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MAREX 390

Can the new 390 really live up to the multi-award-winning Marex flagship?

WORDS: Alex Smith





RIGHT: The new 390 is the smaller sister to the award-winning 440 flagship



According to Espen Aalrud, the boss at Norwegian builder, Marex, the plan is very straightforward. He simply wants to “build the best family sportscruisers in the world” and few would deny that his company is on the right track. Its recent 440 flagship

scooped top prize in its category at every major international awards scheme going, including Best of Boats, the European Powerboat of the Year and our very own MBY Awards. And while that presents the new 390 with a very tough act to live up to, the early signs are almost absurdly good...

OUTDOOR OPTIONS

We’re told that during the ten days of the Cannes Yachting Festival, Marex sold 22 of these new 390s and it’s not hard to see why. For a start, it adopts much the same aesthetic as the 440 and, in spite of its relatively modest length, it also uses much the same main deck layout. That’s broadly divided between a big secure aft cockpit and a saloon with a dinette and galley. The two zones are linked by a single-level deck and integrated by means of sliding doors and a vertical port panel that drops away out of view with a single tap of the button, so you don’t have to stand

there babysitting it as it descends into its cavity. If you then slide the built-in canvases around the cockpit, you generate what amounts to an unbroken cylinder of sheltered accommodation all the way from the transom to the helm.

A great start then, but it actually gets better at the back end because the aft platform makes great use of its integrated teak boxes with a removable table. In addition to excellent drained storage for your lines and fenders, that means you get a really charming aft-facing station for your morning coffee before you even step into the cockpit. It’s such a lovely feature that it can only be a matter of time before it makes its way up to the flagship 440.

As for the cockpit itself, that feels very much the equal of the larger 440. It’s huge and square and lined on all sides by enough seating to accommodate at least ten people. The teak table collaborates in that with big folding leaves and a sliding mechanism that keeps you just as involved on the starboard bench as you are at the port dinette. The security here is also superb, thanks to the raised wraparound mouldings, and the details are a pleasure too. There’s a big manual sunroof overhead, as well as pretty ambient lighting built into the underside of the gunwale-top teak railings; and there’s a cushion mounted on the inside of the transom gate, which means that, when you open it

SEE MORE
mby.com/m390



LEFT: With lots of storage, lovely quality, great shelter and seating for ten, the aft cockpit is absolutely first-rate

During just ten days at the Cannes Yachting Festival, Marex sold 22 of these boats



up and lock it in place, you get five cosy corner seats in a square space.

The steamed ash deck and Alcantara trim also feel very premium and the designs of the storage boxes and engine-room strike a chord too. The various seat boxes use cutaway cushions, linear mouldings and well-judged rams for easy one-handed opening. And once you're in, you get loads of volume, courtesy of the fact that the bottom of each compartment drops 10cm lower than the cockpit deck itself. But if you're concerned about what that does to the space in the engine bay, you needn't be. A light comes on automatically when you lift the hatch, displaying a ready-rigged ladder and a huge checkerplate platform ahead of the test boat's sterndrive set-up. There's plenty of space down here for a gyro and a generator and more than enough for Marex to engineer a V-drive option too. And it's beautifully insulated, so if you do opt for a gen-set, as most UK buyers will, you're likely to be all but oblivious to its muted rumble until you open the hatch.

As for the foredeck, that does seem a shade plain at first, with its simple (albeit beautifully executed) low-level island sun bed and its clean-cut walkaround decks. But with the anchor mounted on the stem, the slightly squared-off bow is really well used for a step-through forepeak and a bow ladder that lifts up and out for easy access to rocks and beaches.



You also get buoyant bow cushions that you can chuck into the water and use as lilos. The guardrails are lovely and high and, once again, whether on the toerail cappings, the decking, the seat boxes or the furniture, the teak work feels delightfully premium.

INTERNAL SPACES

The saloon is simply arranged around a port dinette and a starboard galley. The dinette is quite low-slung but so are those plunging side windows, so visibility, as well as comfort, is very strong. At the forward end of the dinette, you have to reverse the backrest to create the two-man co-pilot position but, as on the 440, it's a very successful spot, thanks to a lift-up teak table, a set of powerpoints and a bulkhead cushion that enables you to pop your feet up and face across to the skipper. The port-side dash is usefully low too, opening up the forward views both from the

co-pilot seats and from the dinette – and with a TV that drops down from the ceiling (rather than swallowing up worktop space at the galley), you can watch TV either from the internal dinette or angle the bracket for a great view from the external cockpit.

Like the larger 440, the 390 is also very much a cruising machine and it has the domestic systems to reflect that. You can have a two or four-ring hob (gas or electric) and in addition to three big fridges totalling 320L of volume, this boat also comes ▶

ABOVE: The fuel flow curve is virtually flat at everything from 21 to 36 knots

LEFT: Company owner Espen reckons the 390 might be the best Marex he's ever built



Swing-out stools and a reversible backrest add extra flexibility to the low-slung dinette

with a 590L water tank, which is huge by the standards of the sector. Both of the main deck dinettes transform into large double beds for occasional guests and there are curtains, both for the aft canvases and for the main screen for extra privacy. And actually, the deck layout works really well for that kind of application because, if you pop a couple of guests in the enclosed aft cockpit, those in the main cabins can get up and make breakfast or access the pontoon via the skipper's side door without causing any disturbance at all.

