

Sabre 45



PHOTOGRAPHY: SALTY DINGO

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Built for the unforgiving waters off New England, the Sabre Salon Express range raises an interesting question – does that make them perfectly suited for Aussie boaters? **Arnie Hammerman** took the helm of Sabre's 45 Salon Express to find out.



Above and top: The half-down galley remains connected with the saloon area and the helm while also making for an easy pit stop from the master stateroom in the bow.

Opposite: Large windows and a single level main deck make for a bright and sociable sedan-style saloon with a warm, contemporary feel.



In some ways, Australia and the United States are – in boating terms at least – like distant cousins. Both have long coastlines, an abundance of different cruising areas, and populations that love to get out on the water. Because of this, many of the types of boats built in each country share similar traits, and as a result work well in both hemispheres – it’s one of the reasons Aussie-built models are so popular in the US. It was interesting, therefore, to take advantage of a post-Sydney Boat Show invitation to trial a US export to see if an American-built boat would meet the needs and expectations of discerning Australian boaters.

Sabre Yachts is a well-known American brand that has a long history of building quality boats – it actually celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2020. Sabre’s range, and that of its sister company Back Cove, feature a Downeast style based on commercial lobster boats – ‘Downeast’ being the term applied to the region of the far northeastern seaboard of the US, particularly up in Maine. The lobster boats are known for their speed and seaworthiness in the rugged conditions off New England, and Sabre’s recreational versions take full advantage of these qualities. In addition to their seakeeping capabilities, they also deliver cruising accommodation, amenities, and the fine woodworking that are hallmarks of Maine-built boats.

The Sabre 45 Salon Express sits right in the middle of the Salon Express range, but she possesses a couple of key features that give her the amenity of a much larger yacht. Her sedan styling with a single level main deck keeps everyone together while cruising, and the generous windows create a light and very sociable aft saloon area. Comfortable L-shaped seating behind the helm is complimented by a high-low flip-top dining table in cherry with a maple inlay. A three-seat portside settee sits on the other side of the aisle, although close enough to make use of the table. A flatscreen TV rises out of the forward panel for easy viewing from either lounge.

The helm sits to starboard at the forward end of the saloon area, and again the large areas of glass mean great all-round visibility for the skipper. There is the option for a second joystick station in the cockpit – potentially useful for stern-to mooring or perhaps for backing down on fish – but in truth, we didn’t need it on the test and it’s probably one of those nice-to-haves rather than a must to make up for poor accessibility or vision from the main helm.

The helm itself is well equipped, not only in electronics – twin Garmin 8617 multifunction displays provide access to chartplotting, fishfinding, radar and autopilot, as well as acting as Volvo’s glass bridge for engine gauges and data – but also in convenience and comfort. Twin Stidd helm chairs provide seating, while everything from drink holders to compartments for helm essentials is included. The helm



area also boasts two-metre headroom if you prefer to stand, as well as footrests for comfortable seated passagemaking.

Powered by a pair of Volvo Penta D6 IPS-600s, the 45 can be controlled by a joystick that conveniently folds down on the starboard armrest for easy access. A centreline overhead hatch allows for some fresh air, while a door to starboard means quick access to the side decks and foredeck – perfect for shorthanded mooring or anchoring.

The interior of our test boat was abundantly clad in beautifully turned American cherry, which speaks to her heritage while providing a bright contemporary look. The entire helm area and much of the rest of the boat is clad in satin varnished timber that provides a polished look and feel. It’s just one element of that overall combination of finish, performance and seaworthiness that translates so easily to any coastline. “Our customers are usually experienced boaters who are knowledgeable enough to understand the quality, workmanship and thought that goes into each Sabre or Back Cove,” says Jed Elderkin, Owner of E Marine Motor Yachts – Sabre and Back Cove distributors for Australia and New Zealand. “They appreciate the attention to detail and the beauty, strength, and versatility these boats offer.”

