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# MOTOR BOAT

TESTED BRILLIANT NEW COUPE

## Magical Marex 375

38ft of pure Scandinavian genius



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# MAREX 375

Fantastically versatile and clever, this mid-sized coupé covers all eventualities with its engine options

Text: **Dave Marsh** Photos: **Lester McCarthy**

**W**hat is Marex up to? This Scandinavian boatbuilder is famous for designing sporty aft cabin cruisers such as its 320 and 370 that provide a miraculous fully functioning stern cabin in boats as short as 10 and 12 metres. So what is it doing producing a 39ft (12m) sporty hardtop cruiser that has abandoned its signature aft cabin in favour of an aft cockpit? Isn't that going to put Marex head to head with mainstream hardtop sports cruisers from the likes of Princess and Jeanneau, builders who have economies of scale that Marex can only dream of.

Well, after two days testing the 375 under Oslo's sunny skies, it became clear that Marex has nothing to fear from these two builders and their ilk. Nowadays, Marex's boats are surprisingly keenly priced; in theory a no-extras 375 can be had for as little as £282,000. And although I would never describe Princess and Jeanneau boats as impractical, on the Marex function positively lords it over form; it's as if the designers are striving to win the award for the boat with the most practical cruising features ever. Even putting aside its less-sporty looks and fully enclosed deck saloon, the 375 doesn't really inhabit the same world as a V39 or a Leader 40.

Nowhere is Marex's sturdy practicality more evident than outside. The deck is all hefty teak tables and handrails, substantial deck fittings and deep toerails, plus a sense of solidity that is worthy of a boat half as big again. I did pull-ups using the handrails at the back of the unsupported hardtop structure and could not detect any flexing whatsoever (although I did detect considerable personal feebleness).

The pictures you see here tell most of the story, but there are two features worthy of a special award. Canopies form such a significant part of the boating experience in temperate climates, and the 375's curtain canopies are pure genius. How does under two minutes from fully stowed to fully buttoned down sound? How does no fiddly rope guides to contend with, no annoying folding or rolling, and zero stowage issues sound? How about being able to easily stow or deploy the canopies from inside or outside the cockpit, or even when you are under way and the weather suddenly turns nasty? Our video shows their workings far more clearly than words, but in short they are released from their vertical stowage compartments, pulled out rapidly along overhead stainless steel tracks like curtains in a bay window, and then swiftly clipped onto the hooks around the cockpit's perimeter. That's it. Suffice to say that they're superior to any cockpit canopies I've ever tried.

Dedicated metal fender baskets are nothing new, but Marex has gone one step further and incorporated four fender lockers into the side decks (see Closer Look). This frees up space, and leaves half the fenders tied on permanently so they can all be launched at a moment's notice, ideal for short handed crews and tricky situations. Deck stowage is impressive too. Even without help from the anchor locker, there's space for another four fenders in the flush locker on the bathing platform, which leaves the big raised locker alongside free for other cruising paraphernalia and seat duties. In the cockpit, owners can choose between seats which sit on stainless pillars or a glassfibre moulding that provides yet more storage. Plus, the engineroom is easily spacious enough to house some big plastic storage containers.



## Marex offer a remarkable range of engines; shaftdrive and sterndrive, single and twin

### INSIDE STORY

Now, I'm not the tallest of blokes, but I still appreciate good headroom and generously sized beds. One of these – the mid cabin double – is so vast that I could sleep across the width of the bed! The smallest critical dimension I measured was the 6ft 3in (1.91m) headroom in the heads, but that was modest compared with most other key dimensions such as the 6ft 10in (2.08m) long forward berth. With the one exception of the limited room to manoeuvre around the foot of the forward berth, this is a boat that breathes very easily.

On boats this size, it's invariably the forward cabin that reigns supreme. On the 375, the mid cabin takes the honours. Strictly speaking, its floor area is no larger than its companion, but in practice it feels far more spacious thanks to a more workable layout and the two large ship side windows that visually open up the space no end. It also boasts an improbable amount of stowage comprising four lockers, one wardrobe, five drawers and four usefully fiddled shelves.

The dark satin walnut joinery you see here gracing our test boat is right on trend. That said, I'd implore you to examine the alternative teak finish before deciding. Even allowing for the fact that the final finishing touches on our prototype 375 had obviously been rushed, so convinced was I that the joinery wasn't up to the same standard as the joinery on board the teak finished, aft cabin 370 I'd tested, that I checked all my photographs and notes from our January 2010 test. In fact, it is all-but identical, even down to minutiae such as the detailing of the ventilation slots and the lifting locker lids under the forward berth. So it seems that subjectively at least, the lighter and more lustrous teak finish that Marex offer is maybe more in keeping with the moulded countertops and exposed glassfibre parts that you wouldn't find on a walnut-clad Princess. Teak is also the most durable timber of them all, so if longevity is a concern, you cannot do better.

### POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Propelled by the most powerful engine option of twin D4-300hp sterndrives, we clocked a two way average top speed of 36.7 knots. It's worth noting that the Volvo diesels on our prototype boat were brand new – fewer than 3 hours on the clock – and that they were under-revving to the tune of 50rpm. So I think it's realistic to expect a similar top speed with looser engines and more finely-pitched freer-revving props, even when 375 owners take advantage of its very considerable storage.

Marex offers a remarkable range of engine options, nine in all, including shaftdrive and sterndrive, single and twin, with power ranging

Generous reversible seat between the navigator's spot and the dinette can accommodate two with space to spare



from 400hp to 600hp. There's even a twin 270hp V8 petrol version, presumably for Americans. At first glance, the choice seems straightforward; sterndrive for fuel efficiency and sporty handling, shaftdrive for resolute handling and easier and cheaper servicing, small for less speed and noise, big for more of both, and finally a single if you're a sensible Scandinavian and twins if you're any other flavour.

In the case of the 375, it's not that simple. Although our sterndrive boat did indeed dish up the sporty ride we'd been expecting, the shaftdrive version of this boat is also extremely responsive and provides all the agility you could ever wish for, even with the weight of the 370's aft cabin to lug around. Moreover, Marex's shaft drive boat is inordinately efficient. For example, at its absolutely most fuel efficient 26 knot cruising speed, our sterndrive 375 managed 1.85mpg – at the same speed, the 31 knot single 435hp shaft drive 370 we tested achieved just under 2mpg. Finally, Volvo's D3 diddy diesels present a further dilemma. These lovely engines are particularly light and compact, and exceptionally smooth and quiet; certainly far smoother and quieter than the 4-cylinder D4s which are the most raucous of the bunch. Plus, thanks to their lower torque and 220hp power output, the D3s are connected to far smaller sterndrive legs, the slender and slippery DPS rather than the bulkier DPH legs that the D4 and D6 need. So the twin D3-220hp sterndrives may be down on power but they fight back with lower drag and reduced weight, plus less noise and vibration, and even better service access than the already reasonable twin D4 installation.

So what to go for? If you want out and out speed, nothing will catch the 36.7-knot twin D4-300hp sterndrive boat. However, if you take advantage of the efficiency gains of singles over twins, or the myriad pluses of D3 installation, and instead fit either the single D6-400hp sterndrive or the twin D3-220hp sterndrive, as long as the Duoprops that Marex select rev freely to full RPM, I'd be surprised if you lost more than 4 knots off the top speed.

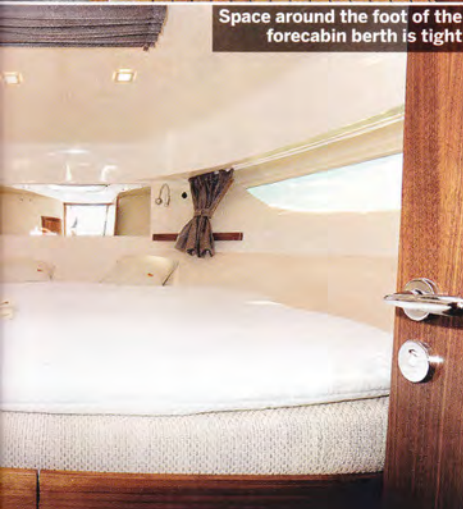


Engine hatches can be lifted with the table and seats in place



The mid cabin has plenty of storage and three opening ports for good cross ventilation





## A CLOSER LOOK WITH DAVID MARSH

### GENIUS CANOPIES

The two canopies stow inside vertical compartments in the superstructure, and can be fully rigged in around two minutes, even when you're under way. Genius.



### FENDER LOCKERS

Four of the principal fenders can be left tied on to the cleats then launched within seconds – brilliant for short handed crews and single handed boating.



### SOLAR PANELS

Such are the recent advances in solar technology that Marex found that three panels can power the fridge and freezer without any help from batteries.



### THE ENGINEROOM

Our engineroom sported the biggest option of twin D4-300hp, so just imagine how much room the 375 will provide with the single D6 sterndrive or shaftdrive, or the small 220hp diesels.



## THE RIVALS

### GRANDEZZA 39CA Price from £387,000

Slightly larger Scandinavian design with a similar focus on outstanding practicality plus oodles of useful storage.

### NIMBUS 365 COUPE Price from £300,000

Galley-up design is closer to the Marex than the galley-down Grandezza. Side door is a huge bonus.

