

Phil Pickin paid a visit to the Cheshire base of Wedgwood Narrowboats Ltd to look at the second Venetian 38 to enter the water



# Ugly Bette

**S**maller, starter narrow boats have become very popular of late and Steve Wedgwood and his team no doubt would have noticed this when they began work on their Venetian 38 range. Having recently delivered the first boat, Venetian Brokerage sold the second to a family from Staffordshire and they have just taken delivery of their new family boat (a first boat for them). The 38ft model

was originally built by Venetian Marine Ltd around eight years ago and currently Steve and his team are building the fourth so it would seem their popularity is growing well.

Being only 38ft, with a 27ft cabin means the design of the interior is critical to make sure that as much is made of the space and that you get everything in. But the design must also make sure the interior is not too cramped and, as far as I can see, they



would seem to have achieved this on the Venetian 38. The boat feels well laid out and very comfortable. The new owners of her only need accommodation for three people and this, it would seem, it would be able to provide this with ease.

### Stern deck

The stern of *Ugly Bette* (which she isn't) is sizable for a small boat like this. It provides plenty of space to helm and to sit and enjoy the view. After a few days in the wet the new owners might decide on a cover but it's not es-



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sential. Its equipped with bench seats on three sides and the forward bulkhead is equipped with the usual Vetus rev counter, hours run and fuel gauge. Access to the interior is via a couple of steps down to the cabin floor level. The stern deck plates cover the engine bay, which is fitted with a Vetus 32hp engine and all the usual equipment. Engine access is easy with plenty of room to get to the weed hatch and still leaving space for all the other tools etc you always need room for.

### **Bedroom**

Through the cabin door you come to the bedroom. This is fitted with a fixed double berth. The area is light and has a large double cupboard above the foot of the bed. At the head end is a shelf and beneath this is a handy reading light. The roof of the bedroom (as with the rest of the boat) is equipped with inset lights and speakers for the radio or Hi-Fi. The bed is at a reasonable height and provides a good amount of storage space beneath. This rear cabin can be closed off if required.

### **Bathroom**

Moving forward you find a door to the bathroom that is large for such a compact boat. There is a good amount of room between





the Thetford toilet, washbasin and shower cubicle. Good use has also been made of the space on offer to add storage to the side of the shower cubicle, which is fitted with a bi-fold door.

This looks very smart and makes a change from the curved acrylic cubicles all too common these days. The room has plenty of natural light from the square windows that are fitted throughout the boat. All told this is going to provide the family with all the facilities and room they will need for longer holidays and shorter trips afloat.

### **Galley**

As you move further forward you come to the main part of the accommodation, which includes the galley area. This has a decent sized worktop, round sink and matching drainer. The worktop is dark grey and L-shaped with the cooker taking up one arm. The cooker is a Caprice and a Beko fridge sits under one side of the worktop. Opposite the galley is a shelving unit, part of which forms one side of the stove surround. This unit also forms an ideal place for a TV. These shelves are a good useable size and are well positioned for the galley. When you take this storage area into account there is a lot of space here. A high level



locker compliments this over the cooker adding up to a great deal of storage space.

### Saloon

The seating area in the saloon is made up of two bench type seats running along both sides of the boat. These are 6ft 4in in length, as is the fixed bed at the stern. The focal point of the living area is the nicely designed unit, which incorporates a cupboard, TV shelf and the solid fuel stove set into a black tiled enclosure. This is good use of the space and provides an attractive piece of furniture as well. The two benches are upholstered in a rustic tweed-like material and forward of the left hand seat is a full-length wardrobe adjacent to the front double doors. These large doors open on to a small deck area.

### Outside

Externally the steelwork looks excellent and there are some nice

finishing touches. The paintwork also looks good with some customer choice of graphics and a large Venetian 38 logo toward the stern. The customers have also requested a double key-line around the panels, which adds to the overall attractiveness. The contrasting cream and green paintwork on the roof makes for a nice finish as well.

### Summary

*Ugly Bette* is a very nicely finished, well laid out and quite competitively priced boat. Internal surfaces are not too shiny making it look less harsh and brash. Solid oak flooring is also a nice touch. Steve Wedgwood points out that although it adds to the cost it's money well spent. He feels laminates scratch due to grit and eventually look tatty. The three quarter inch thick oak used on this one can be sanded if damage occurs. The £25,950 price quoted is for a lined hull with differing



options for heating, galley and bathroom all at an additional cost but, even adding these, the Venetian 38 would still seem to offer good value for money. This example had the option pack that included the solid oak floor and the bi fold shower door and the overhead locker in the kitchen. **C&R**



### MAIN SPECIFICATIONS

- Length:** 38ft
- Berths:** 4. 1 x fixed double. 2 x single bunk/seats.
- Internal cabin space:** 27ft
- Steelwork:** 10/6/5/4.
- Internal woodwork:** Oak.
- Power:** 240v ring to shoreline + 3 x heavy-duty batteries. 1 starter, 3 electrical power for cabin services.
- Engine:** 32hp Vetus.
- Heating:** Solid fuel stove.
- Price:** £25,950 (staring price).
- Contact information:** Venetian Brokerage & Chandlery, Venetian Marina Village, Cholmondeston, Nantwich, Cheshire C5 6DD. Tel: 01270 528538.



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