

Mark says...



I couldn't believe my eyes when I spotted this bright red workboat with a Linssen badge. A closer look found a seriously jazzed up Sturdy, but is there a price to pay for all the bolt on goodies?



MOTOR BOATS TESTED

Linssen

29.9 Sedan Nordic

Linssen's latest '9' series has gone all 'off-road' with oodles of macho, workboat accessories. Is this the toughest steelboat yet?

REPORT BY MARK TURLEY



FACTFILE

Linssen 29.9 Sedan Nordic
LOA: 31ft 7in (9.6m)
PRICE: from £167,600
TOP SPEED: 7.2 knots

Until recently, Dutch steel cruisers tended to sport traditional aft cabins. Now, however, sedan layouts – which deliver the saloon and cockpit on one level – are growing in popularity. The downside is you lose the spacious master cabin aft but given that many of us boat as couples, a choice of sleeping accommodation isn't always the main concern. For many boaters, day-tripping, entertaining and making day-to-day life as easy as possible takes priority. We boarded a workboat-style Linssen 29.9 Sedan Nordic – the 2010 winner of European Powerboat of the Year – to check out the latest and loudest cockpit example.

Design & build

Linssen introduced the '9' series to streamline production over its fully bespoke Mk II series. The upside for customers is that you get Linssen quality but at less of a premium, as long as you are happy to accept the standard layout offered. The 29.9 – available as a sedan or an aft cabin

“The Nordic favours rubber over rope fendering”

(AC) – typifies this approach, but here the yard's traditional look has been given a workboat 'Nordic' makeover.

The Nordic package (also available on the 34.9) is available in three levels. The basic package does away with the cute, over-sized, rope fendering and replaces it with chunky rubber, a Magma red hull, a white superstructure and a larger bathing platform. Exactly how much you load up on the commercial look depends on how much you feel like spending, but even the basic package is a hefty £15k extra. More expensive packages include cheque-plate decks and a trawler-style steadying mast.

Workboat annotations and prices aside, how does this boat appeal? As mentioned before, the main advantage of the Sedan format over the AC

layout is that the saloon and cockpit are on one level, avoiding all that scurrying up and down a companionway. The Sedan's cockpit is a really good size and if al-fresco dining appeals to you, there is room to add to the fixed seating with free-standing chairs and a table.

Unlike the AC layout, the Sedan has



The Nordic has a substantial bathing platform



The saloon typifies the '9' series look – clean looking with plenty of warm woodwork

no exterior driving position – the port-side helm sits ahead of the galley in the saloon. If you're worried this might feel a bit enclosed, you can open up the area by opting for the 'Variodeck' – a large sliding sunroof with a similarly big price tag.

There is only one sleeping cabin, which is pleasant and roomy, but if you need to put up friends or family for a few nights, the saloon dinette will convert into a good-sized double berth. Washing facilities are split between a toilet compartment and a large, separate shower cubicle, and this practical idea works to everyone's advantage.

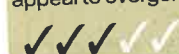
The Nordic boasts wide, safe, side decks and walk-through access to the bathing platform,

which is especially important on boats heading for inland use where there is plenty of mooring work to be done.

Independent of what colour the hull and superstructure end up painted, their fabrication and overall finish is first class and the level of engineering and fitout is well executed.

Design & build

The layout makes life easier but the Nordic look won't appeal to everyone



The underwater sections run from a topside chine down to a full-length keel, with a shoe passing under the prop to both protect it and support the bottom of the rudder.

Exterior

Linssen's aft-cabin boats are always pretty easy to board as their side decks are positioned at a conveniently low height above the pontoon. Much the same can be said for the Nordic, except that your passage is helped by a handrail and broad steps set along the inside of the cockpit. A chunky transom door allows access to the bathing platform, which is finished with rubber fendering but fabricated in stainless steel (so if knocked it won't go rusty).

Solid teak decking in the cockpit and to the bench seating comes as standard but one of the

Handy dedicated glass storage



Nordic packages offers a tread-plate finish, although we think it's a shame to shun the teak. Storage is confined to the under-deck lazarette but although it's a good size, it's odd that lockers haven't been incorporated into the cockpit seating.

