

BOAT REPORT



CONTINENTAL COCKTAIL

YARDING 27

It is somewhat appropriate, as we enter a new era of European integration, that two of the Continent's boat manufacturers should combine their talents to introduce a new name to the market. That name is Yarding, and we tested their 27ft cruiser in the Bay of Biscay.

ONE of Europe's largest boat manufacturers, Jeanneau of France, and the Italian prestige builder Ferretti Craft, have pooled their not inconsiderable resources and expertise to create a completely new range of motorboats from 27-42ft (8-13m).

The joint venture is called Yarding Yacht, and it will utilise the massive production facilities of Jeanneau while the styling, design and engineering concepts will all come from the Italians.

Bologna-based Ferretti currently produce just over 100 quality craft, up to 56ft, annually. However, under this new arrangement they intend to drop their smaller models, enabling their own yards to concentrate on still larger boats, while the Yarding banner maintains their presence at the lower end of the market.

Although renowned for their yachts, Jeanneau also manufacture around 1000 sportsboats and pêche promenades a year. These will still be produced by the parent company, with each range being given a stronger image to identify its place in the market.

Yarding Yachts will be built, parallel to the existing ranges, in Jeanneau's rapidly expanding facilities in western France. The 1500-strong Jeanneau workforce can be justifiably proud of their standards. Sufficient time is allowed in the construction of each boat to enable each worker to check



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his own work, at every stage, before the finished craft is thoroughly inspected and run up in the 'pool'. It is a system which is rarely bucked, seeing as the majority of the workforce have a financial interest in the company after the management buy-out in '87.

We visited France's Atlantic seaboard firstly to inspect the factory, and then to test the first model to come solely from Yarding Yacht, a fast 27ft family cruiser. The open, Med-style Prestige 41 conceived under the Jeanneau masthead last year (see Earl's Court Show report, MBM March '87) will be included in the range, with the hull also used for the basis of a 42ft (12.8m) flybridge model. Plans for a further flybridge cruiser running in at 36ft (11m) are on the drawing board.

Design

Ferretti have produced a variable deadrise hull, with a fine entry forward pushing into a deep, and then more medium, vee as it proceeds to the transom. A deadrise angle of 23°

amidships provides a kindly cutting edge to ensure a comfortable ride, while this flattens to 19° over the after sections, giving a more efficient planing area. Twin sprayrails fade into the hull well forward of the transom. This ensures as clear a flow as possible to the outdrives. A sandwich construction of end grain balsa is bonded between successive layers of woven rovings, to increase stiffness where internal mouldings have not been used.

The topside and superstructure lines are kept flowing, even though both are generous in bulk with full standing headroom below, so there are no hard edges to break the continuity. The mildly concave foredeck runs into a swept back screen, carrying the line aft to the topsides flanking the integral bathing platform.

Narrow style lines and a knuckle in the topsides accentuate the boat's length, as does the pseudo radar arch. This is devoid of what would be a head-height centre span — due to its overall height being kept in proportion

The Yarding is generously upholstered both for interior relaxation (above left) and sunbathing (above right), with an adequate galley for weekending.

to the rest of the boat — but does provide a useful landing for navigation lights and aials.

Exterior

The cockpit exudes a definite lounging, sun-seeking air. The L-settee to port and second bench opposite are both long and wide enough to be used as sunbeds, their low, bolster style seatbacks doubling as headrests for the crew. Six to eight can be sat around the table, or alternatively this can drop to provide an extension to the port-hand sun-lounger. All is well protected by the wraparound screen that continues a useful distance along the coaming.

The helm position seats two, although with the large brushed aluminium wheel sited almost central the skipper will have to sit or stand to one side if he is to be sociable. The console moulding is effectively but



simply laid out, keeping all the main instruments — tachos, log, trim gauges and compass — directly in front, but raised clear of the wheel. Other instrumentation is sited to the left, with tactile ready-use switches just below. Single-lever throttles fall readily to the right hand, and with Mercruiser providing the motive power in this instance, the Quicksilver power trim controls were incorporated in the handle.

Stowage at the helm for binoculars, sunglasses and so on is thoughtfully provided. Charts and pilot books can be slipped under a perspex covered moulding in the coaming opposite the helm. There is plentiful storage around the cockpit for bulk and small items alike, while fenders — albeit small ones — have their own compartment sited on the transom. The battery switches are also mounted in here.

Access to the bathing platform is secured from the main cockpit by a rather insubstantial perspex slide-in plate. This area is equipped with a pair of 8in cleats, ski hook and shower. Up

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at the sharper end of things, the foredeck is fashioned with a large locker, which hides the Lofrans electric windlass, and provides additional sunbathing space when fitted with the contoured cushions.

Deck hardware consists of a further pair of cleats forward — but none amidships — bow roller, pulpit and full head-height two-part canopy. The 6in side decks are moulded with a reasonable guiding toe-rail but care is needed when moving forward, the handrail on the coachroof — apart from hanging onto the screen itself — providing the only security once out of the cockpit until the small pulpit rail is reached.

Interior

Access below is via a wide, tinted sliding door that gives way into a large open plan area, with the dinette forward and galley immediately to port. With an extra infill the fiddled table moulding makes up to a comfortable 6ft 2in x 5ft berth. As in the cockpit, the seat cushions are of good proportions and generously upholstered. The soft furnishings to the deckhead sides and snap-in carpets, smartly clothe the internal moulding to give a light, practical interior. Natural light comes from the half a dozen opening ports, foredeck hatch and through the tinted main access itself. Sunken spots give the necessary illumination once the evening closes in.

