

ON TEST

WORDS & IMAGES: GREG COPP

GRANDEZZA 34 OC





Greg Copp reports on this spacious middleweight cruiser built in the Baltic and designed for all climates...

Grandezza are one of the best-kept secrets in the boating world. If you know nothing of this brand, you may not unreasonably think that Grandezza hail from the Mediterranean, especially as their craft are designed around good weather. However, this boat is Finnish, which soon becomes evident once you step on board and start poking around. Historically speaking, having been in existence since 2005, this company is relatively new to the industry, but its skill set is clearly not lacking.

Technically the Grandezza 34 is not new, as its predecessor, the Grandezza 33, was much the same boat with a shorter bathing platform. Stretching the platform by 12 inches was a good idea, as it makes it a more practical size. The first 34 OC, released three years back, was powered by the previous-generation 370hp Volvo D6, while this boat has the new 380hp D6 with the latest hydraulic gearbox and the new DPI duo-prop sterndrive. It is also worth noting that Volvo have ditched their contentious bronze duo-props in favour of fitting stainless ones. The 34 can also be specified with twin Volvo D3s ranging in power from 170hp to 220hp. How well this double



Wine storage at the back of the galley.

Left: 1. Legroom is limited at the helm. 2. The design makes full use of the boat's wide beam for a large cockpit. 3. You have the bonus of three forward-facing seats.



configuration pans out in terms of engine access is hard to say, but getting to the big straight-six 5.5L D6 is certainly a pleasure. The large engine bay is accessed via the cockpit deck and bench seat hinging backwards on a hydraulic ram. Once in the bay, there is not a single service item that does not come easily to hand. The standard of fit and engineering in the engine bay is impressive, and if you need to get access to the circuit-breakers they are conveniently located behind a black door under the cockpit seating on the starboard side.

Scandinavians tend to have the same approach to building boats as the Germans have to building cars. One obvious aspect of this is the superb joinery, which the cockpit galley and the dinette table opposite make abundantly clear. The galley doors open and close with solid precision, revealing teak-lipped shelves to keep the contents secure. The sink is a very realistic

double drainer, set within a Corian worktop; the double hob is ceramic and the main fridge is a generous 65 litres. However, extra cold storage is also available from a 30L drawer fridge under the navigator's seat; plus, there is wine storage built into a cupboard at the aft end of the galley, complete with wine glass holders. All this is concealed under a cabinet top that folds in half, then locks back to a strong magnet when open, so you can use the sink underway. Complementing this logical touch is the table, which is equipped with four inset cup holders, meaning that refreshments do not have to cease when you cast off. The table itself is superbly finished, and with its deep 2in lipping it gives the impression of being scavenged from a Grand Banks. Sitting on a very sturdy hydraulic telescopic leg, the table can retract and, with an infill, create an extra double berth if the need arises. The decking is teak, which is covered

SPECIFICATIONS

- LOA:** 10.03m (33ft)
- Beam:** 3.23m (10ft 8in)
- Displacement:** 4800kg (dry)
- Power options:** Single 380hp Volvo D6 or twin 170-250 hp Volvo D3s
- Fuel capacity:** 490L (110 gal)
- Water capacity:** 120L (26 gal)
- RCD category:** B for 8
- Test engines:** Single 380hp Volvo D6 with DPI sterndrive and stainless duo-props

PRICE

- From:** £287,000 (inc. VAT) (380hp Volvo D6)
- As tested:** £295,950 (inc. VAT)

PERFORMANCE

31.2 knots (2-way average), sea conditions moderate, crew 3, fuel 50% with some hull growth

CONTACT

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by thick detachable carpets – a sensible touch considering people will likely be walking about with wet feet.

The aft seating can connect to the transom sunbed courtesy of the swivelling seat back, which, when in the forward position, turns the single sunbed into a double. Something that impressed me were the two grab rails at the aft end of the cockpit, which work their way in a snake-like manner up to the coachroof from seat height. Access to side decks is courtesy of teak-capped steps on each quarter. Movement on

It provides a point-and-shoot driving experience that would have been better enjoyed without a stubble of growth robbing us of performance.





deck is via 10in side decks, and again handrails sit where you need them – the full length of the coachroof – and rigid guard rails increase in height going forward. The generous anchor locker houses the windlass while providing space for forward fenders.

Below decks, the Grandezza makes full use of its 3.23m beam. The master cabin is generous for a 34-footer and features an offset island

It is more cruiser than sports, which is what it aims to be.

double bed, plenty of natural light from its long windows, a hanging locker and a TV mounted on its aft bulkhead. The port-side heads, like the rest of the cabins, enjoys nearly 2 metres of headroom, and though the toilet is in the same compartment as the shower, the sink and vanity unit are separate so will not get drenched if the shower is used. In an ideal world, a totally separate shower compartment would be perfect, but this is a 34ft boat, and with many designs there is often a trade-off somewhere. The mid cabin has full standing headroom in the doorway, a small hanging locker with seat

beneath and a wide cross-beam bed with limited headroom above. As mid cabins go, it is par for the course, and many will be tempted by the generous double bed.