If you take the main saloon interior area at



If you take the main saloon interior area at face value, it certainly ticks all the essentials, but it also holds a secret.

face value, it certainly ticks all the essentials, but it also holds a secret that really augments the boat’s usefulness as a cruiser. A large hatch in the teak and holly veneer sole opens to reveal a spacious utility room nestled between the technical space aft and the accommodation bulkhead forward. On our test boat, this Aladdin’s cave housed additional freezers, a separate washer and dryer, and an optional Bluewater watermaker, and it still had plenty of room left for tools, extra pantry provisions, inflatable water toys and more.

The galley is located to port forward opposite the helm, and sits at a half level down a couple of steps – a half-down or half-up style depending on your optimism inclination. This style of arrangement can divide opinion,

AT A GLANCE

14.94m
Overall length
4.47m
Beam
15.7t
Displacement (fully laden)
32kn
Maximum speed



Above: The lobster boat heritage combines good performance with great seakeeping, perfect for day trips and coastal cruising alike.

but actually this one works because it is open overhead beneath the windshield and has good proximity to the helm and saloon. At over two metres long, the Corian galley counter has plenty of room for meal prep as well as a stainless sink, a two-burner Kenyon convection electric cooktop, and a microwave. There are drawers and cabinets for storage, and three Vitrefrigo drawer fridges. The galley’s position also means easy access from the lower-deck cabins, and is therefore ideal for grabbing a drink or a midnight snack, or for quick access to coffee in the morning.

Those lower-deck cabins comprise two staterooms and two heads, both with separate shower compartments. The guest cabin to starboard can be configured with twin beds that slide together to form a double. An opening hatch and a porthole provide light and fresh air, while a large cedar-lined hanging locker serves for clothes. If the views from the main deck or the cockpit prove uninspiring, a bookshelf and reading light allow for a little private relaxation. The cabin features a door direct to the head, which also has an external door so it serves as a combination ensuite and day head.

The master cabin takes pride of place in the bows, with a queen bed on the centreline seducing you for a comfortable night’s sleep. Twin overhead hatches, stainless opening portholes, a hanging locker, multiple drawers and cubbies help to create a feeling of space

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Whether out for the day or for longer cruising, the 45 delivers a lot of boat in an easy-to-manage package.

while still allowing plenty of room for personal effects, and abundant use of soft varnished, warm cherry gives the cabin a luxurious feel. Nightstand shelves with reading lights are a nice added touch, but don’t get in the way of access to the berth itself – a step up toward the front of the bed provides good side access and allows for easier bed making.

The Sabre 45 Salon Express may be well appointed and feature a high level of fit and finish throughout, but this is not a boat that has just been designed to look good – it has also been built to perform. True to her lobster boat heritage the 45 is fast. With a top speed of 32 knots it accelerates easily, its twin IPS-600s easing the modified deep-V planing hull from a dead stop to speed smoothly and with little or no perceptible hump to climb over. At a moderate cruise of 21 knots the 45 burns 88.5l/h, yielding a useful range of 360 nautical miles. At a fast cruise of 28 knots, consumption tips 130l/h but the calculated range with a 10 percent backup is still 319 nautical miles.

It’s not just in performance that the Sabre

45 shines – it is easy to handle, particularly with the IPS drives and joystick control for docking. The boat we tested turned a bit wide for my tastes at high speed, but this is a setting in the IPS drives that can be adjusted. Our test was performed inside the heads in Sydney Harbour so we didn’t get a chance to test her seakeeping abilities directly, but the hull sliced effortlessly through ferry wakes even with the optional Seakeeper 6 gyro stabiliser turned off – don’t forget this boat is built to handle the rugged waters off Maine.

The hull, topsides and transom are all vinylester resin-infused biaxial E-glass with Corecell closed cell foam cores and solid glass surrounding all through-hull fittings. The stringer system is foam-cored biaxial E-glass continuously bonded to the hull. The interior is stick built, meaning there is no moulded inner liner. These construction methods make the Sabre 45 lightweight yet strong, and the coring provides insulation from heat as well as sound. At wide open throttle we measured 79dB, and for comparison, normal conversation is around 60dB while the cabin of a commercial aircraft at cruising speed registers around 85dB.