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Seating wraps around three sides of the cockpit, including an infill over the transom gate, providing plenty of space for eight or more to sit



An abundance of chunky handrails makes it very easy to move around the 375, even on deck and under way

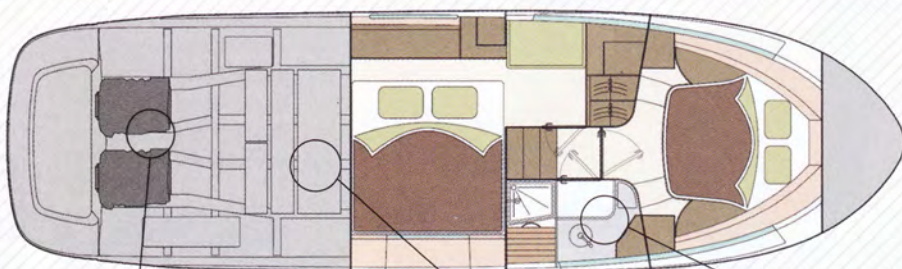


Impressive deck storage thanks to the big deck locker and the flush fender locker on the bathing platform

## THE DATA

LENGTH OVERALL 39ft 4in (11.99m)

BEAM  
11ft 8in  
(3.55m)



Marex offers nine different mix-n-match engine options: single & twin; shaftdrive or sterndrive; 400hp to 600hp

The fuel tanks are located in the perfect place, near the centre of gravity, so fuel load won't adversely affect trim

Our 370 had its toilet in the shower cubicle, but owners can instead site it where the hand basin is shown

### FUEL CAPACITY

165 imp gal (750 litres)

### WATER CAPACITY

75 imp gal (340 litres)

### DRAUGHT

3ft 2in (0.97m)

### RCD CATEGORY

B (for 12 people)

### DESIGNERS

Marex

### DISPLACEMENT

7.7 tonnes (empty)

8.7 tonnes (full fuel & water)



All of the 370's dimensions are generous, but especially the mid cabin berth; 6ft 7in x 5ft 10in (2.01m x 1.78m)



## *Its underlying appeal is it's a superb jack of all trades that has few obvious rivals*

That would still leave your 375 with a potential 30 knot fast cruising speed and all the other aforementioned advantages. As for the three shaftdrive options, the big 435hp single makes so much sense, with the intrinsic advantages of shaft-only magnified in single form. The 370 comes with a bow thruster and an optional stern thruster, and it is an incredibly easy boat to handle and manoeuvre at close quarters, even single handed, so the single doesn't present any handling challenges whatsoever.

### VERDICT

Although the 375 has replaced the aft cabin of its closely related sibling (the 370) with an aft cockpit, its underlying appeal is very similar

— it is a superb jack of all trades that has few obvious rivals. With its intrinsically high levels of on-deck safety and security, it is a family friendly cruiser that could easily be used in single shaftdrive form to potter along the inland waterways. Yet 375 owners can also happily head offshore, either in shaftdrive guise or in potentially 37 knot sterndrive form, safe in the knowledge that its sturdy construction, fully enclosed upper deck and excellent driving environment makes it suitable for intrepid voyages too. Marex really ought to call this boat 'the 375 versatile'. **MBY**

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### THE HELM VIEW

Dash: grey finish means no reflections, and simple flat shape means big chartplotters can be specified

The mullions comprise slender stainless plates, not chunky glassfibre columns, so the view out is excellent

Thoughtful design means owners only pay for their boat in a marina, not for their overhanging pulpit too

One size fits all: the wheel is adjustable, the seat slides fore and aft, and there's a hinging bolster too

A deep fiddle along the front of the dash would provide an extra space for securing odds and ends

Even with the aft doors and the sunroof fully open, the opening side windows usefully improve the ventilation

### PERFORMANCE

**TEST ENGINES** Twin Volvo D4-300 DPR sterndrive. 300hp @ 3,500rpm. 4-cylinder 3.7 litre diesels

#### MBY FIGURES

	2,100	2,300	2,500	2,700	2,900	3,100	3,300	3,450
RPM	2,100	2,300	2,500	2,700	2,900	3,100	3,300	3,450
Speed	16.0	19.6	22.9	26.1	29.4	32.5	34.9	36.7
LPH	48	56	62	64	77	90	103	114
GPH	10.6	12.3	13.6	14.1	16.9	19.8	22.7	25.1
MPG	1.52	1.59	1.68	1.85	1.74	1.64	1.54	1.46
Range	200	210	222	245	229	217	203	193

#### SOUND LEVELS dB(A)

	74	74	74	74	74	74	75	76
Helm	74	74	74	74	74	74	75	76
Cockpit	80	83	81	77	80	82	82	82
Saloon	74	74	74	74	74	74	75	76

### THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from £282,000 (single 435hp shaftdrive)

Price as tested £312,500 (twin 300hp sterndrive)

6hp bow thruster	standard
6hp stern thruster	£3,960
Teak-laid saloon floor	standard
Full teak-laid decks	£7,204
Aft cockpit canopies	standard
3.5kW generator	£12,099
1,800W inverter	£1,271
Integral fender storage	standard
Volvo Joystick control	£16,375
Heater + windscreen demisters	standard
= Options on test boat	

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on readings from onboard fuel gauges, your figures may vary considerably. All prices include UK VAT. 75% fuel, 25% water, 3 crew, no stores or tender or liferaft. 23°C air temp. F2 + very light chop for speed trials

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