

MOTORBOAT & YACHTING

MIGHTY MAREX

FIRST TEST of the brilliant 330 Scandinavia

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Words Jack Haines Photos Paul Wyeth

MAREX 330 SCANDINAVIA

A glorious late autumn day in Oslo allows us to put Marex's latest model to the test in the sort of conditions it was designed for



T

hese occasions are rare but from time to time there are instances where we get to test a boat in the exact environment and conditions that it was designed for. A late, bright autumn day in Oslo presented such an opportunity for the trial of the highly anticipated Marex 330 Scandinavia, which was launched at the Cannes show last September. There, it perhaps appeared a little incongruous rubbing shoulders

with the rakish sportscruisers and rows and rows of outboard-powered exotica but lashed to a pier in a windswept corner of central Oslo, with the doors shut and the heating pumping, the 330 is an incredibly enticing proposition.

The yard's reputation for practicality and attention to detail is second to none in this market but in designing the 330, Marex invited feedback from its network of dealers and, most importantly perhaps, its existing customer base to see what it was they wanted from the

next generation of boats. The result is not only tuned perfectly for its loyal following of owners, but also has broader appeal to anybody who cares about how easy a boat is to use and live with.

Examples of this are varied and plentiful but the most stark demonstration of this is at the helm where a sliding helm door grants excellent access to the starboard side deck directly from the steering wheel. These boats are often used by a couple and many will be operated by a single-handed skipper, so the ability to relinquish the driving controls and quickly be on deck with a line in your hand is hugely important. Not only that, on a sub-35ft boat it's an added benefit to have two access points into the saloon and is another way to draw some natural ventilation into the cabin. From stem to

stern, though, this thing is punctuated with clever ideas that, as Marex likes to say, "make the little things easy". Flip down the bench that's set inside the transom and you will find a high-pressure fresh-water washdown hose on an automatically furling reel. Pop up the hatches at the aft ends of the side decks and there are perfectly sized lined voids that can swallow all of the boat's fenders without gobbling up precious storage space inside the cockpit or anchor locker.

BELOW: Forward sunroof works on a reliable manual sliding mechanism

INSET: The dinette backrest flips to convert it into a two-person navigator bench for when the boat is on passage





LEFT: In good weather the cockpit can be opened up to the elements in a matter of seconds
RIGHT: The floating foredeck cushion is an optional extra



Note how the guardrails don't extend as far aft as they could, leaving the teak-capped bulwark free to be used as a step if the pontoon is higher than the boat. There are flamboyant touches as well, like the optional floating foredeck cushion, which can be chucked in the water and used as a buoyant sunbathing platform.

NATURAL HABITAT

There has not been a stone left unturned to ensure this boat is as functional as it can possibly be. The true beauty of the 330 is its year-round usability. I jest about it being out of place in a sweltering South of France but in truth its split main deck and twin sliding roof sections make it well suited to hot weather too.

With the mercury at a much lower ebb, the Marex feels right at home as it pulls out of the shadows of the high-rise buildings and we point the bow towards the smattering of islands to the south of the city. The air is still and crisp despite the efforts of the low winter sun, and the surface of the water throws up a perfect projection of the hull on its inky surface. These are the glory days of winter boating that a boat like the Marex can truly revel in.

I hesitate over the throttles for a moment; it feels uncouth to pierce the perfect mirrored blue with the brilliant white of the Marex's twin sterndrive wash but this playground is too tempting not to indulge in. The twin 270hp 3.0-litre diesels roar into life and the bow peeps towards the sky as the boat climbs majestically onto the plane and begins to run cleanly over the top of the water. The meaty throttles nudge on to their stops and the revs settle at their maximum before we top out at a speed of just over 36 knots. You could cruise at 30 knots quite comfortably but at 25 knots the engines are that little bit less intrusive and the boat settles into what feels like its natural fast cruise.

