



Ranger Tug R-29

Less is More. BY ZUZANA PROCHAZKA

Building customer confidence is a great marketing tool. And if you can instill confidence in the use of your product, it'll sell itself. Maybe that explains the success behind the launch of Ranger Tugs' R-29, a tough pocket trawler introduced in 2009 by the Kent, Washington-based boatbuilder.

I learned what confidence looks like when I joined new Ranger owner Liz Callard and broker Diane Murray aboard hull No.10 of the Ranger R-29, and we cast off for a short women's cruise on the Alameda estuary in Northern California.

When Liz, who is new to boating, and her husband, a seasoned sailor, started their search for a boat, she quickly decided a sailboat might be too complicated and a large trawler would be too much for her to handle solo. They chose the R-29 because Liz felt she could master it quickly and be comfortable taking it out on her own. Her husband liked it because it was light on maintenance, would fit in a small slip and could take them just about anywhere to explore new cruising grounds and fishing hotspots.

The 360-degree visibility from the helm and the easy swimstep access for their dog didn't hurt, either.

Jeff Messmer, vice president of sales and marketing for Ranger, points out that newbies are as comfortable on Ranger Tugs as salty, long-time sailors. He notes that families moving up from small boats and sailors moving in from the elements and transitioning to power are fans of the small tugs, as are large boat owners downsizing to a vessel that's easier on maintenance—and the wallet.



The Ranger R-29 is a trailerable trawler that packs just about everything you'd find on a 50-footer into a tidy, 29-foot package.

The R-29 has a solid fiberglass semi-displacement hull and a one-piece fiberglass stringer system that's tabbed into the hull and then injected with foam for sound dampening. Lead ingots form the ballast and base for mounting the 260-hp Yanmar diesel engine that comes standard. Construction incorporates several molded compartments, such as the head, which helps minimize noise.

The real appeal of this model is the living space. The entire salon is on one level, from the cockpit to the helm. Two steps lead down into a master stateroom with a king-size semi-island berth and plenty of storage underneath. A full-size head is on port and a hanging locker on starboard. The headroom is 6'3" in the cabin and 6'6" in the salon.

There's no separate pilothouse, so nobody's left alone at the helm and isolated from social activity. The helm on starboard has excellent visibility all around and a sliding door that provides access to the bow and side decks. You can practically dock without leaving the seat. A straight galley runs down the starboard side and features a two-burner electric or propane stove, microwave, double sinks and refrigeration. The dinette on port seats four and converts to a double berth. The backrest for the forward dinette seat swings back to create a companion seat in the helm area, and the helm seat lifts to provide additional counter space in the galley. That's pretty creative use of tight spaces!

A second cabin is accessed behind and down below the dinette and will sleep two adults comfortably. Four overhead hatches and plenty of opening windows with screens provide light and air. The fridge and stereo fit neatly under the helm seat, and a six-bottle wine cooler is tucked under the passenger seat. Cruising aboard the R-29 isn't exactly roughing it.

The cockpit is 9' x 5', which is ample on a boat this size. It includes a wet bar with a sink, cutting board, ice maker and a barbecue built into the transom. The molded steps on either side lead to the side decks and lift up gull-wing style, revealing substantial space beneath to house the optional genset, water maker and lots of equipment and toys. The sole also lifts to provide excel-



SPECS

LOA.....	33'
Beam.....	10'
Draft.....	28"
Weight.....	9,250 lbs.
Fuel Capacity.....	120 gals.
Power.....	Yanmar 260-hp
Base Price.....	\$225,000

rangertugs.com

lent access to the Yanmar. If you want to check fluids and belts, a small hatch in the salon provides access to the front of the engine.

A sizeable swimstep aft has optional patio rails and integrated fenders to protect the step from the odd backing mishap or dinghy dings. The step is large enough to accommodate two deck chairs or carry a dinghy on its side and extends the R-29 to 33' LOA. A bimini and side enclosures are optional to provide shelter from the sun or rain.

The cabintop features a mini-smokestack that houses a TV antenna, dual horns and a folding mast. The top comes standard with stainless rails on which you can mount Thule or Yakima carriers to accommodate recreational equipment such as kayaks and bikes. The side decks are fairly narrow from the aft cockpit to about midships, but these rails make excellent handholds when moving forward.

The R-29 comes standard with a 120-gallon fuel tank. A separate, 30-gallon tank is used for the genset, but a transfer pump can move the fuel into the main tank in case of emergency. There's also 70 gallons of fresh water and a 40-gallon holding tank.

The boat is designed to cruise at 12 to 15 knots and reach a top speed of more than 20 knots. At 9 knots and 2500 rpm, the burn rate is about 4.5 gallons per hour. Slower speeds mean greater fuel efficiency, and the R-29 has about a 450 nautical mile range at 7 knots. If that's too slow, however, you can trailer the R-29 and get there at 60 mph. About half of Ranger's customers order the trailer so they can be completely mobile, whether heading to Florida for the Intracoastal waterway or shooting south on the Great Loop. A permit is typically


required to tow, but with only a 10-foot beam and 9,250 pounds of displacement, no chase cars or special arrangements are necessary.

Demand for the R-29 is ramping up despite a tough economy due to its trailerability, livability, strong diesel and 28" draft, allowing access to shallow waters. The standard equipment list is extensive and includes an electric Lewmar 1000 horizontal windlass with controls on the bow and at the helm, a 2500-watt inverter, 12V refrigeration, and bow and stern thrusters that make the boat practically walk sideways and inspire confidence in any docking situation. Optional electronics include everything from an autopilot to the Garmin 5215 touch-screen chartplotter.

Ranger opened its doors nearly 52 years ago with a line of sailboats. In 1979, the company launched its first trawler, the pocket cruiser R-21, which was eventually joined by her very popular sister, the R-25, in 2007. The R-29 was introduced last year, and more than 30 hulls have been built to date. She's a popular lady, indeed.

With this, their third trawler design, Ranger has proven once again that less is more and introduced a strong, comfortable cruiser featuring many of the same amenities and qualities of a larger trawler—but with a base price of only \$225,000.

Between her size, which offers trailerable mobility, a lower cost of ownership, and the relatively flat learning curve to operate, you can shrink your budget, extend your cruising and develop confidence to venture farther and do more. Now those are some benefits worth marketing! ↓




ALERT:

VHS (viral hemorrhagic septicemia) discovery puts pressure on anglers to contain its spread
— Duluth News Tribune —

Simple steps of prevention to help ensure generations of healthy fish.

- Thoroughly clean and dry fishing equipment, bait buckets, boats, and trailers before using again
- Empty all water from equipment before transporting
- Remove all mud, plants, and aquatic life from equipment
- Do not move fish or plants from one body of water to another

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