BELOW: Raising the bed wins extra breadth for easy access on both sides



The lower deck is equally well arranged. The entry point to the transverse midships cabin features a huge chest of drawers and a sizable changing zone beneath a bright skylight built into the port dash. A 2m x 2m berth enables you to sleep in whatever direction you like; and the port settee sits next to a big hull window, beneath the saloon dinette's raised mouldings, so it's a perfectly pleasant place to relax with a cup of tea. Further forward in the bow cabin, the owner's bed is substantially raised in pursuit of extra breadth and that works well too, creating plenty of space for access on both sides while still delivering the headroom at the forepeak to sit up in bed and read a book.



As for the starboard bathroom, that's good too – big enough for a separate shower with a decent seat and a beautifully designed one-piece shower door mounted on a clever runner system that saves space without overcomplicating the issue.

The balance is good, the grip is unrelenting
and the ride is commendably dry



FASTER THAN YOU THINK

This might be a 12.5-tonne boat but there's a fair bit of poke here. Within 15 seconds of putting the hammers down, we're sliding along at 30 knots and true to Espen's word, if we keep pushing on, we manage to top out at around 41 knots. As you would expect, given its moderate hull angles, generous beam and big volume, it's more comfortable running with the seas than charging headlong into the chop. But the balance feels very good, the grip at the props is unrelenting, it's commendably easy

to tweak the pitch and it's also impressively dry. In spite of lively winds stoking up some two and three-footers, and in spite of the fact that we're pushing the boat harder than you would tend to in these conditions, the only time we call upon our wipers is to chase away the cold Oslo rain.

Better still, the easy-planing hull shape and finely judged weight distribution mean that our cruising band is brilliantly unfussy. At everything from 21 to 36 knots, we're seeing the fuel flow hover at between 3.4 and 3.8 litres per mile for a range ▶

ABOVE: While the D6-440s will see this boat to a top end of 41 knots, it's more about comfort and refinement



FAR LEFT: There's lots of storage at the entry point to the guest double

LEFT: The huge bed is supplemented with a comfy port settee



Rest assured that the new Marex 390 is one of the very best 40ft sportscruisers we've seen



(accommodating 20% in reserve) of between 180 and 200 miles. That means you can pick whatever speed your guests and the conditions demand, without fearing too much for your wallet. And as for the helm position, that's nigh-on impossible to fault. The seat uses a push-button adjustment system so you don't have to root around for a catch beneath the seat base. The sunroof is manual too and while there's not quite the space on this model for a port door, the skipper's door and adjustable wheel are both present and correct. And so is the adjustable barrel that houses the wheel and throttles. You can move it fore and aft at the touch of a button, enabling you to enjoy the seat's excellent lumbar support without having to reach for the touch points.

With the skipper's side door leading directly out to a cleat, a side gate, a lines locker and a rail, this is already a very sound boat in terms of seamanship practicalities. There are neat little integrated teak-lined ledges just above the waterline at the aft end too, so you can plant a foot and grab a line without feeling unsafe. And in another nod to the sheer thoughtfulness behind this design, there's a glazing panel set into the lower half of the transom gate so you can see the edge of the aft platform from the helm when you're berthing stern-to. But to pop the cherry on the cake, an opening port window is an option we would certainly look to take. And we would also opt for a cockpit helm – partly to make single-

handed manoeuvres simpler, but more importantly, so the driver can remain at the heart of the party when the guests are straddling the threshold between the big internal dinette and the aft cockpit's socialising zone.

VERDICT

Smaller, more affordable and more manageable than the Marex flagship but still with a mighty dose of the award-winning 440 experience, this is a boat we can recommend without the slightest hesitation. There are quicker and prettier boats. And if you're happy to sacrifice a bit of length, pace and polish, the remarkably affordable Viknes 10 makes a great alternative thanks to its similarly sociable main deck and its well-specced standard package. But with its conceptual clarity, its build excellence and its promise of rock-solid residual values, those with the money and the ambition can rest assured that the new Marex 390 is one of the best 40ft sportscruisers we've seen.