We are not going to learn a huge amount about the 330's seakeeping today but sometimes there is joy to be had in the sea being this docile, especially when you're behind the helm of a boat that handles as well as this.

There are two sides to Marex, there is the sensible, practical and family focused design of the boats and then there is the way they drive. You can have the boat with V-drive shafts but with the twin sterndrives of our test boat it is a joy to chuck around with ▶



Splendid isolation: The 330 Scandinavia is a gateway to glorious winter days on the water without the crowds

Slaloming through the perfect sea state with a drone buzzing overhead results in me wearing a smile as wide as the fjords

what feels like limitless grip and outstanding poise. Slaloming through this perfect sea state with the drone buzzing overhead results in me wearing a smile as wide as the fjords.

Single and twin engine options are on offer from Volvo and Mercury but this twin 270hp Mercury V6 setup has proved popular on the boats ordered so far. It's easy to see why when you consider the relaxed performance of these neatly packaged motors and the added benefit of the brilliant joystick system, which comes as standard with these engines. It's useful for berthing, of course, but on a boat which could well be used by one person, the Skyhook function, which holds the boat in place using GPS, means lines and fenders can be attached in a stiff breeze or raging tide without the boat moving. It all adds to the "make life easy mantra" Marex lives by.

TAKING POLE POSITION

The joystick is put to good use as we edge into a local island so photographer Paul can hop off to take some stills. Local knowledge is key when you're getting this close in and Espen, the co-owner of Marex who is at the helm for this manoeuvre, guides us in and out expertly. The bow is designed for stepping on and off with a flat edge and no anchor roller in the way. Our test boat has a stern anchor, as is the way in these parts, but even if you do have one forward it's fixed through the hull so as not to impede access from the bow.

I slot back into the helm seat and begin to perform for the camera, the backdrop alive with burning autumn colours. Part of what makes the 330 so enjoyable to drive is its brilliant driving position. The layout is simple but clear and by utilising the area



above the windscreen means there is space for two 12in MFDs and a run of easily referenced analogue dials. Marex has even developed its own seat sliding mechanism that uses a push button and gas ram so that you can glide the seat to any position along its runners. It could have used a standard seat-slide mechanism of course but that's not the Marex way.

We slip towards the shoreline and cosy into a rocky outcrop with a tired boathouse perched on top. The trees are blazing in the reflections on the water and the boat hovers on the surface, unperturbed by wind or current. Without the chilling effect of the breeze our heated cabin has become seriously toasty so we crack open the sliding door and whip away the aft canopies in a matter of seconds. This has always been a Marex

party piece but the latest design means you can pull out the curtain-style covers, secure and tension them all with one hand in about a minute. And a quick pull of the handle above my head slides the cockpit sunroof back to bathe the aft seating in weak sunshine. The speed with which this boat can go from enclosed to open is remarkable.

If any compromises have been made, it's on the lower deck where you feel the boat's sub-35ft dimensions most acutely. The master cabin is forward and the space is used intelligently ▶

It may bristle with practical touches but the 330 is a force to be reckoned with out on the water





ABOVE: Space is used cleverly in the master cabin and storage solutions are impressive
BELOW: Headroom is limited in the guest cabin but the berth is huge. INSET: The heads is well designed and headroom is good





It's a boat designed by boaters
for boaters - and that is what
makes it so special

SEE MORE
mby.com/m330s

but the design of the angled bed means that the person sleeping on the right hand side will disturb their partner if they have to get up in the night. There isn't space for two people to change at the same time, either, but there are some clever storage solutions including a very easily accessed void beneath the bed, which is the ideal size for swallowing suitcases and bulkier items.

MADE FOR TWO

The guest cabin bed, though very wide and comfortable, stretches beneath the saloon so headroom is limited but there is standing room for someone more than 6ft tall in the entrance way and plenty of effort has gone into drawing as much natural light into the space as possible.

