

Bavaria 25DC

It might be a 25-footer, but this stylish vessel is very much a sportsboat, even with the diesel engine option. **REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON**

There was a time when 21ft marked the upper end of the sportsboat scene in the UK. But no longer. With more demand for larger dayboats and weekenders, the market is moving upscale.

Bavaria's latest motorboat is a sleek 25-footer that comes with powerful petrol and turbo-diesel engines, stunning good looks and true sportsboat appeal.

Unfortunately, this particular roost is currently ruled by the Windy 25 Mirage, a boat so impressive that it leaves most rivals in its wake. Its only weakness is price and this is what Bavaria are hoping to exploit. At a starting price of £39,649 its new 25DC undercuts the cheapest Windy Mirage 25 by over £30,000.

DESIGN & BUILD

Like Windy, Bavaria have chosen to leave the mini-sportscruiser path, and head off into a world where style, performance and handling rule the roost, and cabin space is just a necessary evil.

As a result, the 25DC looks quite petite when compared to many of its competitors, and certainly those which hail from the USA. Place it alongside a Maxum 2400, for example, and it would appear to be the smaller boat.

However, in this context small is beautiful, and to our minds the 25DC ranks alongside the Windy as one of the prettiest 25ft sportsboats on the market. Blue and white simplicity is complemented by a low profile and a long, sweeping screen. The result is a clean and sophisticated craft.

Below the waterline, the slighter dimensions are explained by a sharp deadrise

of 27° amidships and 22° at the transom. This is great for handling and seakeeping, but doesn't do much for a boat's beam, which makes the designers' decision to supply side decks a brave one, worthy of respect.

The inevitable result is a rather narrow cockpit that nevertheless succeeds in cramming a lot into a small space. A big sunpad, a U-shaped bench, a wet-bar and two bolster seats are included, plus a decent area of integral bathing platform.

Quite rightly, in a craft that is all about dayboating, the cabin plays second fiddle space-wise. Lack of headroom is the main bugbear, but it does carry an air of afterthought. The entrance is tight, squeezed by the (arguably unnecessary) steps up through the screen to the foredeck, while the

✓✓✓✓
Not an innovative craft, but one with pure sportsboat style.

galley is stuck in a corner, away from the companionway and natural ventilation.

ACCOMMODATION

If accommodation is what you desire, then there are clearly going to other 25ft boats better suited to your needs. However, don't be fooled by the Bavaria's DC (Day Cabin) tag: the cuddy is well up to a spot of overnighting or even weekendng.

Decked out in a mix of fabrics and plenty of the builders' favoured mahogany cabinetry, it is very European, and looks like more than just a storage area or temporary shelter.

A vee-dinette and a tapered table, which make up into a double berth, can seat four or five people with sitting headroom and plenty

of light coming from the three portholes and an overhead hatch. Lined storage bins are hidden under the seats, and a deep shelved locker, integrating a useful 'bits' tray, is supplied for clothes.

A portable toilet, plumbed to a holding tank as standard, is tucked out of sight.

The location of the galley will not be to everyone's liking, but its importance is considered low in a boat of this type and, short of shifting the entire interior around, it would not be very easy to solve the problem.

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The cabin is good for overnighting, but has a questionable layout.

EXTERIOR

Although there is no walkthrough between bathing platform and cockpit, the side decks make boarding very straightforward. Non-slip, and 6in wide, they run from the bow all the way aft to the teak-laid integral platform.

Once past the spacious sunpad, which also houses a locker for warps and fenders, you find a compact but sociable cockpit. Hemmed in by side decks and old-school dimensions, this intimate space oozes sportsboat glamour, with its wraparound screen, clean white mouldings and upholstery, and a liberal sprinkling of stainless steel fittings.

A comfortable U-shaped bench makes

temporary crew members feel at home, ably assisted by a Blaupunkt sound system and a bar area. The fridge here is good for more than a few bottles of beer, and it is complemented by an astonishingly deep under floor locker set into the GRP liner.

