

MAXUM 4600SCB

Just arrived in the UK, this flagship of an American range is a happy blend of design traits from different sides of the Atlantic.





Left: the Maxum's curvaceous galley is both attractive and practical, blending in nicely with the saloon. Below: both toilet compartments are fully moulded, each with a shower and good stowage. Bottom: the forward mastercabin (left) sports a central queen-size berth, while the guest cabin (right) has twin berths. Right: one of the boat's biggest selling points is its open-plan saloon, with its plush U-shaped dinette (top), sideboard and entertainments centre (centre) and two-seat helm station set well back from the screen (bottom).

In a relatively short period, and despite the vagaries of the market in the less buoyant 1990s, the American Maxum range has become well established on this side of the Atlantic. First to make an impact were their snappy-looking sportsboats and cuddies, then their voluminous sportscruisers, and most recently a couple of flybridge models, culminating in the flagship 4600SCB.

The challenge of creating a 46-footer is something very different from that of piecing together boats of smaller stature, so we were keen to have a close look at the first of these boats to arrive in the UK. With the kind permission of its owner, MBM reader Malcolm Hammerton, we visited the South Coast importers Russell Simpson Marine to do just that.

Design

Maxum's design philosophy has been to go for very European exterior styling, with a superstructure and topside founded on plenty of soft curves, rounded corners and swept lines.

The interior, on the other hand, is very much in the American mould, with headroom rarely dropping below 6ft 6in (1.98m) and that extra feeling of expansiveness that you get only with US boats. There is room to swing the proverbial bob-cat, and much of the fit-out is domestic-sized.

The underwater lines are unconventional, even if the powertrain uses a simple straight-through shaft configuration. The deadrise of 9° at the transom puts the hull in the shallow-vee category, even by



American standards, although this tightens up to 18.5° amidships, where the full beam extends well forward.

A second major difference is that the vee-sections culminate in a shallow run of keel, eking out from the stem to a depth of 9in (23cm) and then fading out before the propellers in what is a somewhat semi-displacement format. This keel affords the directional stability and transverse resistance to windage which would otherwise be lost to the shallow sections.

The bathing platform is set deep into the moulding, which masks a fair proportion of its 4ft (1.22m) depth.

Exterior

Equipped with a crane as standard (although this had yet to be fitted on our test boat), the bathing platform provides a landing for a mini-RIB or personal watercraft, although with the transom door sited centrally this will make boarding from astern difficult.

Even with the platform tucking well into it, and the length of the superstructure encroaching from the other end, the cockpit seems a surprisingly good size. This is because the lack of fixed seating across the transom leaves more uncluttered deck area, which can be set with free-standing furniture when required.

A pair of lockers in the transom coaming, on the bathing platform side, house the battery switches and shoreside electrical hook-up, as well as some fenders.

Without the permanent seats in which to house it, cockpit storage might have been lacking, but Maxum have got round this by incorporating rope lockers into the inboard face of the transom coaming, a stowage in the stairwell to the flybridge and, most



usefully, a good-sized locker set within the sole, which is ideal for cleaning equipment.

All of this is in addition to a huge lazaret found under a much larger hatch, which is supported on a gas strut. Besides swallowing major ancillaries such as the encapsulated 9kVA generator and batteries, and housing the dustbin-sized exhaust mufflers, this offers useful general stowage space for buckets, spare fenders and the like, although more attention should have been paid to lining or segmenting it: items go straight into the bilge, and the steering gear is exposed so that it could easily be fouled.

A couple of wide steps lead up from the cockpit to the side decks, which start at around 9in (23cm) wide and broaden as they run forward. We also liked the fact that handrails are positioned not just along the superstructure but also on the coachroof.

The flat foredeck area, for the most part set in a shallow well to complement the security afforded by a sturdy pulpit, has two hatches, separated with uncommon thoughtfulness. The starboard one gives onto a chain locker, while the port one takes warps.

Mooring hardware includes a vertical anchor windlass and plenty of cleats: three 1.2in ones forward, a pair amidships and two further sets on each quarter.

A stairwell which is half moulding and half open-treaded ladder gives access to the flybridge, which feels well protected by its good depth of coaming and its perspex screen.

It is also roomy, with the main U-shaped run of seating to port being comfortably wide, with lockers in its base, and its forward end being sloped to form a sunlounger in line with the double helm seat. There is a well protected larger sunpad right aft.

