

MOTORBOAT & YACHTING

EUROPE'S BEST MOTOR BOAT MAGAZINE

NEW S65 ON TEST

PRINCESS

RULES THE WAVES

37 knots of pure British brilliance



PRINCESS S65

Building on the success of the S72, the S65 has been made from the hull up to be a sportsbridge, and it pays off

Text: **Jack Haines** Photos: **Lester McCarthy**





The space between helm seats makes entry/exit easy but the low windscreen means things can get breezy



One of the sportsbridge's big benefits is the ability to open the forward section of the saloon up to the sky on a day like this



Wet-bar is stylish and nicely finished with a closed-moulded lid and two-tone colours



The cockpit layout feels like a sportscruiser with its tender garage, sunpad and dinette



Interior design is refreshingly light and modern but with plenty of classy detailing



The immaculately appointed bathroom spans nearly the entire beam of the boat

After the success of the S72, it was inevitable that Princess would soon have a smaller sportsbridge in the offing. The only unexpected thing about the S65 is that it was designed from the ground up to be a standalone sportsbridge, whereas the S72 was based on a modified version of the V72 sportscruiser.

This has done wonders for the layout of the S65 because Princess has started with a clean slate. Where the S72 has a more traditional and slightly outdated galley-down layout, the S65's galley is up on the main deck straddling the border between the saloon and the cockpit. Mix in sliding doors that nestle to starboard beneath the flybridge stairs and an electric flip-up pane of glass to port, and you have a set-up that ensures the galley can serve those on deck just as easily as those in the saloon.

With the aft window raised, there's a perfect inside/outside bar for lining up drinks and food for guests in the cockpit, while the galley, complete with a domestic fridge-freezer, is conveniently located opposite the dinette. This means that amidships you have plenty of space for the main internal lounging area, comprising a U-shaped seating area centred around a coffee table and a low-lying sideboard opposite that plays host to the hi-lo flatscreen television. The seating is bang in line with the largest sections of the impressive saloon's glazing, meaning that even if you are trapped indoors you can still enjoy the view.

And then we get to the really clever part of the sportsbridge design – over the forward section of the saloon, above the lower helm, is an electric sunroof bolstered by three large panes of glass. Even when it's closed the glass brings the outside in, but when it's open it transforms the saloon and means you can still be in touch with the elements if it's too cold to be up on the top deck.

An added benefit of the galley being on the main deck is more space for the cabins. A four-cabin layout is standard but there is some flexibility with the bunk bed cabin, which can be made into a small office or storage space with a Pullman berth.

The master cabin is sensational and although the new 'knife' window design means swapping the dramatic square hull windows that Princess has been using of late for a slightly smaller trapezoidal shape, the amount of light they let in and the views out are still very impressive. This cabin is situated low down in the S65's hull so lying in bed you are truly at water level; what a place to wake up!

Up until now the yard has only been able to install the ensuite bathroom aft of the cabin in yachts of 70ft and over, but the S65 breaks that barrier. Not only does this feel very grown up but it means the immaculately appointed bathroom spans nearly the entire beam of the boat and adds extra insulation between the cabin and machinery space.

The new window design works wonders in the VIP cabin where the blade of the 'knife' lines up with the bed to make the space as bright as possible given that, thanks to the seating on the foredeck, this cabin has no skylight.

The guest cabin has the option of powered sliding berths (for £2,000 extra) so you can quickly transform it from a twin to a double and it's well worth having if you are going to be hosting different sets of guests regularly. The VIP has more simple scissor-action berths but, again, these just add to the versatility, as does the fact that every cabin except for the bunks gets its own ensuite bathroom.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

On deck the hybrid sportscruiser/flybridge layout means that, at the stern at least, things all feel very much like the former. The obligatory stern sunpad sits atop a tender garage large enough for a Williams 325, leaving the optional hydraulic bathing platform free for a PWC or for setting up a table and a chairs once you've dropped anchor.

Three shallow steps lead up to the cockpit past access to the optional (and very snug) single crew cabin. This is really aimed at the fledgling Asian market, as most S65s will be owner-operated and are likely to have a large storage void in this area to match the one on the port side in lieu of a central lazarette beneath the cockpit.

The foredeck is put to good use on the S65 where the raised sunpad with flip-up backrests

The handling is beautifully smooth from lock to lock and gets the S65's hips wiggling

is supplemented by a bench seat across the width of the windscreen and a walkway between both areas that allows easy movement from one deck to the other. Princess's practical thinking shines through here – there are deep storage voids in both sides of the bench moulding that can hold nearly all of the boat's fenders.

