

**MOTOR  
BOATS** **TESTED**

# Aquador 33HT

**As one of the most exciting launches at the London Boat Show, we didn't waste any time in getting afloat on Aquador's new flagship**

REPORT BY MARK TURLEY

**Mark says...**



Aquador's new 33HT made a big impression when it was launched at ExCeL in January, so I was keen to get behind the wheel to see if its on-water performance could live up to its super-inviting layout.

**T**his Finnish builder has had a 30-footer in its line-up for some time now – the wheelhouse-toting 32 Cabin – so why has it produced another model at much the same size, given that both offer two separate cabins and a protected helm?

First off, the 33 has been designed from the outset with twin engines in mind – in this case

Cummins MerCruiser sterndrives complete with Axis joystick control. And while the 32 has a wheelhouse saloon with two cabins below decks, the hardtop-style 33 majors on a more sporty and truly sociable open cockpit arrangement. Things are still pretty inviting downstairs though, with a layout that boasts a very inviting main cabin with a dinette-cum-lower saloon seating plan as well as two separate cabins amidships.

**Design & build**

The 33's all-new hull deserves a line or two because it sports a surprisingly deep vee. This is good news when it comes to ride comfort but it doesn't usually help when you are trying to make the accommodation as commodious as possible. It takes a clever designer to find the right balance between the two and not end up with areas that feel pinched, especially those towards the bow.

Happily the Aquador team are masters at this and down below the main cabin is big enough for six adults to sit and chat around the forward dinette as though they were in the snug of some wood-panelled club.

Returning to the hull shape, it's worth noting that the main chine, which is a particularly wide 30cm, doesn't sit flush with the topsides; instead it leads on to a further knuckle where the blue gelcoat meets the underwater sections. It appears that it is this tweaking around the waterline that has allowed for the deeper vee without losing out on internal volume.

Naval architecture and a smart cabin aside, it's



Underwater sections sport a deeper-than-expected vee and a two-stage chine to increase interior volume.



**FACTFILE**

**Aquador 33HT**  
LOA: 32ft 9in (10.0m)  
PRICE: from  
£233,430  
TOP SPEED: 33 knots





Although the helm console looks fairly busy everything falls neatly to hand. Twin bucket-style helm seats provide a fantastic view out

the well-protected cockpit that really impresses. The same sociable arrangement below decks is echoed on deck, with room for six around the aft seating, while across the helm there is seating for three. A fair portion of the cockpit enjoys the shelter of the hardtop and the warmth of the sun through its large, opening sunroof but if the weather closes in, simply pull out the awning from the rear of the hardtop and attach the side canopies to enclose the cockpit in a matter of minutes.

#### Design & build

Good-looking hull and superstructure, plenty of comfort



#### Exterior

What is always noticeable about Aquador's craft is that not only does the builder go to great lengths to use every single bit of space but it never loses sight of the fact that people need to feel safe in order to enjoy their boating. The 33's coamings are a good height, topped with handrails. There are more handrails running along the superstructure and the side decks boast substantial raised

A moulded step locker leads to the side deck



gunwales, and not just a lippy toerail. In addition the guardrails are fabricated with a solid mid-rail rather than a simple wire, and we particularly like the easy access side decks; not quite walkaround but pretty close.

The yard takes the same practical view when it comes to deck stowage and any void is pressed into service with lockers in the bathing platform, a sizeable 'boot' in the transom, the usual seat lockers and other less obvious compartments hidden here and there. The designer has even dropped an extra moulding into the chain locker, so warps won't get entangled with the ground tackle.

The C-shaped cockpit dinette is huge and even if it isn't completely protected by the neatly proportioned hardtop, it is sheltered from the wind. The fiddled table can be dropped at the press of a button to form a vast, sheltered sunbed, and to keep the crew happy there is a drinks locker and a wet-bar with room for an optional fridge and barbecue. And to take care of the smaller items – such as the all-important corkscrew and pilot guide – there are no less than three sets of drawers. You'll never have to hunt around the depths of some cavernous locker again.

#### The helm offers excellent visibility

The hardtop enclosure works well, not only in providing protection but also by letting in plenty of light – thanks to the electric roof being largely clear – plus the windscreen and side windows offer an uninterrupted view for the skipper and his two companions. All three seats have bucket-type support with the helm's bench seat separated by an armrest which drops away in the most delightfully engineered way.

#### Exterior

Great in-or-out cockpit and good side deck access



#### Accommodation

A short run of those tricky offset treads gets you through the sliding companionway door and down into the inviting main cabin. Finished in the yard's usual cherrywood, this area is given an extra dose of natural light thanks to a deckhead skylight positioned beneath the



The beautifully engineered armrest for the helm seat is as much fun to operate as the throttle



The two-part sunroof lets in plenty of light and fresh air



Narrow but adequate platform



The sociable cockpit is a great spot come rain or shine with a C-shaped dinette and catering facilities



Large scuppers are incorporated into the side decks



Although not a true walkaround the raised gunwales and solid guardrails are the next best thing, but the teak decking is, as ever, an optional extra



## ENGINE OPTIONS

As the 33HT was designed to satisfy the demand for a twin-engined Aquador, there are three twin options on offer – a pair of 220hp CMDs complete with the Axios drive, and either twin 260hp or 300hp Volvo Penta units. There is also one single engine alternative – a 370hp Volvo D6.



