

# MOTOR BOAT & YACHTING

COMITTI BREVA 35

BRITTANY

*Exploring the magical pink granite coast*

DIY PRINCESS

*"I turned my 2009 V48 Open into an enclosed GT Coupé"*

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ITALIAN BEAUTY  
vs CHOPPY SOLENT!



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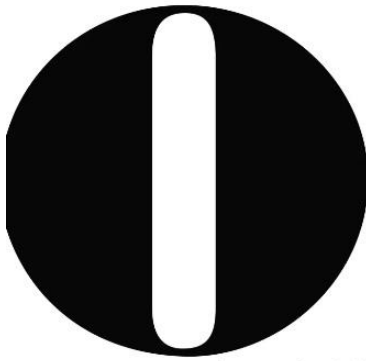
BOAT TEST

WORDS Hugo Andrae PHOTOS Paul Wyeth

# COMMITTI BREVIA 35

*Is there more to this eye-poppingly beautiful Italian sportscruiser than just good looks? We find out with a blustery test in the Solent*





owning a boat as beautiful as this Comitti Brevia 35 must be a bit of a double-edged sword; on the one hand it's very flattering that so many passers-by stop to admire it, on the other hand it's rather frustrating that the first question they're likely to ask is whether it's a Riva. The short answer is no, Comitti is a completely different yard that has been building boats on the shores of Lake Como since 1956. The long answer is that Comitti is an even more exclusive brand, building a limited range of elegant open sportsboats

from 25-35ft, including a handful of classic wooden craft that can trace their origins back to the 1950s and 1960s.

#### HIDDEN GEM

That tends to shut up most casual passers-by but the more inquisitive among them might still go on to ask whether it's as good as a Riva. And that is the question which we are hoping to answer today. The good news is that we have the perfect opportunity to find out, not on a mirror-smooth lake or a sun-soaked Mediterranean bay with a limited amount of time behind the wheel and an anxious PR representative watching our every move, but here in the Solent, on a blustery autumn day with just the UK and Caribbean's new dealer James Hart to help us get the best out of it. Backed by wealthy



entrepreneur Dr Karen Dickens, who owns two Comittis (this Brevia 35 in the UK and a Venezia 34 in the Caribbean), their aim is to grow awareness and sales of what they both believe to be one of Italy's best kept secrets.

They have a point. It's hard not to fall for the Brevia's intoxicating mix of elegant proportions and classic design cues enhanced by the occasional modern twist. It's what Riva did so well with the Aquariva and Comitti has pulled it off with this boat too. There is something about an elegantly flared bow,

tumblehome stern and reverse sheer transom that tugs at the heartstrings, especially when they're set off by a lustrous metallic dark blue paint job and lashings of honey-coloured teak (varnished mahogany is an option).

Modern details like the angular kink at the aft end of the stainless steel windscreen frame, the double arrowhead mouldings in the foredeck and the bespoke Comitti-branded cleats add an unexpected twist and prevent it from being too much of a retro pastiche. Close-up one or two elements, like the fit of the cockpit upholstery and the underside of the bimini cover moulding, don't look



**LEFT** Elegant retro lines are enhanced by glossy painted hull and rich teak or varnished mahogany. Narrow side decks are tricky to negotiate though





quite as neat as you'd expect but perhaps that's inevitable on a hand-made product where every boat is built to order, often with new adaptations to suit each customer's demands.

The deck design is classic day boat stuff with a long bathing platform and a raised sunbed over the engine bay leading to a sunken cockpit. This enjoys an unbroken run of bench seating around three sides of it, culminating in an aft-facing chaise longue on the navigator's side and a small helm bench that's comfortable for one or a tight squeeze for two. It's a sociable layout that creates plenty of space for passengers to spread out and lots of storage space under the seats and deck hatch, but it's not the most versatile of designs. There's a small drawer fridge and drinks holder behind the helm seat, which can be upgraded to a proper little wet bar, but no fold-down armrests or clever adaptable seating. Access to the foredeck is also a bit of an afterthought that involves stepping on the seats to reach the narrow sidedecks and a rather awkward shuffle along them taking care not to tread on the various antennas and deck fittings while bending over to keep one hand on the windscreen

frame for support. Once you get to the relative safety of the foredeck there are no guard rails and only the smallest of toerails to stop your feet slipping over the side. Eight discreet fender fittings allow you to pop the pre-rigged fenders in and out while a couple of inset stainless steel rub rails take the place of fairleads to prevent the lines from chafing the immaculate paintwork, provided the pontoon cleats are in the right place.

