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MAREX 370

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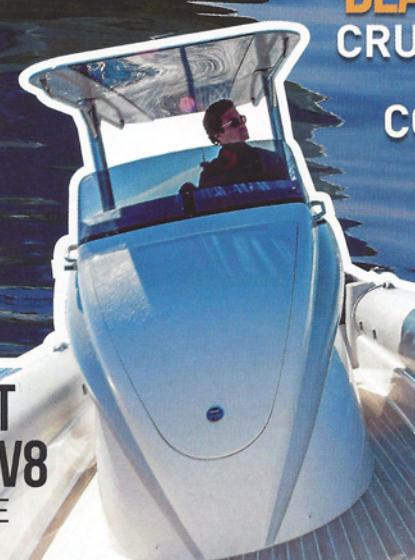
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MAREX 370

REPORT

Dave Marsh tests this miserly multi-talented miracle from Scandinavia and uncovers a tasty smorgasbord of delights ...



However open-minded we are, human nature is such that most of us will give a boat a quick visual once-over and immediately form at least a few preconceptions. Were you to do this with the Marex 370, and then for whatever reason dismiss this unusual boat – perhaps because of its nonconformist appearance – it would be a terrible shame. Because whatever qualities you look for in your cruiser, this innovative

Scandinavian has the potential to fulfil a surprising number of anybody's cruising needs.

Ticking boxes

Buying a boat should be an emotive as well as an analytical affair, so I'm not one for box ticking. But if you are so inclined, then let's consider what boxes you might tick. How about almost implausible fuel efficiency – surely that's something we all crave? Likewise, first-rate build quality.

The 370's construction is very tough indeed, and it's joinery is not just sturdy but finely crafted too. Even if you're blessed with expert boat-handling skills, you'll appreciate the 370's impressive agility at any speed from zero to 30 knots – short-handed crews should have no problems handling or mooring this 7-tonne cruiser in tricky conditions. Safety conscious? Well, the 370's unusual midships cockpit provides tremendous safety and security.





Fabric sunroof provides a much longer opening than a solid roof.

especially if you have young children or elderly and infirm crew on board.

Although some planing boats don't feel at ease travelling slowly, that's not the case with the 370, which was happy pottering along at single-figure speeds. Stir in the 370's low air draught - around 2.9m/3.7m with/without the stainless mast - and a recipe for inland waterway cruising emerges. One of the boat's biggest pluses is the unmatched privacy provided by the 370's separate aft cabin. Even on cruisers far larger than the 11.37m-long 370, if your cabin is amidships, next to your guests' sleeping quarters, there's no way you'll attain the same sense of serene privacy. I'd argue that these myriad plus points will appeal to almost everybody, whatever their needs.

Still, no single boat can be all things to all men. Or women. So inevitably there are boxes that can't be ticked. Part of the 370's fuel efficiency stems from the designer's decision to minimise appendage drag by sticking with single-engine installations. And who wouldn't appreciate far better engine room service access, reduced servicing costs, and lower levels of noise and vibration, not to mention reducing your personal output of those evil carbons? However, despite the proliferation of powerful bow and stern

thrusters, such as those fitted as standard on the 370, some owners are ideologically wedded to the notion of twin engines. Ergo, no tick for twins.

Compared with conventional aft-cabin boats such as those from Broom and Atlantic, the 370 sports far sleeker looks. Yet despite the 370's low profile, Marex have conjured an impressive 1.84m headroom in the roomy aft cabin. However, there's no heads

So fuel-efficient is the 370 that comparisons with other similar shaft drive boats are pointless



Sturdy guardrails and deep toerails make for safe movement around the decks

Even if you're blessed with expert boat-handling skills, you'll appreciate the 370's impressive agility

compartment back here. So unless you choose to sleep at the pointy end, you can't tick the 'owner's en suite' box. No big deal during the day, but it does mean padding quietly through the cockpit if nature calls in the middle of the night. However, although there is in theory enough space for an owner's en suite back here, I'm convinced that Marex made the right decision. The view through the unusual wrap-around windows is a joy, and plonking a small heads in the obvious place (where the big single berth lies) would kill the light and airy feeling inside, and visually close down this cabin no end. Anyway, Marex have provided a handbasin, which lives beneath the dressing table area, so some bedtime ablutions are possible.

No heads means storage in this cabin benefits, and it comes in every form: lockers, practically fiddled shelves, a wardrobe, under-berth cubbyholes and open-topped bins – more than enough for extended cruises. A major part of the 370's success in this area comes courtesy of its internal moulded liner. Of the scores that I've scrutinised over three decades, this is one of the most intelligently designed I've encountered. Consequently, all the spaces under the berths are fully utilised and easy to access, and all the lockers are lined with smoothly moulded GRP or chunky bits of timber. The whole edifice is bonded into the hull structure, so the liner adds to the stiffness of the boat. Generous, thoughtfully implemented storage is evident throughout the boat, and it's a key feature of the 370.

Handling and performance

Out on the water, the biggest surprise was the boat's remarkable agility. Although the 370 is unlikely to be taking part in slalom competitions, if like me you feel more comfortable steering and throttling around the fiercest-looking lumps and bumps when the sea turns nasty, this ability can be a godsend. Sadly, I've yet to test the 370 in truly rough weather, so I can't vouch for its talent here.

SNAPSHOT Onboard the Marex 370. Looking at the cockpit area under the hardtop.



SEAT: Front and rear facing.



CHILLIN': Watching the sun set over a glass of wine.