Thanks to the hardtop and the awning, this cruiser almost gains the protection of a wheelhouse

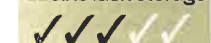
The lockers themselves are a good depth and, as with every other storage area, they are fully moulded out. It was also good to find a couple of handy drawers in the seat bases, along with the usual lockers under the cushions. The dinette table also drops to form a very good-sized double, the forward section of the settee's backrest popping out to increase legroom.

The galley boasts plenty of storage with a useful mix of eye-height, countertop and drawer stowage, plus the yard has remembered the all-important gash bin. We were also pleased to find an extractor fan incorporated over the two-burner, diesel-fired hob, however this is the only means of cooking, unless you plump for the cockpit griddle or you persuade Aquador to fit a microwave in lieu of one of the cupboards.

The toilet compartment is adequate in size and incorporates showering facilities, made possible by the addition of a moulded seat that drops down over the standard-spec electric toilet. There are a couple of small cupboards in here too, but it would have been useful to find a shelf for wash bags and a cover for the opening port to hide one's modesty, because, as with just about every

### Accommodation

Sociable saloon but the midships cabins lack storage



other manufacturer, Aquador has omitted to fit this port with opaque glass. We are baffled why builders haven't cottoned onto the fact that no one really needs to see out or into a toilet compartment.

The side-by-side midships cabins lack decent clothes storage

### Performance & handling

We are not as familiar with Cummins MerCruiser Diesel (CMD) sterndrives as we are Volvo Penta sterndrives it has to be said, and in an ideal world it would have been useful to jump on a 33

powered by a pair of Volvo D4s for comparison. Sadly we couldn't but it was pretty obvious the 2.8lt CMD units aren't as smooth or as lively as the Swedish competition. Having said that they still delivered a very useful top-end speed of 33 knots and a good spread of cruising speeds; >>

The main cabin – split between the 'club house' dinette and useful galley – is overrun with Aquador's signature cherrywood joinery

windscreen. Doors either side of the steps give access to the two separate sleeping cabins that lie side by side across the beam of the boat, with their mattress areas running lengthways under the cockpit. The port-hand one is the slightly larger of the two, its double running to 4ft 6in wide, whereas the starboard berth measures 4ft wide.

You'll find a seat and standing room in and around both the cabin doorways and, for the most part, acceptable headroom over the berths, though the cockpit sole does start to

impinge the further aft you go.

Both cabins are a bit short on clothes stowage too. One cabin has a hanging locker and the other has a couple of small cupboards, but both are treated to a wide shelf running lengthways and a bits tray.

Overall, the side-by-side layout does work, but there is no doubt you miss out on the space that a forward master would bring, with both cabins here feeling like they belong to a slightly smaller boat than the 33.

Back in the main cabin there's decidedly more elbowroom, with a generous depth and height to the U-shaped settee as it arcs around the smart wooden table, the corners of which flip up to help people shuffle along the seats. The backdrop of wood-faced lockers that run above the seat backs helps make up for the lack of stowage in the cabins and gives this area an inviting 'gentleman's club' feel.

If there's space for it, Aquador will fit a drawer!



Offset treads lead you down to the main cabin



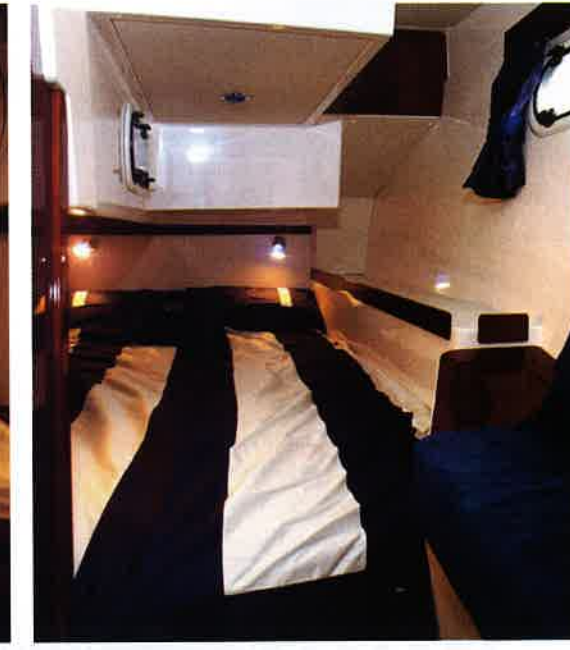
The skylight above the galley helps lighten things up



A moulded drop-down seat makes showering easier



The berth in the starboard cabin is slightly more generous than the port-hand one but both suffer from a lack of headroom due to the overhead moulding





## Standard spec includes heating

3200rpm delivering the sweet-spot speed of 25 knots while turning in nearly 2mpg.

