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WITH ITS MUSE 44, RODMAN HAS BUILT AN ATTRACTIVE, MANEUVERABLE YACHT THAT WILL GIVE YOU PLENTY OF IDEAS ABOUT WHERE TO TAKE HER.
BY KEVIN KOENIG

SOURCE OF





LOA: 44'0"
BEAM: 14'0"
DRAFT: 3'6"
DISPL: 29,000 lb. (dry)
FUEL: 350 gal.
WATER: 100 gal.
TEST POWER: 2/370-hp Volvo Penta IPS500s
TRANSMISSION: Volvo Penta
PROPELLERS: Volvo Penta T3 Propset
OPTIONAL POWER: 2/435-hp
Volvo Penta IPS600s
GENERATOR: 1/7.5-kW Cummins Onan
WARRANTY: 10-year warranty on hull, 5-year
warranty on blistering and osmosis
BASE PRICE: \$750,000
PRICE AS TESTED: \$928,000

Take a good hard look at that boat over there. Not a bad-looking boat at all right? “Sleek” is a word that gets tossed around a lot in the boating industry, maybe to the point where it’s lost some weight, but that boat right there actually is sleek, for real. Which is no small feat for a flying-bridge boat with a hull length of just 39 feet, 4 inches. Think about your own marina. There are probably quite a few boats that fall into the Rodman Muse 44’s class docked there. Do they look like this boat? My money’s on no.

There are a few key design features that help the Muse achieve her race-car look. One, to be sure, is the shape of her large, sweeping windows, which effortlessly draw the eye from the windshield to the cockpit, while also serving the dual purpose of flooding the saloon with light. Another feature that helps to elongate the Muse’s profile, is, ironically, an area of the boat that often dooms flying-bridge cruisers to life as a chunky-looking moonboot—the bridge deck itself. In this Rodman’s case, the deck is drawn back dramatically, which of course, not only helps the boat’s looks, but also provides lots of space up top. My test boat had a huge sunpad forward with a U-shaped dining area aft. Not to mention a starboard-side helm with a single Volvo Penta display and a soft leather wheel for additional chicness. She didn’t have a bimini top, but they are available, and highly recommended if you’re as pale as yours truly.

I’m sure you noticed I mentioned Volvo above. That’s another reason the Muse has such a low profile. Her relatively small 370-horsepower Volvo Penta IPS500s allow for a more efficient use of space on the accommodations level. The forepeak master has an island queen, and though its portlights are small, the cabin becomes bright enough once the shade covering an overhead hatch is pulled back. A surprisingly large en suite head should serve this

INSPIRATION

► See more images of the Rodman Muse 44
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boat well in the American marketplace, while a pullout makeup table in the aft wall is another nice touch. Two identical cabins with twin berths to port and starboard are amidships and make for more-than-adequate guest accommodations, in particular because of their large lockers and a cozy feel imparted by the tasteful walnut woodwork that permeates the deck.

Those twin berths in the guest staterooms can come as kings, and the Muse's galley, which was forward and up two steps from the main deck on my test boat, can be put down below. Otherwise the boat's layout is standard, though finishes, woods, and other aesthetic stylings are up to the customer. One happy result of this standardization is, of course, lower prices. The Muse 44's base price is \$750,000, and nicely spec'd out, like my test boat, she comes in around \$100,000 more. And she's a lot of well-made boat for that kind of money.

Her hull is hand-laid and Divinycell-cored in Vigo, Spain, where Rodman has been turning out all manner of vessels—industrial, military, fishing, and cruising boats—for about 40 years. All that experience really shows in a number of places, not the least of which is the Muse 44's immaculate, one might even say creative, fit and finish. I already noted the supple leather on the upper helm's wheel, but there are other leather accents throughout that let it be known someone cared for their craft as they built her. My test boat's galley had a fridge, microwave, and a two-burner Kenyon induction cooktop—all standard fare. But what I really liked were the soft leather straps on the cabinets that acted as handles. That's not a detail you see on a lot of boats, and it helped lend an air of laidback elegance to the Fulvio De Simoni-designed interior.

