

## Mark says...

There's so much going on with this boat, making it easily one of the most exciting craft in its class. But does all this techno wizardry make the Marino a great boat, or should the yard have kept things simple?



**FACTFILE**  
**Marino APB 27**  
 LOA: 26ft 10in (8.2m)  
 PRICE: from £158,470  
 TOP SPEED: 35.5 knots

**MOTOR BOATS TESTED**

# Marino APB 27

**Does Marino's all purpose boat do exactly what it says on the tin?** **REPORT BY MARK TURLEY**

**W**e coined the term SUB (sports utility boat) a year or so ago, when we tested several cuddly-sized craft that benefit from enclosed, fully protected helms and seating. The concept has now been taken a stage further with a small Finnish yard launching what it has dubbed an APB – all purpose boat; a big, bold

statement for a 27ft boat if there ever was one. So, could this really be all the boat you need?

The Marino clears the first hurdle with ease. It looks good. Trying to be all things could have delivered a Frankenstein's monster of bolt-on bits. Instead, all the APB's ideas are wrapped up in a clean, curvaceous package. The only tricky bit is explaining just how clever this boat is. Here goes...

## Design & build

Let's kick off with the wheelhouse which, well, largely disappears at the touch of a button or two. We all know the great British weather isn't to be relied upon, and although there is no denying that a hardtop makes good sense, we'd probably rather it wasn't there the moment the sun finally makes an appearance.

Marino's answer is to clear away its rear bulkhead, with the largely glazed section slipping under the cockpit sole. On top of this, the majority of the substantially built glass roof disappears too. It is then simply a matter of sliding back the chunky side doors amidships to be as open to the elements as you'll ever want to be.

The really clever part is that all this is achieved without a great deal of fuss, and that the superstructure – with its deep window line and accented curves – sits so comfortably on the

regular medium-vee hull. Regular, that is, except for the broad foam 'bumper' that wraps around the gunwale. The furry finish might be viewed with suspicion but the hard, closed-cell foam is said to be very tough and durable and is used on workboats and fishing vessels with great success.

For watersports lovers, the transom has a trick to play too. The rear moulding hinges over backwards so that the whole cockpit becomes a huge bathing platform or, alternatively, a one-level route from the boat to the pontoon.

Clearly, with so much going on, categorising the APB isn't going to be straightforward. For instance, it is almost a walkaround, but not quite.

The sunken foredeck runs into deep side decks but these become narrow sills further aft. But even this is another neat piece of design thinking, as it allows that bit more interior width, while the side doors make it easy to tend lines amidships.

With all this double-dealing on the outside, can the interior compete? First off, the versatile wheelhouse can be as open to the elements as the conditions permit, but even when closed up it enjoys loads of light thanks to the glass roof and a generous window line. In fact, it is quite a snug venue when battened down and if you root around under the seat cushions you will find the rudiments of a galley, which can become part of

the cockpit if you drop the rear bulkhead and flip over a few backrests. Take a further look under the side benches and you'll discover a couple of decent-sized pipecot berths, while up at the bow there is a forecabin that can be shut off from the main wheelhouse thanks to a sliding door. Being

able to enclose this space is important as there is no separate toilet compartment – the sea toilet (and associated holding tank) is housed beneath the berth. >>

## Design & build

Alternative looks and clever features that account for the weather

✓✓✓✓✓



The sunroof opens in two sections that tuck underneath each other



There isn't any dedicated seating on the foredeck but there is plenty of room to move about



“The rear moulding hinges over so that the cockpit becomes a huge one-level bathing platform”







Even when closed up the wheelhouse is light and airy



The helm seat's backrest flips over to face the rest of the seating; remove the cushion to reveal the hob



## Exterior

You might think that getting a whole bulkhead to disappear would be a slow, rather cumbersome process but it couldn't be simpler. At the touch of a button the whole cockpit sole hinges up and tilts backwards and then the glass wheelhouse bulkhead, which comes with a door,

slides down flat to sit above the engine access. The over-sized deck hatch then comes down on top to hide it. The whole process takes around 30 seconds and is a joy to watch.

