

tradeboat
QUICK SPIN
LUHRS 31
OPEN HARDTOP

PHOTOS: DAVID LOCKWOOD

Jim Burke has owned yachts, flybridge cruisers and sportsyachts before, but running those boats was making him weary. So he trawled the market and decided on a Luhrs 31 Open, with hardtop, with IPS drives, and with a lot less hassle. If the measure of a good boat is how often it's used, then Burke's hit on a winner. He now heads often more often than not.

"I was looking for a dayboat, a picnic boat, with enough creature comforts for the wife and I to do weekends on the Hawkesbury or Port Stephens. I don't go over 22kts and I'm using only 60lt/h.

It's just the best cruiser or powerboat I've ever had," says a boat-proud Burke, pointing to his personal touches.

Heading the list of attributes is ease of operation and, with the Volvo Penta IPS, Burke can easily dock his Luhrs 31 Open shorthanded. In fact, that's the whole idea. With the joystick on the bridgedeck, which is just a step away from the cockpit, you can slot the boat into its berth and grab the lines yourself.

Just as importantly, the boat has a big hardtop for plenty of shade, good seating on the bridgedeck for crew, amenities such as a big fridge to cater for long lunches and, as Burke points out, his lofty son, who stands

6ft3in (1.88m) tall can walk through the boat. Oh, and there are no steep ladders to trouble creaky knees.

Known for its bluewater fishing heritage, Luhrs have a big flared bow that ensures a dry ride. The sharp forefoot cuts the swells, while the IPS drives ensure efficiency. So if the bug bites, no worries, troll-up a tuna or marlin en route to your next day or weekend anchorage.

KITTED OUT COCKPIT

The marlin board, which is more often used as a swimming platform after having climbed up the foldout swimladder, adjoins a big marlin

DAY DREAM

An avid sailor grows tired of pulling the strings and running big boats. So he buys a Luhrs 31 with IPS drives and (re)discovers the joys of dayboating. DAVID LOCKWOOD reports





The owner adds a folding table to make his Luhrs fishboat a great family picnic boat.

QUICK SPIN



Iceboxes and livebait bins come in handy for fishing and family days.

HIGHS

- › Terrific agility thanks to IPS & joystick
- › Great hull with deep forefoot, stability and volume
- › A very dry ride
- › Excellent deck mouldings & nice lines
- › Engineering is really good
- › Low maintenance
- › Handy amenities and accommodation below decks
- › Good backing by a big American factory and local agent

LOWS

- › No hatch in head
- › Small microwave oven
- › Second-hand market diluted to some degree by imported craft

door leading into an Aussie-sized cockpit. Padded coamings make it pleasant when moving about, rodholders are fitted to the gunwales, and there are cleats below decks and through hawsepipes.

Being a bluewater boat, due consideration has gone into the plumbing and the self-draining deck is cambered with moulded gutters and non-skid finish. I also note fresh- and saltwater deckwashes, a handheld hot/cold deckshower (all you need for a weekend away), and moulded steps leading up to the wide sidedecks.

Backed by an aluminium bowrail, the huge flat foredeck could easily double as sundeck. Add beanbags and drinks bucket.

Underfloor are fish or drink boxes

with macerators and overboard drains, while a central hatch leads into the IPS drives linked by jackshafts to 3.7lt inline four-cylinder Volvo Penta IPS 350s. A day hatch offers quick access and there's servicing room aplenty. For more serious engineering checks, the floor lifts up.

Fuel is carried in wing tanks, the water is aft, the holding tank on the centreline, all the batteries are AGM types, the fuel filters are from Racor, and the inverter is a Xantrex model. Back near the IPS drives, there's scope to carry a rollup ducky, watersports gear, and so on.

LOADED FOR FISH AND FUN

At the division of the cockpit and bridgedeck are a big livebait tank,



sink and storage unit and, opposite, a separate oversized icebox that can be fitted with a eutectic plate as an option. Add generator and air-con if you like as well. With clip-on padded covers, these moulded units double as impromptu seats, while the hardtop has a canopy extension for additional shade.

Twin longitudinal lounges on the bridgedeck provide guest seating under the hardtop for four and, with a two-person forward-facing lounge

and swivel helm seat, at least six can travel aboard. The owner added a simple fold-up white table on which to serve the grub for as many.

