



# "It's the MF855, but redefined, with lots of new features"

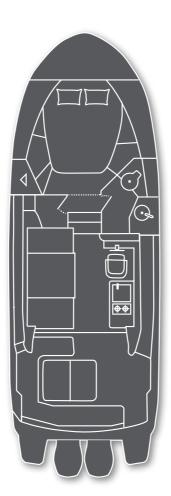


A side access gate in the starboard gunwale is one of the new features found on the 895

t the time of our test, the 895 was the flagship in Jeanneau's ▲ Merry Fisher range and was the replacement for the successful 855. By the time you read this, the new 1095 will have been launched in Europe, although it will be another couple of months before one lands on our shores. We'll bring you more on that as soon as we manage to get our hands on it, but in the meantime the first page of the current Merry Fisher brochure details this boat, and its coloured hull counterpart the 895 Legende. There is also an 895 Offshore version that comes with larger fuel tanks, giving a 600 litre total capacity, and which is available in just twin engine configuration up to a maximum of 400hp. The offshore version also comes with an updated RCD category

B rating.

Inside the 895 you get an almost identical layout to the 855. Up in the bow there is a double berth, which is slightly offset but nevertheless allows access from either side, inside a separate cabin. The theme here, as with much of the boat, and indeed the Merry Fisher range, is simple practicality. Lift the aft end of the bed up, which is assisted by gas struts



that also hold it up, and you have access to a large locker below. Thoughtfully, this locker is still accessible, even if the bed is occupied, as Jeanneau added a door to the front of the locker also. More storage is provided in here by a row of three eyelevel lockers along either side of the cabin and a generously sized full-height hanging locker on the port side. Headroom is good at the aft end of the berth where there is also just enough space to provide a useful dressing area. The cabin benefits from plenty of natural light from the hull windows on either side, an opening hatch in the top and a glazed panel above the aft end of the berth that is placed just under the wheelhouse windscreen.

Moving aft and you will be in a small lobby area with access to the toilet

compartment to starboard, and a second cabin to port. The former has 6ft plus headroom and all the equipment you would need to spend a few nights away from shoreside facilities. As standard, the 895 comes with a sea toilet with 80-litre holding tank, a wash basin and a shower. The compartment has two hull windows, the aft most one fitted with an opening port for ventilation. Storage in here is limited to a single under sink cupboard. Opposite the toilet compartment is the entrance to the second, fully enclosed, cabin. Just inside the door you will find a small full height dressing area with a large double berth and small corner seat stretching back under the wheelhouse sole. With two double berths, the layout is, perhaps, not ideally suited to a family

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of four, although there is yet another berth option that we will come to in a bit. Storage space in here is pretty good, with a half-height locker in the entrance, with some flat storage on top, and some cupboards built into the aft bulkhead. Again, light is good with a hull window



All the facilities you will need for a weekend

containing an opening port and an overhead skylight in the standing area, which is beneath the windscreen.

The companionway up into the wheelhouse is quite steep but made easier with a pair of steps and a suitably-placed grabrail. The wheelhouse, like those on other Merry Fisher boats, is spacious and bathed in natural light, with huge windows all round, two large opening glass sunroofs and a sliding door next to the helm. On the starboard side there is a large sliding window and at the aft end you get a threesection opening patio door arrangement. All this means that even on those rare hot days, the wheelhouse will still be a cool and pleasant place to be, despite the amount of glass. It is worth noting that the twin sunroofs and the side opening afloat, including a full height toilet compartment door are standard features on the 895 and,

"Two cabins and a roomy wheelhouse make the 895 a real family boat"



The mid-cabin is spacious, with good headroom and plenty of natural light



so far, the only options you may want to tick would be the wheelhouse curtain set for privacy and the removable carpet set for additional comfort. That curtain set would be a must if you were to use this boat's convertible dinette as an additional sleeping area. As mentioned earlier, unless your kids are young enough to share a double cabin, this is where one of them is bound to end up. As a dinette, it is just about big enough for a family of four, but drop the table and it does provide another large single, or cosy double berth. To get this feature you will also need to delve into the options list and tick the circa £4,500 'comfort pack'. As well as the convertible

saloon berth, this pack will provide a bow thruster, shore power and battery charger and a mains power water heater, all either very useful or even essential items that are very much worth having.

At the front of the wheelhouse, the helm console is equipped with a single seat, while two crew can sit on the port side on the forward section of dinette seating with its flappable backrest. The helm console is compact and busy with controls and instruments, particularly on our test boat with its twin throttle configuration, but there is still space to install a small to mid-sized multi-function display, perfectly positioned just above the







The compact galley still manages to pack in plenty of storage as well as a hob, sink and fridge

steering wheel. There is also a small panel overhead where additional instruments or a VHF radio can be mounted. The helm seat is adjustable and comes with a lifting bolster, and with ample headroom the 895 helm is comfortable in the standing, leaning or seated position. Alongside the helm is a sliding door with a step up



The backrest of the forward dinette bench flips to create a double forward facing nav seat

to give the helmsman easy access to the deck for single handing or helping the crew. Installed into the space below the helm seat is the boat's refrigerator, and behind this is the galley. The fridge is part of the 'premiere' option package that also includes an electric windlass, trim tabs, aft bench cushions, cockpit shower and LED lighting around the boat. Choosing options is a tricky part of any boat purchase, but with the 895, the two packs on offer, 'Comfort' and 'Premiere', seem to have most essentials covered and together will add around £10k to the base price, leaving you to just add some electronics and decide on what is perhaps the biggest decision of all, what power package to go for, but more on that in a bit.

