



*This watersports-orientated two-cabin cruiser turned heads at its boat show launch, but how do its ergonomics match up to its aesthetics?*



Boat Report  
**FAIRLINE**  
**TARGA 43**





The latest in the Targa range from Fairline Boats was one of the most interesting craft to be launched at last year's Southampton Boat Show, incorporating flowing lines down below as well as up top.

Its layout concentrates on the outdoors lifestyle, epitomised by the provision of a 'garage' rather than davits for a tender, but also offers a cleverly concocted interior which is as functional as it is different.

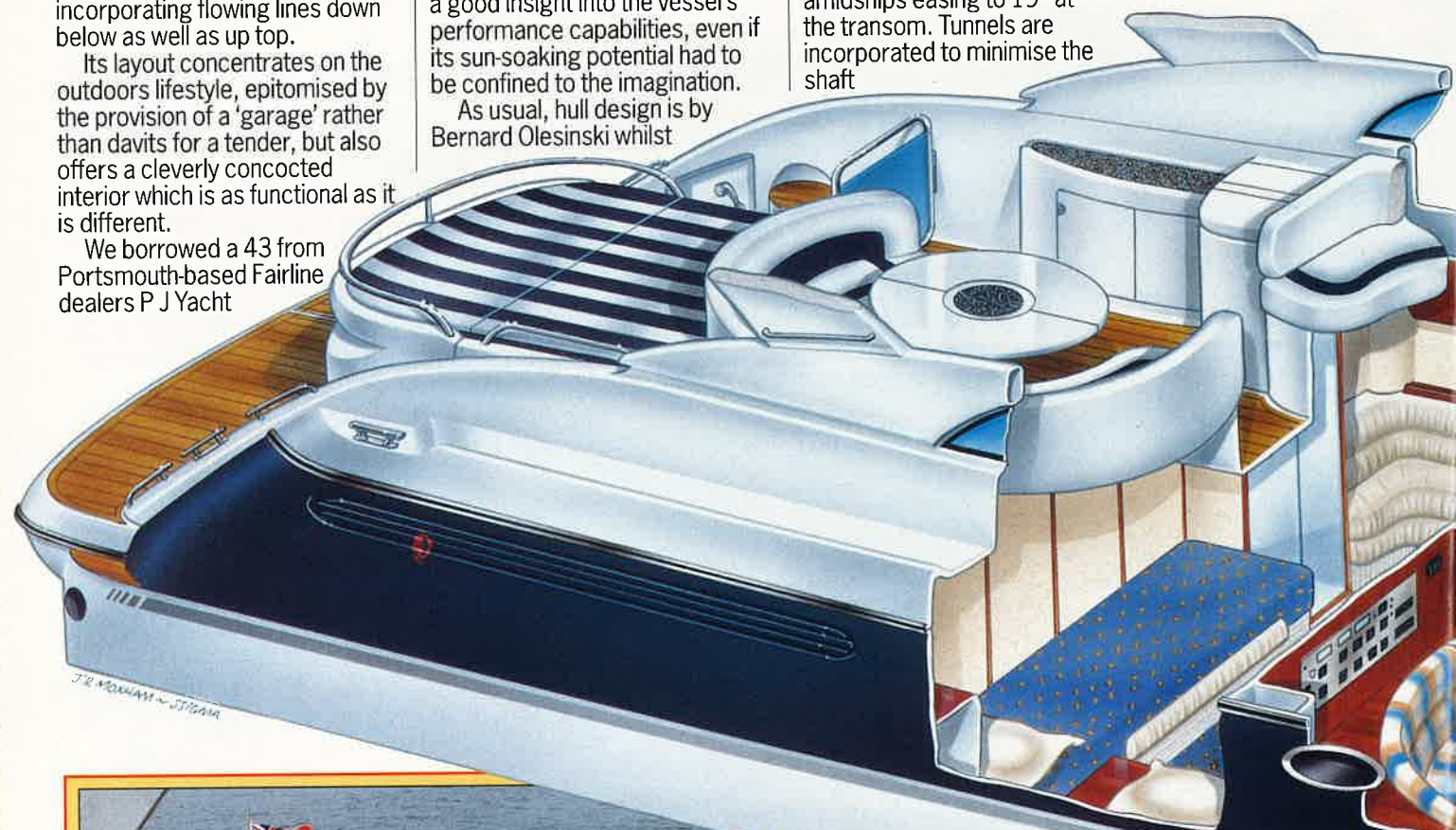
We borrowed a 43 from Portsmouth-based Fairline dealers P J Yacht

Sales, powered by what is currently the only listed engine installation, twin 370hp Volvo Penta TAMD 63Ps. A blustery March day in the eastern approaches to the Solent gave us a good insight into the vessel's performance capabilities, even if its sun-soaking potential had to be confined to the imagination.