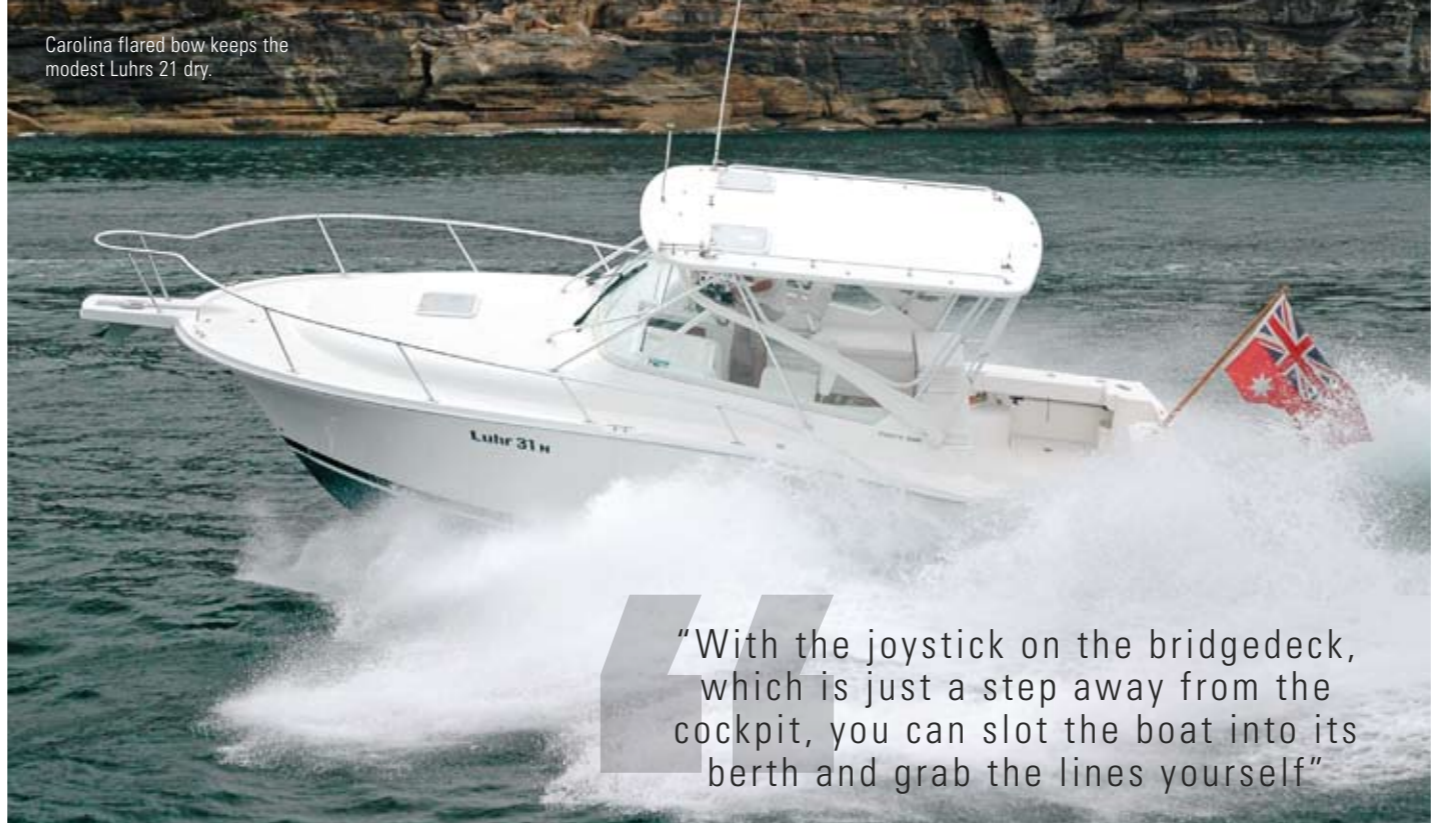
Storage exists under the lounges, in drawers, drinkholders, a chartlocker in the dash, and in aftermarket 'sticky' pockets that Velcro near the helm — another clever idea of the owner. With all the underfloor recesses, pleasureboaters won't be left looking for somewhere to put their personals, food and drink.

Above: The helm is a model of utility, with excellent vision through the deep windscreen. Reel in the sea miles while chatting with your crew.

QUICK SPIN



Thanks to an inverter, the microwave works away from dock.



Carolina flared bow keeps the modest Luhrs 21 dry.

