

STAYING ON TOP

PBT HELPS TAKE THE V-55 TO NEW HEIGHTS



Palm Beach Towers (PBT) is the leading tuna tower manufacturer in the world, and each year this Viking-owned company distances itself further from any competitors. PBT's latest masterpiece: a spectacular gap tower custom designed, engineered and fabricated for hull No. 1 of the new Valhalla Boatworks (VBW) flagship – the V-55.

The largest center console ever to receive a PBT gap tower, the Haze Grey V-55 features a 5-foot gap tower with anodized aluminum brushed piping, a custom standing platform with a molded-in forward light bar, a fully equipped upper helm station (including Mercury display, controls and joystick; Zipwake and bow thruster controls; and a 12-inch Garmin display) with a 53-inch control box and sunshade. The control box as well as the sunshade sides and top match the Haze Grey hull color, while the control box top, sunshade frame and underside are satin black for glare reduction and enhanced visibility.

The structure itself is fabricated with forward and aft tower legs consisting of 2-1/2-inch piping and through-bolted bases. The aft legs are built with eight welded-on rod holders, and there's another half dozen on the horizontal rail welded to the aft legs. Each aft tower leg contains welded steps with treads to provide access to the upper helm. An X-brace welded to the forward legs (between the standing platform and hardtop) brings further support and strength to the installation.

The tower is certainly strong and highly engineered, but it's also designed to be proportional to the boat and aesthetically pleasing. "Balancing your aesthetics and the utility of the structure is crucial for us," says Brett Standen, PBT's Tower CAD Designer. "When you look at the tower you want it to feel like it's part of the boat – not something that has been added on."

Part of the key to achieving this is keeping the piping as close as possible to the fiberglass structures it envelopes to maximize on-deck accessibility while maintaining a streamlined, clean look. All tower legs mount above the deck, on the sides of the console and aft seating module, providing increased unobstructed egress.



“This was quite a project, and a lot of time, planning and work went into making sure everything was just right,” says PBT General Manager Drew McDowell.

The hardtop is an essential part of any Valhalla, whether the boat is built with or without a tower. In a stellar example of Viking’s vertical integration at work, Valhalla Boatworks teamed with PBT and AME to create one hardtop that can be used for three different types of V-55s – hardtop-only models or those with hardtops with either gap or marlin towers. The versatility of the hardtop design allows owners to select from an array of options – everything from outrigger configurations and lighting to satellite domes and stereo speakers. “We utilize a series of dams – which are essentially removable mold inserts on the top and bottom of the resin-infused hardtop structure – to carry out the requested build and its options,” says Viking Design Manager David Wilson. “The hardtop gives us increased flexibility, which ultimately results in greater customer satisfaction. It also contributes to greater efficiency in the build process.”

The hardtop for hull No. 1, which will be used as a VBW demo boat and fish the

winter sailfish tournaments in Florida, is equipped with an express-style molded radar pod that houses a recessed teaser reel box for a pair of Miya Epoch Super US-9 high-speed teaser reels. Forward, the hardtop underside includes a recessed electronics box, while the aft section boasts a molded fiberglass pod that holds four stereo speakers. The hardtop also includes cutouts on the aft corners for the tower legs.

One of Valhalla Boatworks’ key vendors is Gemlux, which supplies our V Series with hardware, outriggers and other equipment. Our first V-55 features the company’s new carbon fiber Gulf Stream Sportfish Outriggers that contain no spreaders or stay wires and can be rigged internally or externally for different types of fishing. (The company will begin taking production orders in January 2023 with expected delivery in June.)

“The design of our hardtop enabled us to have the Gemlux outriggers installed on our V-55,” adds David. The Gulfstream Sportfish Outriggers are also being tested on a Viking 46 Billfish owned by Gemlux – a boat that was on display at the 2022 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. 🦑



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