GALLEY: Great use of space, and a very sociable place for the chef to work



HELM: Good driving ergonomics



FOREDECK: Room for a sunbed here



WEATHERTIGHT: Rear canopy + sunroof = open or fully enclosed boating



POWER: Single engine means better service access than twins



DETAILING: Far superior to simple loose lids



The view out at any speed is very clear

SPECIFICATIONS i

Marex 370

LENGTH OVERALL: 11.37m (37ft 4in)
BEAM: 3.50m (11ft 6in)
WEIGHT (LIGHT, APPROX.): 6950kg
WEIGHT (FULL FUEL & WATER): 7800kg
DRAUGHT: 1.00m (3ft 3in)
AIR DRAUGHT: 2.85m (9ft 4in) ex mast
FUEL CAPACITY: 650 litres
WATER CAPACITY: 300 litres
CE CATEGORY: B (for 8 people)

PRICES (INC. VAT) i

£329,740 (single 370hp D6 Volvo)
£335,820 (single 435hp D6 Volvo)
 + £16,600 (value of options fitted)
 inc. teak decks, hull colour, chartplotter.

PERFORMANCE i

SMALLEST ENGINE: single 370hp
BIGGEST ENGINE: single 435hp
TEST ENGINE: single Volvo D6-435.
 435hp @ 3,500rpm.
TOP SPEED: 27.6** knots @ 3350rpm
CRUISING SPEED: 8 to 27*** knots
 ** see notes in report

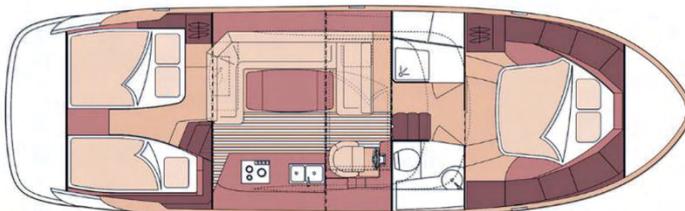
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However, hurtling through the chop and the ferry wakes we found in and around Poole, it always dished up a reassuringly solid feel.

Talking of hurtling, this is the second time I've tested the 370, and this time it didn't hurtle anywhere near as well. During the last test out in Norway, with the same 435hp Volvo D6 diesel and an almost identical load (fuel + water + crew + stores) of around 550kg, I clocked a 31-knot average over a two-way run. This time we only reached 27.6 knots flat out. With no tender or life raft back aft, and no water in the tank sited beneath the bathing platform, it may be that the roughly 1 degree of bow-down static trim was affecting the speed. Differences in fuel quality can also have a small

One of the 370's biggest pluses is the unmatched privacy provided by the separate aft cabin



effect. However, I suspect the propeller. Our Volvo only pulled 3350rpm, down 150rpm on the D6's rated 3500rpm. In fact, with such a light load, our D6 ought

to have been pulling closer to my Scandinavian boat's 3630rpm, to allow latitude for a true-to-life load of cruising stores and the impediment of mid-season fouling.



WHAT WE THOUGHT i

Marex 370

WHY YOU WOULD

- Amazingly versatile cruiser
- Astonishing fuel efficiency
- First-rate build quality
- Matchless privacy of aft cabin
- On-board safety and security
- Generous storage

WHY YOU WOULDN'T

- You're wedded to twin engines
- No aft-cabin en suite
- You're uneasy with individuality

So let's assume that with better propping a 370 will normally achieve around 29 to 30 knots. That is remarkable for a shaft drive boat around this size. Even flat out, the 370 is only burning 18gph and achieving around 1.6mpg. So efficient is this that comparisons with other similar shaft drive boats are pointless – we have to look to the likes of sports cruisers with slippery sterndrive legs for a worthy challenger. For instance, at the same 29/30 knots, Sealine's SC35 will only travel about 1.35 miles for every gallon burned, likewise Fairline's Targa 38. Only when super-efficient boats like the slender Windy 37 Grand Mistral step up to the plate does anything get the better of the 370.

Conclusion

For once, it's safe to use the description 'unique' to describe this boat. Marex have largely abandoned conventional thinking, and in doing so they have created a remarkably versatile boat. The praiseworthy 'jack of all trades' often heralds the condemnation 'and master of none'. In my opinion, though, that is not the case here. Couples intent on restful cruising will enjoy uncommon privacy, certainly better than the majority of non-aft-cabin boats. Yet the 370's tough build and (potentially) fully enclosed cockpit also make it eminently suitable for intrepid offshore cruising, whatever the weather. That same deep, protected cockpit lends itself to safe and secure family boating. And although there are more focused inland waterway cruisers, the 370 would be happy with life in the slow lane.

Headline prices are one thing, real value is another. Thanks to the relentless strength of Scandinavian currencies, the Norwegian-built 370 will never be the cheapest of boats. However, it's important to scrutinise the 370's abnormally brief extras list, as only then will you appreciate just how much is standard issue. In addition, there's distinct value in the 'reassuringly expensive' feel of the 370's impressive build, and the promise of longevity that this quality brings. And thanks to its remarkable fuel efficiency, here is one boat that does at least present owners who intend to cruise extensively with the chance to realise some very worthwhile savings. All things considered, I reckon the innovative 370 is actually good value for money.

Dave Marsh

SNAPSHOT Onboard the Marex 370. Below decks accommodation.



SHOWER: Generous storage here



SPACESHIP: Surprisingly good headroom & generous berth sizes in the aft cabin



GUEST CABIN: Marex utilise every nook and cranny for storage



BERTH: Big single behind the stairs



PRIVACY: Separate shower is a boon



AFT CABIN: No en-suite but there is a useful handbasin



WINDOWS: The view out of the owner's cabin is a joy



HEADS: Quality of joinery throughout is excellent