

BAVARIA 42

The first of a new generation from Germany's most prolific builder



SVEN DONALDSON PHOTOS

Bavaria Yachts is a world leader when it comes to building wholesome, aft-cockpit yachts in an extremely cost-effective manner. As a result, its six-cruising models, ranging from 32 to 50', are consistently among the cost leaders on the Canadian new-boat market, despite a muscular Euro, the expense of overseas shipping and a 9.5% import duty.

Bavaria replaces every model in its mainstream cruising lineup on a three-to-four year cycle, and recently the bigger boats (42, 46 and 50') have had their turns. The 42 reviewed here is the latest in a sequence of similar-sized Bavarias—the 40 and 41. In terms of basic design parameters, the new boat is a little heavier than its immediate predecessor, but the difference is primarily due to a substantially heavier ballast keel, which results in a more stable yacht.

The Bavaria 42 is a sweet-sailing yacht with pace enough for enjoyable club racing.

It's wider in the stern (although by no means extreme by today's standards), and, thanks to its much-reduced bow rake, it picks up a couple of extra feet of sailing length. There are numerous improvements on deck—most notably the dual-wheel steering. However, the most dramatic changes are below decks, where a shift to larger windows, more hatches and skylights and a paler variety of mahogany for the woodwork add up to a brighter, more inviting interior.

DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION J&J Design of Slovenia has a long-standing relationship with Bavaria Yachts, thanks in large part to its skill in designing for efficient, high-volume production, particularly when advanced robotic machinery is involved. It also doesn't hurt that J&J has consistently

BAVARIA 42

LOA	13.05 m	42' 8"
LWL	11.8 m	38' 7"
Beam	4.02 m	13' 2"
Std. Draft		5' 11"
Opt. Draft		6' 11"
Ballast		6,614 lbs
Displ.	8,572 kg	18,898 lbs
SA (100% FT)	73.67 sq-m	793 sq-ft
Fuel	210 L	46 Imp. gals
Water	360 L	79 Imp. gals
Power		55-hp Volvo Penta

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crafted handsome, up-to-date yachts with fine sailing qualities.

Compared to earlier Bavarias, the new 42 differs little in terms of construction: foam-cored sandwich for the deck and topsides with Kevlar anti-collision reinforcements in the bows. Interestingly, the recessed, and solid fibreglass below the waterline cove in the topsides—a trademark cosmetic feature in previous Bavarias—is gone now, replaced by a plain, tapered stripe in dark blue gel-coat. Of course, the recessed coves had required special mold inserts and extra lay-up effort, so it's not too surprising to see them sacrificed in the interests of efficiency. All the same, they were an elegant touch.

All Bavaria models have a cast iron keel as factory standard, but boats brought to North America nearly always come with the optional lead performance keel which, for the 42, draws 6' 11". The deep, balanced spade rudder features a husky stainless steel shaft and self-aligning pendulum bearings.

EQUIPMENT One major asset in Bavaria's new 42 is the excellent dual-wheel steering system incorporating robust, low-friction chain-drive components produced by Lewmar/Whitlock. There is no detectable play in the linkages, and, despite the fact that two wheels swing together, steering effort is no greater than in a good single-wheel installation. A below-decks autopilot drive (optional) can be bolted directly to the back of the main steering gear housing.

Bavaria 42s are fitted with a Volvo Penta D2-55 saildrive unit (55 hp)—an exceptionally smooth, low-revving diesel based on the famous Perkins 4-108 block. The test boat loafed along at 6.2 knots turning 1,500 rpm, and 7.8 knots at 2,000 rpm. Wide-open throttle delivered 8.9 knots at 2,900 rpm. Sound levels (measured in the centre of the main saloon) remained surprisingly uniform across the rpm band: 70 to 72 dBA at cruising speeds, 73 dBA at full throttle. Pretty impressive, especially considering that the engine compartment sound-proofing left significant areas of bare plywood exposed.

The Bavaria gets top marks for painless engine access, thanks to a swing-up





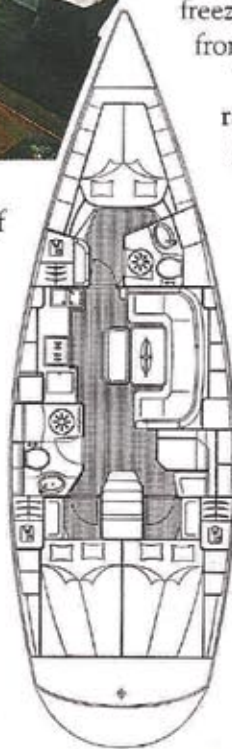
A major asset of the Bavaria 42 is its excellent dual-wheel steering system.

companionway (with gas support strut) and large removable panels port and starboard. Similarly, all stainless steel thru-hulls are conveniently positioned, as are the other principle plumbing system components. The standard electrical system includes two 12V refrigerators and plenty of interior lighting. The local dealer routinely adds a second 140 AH house battery, but many owners will still wish for more.

