

# Sea Ranger 448

This unconventional British trawler yacht is extremely well constructed for serious cruising ambitions. Would we be impressed by a long-distance delivery trip?

REPORT BY MARK TURLEY



## highlights



### QUALITY JOINERY

The standard of joinery is extremely high. This rounded cocktail cabinet has a plinth which provides storage for crockery and cutlery.

### SAFE DECKS

A raised gunwale topped with sturdy guardrails makes the wide side decks feel cosseted.



### EASY ACCESS

There are doors from the wheelhouse/saloon to each side deck. Impressively chunky, they swing open and dog down without undue effort.

It was Kip Marina on the Firth of Clyde who came up with the initial concept for this trawler yacht. They felt there was a need for a serious cruising boat which offered plenty of room and creature comforts, and a high specification, but which would not be compromised by the challenging weather that tends to trump up around the Irish Sea and the Western Isles.

They commissioned naval architect Bill Dixon to design a Range Rover of a boat, and the yard that used to build the Beaux Bateaux marque to build it.

The Sea Ranger 448 was initially launched with a three-cabin layout. But we recently seized the chance to cadge a ride on the very first example of the new two-cabin option, following its appearance at the Southampton Boat Show.

This was on the first leg of its delivery trip from the Solent to Anglesey, where its very hospitable owners, Len and Pauline Wilco, will undoubtedly put it to good use. They plan regular sorties from north Wales to Ireland, to the scenic West Coast of Scotland and, in the fullness of time, to Scandinavia.

## DESIGN & LAYOUT

The 448's hull is unconventional, to say the least, with an underwater cross-section rather like one of those old wide-rimmed soup bowls. The shape is relatively flat across the keel bottom, then works its way quite steeply up towards the chine before flattening out again.

This modified semi-displacement form is to allow for speeds in the mid-20s, but without falling foul of a conventional keel which can make the hull twitch if pushed too hard.

Another advantage is that there is plenty of boat sitting in the water at lower speeds, but still a measure of efficient planing area to give a uniform amount of lift, so the vessel will not fall into a hole with an adverse amount of trim, even at 11-12 knots.

Initially, the interior arrangement was for three cabins, with a galley encroaching into the saloon. This layout is still available, but our test boat had the new two-cabin option, which does away with the midships berths to create space for a separate improved galley to starboard. This in turn allows for a second dinette opposite the helm station, so that a couple of people can sit just across from the skipper and help him out.

Both the remaining cabins have en-suite facilities, and the master cabin aft is particularly roomy, even though it does not run to the hull's full beam, as the side decks extend past it and round the transom.

Either of the two standard layouts appears to suit most buyers, but the builders will accommodate most foibles, and our test boat



**outside helm** The two-person seat has lifting squabs, and the console is ranged around the skipper to good effect. There is plenty of room for fitting additional electronics beyond the standard package, which includes an autopilot and VHF.



**inside helm** Owner Len Wilcox did not want a fixed helm seat, so a movable arrangement on a sliding carriage was devised. One by-product is clearer access through the door to the starboard side deck.

had been customised in several respects, not least with a sliding helm seat and an unusual arrangement of berths in the forward cabin.

All the joinery is finished to the highest standard, and every locker and seat-base is lined or finished in wood. Surfaces and shelves are all fashioned with sensible, deep fiddles.

Out on deck, it is extremely easy to move around, what with the chunky raised gunwales and solid, high guardrails. There is access from the wheelhouse/saloon to the side decks via two impressively fabricated side doors, and up to the well protected flybridge by way of the raised quarterdeck.

#### POWER OPTIONS

The builders will endeavour to fit whatever type and horsepower of engines that a buyer prefers, but realistically you need to be looking at twin 320hp to 480hp diesels to give this heavily-built boat some legs.

The standard choices are from Volvo Penta, and our test boat had a pair of TAMD75P units rated to 480hp.

#### PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

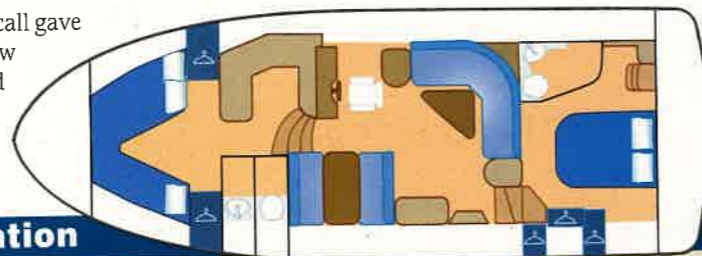
We timed our departure from the Solent so that we would have the tide running with us for the majority of the 100-mile passage to Dartmouth. Given the stiff northeasterly blowing over the back of the flood tide which we encountered while we stooged around our photo boat before setting off, this was a good move.

That said, our photocall gave us the chance to see how this unusual hull coped with shorter seas. And it did so commendably cleanly, with never a

complaint from the boat itself and only a few from the crew when the odd lick of spray lifted towards the flybridge.

Putting the helm over hard, we were pleasantly surprised at the response. We barrelled round in about three boat lengths, while staying almost bolt upright.