As usual, hull design is by Bernard Olesinski whilst

everything from the gunwale up, and the actual layout, is down to Fairline's in-house design team.

The underwater sections are a medium-to-deep-vee form, with a variable deadrise of 24° amidships easing to 19° at the transom. Tunnels are incorporated to minimise the shaft



## Cockpit

The entertaining area is dominated by a large oval table (above) and its crescent of seating. Although the table doubles back when not in use, it is if anything a bit too big when extended, almost impossible to squeeze past for anyone passing through the cockpit.

As you would expect, the voids beneath the seat-bases are



commandeered for use as locker space; a nice touch is that the lids are hinged for ease of access.

The wet-bar opposite has a usefully sized moulded sink/drain and a top-loading fridge, while an adjacent cupboard houses the heavier electrical breakers and the battery switches. When you want to have a barbecue, an electric grill is fitted just ahead of the forward passenger's seat (left), and the handy perspex-fronted cave lockers moulded into the forward coaming could be used as a larder while preparing food if not required for 'bits' stowage.

The single perch opposite the helm is rather uncomfortable because of its low back, but to make up for this a couple of handholds are set into the rear of the double helm seat so that

people can stand and peer over the skipper's shoulder, which in many ways is preferable to sitting in any case.

Given the cockpit's importance as an entertaining area, the canopy sensibly offers exceptionally full headroom, so there is no question of the area becoming claustrophobic when it is deployed to keep the rain off.

The frame and canopy are sturdy, and easy to put up and

down (below). However, when we had the front of the canopy erected during our test we were unimpressed that it leaked quite profusely, dripping over the helm; not being Velcro-sealed, the flap covering the zip rides up, allowing spray to drive through.

The cockpit sole is laid to teak throughout.



## Helm position

At first sight the double helm seat appears to be a solid bench, but in fact the driver's portion is adjustable both fore-and-aft and up-and-down. However we found this cumbersome to operate; the red push/pull handle activating the gas strut seems more in keeping with a fire-extinguishing system than a seat adjustment mechanism, and there are another two similar-looking handles tucked down by the skipper's legs which are in

fact the remote fuel shut-offs. The seat also has a simple squab, which is perhaps an easier way of gaining extra height should you want it.

Once settled, the driving position is comfortable, and the console layout is fine, although we were mystified as to why no voltmeters had been included with the engine instrumentation (an issue thrown into sharp focus when our test boat, newly commissioned, appeared to suffer from a charging problem).

The dark gel facings are a good idea to reduce glare, but the cut-outs for the instrument heads are ragged to say the least, and we were surprised by the



so-so standard of finish.

This particular boat had been fitted with Microcommander electronic throttles, although mechanical ones are the norm. Other standard instrumentation includes a combined log/depth-sounder, a compass and VHF, the latter fitted in a niche which seems

purpose-designed to slant away from the driver so that it is difficult to operate. The view through the screen is largely unimpeded, although the join between the single main portion and the lateral pieces does cut across the starboard bow. Furthermore, whilst the two-speed pantograph wipers clear the forward portion effectively, the large curved area of the side sections remain speckled by spray, and it is surprising how much they distort the view, making everything seem much closer than it is.

angles, allowing the engines to be mounted low in the boat.

Of course, interrupting the smooth lines of the lower hull in this way brings with it a penalty in terms of hydrodynamic drag, and Olesinski's office have been hard at work on minimising this and smoothing the flow of water to the props and rudders. The tunnels have been faired into the hull in a way that greatly reduces turbulence, their exact shape determined with the aid of a sophisticated in-house computer system.

The chine has the now characteristic downturn to it, and there are three sets of sprayrails.

Above the waterline there is little by way of knuckle or curvature, the hull sides being left fairly plain apart from the intricate nip and tuck-in at the sculpted

## Bathing platform

The bathing platform is good and deep, with teak treads extending right outboard to make it easier to board and walk around in bare feet. A void beneath the deck to port will take the optional passerelle; a further void in the platform itself hides the bathing ladder (below). Steps flanking the central garage give you somewhere to sit and shower-off



before you invade the cockpit.

The garage will take an inflatable up to 9ft 4in (2.84m) complete with an attached outboard, which you simply haul up over the platform. The top of the hydraulically actuated lifting door (above), bordered by a handrail, doubles as a sunpad

when closed. Fenders and ropes can be tucked neatly out of the way in a pair of long bins under the mattress area.

Although there are steps leading up on both sides, the walk-through to the cockpit is to port. The other side gives access to the lazaret.





