

Freedom

The new Clipper 45 motoryacht combines traditional trawler handling with comfortable, economical cruising and relaxed passagemaking - all at a very reasonable price.

Words **John Eichelsheim** Photos **Mike Hunter**



At a glance > loa 14.8m > boa 4.35m > engine Cummins QSB 480hp turbo-diesel > cruise speed 9 knots > max speed 13-14 knots > cabins two, master semi-ensuite

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► price as tested \$995,000 **Test conditions** ► Hauraki Gulf, light winds and calm seas, incoming tide.

Clipper 45

key features

The tender is optimised for fishing and includes a canvas bimini for sun protection. Stainless deck rail unclips to deploy the dinghy using the ADC davit



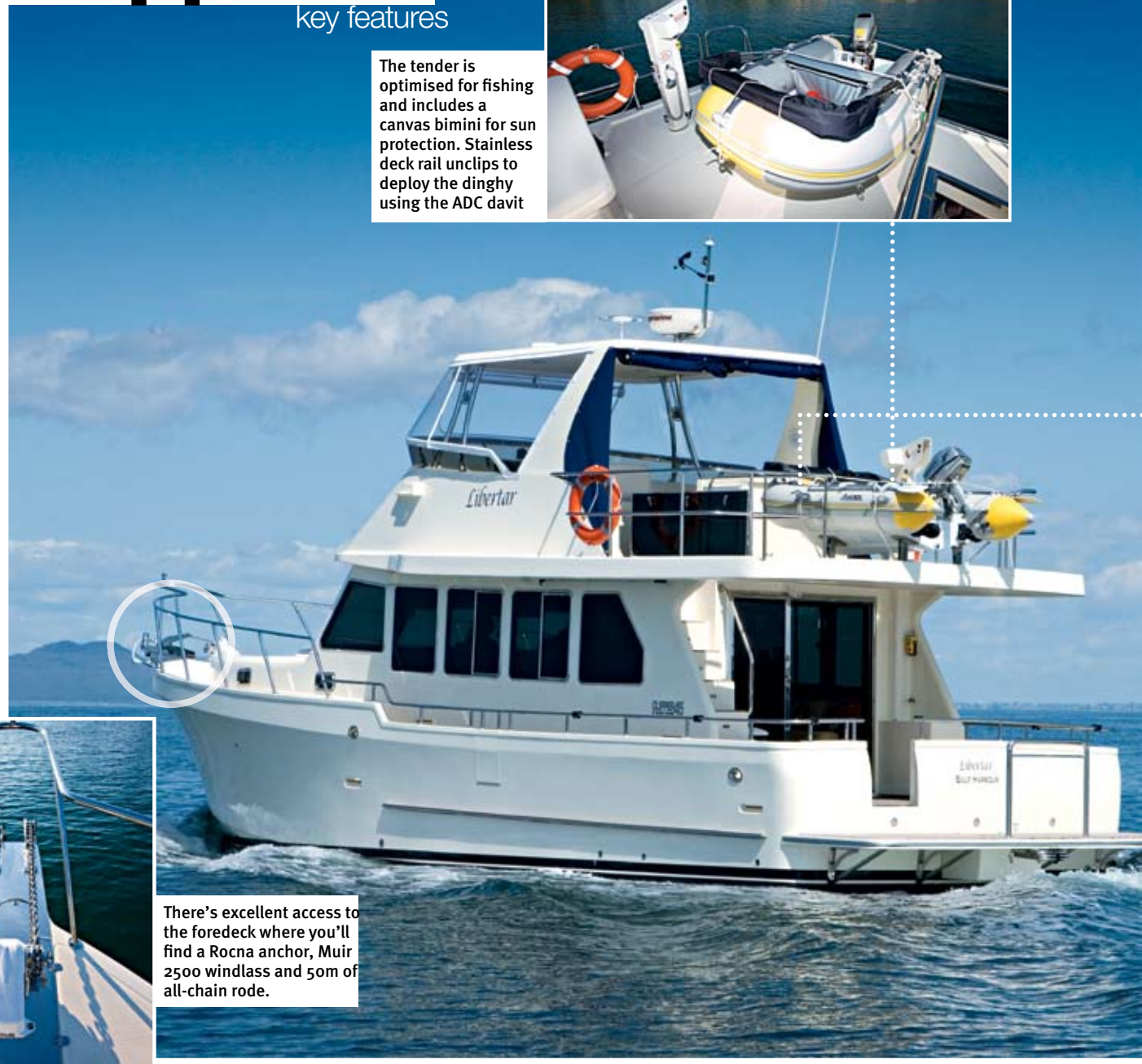
es and Sonia Shrubbs looked at a number of trawler-style motor yachts, including the smaller Clipper 40-footer, before settling on the latest Clipper 45.