Detailing is something Princess has had sewn up for years but the S65 feels especially well conceived. Take a look at the exquisite handrail on the flybridge staircase that runs up either side of the steps and then loops round in a perfect arc to give you a grab-handle on the way down as well. On the flybridge the wet-bar has subtle carved grooves in the two-tone moulding to add a bit of visual impact and the hefty lid is perfectly smooth on both sides. There are leather-coated handholds throughout the saloon so cutely designed that they blend in with the furniture and subtle touches such as the backing plates for the ceiling-mounted LEDs mimic the shape of the hull windows. Tiny details, yes, but it's this stuff that sets Princess apart.

PLENTIFUL POWER

The flybridge, though clearly smaller than that of a traditional 65ft flybridge cruiser, makes the most of the available space by being well thought out and nicely finished. I've mentioned the wet-bar already but the wrap of seating aft curls around a solid teak table, mounted on a sturdy stainless steel base and the Silvertex upholstery in classy macadamia really looks and feels the business.

The seating to port of the helm is clever because it provides space for people to sit up with the helmsman and navigator when the boat is on the move but the reclined, aft-facing backrest means you can sunbathe here as well, though the stubby screens around the flybridge do mean you get quite a buffeting from the breeze.

No doubt that breeze was made worse by the fact we spent most of the day heading into it at 37 knots. You read that right; the S65 is nearly a 40-knot boat with the largest 1,400hp MAN motors. These are serious engines, less power plants more power stations, that wallop the S65 forward on great, heaving waves of torque. They take a fair few seconds to spool up but once they do it's like that moment when a

roller coaster just creeps past the incline before rocketing off down the track.

It's unlikely that you are going to fancy thumping along at 37 knots all day but with this performance on tap it makes a 30-knot cruise feel sedate and, thanks to Princess's excellent soundproofing, fast cruising is very relaxed.

There are two smaller engine options including the smaller V8 1,200hp MANs and a 1,150hp per side option from Caterpillar. Neither option could be labelled sluggish with even the Cats capable of thrusting the S65 to a claimed 34 knots flat out.

The handling is a predictable balance between engaging and secure, beautifully smooth from lock to lock and capable of getting the S65's hips wiggling with minimum effort. The S range is supposed to have sporty intentions and that shines through in the S65's poise and the way it changes direction.

Helming from the flybridge or the lower deck is a joy thanks to brilliant ergonomics and adjustability at either helm, especially regarding the wheel and throttles that you are in contact with most often. Both dashboards look great in a simple, classy sort of way, though the tacky plastic air vents at the lower helm look and feel out of place on a £2 million boat.

I particularly like the layout of the upper helm where the skipper sits centrally with a navigator's seat to port but also enough space between the chairs to allow people to come and go without the helmsman having to shift out of the way. The oversized glove box on the port side of the dash is perfect for chucking screen protectors, sun cream and other bits in plus it's chilled if you want to use it for drinks.

VERDICT

Despite sportsbridges being a somewhat niche concept there is already some strong competition for the S65 to butt up against. Prestige was arguably the first to bring this idea to the 60ft market with its clever 620S while Sunseeker has smartly fiddled with its 68 Predator to create the 68 Sport Yacht. So there is more choice in this market than you might imagine though, in truth, the S65 is probably the most rounded of the bunch.

The Prestige is quite an old boat now and though it manages to pull off the trick of both



Master ensuite runs across the beam of the cabin; it's utterly fabulous





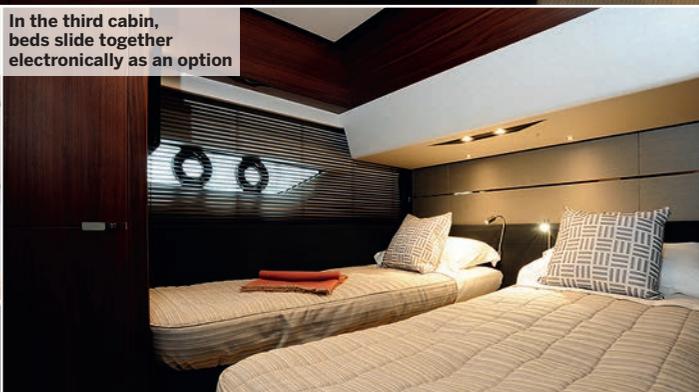
Owner's suite enjoys well over 6ft of headroom all the way round the king-sized bed

The 'knife' windows look great and pump natural light into the VIP cabin



Every bathroom has a separate shower cubicle and a high level of finish

In the third cabin, beds slide together electronically as an option



A CLOSER LOOK WITH JACK HAINES

STORAGE

These two large bins with gas-strut propelled lids are large enough to easily swallow pretty much all of the S65's fenders. They are deep enough to hold lines or a length of fresh water hose if needs be.