The hull windows help but it's the large smoked glass panel above the entrance way that drenches this area in natural light via the windscreen and bolsters the feeling of space. In reality, it's probably quite rare that four people will be on board for any length of time (you can, rather amazingly, actually sleep eight thanks to both convertible dinettes on the main deck) and the accommodation definitely feels most well suited to a couple.

For that reason it's probably more important that the bathroom is a good size and it comes as a pleasant surprise to discover how spacious

this one is, especially with its separate shower cubicle, which has full standing headroom.

There is a premium to pay for this brand but you only need to glance at the thickness and finish of the teak to understand that the 330 is a cut above many of its competitors. There is quality everywhere you look and touch, from the upholstery to the woodwork and the doors on the lower deck – even down to the attractively finished and incredibly thorough owner's manual, which sounds like a given but is not something you can expect from every manufacturer.

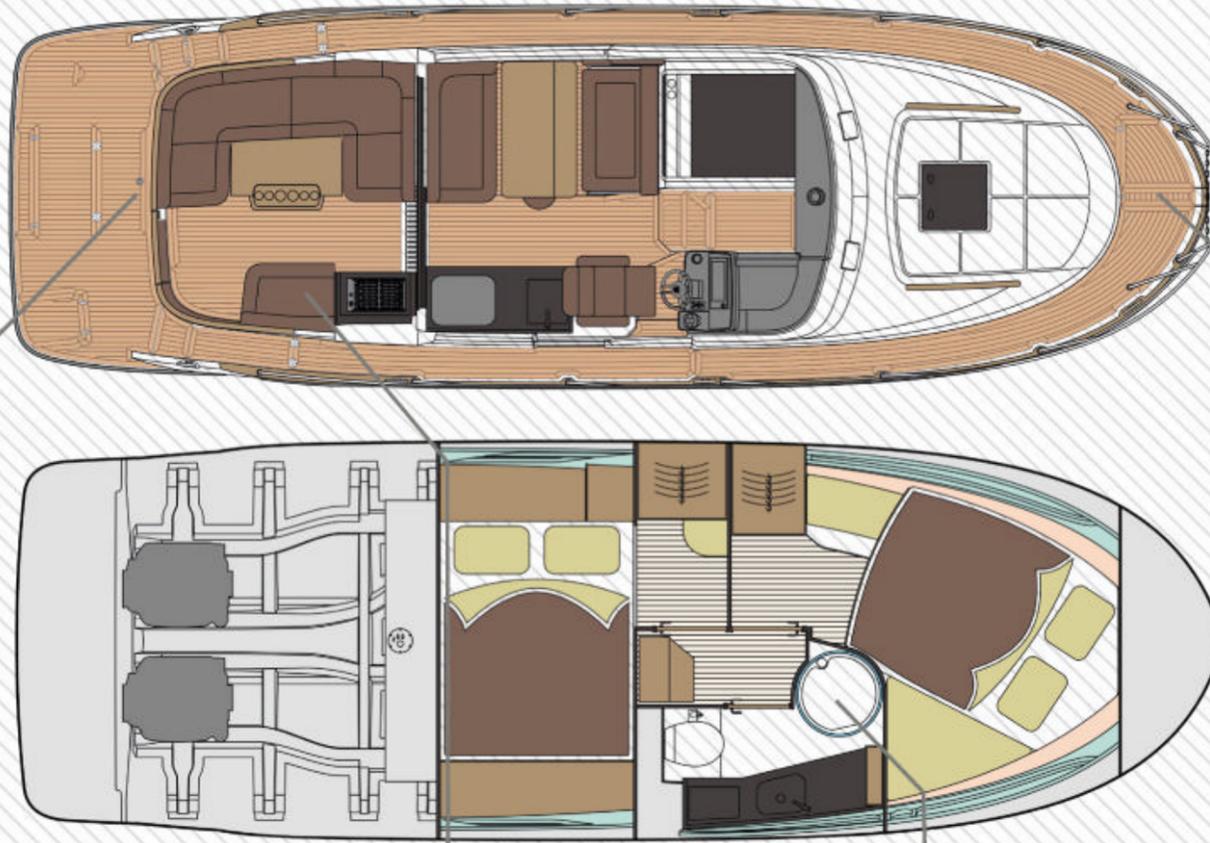
This family-run business has been building boats for nearly half a century and that shows in the meticulous way these craft are designed and built. The 330 is not a boat that has been designed under the influence of a marketing department or with an accountant's eye trained on the bottom line, it's a boat designed by boaters for boaters – and that is what makes it so special. **CONTACT** Wessex Marine +44 (0)1202 700702; www.marex.no