## Saloon

The hatch to the accommodation from deck level is on the narrow side, but has good-sized treads and handrails on both sides.

The saloon is not enormous, but the table (below middle) can take six when the two stowable stools are brought out from their dedicated niche beneath one of the seat-bases (below right). The settee converts into a good-sized double berth.

Lockers under the rest of the seats back straight on to the painted-out hull, with no lining at all. Similarly, when you open the large hatch in the sole there is no false bottom to keep things clear of the bilge.

Above the settee is a useful run of well-finished cupboards (below left), all with a sturdy fiddle to keep things in situ.



## Day toilet

The second WC, entered from the saloon forward of the galley, doubles as the facilities for the midships cabin and as a day toilet.

Smaller than the forecabin's en-suite toilet, it has only a curtained-off shower area rather than a cubicle, but it is adequate for ablutions and has plenty of dry stowage. The electric toilet is partially hidden by the moulding, but there is no extractor.



## Forward cabin

There is plenty of room to the foot and sides of the master cabin's 6ft 0in x 5ft 0in (1.83m x 1.52m) double berth, with good headroom maintained even this far forward.

Clothes storage is limited to a hanging locker with a couple of shelves, and a pair of drawers set into the bunk base; the eye-height cupboards

featured throughout the rest of the accommodation are conspicuous by their absence, arguably just where you need them most.

The en-suite toilet compartment is a good size, and features a circular shower module and an electric toilet. The basin moulding is set within a Corian work surface, and has some of the smartest taps we have seen, either ashore or afloat. There is a good amount of dry storage but, as with the other toilet area, no extractor.

## Midships cabin

With its two 6ft 5in x 2ft 3in (1.96m x 0.69m) berths, the midships cabin is a good size. The berths are positioned athwartships, and benefit from plenty of sitting headroom, while there is also a sizable dressing area complete with a small settee.

The small vanity area is welcome, but clothes storage could be improved upon, comprising just a mirror-fronted wardrobe and some fairly shallow eye-height cupboards.

Hinged berth-bases allow access to the water tank and a possible stowage area, albeit opening straight onto the bilge.



transom. The moulding extends right out astern to incorporate the bathing platform as part of the actual hull, although the way it is chiselled-in slightly helps to make it less vulnerable to knocks.

Something of a design coup by the Fairline team is the swish styling to the windscreen. The tapering frame section which seems to grow out of the coaming is in fact a GRP moulding, making a break from the usual look of a stainless steel or aluminium frame.

## Layout & accommodation

Ahead of the bathing platform and centrally sited 'garage', which make an excellent watersports area, the cockpit is on one level, ideal for easy socialising.

Down below there is headroom of 6ft 6in (1.98m) for the most part, and the saloon is one of the most inviting we have seen in this style of craft. The dinette feels snug but in fact is quite roomy, and across the way is an attractively curved galley, which also provides a right of passage to a spacious midships cabin.

The guests' toilet/shower compartment is forward, along with the master cabin and its more commodious en-suite affair.

Standards of joinery and fit-out are extremely high. The interior of our test boat was finished in

## Decks



Stepping from the cockpit out onto the side decks is aided by treads and handrails.

Bordered by a reasonable lip of toerail, the decks are just wide enough at 6.5in (16.5cm), and there is adequate hip and shoulder width for easy movement forward.



A vertical windlass is half-hidden beneath the large foredeck hatch, which lets onto a huge void for the chain. Disappointingly, there is no separate bin incorporated for ropes, although there appears to be plenty of room for it.

Mooring hardware includes two sets of 10in (25cm) cleats on each side for springs, in addition to the slightly larger affairs to take head and stern lines.

## Galley

A centreline plinth, with its clever combination of moulded fiddle and Corian work surface, half-masks the rest of the galley from the seating area. The main part of the galley is a curvy lamb-chop shape, with the worktops having the same shallow fiddle to stop things sliding onto the floor.

At the 'meaty' end of the chop, a large roundel of satin-finish stainless steel houses a two-burner hob (either gas or electric depending upon your preference, and whether you opt for a



generator), which in turn is covered by a hefty chopping board. A matching piece of lumber hides the adjacent one-and-a-half drainer sink.

A large fridge with a freezer

compartment is located in the island plinth, and a combined microwave/grill is tucked away behind a pair of sliding doors beneath the hob.

Stowage is good, with drawers

and various cupboards. There is a dedicated cupboard for glasses and even a drinks tray (left), but unfortunately not a fiddled area for crockery. The hob benefits from an overhead extractor fan.





## Engineroom & lazaret

The circular central hatch in the cockpit sole (above) delivers you via a short ladder to a treadplate between the two engines.