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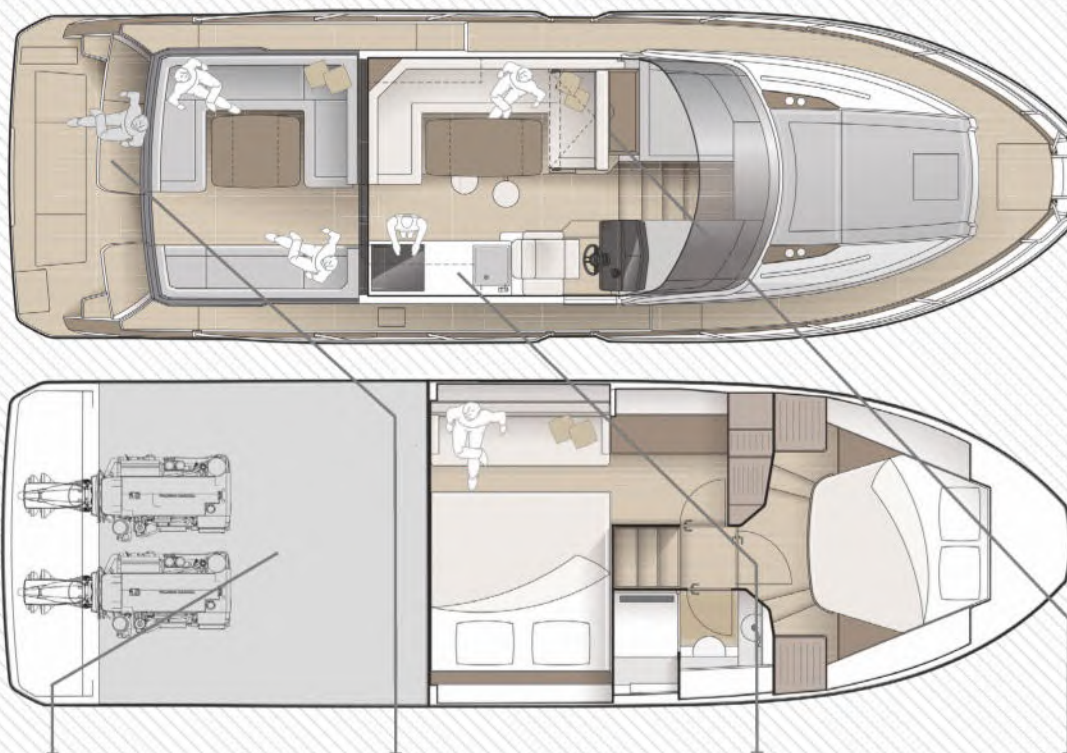
ABOVE: There's masses of space ahead of the stern-drive rig for a gyro and a generator



EASY ANGLES
Angled MFDs reduce the glare and increase the sense of intimacy

EASY ADJUST
You can move all the key touch points closer with the push of a button

EASY ACCESS
You don't have to go far to access the breaker panel



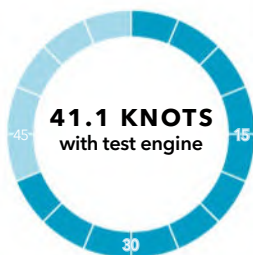
ENGINE OPTIONS
There's plenty of space for V-drives should you want them

SEATING FOR TWO
Fit the table and it's the perfect spot for a coffee by the water

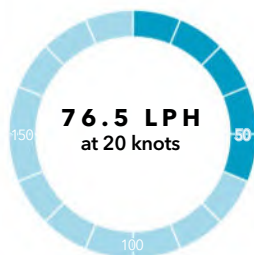
HIGH CAPACITY
590L of water and 320L of fridge space are great for longer cruises

CO-PILOT POSITION
There's a chart table, some power points and big views

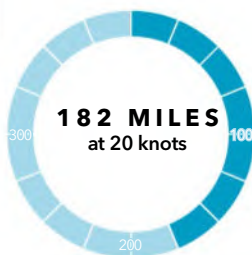
TOP SPEED



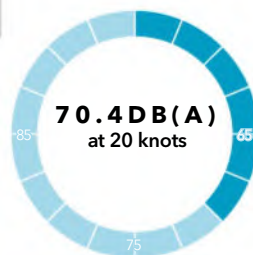
CONSUMPTION



RANGE



NOISE



PRICE



SPECIFICATION

- LOA: 39ft 4in (12.0m)
- BEAM: 12ft 3in (3.73m)
- DRAFT: 3ft 5in (1.05m)
- DISPLACEMENT: 12,500kg (light)
- FUEL CAPACITY: 860L
- WATER CAPACITY: 590L
- ENGINES: Twin D4-320s / D6-440 diesels

COSTS & OPTIONS

PRICE: from €600,000 ex VAT. Test boat includes the following options...
Twin Volvo Penta D6-440 upgrade
Alcantara upholstery
Aft coffee table
Oven beneath helm seat

PERFORMANCE

TEST ENGINES: Twin Volvo Penta D6-440s on sterndrives

	1,000	2,000	2,250	2,500	ECO	3,000	3,250	FAST	MAX
RPM	1,000	2,000	2,250	2,500	2,750	3,000	3,250	3,500	3,820
Knots	6.6	11.7	15.3	19.9	24.5	28.9	32.5	35.9	41.1
Litres per hour	9.0	56.0	66.2	76.5	84.2	107	122	135	181
Litres per mile	1.41	4.79	4.33	3.84	3.44	3.70	3.72	3.76	4.40
Range (Nm)	494	145	161	181	202	188	187	185	158

CALCULATED FIGURES based on real-time readings, yours may vary considerably. Range figures allow for 20% reserve. Boat tested with 68% fuel, 0% water, 2 crew + safety stores. 0 degrees C air temperature, F3 and 2-3ft seas for sea trial.