The next 'open and close' exercise concerns the folding transom. OK, the all-in-one cockpit-cum-bathing platform might not be as

useful as the disappearing bulkhead, but its manual operation is easy and virtually glitch-proof, so you might as well have one. And in sunnier climes this vast teak-clad deck amounts to something like your own private beach.

The downside to these neat ideas is that the aft cockpit has ended up being pretty shallow, and the wooded seat bases on either side that double as lockers – a handy place to hide the stern cleats – are pretty narrow.

The foredeck offers a fair bit of room and although it is possible to squat on the coaming-height lockers set in the bow, there is no actual dedicated seating here; perhaps

something utilising the short coachroof would make sense. At present there is no bow roller arrangement either but the UK agent – Wessex Marine – is aiming to provide this on UK boats.

## Exterior

Multi-purpose space but pinched cockpit seating



The sea toilet is tucked under the V-berth



A sink is located under one of the side benches



The cockpit coaming doubles as seating and storage

## Accommodation

Our comment about the limited depth of the wood-finished cockpit is more of an observation than a criticism, as when underway it's likely that the crew will sit inside – or what's left of the inside once you've dropped the bulkhead and opened up the roof. However, due to the walk-through nature of the design, the rear wheelhouse seats face each other, which is great when moored up but far from ideal when underway. These seats are also raised, in order to give the required space beneath for the generous pipecot-type berths, the forward portion of each seat base lifting for access and to make them less claustrophobic.

To increase space in the wheelhouse the plinth of the double helm seat can be moved forward towards the console and by flipping over the seat backrests you quickly create some U-shaped seating, which faces out into the cockpit.

The helm seat unit also provides room for the optional galley module, with a hob and fridge housed here, while the sink, due to logistical reasons involving the water tank and the sliding nature of the plinth, is tucked within the base of the port-hand seat.

Headroom in the forecabin is more than

## Accommodation

Bright and breezy with a fitout limited to overnighting



adequate but it is more a cuddly for sleeping in than sitting in, as although the V-berth arrangement is generous there are no seat backs incorporated into the moulded liner.

## Performance & handling

The test boat sported the largest of the Volvo D4 sterndrive options rated to 300hp – others deliver 225hp and 260hp – which pushed it into the mid-30s without either the hull or its occupants getting fazed. The driving position, while nothing sophisticated, offers plenty of



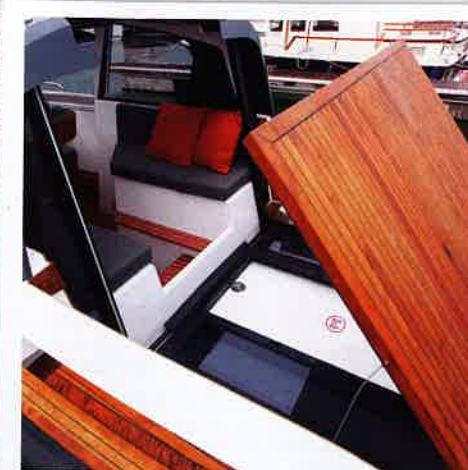
The side benches in the wheelhouse have decent-sized single berths tucked under them



A sliding door shuts off the forecabin from the wheelhouse

Access is actually quite easy

## AS EASY AS 1,2,3



Up goes the decking, then the bulkhead slides down at the touch of a button – like an upside down garage door – and then the decking covers it up

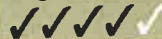


support and the hull nips and tucks around extremely cleanly. The hull did suffer the odd knock or two as we flicked it about at speed but on a straight run it gave a comfortable ride. Alternatively, you can throttle back and jog along in the high teens, which is all the better for enjoying the boat in its almost open-air mode.

Visibility is excellent – with the deep, plunging window line paying dividends – but the helm console needs a bit of tweaking to our mind, not because you can't see or operate things but simply because it doesn't do the rest of the boat justice. It starts off great, with an attractively radiused wood finish but then someone has cut a huge hole in it to bracket-mount a plotter. The designer has then seen fit to stick the engine

### Performance & handling

Good turn of speed with a comfy straight-line ride



instruments on a piece of flat, grey ply under the stylish one-piece windscreen, when an angled fascia inset into the top of the console would have made a much neater job.