Two sporty bolster seats look after the business end of things, although a small sink curiously positioned next to the navigator does detract a little from the otherwise drive-focused layout.

The console's inventory is strong, with trim gauges for the tabs, a standard-fit Raymarine Bidata speed and depth display, stainless steel bezels around the instruments and a neat

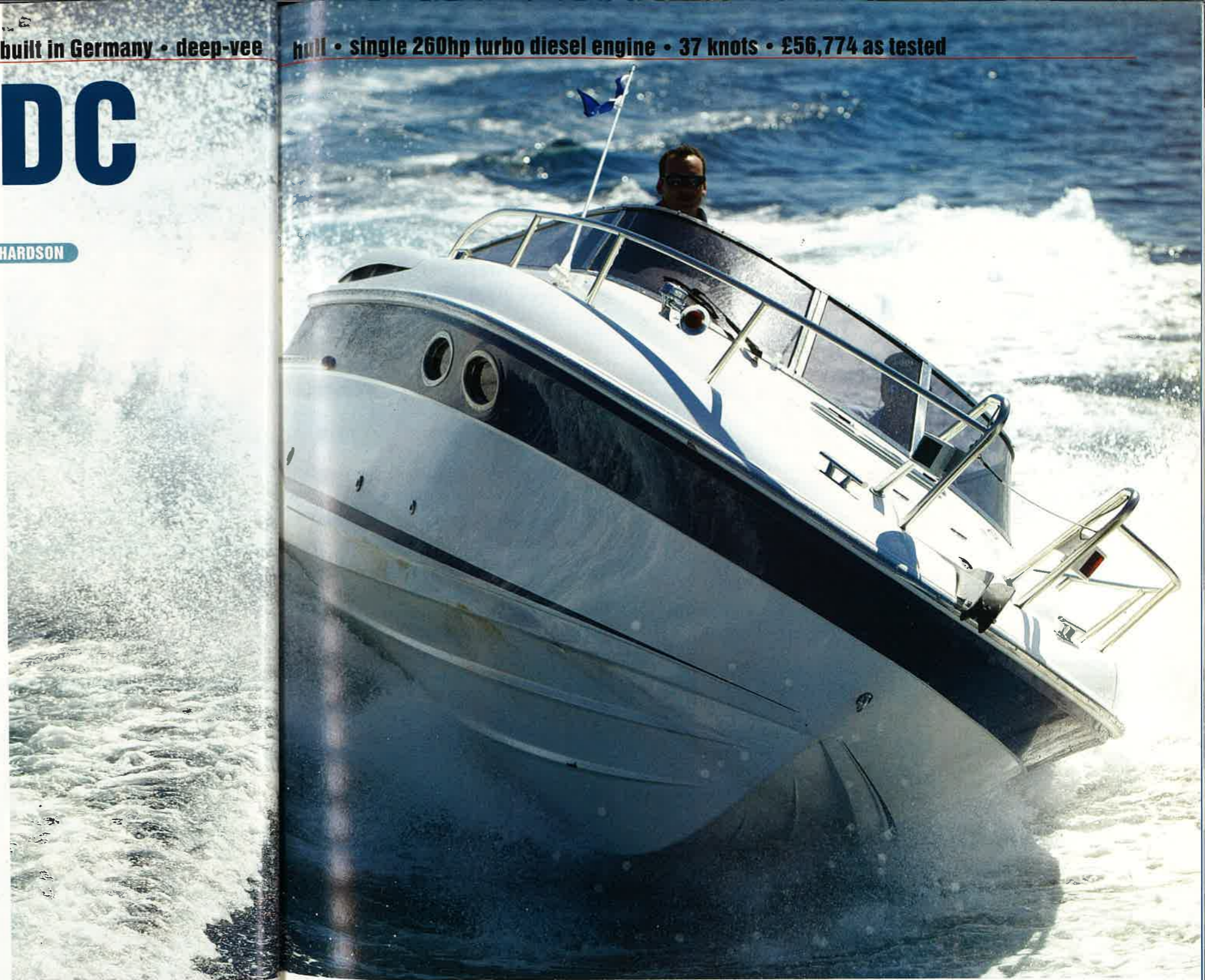
touchpad with which to control the single wiper, the horn and the enginebay blowers.