The helm itself is nicely thought out with the throttle and optional joystick set on an L-shaped extension that brings them closer to the seat for a comfortable driving position whether

seated or standing. The heavily tinted windscreen isn't ideal in this country and I found the frame was exactly the right height to block my view of the horizon when seated but that may not be an issue for others. The dashboard features an attractive hand-stitched leather surround with a carbon-fibre effect fascia filled with a combination of analogue dials, digital engine readouts and multiple switches. The end result is a little busy and I'd prefer to see the dials paired rather than spaced either side of the MFD but doubtless this is ►



**RIGHT** Fully automated canopy is a delight to watch in action but a pricey option at £42,000

**TOP** Arrowhead foredeck mouldings are a lovely touch but lack of grabrails may put off some owners



## BOAT TEST

Deep-vee hull  
coped very well  
with blustery  
Solent chop



Agile responses  
to the helm and  
throttle make  
for a fun drive



Tidy handling and  
ride proves the  
Brevia 35 is far  
more than just  
a pretty face





RIGHT Smooth performing 270hp Mercruiser diesels were good for 39.7 knots

something that could be customised as well. One thing I'd definitely ask for is some form of storage recess where you can put your phone and sunglasses.

### ACCOMMODATION

Rather more surprising, given its sleek profile, is how much space and light there is below decks. It's no TARDIS and the main cabin is open plan and lacks full standing headroom for most of its length but there's a good sized skylight in the foredeck and a pair of portholes on either side letting plenty of natural light into the area. Combined with the pale oak interior of the test boat it makes for a genuinely pleasant refuge during the day and a cosy retreat at night. There is an option for a small sink, induction hob and fridge in the unit next to the companionway, but it's unlikely anyone will want to rustle up anything more challenging than a G&T and nibbles down here.

The V-shaped dinette converts to a bed with the aid of hi-lo table and an infill but the rather optimistically entitled optional 'guest cabin' under the cockpit is more of a crawl-in space with a mattress. Realistically, it's unlikely many owners will be using the Brevia as anything other than a day boat, albeit one that allows for the occasional overnight stay. Rather more valuable than the sleeping arrangements is the nicely finished heads compartment with a concealed toilet and shower that makes long days at anchor more relaxing, even if headroom is a little limited.

### IMPECCABLE MANNERS

So far so good for a style-focussed day boat but all this would count for little if it couldn't hack the kind of conditions most UK-based owners are likely to experience. Given its lake-based origins and fair weather appearance, I was half expecting our blustery Solent test to be a rather unedifying experience, like hammering a Rolls-Royce Corniche around a wet race track and expecting it to handle like a Porsche. Far from it. It turns out that the Brevia is named after a notorious wind that whistles down the mountains to whip up the normally flat surface of Lake Como.

It's aptly named because the Brevia 35 positively relishes these conditions. Its deep-vee hull cuts through the chop very tidily



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sending sheets of spray cascading outwards from its flared bow, very little of which finds its way back on board in anything other than a strong cross wind. The structure of the hull feels reassuringly strong and although there is a noticeable tremor through the dash moulding if you manage to land it heavily on one of the chines, it looks like it's designed to allow some movement rather than being hard mounted. It's also a lot of fun to drive with one of the most responsive helms and entertaining hulls I can recall of a 35ft diesel sportscruiser. The test boat was fitted with a pair of 270hp Mercruiser 3.0 V6 sterndrives but there are no fewer than 11 other engine choices ranging from twin 220hp Volvo D3s up to 430hp petrol V8s. These Mercruisers are the most powerful diesel option, presumably because the Volvo D4s are too tall to fit in the engine bay.

Thankfully, it's a match made in heaven as these Audi-based V6s are as smooth as silk and very refined by marine diesel standards. In some boats their relatively small capacity and turbocharged (rather than supercharged) blocks can feel a bit lethargic at low revs but here they work a treat. Power comes in steadily from 1500rpm all the way up to its unusually high red line of 4200rpm with no obvious turbo lag low down or breathlessness at the top end. The big V8 petrols would doubtless ►



FAR LEFT  
Main cabin benefits from good levels of natural light LEFT  
Smartly finished heads INSET  
The optional crawl-in guest cabin





Wind on the lock and it dives into the turn with alacrity, leaning so far over, the water is almost close enough to touch

be even faster and more sonorous but with a top speed a whisker shy of 40 knots and a civilised cruising speed of 27 knots while burning a modest 2.25 litres per mile, you've got to really want the extra grunt to forego the superior availability, range and efficiency of diesel. The Smartcraft throttles are also a joy to use with a positive feel and no clunkiness shifting into gear even when using the optional Mercury joystick to come alongside.

Whichever engines you go for, it's the way the hull responds to the helm that really distinguishes the Brevia. Wind on the lock and it dives into the turn with real alacrity, leaning so far over that the water is almost close enough to touch. Yet it grips securely even when pushed hard in lumpy conditions. It may not be quite as nimble as a Fairline F33 or as soft-riding as a Windy Camira 39 but it's far closer than you might expect.