We were impressed by the space around them, and you can get at the necessary service items outboard without knuckle-crunching against the wing fuel tanks. There is even space above the tank tops to inspect the pipe and sender fittings, but why make the tanks without a decent-sized inspection plate?

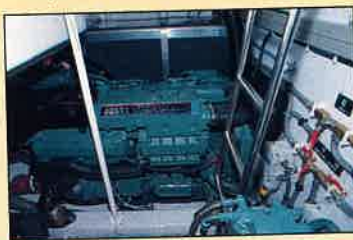
The installation appeared extremely neat and well found, with the fuel/water separators located on the forward bulkhead (right) together with a changeover system to allow either engine to run from either tank.

An alternative access to the engineering is via a hatch to starboard of the garage, although this is really only necessary if you want to check the stern glands, clear the raw-water filters or spring clean the area around the submersible

bilge pump.

This hatch also gives access to the lazaret immediately to the rear of the enginespace, which as well as offering general stowage space houses the battery boxes and calorifier, and on our test boat a generator set.

Headroom here is down to crouching levels, but that is enough to enable you to get around, not least right aft to the steering gear. This rear portion benefits from a moulded infill so that you are not left kneeling in the actual bilge, but a number of handy cut-outs ensure you have adequate access to the hull.



American cherry, with maple being an alternative.

## Performance & handling

A stiff southerly breeze was giving the approaches to the Solent some sharp teeth on the day of our test, but nothing that was going to adversely affect an Olesinski hull.

On each and every tack we motored at whatever speed we fancied, up to a flat-out 31 knots as measured by our radar gun. For cruising, 2400rpm gives a wholly comfortable 26.4 knots, and a useful range to boot.

Should some owners expect a mite more potency from this style of performance cruiser than the twin 370hp Volvos offer, there is talk of a larger engine option becoming available.

The ride proved smooth and solid through the short seas. For the most part the windborne spray was cast wide of the boat, with just the odd bucketload coming over the top.

Handling is precise, even if steering is on the heavy side, and we carved through wide turns in a well-mannered way. The hull sits well on the water, and even in the crosswind there was little need to use the trim tabs.

Noise levels in the cockpit and the saloon were not unreasonable, around the 81 dB(A) mark at our nominated 2400rpm cruising speed.

## Conclusions

The initial glitz of the Targa 43's boat show preview was slightly undone in some areas by our detailed examination. Ostensibly good ideas which worked less well than they might, such as the adjustable helm seat, and detail complaints, such as the seat lockers being unlined, were a little out of keeping with the very high standard we have come to expect of Fairline.

Criticisms aside, this is a nice package, well-mannered at sea and attractive in styling, but in a way that is not going to date easily. Overall, we came away liking the 43 as much as on our initial perusal at Southampton '97.

Its below-decks accommodation is among the snappiest we have seen, while the cockpit flows nicely through at one level. Garaging the tender certainly adds to the aesthetics, as well as making it less vulnerable. □



### BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

### DIMENSIONS

#### LOA

45ft 1in (13.47m)

#### HULL LENGTH

43ft 7in (13.28m)

#### BEAM

12ft 6in (3.80m)

#### DRAUGHT

3ft 3in (1.00m)

#### AIR DRAUGHT

13ft 3in (4.04m)

### DISPLACEMENT

9.4 tonnes

### FUEL CAPACITY

280gal (1247lt)

### WATER CAPACITY

74gal (337lt)

### ENGINES

twin Volvo Penta TAMD63Ps

6cyl 5.46lt diesels

370hp at 2800rpm

### PRICE

£192,343 ex VAT

## FAIRLINE TARGA 43

PERFORMANCE & CONSUMPTION							SOUND LEVELS dB(A)		
rpm	knots#	gph†	lph†	mpg†	range*	trim	saloon	helm	cockpit
1500	12.1	7.1	32	1.70	380	—	69	74	75
1800	17.0	10.8	49	1.57	352	—	71	77	79
2000	19.9	14.8	67	1.34	300	—	76	78	80
2200	23.5	18.6	84	1.26	282	—	78	80	82
2400	26.4	21.8	99	1.21	271	—	80	81	82
2600	28.5	26.8	122	1.06	237	—	80	83	83
2800	31.0	32.3	147	0.96	215	—	81	83	84

#Measured by radar gun. †Calculated from engine manufacturer's figures. \*Allows 20% margin.

ACCELERATION - 0-20 knots, 9.6sec

CONDITIONS - wind southerly Force 4, sea slight

LOAD - fuel 50%, water 0%, crew 2

### SUPPLIERS

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