The rear of the helm seat moulding incorporates a wet-bar, although the large void beneath the sink/drainage would be more useful if it was fitted out as a pukka

cupboard, perhaps with a fridge.

Although the helm console is set to starboard, the actual steering position is biased towards the centreline, just adjacent to a small perspex-covered chart area. The positioning of the wheel, and the separate Hynautic throttle and gearshifts on either side of it, is comfortable whether you are seated or standing.

The instrumentation and switch panels are well spread out across the tiers of moulding, but they are easy to view and reach.

On UK boats the 4600's standard specification includes a comprehensive electronics package which, over and above the usual log and depth instruments, includes dual-station GPS/plotter, autopilot and VHF, plus a Raytheon radar located at the interior helm position.

Interior

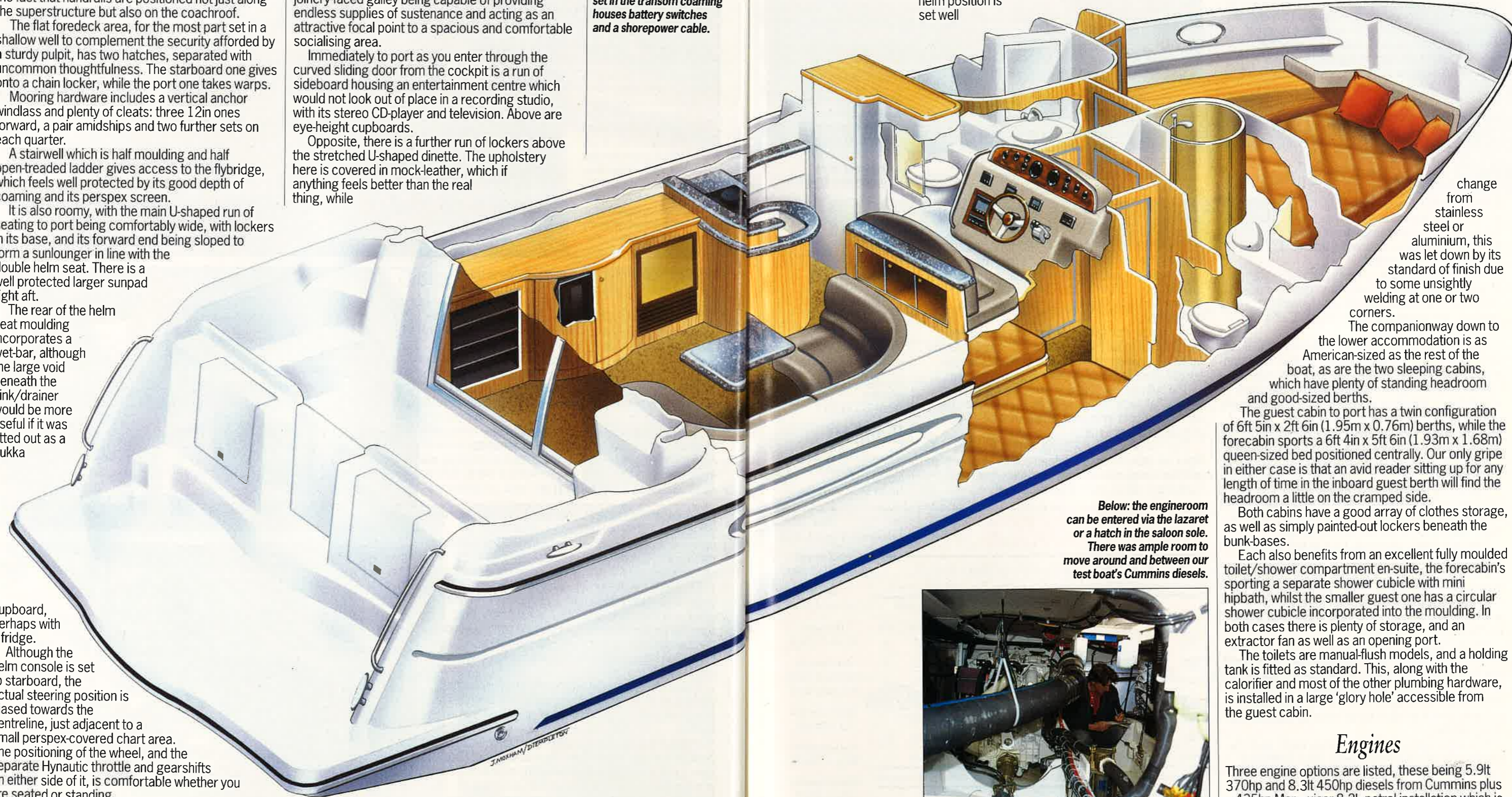
Perhaps more than any other factor it is the open-plan saloon that will sway potential buyers of this Maxum, with its generous roundel of joinery-faced galley being capable of providing endless supplies of sustenance and acting as an attractive focal point to a spacious and comfortable socialising area.

