

BOAT REPORT **MAXUM 2700SCR**

Flagship of the fleet, Maxum's 29-footer turned in a lively performance in the Mediterranean.





WHILE we were in the South of France to test Mercruiser's latest incursion into the diesel world (see p40), we took the opportunity to try out the latest and largest craft from American manufacturers Maxum, a company also owned by the giant Brunswick Corporation.

Design

Alongside the pontoon this 29ft (8.8m) craft looks a very bulky piece of GRP, although the prominence of the deckline is reduced by the broad band of grey below the rubbing strake when underway. The height of topside gives 6ft 6in (2.0m) interior headroom, but the coachroof is flattish and easy to walk over and there is plenty of height to the cockpit coaming.

The design allows for easy boarding via the integral bathing platform and walk-through transom. The former extends to the vessel's full beam, so you can just step aboard, rather than having to stretch past the usual bordering slope of topside.

The underwater sections have a medium-vee of 18.5° deadrise, the bow giving way to very full lines above the chine, ensuring there is plenty of buoyancy forward and maximising space down below. Maxum use their boats' secondary mouldings as stiffeners, in addition to the dedicated stringers and bearers, and fill the voids between them with foam, for reserve buoyancy and hull sound-deadening.

Exterior

Boarding via the bathing platform is aided by the transom seat frame being constructed of tubular stainless steel, doubling as a handrail. The seat-base provides a measure of stowage, which is



supplemented by a couple of good-sized perspex-fronted lockers set into the coaming to port.

Further forward, the pair of double back-to-back settees adjacent to the individual helm seat can be pulled out flat, giving the ample cockpit a sunbed. Additionally, there is provision for a removable table to be set between the transom and the aft-facing seats; if it was a mite larger, it would create a pleasant al-fresco dining area, especially with the coolbox sited handily to one side. A large, unforgiving hinged footrest is incorporated below the rear-facing settee, due to the cockpit sole's height variation. A rather less cumbersome alternative would save a few painful knocks to the ankles.

The helm seat is adjustable fore and aft and is substantially upholstered, along with the rest of the seating. The moulded console is finished in grey gel, which avoids excessive glare but does appear rather bulky.

Everything is to hand and readily viewed, whether you are sitting or standing. The trim tabs



Above: the walk-through screen allows simple access to the foredeck, but minimises space for additional instruments. Left: in this quarter view, notice how the bathing platform is allowed to run full width, allowing easy boarding when alongside. Top right: the dinette, made up as a double berth. Right: It's a cosy sleeping arrangement in the open plan cabin; the offset fore berth is simply curtained off from the convertible dinette. Far right: the full-width engine hatch gives good access to the machinery.



follow on from the angled throttle plinth, and the rest of the ready-use switches are banked around the stainless steel wheel. Instrumentation is presented in a two-tiered array, and although a speedo and depth sounder are included in the package, as well as a compass, spare console space is limited because the area immediately to the left is fashioned with a couple of in-built steps leading through the substantially framed split screen to the coachroof.

The latter route to the foredeck is preferable to shuffling along the minimal side decks, and the arrangement works well enough, especially given that the coachroof is fairly flat and covered (like all other deck surfaces) with a good depth of moulded non-slip. A guardrail borders the coachroof, but a central run of handrail would be beneficial as you emerge through the screen.

Deck hardware consists of a bow roller set in the anchor platform, which leads to a chain locker accessed from the interior (so there is no stowage forward), plus fore, midships and quarter cleats of just adequate size, 8in (20cm).

Interior

A gas-strut supported perspex hatch and an accompanying door allow access to the main cabin. A different hinging system might help the former; its close proximity to the screen means it does not open far enough, and nearly everyone on our test boat managed to have an encounter with it.

The interior is pretty much open-plan, even though it is geared to sleep up to six. Curtains cordon off the angled foreberth from the convertible dinette, and the midships sleeping area from the main cabin.

