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# INSIDE OUT

## THE NEW BENETEAU GRAN TURISMO 46 BLENDS OUTSIDE AND INSIDE SEAMLESSLY.

**Q**UESTION: HOW DO you use all the indoor and outdoor space aboard the new Beneteau Gran Turismo 46? Answer: Any way you want.

A cross between an express boat and a motoryacht, the GT 46 is “from-the-hull-up” new, and though it replaces the existing GT 44, its transformation has been so complete there’s really little comparison. The new design blends the inside and outside so well, passengers will barely notice they’ve stepped from one to the other.

Boat builders often use the same hull to create new models, stretching or shrinking the overall footprint, tweaking the deck and maybe rearranging the layout. And there’s nothing wrong with that, but it does make one appreciate when a boat gets a real makeover, hull and all. Such is the case with Beneteau’s newest Gran Turismo, the GT 46, which looks different from the bottom up.

Beneteau incorporated the new and improved AirStep2 hull, which reduces friction between the hull and the water by injecting air from vents along the hull sides. It creates an air cushion under the aft one-third of the hull, reducing “stickiness” and therefore fuel consumption, and allowing the boat to accelerate faster. The new version channels air to the midsection and back out at the transom as before but without the need for air intake tubes.

### ON DECK

The vessel’s profile has changed too. The GT 46 now has two rows of glass on the

sides of the cabin house, a stacked effect of windows that makes it lighter inside but also adds a bit of weightlessness to its overall appearance. The windows and the enormous sunroof open electrically, all of which make the boat feel like a convertible. The mullions at the sides of the uninterrupted windshield are narrower now, which helps with visibility, but when the boat is in a tight turn and heeling, the skipper will still have to duck and weave to see if someone is coming from the side.

The new cabin house gained a redesigned and clever access door. Instead of sliding or hinging, two glass-and-stainless doors open via a system that is best described as an accordion gullwing. The system brings both sections of the door outboard and completely out of the way, opening up what looks like a motoryacht into what functions like an express boat.

With the doors open, two attached ottomans pivot outward and aft to form a straight settee to port and an extended L-shaped lounge to starboard and perfectly combining the inside with the outside. Although it’s an \$8,000 option, this door feature defines the dual character of the boat and is one I wouldn’t skimp on.

Another option is the electric lounge aft. Built into the transom, two fully electric seats are like forward-facing Barcaloungers that will be the place everyone fights over.

And adding to the party atmosphere, there are 15 cupholders between the helm, salon and cockpit — one for every person who can find a seat aboard.

Unlike the GT 44, which had a serpentine path between the helm and the swim platform, the new GT 46 makes the transition a more direct journey, and that’s because the outdoor galley was moved aft. Beneteau borrowed a concept from its Monte Carlo line and incorporated a full galley module into the transom. The chef stands on the oversized hydraulic swim platform and works at the Kenyon electric grill and sink, keeping the heat and smoke of dinner out of the boat. (There is an option to replace the electric lounge chairs and the galley module with a large aft sunpad.)

Below the galley module is a good-sized stowage locker for fenders, lines or water toys. Of course that means the dinghy garage disappeared, but that’s not really a loss. When it’s not being used as a teak beach, the four-foot-wide platform carries the tender. Because it descends below the waterline, it’s easier to load the tender onto the integrated chocks than it ever was to wrestle it into that garage. The platform is another \$30,000 add-on, but again, it defines the new functionality of the boat, so it’s really a no-brainer option.

Forward, Beneteau enlarged the bow sunpad and added two backrests, which are raised manually. There is also plenty of room on the forward deck for anchoring work that’s managed by a Lewmar windlass with a tethered Quick remote. A stainless steel rail runs from the bow to the cockpit, but starting at about the cabin house, it gets rather low. For safe transit aft, you’ll do better reaching for the handhold that is subtly integrated into the rooftop and runs all the way to the cockpit.

**The door between the cockpit and the salon opens wide to give the entire main deck an outdoor feel, especially with the side windows and sunroof open. Below, the galley is functional, and the bed in the VIP can be one berth or two.**



## ➔ TESTER'S OPINION

- A cross between an express boat and a motoryacht, the GT 46 is “from-the-hull-up” new, and though it replaces the existing GT 44, its transformation has been so complete there’s really little comparison.

➔ SPECIFICATIONS

- > LOA 48 ft., 6 in. > BEAM 13 ft., 9 in.
- > DRAFT 3 ft., 9 in. > DISPLACEMENT 23,208 lbs. > FUEL 238 gal. > WATER 106 gal.
- > POWER Twin Volvo Penta 435 hp diesels
- > PRICE (as tested) \$832,000

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

Twin Volvo Penta 375 hp engines with IPS drive, bow thruster, hardtop, Bose speakers, electric toilets, 7 kw Onan genset, 775 aH batteries (engine and house banks) and more.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Volvo Penta IPS 600 435 hp, Simrad electronics package, Lowrance StructureScan sensor, hydraulic swim platform, remote control for swim platform, electric lounge chairs, patented sliding glass doors, underwater lights, cockpit A/C, VacuFlush heads, anchoring package and more.

BUILDER

Beneteau, France; beneteau.com.

