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SEPTEMBER 2002 £3.50

MOTOR BOAT

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NEW 61 ON TEST

Island life
Go Greek in Evvoia

Marex 330 | Hinckley T29
Hard-headed hard-top | Pricey? Yup. Sexy? You know

Electronic meltdown, Lyme Bay, Force 6
A READER'S TOUGHEST TRIP



Whatever the weather

Wind-in-the-hair or drizzle-out-of-the-hair and sun-off-the-neck? A feisty 33ft sports cruiser with an opening hardtop means the choice of cruising mode is yours

TEXT
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PHOTOGRAPHY
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Temperate' is the unrealistically optimistic word we Northern Europeans use to kid ourselves that it's only occasionally cold and wet. In a climate like ours, the argument for a hardtop is incontestable. The main benefit is obvious – protection from inclement weather – and, on a few weekends at least, the blazing sun too. There's a secondary bonus: reducing the acres of unco-operative canvas that need

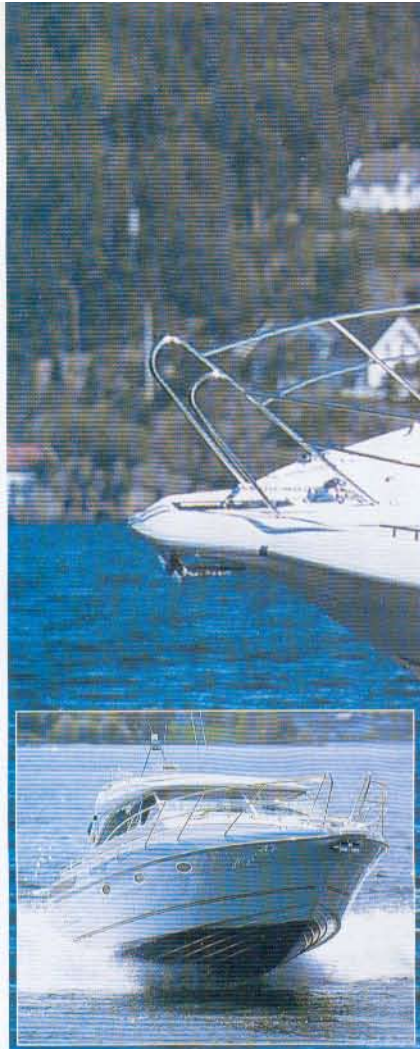
wrestling into place at the end of a day's boating, just when you least feel like doing it. But compared with a typical open-topped sports cruiser, you lose that wind-in-the-hair sensation and you have to put up with a closed-in feeling. However, the 330 Scandinavia helps here with its well-sorted helm ergonomics that allow helmsman to stand with his head poking out through the sliding sunroof in the hardtop.

The excellent dash and helm position, with its adjustable seat and steering wheel, make it easy to drive the 330 sitting down. For a bulky 33-footer, the boat is nippy – 42.7 knots on test with Volvo's 285hp KAD300 electronic diesels.

Marex offer alternative twin-engine options, including 260hp and 230hp Volvos, but personally I'd sidestep their smallest offering, the 170hp KAD32DPs. Although these engines will push the 330 to around 32 knots, say Marex, I've found their torque characteristics (very little low down, followed by a huge dollop at 1,500rpm) work better in smaller, lighter, less bulky boats that need less oomph to climb on to the plane. The KAD300 engines may cost more up front, but their fuel consumption is unlikely to be any higher, and the extra speed is always useful for outrunning bad weather and opening up new cruising grounds.

The hull was designed by Hans Jørgen Johnsen, but don't expect the 330 to match the outstanding rough-water capabilities of his other more famous boats, the Windy range. The ride is okay, but the 330's forward sections (much flatter than a Windy) naturally pounded more than the Windy 34 would have done in the rough water around the Norwegian port of Arendal.

But there's nothing wrong with the handling of the 330, and the steering is



very good – light, accurate and rapid when the helmsman needs it to be. However, like most small hardtop boats, the weight of the hardtop raises the boat's centre of gravity, which makes it feel livelier than an equivalent sports cruiser – not as securely 'glued' to the water – and the helmsman sits higher up so any movement feels exaggerated.

Below, the layout follows the norms: a centreline double forward, with a heads compartment opposite the port-side tucked-under-the-saloon double cabin. Compared with most of today's sophisticated and glamorous boats, the 330 is a real Plain Jane, but the layout works fine, and owners will appreciate the spacious heads and the extra-large berth, which measures 7ft (2.1m) by 5ft (1.5m). A third couple can sleep on board if you convert the saloon settee.

Of course, the hardtop is what makes the 330. With its particularly large two-part opening sunroof and its deep



windows unobstructed by heavy frames, the distinction between inside and out is about as blurred as it can be without the boat becoming a conventional open-topped sports cruiser.

It's easy to move around the accommodation and get to the engines, but harder to get ashore and move around outside with the high topsides, skinny side decks at only 7in (180mm) wide, and a bathing platform closed off by the topsides. Otherwise, mooring should be easy with the fenders stowed in a moulded basket on the transom,

and plenty of handrails all round the boat to seize or tie fenders on to.

Like most outdrive-leg installations, the engineroom is uncluttered. What little there is in the 330's machinery space is neatly installed and easy to service, as Marex have left plenty of room in front of the engines for you to stand on the wide alloy tread plate and perform the usual daily checks.

The last word

The 330 sports a mundane interior finish by today's ultra-glam standards, but that's not the point of this boat. The driver and navigator get excellent helm and chart-table positions, lots of fresh air, and a good view out. Combine this with protection from the versatile hardtop and the option of powerful engines (up to 600hp in total) and you have a boat with the potential for safe, speedy passage-making in all weather conditions. **MBY**

Thumbs up or thumbs down?

UPS

- Versatile hardtop
- Top speed
- Helm position
- Value for money
- Six-berth potential

DOWN

- Narrow side decks
- Average ride
- Difficult side boarding

Data

Overall length	33ft 8in (10.26m)
Hull length	31ft 2in (9.50m) <i>MBY estimate – no data supplied</i>
Beam	10ft 10in (3.31m)
Displacement	5.4 tonnes light, 6.3 tonnes loaded (loaded – light + 100% fuel & water)
Draught	3ft 3in (1.00m)
Air draught	13ft 4in (4.06m) (top of mast) 10ft 4in (3.16m) (top of hardtop)
Fuel capacity	147 imp gal (670 litres)
Water capacity	77 imp gal (350 litres)
Engines	Twin Volvo KAD300, 285hp @ 3,800rpm, 6-cylinder 3.59-litre diesels; Volvo C3 Duoprops, Volvo DP-6 outdrive legs
Flat out	42.7 knots, 193 miles @ 3,900rpm <i>Range allows for 20% reserve; 70% fuel, 50% water, 3 crew, modest stores; 1ft chop, Force 2-3 for speed trials</i>
Price from	£105,000 inc VAT
Price as tested	£135,000 inc VAT
Designer	Hans Jørgen Johnsen & E. Aalrud, 1999
RCD category	B (for 10 people)
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