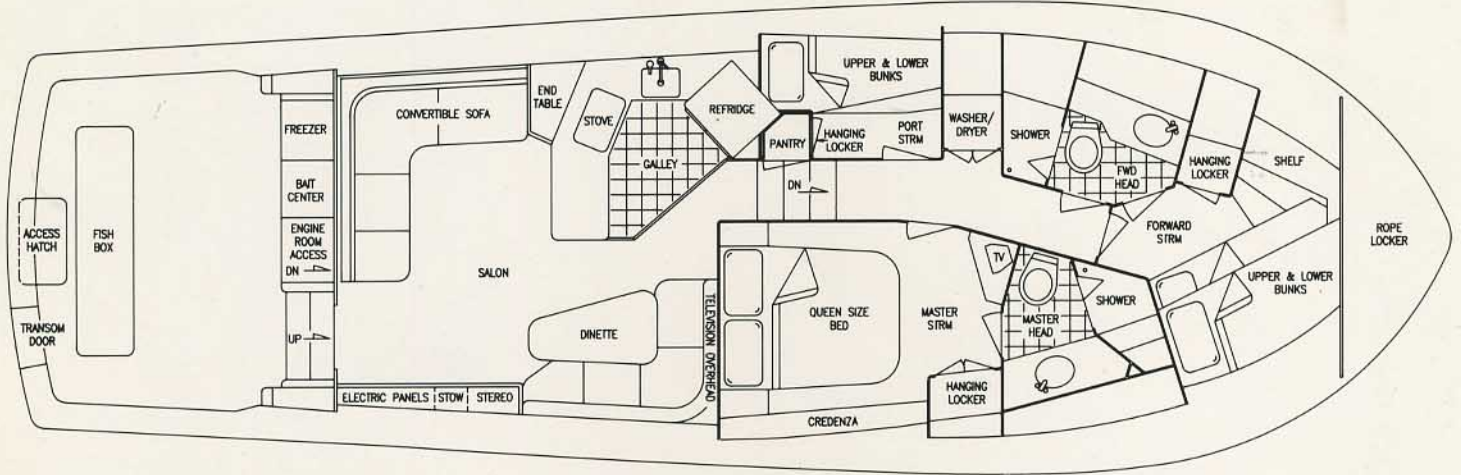
**Test engines:** 10-cylinder MAN 2480LXs diesels  
 845 bhp each  
**Transmission:** ZF 350  
**Reduction ratio:** 1.58:1  
**Propellers:** 30x33 Nibrall 3-blade, medium cup  
**Steering:** Hynautic Hydraulic  
**Controls:** Hynautic  
**Trim tabs:** Bennett dual-position

### TEST RESULTS

**Test conditions:** temperature: 60°; humidity: 25%; wind: 15-20 knots; seas: small waves; load: 700 gallons fuel, five persons, medium gear.

Indicated rpm	mph	(knots)	Total gph	mpg	(nmpg)	Range (miles)	Decibels at helm
600	7.0	(6.1)	N/A	N/A	(N/A)	N/A	71
900	10.5	(9.1)	15.0	.70	(.61)	587	76
1200	17.5	(15.2)	28.0	.60	(.52)	431	81
1500	25.5	(22.2)	41.8	.61	(.53)	441	84
1700	33.0	(28.7)	61.0	.54	(.47)	391	87
2100	36.0	(31.3)	71.8	.50	(.44)	363	89
2300	40.5	(35.2)	88.8	.46	(.40)	330	90

Speeds are two-way average, measured with Decatur digital radar gun. Fuel flow measured with digital fuel flow meter. Decibels measured on A scale using GenRad GR1565-B acoustical meter (as a reference, 60 dB is the level of normal conversation). Note: when decibels were measured at helm station the boat was not equipped with a canvas enclosure.



PLAN 'A'  
UPPER & LOWER FORWARD