The galley is concealed beneath a lifting lid and consists of a sink and twin burner hob. There is an optional microwave, but

you will have to take the 'comfort' pack with its shorepower or opt for the rather extravagant diesel generator (available only with the offshore version) to make use of this. Without a microwave, the galley should still be more than capable of conjuring up some basic provisions, and you get the perfect excuse to eat out more. Galley storage is reasonable, with a double cupboard and a full length drawer. Storage elsewhere in the wheelhouse is limited to another drawer beneath the aft dinette seat and, if you don't take the fridge option, the space below the helm seat.

Externally, the 895's practicality really shines through. The offset wheelhouse provides a deep and very wide side deck on the starboard side, together with that useful side door, while the port side deck, despite being raised and narrower,

is still eminently usable should you need to moor port side to. High guardrails on either side, together with grab rails on the wheelhouse roof, and at the aft end, make moving around the boat very safe and secure. One new feature on this model is a small gate in the starboard topside to allow easy access when moored, particularly to a high sided quay. Up at



The aft bench slides forwards for engine access

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MHA 150

"Despite blustery, choppy test conditions, the boat handled superbly"

Twin 150's or a single 300hp. That's the biggest decision you'll have to make when contemplating an 895



the bow you get a very good platform for crewing, with lots of flat, non-slip deck, and you can also opt for sunpad cushions for the cabin top. The anchor locker lid is held open with a gas strut and beneath you will find the optional electric windlass and a locker large enough to store a couple of fenders along with your anchor rode.

Back in the cockpit there is, as standard, a full width transom seat that slides forward to allow the engines to be fully tilted, and an option to extend the seating into a U-shape that can also be in-filled to create a cockpit sun pad. There is, of course, storage beneath the seating and you also get a huge locker in the cockpit sole with a gas strut retained lid. Down here is where the diesel heating system would be installed,

should you decide to tick that £3.5k option, which comes with the very useful benefit of providing windscreen demisters, something definitely worth having on a wheelhouse boat.

0.77

1.36

3.24

3.46

2.56

2.21

285

304

225

194

139

110

At the transom, the 895 has a pair of swim platforms, one on either side of the engine. The starboard platform has a bathing ladder and boarding rail, and leads straight into the cockpit via the transom gate. The port platform is quite inaccessible, without climbing over the seating or sliding the transom seat forward, but does of course come in handy when carrying out your engine checks, particularly on a twin engined version.

### Underway

As mentioned earlier, one big decision you have to make when ordering an 895 is whether to go with a big single engine, or a pair of smaller units. Standard options seem to be either twin 150's or a single 300, although you can also specify twin 175's or even 200's on the offshore version, or a single 350. Our test boat had twin F150hp

Yamaha engines and having previously tested the 855 with a single F300 I feel I can draw some useful conclusions.

The boat we were testing was fitted with mechanical throttles that, if I'm honest, felt a bit 'agricultural'. If it were an option, I would definitely choose to upgrade to electronic throttle and shift. The boat did have hydraulic steering, which is standard, so the steering at least was light, perfectly balanced and a joy to use. Conditions during our test were somewhat blustery with a decent sized swell, so we had perfect conditions to put the 895 through its paces. Bashing into a head sea, the 895 could maintain a very comfortable and easy 18 knots. Pushing it beyond this resulted in some slamming and discomfort, but these were not the sort of

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conditions you would be choosing to be out in. It was nice though, to see that if you were caught out, you could still make your way back to port at a decent pace. Spinning the boat around and tackling a following sea, the boat handled superbly, with a comfortable cruising speed well into the 20's. In either direction, the boat delivered quite a wet ride in these choppy conditions, but the inside helm position and twin wipers meant this really wasn't an issue. Pickup, acceleration and top speed were all good, although the twin engine setup did deliver noticeably more ventilation of the props in a tight turn than I experienced with the single engine version of the previous model. This is undoubtedly due to the single prop being central and deeper in the water than the twins. I would say that, on balance, the performance felt a little shy of that experienced on the single 300hp 855, although don't take that as being a negative. In twin 150hp guise, the 895 is a great package, and comes with the added security of a backup engine as well as the



A foredeck that is very practical from a crewing perspective, also offers sunbathing opportunities

extra manoeuvrability that twins bring. For me, the saving on the purchase price, the reduction in running and servicing costs, and the fact that a single 300 provides slightly better performance and sprightlier handling, means I would choose this option. In fact, I might even be a bit extravagant and go for the single 350. If you really can't see yourself being comfortable with a single engine, the twin 150's provide perfectly acceptable performance, but you might want to at least think about those 175's. If you chose the offshore version, you only have the option of twins, and



twin 200's at that, so I would guess that performance in this case would be on a par with an 895 equipped with a single 350.

#### Conclusion

The 895 is a multi-purpose boat that will look after you and your family for short breaks, and equally act as a day boat for cruising or fishing. I have always thought the Merry Fisher 855 was a particularly handsome boat, and the 895 hasn't lost any of its looks with its minor design tweaks. It's fair to say that it doesn't offer the last word in luxury or performance, but it does provide a great package that is practical, easy to own and fun to use. It has enough facilities to be considered a



Despite having asymmetric sidedecks, both sides are still very usable and easy to negotiate

genuine compact cruiser, and, with the right engine package, performance that won't leave you wanting. Like all boats, the 895 is a compromise, but it is one that I think any owner will be more than happy with.

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