Driving the Grandezza

Firstly, I need to point out that this boat, having been subjected to lockdown since last autumn, had not had a bottom scrub or any use for five months. This unfortunately turned a 35/36-knot boat into a fairly lethargic 31-knot craft. This is no reflection on Gibbs Marine, as we tested it immediately after marina restrictions had been lifted. Consequently the 34 OC took a bit of time to get up and go, with a tendency to drag her stern at any speed below 27 knots. Once you got her up to 30 knots, it gave you an idea of how she runs, which is pretty sure-footed. When performing 30-knot full-lock turns she tracks round as if on rails, with light, yet not over-responsive steering. However, being a fairly beamy boat, there is some chine slap when running banked hard over into the weather. The day was pretty mild, but what chop we could find off Old Harry did not create any concerning bangs or rattles from what is clearly a solid boat. The Grandezza has a medium-vee hull with a transom deadrise angle of 18 degrees, so she has not been designed to run like a Hunton into head seas.

She was equipped with the Zipwake trim tab system, which automatically adjusts for pitch and heel while tabbing the bow down when



Left 1. Full standing headroom in the mid-cabin doorway. **2.** Unlike some sports cruisers, the side decks are not a squeeze.

FUEL FIGURES (Volvo fuel flow meter)

RPM	Speed (knots)	LPH	NMPG
1000	5.6	4.4	5.6
1250	6.4	8.6	3.4
1500	7.6	15.0	2.3
1750	8.1	21.0	1.8
2000	9.4	35.0	1.2
2250	12.2	46.5	1.2
2500	19.5	48.5	1.8
2750	23.9	53.0	2.0
3000	28.0	62.5	2.0
3150 (WOT)	31.2	75.5	1.9

punching up onto the plane from displacement speed. Also, Volvo's D6 is equipped with Powertrim Assistant, which automatically trims the sterndrive in accordance with the boat's needs, so there is no need to manually trim the leg in when climbing onto the plane, or out when running at higher speeds. It provides a point-and-shoot driving experience that would have been better enjoyed without a stubble of growth robbing us of performance.

The only real drawback I personally found with the boat was the helm ergonomics. Firstly, the throttle is too far away, as you have to lean forward to keep your right hand on it. If you have settled down to a passage where you are

happy just to have your hand on the wheel, this is not a problem; however, if you are indulging in the sporting side of the boat, or running into a head sea where you are working the throttle in accordance with the wave pattern, you will find it uncomfortable. This could be partially solved by moving the Zipwake panel to the middle of the dash and relocating the throttle into this available slot. Ideally the throttle needs to be where your wrist falls, just forward of the helm seat.

Secondly, there is not a huge amount of leg space, so if you are 6ft as I am, you will find this a bit cramped after a while. The only way round this is to lower the section of the deck forward of the helm seat, which is not realistic as it would rob the mid cabin of some crucial headroom. If you flip up the bolster and sit on it, your view under what is a fairly low windscreen line is further reduced. Though all-round visibility is very good when the boat is on an even keel, when banked over to port you get that inevitable port-side blind spot that many sports cruisers suffer from. You just have to be disciplined and check your port quarter before turning. If you have the big sunroof open, you are blessed with a clear line of sight through the roof opening when banked. This sunroof also has other uses apart from letting the sun in on a good day. Due to the forward slope of the coachroof, the

wind is channelled in at speed, which, with the open-back hardtop design, serves to produce an open-boat feel. With the high helm position, you are able to stand with your head out of the sunroof, which is great when berthing. On this matter, I would suggest that choosing the optional Sleipner stern thruster to complement the standard-fit bow thruster would be a wise move on a single-engine 34ft boat.

Verdict

The Grandezza 34 OC is a very well-built boat. It is more cruiser than sports, which is what it aims to be. It does this well by providing a level of internal accommodation that 34-footers do not often achieve, and in the process gives the impression of being bigger than it is. Impressively, the options list is small, as our heavily specified test boat cost just £9,000 more than the most basic version. Finally, I must say that the fuel consumption figures we recorded on the day do not represent what this boat is really capable of due to the hull growth. Volvo's fuel consumption figures for their new 380hp D6 show this engine to be 50% more efficient than the figures we recorded. Allowing for Volvo's figures being an absolute best-case example, you should factor in an improvement of 30% over the figures listed below. ■



1. The size of the master cabin is impressive for this size of boat. 2. The mid cabin is predominantly taken up by the big bed. 3. The heads is divided into two compartments.



WHAT WE THOUGHT

FOR

- ▲ Great build quality and finish
- ▲ Balanced responsive steering
- ▲ Great engine access
- ▲ Very good level of internal accommodation for the size of boat
- ▲ Effective innovative use made of all available space

AGAINST

- ▼ The helm ergonomics are not ideal for taller people