

Grand Banks 39 Eastbay SX

Express cruiser evolution at its best.

by Tom Thompson



It's been more than 10 years since Grand Banks launched its popular Eastbay series. This express cruiser line became a classic—but what else would you expect from the company whose name evokes classic style? And the next obvious question is: Why would you want to change an icon?





The 39 Eastbay SX represents the evolution of the decade-old 38 Eastbay. The refined Down East look is still there but it's a bit softer. Subtle curves appear in the superstructure instead of hard edges and angles. Those graceful, sweeping lines hint at what's inside—a comfortable living space for a cruising couple. The décor is a tasteful blend of wood, fabric and leather upholstery.

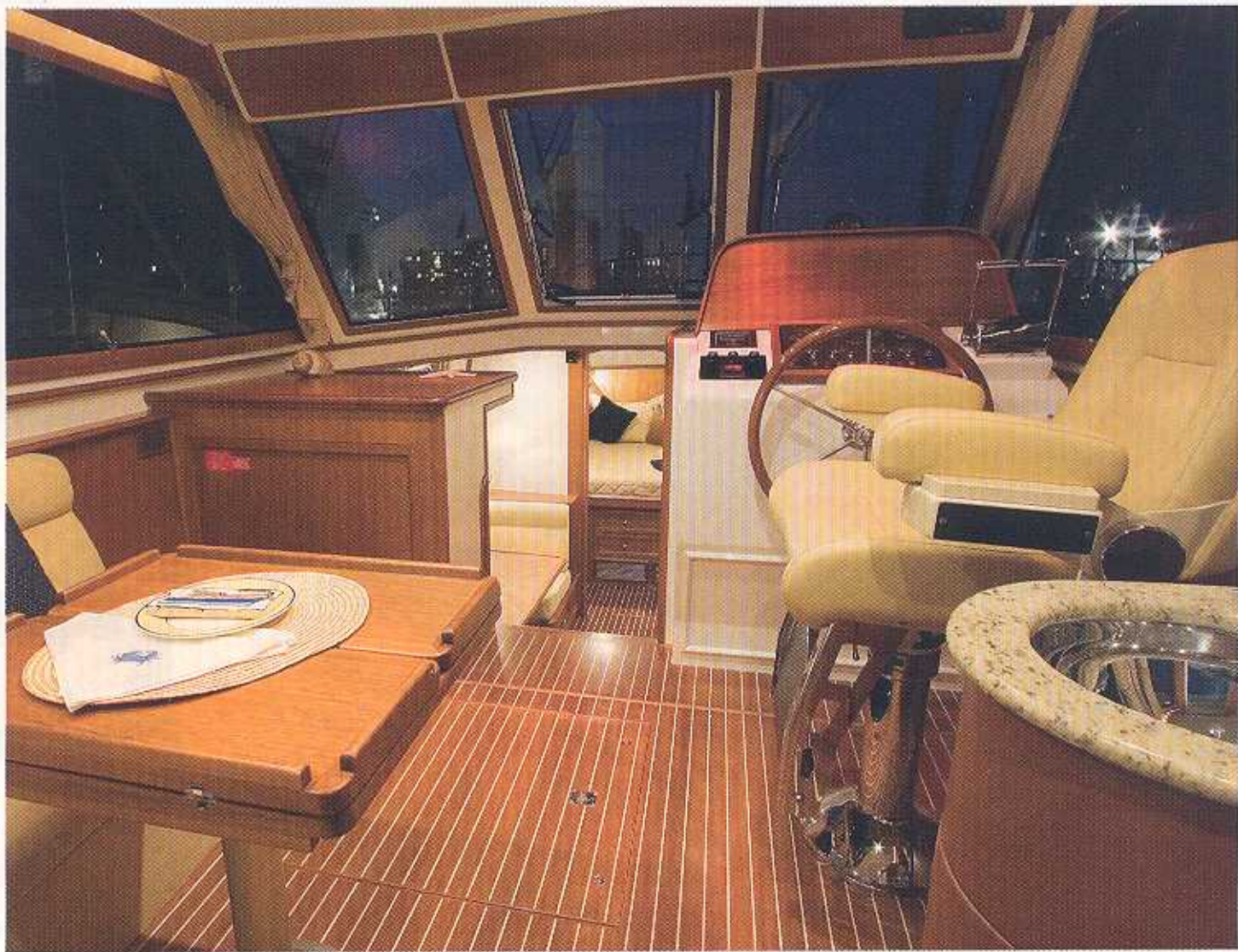
Teak decking is standard both inside and out. High railings and a wide walkway make getting around the outside safe and easy. There's a bench seat at the transom with storage underneath. Access to the engine compartment is through a hatch in the cockpit sole. There are two storage cabinets on either side of the cabin's aft bulkhead. The one to port can hold an optional refrigerator.

