

Ryds 23 WA

Hardtop or soft-top, petrol or diesel, this walkaround is the kind of boat you can enjoy in all weathers. **REPORT BY MARK TURLEY**

Ryds are still among the most prolific builders of runabouts in Scandinavia, which is pretty good going considering their rather chequered history over the past decade.

At one time this Swedish concern were owned by the now defunct American engine manufacturers OMC. More recently they have

been incorporated into the group that owns Nimbus and Storebro, giving dealers some competent but more modestly priced entry-level craft to offer alongside the excellent but pricey Nimbus Nova line-up.

Until recently the range has largely been dominated by outboard-powered open boats, but it now includes 20ft and 23ft sterndrive-

powered cuddies, both designed by John Lindblom, the man responsible for much of the Storebro range.

In a neat departure from the standard look of a walkaround sportsboat, the flagship 23 is available in a hardtop version, offering pretty much all-over shelter as a no-cost option.

But should you buy the petrol or diesel version? We took the opportunity to compare the two.

DESIGN & BUILD

The layout of the 23 is based on a midships helm console, with a well-proportioned cuddy cabin set forward of this, and plenty of clear, usable deck space all around.

At the transom, unusually,

instead of negotiating a squeeze-through walkway to the bathing platform, you lift out the backrest over the enginebox/seating for easy access.

The hull shape is a usefully deep vee, with a step just aft of the midships station to help lift it onto the plane. Right forward, a decent amount of flair has been incorporated into the bow sections which is all to the good as far as interior volume is concerned.

The porpoise-like beak is there to help people on and off the bow when moored Scandinavian-style (bows-to a handy foreshore), rather being geared up to handle an anchor.

A smart looker, despite a bulky screen, and nicely finished.

For the most part the finish is good, and the boat feels solidly put together.

ACCOMMODATION

Accessed through a set of double-hinged doors, the cuddy is a straightforward affair, with decent sitting headroom.

The boats' GRP internal liner carries the gloss of a gelcoat finish just so far before the cabin sides give way to rather more basic, painted chop-strand mat, but apart from that the space is well turned out. It's also well lit, courtesy of a couple of fixed ports and spotlights.

The dinette's seat-back is curved round through the bow sections rather than left in an awkward vee. However, there is further space extending forward to tuck your feet into when converting the area into an overnight berth.

Otherwise this space is handy for stowing kit bags, for example, as the voids

within the seat-base moulding have not been opened up as lockers; the builders preferred to leave them intact so as to give the boat more reserve buoyancy.

A useful sized cuddy, but it would benefit from more stowage.

Storage is therefore limited to the one good-sized lined locker that extends aft under the cockpit.

EXTERIOR

The GRP hardtop has a canvas sunroof which can be unclipped to let the elements back in when desired. It isn't there to allow you to stick your head out of it, because there's no need for this; headroom underneath it is 6ft 1in (1.85m).

The boat is priced the same with or without the hardtop, because the 'soft-top' alternative comes with a folding canopy instead. Both arrangements include a backdrop section of canopy so you can fully enclose the helm area if required.

Whichever the preferred option, there is a hefty stainless steel arch running around the rear of the helm console, making an excellent grabrail as you move to and fro. The guardrails topping off the coaming also help to ensure there is always something to hang onto.

These guardrails break only to allow you to hop on and off when moored alongside. Here, extra handholds have been neatly fashioned into the taffrail which protects the GRP gunwale.

The coamings incorporate a number of rod-holders, and, around the helm, the sides of the console have fiddled shelves to take all manner of smaller items.

The backrest to the enginebox/seat is removable, allowing easy access from the cockpit to the bathing platform, while an extra set of holes means it can also be arranged as a sort of short-legged lounger.

In its usual format, and with the helm seats swivelled, it is possible for four people to picnic around the neat fold-away table.

If you prefer the transom seat to run full-width, you can specify the optional loose-fitted extension pieces that will fit in on either side of the enginebox, as on our test boat.

The bathing platform, which is integral to the hull moulding, houses a locker and a boarding ladder.

Up at the sharp end, a seat/locker is incorporated round the arc of the bow. This is about the only covered storage available for bulky items and — given that there's not much hope of fitting a bow roller to the beak — it is soon going to be full of ironmongery.

A sheltered helm and a roomy cockpit, but little stowage for bulky gear.

As standard, the mooring hardware is down to sets of 8in (20cm) cleats forward and aft.





