

BOAT REPORT Fairline Phantom 40 • flybridge motor cruiser • variable-deadrise hull • two en-suite cabins • twin 375hp shaftdrive diesels • 28 knots • £272,568 as tested

Fairline Phantom 40

If you want a brand new Fairline, this may soon be the smallest one you can buy. Do you get the build quality and performance associated with the top end of the range? **REPORT BY MARK TURLEY**



Flybridge cruisers of around 40ft used to be the mainstay of British boatbuilders, falling somewhere in the middle of their ranges. Now, with the likes of Fairline producing boats up to around 75ft, craft that were once considered medium size are now the smallest they offer.

The Phantom 40 is a case in point. The word on the street is that the 38 which currently kicks-off the range is soon to be discontinued in favour of this slightly roomier model, in which case this will become the entry-level Fairline.

Do the builders lavish the same amount of effort and attention on a 40-footer as they do on boats which sell for several times the price? A couple of days spent on board gave us plenty of time to consider the answer.

DESIGN & BUILD

Much of the concept work and the naval architecture for the Phantom 40 hull is down to Bernard Olesinski, while Fairline's own design office is responsible for the detail, both large and small. The in-house set-up includes a 'mock-up' team who build a full-scale model of each compartment so that it can be got just right before production begins.

The hull shape is Olesinski's trademark variable-deadrise medium-to-deep-vee, and as is now usual it extends under much of the

bathing platform. The upshot is a greater waterline length as a percentage of overall length, which in turn increases the planing area where you need it and adds considerably to internal volume.

One way in which it does this is by allowing the engines to be pushed further aft, especially as the propellers are set in tunnels, allowing a shallower and more efficient shaft angle.

Accommodation layout abides by the tried-and-tested format of a double cabin forward and a twin-berth cabin amidships, each served by a pleasant en-suite with a separate shower. Up at saloon level, the dinette hides a small foldout double, to take the full sleeping complement to a possible six.

As on larger Fairlines, a wide open-tread staircase leads up to the flybridge, making it easy to move up and down while allowing extra light to filter through to the saloon. The area beneath the stairs is also handy for dumping kitbags as people embark, prior to getting themselves unpacked.

The flybridge itself is typically Fairline, with provision for three people to share helm duties, supplemented by an arc of seating aft. A griddle and wet-bar can be

specified as an extra, in which case it tends to divide the entertaining area from the driving position.

ACCOMMODATION

The layout is fairly standard for craft of this size and type, but what Fairline do better than many builders is the unfussy, practical but elegant finishing touches. Flat surfaces always benefit from a fiddle, for instance, and the saloon has a handrail recessed into the deckhead.

The dinette doesn't just have a large table but also the pleasant surprise of a foldaway double berth within its seat base. The smaller sofa opposite is designed so that its moulded seat pods can be pulled over towards the table, and their loose cushions hide good stowage, perhaps for squirreling away the bedding for the occasional bed.

The adjacent cabinetry can be left free for general stowage or fitted with an icemaker and television.

A couple of steps lead down to the galley, but this has been left fully open-plan to the saloon rather than being deliberately shielded from sight. Its layout is well thought-out, with the items you need most while entertaining, such as the pull-out drinks cabinet and fridge, being handily located closest to the saloon.

It also scores well on stowage, with readily accessible cupboards outboard of the Avonite work surface, and a really useful selection of deep, segmented drawers for victuals. For bulk items, extra storage is to be found



beneath the sensible teak and holly flooring.

Cooking facilities comprise a two-burner hob, with an extractor above, and a combi-microwave tucked behind a swing-up cover; open this before pouring the drinks, otherwise countertop space starts to get a bit limited. Washing-up is down to a single but decent sized sink.

In all this, there is still room for a pair of reasonable rubbish bins and a tea towel rail. And for the really houseproud skipper, beneath the stairwell is a large moulded compartment which is spacious enough to take a washing machine if required.