DIAL IN
You can't beat the ease and clarity of black on white analogue clocks



THROTTLES
Shared with Mercury outboards, they are huge. They feel nice in the hand, though

SIDE DOOR
It seems a simple addition but it transforms the main deck



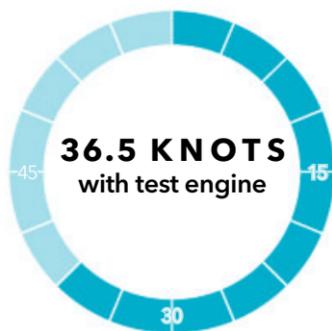
WASH DOWN
A high pressure fresh water hose is built in to the transom

STORAGE
The seat bases lift to grant quick access to lined storage voids

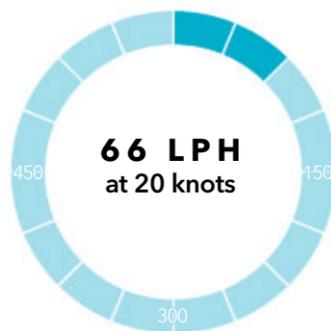
SHOWER
The cylindrical shower cubicle isn't enormous but it does the job

FOREDECK
This area is flat to make boarding from the bow as easy as possible

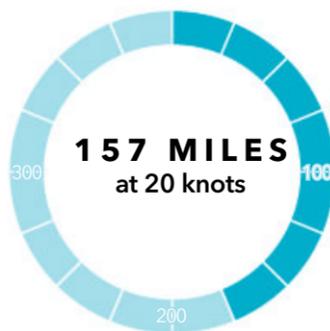
TOP SPEED



CONSUMPTION



RANGE



NOISE



PRICE



SPECIFICATION

LOA 34ft 4in (10.49m)
Beam 11ft 2in (3.4m)
Draught 2ft 9in (0.9m)
Displacement 5.5 tonnes (light)
Fuel capacity 650 litres
Water capacity 300 litres
RCD Category B for 8 people
Designer Marex

COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from €267,217 inc VAT
Aft anchor with lead rope €5,015
Stool on saloon table column €656
Rear-view camera €448
Courtesy lights €807
Hi-lo saloon table €1,695
Gas oven €1,410
High-pressure deck wash €1,675
Inverter combi 2,000W €2,130
Extended bathing platform €6,759
Solar panels €3,398

PERFORMANCE

Test engines Mercury Diesel 3.0L 270. 270hp @ 4,200rpm. 6-cylinder, 3-litre diesel.

		ECO					FAST	MAX
RPM	500	1,000	1,500	2,000	2,500	3,000	3,500	4,000
Knots	3.6	5.9	7.8	9.4	10.1	20.0	31.0	36.5
Litres per hour	2.4	6.8	16.4	31.8	41.0	66.0	89.0	120
Litres per mile	0.67	1.15	2.10	3.38	4.06	3.30	2.87	3.29
Range (NM)	780	451	247	154	128	158	181	158
Noise dB(A)	55	58	66	69	75	75	76	79

Calculated figures based on real-time readings, yours may vary considerably. Figures allow for 20% reserve. All prices include VAT. 50% fuel, 0% water, 3 crew + safety stores. 10 degrees air temperature, F1 and calm for sea trial.