

BOATS

BOAT TESTS

Tiara 3900 Coronet

By Jason Y. Wood



THE INFO

Builder: Tiara
Model: Tiara 3900 Coronet
Year: 2013
Boat Type: Cruiser
LOA: 41'11"
Beam: 15'0"
Draft: 3'6"
Base Price: \$660,000

Good Clean Fun

The Tiara 3900 Coronet lives up to a simple mission: Have a great time on the water.

When we say every boat is a compromise, what we usually mean is that no boat can be all things to all men. A boat may be designed to go fast, or do a certain kind of cruising, or chase fish. She can be used to do other things, but you can understand why she doesn't knock it out of the park in those other uses. It's like fishing from a sloop. It can be done, but it's not really what was intended when the keel was laid.

Problem is, some boats in this day and age, seem to ignore their own design. I'm talking about boats that look like bluewater cruisers but bring barely enough range to get out of sight of land. Go-fast boats that take a long time to get on plane. And the latest "sleek express cruiser" that is neither sleek, nor does it cruise particularly well, and don't get me started on "express," because that involves speed at some point in the equation, and often I'm not seeing it.

Fortunately, the Tiara 3900 Coronet does not fall under this description. Every aspect of this boat fits into her design brief, as I see it. The Coronet has long been Tiara's entry-level model, and to that end she delivers on her promise, right down to propulsion. She is offered only with conventional drives—no pod options are available. "We chose a traditional drive train for the 3900 Coronet matched with two diesel power options," says David Glenn, marketing director of S2 Yachts, Tiara's parent company. "They deliver the best value for this particular product category." This boat stays true to her mission—a gutsy choice to keep your model badging accurate in the face of market forces, particularly since Tiara was the company that introduced many boaters to the Volvo Penta IPS system years ago. The 3900 Coronet is a dayboat, and succeeds in focusing on the fun of being aboard. At the same time, she takes into account the occasional complications that

make boating spontaneous and enjoyable.

I'll start at the stern, and you'll see why. There's a wide fiberglass swim platform here nicely finished in teak with a narrow channel running around the outer edge. At the forward corners where the platform meets the hull that channel opens into a double cupholder on each side. That channel isn't for drainage as I initially thought, it's for holding on when you're soaking in the water at anchor. And if it's hot enough for a soak, you'll probably also want a cold drink. And yet the channel solves numerous problems—easy to grab, unobtrusive, and not adding something that would induce a stumble. Also that swim platform is fixed in place—it doesn't raise or lower—dayboat simplicity.

Moving on: As with every boat of this size, the cockpit is where the action happens. If you get the optional Cruising Package, the cockpit area has an L-shaped settee across the transom and along the port side, situated around a teak table that can drop down to convert to a sunpad. There's also an aft-facing loveseat on the port side, and all of these cockpit seats are comfortable and engineered to help you relax. To starboard is a Kenyon electric grill beneath a sturdy lid. This is a good roomy deck, even with all of that seating, and its open feel is enhanced by a transom door that allows a simple walk-through to the swim platform.

The cockpit feels like you're right down on the water, which is the feeling you're after, so it's why you're spending the day on a boat. When I stood on the starboard side and pushed my knee up against the coaming pad there, my view of the boat changed. That transom door became a tuna door, and those low covering boards would make it easy to reach down to release a fish. Tiara's piscatorial chops are showing—makes sense since the company's open and convertible models continue to strike terror in the hearts of undersea creatures everywhere. "This one has the cruising package, which is why it has that seating," says Glenn. "But there's also a Tournament Fishing Package that opens up the cockpit and has a transom livewell, another insulated stowage box in the deck, rodholders, and more."

So the Coronet has a couple of different dimensions to her. Another one to think about is forward of the cockpit—the bridgedeck, two steps up. If the cockpit feels like you're right down on the surface of the water, this area sets you apart a little bit. If you want to have dinner onboard at the dock, you can sit up in this portside dinette and not feel as though you're on display. This is thanks in large part to a serious hardtop, with an elongated Lewmar skylight with opening hatch on the centerline, built-in lights, and included side curtains. An optional aft curtain will fully enclose this amidships deck.