The cabins are pretty conventional, the forward one having a good-sized island double berth and the midships one twin berths of at least 6ft in length. Standing room for dressing is fine, but the intrusion of the helm well means you will have to watch your head over the midships berths, unless you prefer to sleep with the pillow at the door end.

Clothes storage is adequate rather than plentiful. There is more in the forecabin, which in addition to a wardrobe benefits from a couple of drawers in the base of the berth. However, we were pleased to see that the builders have thought to fit a false bottom to the mid-cabin's inboard berth, and incorporate a couple of extra lockers in the moulding.

Both en-suites feature circular shower stalls, fashioned to give good shoulder width, which saves messing around with clammy curtains or drenching the whole compartment.

The finish and eye for detail is as sharp here as anywhere else on the boat, with elegantly sculpted Avonite surfaces,

extractors, and neat shower stall mouldings so that you have somewhere to put your shampoo.

EXTERIOR

The bathing platform is more than 3ft 6in deep, so that as well as being an easy

boarding point, whether you are lying alongside or stern-to, a mini-RIB can be landed on it. An extra run of handrail across the transom would be an improvement.

The platform and cockpit decking is finished in teak as standard, as are the chunky stair treads up to the flybridge. Again, an extra grabrail towards the top of the stairwell would not go amiss; these are particularly odd omissions given the boat is well sorted with handholds elsewhere, including the break of the cockpit where you emerge onto the side decks.

Lockers within the cockpit seating are well finished and moulded out, as is the lazaret which is accessed via a hatch that is shared with the adjacent but separate engine compartment. Space within the central portion of the lazaret will be dominated by a

generator if you specify one, and the outboard areas are already well utilised by battery boxes and tanks; that said, there is still a useful amount of stowage space, as well as access to the steering gear.

The flybridge has no dedicated sunpad area, the available space being used more productively by a good-sized dinette and, as an option, a virtual station comprising a sink, fridge and griddle. Stowage is built into the seat-bases.

Up front, the helm is well laid out to accommodate three people in comfort. Thoughtfully, the seats are located so that each one can be accessed separately, there are neat handrails to their backrests for the benefit of those watching over the skipper's shoulder, and the starboard one can be flipped over to form a rear-facing lounge if

below The galley has good stowage, and a microwave behind a swing-up door.

below The interior helm is well laid-out, but a bit of a squeeze.



below In the saloon, the small sofa to port can be pulled across to join the dinette to starboard. The cabinetry can house a television and icemaker.



below The midships cabin has 6ft berths, and an en-suite WC, but the helm impinges on headroom.



below In the master suite, an island double berth dominates, with drawers underneath for stowage.



✓✓✓✓
Clean lines, good interior volume and plenty of useful detail.

✓✓✓✓
Well proportioned and well finished, with good practical touches.

the encumbant decides he has had enough of watchkeeping!

Deckwork should be no trouble. Although the side decks are a pretty standard 10in (25cm) wide, they are easy to negotiate due to the fact that the superstructure tapers in nicely, so you never feel you are being squeezed overboard.

The foredeck locker tucks away the windlass but unfortunately has only the one compartment, so that warps or fenders will be dumped straight onto the chain.

Those tending the stern lines are more privileged, having teak-topped lockers on either quarter so that ropes can be bundled away easily. The deck hardware

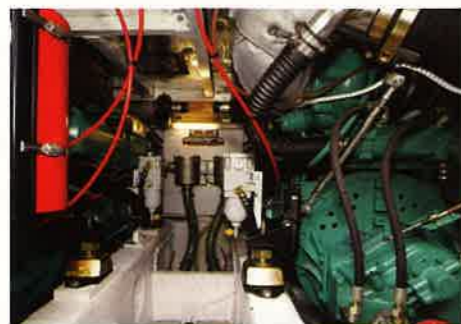
itself measures up very well, comprising 12in (30cm) cleats fore, aft and amidships.

ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

The engine options list shows variants on Volvo Penta's 63 block, rated to either 318hp or 375hp, and also on Caterpillar's 3126 diesel, by way of 355hp and 385hp units.