SUNPAD SUPPORT

This simple sunlounger mechanism on the foredeck sunpads makes it quick and easy to prop yourself up to read when relaxing in the sun. The backrest can be set at three different reclining angles.



AFT GALLEY

The flip-up window in the galley means you can transform the kitchen into an indoor/outdoor bar at the touch of a button. The single pane of glass silently glides up to the ceiling and then can be locked in place.



ENGINE ROOM

It's quite a climb down into the S65's engine room but once you're in the excellent headroom is appreciated. Bearing in mind that our test boat had two enormous V12s down here there was still ample space to move between the motors and inspect their outboard sides. There is lashings of soundproofing down here, and the installation itself is of the highest order with plentiful artificial light.





You are quite exposed on the flybridge; the windscreen has very little effect

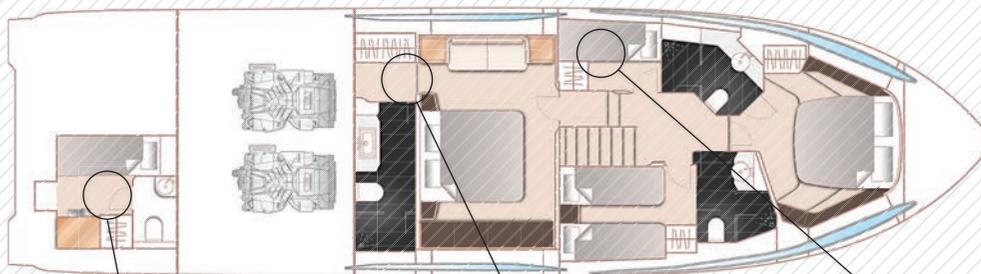


We reckon this is the best view of a genuinely pretty boat. This is such a good angle for it

THE DATA

LENGTH OVERALL 66ft (20.12m)

BEAM
16ft 9in
(5.08m)



Optional crew cabin is cramped. Most owners will probably end up using it for storage

The first time on a Princess under 70ft that the bathroom has been located aft of the bed; a classy touch

This cabin has some room for customisation. It can be set up as a small study with a pullman berth

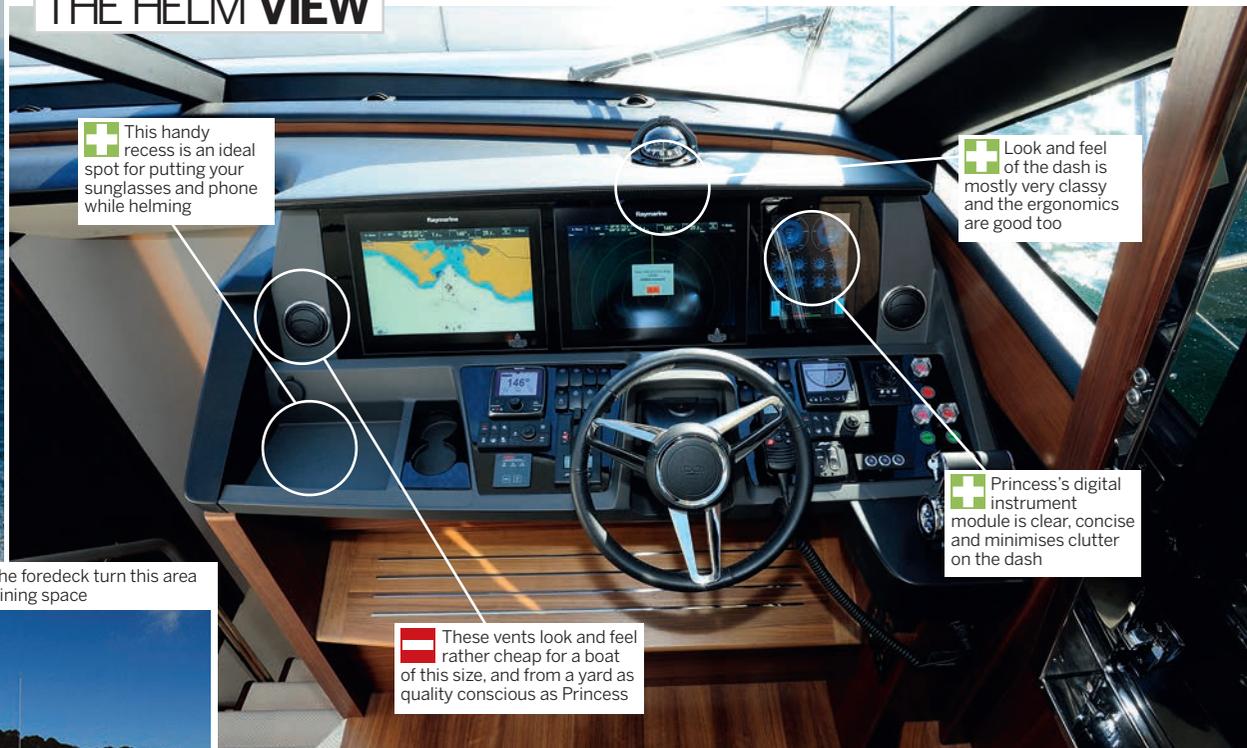
LENGTH OVERALL
66ft (20.12m)
BEAM 16ft 9in (5.08m)
FUEL CAPACITY
902 imp gal (4,100 litres)
WATER CAPACITY
192 imp gal (873 litres)
DRAUGHT
4ft 9in (1.47m)
RCD CATEGORY
B for 18 people
DESIGNERS Princess
DISPLACEMENT
30 tonnes



