

Carl says...



When I tested the Monte Carlo 37 I was left wanting more. This upset Bénéteau a bit, quite a lot actually. The offer of a test on the MC42 was going to prove an interesting one...

BOAT REPORT

MONTE CARLO 42



“This has the best full-beam master you'll find on a 42ft sportscruiser”

FACTFILE

Bénéteau MC42
LOA: 44ft 11in (13.7m)
PRICE: from £300,757
TOP SPEED: 34 knots



MOTOR BOATS TESTED

Bénéteau Monte Carlo 42 >>

Bénéteau's sportscruisers have always looked the part but a new edge to its design and detail means the yard has Fairline and Sessa in its sights

REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON



Designer Andreani has given the helm the space and consideration it deserves, plus a big hit of style, and the results are simply outstanding

Bénéteau's plan for world domination is coming along nicely. Its reach extends from cracking little dayboats to serious, go-anywhere trawler yachts, so all it needs now is a sharp sportscruiser to compete with the big boys. Enter the Monte Carlo 42.

Design & build

It has taken a while but Bénéteau's finish has finally caught up with its design. For a good few years this French builder has delivered boats of considerable charm and ability, such as the Swift Trawler 34. But the main selling point has always been the overall design, rather than the close-up detail. An example is the first Monte Carlo, the 37.

Launched in 2007, the MC37 was a superb-looking boat on the outside but it left us wondering whether it had been finished on the inside. Then, last year, we started to hear rumours about the new Monte Carlo 42, just snippets from dealers and Bénéteau insiders, but they were all saying the same thing – this was a completely new kind of Bénéteau, one that would make the likes of Fairline and Princess sit up and take note.

Sure enough, on the outside, this is another smooth, stylish sportscruiser. The hardtop is rakish, the hull comes in a range of smart colours (red, grey, blue or plain white) and below the waterline Bénéteau's proven Air Step hull design promises plenty of performance.

But as we've already said, exterior wow-factor is no surprise. The surprise comes when you board and walk through a cockpit that is so cool, so well finished and so damn good that it could have come from Sessa, Fairline or just about any other premium builder you might care to mention.

A wonderful example of how Bénéteau's attention to design and detail comes together can be found at the helm. The Monte Carlo's all-access seating layout has always been incredibly practical but now it also looks incredibly cool. Surrounded by a sophisticated grey moulding, the helm features a chunky teak trim and an architectural curve of skylight that morphs into the below-decks entranceway. Together these elements form the centrepiece of a very good

cockpit and are a big statement of design intent.

It's the same story below decks where much improved mahogany or oak joinery can be optioned. Last year we were impressed by the ST34 but the fitout lacked finesse, here the MC42 boasts shape, detail and cabinetry that curves. We also like the polymer moulding Bénéteau has used for its sinks, which looks and feels like soapstone.

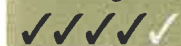
So much effort has gone into the use of space on the MC42 that its bigger sister, the cavernous MC47, seems very lazy by comparison. Without question this is the best-finished Bénéteau we've ever tested. Aside from the significantly improved finish, it's the full-beam master suite amidships, complete with hull-side windows, that will really get buyers excited. And they have every right to be because this must be the most sophisticated cabin you'll find on a 42-footer.

Away from the on-board niceties there are other signs the yard means business. The engine access is excellent with a service hatch and ladder leading from the cockpit sole, and a vast hydraulic hatch in the tender garage for more serious jobs. The enginebay is clean with a flow-coated finish, lots of insulation and a GRP liner that runs throughout the entire bilge.

There are a few questionable areas that we can pick on, however. Plastic fuel tanks might be OK

Design & build

Great design is matched by finish



on small boats but we prefer stainless steel ones on £300,000 cruisers, and the ugly sight of self-tapping screws piercing the enginebay was a shame.

“This is the best-finished Bénéteau we've ever tested”



A separate access hatch lies to starboard



You can spec the wet-bar with a fridge and grill



The cockpit seating is virtually wind-free, even at 30 knots, with no spray dragged back inboard

Exterior

The MC42's cockpit layout is a modern classic. Italian Pierangelo Andreani is the design man behind the Monte Carlo range (and the Flyers) and his decision to grant space and design priority to the all-important helm area is to be applauded. Only Windy can claim to deliver such an emphasis, and even its helm stations aren't as accessible as the MC42's. Split between a single helm seat and a separate wraparound bench to port, it's a near-perfect three-man set-up that offers the skipper complete movement and

friends and family the chance to get in on the driving action. Legroom is a tad tight, especially for the bench, but it feels right.