Our test boat had a pair of the more potent 63s, and in our view it would do the Phantom 40 a disservice to install anything with less grunt. By the time you have loaded up the boat, and developed a film of mid-summer fouling, you are going to need that much power to maintain a service speed in the mid-20s.

A large gas-strut supported hatch in the



above There is lots of room between the engines.



above A hatch with a gas strut gives access.

cockpit allows access to the engine space, and, in another example of Fairline's attention to detail, it is lined with a moulding to smarten its appearance and help check noise.

There is sufficient room to drop down onto the treadplate, get between the engines and make your way forward to the raw-water strainers. On the way, you can check the primary filters mounted adjacent to the inboard bearers, and also whip out the dipsticks.

There is just sufficient room over the

engines to undertake top-ups, but to replace some of the filters you will need to lift a few portions of the saloon sole, especially if they are outboard where the fuel tanks reside.

The engines are also tight to the forward bulkhead, although replacing impellers is not a problem because the pumps have been turned inboard.

✓✓✓✓
Easy engineroom access and a tidily executed installation.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Our encounter with the Phantom 40 was initially on a North Sea delivery trip from the Netherlands to Ipswich, a crossing of around 120 miles.

This was undertaken in a shortish beam sea pushed up by a fairly steady southwesterly Force 4, with a slight residual swell from the previous day's blow. In other words it was a pretty typical open-water passage, and one that we clipped through comfortably at 23-25 knots.

The hull took the waves cleanly and pushed any wind-borne water back down so that, for a while at least, we were comfortable in the bracing conditions on the flybridge. It was also responsive to the wheel, offering a highly controllable drive in anybody's terms.

Flat-out, at 2800rpm, the boat turned in 28.5 knots — a useful speed, certainly, but the hull feels as if it would like to give more. Matching it to more potent engines (engineroom space permitting) is not likely to overtax it, and might allow a fast cruising pace of perhaps 26-27 knots rather than 23-24 knots.

The outside helm station benefits from the practical layout and design details of the larger Phantoms, allowing three people to sit facing directly ahead but still enabling them to switch positions without disturbing each other. The wheel is on the centreline, and, like the helmsman's seat, is adjustable, so you should always be comfortable whether you are sitting or standing.

Engine gauges are readily viewable, you get a Perspex-covered chart area, and there is plenty of room on the well-angled dash for adding navigation aids to supplement the depth-sounder, log and dual-station VHF which come as standard.

Moving down below, we were equally impressed with the set-up of the interior helm, even if the access to it is more cramped, via fairly narrow steps and a squeeze past the electrics panel, which is thankfully covered with a Perspex door. A grabrail on the inboard side of the console would help matters.

The console is largely finished in matt black, which is sensible as it greatly reduces reflections in the screen. A further boon is that the side windows stretch a good way aft, making the view past the quarters especially good, while demisters

help to keep the forward screen clear.

The positioning of controls and instrumentation is unfussy and sensible, with everything just where you want it. Further plus points are the decent-sized chart area, a scalloped tray for odds and ends, and plenty of angled console for flush-mounting electronics.

✓✓✓✓
A comfortable ride and responsive handling. Tempting to add power.

SPECIFICATION & VALUE

Fairline have been quite canny in pricing the Phantom 40: with a useful standard specification, it comes in at not much more than £250,000, which is where many of its like-sized rivals sit.

The bonus is that you are getting a Fairline for your money, so the build quality and level of fit-out are high.

The standard specification is pretty normal for a mainstream manufacturer, with the likes of a bow-thruster and a heating system the main add-ons, plus the essential matter of some antifouling.

When it comes to running costs, a gallon per mile in cruising mode is the order of day, so there are no nasty shocks there. Finally, demand for secondhand Fairlines

of this size is likely to remain high, so resale values should hold up well.

✓✓✓✓
No nasty surprises in either specification or running costs.