Due to the Yarding's fine entry, underseat lockers are fairly shallow so smarter clothes are best placed in the half-height hanging locker sited just forward of the toilet compartment. This latter area is an easy to clean one-piece moulding, with integral basin and shower tray. The pump-out toilet is hidden beneath an extra hinged seat cover and the plumbing concealed.

Stowage under the sink is supplemented with some fiddled shelves, although a further mini-cupboard to rear of the compartment less usefully houses the 12V breaker panel. While it remains out of the firing line of the shower, a less humid site would be preferable.

The galley is adequate for week-ending with stowage limited to a pair of lockers outboard of the two-burner gas hob and stainless sink. A hinge-down flap will cover these when not in use, while the space below the worksurface houses a further

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cupboard and fridge.

A door adjacent to the galley gives access to a separate cabin, whose ample 4ft 6in-wide berth stretches athwartships under the cockpit. Although there is standing headroom here, it is easier to don the day's boating attire whilst sitting on the small settee adjacent to the half-height hanging locker.

Apart from this, there is little further stowage for clothes. Hatches beneath the berth only give access to the shower pump and bilge, and a small locker in the forward bulkhead contains the AC breaker panel (mains ring and calorifier are extras costing a total of £750).

Engines

The cockpit sole by way of the engine compartment is moulded to include the side and transom benches for the various settees. The main advantage to the skipper is that when this huge hatch is raised, and supported on the very able gas struts, he has full-length and-breadth access to the whole compartment. Unfortunately, this excellent idea is somewhat compromised in that the hatch hinges from mid-cockpit, rather than at the transom. This means the compartment is not readily accessible from the security of the cockpit, only from the bathing platform.

Our test boat was fitted with the twin diesel option of a pair of Mercruiser five-cylinder D183s, producing 150hp apiece. This installation is not only the most expensive, running in at some £12,000 more than the equivalent horsepower Volvo petrols, but obviously helps concentrate weight towards the stern of the vessel. This is particularly so when the fuel and water tanks are also mounted aft, together with the battery boxes and calorifier.

If diesel power is preferred, Yarding



offer a weight and price-conscious single 200hp installation — at £52,600, over £8000 less than our test boat — while the most potent option of twin 205hp petrols should turn in speeds of around 40 knots.

All cables and piping are either ducted or securely clipped out of harm's way. Our only major quibble regarding the installation was the location of the fuel/water separators. They are attached to the central engine bearer, tight between the engines, and were so low down as to be tricky to check alongside the pontoon, making it pretty well impossible in any type of seaway when the engines are hot. We are told this problem is under consideration by the manufacturers.

Our demo boat had yet to be fitted with fire extinguishers, and insulation had only been fitted to the reflective surface of the 77gal (350lt) stainless steel fuel tank. An automatic electric bilge pump and a manual unit are fitted as standard.

Handling and performance

Setting through the protective breakwaters of Les Sables d'Olonne some 100 miles north of Bordeaux, we could see why this attractive fishing port doubles as one of France's major surfing resorts. Steady, well behaved Atlantic rollers readily heap up as they make their way across the shelving coastline, while if you need an even fuller sea for trials, the rocky foreshore to the north of the harbour reflects the swell to give a handy, boisterous test-track.

The medium-deep vee of the Yarding took this steep sloop in its stride, slicing a dry, comfortable ride through the head seas, whilst ensuring a predictable easy control passage running before them.

Responsive to the power steering, the hull tracked precisely and turned smartly under full power, although with the heavy twin-diesel installation in the stern it was necessary to keep the drives well tucked in the majority of the time, especially when accelerating onto the plane. On this latter point, although adjustable trim tabs were not installed, we found the transom to be fitted with a pair of fixed tabs to generate more lift aft. Conducting our speed runs in these conditions proved tricky with only limited shelter.

We measured a top speed at

3600rpm of 29.5 knots; Yarding claim a figure into the low thirties which would seem reasonable given the prevailing conditions. Consumption at these revs will be in the order of 15.5gph (72lph), while dropping to 3000rpm gave 24 knots and an estimated cruising range of 200 miles at 9.9gph (41lph). During a steady passage into a lumpier chop, the boat maintained an easy 16-knot planing speed at 2300rpm.

A combination of twin diesels and unfinished insulation produced higher than average sound readings, hovering around the 90dB(A) mark in the cockpit. When the revs were cut to 2500, they panned out to 86dB(A) in the cockpit and a more reasonable 78dB(A) in the main cabin.

Conclusions

Our test boat was the first off the production line so inevitably there are one or two areas that need tidying — repositioning of the fuel filters being a case in point. However, as a four-berth family cruiser this first European motorboat must be a strong contender at the more opulent end of the market.

It can take care of its occupants in a comfortable, relaxed style in terms of general layout and, just as important, in its sea-keeping ability. By Yarding's own admission, the market for the twin-diesel model that we tried will be limited, but there is favourable choice of power options to balance this well found continental cocktail.

Loa	27ft 4in (8.35m)
Hull length	26ft 3in (7.99m)
Beam	9ft 10in (3.00m)
Draught (legs raised)	1ft 9in (0.55m)
Displacement	3.0 tons approx
Fuel	77 gal (350lt)
Water	22 gal (100lt)

Price ex VAT
with twin Volvo 146hp petrols £48,482
as tested with twin Mercruiser 150hp diesel D183s £61,052

Builder: Yarding Yacht, BP83, 85503 Les Herbiers, France.
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