You feel safe and secure moving along the 12in side decks, thanks to the good depth of gunwale and accompanying guard and handrails. At the bow a manual windlass is supplied as standard but going electric is optional. The chain feeds down into an enclosed locker accessed via a hatch in the cabin's forward bulkhead, rather than one at deck level. The rest of the mooring hardware is well placed with 10in cleats sited amidships, fore and aft. The aluminium mast seen here comes complete with a steadying sail as part

Exterior

The Nordic looks flash and will handle a bashing



of the top-ranking Nordic package. It also takes care of whatever antennas may require housing and does away with the rather handsome, swept foredeck mast that is usually fitted.

Accommodation

In all but sub-zero conditions you will want to cruise with the beautifully built cockpit doors open, which means the saloon can extend seamlessly into the cockpit.

Immediately inside the doors to starboard is a four-seater dinette, which readily converts to a double berth when required. Across from this is the galley and helm station. The former has a gas-fired three-burner hob and a large circular sink set into a raised Corian work surface, but there is limited countertop workspace. This aside, the galley works well, with deep, generous-sized drawers and an under-sink cupboard, complete with a bin and shelves. Glasses live in a dedicated drawer tucked in the base of the settee, and there is a mid-sized fridge within the helm seat plinth.

In its usual guise, this comfortable dinette seats four with ease



Although the 29.9 only has one cabin, the dinette sofa readily pulls out to form a generous double

The only sleeping cabin forward is really comfortable with a domestic-sized double flanked with shelves, but all the Nordic's surfaces are devoid of fiddled edges. This is a shame because not only do they stop things rolling off, they also add an element of interest to the high-quality joinery.

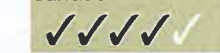
Clothes storage is good, with two sets of shelved cupboards and a deep drawer in the base of the bed. Additional bulk storage can be found under the berth and for items that need to be hung up, there is a wardrobe out

by the companionway steps.

The toilet compartment is generous in size and can be accessed from the saloon and the cabin. A notable feature is the large basin set in a good expanse of countertop, which is something the galley is lacking.

Accommodation

Big on lounging but limited galley work surface



A separate and equally generous shower room, situated opposite, is fitted with a useful teak-slatted seat.



Optional steadying mast



Safe, easy-to-use decks



The spacious cockpit is laid with teak as standard, cheque-plate costs more



The forecabin is spacious with a domestic-sized double berth



The toilet and shower compartments are split. The shower is excellent



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Performance & handling

The hull's full-length keel ensures plenty of directional stability and when the rudder is put over it can still turn in its own length, and that's without any help from the bow thruster. That said, I would still go for a bow thruster and one is included – along with heating and a few other must haves – in the Deluxe upgrade. Motoring astern is pretty easy too, and despite the initial prop walk (helpful when coming alongside in many instances) when your speed increases you'll quickly have reasonable steerage.

It you want to maintain a healthy balance between economy and progress, a cruising speed of 6 knots at 2200rpm delivers just over 5mpg. An extra couple of knots are available should you need to punch a tide, and it was good to find that the bow doesn't bury itself in too much water but lifts slightly and parts the water cleanly. There is also plenty of scope to reduce speed and maintain steerage, which are



Coir fendering is for softies, toughen up with the workboat look



Mooring hardware and rubber fendering is substantial and well-thought through

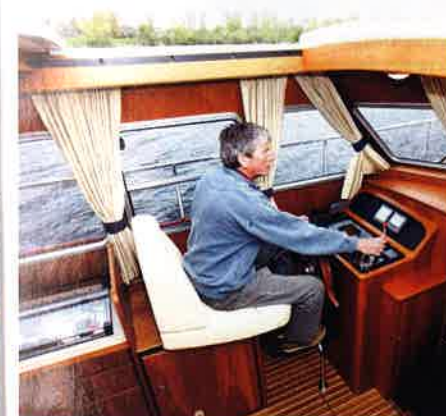


important factors when it comes to inland work.