Immediately to port as you enter through the curved sliding door from the cockpit is a run of sideboard housing an entertainment centre which would not look out of place in a recording studio, with its stereo CD-player and television. Above are eye-height cupboards.

Opposite, there is a further run of lockers above the stretched U-shaped dinette. The upholstery here is covered in mock-leather, which if anything feels better than the real thing, while



Above: one of the lockers set in the transom coaming houses battery switches and a shorepower cable.



the free-standing table is of Avonite.

The latter material is also used for the worksurfaces in the curved corner galley, which is both fun and smart at the same time as it flexes its way into the living area. It is well laid-out with every amenity, including full-size domestic appliances by way of the fridge, freezer and all electric cooking facilities, plus a one-and-a-half-bowl sink arrangement and a plethora of cupboards and drawers. The beechwood flooring is a nice practical touch, too.

Just adjacent is a locker incorporating the central vacuum system. Also fitted as standard is a reverse-cycle heating/air-conditioning system, which can be run off the generator or from shorepower.

Directly opposite the galley, the two-seater lower helm position is set well

back from the screen, not least because on boats intended for the US market this area is actually a dinette, with facing seats requiring headroom forward. Even so, the helm layout is comfortable and the console arrangement practical, with the navigation instruments run largely between the adjustable wheel and the tier of engine gauges, while larger items of electronics are housed over towards the co-pilot's side.

Visibility forward is unimpeded either by the bow or by the pillars of the three-section screen, although we were disappointed that the good-size wipers are not self-parking. We were also surprised to find that the screen frames, and indeed the 'patio' door surround, were powder-coated; while making a

change from stainless steel or aluminium, this was let down by its standard of finish due to some unsightly welding at one or two corners.

The companionway down to the lower accommodation is as American-sized as the rest of the boat, as are the two sleeping cabins, which have plenty of standing headroom and good-sized berths.

The guest cabin to port has a twin configuration of 6ft 5in x 2ft 6in (1.95m x 0.76m) berths, while the forecabin sports a 6ft 4in x 5ft 6in (1.93m x 1.68m) queen-sized bed positioned centrally. Our only gripe in either case is that an avid reader sitting up for any length of time in the inboard guest berth will find the headroom a little on the cramped side.

Both cabins have a good array of clothes storage, as well as simply painted-out lockers beneath the bunk-bases.

Each also benefits from an excellent fully moulded toilet/shower compartment en-suite, the forecabin's sporting a separate shower cubicle with mini hipbath, whilst the smaller guest one has a circular shower cubicle incorporated into the moulding. In both cases there is plenty of storage, and an extractor fan as well as an opening port.

The toilets are manual-flush models, and a holding tank is fitted as standard. This, along with the calorifier and most of the other plumbing hardware, is installed in a large 'glory hole' accessible from the guest cabin.

Engines

Three engine options are listed, these being 5.9lt 370hp and 8.3lt 450hp diesels from Cummins plus a 435hp Mercruiser 8.2L petrol installation which is

Below: the engineroom can be entered via the lazaret or a hatch in the saloon sole. There was ample room to move around and between our test boat's Cummins diesels.



unlikely to find any takers in the UK. Our test boat had a pair of the smaller Cummins units.

Access is as easy through a hatch in the saloon as via the lazaret, there being simply a quarter-height bulkhead between the latter and the machinery space. Whether a full bulkhead to isolate the engine compartment is better building practice is open to conjecture, few boats having truly watertight barriers between under-deck spaces in any case.

The enginespace suffers in the same way as the lazaret, with nothing to keep feet clear of the bilge, but the engineering appears sound.

The fuel/water separators are sited on the forward bulkhead, with a fuel manifold hatch set in the sole just above, whilst the raw-water filters are back towards the aft end, all of these being easy to get at. There is room to move between the engines as well as plenty of space around them to get at their main service points, even if items on the outboard sides are tight to the wing tanks.

Additional hatches in the sole give clearer access to the cylinder heads.