WEST COAST DEALERS

South Coast Yachts, San Diego; (619) 224-7784; scyachts.com.  
South Coast Yachts, Newport Beach, Calif.; (949) 673-1607; scyachts.com  
Passage Nautical, Point Richmond, Calif.; (510) 236-2633; passagenautical.com  
Passage Nautical, Oakland, Calif.; (510) 864-3000; passagenautical.com  
Denison Yacht Sales, Seattle; (206) 686-5400; denisonyachtsales.com

PERFORMANCE

| RPM        | SPEED (Knots) | GPH  |
|------------|---------------|------|
| 750        | 5.1           | 1.3  |
| 1000       | 6.2           | 2.0  |
| 1500       | 8.7           | 5.8  |
| 2000       | 10.4          | 12.0 |
| 2200       | 12.8          | 15.0 |
| 2400       | 15.3          | 17.2 |
| 2600       | 17.4          | 22.2 |
| 2800       | 21.0          | 25.6 |
| 3000       | 23.8          | 27.5 |
| 3200       | 27.3          | 32.3 |
| 3400       | 30.1          | 38.0 |
| 3625 (WOT) | 32.7          | 44.8 |



ERGONOMIC COMMAND STATION

The helm seat is offset to starboard, and that’s where those narrower mullions really help the driver see better. Amidships is a double companion seat, which will work well for two child-sized behinds or a largish adult one. Both seats have flip-up bolsters, so the captain can drive standing up. On our test boat, the Ultraleather upholstery was a two-tone espresso/mocha that complemented the cream upholstery of the aft settees.

A single 16-inch Simrad NSS multifunction display was front and center above the leather-accented wheel. A digital display for the Volvo Penta diesels, the bow thruster control and four arrays of rocker switches were on the main dash, with the engine throttles and joystick atop the console outboard to the right. In its entirety, the dash is massive, covered in part with a textured surface and also with two tones of brown paint that cut the glare below the large expanse of windshield.

LIFE BELOW

I entered the boat via a portside curved companionway and descended into the galley and salon area. Here’s where the boat retained much of its similarity to the GT 44. The indoor (and main) galley is still to port and has a large standup refrigerator and freezer tucked behind an Alpi-wood door with a slightly different walnut-colored finish. (An optional Isotherm refrigerator for drinks is up in the cockpit built into the portside hull.) The microwave hides in an overhead cabinet on the centerline and is a bit too far overhead for safety, in my opinion. A two-burner Kenyon ceramic cooktop, twin sinks and a number of stowage lockers



complete the interior galley. A half-height partition between the galley and the U-shaped salon settee to starboard is wired for a flat-screen TV.

Because the new hull is almost a foot wider, there is a bit more space in the open floor plan. Our test boat had the two-cabin, two-head layout, but a third cabin with over/under bunks is an option. That will make the interior feel a bit cramped, but when, if ever, would people sit at the open lower settee given all that great indoor/outdoor seating above.

The VIP cabin is forward. The overhead hatch seems a bit small for a stateroom of this size, but two round opening portlights in the hull sides bring in added light and air. The centerline queen bed splits into two by picking up and swinging the ends outboard at the foot. The forward head is also the day head for guests, and it has a nice-sized separate shower stall.

The master is aft and includes lots of headroom at the foot of the bed. So much, in fact, that the overhead hatch that looks up at the underside of the windshield is fixed because nobody could reach it anyway. To starboard is quite a lot of stowage space inside long inline outboard lockers; a small lounge takes up the port

side. Like most full-beam master suites, this cabin gets its light and air from fixed hull-side windows and small inset opening ports. In hot climates, owners might need to run the air conditioning at night, since there is no overhead hatch.

TEST DAY

The GT 46 has IPS pod drives and joystick control. In Europe, buyers can get the boat with 370 hp Volvo Penta D6 engines with stern drives. However, U.S. boaters prefer pods on boats larger than 40 feet, so in the States at least, the GT 46 is powered by twin 435 hp Volvo Penta IPS600 diesels with IPS drives. The effect is a smoother shift, especially when using the joystick at the dock. Access to the engine room is below the cockpit sole, and there’s decent access forward to the 7.5 kw Onan genset and aft to the pods. In the revamp, the GT 46 gained almost 1,000 pounds, which is not that much considering that it’s wider and carries a massive swim platform.

The GT 46 is a fun boat to run, because it’s spry. Four holeshots consistently showed the GT 46 coming up on plane in nine seconds at around 16 knots of boat speed. With minimal bowrise, the horizon was visible throughout the acceleration curve. At the top, we came just shy of 33 knots (44.8 gph), but a nice cruising speed was at 2800 to 3000 rpm and 21 to 24 knots (25.6 to 28 gph). Once the boat was on plane, the engines consistently delivered 0.8 nautical miles per gallon.

No matter how aggressive I tried to get, the boat took gradual, even turns. And although there were a few hard bounces when we crossed our own wake, overall it resulted in little drama. (Our test was on the flat water of San Diego Bay, but running into a three-foot chop, the boat may experience some pounding.)

Slow maneuvering with only the engines was adequate, although they seem to be too close together to really produce a good response in turns. On the other hand,

joystick maneuvering was pure bliss. Clean side slides were accomplished by pushing the stick left or right and then adding a slight twist to engage the bow thruster. That way, the push of the powerful engines doesn’t overpower the movement of the bow. The GT 46 is the kind of boat that inspires confidence when docking, and I wouldn’t mind doing it all day for practice, even with an audience. Beneteau broker Scott Young of South Coast Yachts made child’s play of squeezing into a ridiculously tight spot.

HOW DOES IT COMPARE?

The base price for the GT 46 is \$610,000. Delivered to the West Coast, commissioned and fully loaded with most options, down to underwater lights, our test boat came in at \$832,000, which is about \$200,000 more than its well-equipped predecessor — not an insignificant increase but then again, it was not an insignificant metamorphosis. 🍷