



BOAT REPORT
LINSSEN
STURDY
360AC

The latest of the traditionally-styled boats from this Dutch yard has attractive looks, practical fit-out and a lot of character.

BEST known for their fully-displacement SE range from 37ft (11.3m) to 44ft (13.4m), and for the like-sized semi-planing SX models with twin engines, the renowned Dutch yard of Linssen has also kept more traditionally styled craft in their line-up.

After much tweaking of what is an intriguing highly shaped steel hull design, and refinements on the engineering and equipment fronts, the latest result is the characterful but nevertheless very practical Sturdy 360.

As with all other Linssens, the Sturdy is available in two standard specifications. The quality of fit-out and inventory is high in both, the Royal pipping the Luxe on such points as davit plinths built up on the transom, a manual windlass with ground tackle and a large opening deckhead hatch in the saloon.

Giles Ball, sales manager of the parent company's subsidiary Linssen Yachts UK, has further modified the Royal spec, as tested here, to include a basic Autohelm navigation package, a Shipmate VHF, an oven/grill and an extractor fan for the galley.

The 360 comes in a choice of two designs, the aft-cabin model we tested (above) or with an open cockpit (inset). The UK versions of Royal models include such extras as an oven/grill and an extractor fan in the galley (right); the layout was customised on our test boat.

Design

The basic alternatives are an aft-cabin model (as tested) and an open-cockpit style.

Both share an enclosed forecabin and a midships saloon with interior helm, split by a galley with an additional dinette area. The saloon of the OC opens via a wide set of doors into the cockpit; the AC has a raised aft deck with a secondary helm station. In lieu of the lower dinette, a small double bunk cabin is available on either boat.

Although cost-effective as a building material, steel has certain inherent properties which generally restrict boat design to slab sides and a boxy appearance. But it seems no-one told Linssen! This 34ft (10.35m) hull incorporates a pleasing measure of 'tumblehome' (curvature) into its topsides, formed by a knuckle at the chine of the two adjoining runs of plate, which is in turn broken up by purposeful-looking rope fendering.

The hull tapers from its full beam, just ahead of amidships, to pinch in considerably at the transom — no doubt in an attempt to reduce



resistance (although there is still full transom immersion) while maintaining as much volume-giving beam as possible.

A couple of further chines to the underwater sections give a round bilge of sorts, with the bottom run of plating butting into the only squared-off part of the hull: a huge box-section keel. Averaging around 12in (30cm) in depth, this runs from the forefoot through to the transom, encapsulating the shaft and protecting the four-bladed prop and rudder. The raw cooling water pick-up is also set within it, and large grills on each side minimise the danger of the strainer becoming clogged with large debris.

The bow section itself is tug-like in its abruptness, with the conic runs of plate drawing together to form the shallowest of cleaving shapes on their run up from the waterline, while a handsome extra-thick piece of rope fendering reinforces the boat's workboat appearance.

Exterior

Whether boarding or hopping off to pop the first line ashore, the slight height difference between side deck and pontoon is unlikely ever to be a problem. The stainless steel guardrails border easily-paced 12in-wide sidedecks, which on our test boat were teak-finished, along with the aft deck, at a hefty extra cost of £8800 ex VAT.

A handrail runs along the upper stretch of coachroof only. The lower portion, with its triplet of portholes, does not really warrant one since the crew is kept safe by a sturdy guardrail, although at the foredeck the relative height of the rail is reduced by the raising of the deck level.

The manual Vetus windlass is standard-issue on Royal models. The chain feeds into a large foredeck locker (which also houses a pair of sealed gas bottle containers) from a vertical central hawse pipe, the anchor being pulled up snug under the bow.

Deck hardware includes sizable 1 1/2in (28cm) bits forward, midships and aft. All are set as tight as possible to the side of the vessel, reducing chafe. The stayed mast on the coachroof is on a tabernacle for easy lowering.

There are a number of alternative set-ups for the screen and protective canopy. A collapsible framed glass affair is the norm, with a hoop-supported canvas dodger above it. On the boat we tested, the owner has opted for a flexible polythene lower screen, allowing the whole construction to be folded down more quickly, tucking around the console perimeter.

