

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 (2011-)

Brief Summary

The Swift Trawler 44 is intended for coastal work, inter-island exploration, and serious cruising -- all done by a couple. This twin stateroom, one-head boat weighs 24,019 lbs. (10,895 kgs.) and is powered with twin Volvo Penta D4 300-hp diesel engines. She comes equipped with most of what is needed to get the dream started and her price is designed for baby boomers ready to retire.

Price

Base Price

Prices, features, designs, and equipment are subject to change. Please see your local dealer or visit the builder's website for the latest information available on this boat model.

Key Features

Updates for 2014

- Change of color at fly helm
- Change of fabrics for exterior upholstery
- New color on galley top
- New design for ceiling storage at helm
- Fusion audio equipment
- Additional electronic options including reverse aft cam and thermal cam
- Additional fridge in galley
- More vented doors in saloon
- New head with separate shower stall for owner

Test Results

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
700	4.2	3.6	0.6	6.92	6.01	2297	1997	62
1000	6.6	5.7	1.1	6	5.22	1993	1733	62

RPM	MPH	Knots	GPH	MPG	NMPG	STAT. MILE	NM	dBa
1250	7.8	6.7	1.8	4.31	3.74	1430	1243	65
1500	9.2	8	3.7	2.49	2.16	826	718	64
1750	10.3	9	5.05	2.04	1.77	677	589	67
2000	11.5	10	7.9	1.45	1.26	481	419	68
2250	13.4	11.7	10	1.34	1.17	445	387	72
2750	19.5	16.9	16	1.22	1.06	404	351	73
3000	22.6	19.6	19	1.19	1.03	394	343	76
3250	26	22.6	22.5	1.16	1	384	334	76
3500	28.6	24.8	26	1.1	0.95	365	317	78
3600	29.4	25.6	28	1.05	0.91	349	303	79

[View the test results in metric units](#)
[beneteau_swift44_chart.jpg](#)

Specifications

Length Overall	45' 6" / 13.87 m
BEAM	13' 11" 4.24 m
Dry Weight	23,957 lbs. 10,867 kg
Tested Weight	

Draft	3' 5" 1.04 m
Draft Up	
Draft Down	
Air Draft	
Deadrise/Transom	N/A
Max Headroom	6' 6" 1.98 m
Bridge Clearance	N/A
Weight Capacity	
Person Capacity	
Fuel Capacity	370 gal. 1,401 L
Water Capacity	169 gal. 640 L
Length on Trailer	
Height on Trailer	
Trailer Weight	
Total Weight	
Aft Deck	
Salon Inside Width	

Salon Fore & Aft	
Salon Height	
Salon Volume	
Galley Volume	
Master SR Width	
Master SR fore & Aft	
Master SR Overhead	
Master SR Volume	
Eng. Room Volume	

Acceleration Times & Conditions

Time to Plane	6.3 sec.
0 to 20	
Ratio	N/A
Props	N/A
Load	3 persons, full fuel, 0 water, minimal of gear
Climate	61 degrees, 66% humidity, 0-5 wind, calm seas

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By Captain Steve Larivee

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

Even at planing speeds, the 44 handles like a lady, responding quickly to the helm to side-step pots. At close quarters she's even better... able to be docked, and secured, single-handed.

Mission Statement

The Swift Trawler 44 is intended to be a capable coastal cruiser for one or two couples or a family, that is also affordable to buy and economical to operate. That means she has all of the basics done right but she has not been lavished with expensive extras and materials that only add to price, and not to functionality or utility. She is designed to be easily handled by a cruising couple and she can be easily single-handed for deliveries. The Swift Trawler 44 with her standard twin 300-hp diesel engines will cruise comfortably anywhere from 17 to 23 knots or so, without much penalty in fuel consumption. But the Swift Trawler 44 can also be operated slowly, and then she has significant range. So what's different about the 44 vis a vis the old 42?

Vive la Différence

The 44 was designed as a replacement for the 42, a fine boat, but one which could be improved upon once feedback came in from owners willing to share their best ideas. One of the commendable things about Beneteau as a boat builder is its drive for perfection. Rarely have I encountered a boat builder that is so good at what it does, but is also so open-minded about making a good thing just a little bit better – even though it costs a lot of money in re-tooling.

