

Mainship History

The Mainship History

The history of Mainship Boats Corporation dates back to the 1830's and a German immigrant by the name of Henry Luhrs. His entry into the Marine trade began by supplying ships in the harbors of New York City. He eventually came to own his own chandlery and even his own ship, which he named the Sophia R. Luhrs.

From these humble beginnings sprang a vibrant and thriving business called the Henry Luhrs Sea Skiff Company. As the business grew, Henry's sons, John and Warren became involved and soon the company was producing over 1200 boats a year.

Under the guidance of their father, the brothers were very successful. Warren, being an accomplished sailor knew they could adapt their building philosophy to sailboats and Hunter Marine was incorporated in 1973. Hunter is now known as the largest sailboat builder in North America.

The international fuel-crisis gave a huge wake-up call to boat builders, and John and Warren saw opportunity in building an economical, single diesel cruising boat that a family could afford.

Mainship Boats Corporation was formed in 1977 and soon outgrew the existing facilities. A new plant was built in Marlboro, NJ and was home to Mainship Trawlers until 1992 when it was moved to St. Augustine, FL. Over 1200 of the traditionally styled cruisers were built before Mainship Trawlers began building a European inspired line of cruisers in 1988. The new boat line did well for several years, but Mainship Trawlers real destiny was to return to the trawlers that made them famous. In 1994, the first new Trawler, a 35' sedan was introduced and the market accepted the new breed with enthusiasm.

Mainship Boats Corporation [was] the leading manufacturer of production trawlers building 6 different models with many more on the drawing boards. Production is split between the St. Augustine facility it shares with the reacquired Luhrs Corporation and a new facility in Midway, GA.

Mainship Trawlers, along with its sister companies in the Luhrs Marine Group, [was] an employee ownership company that filed for bankruptcy in 2012 and was bought by Marlow Yachts. Current models are produce and sold as [Marlow - Mainship](#)

Mainship 1997 34 MY -

I only know they were produced during Mainship's hiatus from the trawler world, which lasted roughly circa 1990-1998 or so (give or take, plus or minus). The first Mainship boats were produced by Silverton (Mainship wasn't a separate brand then), in Marlboro NJ. The story as I understand it is they acquired some 34' downeast/lobstah-boat-like hulls, finished them as sorta-kinda trawlers with single diesels, found them popular, so they made and sold a boatload. Augmented by similar twin cabin (aft cabin) models, 36' and 40' I think, usually with twin gas engines.

Then eventually Mainship became it's own company, a separate subsidiary of Luhrs Group. That did not happen prior to 1987 -- our '87 34' MK III was built by Silverton in Marlboro -- but I don't know when the transition took place. Mainships built in the '90s were mostly twin-gas sedans and motor yachts of varying styles. (A dock neighbor has twin diesels in a 40' but he did that conversion himself and I think it started life as a gasser.) One of the brand's useful features was the incorporation of easier bow access using a centerline "staircase" (walkway) from the flying bridge. (Silverton, in the meantime, adopted a "sidewalk" approach, which was equally popular. Both brands eventually began using stairways -- not ladders -- to the bridge.)

Then I think around 1998 or 1999 or so (+/-) Mainship began introducing trawler-like boats again, with the 350 (later 390) that essentially upgraded all the things "missing" on the original 34s (stairs to the bridge, wider beam, centerline master berth, sliding doors from lower helm to the sidedecks, etc.) More trawler-like boats (430, 400, 30 and 34 Pilot, 34T, etc.) from then on.

Then Luhrs bankruptcy, Marlow acquired Hunter and Mainship, Egg Harbor Group acquired Silverton, somebody else acquired Luhrs...

The '97 MY you've seen would have been one of the non-trawlers. Likely decent quality for price, probably gas engines, likely with a couple progressive deck features compared to other brands of the same era, decent systems (ACs, water pumps, heads, etc.), but then everything will depend on how it's been maintained and so forth.

-Chris

South River, Chesapeake Bay

*NOTE: Above appeared on the **Trawler Forum – Mainship Forum** and was posted by "Ranger42c" based on his MS heritage, recollection, and other boater inputs... it is believed to be fairly accurate.*

History of the Mainship 34 Sedan Trawler (From an online article)

Built by people who respect the sea, the boating family ... and its pocketbook.



The Mainship 34 Sedan is one of the most popular small cruisers ever built. She was constructed on a solid fiberglass semi-displacement hull design with a fine bow entry and a full-length keel below. First of the Mainship series, the appeal of the 34 Sedan had much to do with her trawler-style profile and affordable price tag, and her greatest attraction remains her superb economy at better the trawler speeds. With a single 160-hp Perkins 6-cylinder diesel, the Mainship's easily driven hull will cruise at 10-11 knots burning only 6 gph. At a more relaxed 7-knot speed, the fuel consumption drops to a remarkable 2 gph. The practical single-stateroom floorplan is well suited to the needs of a cruising couple. A lower helm was standard in the salon; the galley is large enough for serious food preparation; and a stall shower is included in the head. Outside, the flybridge extends aft to provide weather protection for the cockpit. Considered a low-maintenance boat, the Mainship 34 Sedan continues to enjoy great popularity in most markets.



Specifications

L.O.A	34'0"
Hull Length	NA
Beam	11'11"
Draft	2'10"
Weight	14,000 lb
Clearance	13'6"
Water	50 gals
Fuel	220 gals.
Hull Type	Semi-Disp
Deadrise Aft	NA
Designer	Cherubini
Production	1978-1982