In many respects, the Shrubbs are typical Clipper owners. Approaching retirement age, they are experienced boaters – they owned a Salthouse Corsair for many years – looking for a more relaxed boating experience in a vessel easily handled by two, with the space and the creature comforts they deserve, along with the ability to travel all day while burning just 35 litres of diesel per hour.

The Clipper 45 is a new boat in every way. She benefits from completely new tooling so she is straight and fair, requiring no filling and finishing. The mouldings are tidy and the fit between panels excellent. This boat's gel-coat is an attractive 'antique white', but new owners can choose from several other colours.

The owners opted for a single engine variant, but with enough power to ensure a reasonable turn of speed if required. This model is also available with smaller single engines, or twin engines if all-out speed is important, but the semi-displacement design operates best at a comfortable eight to nine knots cruise.

Interestingly, the owners increasingly found themselves driving their Corsair at these speeds in the interests of comfort, even though its planing hull was



There's excellent access to the foredeck where you'll find a Rocna anchor, Muir 2500 windlass and 50m of all-chain rode.



Boating's test day notes

Design brief

Designed as a trawler-style cruiser on a semi-displacement hull form, the Clipper 45 (14.8m with overhangs) will accept single or twin-engine installations. The stable hull reaches speeds in the mid-teens with sufficient power, but cruises economically at 8-10 knots. *Libertar* reaches 14 knots (light) with a 480hp Cummins. The layout emphasises cruising comfort, with twin helm stations, walk-around side-decks and a large, social upper deck.

Construction

Built in Ningbo, China, in solid, hand-laid GRP to CE specifications, dry displacement is around 16000kg. The hull features a full keel/skeg. Fuel tanks (2300) and water tanks (1200) are moulded GRP with FPA-approved gelcoat linings and baffles. Flybridge and decks are core-construction. Clipper builds boats for the world, with agencies all over the globe. Interiors feature quality fabrics, vinyls, teak and holly floors, and buffed teak cabinetry and trim.

Engineering

A single 480hp Cummins QSD 5.9-litre common rail diesel drives a large Hung Shen S-class four-bladed propeller via a 1.96:1 ZF gearbox and a 2.25-inch diameter shaft. A Side Power twin-prop bowthruster is fitted. The engine room under the saloon sole is spacious with easy access all-round, but lacks standing headroom.

Cockpit

The cockpit, at 3.97m by 2.45m (9.5m²) is a good size and its high, rail-topped gunwales wrap right around the boat. The 1.3m-wide swim platform has a retractable stainless swim ladder; a staple has been fitted here to accept a baitboard or BBQ. Teak decks extend right around the side decks, with plenty of stowage in the lazarette, which also houses an additional 120 litre Isotherm freezer. There's a livebait tank in the swimstep.

At the helm

Libertar is set up with the main helm on the flybridge, with important instruments and controls duplicated in the saloon. There's a custom tandem helm seat upstairs with optical clears and canvas drop covers to enclose the flybridge. The more traditional downstairs helm features a teak fascia, a built-in ultra-leather helm seat, teak wheel and sliding helm door. Visibility ahead from both stations is good; a docking camera improves vision aft.

