

Tiara 44 Coupe

I USUALLY CHUCKLE WHEN I HEAR THE TERM *overbuilt*. More often than not, what others think is overbuilt I think is good and rugged. Such was the case when I started poking around the nether regions of Tiara's new 44 Coupe. For example, some would call the support system for the bulkhead opening that allows the 44 Coupe's huge, extra-wide, sliding-glass salon doors overbuilt. I call it appropriate to last over the long haul. It features 4-by-6-inch vertical fiberglass beams running up the sides of the salon and across the top of the opening, as well as a large structure beneath the cockpit sole that spans the boat's beam. This is just a door opening, but indicative of Tiara's commitment.

From within the 44 Coupe's engine compartment, I admired large, reinforcing knees that ensure that the hull sides don't flex too much. Forward on each side, aluminum structural pillars fabricated on a heavy-duty sill along the windshield landing support the 44 Coupe's house structure and the large windows that give such a great view when you're cruising. Throughout the boat, the hinges for all the locker hatches have a great, heavy-duty feel. You know when you close a hatch it's not going to pop back open, which gives me a good feeling about how the boat is built overall. Tiara laid up the boat with a solid fiberglass bottom and balsa coring in the hull sides and deck.

Out on a lumpy Lake Michigan, my opinion of the Tiara 44 Coupe only improved. The boat is based on the same bottom as Tiara's 48 Convertible is, and the blue-water design knocked down waves with condescension and exhibited runaboutlike handling when I put it through a series of turns at about 25 mph. I drove it with the steering wheel and controls and then had even more fun, taking command with the joystick. It's nothing new, but sitting back and taking control of a 45-foot-6-inch vessel in the same way my 14-year-old plays a video game still makes me giggle.

From the time the manufacturer decided to come out with a complement to the 50 Coupe, Tiara remained dedicated to ensuring that the 44 Coupe exhibit the handling traits

Tiara's 44 Coupe runs on a "sport-fish" bottom, and so cleaves the seas. The helm folds down for service, while we rated staterooms and salon deluxe.

■ NOTEWORTHY

The Tiara 44 Coupe's boot stripe is painted on so that it's more resistant to scrubbing, and easier to repair than a decal.



PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) BILLY BLACK, COURTESY TIARA YACHTS (3)

➔ Tiara 44 Coupe



for which the manufacturer's boats are known. That even included moving the engine halves of the Volvo Penta IPS600 pod-drive systems farther forward and linking them to the pod drives with jack shafts. This is a practice employed by manufacturers of sport-fishing boats to improve cockpit space and center the weight of the engines for enhanced stability and an easier motion — but for more of an express-cruiser-style boat, this could have been risky. Moving the engines forward meant the manufacturer couldn't expand the size of the midcabin, which designers usually can do when working with IPS. I applaud them for wanting to ensure that the 44 Coupe rode and felt like previous Tiara yachts. My test boat topped off at a speedy 37.4 mph at 3,600 rpm and cruised comfortably at 26.3 mph at 3,000 rpm. This performance is similar to what you can expect from boats like Cruisers Yachts' 45 Cantius (\$955,350 powered like our test boat). Around the docks, the joystick made life easy, and so did the windows that ensured I could see everything I needed to while docking.

At the helm, the twin Volvo Penta Glass Cockpit screens provided all requisite information on engine health and navigation. I found it easy to use the integrated Garmin electronics, and the "yacht-wide" audio system impressed me with its zone-controlled volume, Bluetooth connectivity and two LCD TV screens, among other entertainment goodies. Controls are comfortably positioned, and the dash is finished in a glare-killing dark upholstery. To port, there's ample space for a crowd on the L-shaped lounge.

When you head belowdecks on the 44 Coupe, you'll find some clever ideas that make the boat feel spacious. First is the hatch to the master stateroom that folds over twice to further open the area. There's a queen berth with pillowtop innerspring mattress and abundant small-item stowage, and plenty of natural light thanks to an overhead deck hatch and side ports. The private master head has a separate shower stall that's impressive for a boat in this size range.

Ensnored in the master stateroom, you need not be disturbed. Crew can answer nature's call in the day-head,

which is located at the bottom of the salon stairs. Work your way aft and the midcabin has twin berths that stretch from starboard to port and fill in with a cushion to accommodate two adults. This hanging locker is actually larger than the hanging locker found in the master stateroom because the optional combination washer/dryer installs here.

Back up in the salon, the galley is aft to starboard with an Isotherm refrigerator and freezer drawers and plenty of dry stowage. The cockpit has space that allows a crowd to hang out in open air, and I liked the steps built into the engine-compartment vents that facilitate side boarding. My favorite feature on the 44 Coupe, though, was the optional barbecue in the transom trunk (\$2,280). I can't think of a better location for a grill than on the transom. Any spills are easy to clean up, and should the flames get out of control, there's plenty of water. After all, you're on a boat. And the hinges and hatch for the aft trunk are, of course, "overbuilt." — *Eric Colby*



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AVAILABLE POWER:
TWIN POD DRIVES



High Points

- ▶ Having the salon and cockpit on the same level creates an excellent social flow.
- ▶ A double-wide sliding door for the master stateroom enhances belowdecks space.
- ▶ Volvo Penta IPS joystick controls make the boat downright fun to drive.

Low Points

- ▶ Tiara traded the functional fiddle rails on the galley counters for cosmetically correct smooth edges, a substitution we bemoan.

▶ LOA: 45'6" ▶ Beam: 15'0" ▶ Draft (max): 3'8" ▶ Displacement (approx.): 30,000 lb.
▶ Transom Deadrise: 18 degrees ▶ Bridge Clearance: 10'0" ▶ Max Cabin Headroom: 6'5"
▶ Fuel Capacity: 350 gal. ▶ Max Horsepower: 870 ▶ Available Power: Twin 435 hp Volvo Penta IPS600 diesels

Price: \$903,704 (with test power)

▼ BOATING Certified Test Results

SPEED			EFFICIENCY					OPERATION		
rpm	knots	mph	naut. gph	stat. mpg	n. mi. mpg	s. mi. range	sound range	angle	level	
600	4.69	5.40	0.60	7.82	9.00	2464	2835	0	61	
900	5.82	6.70	1.60	3.64	4.19	1146	1319	1	64	
1200	6.60	7.60	2.00	3.30	3.80	1040	1197	1	64	
1500	7.65	8.80	5.90	1.30	1.49	408	470	1	71	
1800	8.86	10.20	9.20	0.96	1.11	303	349	2	73	
2100	9.73	11.20	14.70	0.66	0.76	209	240	5	75	
2400	12.77	14.70	19.10	0.67	0.77	211	242	6	78	
2700	15.90	18.30	26.10	0.61	0.70	192	221	7	77	
3000	20.07	23.10	30.80	0.65	0.75	205	236	7	78	
3300	24.16	27.80	37.00	0.65	0.75	206	237	6	80	
3600	27.89	32.10	44.00	0.63	0.73	200	230	5	81	

MOST ECONOMICAL CRUISING SPEED

HOW WE TESTED

ENGINE: Twin 435 hp Volvo Penta IPS600 diesels DRIVE/PROP: IPS pods/T-3 bronze propsets GEAR RATIO: 1.82:1 FUEL LOAD: 300 gal. WATER ON BOARD: 30 gal. CREW WEIGHT: 900 lb.

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