Our test was conducted on a Dutch inland waterway so out-and-out sea-keeping couldn't be assessed, but there is no reason to suspect that the Nordic would do anything wayward; the slightly larger 34.9, proved easy going when we had it out in open water a few years back. The only element we couldn't test out was the steading sail, and whether it could help reduce this hull's inherent tendency to roll in a beam sea.

A comfortable helm seat and good view out is essential when it comes to slow boating, as you may end up helming for several hours at a time.

If you want to maintain a healthy balance between economy and progress, cruising at 6 knots at 2200rpm delivers 5mpg

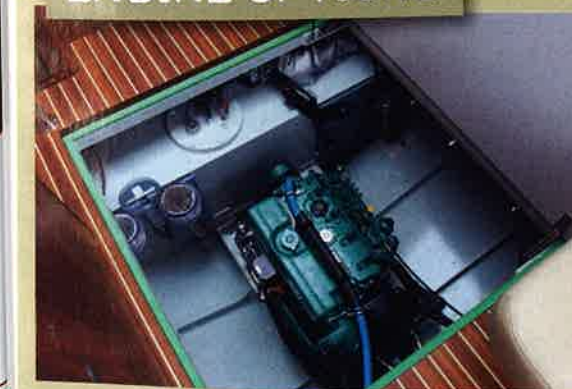


All-round visibility is good at the helm

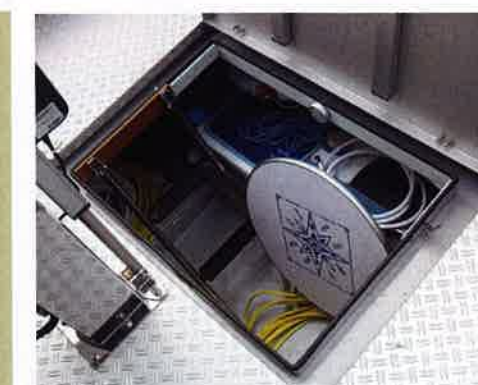


Good galley but limited worktop space

ENGINE OPTIONS




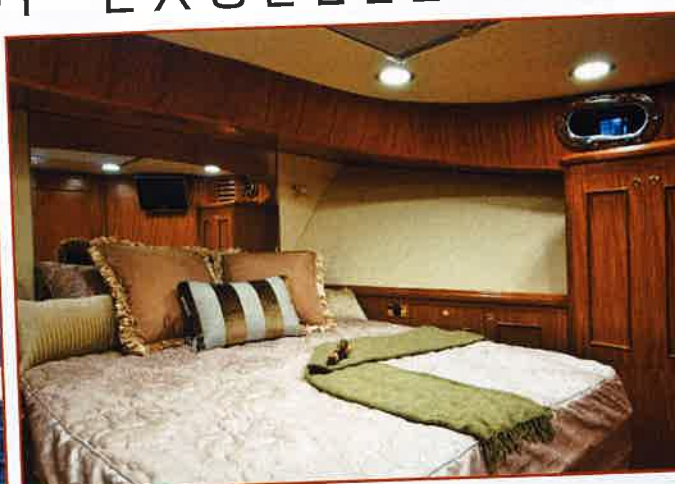
Just the one engine installation is offered – a single four-cylinder Volvo D2 rated to 55hp – and this is all that is required. It looks a bit lost in its compartment beneath the saloon sole, but the decking benefits from built-in rubber insulation and a layer of anti-vibration matting separates it from the steel structure. Also worth noting is the Aquadrive coupling and the vibration deadening 'sand box' fabricated to the hull above the propeller.



Deck storage is confined to the lazarette

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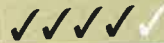
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So it was good to find that the Nordic's large, single helm seat is adjustable fore and aft, and the controls were within easy reach. The console

Performance & handling

The 55hp is well mannered and economical



has room for a small, flush-mounted plotter along with a few other bits and pieces, but we would have preferred the screen set at an angle, as flat screens can be awkward to see.

Specification & value

Building in steel – especially to this high-end finish – is a time consuming and costly business. Linssen boats are pretty pricey to begin with, even with a standard fitout, and the poor showing of the pound against the euro only makes things worse. To get close to an all-up price the standard spec needs some hefty reinforcement from the options list, and if you opt to go Nordic there is a minimum £15,000 charge on top – a dizzying charge to move from rope to rubber.