There is abundant stowage in painted-out or lined compartments, including a hanging locker and a huge void beneath the forward berth. The hatch to the latter is helpfully provided with a gas strut to keep it open as you stow or retrieve bedding. We were also pleased to find a couple of very adequate lockers to the foot and head of the decent-sized 6ft 1in x 4ft 4in (1.86m x 1.32m) midships berth, as well as a large sliding window arrangement in the cockpit.

The galley area to port of the companionway is well endowed with cupboards and drawers, and has an adequate-sized fridge. With so much room for stowing victuals, however, it would have been nice to see more than a single electric/paraffin burner to cook on. A stainless steel sink with a mixer tap is set into the fiddled work surface.

Opposite is a good-sized toilet compartment, mostly moulded for easy cleaning, with a shower and adequate dry stowage. An opening port provides ventilation.

The sensible, albeit rather dark, colours used in the upholstery, head linings and carpeting are lifted by natural light from two deck hatches and a number of opening side ports.

Engines

The engine options are all from Mercruiser. Two single petrol alternatives are offered, of 260hp and 330hp. Our test boat had the most potent installation, twin 205hp V6s.

These are fitted, with plenty of clearance around them, under a pair of gas-strut supported

hatches which afford good access to the engines themselves and the auxiliaries. Only the leg end right at the transom is a little awkward, although the power-trim pumps and reservoirs have been brought to the front of the compartment for easy checking.

The water tank, calorifier and pressure pump, and strapped down batteries are to be found outboard, while the battery switches and charger (the mains ring being standard) are fitted on the forward bulkhead.

The compartment is completely painted out, and foil-faced insulation is stuck to the hatches and forward bulkhead. The boat we inspected was fitted with extinguishers activated from the helm and a single automatic bilge pump, but as is usual on American craft the fuel lines were devoid of stopcocks and extra filters.

Performance and handling

The temperature may be a good few degrees warmer than the UK in April, and certainly the food is wonderful, but as awkward bits of sea go the French Mediterranean is on a par with any British stretch of coastline.

Gales to the south provided a short swell, nicely compounded by the reflective effect of the steep-to shoreline, topped off with a Force 3-4 blowing at 45° to the main wave pattern. This was all very well for gauging seakeeping, when speed can be tempered to the conditions and the limitations of the boat, but less good for collecting fuel and speed data.

Or so one might think. Our 'pilot' Jean-Paul, from the local Mercruiser distributors, had different ideas. We concluded our test in record time, combining full throttle speed/fuel trials and seakeeping in one fell swoop, bowling across the wavetops at 38 knots.

To call this comfortable would be stretching a point, but we were pleasantly surprised by the lack of banging and crashing from below, and by the cushioned ride in these unpredictable conditions, especially as Jean-Paul had wound out the drives to get "le max".

Throttling back from their full 4900rpm, at which they were consuming 13.5gph (61lph) apiece, the Mercruisers gave us an easy 27 knots at 3500rpm and a complacent 21 knots at 3000rpm, in both cases 'uphill' and without discomfort or cause for concern. Fuel consumption was 16gph (72lph) and 10.5gph (48lph) respectively.

In the cockpit we measured noise levels of 92dB(A) flat-out, 86dB(A) at 3500rpm, and a rather less intrusive 83dB(A) cruising at 3000rpm. You'll forgive us, perhaps, for not venturing below.

Conclusions

Since their introduction to this country several years ago, we have seen a marked improvement in almost every aspect of Maxum design, build and finish, and the 2700 is no exception.

The interior layout with its three double bunk areas, is roomy if not altogether geared for privacy, while the cockpit offers plenty of comfortable seating which in part doubles as a sunbed. We have no complaints on the handling front either, the 2700SCR proving very lively but in a confidence-inspiring manner. □

Maxum 2700SCR

Loa 29ft 0in (8.84m).

Hull length 26ft 9in (8.15m).

Beam 9ft 6in (2.90m).

Draught 1ft 11in (0.58m) with drives up.

Displacement 3.0 tons.

Fuel 85gal (386lt).

Water 25gal (114lt).

Price £28,046 ex VAT with a single 260hp Mercruiser petrol engine; £34,038 with a twin 205hp installation. The arch mast shown on our test boat is an optional extra.

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