Electronics

Cummins electronic controls and Smartcraft analogue gauges are found at both stations, with twin Raymarine E120 displays upstairs (a single E120 downstairs), Bennett trim tabs, Muir winch control (with chain counter), bowthruster controls, genset gauges, remote Jabsco spotlight, Raymarine autopilot, wind gauge and VHF. Electronics display a full range of engine parameters. Fusion stereo has i-Pod dock and remotes.



The upper deck is an entertainment centre complete with wet bar, refrigerator and an electric grill with stainless steel splashback. There's plenty of lounging room and weather protection from optical clears with a zip-out front panel



not at its most efficient at those speeds. It's a phenomenon Clipper Motoryachts New Zealand agent Phil Gilbert has noted with many of his customers.

"A lot of the time, especially in the Hauraki Gulf with its typically uncomfortable short chop, 8-10 knots is simply the best speed to travel. Trawler-style motoryachts are designed for these speeds and are much more comfortable and efficient than a planing launch travelling at displacement speed," says Gilbert.

For the owners, a large part of the Clipper 45's appeal is its opulent, traditional, rather woody interior. The saloon and cabins below are comfortably furnished in good-quality

materials and the standard of workmanship is generally high.

Most of their cruising will be as a couple, or with another couple, although they will also host their grandchildren. The walkaround layout and bulwarks right around the boat are extremely child-friendly, while the two single berths in the guest cabins serve equally well for a couple or the kids. A sistership features the ability to unite both guest cabin berths into a generous double,

while still being able to easily walk down the side of the bed. Another double berth can be created by pulling out the settee on the starboard side of the saloon. Squabs to fit are supplied as part of this feature.

The accommodation works well for them: the master cabin is generous with a queen-sized island berth, hanging lockers and plenty of additional stowage. The warm teak that dominates the cabin and much

Saloon

The saloon is really spacious and lighter than expected, courtesy of a full-width, three-stage glass and stainless saloon door aft and full-height side windows. Teak panelling, teak cabinets and charcoal-grey carpets sound a bit sombre, but aren't thanks to good use of light-coloured ultra-leather upholstery, vinyl headlining and LED and quartz lights. Pale cream roller blinds afford privacy day or night, with removable insect screens for all opening windows.

Galley

Libertar boasts a large, well-equipped, U-shaped galley with gas cooking (electric cooking is standard), teak cabinetry and Corian countertops. Serada Marine (NZ) supplied the SMEV four-burner hob, gas oven and grill, which were fitted in China. There's a 200-litre Isotherm fridge-freezer (with a second freezer in the lazarette), a large stainless steel sink and draining board, and two in-bench bins. Stowage includes L-shaped, wrap-around overhead lockers.

Accommodation

Libertar is a two-cabin design with a luxurious master in the bow and a generous two-berth guest cabin to port opposite the spacious, semi-ensuite bathroom. Cabins have cedar-lined hanging lockers, drawers and additional stowage. Décor is traditional. The starboard settee in the saloon extends to make a double berth. The bathroom features a separate shower cabinet, a Tecma electric toilet (400 litre holding tank). Mirrors give an impression of space.



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The upper deck is a very useable space, set up aboard *Libertar* as the main helm station. The adjustable twin helm seat sits on gas struts. Stowage under the settees and forward



The downstairs helm station has a traditional, woody feel, but visibility is good and the sliding side door is a useful feature



Clipper's New Zealand agent Phil Gilbert and partner Glenda enjoy the ambience of the Clipper 45's saloon. The settee on the right converts to a double berth



A large, well-equipped galley is a feature of the boat. Gas appliances were purchased in New Zealand and sent to China to be fitted. Overhead lockers provide ample stowage space with more available in two in-bench bins



Libertar's guest cabin features two single berths



All major helm instruments are duplicated downstairs

of the rest of the boat's interior will either appeal or it won't, but the owners love it.

The bathroom is shared, but you have the ability to lock one or other of its doors when in use. The large, separate shower keeps water away from the rest of the space and the Tecma electric toilet is domestic-sized for comfort.

A locker in the shower cabinet opens to reveal the helm station cabling and wiring, all neatly labelled and bundled, while another hatch under the bathroom vanity contains a valve directing toilet waste overboard or into the 400-litre holding tank.