The Changes in the New 44

After closely comparing the old 42 with the new 44 I have found nearly two dozen meaningful changes. Essentially what Beneteau did was to make the boat's deck and superstructure asymmetrical – and thus break with nautical tradition that dictated that everything had to look identical on both the exterior port and starboard sides. The result was a wider salon and more headroom below on the port side where the guest stateroom was re-located. This allowed the Swift Trawler 44 to have in the guest stateroom two single berths adjoining to make a queen-size berth, as well as providing more standing headroom at the entrance to the cabin.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

The Swift Trawler 44 has a trawler profile but her performance is very un-trawler-like. On the main deck the port side door was eliminated and the U-shaped galley was significantly enlarged. Further aft new stowage was installed and with the wider house more people could be seated at the dining table aft. With extra cabin width, there was room for a fold-out double mattress in the sofa. The 44 can comfortably sleep six. On the flying bridge the settee was moved aft and a companion seat was added next to the helm chair. All of these changes and many smaller ones have made the Swift Trawler 44 even more comfortable and functional with relatively minor compromises.

Distinguishing Features

There are a few features that separate the Swift Trawler 44 from the competition and from conventional trawlers. Let's take a look at some of them.

- **She has rounded front windows and narrow mullions.** In fact, Swift Trawler seems to have the smallest mullions in class. This serves to greatly improve visibility.
- **She is lighter than most boats in this class.** By clicking on the "Compare" button at the top of this report you'll easily see the difference.
- **All side windows are opening.** Other builders use the glass to help support weight and don't want the added expense of opening windows. Not so here.
- **It's a small thing but not many get this right.** All light switches are where you'd expect them to be. All too often, I enter a stateroom and have to search in the dark for a light switch that ends up being next to the berth. I've yet to see a boat from Beneteau that doesn't have a switch right next to the door, whether it's a salon, cockpit, or stateroom.
- **Her bow profile is distinctive,** reminding me more of a navy patrol boat than a typical trawler design.

Performance Figures

As for performance, the twin 300-hp Volvo Penta D4 inboard drive diesels pushed our test boat to a top speed of 25.6 kts at 2600 rpm. At that speed we were burning 28 gph for a range of 303 nm. Best cruise is purely conjecture as the range decreases fairly linearly as you continue to add power. If I had to come up with a number though, it would be 22.6 kts at 3250 rpm. At that speed the fuel burn is 22.5 gph which translates into exactly 1 nm per gallon. That makes a great number for determining your endurance on any fuel remaining, and all calculations can be done in your head. Just be sure to subtract 10% of your remaining fuel as a safety margin before determining how far you can go. The 44 had a respectable time to plane of only 6.3 seconds and we reached 20 mph in 8.5 seconds.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

A look at the running gear and some of the more pertinent dimensions of the Swift Trawler 44. "Flotation" being the distance above the waterline.

Handling

The handling characteristics of the Swift Trawler 44 are outstanding. This is one aspect of the 42 that was not tampered with, and for good reason. The 44 has a fairly deep keel that offers protection against grounding, but it is not so large and long that it degrades turning performance. That is thanks to it being cut away about 25% of the way forward of the transom. The keel design and the size of the bronze rudders afford excellent responsiveness to the helm, whether in gear or not. Couple all this with her hard chines and you have a sense of the stability that the 44 offers, and even when I attempted to get heavy-handed, she wouldn't have any of it, remaining docile and comfortable throughout. Acceleration was also comfortable. By that I mean that it wasn't enough to toss everyone and everything to the stern, but still enough to get us on plane in short order with minimal bow rise. There is a very "shippy" feel to the helm of the 44.

Docking

I had full controllability when backing. I did some experimenting as the test boat was not equipped with the optional stern thruster and you won't need it. I left the helm centered (thank you for the rudder angle indicator at each helm) and steered back with just the gears. In this manner I found the 44 to be incredibly responsive to the individual engine inputs and I was able to back with surgical precision. I used the bow thruster just once to push against the dock before stepping off and tying up the midships' line.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

A huge swim ladder has wide treads and grab handles to either side. Notice the beefy rubrail surrounding the platform as this is the first point of contact with an errant captain at the helm. In the right corner where the platform meets the transom is a quick-connect hose bib.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

Shore connections are in the transom to port and I'd like to see them behind a recessed door for protection from the elements. Generator exhaust is to the left. Check out those beefy rail supports.

Features Walkthrough

Boarding the 44 is via either the swim platform with its transom door to the cockpit, or through the bulwarks door to starboard midships. The swim platform is 1'5" (.44 m) off the water while the bulwarks door is 2'6" (.75 m) off so either will suffice from a floating dock but the platform lends itself more to boarding from, or disembarking to, a tender.