Three gripped steps in the moulding offer an alternative route to the non-slip foredeck, which is bordered by guardrails leading up to a good-sized anchor locker.

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A very stylish design that is compact without being tight.

ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

The price of unleaded means the choice between diesel and petrol engines on larger craft is an easy one. At the sportsboat end of



Below The cuddy is well up to a spot of overnighting but the galley (below right) is poorly situated



Above U-shaped seating and an insert for a table

the market, however, the power-to-weight ratio and purchase price arguments are harder to resolve.

Following the 'less is more' principle, Bavaria offer just two options: a single petrol sterndrive or a single diesel sterndrive.

For those happier with the smooth running and lower initial outlay associated with petrol engines, the 320hp Volvo Penta 5.7L GXI should do the trick. Our test boat, on the other hand, came with the 260hp Volvo KAD44 6cyl turbo diesel, offering far cheaper running costs for a weighty £10,000 price premium.

Both engines offer plenty of oomph, so affordability and frequency of use will decide which is the right option for you.

Getting at the unit couldn't be more straightforward, the sunpad lifting up at the touch of a button to reveal a huge enginebay.

Below The cockpit is rather narrow but nevertheless succeeds in cramming a lot into a small space



Even with the big KAD44 inside, the compartment is very spacious. Deep and wide, it has a basic but tidy finish and even offers plenty of flat surface that could be turned into extra storage space. On the flip side, such a deep bay could do with some kind of step to help you down into it, and there is precious little soundproofing. Most of

✓✓✓
Only two engine options but they are probably the ones you'll want.

the service points are sited on a timber-faced bulkhead, with only the fuel filters a little difficult to get at.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Designing the 25DC for sportsboat performance rather than on-board space has paid dividends in the way it drives.

The ride is stable and predictable enough to instil confidence in any helmsman and the smooth, constant power delivery of the 260hp turbo diesel compliments it perfectly. Push the throttles forward and the boat accelerates steadily forward, the ride livening as the hull settles on to the plane at around 2400rpm and 17.6 knots. For cruising, you can run all day at 3000rpm, and a comfortable 26.4 knots; if conditions worsen, 2500rpm returns just over 25 knots. Flat out the boat reached a useful 37.8knots — about what we would expect for a boat of this size and power.

This should be quick enough for most people but with the hull handling so tidily, the extra 50hp available from a petrol engine, which is also some 130kg lighter, is an appealing thought.

Although far from flat calm, conditions on our test day were never going to trouble a hull as refined as this. Even taking the wash of another boat horribly wrong could do nothing to ruffle its fenders. No spray found



Above No walk-through transom but a useful boat



Above The enginebay area is extremely spacious

its way inboard, and the hull's reaction to trim (both from the leg and from the standard-spec tabs) was precise and immediate.

Grip on the water is also excellent, and we pushed it into full-speed, tight turns without any qualms. The hull does lean in enthusiastically, but then it soon levels out into a more sensible angle. Under these strains it does lose speed, but better to slow down than slide out, as flatter-bottomed boats have a tendency to do.

At the helm, the adjustable carbon-fibre steering and throttle are placed exactly where you want them. The deep bolster seats provided for the helmsman and navigator keep you firmly locked in place but a few more handrails wouldn't go amiss.

Although the long sweeping screen beats away most of the wind, the lack of soundproofing in the enginebay means that the rasp of the supercharger is very audible. Whether that is a good or bad thing depends on your point of view. Heard from a distance, certainly, the diesel-engined 25DC gives off a fantastically throaty roar, not dissimilar to a petrol V8.

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Not the fastest boat on the water, but it does handle very well.

SPECIFICATION & VALUE

Excepting the extremes of the premium-priced Windy 25 Mirage and the budget Cranchi 24 Turchese, prices for this type of boat generally range from £40,000 to £60,000 inc VAT.