The hull itself handles cleanly and certainly makes short, comfortable work of clipping across the wave tops but the trim tabs need some attention to help level the boat up. This could be down to the sharp, tucked-in underwater sections and soundly constructed superstructure.

The helm feels pretty busy – largely due to the Axis controls that have a host of buttons to ponder over – but overall it is tidily laid out and

easy to find what you want. The large windscreens offer excellent visibility and there is little chance of getting fogged up thanks to the standard-spec demisters and heating.

### Performance & handling

A clean runner but we'd go for the Volvo Penta D4s

✓✓✓✓✓

### Specification & value

There are some good hardtop-toting boats around this size with price tags hovering around the £200k-mark for an on-the-water boat, such as Sealine's sharp-looking SC35 and the Leader 10 from Jeanneau. These may lack some of the traditional warmth that the Aquador exudes and while there is no denying the Finnish yard's eye for detail, overall quality and useful spec – which includes heating and cockpit teak – there is some very likeable competition out there.

Of course if you don't fancy the sophistication of the Axis sterndrive system, you can shave several thousand pounds off the price by opting for a couple of 260hp Volvo D4s. Having

### Specification & value

Quite pricey compared to its likeable rivals

✓✓✓✓✓

said that, you will probably still want to add in a bow thruster, so it's swings and roundabouts to a degree, and one way or another this is really a £240k-plus boat.

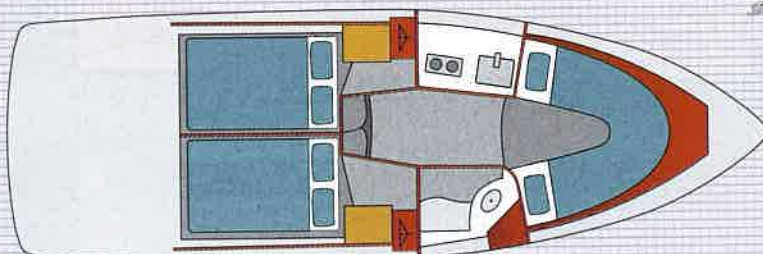
## MBM verdict

The cabin layout might have its drawbacks but there's a lot to like about the 33, not least its hardtop-protected cockpit and Aquador's smart and inviting fitout. If fitted with twin Volvo D4s, it would have got an 8.

MBM rating

✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ 7/10

## Aquador 33HT technical data



### specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	32ft 9in (10.0m)
HULL LENGTH	30ft 9in (9.4m)
BEAM	11ft 3in (3.4m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 5in (1.0m)
DISPLACEMENT	5.2 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	110gal (500lt)
WATER CAPACITY	35gal (160lt)

### key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	10in (25cm)
HEADROOM UNDER HARDTOP	6ft 4in (1.9m)
STARBOARD CABIN BERTH	7ft 0in x 4ft 0in (2.1 x 1.2m)
PORT CABIN BERTH	7ft 0in x 4ft 6in (2.1 x 1.3m)



### performance

Engines	twin Cummins MerCruiser Diesel QSD 2.8 ES sterndrives
Configuration	4cyl, 2.8lt, 220hp @ 3600rpm
Conditions	wind NE'ly, Force 3, sea slight
Load	fuel 75%, water 0%, crew 3

Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2700	18.5	11.0	50	1.68	148	78
3000	22.8	12.3	56	1.85	163	79
3200	25.4	13.2	60	1.92	169	79
3500	29.2	15.8	72	1.84	162	79
3850	33.0	20.5	93	1.61	142	80

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. These figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temperature, crew numbers, hull fouling, fuel quality and other issues. Noise readings in dB(A) were recorded at the helm.

### prices

STANDARD BOAT with twin CMD 220hp Axis sterndrives	inc VAT £233,430
BOW THRUSTER	£4435
HEATING	standard
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	£3394
SHOREPOWER	£1861
COCKPIT TEAK DECKING	standard
COMMISSIONING & ANTIFOUL	£2270

**BOAT AS TESTED £253,170**

ENQUIRIES MGM Boats Tel: 02380 456318  
www.mgmboats.com

### the rivals



#### NIMBUS 335

From £190,000  
More coupe than cockpit, this model only sports a single engine but if you like how Aquador goes about things then you ought to check out this Nimbus too.  
www.offshorepowerboats.com



#### JEANNEAU LEADER 10

From £198,335 (twin D4s)  
The new Leader range incorporates lots of windows but the Prestige interior styling remains much the same. Spacious cockpit and two decent cabins.  
www.jeanneau.com



#### SEALINE SC35

From £183,418  
Excellent hull and sharp styling plus loads of space inside and out, including two cabins. Good-sized saloon and a toilet cubicle with a separate shower stall.  
www.sealine.com