Two large double-width lockers can be found near the helm, with a further two set aft by the transom gate. There is gallons of stowage space, including a vast area under the cockpit seating, but you may need to allocate a locker for the fenders as there isn't a dedicated place for them. We were disappointed with the locker door shut lines on the test boat – they were so far out you could have dragged a fender out



The detail work is so strong



A curve of skylight morphs into the interior entrance



The garage will swallow up lots of gear as well as a tender – note the aft drainage well



Master suite boasts hull-side windows, lots of space and gallons of stowage. The lounge (right) is a luxurious touch but the little bench opposite is just as useful

without opening a door. The Bénéteau representative wasn't impressed with this either but we were by his attitude. It left us with the distinct impression that someone back at the yard would be getting their ear bent.

The tender garage is ready and able to act as a dumping ground for all manner of stuff. In fact it's so huge, that even with a 2.5m tender inside there will be enough room for all the fenders you could ever want. The garage also sports a deep well at its aft end to stop any wash finding its way inboard or into the enginebay.

From the stern, steps either side of the sunpad-topped garage make accessing the decks easy. Handrails and a useful little channel cut into in the hardtop roof act as the perfect

guide for fingers to ease you forward.

Back in the cockpit, the main seating area is surrounded by LED lights and is serviced by a long wet-bar and a solid teak table. We are so bored with pointing out the lack of fiddled surfaces on boats that we rarely bother anymore, but this table takes things to another level. It features what might be termed a reverse-fiddle, as the edges actually slope downwards to really make sure things can fall off easily.

However, the slightly raised seating area is the most notable design feature here because it gives a clue to what is going on below decks.

Exterior
A helm and cockpit to be proud of
✓✓✓✓✓



Lockers are neatly lined with fiddled shelves



Smart new sink mouldings look like soapstone



TV cabinets for the saloon, master and guest cabins



The forward guest cabin doesn't have an en suite but it equals many a master in terms of style and space

Accommodation

The MC37 (soon to be reinvigorated as the MC38) and the MC47 sport particularly large midship cabins, but neither is as impressive as the full-beam master suite aboard the MC42. Bordered by hull-side windows with inset ports, the entrance features a curve of cabinetry and shallow steps that lead you to a large, low-set double berth with stacks of headroom above it. A lounge to port looks the part although the neat little bench to port is just as important. Stowage is abundant and the only real issue is the location of the main 12V and 220V distribution panel, which sits behind a locker door with nothing to cover the main 12V terminals. Niggles aside, this is a great midships cabin that is better and infinitely more useable than the Sealine SC47's, and a world away from the usual twin-berth set-up you'll find on most 42ft sportscruisers.

Having a grandstand master amidships also means you still have room for a forward guest cabin that can equal many a competitor's forward master. The 42's guest cabin features another low-slung berth that you can fall in to rather than climb on to, as well as oodles of lockers.

Both cabins are served by toilet compartments with separate shower stalls, and although the forward compartment isn't an en suite the payoff is more useable space inside. The galley is similarly spacious with a big slice of that soapstone-effect moulding for its worktop and masses of lockers, although there are no compartments for crockery.

Across the interior, the décor is simple but effective. White vinyl covers most of the surfaces not looked after by the cabinetry and this contrast



A big fridge is never a bad thing but we'd like more compartmentalised lockers for the galley

worked well with the test boat's mahogany. The dark wood is warm but perhaps the light oak option might suit the cool sophistication of the MC42's design that bit better.

The high level of fitout and finish definitely lifts the interior above the Bénéteau, Bavaria and Jeanneau norm, even if it lacks the heady levels of sophistication you would see on a (far more expensive) Fairline or Sessa – put simply you don't get much in the way of steamed bamboo. What you do get are lots of very useable areas, such as the saloon where space and style merge together harmoniously. Larger than the similarly priced Sessa 38, the Monte Carlo 42 benefits from almost 7ft of headroom and that arc of

skylight overhead. The saloon seating will take four or five in comfort with Ocean Air blinds adding some subtle detail around the port lights.

Accommodation
Master cabin masterclass
✓✓✓✓✓

“The saloon is a fantastic space”



Both toilets include separate showers



Masses of headroom and two skylights mix with warm mahogany to deliver a very pleasant saloon

Performance & handling

During seatrials the Euro journalists complained that there wasn't an IPS version of the MC42 planned, but we don't see the need. With Volvo Penta's highest-rated sterndrive application – the D6-370 – you get 34 knots of oomph, plus the option of Aquamatic joystick control, if required.

In any case, to focus on the drive type of the Monte Carlo 42 is to miss the point, or rather the step, because Bénéteau's Air Step hull is once again a roaring success. Speed and efficiency are no more than average, with the heavier Princess V42 both faster and more frugal, but just about everything else impresses.