+ The raised sunpad and bench on the foredeck turn this area into a brilliant fair-weather entertaining space



THE HELM VIEW



+ This handy recess is an ideal spot for putting your sunglasses and phone while helming

+ Look and feel of the dash is mostly very classy and the ergonomics are good too

+ Princess's digital instrument module is clear, concise and minimises clutter on the dash

- These vents look and feel rather cheap for a boat of this size, and from a yard as quality conscious as Princess

The S65 is, in my opinion, the best looking boat that Princess currently builds

flybridge and sunroof it simply doesn't feel as special as the Princess does on board, though that is reflected in the price and it is being replaced by a 680S next year. And the Sunseeker is an excellent sea boat with a sumptuous interior and potential 40-knot plus performance thanks to the bonkers Arnesons but it misses out on the sunroof, which is part of what makes these boats so good.

It's no great surprise that the S65 is a well-rounded and talented machine, but add in the visual punch of the S range and Princess's latest styling cues and storming performance and you have an extremely desirable package.

However, the flybridge is only about the size of the one on the Princess 43, and that simply won't add up for those who value a larger party platform up top. But if you can see past that there is so much to like about the S65. It is, in my opinion, the best looking boat that Princess currently builds (run very closely by the new V58) and the interior an almost perfect balance for the owner operator. Predictable it may have been that Princess would build the S65 but it wasn't so inevitable for it to be quite this good. **MBY**

Contact See Princess website for dealers. Web: www.princessyachts.com

PERFORMANCE

TEST ENGINES Twin MAN V12-1400.

1,400hp @ 2,350rpm. 12-cylinder 24.2-litre diesels

FIGURES	ECO					FAST		MAX	
	1,000	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,000	2,200	2,350	
RPM									
Speed	11.0	12.2	16.1	20.6	25.3	30.2	33.7	36.6	
LPH	67.6	129	176	243	324	413	475	544	
GPH	14.9	28.4	38.7	53.5	71.3	90.8	104.5	120	
MPG	0.74	0.43	0.42	0.39	0.35	0.33	0.32	0.31	
Range	534	310	300	278	256	240	233	221	

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)

Helm	68	65	69	72	76	79	83	82	
Cockpit	80	81	83	84	85	85	86	86	
Saloon	68	68	72	74	78	80	83	84	

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on readings from on-board fuel gauges, your figures may vary considerably. All prices exclude UK VAT. 50% fuel, 100% water, 3 crew, no stores or tender; liferaft on board, 20°C air temp, F1+ calm for sea trials

THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Prices from **£1.52m** (twin 1,150hp)
Price as tested **£1.65m** (twin 1,400hp)

Variable speed thrusters	£9,130
Crew cabin fit-out	£6,850
Electric sliding berths in guest cabin	£1,930
Teak side decks and foredeck	£9,905
Telescopic passerelle	£15,550
Sliding sunroof	£10,680
Tropical 88,000 BTU air-con (needs 19kW generator)	£24,730
Onan 19kW generator	£5,605
= Options on test boat	

RIVALS

Prestige 620S
Price from **£994,435**

One of the first of the breed and still good, but being replaced by a 680S next year.



Sunseeker 68 Sport Yacht
Price from **£2.04m**

Rakish looks and an excellent hull but no sunroof option.

Buy the test: mby.com/sy68