#### VERDICT

It's easy to approach a pretty, low volume, handcrafted, open Italian day boat like this with a set of preconceived ideas about how it will cope in choppy UK waters; easy but not necessarily correct. Sure there are some aspects of it that fit the stereotype – it's not

the most spacious or practical of designs – but that's like criticising a Ferrari for not having seven seats and a big boot. What's more revealing is just how good it is to drive in conditions that you wouldn't necessarily choose to go out in but sometimes get caught in. And while a starting price of £351,600 inc VAT isn't exactly cheap for a 35-footer (especially once you've added some key options) it is usefully less expensive than a Riva Aquariva, almost as pretty, and although I've never had the pleasure of testing one, I'd be surprised if it was any more fun to drive. So the next time someone stops to ask you whether it's a Riva, I'd point to the badge, smile and think of the several hundred-thousand reasons why you chose a Comitti instead.

**CONTACT** Comitti UK & Caribbean  
Tel +44 (0)1590 675444; [www.comittiboatsuk.com](http://www.comittiboatsuk.com)

**DIALS**  
It might make more sense to have these paired on one side of the MFD

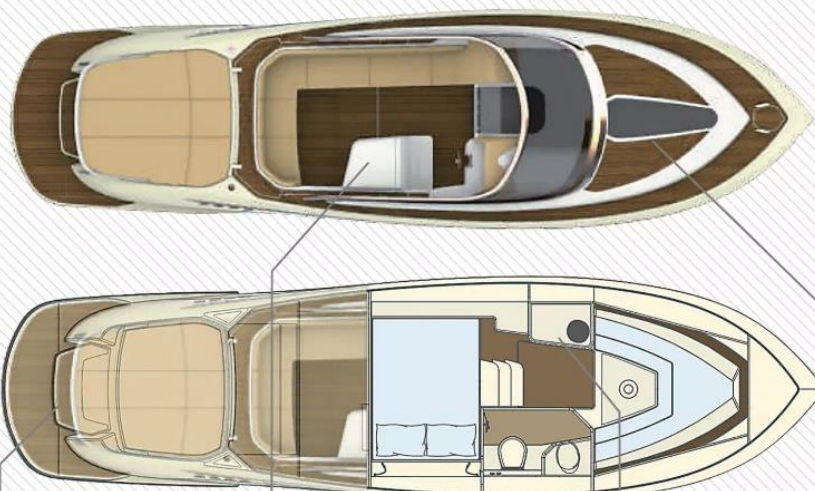


**THROTTLES**  
Moulded dash extension puts throttles at perfect height and reach

**JOYSTICK**  
Optional Mercury joystick assists with berthing manoeuvres



## BOAT TEST



### STEP/SEAT

This teak step doubles as a small aft-facing seat for the bathing platform

### WET BAR

This layout shows the optional L-shaped seating with a wet bar behind the helm

### GALLEY

You can have a sink and hob fitted to this side unit but few choose to cook on board

### SKYLIGHT

This fixed glass deck hatch lets light into the cabin below

### TOP SPEED



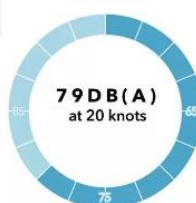
### CONSUMPTION



### RANGE



### NOISE



### PRICE



### SPECIFICATION

LOA 36ft 1in (11.0m)  
Beam 9ft 9in (2.99m)  
Draught 2ft 3in (0.70m)  
Displacement from 4,500kgs  
Fuel capacity 600 litres  
Water capacity 170 litres  
RCD B for 10 people

### COST & OPTIONS

Price from £351,600 (inc VAT)  
with 2x240hp Volvo petrol

Upgrade to 270hp Mercruiser diesel £27,600  
Mahogany deck and floor £28,800  
Painted hull and deck from £24,600  
Guest cabin under cockpit £10,980  
Electric bimini £42,000  
Mercury joystick control £9,900  
Underwater lights £1,860

### PERFORMANCE

Test engines Twin Mercruiser MD 3.0 DTS. 270hp @ 4200rpm 3.0 litre V6 diesel

				ECO		FAST		MAX
RPM	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	3500	4000	4200
Knots	6.4	8.4	10.7	19.1	27.3	31.8	37.5	39.7
Litres per hour	6.2	13.4	25.2	41.1	61.5	78.5	109	120
Litres per mile	0.97	1.60	2.36	2.15	2.25	2.47	2.91	3.02
Range (NM)	495	300	203	223	213	194	165	159
Noise dB(A)	66	71	79	79	81	85	85	86

Calculated figures based on real-time readings, yours may vary considerably.  
Range figures allow for 20% reserve. All prices include VAT. 2 crew, 50% fuel,  
20° air temperature, F5-6 and moderate waves