### Specification & value

All the main features that make the APB 27 so different – the drop-away bulkhead and electric sunroof – are part and parcel of the boat, plus you get wood decking and a demister system included in the base price. Another nice touch is the comprehensive electronics package that is listed as standard, although from there on in you need to add a bow thruster, galley module,

### Specification & value

Cheerful but not cheap. Decent standard spec

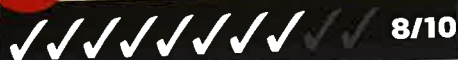


shorepower and hot water. Drop these extras into the end price and you're moving towards £170k for an interesting sub 30-footer, but one that is still only a single-engined weekender.

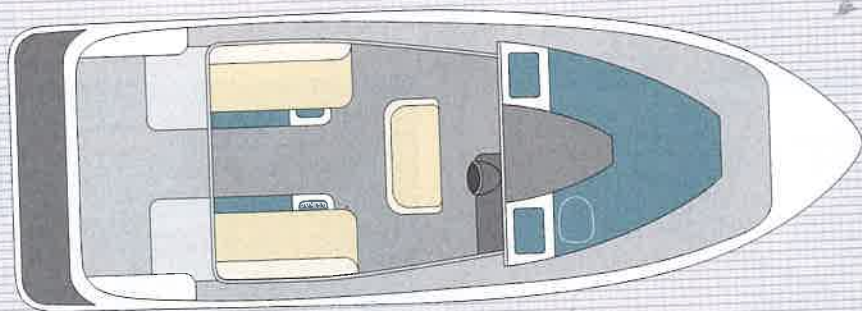
## MBM verdict

It looks like the award for most interesting boat of the year has been sewn up late on. The APB is awash with detail and thought but, the funny thing is, stripped of most of its quirky functionality, this would still be a very useable and probably far cheaper boat. But let's stop being sensible – enjoy the toys and the undeniably clever way that you can take on the weather and win.

MBM rating



## Marino APB 27 technical data



### specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	C
LENGTH OVERALL	26ft 10in (8.20m)
HULL LENGTH	25ft 9in (7.85m)
BEAM	9ft 6in (2.90m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 3in (1.0m)
DISPLACEMENT	3 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	64gal (290lt)
WATER CAPACITY	12gal (50lt)

### key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	8in (20cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 2in (1.88m)
FORECABIN BERTHS	7ft 0in x 2ft 4in (2.13 x 0.70m)
MIDSHIP BERTHS	6ft 6in x 3ft 0in (1.98 x 0.91m)



ENQUIRIES Wessex Marine Tel: 01202 700702  
www.wessexmarine.co.uk

### performance

Engines	single Volvo D4-300hp diesel
Configuration	4cyl 3.7lt 300hp @ 3500rpm
Conditions	SW'ly Force 3, sea slight
Load	fuel 100% water 0% crew 2



Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2200	17.0	3.7	17	4.59	234	75
2500	23.5	5.3	24	4.43	226	76
2800	27.4	6.8	31	4.03	206	76
3000	30.6	8.1	37	3.78	193	77
3500	35.5	10.6	56	3.35	171	78

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 D4-300hp (landed UK)	£158,470
BOW THRUSTER	£3444
ENGINE-DRIVEN HEATER	standard
SHOREPOWER	£1524
HOT WATER	£1092
GALLEY MODULE	£1374

**BOAT AS TESTED £167,500**

### the rivals



**KARNIC 2965**  
From £138,000  
Huge cockpit and loads of accommodation but, like the Marino APB 27, it doesn't benefit from walkaround decks.  
Tel: 01202 710448  
www.yellowpenguin.co.uk



**PARAGON 25**  
From £130,000  
This sharp looking operator has full walkaround decks and an excellent standard of finish but again it has no separate toilet compartment.  
Tel: 01590 677955  
www.offshorepowerboats.co.uk



**AQUADOR 28C**  
From £146,800  
This is one of the cleverest walkarounds you will find because it offers so much accommodation, including a lift-up mid cabin.  
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