“With the joystick on the bridgedeck, which is just a step away from the cockpit, you can slot the boat into its berth and grab the lines yourself”

The starboardside helm, meanwhile, is a model of utility. The Pompanette helm seat fronts a sturdy stainless steel wheel, with headroom to stand and drive, and plenty of ventilation thanks to clears. The raised bridgedeck, deep windscreen, and wipers also ensure good views when the seas aren't so kind.

I noted a Furuno depthsounder and GPS plotter, Fusion stereo, Muir chain counter for the windlass, twin Volvo EVC start panels and engine-control displays, electronic gearshifts, IPS Joystick, VHF radio and more. There was no autopilot as the owner prefers

to hand-steer on the short coastal passages. Thankfully, the drive is nice and easy.

WEEKENDER OPTIONS

While the huge Carolina flared bow is insurance for a dry ride, it also lends plenty of volume below decks where this boat has the space and kit to perform as a bona fide weekender. The aft galley comes with an albeit small microwave oven, that works off the 1800W inverter or Shorepower connection, a decent fridge, and good storage. The 189lt of water will suffice.

A huge subfloor storage locker can hold a pile of rods, with scope to carry six more under the vee-berth up front, and four over the bunks. That's an arsenal for tournament fishing. You might also hide a speargun down here, a yabby pump, and, when the cabin is locked, it's all safe and squared away.

The owner uses the aforesaid fold-down table from his cockpit for meals in the cabin. Après dinner, and with the supplied infill, the vee-berth in the bow converts to a double bed. Without it, you can sleep four on the upper and lower vee-berth bunks. The interior is also low-maintenance, with lift-out carpets, and wipe-clean, warm timber joinery.

The separate head includes a handheld shower — the cockpit shower is what you use on boats like

this — vanity with solid counter and storage, electric loo, and extractor fan. Last but not least, the sense of headroom is just great. It's really all very weekendable.

DAY DRIVE

The first Luhrs 31 Open we drove some years ago was fitted with twin 315hp Yanmar diesel engines with shafts for a 28.5-knot top speed and a lot less manoeuvrability. This twin 265hp IPS model really impressed with its top speed of 31.8kts, comfortable cruise of 23kts for 65lt/h, and joystick jiving at low speeds.

According to official figures, the boat uses around 3lt/nm anywhere from 19 to 27kts. QL trim tabs are provided to ensure the right trim through the rev range and to hold handy, low-speed cruise speeds when offshore.

The Luhrs 31 Open seen here was a boatie's boat, something you arrive at after having been on a number of other craft. Used often, this Luhrs is often seen touring the harbour. After a sunny Sunday or weekend away, the clean-up is a snap.

But with a bluewater heritage, the owner has taken his boat to Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens. With its twin engines and bluewater performance, the Luhrs 31 Open is a handy coastal cruiser. And you can fish from it. What else do you need?



Right: The Luhrs sleeps a crew and the vee-berth converts to an owner's double. Above inset: Flatscreen TV is a neat fit and out of the way.



QuickSpecs
LUHRS 31
PRICE AS TESTED
APPROX \$449,000 w/ Volvo Penta IPS 350s, and options

OPTIONS FITTED
 Volvo Penta IPS and joystick, Furuno gear, inverter, clears, cockpit bolsters, swim platform, windlass, and more

PRICED FROM
\$405,000 w/ Volvo Penta IPS 350s and joystick (subject to exchange rate)

GENERAL
MATERIAL: GRP fibreglass w/ balsa-cored sides and decks
TYPE: Deep-vee planing hull
LENGTH OVERALL: 10.47m
HULL LENGTH: 9.58m
BEAM: 3.61m
DRAFT: 0.76m
DEADRISE: 19° at transom
WEIGHT: Approx 6129kg (dry)

CAPACITIES
BERTHS: 2+2
FUEL: 1136lt
WATER: 189lt

ENGINE
MAKE/MODEL: Volvo Penta IPS 350s
TYPE: Inline common rail four-cylinder diesel engine w/ turbocharging and aftercooling
RATED HP: 250 at 3500rpm max.
DISPLACEMENT: 3.7lt
WEIGHT: Approx 800kg (dry)
GEARBOXES (MAKE): IPS drives w/ jack shafts
PROPS: Duoprops on IPS drives

SUPPLIED BY
BlueWater Power Yachts,
19 The Crescent,
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Phone: (02) 9029 6554
Websites: www.bpy.com.au;
www.luhrs.com

Below: With hot handheld shower, you can enjoy a rinse before bed.