The cockpit on the Sabre 45 is perfectly suited for both entertaining and relaxing. A SureShade silent glide retractable awning can provide sun protection at the touch of a button, while speakers for the Fusion Black Box System with a cockpit control station and Lumishore underwater lighting sets the mood by day and by night. A U-shaped lounge, folding teak dining table, wet bar with icemaker and an electric barbecue create a perfect secondary outside entertaining and living space when the weather is fair, and twin

Right: Single-level side decks, while narrow, give easy access to the foredeck.

accessways with stainless doors that lead to a swimming platform should you get the urge to cool off with a dip. Our test boat was equipped with an optional Freedom Lift davit on the swimming platform for an AB11 RIB with a 20hp Yamaha outboard – ideal for either trips ashore or exploring small coves or beaches.

After putting the Sabre 45 through her paces it is clear she has a lot to offer. The elegant yet simple good looks combined with the quality and diversity of her accommodations and her smooth, fast performance are impressive.

Whether out for the day or for longer cruising as a couple, a family, or with friends, the Sabre 45 Salon Express delivers a lot of boat in an easy-to-manage, finely finished package. So has the Downeast style transitioned well to our down under lifestyle? The answer, clearly, is ‘yeah’. Oemarine.com.au

SPECIFICATIONS ➔

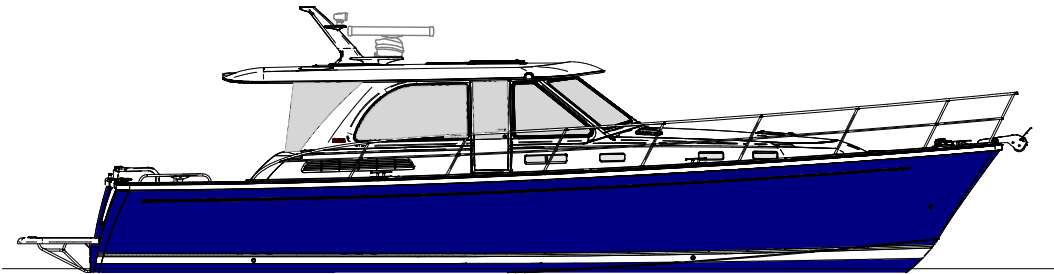


Sabre 45



1
WATERLINE PROFILE

Classic downeast lines refined by computational fluid dynamics software ensure a fast hull shape with excellent sea-keeping qualities and good fuel economy.



2
MAIN DECK

Interior is quiet, with a warm and luxurious feel thanks to high quality cherry joinery, helm seats and furnishings. Well sited galley. Extended cockpit shade a must for Australia.



3
LOWER DECK

Owner's stateroom forward with large island berth and bureau. Guest VIP stateroom has double berth that can slide apart to become twins. Utility room a real bonus feature.



SPECIFICATIONS

Builder	Sabre Yachts
Model	Sabre 45 Salon Express
Country of build	USA
Designer	Sabre Yachts
Naval architect	Sabre Yachts
Interior designer	Sabre Yachts
Year of build	2019
LOA (length overall)	14.94 metres
LWL (waterline length)	12.4 metres
Beam	4.47 metres
Draft	1.14 metres
Displacement (fully laden)	15.73 tonnes
Classification	ABYC, NMMA, USCG, CE cat B
Hull construction	Infused FRP
Superstructure	Infused FRP
Engines	2 x Volvo D6 5.5L Diesel
Output	435-mhp @ 3500 RPM
Propellers	Volvo Penta IPS T3

Drive train	Volvo Penta IPS 10-600
Stabilisation systems	Optional Seakeeper Gyro
Speed (max)	32 knots
Speed (cruise)	27.6 knots
Fuel capacity	1,688 litres
Range	323nm @ 27.6 knots
Freshwater capacity	562 litres
Blackwater capacity	244 litres
Generators (main)	Onan QD
Winches	Quick
Anchoring systems	Quick
Owner berth	Island queen berth with ensuite, separate shower
Guest berths	1 x twin (push button convert to double) with ensuite access to day head
Maximum people on board	14
Tenders	AB 11AL Tender with Yamaha F20 on Freedom Lift hydraulic cradle
Price in Australian dollars (landed)	AU\$ 1.7 million

32 knots
Speed (max)

27.6 knots
Speed (cruise)

1,688 L
Fuel capacity

323nm
Range (at 27.6 knots)

4
Guests overnight