The Bavaria 42 is supplied with a Seldon, double-spreader fractional rig, Furlex jib furling, Seldon rigid vang, crank-up adjustable backstay and four self-tailing winches as standard. The Rutgerson genoa lead cars are adjustable under load—a worthwhile feature seldom seen on boats geared mainly to cruising. The stainless hand grabs on the cabin top are exceptionally tall and long—valuable safety features. Similarly, the recessed footwell area on the cabin top just ahead of the mast deck improves footing when conditions get rough. Incidentally, if teak decks are specified, this recessed area (as well as the side decks, of course) gets the wood treatment. Standard 42s have

molded non-skid on the rest of the deck is very effective.

ACCOMMODATIONS While some European production builders are offering elaborate “mix and match” options, the trend with Bavaria has been toward the opposite extreme. The only layout available for the new 42 is a three-cabin arrangement with two heads and a linear galley opposite the dinette. Naturally, if every



boat that rolls off the assembly line is identical, there's no need to build “to order”—a real advantage in terms of production and distribution efficiency. The downside? Linear galleys are more popular in Europe than North America, and some potential buyers favour one big aft cabin, even in a fairly voluminous 42-footer.

The linear galley arrangement is fine as long as the main cabin is wide enough to mount a bench seat opposite the dinette, which can serve as a backstop for the cook in rough weather. The galley offers plentiful counter and cabinet space as well as the luxury of two refrigerator/freezers, one top-loading and the other front-loading.

The large rear head (with separate shower stall) is just aft of the galley to port, while opposite is a full-sized nav station. Thanks to the two-person seating module between the galley and the dinette area, it's practical for six to dine in comfort, and at least 10 to cozy in for less formal socializing.

The symmetrical aft cabins are spacious and bright, with ample standing headroom in the entry/dressing area and good-size hanging lockers. The owners' cabin forward offers even more living space and an ensuite head.

As mentioned earlier, the





The full-size nav station is to starboard of the galley.

overall interior ambiance of Bavaria's latest 42 (as well as the new 46, 50 and upcoming 39 models) has been changed—and for the better. Replacing the relatively dark, variegated meranti woodwork is a lighter, more uniformly grained mahogany. The new veneer looks particularly good on Bavaria's trademark row of front-loading storage cabinets (which wrap nearly all the way around the living quarters, and in the access space required for fastening the hull/deck joint). When built in the old veneer, the contrast between vertical and horizontal panels was too pronounced, and the overall look too dark for my taste. Of course, a new style of substantially larger Lewmar windows, more overhead hatches and the addition of two fixed skylights are also a big help when it comes to brightening up the place.

UNDER SAIL Testing on a pleasant, late-winter day in an 8- to 10-knot breeze,

the Bavaria 42 displayed good, predictable sailing manners and a pleasant, almost effortless helm. The trial boat had been fitted with a beautifully customized, full-cockpit bimini, but even with strategically placed overhead windows it did make it harder to see and trim the sails.

Having dual-wheel steering, and hence the ability to sit and steer from well outboard, either to windward or to leeward, was a definite asset. Naturally, the dual-wheel arrangement is also a big help for walk-through stern boarding and swim grid access. The powerful mechanical backstay adjuster is operated using a winch handle that requires leaning awkwardly over the stern grid. A gang tack might look a bit less tidy, but it's quicker and easier to use.

The test boat sailed closehauled at up to 6.2 knots in about 14 apparent, tacked with alacrity, and accelerated well. Close reaching in much the same breeze, we saw 6.7 knots, and there's little doubt that with a folding prop in place of the fixed 3-blader, it would have topped 7. All in all, a sweet-sailing yacht with pace enough to make for enjoyable club racing if desired.

FINAL REMARKS No one buys a Bavaria as a display of individuality, but the fact remains these mass-produced boats are financially accessible to many who couldn't otherwise afford a yacht, offering comparable style, construction and amenities. The current sailaway price for a Bavaria 42 with optional lead keel etc., commissioned in Vancouver is \$275,900. For about \$36,000 less, the soon-to-be-released 39 offers a near-identical, albeit scaled-down interior and a very similar equipment package. No question, the folks at Bavaria have their eyes on the ball. ●