

The Best of
SPORTFISHING
Boats Tips Tackle

"Conditions were blustery, with confused 3- to 4-footers and occasional explosions of rain from above ... The Viking ate it up."

If you've been to any of the major American boat shows in the past few years, you have undoubtedly become familiar with the sight of the Viking 82 Convertible. Massive, sleek, and always prominently positioned, the boat is near impossible to miss. And with the highly anticipated 92 Convertible set to launch at this year's Ft. Lauderdale show, you could be forgiven if you were operating under the assumption that Viking is putting all its eggs in the big-boat basket. But that's simply not true, as evinced by the company's launch of the sisterships 42 ST (Sport Tower) and 42 SC (Sport Coupe) last year.

I recently tested the fishier version of the duo, the ST, off of Palm Beach, and was pleased to find a punchy, versatile sportfisherman with cruising and angling amenities to spare, a soft ride, and admirable maneuverability thanks to her Zeus-pod setup.

The 42 ST is essentially designed for three distinct purposes. One is as a tender, usually for an 82. In that case, the 42 is often used expressly as a fishboat, while the 82 acts as a mothership. One Viking client who uses his 42 as such actually uses the sizable amidships VIP stateroom for rod stowage exclusively. His captain sleeps in the master, and everyone else has a berth on the big boat.

Another way Viking sees its clients use the 42 is as a low-maintenance boat to be kept at a second home. With an LOA of 42 feet, 7 inches, the vessel is comparatively hassle free to clean, while also being the perfect size for cruising with friends, diving, fishing, and other activities commonly associated with waterside vacation homes.

Capt. Mike Hunter, Viking 56, Princess Lily



"WE GOT BACK FROM KEY WEST a couple of weeks ago. We fished the Viking 50th Anniversary tournament down there. So that kind of finished up our billfishing tournaments. We came in second—we were two fish behind, but we had four fish—it's just crazy. We had one fish that a boat wouldn't get out

of our way and ran over our fish. We had a kingfish come up and eat the cork with a sailfish still on, and broke the line. Then we had a double on and they both came up at the same time and the one fish crossed over and cut the line on the other. And so there's three out of four fish that we were hooked up with and it would have meant that we won the tournament. It's just part of fishing."

"WE DO A LOT OF LIGHT-TACKLE STUFF, you know, 20-pound stuff. My guys are into that more than the heavier stuff. If I did go blue marlin fishing I'd try to do it on as light tackle as I can get away with. I hate putting out 80-pound outfits and 50s. I'm from up north; I grew up in Cape May, canyon fishing, and you never know if you're going to catch a 40-pound white marlin or a 500-pounder will come into your spread, or a 200-pound bigeye. We hated putting all the big stuff out because it seemed like if you hooked something like a 60-pound yellowfin on a bent-but 80 there's no challenge to it."

"WE DO A LOT OF LIVE-BAIT FISHING. Kite fishing is our forte, but we did do a couple tournaments where we were trolling. Your mindset has to be a little bit different than either trolling or live-baiting."

"I'VE USED MY BAIT GUY for the last 15 years and it's kind of like he's as reliable as a generator would be. I don't have to worry. When I say I need eight dozen goggle-eyes tomorrow morning, it's there."

How About A Custom Rod?

There are all kinds of reasons why you should spring for a custom rod or rods, says Jack Tullius of



Black Bart International (www.blackbartures.com) in Riviera Beach, Florida, purveyors of custom lures and other products since 1966. "There's the feel of the rod," Tullius explains. "You know—the speed of the tip action, the precise amount of parabolic bend, the stiffness, all those sorts of things that'll make the thing truly yours and yours alone." But then, of course, there's appearance and, over the years, the rod builders at Black Bart have produced some truly spectacular, stunningly customized works of fish-fighting art. Check out this gorgeous bit of craftsmanship above as just one example. Those are lustrous wraps of green sea-snail shell between the feet of the guides. How much does such a custom, wholly individualized feature cost? The short answer, according to Tullius, is, "Lots." — Capt. Bill Pike

LOA: 42'7"
BEAM: 15'10"
DRAFT: 3'5"
DISPL.: 30,000 lb. (dry)
FUEL: 525 gal.
WATER: 120 gal.
TEST POWER: 2/600-hp Cummins QSC8.3 diesels w/ Zeus pod drives
TRANSMISSION: Zeus, 1.75:1 ratio
PROPELLERS: MerCruiser M9 countrarotating props
GENERATOR: 12-kW Phasor
BASE PRICE: \$995,000
PRICE AS TESTED: \$1,317,229

Small Wonder

EVEN THOUGH SHE'S THE BABY IN THE VIKING LINE, THE 42 ST PACKS A BIG PUNCH WHEN IT COMES TO FISHING AND CRUISING, AND YOU MIGHT JUST FIND SHE'S ALL THE BOAT YOU NEED. BY KEVIN KOENIG