We enjoyed a pleasant, sunny afternoon cruise to Tiritiri Matangi and then onwards to Rakino Island, where we dropped anchor in Woody Bay for sundowners, before a leisurely return trip to Gulf Harbour Marina.

On the way, we steamed up and down for the cameras, one overhead in a helicopter and the other aboard the *Boating New Zealand* photo boat.

While conditions were bright and sunny, we spent time on the spacious flybridge. It's accessed via an ergonomically raked and stepped stairway and a large stainless steel and glass hatch that closes off the flybridge from the cockpit when desired. Its fibreglass and vinyl is quite a contrast from the leather and teak down below.

The owners specified the flybridge helm station as the main control station, but Clipper Motoryachts' distributor Phil Gilbert, our host for the afternoon, reckons they will spend a lot more time driving down below than they imagine.

"It's just so easy, comfortable and social. Why sit up top alone, especially when the weather's a bit ordinary and you could be cosy and warm?"

Not that it's uncomfortable up top, far from it. The custom made tandem helm seat – the owners like to sit together – is supportive and adjustable, while wrap-around settees, a small triangular table, fridge/icemaker and a wet bar plus an electric BBQ makes the flybridge a logical place to spend time on a nice day.

Polished stainless steel pillars support a GRP hardtop, with optical quality clears all round and canvas drop covers aft to keep the weather out. The rear section of the upper deck cradles an Aakron RIB with a 5hp Honda outboard kitted out for fishing, and a 200kg SWL ADC davit takes the grunt out of deploying and retrieving it over the side.

On the other hand, the downstairs helm station is also inviting, with the bonus of

the galley opposite so a coffee or a cold drink is easy to arrange. The sliding side door offers convenient access forward or aft, as well as enhanced visibility while docking or at night.

A quiet boat overall, it was slightly noisier downstairs than upstairs, perhaps due to slight gaps around the lifting companionway stairs. In subsequent boats, Gilbert intends to either dispense with the under-stair engine room access altogether, or else improve the sound-proofing. Engine room access is already available through a hatch in the saloon sole, with the option of lifting the whole floor if required.

The engine room is a well-lit space, built to accommodate two engines if requested, so the single Cummins almost looks lonely, but access right around is exceptionally good. The engineering looks to be well executed too, with everything logically positioned and labelled for convenience. Four automatic/manual bilge pumps on float switches are strategically placed along the length of the keel and the engine room also contains Racor fuel filters, the 230V AC system, Webasto diesel heater, hot water cylinder, exhaust system and Seafire automatic fire extinguisher. The fuel tanks are mounted in either side of the engine room with the water forward of these.

Batteries – house and generator to port and starting, winch and thruster to starboard – a Victron Centaur battery charger and Hynautic steering gear are housed in the spacious lazarette, accessed through a hatch in the cockpit sole. Access stairs are fitted here and to the engine room.

GRP tanks either side of the engine room contain fuel (2300 litres), with water (1200 litres) forward. Fuel and water fillers are conveniently located on both sides of the boat.

Clipper has opted for a 2.25-inch propshaft rather than a two-inch model, which would have been adequate, and many other engineering components and fittings around the boat are also over-spec.

The boat is well-equipped in general, although it lacks a watermaker and her owners will use the super-quiet Onan genset (with split air/water exhaust) whenever 230-volt appliances are required, rather than relying on an inverter. Wash-downs fore and aft switch between freshwater and saltwater.