You really need the £13,000 DeLuxe Pack, which gives you a bow thruster, heating and shorepower (but still no battery charger – another £1500). And the other extras worth considering include the canvas package and the Variodeck sunroof, adding a further £15,000 to the bottom line.

With this in mind a fully functional 29.9 Nordic is pushing £200,000, and although this will buy you a very nice boat, for similar money you could go bigger, as well as checkout the British competition (such as Westwood, Haines and Sheerline). The only downside with the British yards is that they only produce GRP boats and it has to be said that

Specification & value

Pricey to start with and the costs only go one way – up



in European waterways it is difficult to beat a bit of confidence-inspiring steel dressed with hefty fendering. Hmm, I think I'm finally getting to grips with this Nordic thing, after all.

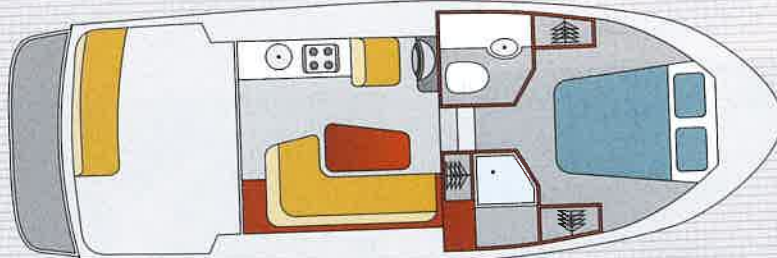
MBM verdict

There's no denying Linssen build quality boats, and 29.9 Sedan works well as either a tourer or a weekend cottage. If erring towards the latter we'd stick with the original styling but our initial scepticism regarding the Nordic version is starting to wain – it's certainly different and it makes good sense if you intend exploring in earnest.



MBM rating

Linssen 29.9 Sedan Nordic technical data



specifications

BUILD	steel
RCD	C
LENGTH OVERALL	31ft 7in (9.6m)
HULL LENGTH	29ft 1in (8.8m)
BEAM	11ft 0in (3.3m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 3in (1.0m)
AIR DRAUGHT	7ft 9in (2.4m)
DISPLACEMENT	8 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	53gal (240lt)
WATER CAPACITY	48gal (220lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	12in (30cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 4in (1.9m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 5ft 0in (2.0 x 1.5m)



performance

Engines	single Volvo Penta D2-55 diesel
Configuration	4cyl, 2.2lt, 55hp @ 3000rpm
conditions	wind NE'ly, Force 2, sea state calm
Load	fuel 75%, water 25%, crew 5

Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
1200	3.6	-	-	-	-	60
1600	4.8	0.7	3	6.9	293	61
2200	5.8	1.1	5	5.3	223	63
2500	6.5	1.5	7	4.3	181	66
2900	7.3	2.6	12	2.8	118	66

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 taken in the wheelhouse.

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with single Volvo D2 55hp	£167,600
DE LUXE PACK (bow thruster, heater, shorepower and antifoul)	£13,000
NORDIC PACKAGE III	£24,360
SHOREPOWER	£1980
BATTERY CHARGER/INVERTER	£3940
VARIODECK SUNROOF	£11,110
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	£1980
COCKPIT CANOPY	£4080

Prices based on €1.1 to the pound

BOAT AS TESTED £221,200

ENQUIRIES Berthon Tel: 01590 647444
www.linssenyachts.co.uk

the rivals



HAINES SEDAN 31

From £128,000
If the Nordic's sedan layout suits but you would prefer a GRP boat, this British yard's 31-footer should tick all the boxes.
Tel: 01692 582180
hainesmarine.co.uk



JETTEN 34

From £149,000
Rival Dutch steel builder Jetten offer a 33-footer with much the same layout as the Linssen; one cabin with a separate toilet and shower.
Tel: 0118 9401773
valwyattmarine.co.uk



CAPRICE ACE 34

From £190,000
This Dutch yard's answer to an entry-level cruiser is this sedan model. It's still pricey but is slightly bigger than Linssen's 29.9 Sedan.
Tel: 01202 826800
imperial-motoryachts.com