The exterior helm station has a plasticised foam-coated vertical wheel — certainly preferable to cold stainless steel — and a duplication of the basic engine instruments and nav repeaters found below. There is no helm seat, and in fact no seating provided as standard on the aft deck at all, which limits storage space to just the foredeck locker. On this boat, the aft deck had been fitted with an extremely expensive pair of fixed steel and teak seat lockers, either side of the access to the bathing platform.

The platform itself is a neat, unobtrusive affair, finished with wood slats. Several inches shy of the full width of the transom, it is unlikely to be a hindrance during close-quarters manoeuvring.

Interior

From the large sliding hatch and wooden door, it is several steps down to the saloon from the aft deck, with a balustrade to lend a helping hand.

Immediately to port is a short companionway to the aft cabin, together with a run of cupboard and drawer storage outboard. The portion behind the helm seat has bottle and glass cut-outs which mark it out as a useful bar.

The starboard side of the upper saloon has a shallow U-shaped seating arrangement which you would usually expect to have a dinette table.



Left: aft of the interior helm position are a run of cupboards and drawers to port and a U-settee to starboard, in this case with a small coffee table instead of a full dinette arrangement. **Above:** this owner opted for a flexible polythene screen for the upper helm, easy to fold down but harder to see through. **Below right:** access to the single 150hp Volvo Penta is good, and most of the service points can be inspected by lifting one of the four hatches in the sole.

In this instance, a smaller coffee-table has been substituted, infilling to allow an occasional berth to be made up. Lockers here, as throughout the boat, are wood-lined, finished with either paint or varnish. The foremost one houses the manual bilge pump, which can be worked clear of obstructions.

The skipper has a decent-sized fixed single helm seat, with a footrest. The angled console provides sufficient landing for the main engine instrument panel, switches and basic navigation heads, plus space for extra electronics of reasonable dimensions. Removable panels both here and towards the upper helm give access behind-the-scenes.

No doubt pleased with its appearance, Linsen's design office have given the console a smart roll-top edge; however, we would rather have seen a ledge to form a lectern, and a tighter grouping of instrumentation to leave room for a folded chart or a pilot book.

The forward screen is split into three, the outboard sections having sturdy self-parking wipers and the middle one being openable. Additional ventilation is provided by the double-sized sunroof over the forward part of the saloon, and by sliding side windows.

A couple of steps lead down to the galley and dinette area.

The standard layout has the galley to

starboard and an L-shaped settee and table opposite. However, with a view to liveaboard cruising, the owner of this boat plumped for a less commodious (but still four-seater) dinette to starboard, thereby allowing more room for a better appointed galley.

The revised arrangement features a full built-in hob, grill and oven (rather than just a hob) and more work surface, in addition to the stainless steel sink with mixer tap, the fridge and the plentiful stowage provided by the standard design. To supplement the opening port and



hatch, an extractor over the hob has been fitted.

The forecabin has a 6ft 1in x 5ft 0in (1.85 x 1.52m) central double but, apart from a three-quarter-height hanging locker and a double cupboard opening up the cavernous void beneath the bunk-base, it is rather plain.

Finishing off the forward accommodation is the part-tiled toilet compartment, accessed from the dinette lobby rather than direct from the cabin. There is a sea toilet and a basin with a cupboard beneath, but no shower.

If the forward cabin lacks storage and detail, the master cabin aft makes up for it, with an array of cupboards and wardrobes fashioned into every bulkhead. Beneath the bunk-base lies access to the steering gear, and the water tanks, the Royal model having a 33gal (150lt) tank in addition to the Luxe version's 48gal (220lt) one.

The 6ft 3in x 4ft 0in (1.9 x 1.22m) berth is offset to port, allowing a clear run to starboard for the toilet compartment with its separate tiled shower cubicle. This is the only part of the boat which does not have full standing headroom, there being up to 6ft 4in (1.93m) in the saloon.

A nice detail in both cabins is that the ply bases to the berths have large vent holes to keep mattresses aired. The interior of the 360 is almost fully clad in well matched mahogany, the joinery coming up to the standard of finish we have come to expect from Linssen. The headlinings are of a stitch-seamed Alcantara-type material, with inset spots. Cabins have plenty of ventilation, through hatches or ports, and all lifting hatches in the sole, whether to the engine compartment or to the bilge, are framed with aluminium strip.

Engines

All engine options are single diesels from the Volvo stable. The four-cylinder 31B comes in either 100hp or 124hp guise, and the 41B series in either turbocharged 150hp or turbocharged/aftercooled 200hp state.