At the lower helm, a single Volvo Penta screen was surrounded by carbon fiber—more likely chosen for aesthetics than for its feathery weight. A magnetic compass just forward of the wheel was an old-school, and frankly refreshing, touch. The sightlines here are nearly panoramic, save for the aft bulkheads, thanks to the aforementioned large saloon windows. One gripe I did have was that there wasn't a whole lot of headroom at the wheel. I'm 6 feet tall and had trouble standing up straight. That's no doubt a sacrifice made to keep this boat as sleek as she is, and one that may very well be worth it, but I admit I initially had my concerns about how it would affect the sightlines, particularly in tight turns.

Fears averted. The Muse 44 proved to be an exceptionally well-balanced boat. I assume this has a lot to do with her single, centrally located 350-gallon fuel tank. Hardover at speed, I spun her to starboard in 2½ boatlengths, but never lost the view of the horizon out the side windows when double-checking for other boats. (Hardover turns to port were a bit wider, at 3½ boatlengths, not unusual depending on how the pods were calibrated.) The boat also trimmed out well thanks to her highly effective Interceptor trim tabs.

Unfortunately, the seas didn't cooperate on test day. This means something totally different to me than it does to you. The ocean was essentially lake flat, with an ever-so-slight wind chop, so it was hard to get a feel for how the 44 would do in rougher water. However I did put to use the wake from all those turns I was making, and the boat ably sliced through the turbulence without so much as a shudder. With the hammer down the Muse hit a top hop of 27.2 knots, while



Note the expert leatherwork and light, airy ambiance in the saloon thanks to those panoramic windows.

clocking a cruise just over 21. While those numbers are nothing to sneeze at, I'd like to see what this boat could do with the optional IPS600s, and their attendant 130 more horses, since the acceleration was frankly just a bit sluggish for my taste.

At slower speeds I was able to nimbly pirouette the cruiser in neat little circles, and moonwalk her back and forth and side to side using the Volvo joystick and Vetus thrusters—not inconsequential when you take into account the 10-knot breeze.

While I was doing all of this, the pirouetting and the hardover turns and the hammer-down speed runs, we were within a few hundreds yards of the 240-foot ADM-built megayacht, *Plan B*. One by one the crew lined up on the portside rail to watch the little show we were putting on. And even from their rarified vantage, I'd have to guess they liked what they saw. □

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Under the Hood: Within Reach

Maybe the best thing about the Muse 44's engine room is the excellent access it affords the owner. A large 6-foot-by-5-foot hatch in the cockpit means you don't have to wriggle through any tight openings, and once inside, it was easy for me to get to everything. The engines and the 7.5-kW Cummins Onan generator, yes, but also the fire-suppression system forward, and both the wiring for the Interceptor trim tabs and the lines for the optional hydraulic swim platform along the transom bulkhead. It's a nice little feat of engineering that Rodman was able to do this on what isn't a particularly large boat, and that's something you can chalk up to the nautical know-how gleaned over a 40-year existence making boats.



NOTEWORTHY OPTIONS: 48,000-Btu A/C, \$17,895; hydraulic swim platform, \$28,018; automatic Interceptor trim tabs, \$13,691; teak sole on flying bridge, \$4,215; wheelhouse searchlight, \$865

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	RANGE	dB(A)
650	4.0	.6	2100	61
1000	5.7	1.9	945	65
1500	7.9	4.8	518	65
2000	9.8	11.0	281	69
2500	13.1	20.0	206	71
3000	20.3	28.0	228	76
3300	27.2	41.0	209	77

TEST CONDITIONS:

Air temperature: 79°F; humidity 30%; seas: 1' or less; load: 170 gal. fuel, 25 gal. water; 3 persons; 50 lb. gear. Speeds are two-way averages measured w/ GPS display. GPH estimates taken via Volvo Penta display. Range is based on 90% of advertised fuel capacity.