Swim Platform and Ladder

From the stern, the swim platform measures 11'2" (3.40 m) by 3'3" (.99 m) and has two compartments. To port is a deep storage area, self draining and large enough to hold fenders and lines, or just about anything

else you'd like to put in there. To starboard is a recessed re-boarding ladder that appears large enough for a larger boat because it is. It's the same ladder as on the 52 (yes I looked, the 52 was right next door). This ladder has four steps, and wide treads as well as a full length grab handle to either side. You could probably climb aboard while carrying the booty from your dive, as well as the tanks on your back. My only gripe is that the hatch over the ladder is massive and hard to lift, and must be especially so from the water. Beefier gas assist supports would easily solve that problem and shut me up.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

Stairs to starboard on the aft deck lead to the flybridge, and under the steps is storage for the propane tank that feeds the galley stove and oven.

Aft Deck

A transom door is to starboard and a 12" (30.5 cm) step gets you to the cockpit. Two deck hatches allow access to lazzerette storage, steering gear, and the optional 11 kW generator. The extended overhead is 6'8" (2.03 m) high and really adds to the functionality of the aft deck. The entire area can be closed in with isinglass curtains that attach to tracks on the inside of the overhang, which ensures that rainwater won't collect when they are rolled up. This provides more three-season living space, plus creating a good-sized boat deck above. Our test boat had optional L-shaped seats over to port that were easily removable. There is also room to move the table from the salon, out to the aft deck for al fresco dining.

Flying Bridge

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 Flying Bridge

The 44 has a roomy bridge deck with a boat deck aft. In the center is a mast with winch for launching the tender. The access to the deck can be closed off with a lockable Lexan hatch.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 Flying Bridge

The entertainment center offers space for an optional grill. There is an optional refrigerator below and to the left, to the right is storage large enough for a carry-on cooler.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 Flying Bridge

The starboard seat forms a chaise lounge at the forward end making a relaxing ride right next to the captain. Notice the Beneteau logo'd drink holders in the center of the table.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 Flying Bridge Helm

The bridge is nicely equipped with a C90 display, autopilot, and digital engine controls. Note the companion seat at left. I'd like to see the compass on the centerline of the steering wheel hub, but the position of the nav screen is perfect for both skipper and companion to see and adjust.

The flying bridge on the 44 is roomy enough to have a party. Lots of opposing seating surrounds a wood table and all seats have storage underneath, as you would expect. The optional Bimini top is 7'1" (2.16 m) off the deck and extends fully forward over the helm. Aft it extends just to the boat deck. That boat deck measures 11' (3.35 m) in length, and I see no problem with placing an inflatable of that size on the deck and letting the outboard hang off the back end past the rails. A mast with crane makes launching a simple affair, if not a single person affair. With the aft deck empty, as on our test boat, it was easy to picture blankets and beach chairs occupying this space on a sunny day. To starboard, abaft the covered companionway, was dedicated space, and secure points, for a liferaft.

Notable Cruising Options

Before I get too far along, now would be a good time to discuss some of the options that make this an ideal cruiser. There are two option packs available, and I can't imagine a Swift Trawler 44 customer not considering at least one of the first two.

- The first is called *Avantage* (French for “advantage”). It offers the cruiser the mast and crane on the flybridge, searchlight, speakers on the bridge, a C120 display at the lower helm, C90 at the upper, the ST70 autopilot with flybridge repeater, and pre-wiring for TVs in the salon and two staterooms.
- Then there is the *Elegance* package (which our test boat had). It includes all the above features with the addition of a pump for deck washing, shore fresh water supply, and a refrigerator on the flybridge.
- Finally there's a separate electronics package consisting of a digital 4kW radar and the Ray 240E VHF with DSC and AIS.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 windlass

A Lewmar windlass, plow anchor, and all chain rode are optional. While you can opt for teak decking I liked the low-maintenance of the fiberglass non-skid. The teak pulpit makes a nice highlight to the white deck.

Side Decks and Bow

Decks.

Back to the tour and we take a brief look at the side decks, which as stated earlier are asymmetrical. A door aft, hung on the starboard side of house, blocks off the weather to the aft deck. Teak decks are optional for the foredeck and port side deck. The boarding gate makes for an easy transition to the dock, which I found useful when I tied up single-handed.

Fuel Fill.

A set of steps just ahead of the boarding gate make a nice place to conceal the fuel fills, and I don't know why more builders don't do this. All spills are nicely contained and there's no mess left behind. Close off the step and you're back to a neat and clean area with no muss or fuss. (I've picked on other builders before for missing the opportunity to do this, so it's nice to see it done here.)

On the Bow.

