Sensation
2500 Cruiser

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Simply Sensational!
Nice looks, great creature comforts
The Sensation 2500 Cruiser is your passport to a weekend of great exhilaration on the water. Imagine retiring to a comfortable cabin under a star-filled-sky while waves gently lull you to sleep. And with such roomy accommodation, as well as plenty of on board amenities, the family (and especially the wife!) would be hard-pressed to find anything to complain about! Complete with loads of style, sufficient power and feather-light handling, the 2500 Cruiser can be summed up in two words – simply sensational!

Leisure Boating travels to the Vaal River to test the Sensation 2500 Cruiser.

About the twins

We caught up with Twin Boats and Trailers’ owners Andre and Riaan van Helsdingen at their Vereeniging factory. Although they are light-hearted, the twins also pride themselves on being serious boat-builders with a knack for constructing some of the best boats currently on the market.

Twins Boats and Trailers have been in the industry for 10 years, so when they build a boat, it stays built! In other words, a lot of experience has gone into its making.

Andre and Riaan didn’t have an easy upbringing. However, with plenty of persistence, hard work and lots of faith in their Sensation range, they became what they are today – self-made millionaires.
Many satisfied boat owners can vouch for the twins’ ability to build boats with the utmost care and consideration, not only for form, but function and safety too.

Honesty is the twins’ most obvious characteristic. “People often say that we are sometimes too honest,” says Riaan. “But that’s just part of our personalities and it reflects in our approach to building boats. There are no hidden agendas”.

General Impressions

The 2500 Cruiser manages to be sufficiently luxurious, without being ostentatious in any way. Its sweeping lines and strong curves, accentuated by stainless steel grab rails at the bow, resulting in a basic, yet quality design. For me, the 2500 Cruiser certainly proves that when it comes to boating, less is definitely more.

Due to its large cabin and rigid construction, the 8.1 m (25-ft) Cruiser is quite a hefty boat. Weighing in at an astonishing 2 540 kg, and flaunting broad shoulders and a stocky posture, her rigid construction seems designed more for use at sea. However, this colossal craft seems equally at home on the river.

With azure hull graphics and an athletic-looking shape, the boat has a very sporty look – not a standard feature when it comes to cabin boats. Nonetheless, before we’d even started her motor, she managed to produce a very promising first impression.

Conditions for test

Our review took place on a weekday afternoon, with the magnificent Vaal River providing flat and calm conditions. Which was a pity, really, as we were hoping for rougher water conditions to thoroughly test a boat of this magnitude, which promises great stability and water handling.

But from a leisure perspective, the day was ideal. It was hot, with the temperature soaring to 27°C and not a breath of wind in the air. And with hardly any other boats on the water, we had the opportunity to familiarise ourselves with her finer handling characteristics.

The Cabin

Much can be said about the lavishness of the cabin area, probably the craft’s strongest selling feature. But one must remember that the cabin is not meant for socialising, but rather for retiring to after a long day out fishing or when the weather turns nasty. But when forced inside, the cabin boasts an array of creature comforts to make your stay as pleasant as possible.

The spacious four-berth cabin features sufficient sleeping space for an average-sized family. A private mid-cabin berth sleeps two, and the V-shaped seating arrangement, with its chocolate-brown coloured upholstery, also converts into a bed for two.

A ventilating skylight above the main seating arrangement makes the cabin airy and cool. And at night, five down-lights provide lighting and create a wonderful ambiance inside the cabin.

The enclosed bathroom area features a hand-held shower, marine toilet and a sink and basin. The small kitchen area features a microwave, fridge and serving counter to prepare light meals. Gather the family around the removable cocktail table, erected indoors, and serve up something scrumptious to eat!
Deck Layout

With the focus being on the cabin, the outside deck of the 2500 Cruiser is minimally, but cleverly designed. The white upholstery seating arrangement, with its stylish black and grey logo, is sufficiently spacious to accommodate family members, friends and even the family pet.

With seating space for nine people, by means of three comfortably cushioned deck couches on the starboard side, passengers can stretch their limbs and relax. But even though it can seat nine, we recommend no more than six people for a more comfortable ride.

We would like to have seen the manufacturers install a removable cushioned addition between the two facing three-seater couches at the stern for added comfort. Such an insert would combine the two couches and make for a comfortable sun lounger to stretch out, thus optimising space.

The good news is that the word from Twin Boats is that a large sun lounger at the bow is currently in the development process and will feature on the 2500 Cruiser in the near further.

Performance and Handling

The Sensation 2500 Cruiser is equipped with a powerful 5.7-litre 350 HP MerCruiser Magnum MPI inboard engine that produces a sexy roar when at full throttle. The engine pushes out 300 HP to the single 17-pitch, Vensura propeller. Fuel for the motor is supplied by a 200 litre built-in fuel tank.

Top GPS speed on this craft is a good 71 km/h at 3 500 rpm, but we recommend a good, fuel-efficient cruising speed of 46 km/h at 2 400 rpm. The boat also popped onto the plane in 8.27 sec, which is quite remarkable for a craft of this size and weight.

With an overall length of 8.1 m and a width of 2.6 m, you would imagine she’d require plenty of space when cornering. However, the boat’s response was fantastic. Assisted by hydraulic steering, the hull gripped the water solidly and turned sharply without fault.
The boat’s cornering was impressive and while cutting through the chase boat’s wake, she showed that her overall handling capabilities were more than adequate. But due to the large empty cabin space at the bow, she tends to be slightly susceptible to “bow bounce” when on the plane. To avoid this, you can simply accommodate more passengers in the cabin or trim the engine correctly.

**Finishing touches**

The deck features only three cupholders, which could prove to be insufficient. It might seem a minor detail, but I feel the manufacturers could have increased the number of cupholders, especially for a boat that is designed for socialising on board.

Entertainment-wise, the cabin comes standard with a flat screen television mounted on the panel situated on the foot side of the main seating arrangement. And, if you’re in the mood, pump up the volume on the boat’s CD/radio player, which boasts two Boss Marine speakers in the cabin and two on deck.

The craft also features storage space underneath all the seats and two small storage compartments on the inside panels of its port and starboard side – handy for storing valuables or personal gear.

Other finishes include a large swim platform aft with a telescopic boarding ladder, sleek retractable cleats, stainless steel grab rails at the bow and a windscreen covering the helm area, offering good wind resistance.

**Conclusion**

Boat lovers with families will appreciate the 2500 Cruiser’s consideration for safety. The craft’s hull is foam-filled right to the top of the sides for safety, strength and buoyancy.

If you regard safety, trustworthy manufacturing, roomy accommodation as well as power and handling as good value for money, then you should seriously consider testing the Sensation 2500 Cruiser. Not only will this craft meet your boating requirements, but chances are it will surpass them with flying colours.

For more information on the Sensation 2500 Cruiser, please contact Twin Boats and Trailers on (016) 366 1630 or 082 445 1543. Alternatively, drop them an email at andre@twinboats.co.za.

**At a glance**

- **LOA:** 8.1 m (25-ft)
- **Beam:** 2.6 m
- **Weight:** 2 450 kg
- **Engine:** 5.7-litre 350 HP MerCruiser Magnum MPI inboard
- **Steering:** Hydraulic
- **Max passengers:** 9 (recommend 6)
- **Top speed:** 71 km/h (GPS Speed)
- **Price:** Contact for price