SEA TRIAL

The sea-trial checklist

A sea trial is the only time you see a yacht working as she will for you. Tick these off from the cold start to the engine room after the run.

The full guide: yachtxchange.app/blog/sea-trial-checklist

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE BERTH

- [ ] Ask, in writing and in advance, that the engines and generators are not run before you arrive
- [ ] Note whether the engine room is warm when you arrive, and ask why if it is
- [ ] Watch the cold start for hard starting, smoke that does not clear, and leaks
- [ ] Compare engine and generator hours with the service records and the listing
- [ ] Read the maintenance log, recent work orders and any stored fault codes
- [ ] Check oil and coolant levels and condition before the start
- [ ] Look for fuel, oil or coolant in the bilges
- [ ] Look at belts, hoses, raw-water strainers and exhaust elbows
- [ ] Agree who is in command, the route, the duration, the fuel on board and the tests the surveyors want
- [ ] Confirm the weather and sea state allow a meaningful run

UNDER WAY

- [ ] Record every reading with the time and engine speed
- [ ] Run each engine up through the range and hold full load for the period agreed with the engine surveyor
- [ ] Check that each engine reaches its rated maximum speed under load
- [ ] Record coolant temperature, oil pressure, exhaust temperature where fitted, boost pressure and gearbox oil pressure at several speeds
- [ ] Compare the readings between engines on a twin installation
- [ ] Watch the exhaust for black, blue or persistent white smoke
- [ ] Feel and listen for vibration and noise in the hull, the cabins and the engine room at each speed
- [ ] Test the steering lock to lock at low and at cruising speed, and the emergency steering
- [ ] Test the stabilisers under way and, where fitted, at anchor
- [ ] Run the bow and stern thrusters both ways and note any overheating or cut-outs
- [ ] Run each generator with real load and check voltage, frequency and changeover
- [ ] Engage the autopilot on several headings
- [ ] Test the chart plotter, radar, AIS, depth sounder, compass, VHF and satellite communications
- [ ] Run the watermaker, test the bilge pumps and their alarms, and have the fire system demonstrated
- [ ] On a sailing yacht, hoist every sail, run every winch under load, tack and gybe, and watch the rig under load

AFTER THE RUN

- [ ] Inspect the engine room straight away for leaks, water in the bilges and anything moved, loose or hot

- [ ] Take oil samples from engines, generators and gearboxes while the oil is warm, for laboratory analysis
- [ ] Write up your observations the same day and share them with your surveyors
- [ ] Note anything that did not work, did not reach specification or could not be tested, and why
- [ ] Check the acceptance deadline in your purchase agreement and ask for an extension in writing if you need one

General information, not legal or technical advice. Follow your surveyors' recommendations, the engine and builder's guidance and the terms of your purchase agreement.