Our test boat had the 150hp TMD 41B. Whilst all the listed installations should push the 30ft (9.1m) lwl craft up to its hull speed of around 7-8 knots, the extra power in hand is a bonus for sea or estuary cruising, as are the smoother running characteristics of a six-cylinder.

The engine compartment beneath the saloon sole is exposed by lifting any number of the freestanding, eggbox foam-covered hatches. Access is generally good both to the day-to-day service points on the main engine and to the auxiliaries, most of which are mounted on their own painted plinths, with wiring, pipes and cables ducted out of harm's way. Relocating the raw-water filter and fuel/water separator a foot or so inboard would allow all the main service points to be inspected without lifting any more than the one central hatch.

Battery boxes are well secured and accessible. Their isolators are just adjacent, making them less than conveniently located, although a duplicate switch at the helm knocks out the domestic bank which Linssen reckon is more prone to discharge.

Fuel is split between two outboard tanks. There is a balance pipe between them, with the feed and return plumbed into the port tank and a stopcock just about accessible on the former. Both tanks had inspection plates, but some part of the sideboard and settee joinery would almost

certainly have to be removed if you were to make use of them.

The boat has a through bilge, the lowest part of which is towards the forward engineroom bulkhead, which makes it the obvious pick-up point for the automatic/electric and manual pumps. Unfortunately the engine itself is pretty tight to this bulkhead.

Handling and performance

The 360 being single-engined, most owners will opt for the £2000 bow thruster fitment. Whilst not essential for berthing manoeuvres, it makes a difference when steadying the bow against the wind (just about matching the Force 4 we encountered) and makes less of a meal of turning once you are clear of a finger mooring.

Heading out at a full throttle into the short Solent chop, we expected the flat bow sections to act as a drum, and to allow water to run up the topsides and stream aboard. In fact, the ride was free of hull noise and squeaking from the internals, and the bow wave was broken and flattened enough not to be picked up too much by the wind. A small amount of spray found its way aboard, but not with any regularity or quantity, and the screen at the lower helm needed only an occasional wipe.

Visibility from here is good, if not a full 360°. The quarters are slightly obscured, but leaning a little further from the helm seat allows blindspots to be checked.

The hydraulic steering is finger-light, and even with its full run of keel the hull proved responsive, turning 90° in a boat's length and achieving the reciprocal course in well under two lengths.

Backing off from the full-throttle 3900rpm, which gave 8.5 knots, we fell to 2800rpm before we dropped a knot, so the TMD 41B clearly has plenty in hand for plugging into any weather. For estuary cruising at about 6 knots, the revs can be eased to 2200rpm.

Noise levels were not intrusive, either on the aft deck or in the saloon, measuring 76dB(A) and 80dB(A) respectively at our 2800rpm cruising speed. The aft cabin began to suffer at around the 3200rpm mark, but it is most unlikely that anyone would want to sleep at these speeds.

Maximum fuel consumption by this 150hp engine under normal service conditions is 7.5gph (34lph). Maintaining 2800rpm should drop this to around 4-4.5gph (21lph), giving reasonable 7½-knot progress plus economy.

Conclusions

The Sturdy's exterior finish is nothing short of superb, from the clean, millimetre-perfect sweep and join of the chines to the curves and detail incorporated in the superstructure. And whether you look inside or out, at the metalwork or the joinery, the rest of the boat is finished to the same high standards.

What the Sturdy sets out to achieve receives a wholehearted thumbs-up, too. Its exterior design is not only different but to our mind attractive, and more importantly the hull shape is effective. Couple this with sound workmanship and the practicality of an aft-cabin layout, and Linssen have a very useful addition to their range.

Look out for a 40ft version making its debut at the London Boat Show in January. □

Linssen Sturdy 360AC

Loa 35ft 6in (10.85m).
Hull length 34ft 0in (10.35m).
Beam 10ft 8in (3.55m).
Draught 3ft 6in (1.10m).
Air draught 7ft 8in (2.40m) with the mast down.
Displacement 9 tons.
Fuel capacity 2 x 55gal (250lt).
Water capacity 81gal (370lt).

Engine single Volvo Penta TMD 41B 150hp diesel.
Price from £79,035 ex VAT for Luxe version with TMD 31B engine; £103,321 for Royal specification with TMD 41B; £125,740 as tested.

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