The 39 Eastbay SX has slightly larger dimensions than its predecessor, making for a more spacious interior. For salon seating, you have a choice between an L-shaped sofa that runs along the port and aft, or a shortened version that makes room for a second Stidd captain's chair to match the one at the helm. Regardless of which you choose, sightlines are excellent in all directions from any seat in the house. Those views are accompanied by equally excellent ventilation from an opening windshield section, side sliding glass panels, a pair of hatches overhead and a screened panel for the cockpit door.

At the sofa there's a wood table with fold-out leaves, with a chart table to port that provides a work surface. A wetbar tops off the storage cabinet space along the starboard side, aft of the helm seat. I liked the look of the curved, leather-covered door beneath the stainless steel sink. The uncluttered design of the helm station is elegant in its simplicity. Gauges are centered on a wood-framed panel in front of the steering wheel. A wood panel above this will handle a large-screen electronics display with room left over.

The steps to the lower deck are a precursor to the major changes here. The sailboat like companionway is gone, replaced by a spacious and inviting area that's open to the salon as well as daylight from the windshield above. A U-shaped settee with a dining table is to port, while the galley sits starboard. The settee converts to a berth if needed. Standard appliances in the galley include a two-burner electric stove, under-counter fridge and microwave oven.





A pedestal queen berth is the focus of the roomy forward cabin. There are storage lockers on either side and drawers under the berth. The space gets cross ventilation from portlights in the trunk cabin sides as well as an overhead hatch. The head, located just aft of the galley, features an enclosed shower with a clear, circular doorway. This is a significant improvement over the wet head on the 38. A VacuFlush toilet is standard. The built-in vanity has storage cabinets above and below the Corian countertop.

The classic styling of the 39 Eastbay SX is paired with surprising performance. Certainly you can enjoy the ride at a leisurely pace. That's what you'll probably end up doing most of the time—but it's good to know there are some horses under the hood at your command if you need them. Our test boat had 1,000 to be exact. It was powered by a pair of

Yanmar 6CXM-GTE2 diesels. Cruising speed for this package is in the high-20-knot range and will top out at 32. This performance doesn't come with a penalty, either. At cruising speed, the fuel burn is just over 20 gph total.

The C. Raymond Hunt-designed hull got on plane quickly, and the acceleration of the Yanmars was smooth throughout the power curve. Sea conditions were a little on the sloppy side, but the wide bow flare kept the windshield dry. The boat tracked without wavering and had little lean in tight turns at cruising speed.

Grand Banks did a commendable job in making a good thing better with the 39 Eastbay SX. The company kept the essence of the classic by maintaining the traditional look while updating the performance and amenities. It took a decade to make the change, but it was well worth the wait. ↓

Specs

LOA	42'2"
Beam	13'2"
Draft	2'4"
Weight	29,000 lbs.
Fuel capacity.....	352 gals.
Sleeps	4
Base power	T/Caterpillar C-7s (455 hp)
Base price	\$591,800
Power as tested.....	T/Yanmar 6CXM-GTE2 diesels (500 hp)
Price as tested	\$677,875



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