The architecture of this area on the boat is a bit complicated, since both the helm seat to starboard and the dinette I mentioned are placed high in the boat's profile. It's two steps up to the platform on which the dinette sits.

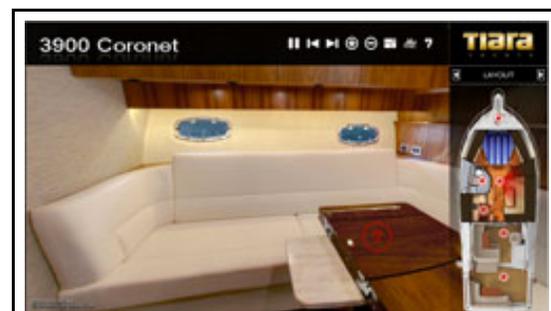
The forward end of that dinette has a foldaway section so a helm companion can choose to sit or stand and lean on the cushioned forward bulkhead, all molded in flag-blue fiberglass to reduce glare. There's also a chart table here and a pair of cupholders. Boaters will get this: No one has to kneel on the settee when they really want to stand, but there's more seating when you need it.

The helm seat is at the same height as the dinette, with a two-level footrest built into the flag-blue helm console so you can sit on the edge of the helm seat, or stand and lean against it, or sit way back. Aft of the seat on the starboard side is a wet bar with drawer-style fridge beneath. The positioning of the helm seat helps drivers of all heights see over that bow, where a sunpad cushion can be placed. The pad covers the skylight hatches for the saloon, which includes a galley, a convertible dinette, head, and forward berth.

I ran the boat in short, 1- to 2-foot seas on a breezy day off Dania Beach, Florida, and she seemed to relish the conditions. She was responsive to the helm and tracked like a champ, pressing through the seas and breeze with just a bit of spray thrown high onto the windshield by the wind. The twin 480-horsepower Cummins diesels matched to conventional shafts pushed her to better than 30 knots in our test and the ride was dry and comfortable, if a bit on the loud side when the revs get going.

That's because the engines are situated directly below that bridgedeck which raises on rams so you have wide-open access to the mechanical space below. There's also a centerline hatch in the bridgedeck for routine maintenance that offers easy access to the Groco sea strainers and other components, but I think I would generally take my time and raise the entire deck for daily checks, given the short time it takes. The engines have 26 inches between them and are 10 inches abaft the forward bulkhead.

As I mentioned early on, this is a dayboat, but she does have a serviceable cabin for a cruising couple to enjoy time on the water. This gives you the flexibility to stay out longer and maybe spend the night onboard. When I stepped down the four companionway steps I was amazed by the feel of this interior space. Warm satin-finished teak joinery stretches all the way to the forward bulkhead at the head of the island berth. With 76 inches of headroom, the cabin has a great cozy feel to it, not confining at all—an accomplishment in a 39-footer. A galley to port has a two-burner Eureka cooktop, drawer-style Vitrefrigo refrigerator and freezer, and microwave. A 26-inch flatscreen TV in a cabinet faces the dinette to starboard. The boat's electrical panel sits behind a cover on the aft bulkhead, right above the backrest of the dinette.



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Forward of the galley is a head compartment. The shower sports a clever, rigid shower curtain that stows out of the way to give more room in the head for ablutions, should the owners opt to spend the night.

The berth looks comfortable enough, with better than 32 inches between the mattress and the overhead, where two centerline skylights add to the feel of the entire space. Other owner-accommodation amenities include another 26-inch TV and a hanging locker. The dinette converts to a double and there's a privacy curtain for when there's a crowd staying onboard. I felt like this was a great call, rather than enclosing the berth into a forward stateroom. Instead of two tiny, barely workable spaces, this single large space definitely makes more of the resources.

Calling this design a dayboat—and sticking to it—means Tiara can bring together that great cockpit, a more intimate bridgedeck area, a sunny foredeck, and flexible, livable accommodations that will work for a couple, a small family, or even two couples for an overnight. The design works because it takes into account how boaters really use boats, and Tiara should know.



Brand Foundation:
Tiara 2900 Coronet >

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