



Ranger R27

A DO-IT-ALL 27-FOOTER THAT'S AT HOME ON ANY WATER

BY MIKE WERLING

Photos by Billy Black

THE RANGER R27 IS GOING to find a home with a wide range of boaters. Due to its size, capabilities, ease of use and rugged good looks, combined with modern building techniques, the R27 will appeal to boaters across several niches: first-time buyers, bargain hunters, longtime owners looking to downsize, longtime sailors who want to upsize or downsize into the power market, people with families, boaters looking to extend their boating life, tugboat aficionados, people who want to pay for a smaller slip, people who don't want to pay for a slip at all, snowbirds who want to cruise Lake Michigan during the summer and the Sea of Cortez during the winter. In other words, this vessel will appeal to a lot of buyers.

Ranger Tugs' founder, David Livingston, has been building boats and operating his company since 1958, and his son John is the company president. They know a thing or two about what boaters want

and need. And whether they possessed perfect timing or uncanny foresight, the Livingstons have found themselves in a good place, offering affordable boats during a recessionary period.

The latest addition to the Ranger line, the trailerable R27, fits in nicely between the R25 and the R29, both of which can also be stored on a trailer. Looking at it in its slip from my second-story perch, I noticed that it is reminiscent of old-school work tugs — a little squat with a snub nose and a just-past-center cabin whose windshield leans forward slightly, like the boat's eager to get to work. Growing up, I saw tugs ply their trade pushing barges around on the Mississippi River, and the R27 took me back to those summer days, though this boat is smaller and far too clean for the image in my mind.

This R27 has a red hull — a



departure from the standard blue — with a white roof and decks, a tan band that runs around the cabin and a red stripe on the roofline. Six windows comprise the windshield: four across the front and one each to starboard and port. There are two more windows on the starboard side above the galley and in the head, and another pair to port above the dinette area. Natural light floods the cabin through all of these windows. I also spied a solar panel from my observation point. That panel, according to Capt. Patricia Garfield, president and CEO of Farallone Yacht Sales and my captain for the day, generates 9 to 12 amps per hour. A small refrigerator, by comparison, burns about 3 amps per hour.

ON BOARD

The cockpit — 25 percent larger than the one on the R25 at 50 square feet — provides ample space for fishing or lounging and provides access to the cabin. Inside, you'll find a fairly typical layout for a boat this size, plus a little bonus. The standard galley, which is forward of the head and aft of the helm seat, includes a sink, refrigerator, microwave, combination propane stove/oven and an inverter. The head is equipped with a glass bowl sink, an electric flush toilet and a shower. Situated to starboard is the helm, with a Garmin display, an engine readout screen, a VHF radio, all of the engine controls (including a wireless remote control), anchor control and a DC distribution panel.

A raised dinette table to port seats

An Inside Look



TESTER'S OPINION
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Ranger designers made the most of every inch of space — inside, on the roof and in the engine compartment.



Ranger R27



SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	27 ft., 1 in.
Beam	8 ft., 6 in.
Draft	26 in.
Displacement	6,200 lbs.
Fuel	100 gals.
Water	40 gals.
Engine	Yanmar 4BY2 diesel, 180 hp

CONSTRUCTION

The hull is hand-laid solid fiberglass below and above the waterline, while the decks and cabin are cored fiberglass. A one-piece fiberglass stringer is laminated to the hull while it is in the mold, to prevent any deformities when it is extracted.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Yanmar 4BY2 180 hp diesel, four batteries w/charging relay and switch panel, two bilge pumps, high-bilge alarm, 6-gal. hot-water tank, electric head w/holding tank and dock pumpout, battery charger and inverter, dual-burner stovetop, bow and stern thrusters, 19-in. flat-screen TV, hydraulic trim tabs, VHF radio, two rod holders, seawater strainer, Fuel Flow data display, cabin heater, sports rack, shower in head and more.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Air conditioning, Garmin autopilot, cockpit carpet, diesel heater, Garmin navigation package, solar panel w/control panel, aft canopy Bimini top w/boot, wireless remote for thrusters, triple-axle trailer w/disc brakes, spare tire and EZ Loader, and more.