The bow had nice high rails at 29" (73.7 cm) and they're also quite beefy at 1.5" (3.81 cm) thick. Our test boat had the optional anchoring kit and I noticed the pulpit can be opened up to allow a transition to a quay if you pull in bow first. This is a common method of egress in Northern Europe, at least, and we suspect with more builders opening up the bow pulpit it might become popular in North America as well. There were two hatches to either side of the windlass allowing you to manage tangles but I'd like to see the addition of windlass controls at the bow. Currently the windlass is only controlled from either helm. All cleats are 16" (41 cm) and chafing strips are just outside.

Salon

As we head to the salon, a triple pane set of glass doors opens double wide to the left or right and also locks in the center position. A sofa lies to starboard with a credenza type storage unit to port. The storage accommodates the air conditioning unit below, and the ship's electrical panel above. All windows are opening via sliders for ventilation. Behind the sofa is more storage with bottle holders included. Our test boat was pre-wired for TV in the salon and two staterooms.

Beneteau and Swift Trawler Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 Salon

The glass doors open double wide bringing the outside in. Deck chairs go to port making seating for five or six.

The salon sofa converts to a berth in one of the easiest methods I've seen. Just pull a handle and out it comes. When fully deployed, there's still sitting room for your overnight guests to have a place to get ready for turning in. Curtains and window blinds afford privacy. Of course to deploy the berth you have to remove the table, and we sent it to the aft deck, in front of the L-shaped bench seat. This meant we still had a gathering area while the bed was being made up. Access to the forward staterooms can still be through the salon or the side door with the bed opened up.

Galley and Helm

Beneteau and Swift Trawler Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 Galley

A U-shaped galley offers more room than the previous version and accommodates the usual amenities.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

The fridge is across from the galley under the helm seat. Notice how the helm seat cleverly flips forward to add a little bit more serving area for large meals.

The galley is to port and opening windows offer ventilation when cooking. Our test boat was fitted with a gas stove and oven, but a microwave can be swapped out in place of the oven. A double basin sink aids in dish washing but you can also opt for a dishwasher. At the end of the sink cabinetry is a trash bin. The 34 gallon (130 L) refrigerator is to starboard, under the helm seat, only one step away.

Helm

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 Helm

The well-equipped lower helm station is simple and uncluttered. Notice the beautiful finish on the wheel. The 12" (30.5 cm) display is on a wedge with storage behind.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 with flip down step at helm

This flip-down step is a brilliant addition that so many builders just can't seem to grasp. For us short captains, it makes a world of difference, and high marks to Beneteau for including it. Notice how the footrest, to use when seated, doesn't intrude on the space behind the helm.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 backing

When backing into a tight slip, I had full visibility of the whole starboard side while still keeping my hand on the controls. The bow thruster control is just to the left of the engine controls.

The lower helm station offered great visibility, and although I had all-around sightlines from the flybridge helm, this is still where I preferred docking from as I could just step out onto the dock and tie up single-handed. The 44 helm features a double-wide helm seat with flip-up bolster. The large windows have defrosters and wipers with integral washers.

Lower Deck

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

The wet head has opening portlights, a pull-out shower nozzle, and a teak deck drain.

As we transition to the lower decks, the stairs have storage underneath as well as easy access to the fuel shutoffs and fire suppression system.

The Staterooms

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

The master stateroom in the bow has the usual accommodations for storage, with the added space accessible under the berth. The island berth is slightly tapered at the foot to ease getting in along the sides.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

The guest cabin is to port and has a relatively large standing area compared to the old 42 for changing clothes and getting ready for bed, which must be crawled into.

Both cabins have opening portlights. Since the generator is located under the lazzerette and abaft the engine room, nights at anchor should be nice and quiet while remaining climate controlled in the tropics.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44 engine room access

Accessing the engine compartment takes a little effort as the table must be moved to the aft deck. Sound protection is excellent, as you can see under the hatch.

Engine Compartment

With the table removed, and the carpet pulled up (if there is one), we had access to the engine compartment. This is much the same method as on the Swift 34. I remain concerned that having to remove a table, which really takes two people, and a carpet, might make daily engine checks too much of a chore for some people. Perhaps a walkthrough to the machinery space from the lazarette, a la the 52, could be employed here as well.

Beneteau Swift Trawler 44

The engine room is a bit cramped but functional and well organized. As you can see, there's no shortage of sound reduction here.

Once inside the compartment, there is easy access to the space between the engines, and a bit cramped access to the sides. I'd like to see additional lighting here as the only lights were well forward. Wiring runs were neat and orderly as well as easily identified. All hoses double clamped and the sharp edges of the clamps were protected. Most noticeable was the very thick sound protection. Because of this protection I measured only 79 dBa at full speed in the salon, which still allowed for easy conversation.