Ryds 23 WA technical data



specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic
RCD	design category C
LENGTH OVERALL	23ft 11in (7.30m)
HULL LENGTH	22ft 7in (6.85m)
BEAM	8ft 1in (2.48m)
DRAUGHT	1ft 3in (0.38m)
DISPLACEMENT	1.63 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	33gal (150lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	0ft 8in
HEADROOM IN CABIN	4ft 5in
CABIN BERTH	6ft 3in x 5ft 5in

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with 120hp Mercruiser D1.7L DTI diesel	£39,557
with 220hp 4.3L MPI petrol	£34,042
COMMISSIONING & DELIVERY	standard
TRANSOM CORNER SEATS & CUSHIONS	£248
TEAK COCKPIT DECKING	£995
DIESEL BOAT AS TESTED	£39,805
PETROL BOAT AS TESTED	£34,290



ENQUIRIES
Offshore Powerboats Ltd, Lymington Yacht Haven,
Kings Saltern Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9QD.
Tel: 01590 677955. www.rydsbatar.se



the rivals



AQUADOR 23 WA
from £41,857 inc VAT
A Scandinavian rival with a convivial cockpit layout and useful engine options.
Tel: 01590 673312.
www.bellaboats.fi

WHITE SHARK 237
from £37,199 inc VAT
A spacious cockpit design, and a choice of outboard or sterndrive engines.
Tel: 01202 661630.
www.whitesharkboats.net

KARNIC 2260 WEEKENDER
from £29,640 inc VAT
A roomy boat with the option of a cockpit mini-galley, and petrol or diesel engines.
Tel: 01202 710448.
www.yellowpenguin.co.uk

optional hardtop • single petrol or diesel sterndrive • up to 38 knots • from £34,042

above The enginebox lid lifts on gas struts.

petrol engine option in favour of the (lower horsepower) diesel. Even given lower fuel costs and a better residual value, this is quite a premium, bearing in mind you are shelving a ton of horsepower into the bargain.

It's a difficult call, but it is clearly better to have the choice than not have it. To demonstrate the point, deals were being concluded on both versions of the boat within 48 hours of them hitting the water.

Extras aren't an issue, but the petrol or diesel choice could be.

Verdict

The Ryds 23's smart-looking and practical aura, with a tinge of small-C conservatism, rather belies what it is capable of in terms of performance.

It feels more of a dayboat than an overnigher, even though it clearly has a good-sized cuddy. It is not the shelter offered by the interior that attracts, so much as the benefits of the deep coaming, the protective screen and the hardtop.

This is a boat you will want to use whenever the slightest chance arises, rather than waiting for flat calm and clear skies.

MBM RATING 7/10

above The cockpit table is removable, as are optional transom side seats.

above The hardtop has an opening sunroof, although it offers full headroom.

ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

Bearing in mind the Swedish origins of this boat, we were somewhat surprised that the engine line-up is provided by Mercruiser, and not Volvo Penta.

Volvo has a particularly useful small-boat diesel, the 130 or 160hp D3, although in fairness it comes at something of a cost premium in comparison with what Ryds have chosen to offer: Mercruiser's 120hp 1.7lt unit. The petrol alternative is a 220hp V6.

The lid of the enginebox lifts on a hefty pair of gas struts to give straightforward access right round the compartment, especially if you have opted for the relatively diddy 4cyl diesel.

The installation appears textbook, complete

with the fuel pre-filter mounted on the forward bulkhead. Also tucked down here is the battery and associated switch, while the fuel cut-off is found under a small lift-out hatch in the cockpit sole.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Trying a diesel-engined boat first, we achieved a top speed of a tad under 30 knots, and it was far from sluggish off the blocks, taking to the plane in one clean, even push of power. The combination of this very adequate performance and relatively frugal fuel costs ostensibly makes this installation the obvious choice.

However, jump on the petrol boat a moment later and the case becomes less cut and dried. Not only is it a second or so quicker onto the plane, but the extra 100hp rushes you up to 38.5 knots. Furthermore, the tone of the V6 is less harsh, and the boat handles the acceleration and pace competently.

Backing off from flat-out, the diesel boat made a comfortable 22.5 knots at 3500rpm, consuming in the region of 2.5gph (12lph). The V6 could be cut right back to 3000rpm and still give this speed, but let's not fool ourselves — it is unlikely that you will feel like jogging in the petrol boat, and 4000rpm gives a more entertaining 28 knots.

The hull offers a commendably smooth ride. Our test day threw up a short Solent chop with a stiff breeze that would readily pick up any loose spray, but the chines and level running kept this down, and we appreciated the useful amount of shelter provided by the hardtop.

Although the positioning of the twin helm seats is snug, it is not cramped, and the wheel and throttle are well placed. Most of the angled fascia is taken up with engine gauges and a speedometer, but the console area ahead of the skipper is flat and available for mounting the odd box of electronics.

Trim tabs are fitted as standard, and the screen has a single wiper.

below You lift out the seat backrest for access aft.



below A canopy will enclose the helm if required.



below The cuddy is well lit by ports and bulbs.



below Sleeping legroom extends well forward.



SPECIFICATION & VALUE

We like the fact that there is no extra to pay, whether you choose the hardtop or the soft-top arrangement. And there is really not much else that you need to specify or fit, apart from some electronic aids, which might as well be of the handheld variety.

More of an issue is the extra £5000 you will need to fork out if you want to reject the