BUILDER

RANGER TUGS, Kent, Wash.; (253) 839-5213; rangertugs.com

WEST COAST DEALERS

Ranger Tugs Northwest, Kent, Wash.; (253) 839-5213; rangertugs.com

Farallone Yacht Sales, Newport Beach, Calif., (949) 610-7190; Alameda, Calif., (510) 523-6730; San Diego, (619) 523-6730; faralloneyachts.com

Port Boat House, Port Albemi, B.C.; (250) 724-5754; portboathouse.com

four easily on two benches, one of which can be adjusted to face forward or aft. The table is on a hydraulic piston and can be lowered to convert the space to a berth. Beneath the dinette area is a midship berth that can sleep two. At the entry point to the midship berth is the bonus: a small office with a desk and a foldaway chair. All the way forward and down a set of steps is a V-berth, with 6 feet, 5 inches of room at its deepest point, and plenty of space for two adults to sleep.

Getting to the bow takes some dexterity on the narrow sidedecks, which don't have side rails, but there are cabin-top grabrails to make the transit easier. There is also a hatch in the forward berth that provides bow access.

ON THE WATER

Remnants of a weekend storm were still making their way out of town on the morning of our test, so the sea was in a state of confusion. The waves looked like a kindergarten recess-time scramble for toys instead of a disciplined army platoon marching toward shore. Capt. Garfield didn't look the least bit worried.

"It's not a tippy boat," she said, "especially for a trailerable boat."

She was right. The flat bottom and hard chines work to limit the roll of the R27. When it did roll, which I expected given the water conditions, it righted itself immediately without overcorrecting, which was welcome news on a roiling ocean. The vessel stayed flat during turns, too, and took little more than the length of the boat to pull a 360.

The Garmin autopilot is a nice optional feature, especially when you consider the autopilot disengages at the touch of the wheel. No more wondering why you're turning the wheel but the boat isn't following orders.

We topped out at about 18 knots, where we burned 9.6 gph and hit 4000 rpm. That top speed will probably reach about a knot more in calmer conditions. At 16 knots, we were burning 9.2 gph and turning 3700 rpm. Fuel consumption

dropped to 7 gph at 12 knots and about 4 gph at 9 knots. I've seen tests with slightly higher speeds and lower fuel consumption, but they were conducted in calmer conditions.

Throughout the test, the captain and I maintained a conversation that had to increase in volume only slightly as we reached the upper reaches of the boat's speed capability. It's louder with the aft cabin door open but far from unbearable.

After a fair amount of time on the confused ocean, we headed back to Newport Harbor. Garfield took the opportunity to demonstrate the docking advantage offered by the standard bow and stern thrusters — at the helm and on the aft deck using the wireless remote. From either location, the R27 is simple to dock. And it can be turned around in tight quarters, because the thrusters spin it 360 degrees as if it's a top. The thrusters are among the features of the boat that make it a good fit for new boaters or captains uncomfortable with the confines of a new marina.

What impresses me about the R27 is the use of space on board. A 27-foot boat is going to have limitations, so it's up to the designer and builder to overcome those constraints. The midship berth and the office are two examples of the Ranger folks maximizing space. They also included rooftop storage that works around the solar panel, so owners can bring a few toys along. And the extra space in the cockpit will be appreciated by everyone who enjoys outdoor activities. Given the sleeping capacity, the galley equipment and the shower in the head, a couple could enjoy a week-long cruise, a family could make a weekend out of it or a group of friends could spend a day together.

The boat's price tag is going to attract consumers, too. It's a do-it-all 27-footer for around \$160,000 that can be towed and feels at home on rivers, lakes and oceans. The R27 fits in the Ranger line nicely and furthers the Livingston family's philosophy of spending time together on the water. 🍷