Endowed with masses of stowage, the boat swallowed everything the owners had aboard their Corsair, plus a whole lot more they had accumulated between



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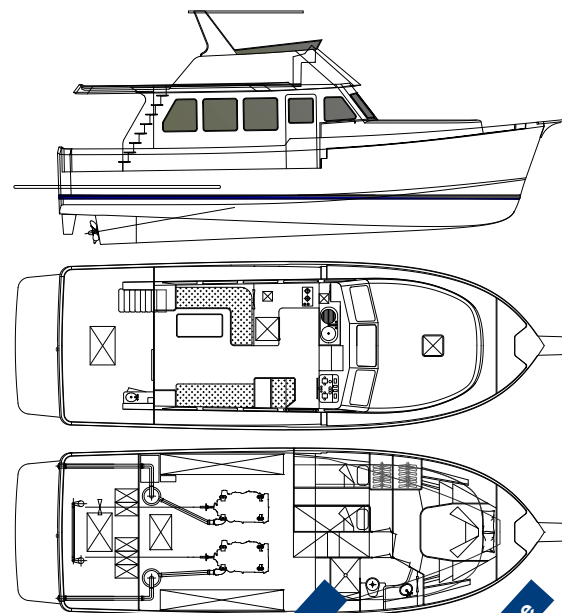


PROS

■ Semi-displacement cruiser; comfortable, roomy interior, traditional styling inside and out, modern electronics and engineering, economical and well-priced.

CONS

■ Semi-displacement cruiser, so not everyone's cup of tea! Cockpit overhangs not ideal for fishing (but keep out sun and rain), décor may be too sombre for some (light afromosia timber trim optional), single-screw configuration.



Engine data

(rpm)	(knots)	(litres per hour)
2250	8.0	30.0
2480	8.6	37.5
2590	9.0	41.0
3070	10.0	70.0
3220	11.3	84.0
3350 (MAX)	12.3	96.4*

*Speeds recorded pushing a run-in tide and with 1600 litres fuel, 1000 litres water and gear (heavy); speeds over the cruising range increased by one knot when going with the tide.

Clipper 45 - Libertar

► **loa** 14.8m ► **lwl** 12.5m ► **beam** 4.35m ► **draft** 1.0 ► **displacement** 16000kg (light) ► **engine** Cummins QSD 5.9-litre 480hp ZF 1.96:1 ► **gearbox** 2.25-inch shaft ► **propeller** Hung Shen four-blade S-Series ► **fuel** 2300l ► **water** 1200l
 ► **holding tank** 400l ► **cruising speed** 9.5kt ► **max speed** 14-14.5kt ► **price as reviewed** \$995,000 ► **designer** Clipper Motoryachts ► **builder** Clipper Motoryachts ► **agent** Gilbert Marine Ltd, phone 0274 923-374 www.yachtworld.com

boats. *Libertar* certainly didn't look overcrowded, although Phil was fairly certain that she weighed considerably more than her nominal 16-tonnes on test day, loaded, fuelled (1600 litres approx) and watered for her maiden cruise with her new owners, scheduled for the next day.

Based on a delivery voyage to the Marlborough Sounds aboard *Libertar's* sistership, Phil Gilbert expects at least 14 knots (light) and a range of around 700nm at cruising speed. On the delivery voyage, they averaged 9.5 knots with average fuel consumption of 35 litres per hour. The voyage was a doddle, even the lumpy bit across the shoal ground off East Cape, the boat impressing Gilbert with her stability and good manners in a seaway.

While they had nothing too ambitious planned for their first overnight voyage aboard *Libertar*, Les and Sonia fully expect to stay away for as long as six weeks at a



Sound levels

	Cockpit	Saloon	Flybridge
600rpm (idle)	62dB	59dB	N/A
2250rpm (8 knots)	79dB	72dB	70dB
2590rpm (9 knots)	79dB	72dB	72dB
3350rpm (MAX)	90dB	83dB	74dB
Saloon doors open, flybridge hatch open			

OUR VERDICT

Libertar impresses as a traditional trawler-style motoryacht: solid, comfortable and offering all the comforts of home. She's ideal for extended stay-aways, but also suitable for overnights and weekends, and is obviously her owners' pride and joy. With ship-like handling, plenty of volume distributed over two useable decks and a good compromise of cockpit, swim platform and interior space, she is versatile, well-equipped, well-priced and economical to run. Of course, you can't expect to reach the Great Barrier in two hours in a trawler motoryacht, but if you are in the market for a Clipper, that's probably the least of your priorities. For most Clipper owners the journey is as important as the destination, and the new Clipper 45 is certainly a comfortable traveller.