

Good Things Come...

BENETEAU ANTARES 760

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GOOD THINGS THEY say, come in small packages. It's an old idiom but in the case of the Antares 760 from Beneteau, it is an appropriate and entirely accurate statement.

Most of us relate to the term 'bay cruiser' as a 30ft plus displacement vessel with an average speed of between 6 - 8 knots. After having been aboard this pocket sized cruiser, it is fair to say that Beneteau, quite unknowingly, have re-defined the term.

Here is a power boat - under eight metres with a diesel motor with shaft drive, fully protected keel, hard top, walk-around decks and accommodation for four people in relative comfort.

It is quite an amazing package. But the list of standard features doesn't stop there. This pocket cruiser has a bow thruster,

windscreen wipers, electric anchor winch and over six feet head height in the saloon.

But the best part, due to its 200hp Nanni diesel engine, is that it will run all day on the smell of an oily rag and has a top speed, despite its semi-displacement hull, of better than 20 knots.

If you think this is a new model from the famed French builder Beneteau, you would most definitely be wrong. Our test boat was hull No. 962 - that's right, almost 1,000 of these little gems are cruising all parts of the world.

After having spent some time aboard, it is not hard to see why these pocket sized cruisers are so popular, particularly among entry level boaties or those older salts looking to come down in size but not lose too many creature comforts.





If that is your requirement, then this is your boat. The point I have to continue to make is that the Antares 760 is under 25 feet yet it has features which are often not found on much larger cruisers.

Despite its size, the Antares 760 has a modest teak swim platform with a real swim ladder. A starboard transom door provides access to the cockpit. The cockpit has surprising space - although not voluminous by any means but still big enough for a table and chairs. The cockpit has self-draining scuppers, a sizeable storage locker under the deck, teak topped side coamings and steps to the side decks.

A gas canister is located in the starboard side step while stainless steel fairleads are located in the corner pockets with sizeable cleats below.

The side decks are genuinely recessed walk-around with safety rails extending aft to the saloon entry and grab rails recessed into the hardtop.

On the foredeck, Beneteau's designers have moulded a bow seat. There is a heavy duty electric anchor winch, stainless steel anchor channel and a Danforth anchor. The bow rails are split to provide access to the anchor and there is a surprisingly deep anchor locker.

The saloon too is a revelation in the clever use of space. A compact galley is positioned on the starboard side of the saloon just forward of the sliding saloon door while to port is a four seater dinette with a good sized table with raised lip and comfortable blue fabric lounges.

The dinette, as would be expected, converts to a near double bed and there is space below the lounges for luggage storage.

The galley is a complete work of art. Below a highly polished benchtop complete with raised lip is a twin burner gas stove, sink and tap combination, recessed rubbish bin and plenty of galley storage by way of drawers and cabinets. There are twin GPOs below the white laminate benchtop and a bottle cabinet under the helm seat, just forward of the galley.

In terms of ventilation, the saloon is well designed. The side windows slide and an overhead hatch also draws fresh air to the saloon. Privacy is achieved using wrap around blue curtains.



The starboard helm is simply styled with a cushioned leather bucket seat, a timber wheel with polished steel spokes and a timber grain dash. Instrumentation is basic but adequate using analogue gauges while standard electronics include a Raymarine A6 GPS plotter/sounder.

A Plastimo offshore compass is mounted above the dash while the throttle control is well positioned on the side wall for driver comfort. The Maxpower bow thruster is operated by buttons located on the starboard side of the dash.

Two massive windscreen wipers deflect spray from the large windscreen and it has to be said, overall visibility on the 760 is superb.

There is even a navigator's station to port complete with chart well. Access to the compact Nanni diesel is through a deck hatch - simply unclip the cream carpet and the hatch is exposed. Heavy insulation has been used to ensure a quiet ride despite the engine's diesel power. Irrespective of its compact size, the engine room is equipped with a fire retardant system.

All through hull fittings are solid brass and double clamped.

If nothing else, Beneteau's designers have excelled in the use of every inch of space to deliver a cruiser jam-packed with features. A small DC fridge is located under the helm and accessed from the companionway as are the electrical panel and sound system. Speakers have been positioned above the helm and navigator's station.

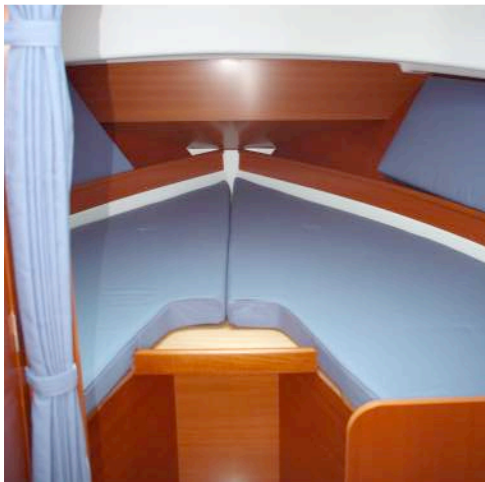
In terms of storage, there is a huge locker which extends aft under the helm, and positioned neatly between that locker and the vee bunk is another cabinet with a storage shelf above. The battery is located under the lower step while polished timber floors feature in the lower deck.

The vee berth has deep storage lockers and an extendable section to make the bunk a full double. Twin GPOs have been installed for when in port.

Timber rails on either side of the vee berth provide good side pockets with fixed portholes complete with clip-on modesty curtains. An overhead hatch provides adequate ventilation.

The head is located on the portside of the lower deck. It offers full head height, a





manual pump toilet, moulded vanity basin, circular wall mounted mirror and a raised timber floor panel in the shower.

A porthole allows ventilation to the head. There is however, one drawback and that is that the 760 does not come standard with hot water. It is an optional extra at \$2,400 which equips the boat with a heat exchanger and electric hot water system and tank.

The Antares 760 is a most amazing cruiser. Beneteau has designed and built a compact, sturdy and sea going cruiser which provides a level of fitout that would embarrass much larger cruisers.

This is no toy - it is a serious cruiser with lots of features which gives great assurance when on the water. Take for example, emergency steering gear, the fully protected

hull skeg, stainless steel rudder and manual bilge pump over-rides.

In terms of performance, this cruiser is a very capable performer. It runs flat and turns easily despite its full length keel. It can cruise at 10 knots at 2,000 rpm or more comfortably at 17 knots with the Nanni diesel showing 3,000 rpm on the clock.

Our test boat was fitted with a Yacht Club Pack which includes 240 volt AC wiring, bow thruster, anchor winch and mooring lines.

The Beneteau Antares 760 is undisputable proof that good things do come in small packages.

SPECIFICATIONS	LOA	7.60 metres (24ft 7")
	LWL	7.44 metres (24ft 2")
	Beam	2.75 metres (8ft 10")
	Displacement	8,760 kg
	Fuel capacity	220 litres
	Fresh water	95 litres
	Waste tank	88 litres
	Accommodation	4 persons
	Engine	Nanni 4.390TDI 200hp diesel Shaft driven four blade prop
	Cruising speed	10 - 17 knots
	Warranty	5 years Sail for Pleasure warranty
	Price as tested	\$173,000
Base models	From \$164,000	

Test boat supplied by
Beneteau Power & Sail, Queensland
Phone 07 5531 4230
www.beneteau.com