Verdict

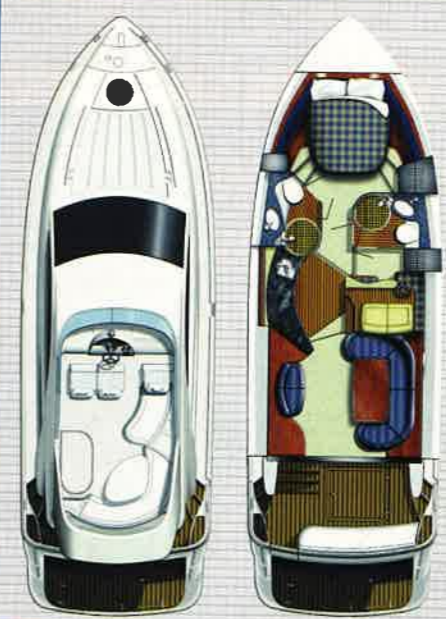
In many respects it is a shame when a boatbuilder ups the ante on its entry-level craft, such as phasing out the well liked 38 in favour of this slightly more substantial model.

However, the new Phantom 40 benefits from a roomier saloon and two full en-suites, and of course there is no shortage of either quality or detail.

Even if smallest is now bigger, this prestigious yard is clearly still lavishing as much attention at the bottom end of the range as it does on its flagship.

MBM RATING 8/10
✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

Fairline Phantom 40 technical data



specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	41ft 2in (12.53m)
HULL LENGTH	39ft 7in (12.07m)
BEAM	13ft 0in (3.96m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 3in (1.00m)
DISPLACEMENT	11.6 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	220gal (990lt)
WATER CAPACITY	97gal (440lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	10in
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 4in
HEADROOM IN FORWARD CABIN	6ft 1in
HEADROOM IN MIDSHIPS CABIN	6ft 1in
FORWARD CABIN BERTH	6ft 4in x 5ft 0in
MIDSHIPS CABIN BERTHS	6ft 0in & 6ft 3in x 2ft 0in

performance

engines twin Volvo Penta TAMD63P diesels.
configuration 6cyl, 5.46lt, 370hp at 2800rpm.
conditions wind northeasterly Force 4, sea moderate.
load fuel 100%, water 40%, crew 3.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	trim	noise
1500	9.4	—	—	—	—	4.5	66
1800	12.5	12.1	55	1.03	181	6.0	70
2000	16.3	14.6	66	1.11	195	6.0	73
2200	19.8	17.1	78	1.16	204	5.5	74
2400	22.9	21.5	98	1.07	188	5.5	76
2600	25.7	27.7	126	0.92	162	5.0	77
2800	28.5	35.5	161	0.80	141	5.0	79

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

prices

STANDARD BOAT with 370hp Volvo Penta TAMD63P diesels	inc VAT £261,715
(includes electric windlass and ground tackle, teak cockpit decking and bathing platform, log/depth-sounder, dual-station VHF radio, trim tabs, electric toilets, stereo radio/CD player)	
HOLDING TANK & MACERATOR	£2,198
BOW-THRUSTER	£5,269
COCKPIT BARBECUE & FRIDGE	£2,534
EBERSPACHER HEATING	£5,584
BOAT AS TESTED	£272,568

ENQUIRIES Peters plc, Chichester Marina, Chichester, Sussex PO20 7EJ. Tel: 01243 511381. www.petersplc.com

the rivals



SEALINE F42/5
from £249,108 inc VAT
Available with either two or three cabins, with the added benefit of an extending cockpit.
Tel: 01562 749100.
www.sealine.com



AZIMUT 39
from about £239,200 inc VAT
Chic, but not quite as voluminous as the Phantom 40, even though its dimensions are very similar.
Tel: 01489 565555.
www.azimutyachts.net



RODMAN 41
from £238,525 inc VAT
Sturdy, distinctive and capable hull with a neat three-cabin layout and plenty of room inside and out.
Tel: 01243 512454.
www.rodman.es

below The flybridge has an aft dinette. below Cockpit sole and flybridge steps are teak-finished.



below The upper helm is well designed for three people, with each seat accessible independently.