Noise insulation is basic, but a rather more serious issue is the puny size of the one submersible bilge pump in the compartment. Two other pumps are fitted, one forward and the other in the lazaret.

Performance & handling

Malcolm took delivery of his 4600 back in October, when the run around from the importers' yard at Newhaven to Southampton Water was completed in a fair southerly blow, with some 'interesting' seas through the Looe Channel.

This brought to light no nasty surprises in terms of seakeeping, and Malcolm commends the ride. There was little slamming, with the almost flat sections, being well aft, rarely having to take the brunt of any major waves.

Our test day offered no such awkward conditions to help us assess the boat's seakindness, although any fast-moving ferry wakes we could find were certainly cut through without a murmur, and there was plenty of steerage with which to pull out of them when we sat them on the quarter.

We measured a top speed of 24.7 knots, but for the most part we motored around with the smoothly manipulated hydraulic throttles set at 2600rpm, which gave 20.5 knots. At this speed the boat will do 1mpg, giving an easy range of 250 miles, and its turns are tight and flat, whereas running faster requires a fair bit more room, and the hull prefers a slight application of tab for normal running.

The keel does a good job, both at high and low speed, maintaining a steady course without the oversteering or understeering you might expect from such a shallow vee. It also gives an extra measure of bite on the water when manoeuvring, helping Malcolm to show his deftness of touch with the twin-lever engine controls.

Among the more surprising test results were the Maxum's comparatively good sound levels, clearly a result of the way the panels in the sole are squeezed tight onto each other and the covering of carpet which keeps them snug; much of the noise that escapes on some other boats does so from poorly fitting hatches.

The upper helm position is comfortable, as is the interior one, although in the latter case visibility is slightly impaired by the eye-level cupboards which run along either side of the saloon, a common problem suffered by boats of this ilk.



Conclusions

The 4600 comes with a good specification, and in the main is fitted-out wholly adequately. There are one or two anomalies that we would like to see addressed — notably the need to box in the steering gear and provide treadplates through the bilge areas — but these are easy to rectify and do not mar the overall feel of the boat.

Indeed Maxum have done a sound job overall, not just because this represents a major push upwards in size for them, but also because they have successfully combined the preferences of buyers on both sides of the Atlantic, keeping the accommodation spacious but in a style that is not too boxy.

Of course, this 46-footer has only two cabins, which might reduce its attraction for some potential buyers, but when you load up with friends for day sorties there is plenty of room to entertain them.

The hull may be a little different from the norm, with its flat sections and keel, but this is not to the detriment of performance, and of course it helps to give that extra volume.

This is a boat for easy living, with that condo-style fitout we expect from American builders but with an additional easiness of layout and lines that most Europeans will be more than happy with. □

Above: with its topsides and superstructure founded on rounded corners and swept lines, the 4600's exterior styling looks more European than American.

Suppliers

Russell Simpson Marine Ltd,
The Yacht Harbour,
Newhaven, East Sussex
BN9 9BY.
Tel: 01273 612612.

Builders

Maxum Marine, PO Box 9029,
Everett, Washington
98206, USA.
Tel: (1) 360 435 6534.

Maxum 4600SCB

Engines twin Cummins 370B diesels, 370hp at 2900rpm, 6cyl, 5.9lt.

Conditions wind SW Force 3, sea calm. **Load** fuel 25%, water 50%, crew 4.

							sound levels dB(A)			
rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	saloon	fwdcab	ckpt	flybg
1800	9.8	7.8	36	1.26	349	2.5	72	63	81	66
2000	12.3	10.1	46	1.22	338	4.0	73	64	81	68
2200	14.5	13.2	60	1.10	305	4.0	74	67	82	70
2400	17.6	15.8	72	1.11	309	4.0	74	68	83	70
2600	20.5	20.2	92	1.01	281	4.5	78	71	84	71
2800	22.2	25.3	115	0.88	245	4.5	79	72	85	72
3000	24.7	31.9	145	0.76	221	4.5	80	73	86	73

Acceleration 0-20 knots, 11.6sec

(* allows 20% margin)

Price £240,398 ex VAT

Loa
45ft 11in (14.00m)

Hull length
43ft 9in (13.34m)

Beam
14ft 4in (4.37m)

Draught
3ft 4in (1.02m)

Air draught
14ft 2in (4.32m)
with radar arch

Displacement
13.6 tonnes

Fuel capacity
350gal (1580lt)

Water capacity
85gal (380lt)