At a starting price of £39,649 the petrol powered 25DC looks very good value for money. Unfortunately it's not quite as keen as it appears once you've added the unavoidable and frankly unnecessarily expensive delivery (£2,413) and

commissioning (£3,145).

Opting for diesel power pushes the price up by an even more frightening £11,000. At least the finished boat is well equipped with shorepower, trim tabs, and a battery charger all supplied as standard. There are really only two optional extras: canopies (£3,039) which you'll want and a deck outlet for the holding tank which you probably won't.

Pound for pound, and horsepower for horsepower, Bavaria are offering a fair rather than an exceptional deal for what is a highly desirable craft.

Residual values, particularly for the diesel boat, should stay firm.

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Not quite as cheap as it first appears but still offers good value.

Verdict

This is one of those boats that feels right the minute you turn the key. From its smart, understated looks to its intuitive handling and punchy performance, it is the perfect craft for sportsboat enthusiasts looking to take the next step up the ladder.

The best illustration of this is that during the test of the 25DC we also had a 29DC along for the ride. But after spending time on the larger boat we couldn't wait to get back to the sheer fun and performance of the smaller boat

The cockpit may be tight and the cabin less than perfectly arranged, but they are beautifully finished, practical enough to do the job in hand and look the business.

It would be wonderful if the diesel powered version were cheaper — and we'd have thought that if anyone could do it Bavaria could — but it is still £22,000 less than the Windy Mirage 25.

Besides, at this size and money there is still a strong case for sticking with petrol. Either way you'll end up with a fine boat.

MBM RATING 7/10
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Bavaria 25DC technical data



ENQUIRIES Ancasta International Boat Sales Ltd, Port Hamble, Satchell Lane, Hamble, Hampshire SO31 4QD. Tel: 023 8045 0001. www.ancasta.co.uk

specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	25ft 2in (7.7m)
BEAM	8ft 2in (2.5m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 8in (1.16m)
AIR DRAUGHT	5ft 2in (1.62m)
DISPLACEMENT	2.4 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	66gal (300lt)
WATER CAPACITY	13gal (60lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	0ft 8in
HEADROOM IN CABIN	6ft 5in
CABIN BERTH	6ft x 6ft

performance

engines single Volvo Penta KAD44/DP diesel, configuration 4cyl, 3.6lt, 260hp at 3900rpm. conditions wind southwesterly Force 2, sea smooth, load fuel 75%, water 75%, crew 2.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2000	10.5	4.2	19.0	2.50	132	81
2200	14.0	4.4	20.0	3.33	175	82
2500	21.1	4.9	22.3	4.31	227	83
3000	26.4	6.6	29.9	4.00	211	86
3500	32.6	9.2	42.0	3.54	187	86
3900	37.2	12.3	55.8	3.02	159	89

Range figures above are in miles, with 20% margin. Noise figures are in dB(A), recorded in the cockpit.

prices

STANDARD BOAT with 320hp Volvo Penta petrol engine	inc VAT £39,649
with 260hp Volvo Penta diesel engine	£50,737
DELIVERY	£2,413
COMMISSIONING	£3,154
CAMPER CANVAS	£3,039
TONNEAU COVER	£470
BOAT AS TESTED	£56,774

the rivals



WINDY 25 MIRAGE
from £78,929 inc VAT
Damn near perfect, with stunning looks, handling and build quality. But also damn near £80,000. Tel: 01590 673312. www.berthongroup.co.uk



SEA RAY 245 WEEKENDER
from £53,370 inc VAT
Less sleek in appearance but with a roomier cabin and cockpit. Lacks the style and finish of European rivals. Tel: 023 8045 3005. www.marinamarbella.co.uk



CRANCHI 24 TURCHESE
from £38,000 inc VAT
Italian panache at a knock-down price, albeit with a 170hp diesel. Due for a makeover in 2004. Tel: 01202 701702. www.crestmarine.co.uk