The response from the helm is electric, and the pick-up and trim as you accelerate are near perfect. The ride is incredibly smooth, although catching a wave on the chine will reverberate up through the hardtop coaming with an acoustic slap. Other than that it's quiet, with soundproofing in the enginebay helping to

achieve a respectable sub-80dB(A) noise level at fast cruising speeds.

One of the few issues with the MC37's stepped hull was a slight tendency for the propellers to ventilate. On the MC42 the steps are still there but the ventilation has gone. This boat turns as well as any sportscruiser you'll have the pleasure of helming – it is utterly addictive and stupidly easy all at once. In fact, the only annoying thing about driving this boat is that anyone can do it and look good.

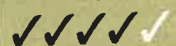
If you're not one for the limelight, you might like to know that this is one of the few boats to offer a helm that works better seated than standing up. Bénéteau knows this too, because the controls are all set up for seated use. Sat behind the helm, you can power straight up to 30 knots without any loss of visibility through the one-piece windscreen and, as is the way with all hardtop boats, you actually have better lateral

visibility when you're sat lower in the boat.

However the ride is so agile and so sporty that you feel you should stand up, if not for comfort then simply out of respect.

Performance & handling

Another triumph for the Air Step

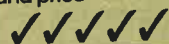


Specification & value

For once this is going to be relatively straightforward. If you're in the market for a two-cabin 42ft hardtop sportscruiser you won't find a better boat for the money (even if

Specification & value

Unbeatable mix of space, spec and price



MBM verdict

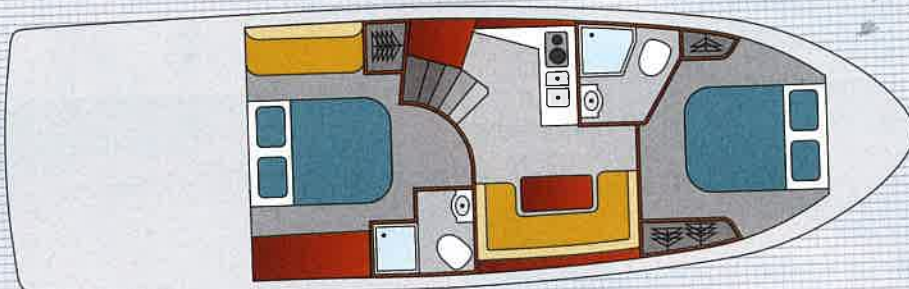
Ladies and gents, we have a winner. The question we posed before testing the MC42 was: can Bénéteau compete with the big boys? The answer is an emphatic yes. The MC42 is one of the best cruisers in the world both in terms of its size and price. It's also miles better than the MC47 – sorry Bénéteau, but it really is. If you can find a better sportscruiser for the money or length we'll be impressed and surprised in equally massive measures.

MBM rating



9/10

Bénéteau Monte Carlo 42 technical data



specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	44ft 11in (13.7m)
BEAM	13ft 9in (3.9m)
DRAUGHT	2ft 9in (0.8m)
DISPLACEMENT	9 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	175gal (800lt)
WATER CAPACITY	88gal (400lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	8in (20cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 10in (2.1m)
HEADROOM IN MASTER CABIN	6ft 2in (1.8m)
MASTER CABIN BERTH	6ft 5in x 5ft 0in (1.9 x 1.5m)



performance

Engines	twin Volvo Penta D6-370
Configuration	6cyl, 5.5lt, 370hp @ 3500rpm
Conditions	wind w/ly, Force 3, sea state slight
Load	fuel 50%, water 0%, crew 2

Rpm	knots	lph	gph	mpg	range	noise
2200	16	48	10.5	1.52	212	76
2500	21	66	14.5	1.45	203	76
2800	25.5	80	17.6	1.45	203	77
3000	28.4	96	21.1	1.34	187	80
3300	31.5	128	28.2	1.11	155	81
3500	34.1	154	33.9	1.01	140	82

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 and fuel quality. Noise readings in dB(A) and were taken at the helm with the sunroof closed

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
Volvo Penta D6-370hp inc joystick	£300,757
COLOURED HULL	£4635
TEAK DECK TO COCKPIT	£3072
HEATING	£3784

BOAT AS TESTED £347,275

ENQUIRIES www.beneteau.com

the rivals



SESSA 38

From £261,500
Another new kid on the block offering a very similar level of style and performance, but smaller dimensions mean it can't match the MC42's on-board glory.
www.bateswharf.co.uk



JEANNEAU PRESTIGE 42S

From £330,865
A big boat with plenty to shout about, including strong IPS power, but even this model from Bénéteau's sister yard can't match the MC42's style or cabin quality.
www.jeanneau.com



PRINCESS V42

From £357,024
The smart-looking V42 has plenty going for it with a great hull and cockpit, but its conventional below-decks layout loses ground to the MC42.
www.princessyachts.com