The upper helm station works well, with



#### accommodation



**saloon** A lowish window line affords a great view in all directions, even when you are seated, and there is headroom of at least 6ft 4in (1.93m). The dinette seats six when the table is opened up.



**master suite** There is a full bank of hanging lockers and cupboards on each side of the wide double berth.

**galley** To support the owners' plans for extended cruising, the galley has a good-sized trunk freezer installed beneath the worktop. There is plenty more well thought-out storage, including a sensible rubbish bin.



instrumentation and controls falling nicely to hand, and everyone feels safely in the boat rather than just perched on top.

Once clear of The Needles, we set up the autopilot and retired below. Here, the skipper's mate can take up position at the port-side dinette with a paper chart, while the helmsman can adjust the position of his seat as required.

In practice, we found it was best trundled outboard, rather than left smack in front of the wheel, as the view forward is decidedly better from this offset position; otherwise, the deep bow tends to hog the horizon, especially when coupled with around 5° of trim. That

The feeling inside is of light and space, but without ever wasting the latter.

Flaps on the main dinette's table hinge out so that six can dine on the extremely comfortable settee, or you can put your feet up and watch the flat-screen television that floats up out of the sideboard opposite.

The galley, a few easy steps down, is a practical U-shape with plenty of countertop space. It is very well appointed, not least because it is all-electric, with a 7kVA generator being fitted as standard.

Opposite is the forward WC, acting as a day-toilet as well as serving the adjacent cabin. If required, a washer/dryer can be fitted in an oversized cupboard worked into the aft bulkhead.

The usual alternative layouts for the forecabin are vee berths or a central double. But on this boat the vee has been skewed, with one side extended to make a small double while the other is child-sized — a neat solution for when your guests are a couple with a youngster.

The aft master cabin is indulgent without being greedy on space, and benefits from a good-sized en-suite. There is also a companionway directly out on to the aft deck.



**design detail** Neat practical details include a chart locker set into the deckhead at the forward end of the wheelhouse/saloon.



**toilets** Both WCs benefit from a separate shower cubicle of a wholly practical size.

#### decks

You soon get used to slipping through the relatively small doors to the side decks, which are nicely balanced to swing open and shut easily, but can nevertheless be dogged down securely when the need arises.

Boarding and disembarking from the side decks is also easy despite the raised gunwales, although it is a bit of a drop down to pontoon level.

Hatches on both quarters give access to a sizable lazaret (which includes a saltwater fire hose), and for an aft-cabin boat there is plenty of deck stowage, not least within

the seat-bases. The rope locker forward is separate from the adjacent chain locker.

Nipping up to the flybridge via the quarterdeck from either side of the vessel is safely assured, with good-sized treads and kindly angled steps, plus plenty of handholds. Most of the exterior is finished in teak decking as standard.

The flybridge is uncluttered, and the high coamings mean you feel tucked safely out of harm's way. The mast hinges down to reduce air draught.



**foredeck** This is mini-ship style, with large bitts and enclosed fairleads. A freshwater wash-down hose is incorporated in the locker.



**stern** A transom gate gives access from the bathing platform to the decks, and to the aft cabin, via a hatch in the quarterdeck.



**side decks** The raised gunwales are topped with teak, and 12in (30cm) midships bitts.

aside, all round visibility is excellent.

A couple of hours at 2200rpm, giving a well mannered 20 knots or so in a moderate following sea, took us past Portland Bill, whereupon we throttled back slightly while preparing lunch and then eating. After that, nobody fancied hurrying on, so we jogged across Lyme Bay at a pleasant, unfussed 12 knots.

All of this emphasises the way the boat is easy on the crew while still making decent time. But on the other side of the coin, it was

more than happy to be pushed harder when required, delivering 23 knots flat-out (a couple of knots down due to the ropecutters fitted) and giving a rock solid ride.

At displacement speeds, there is plenty of hull in the water so it is not readily pushed around by the wind. With the drivetrains a good distance apart, it can be manoeuvred smartly and predictably, but steadies almost immediately once the power is taken off.

#### Specifications & Verdict



## engineroom



A treadplate between the engines makes daily checks easy.

There are two ways into the engineroom. Lifting out a hatch in the saloon sole allows you to drop straight down onto the treadplate between the engines. Or flicking a switch to raise the stairwell that leads to the galley reveals a dogged door in the compartment's forward bulkhead.

This latter approach also gives access to a 'glory hole' which houses the Eberspächer heater and waste tank as well as providing useful storage for engine spares and tools.

Either way, all the main check points and service

items are easy to get at, not least the primary fuel filters and transparent-topped raw-water strainers to the front of the bay. Items located outboard of the engines, such as one or two of the filters, are a good 12in (30cm) or so clear of the wing fuel tanks, making them quite accessible.

The generator is located against the aft bulkhead, but is just high enough to leave reasonable access to the shaft logs beneath it.

The engineering appears to go by the book, to a high standard, and with a good 'loaded' insulation fitted to all surfaces. The yard have also built in some useful extras such as drain plugs to the drip trays, and a handy freshwater tap.



above Access is by hydraulically raising the galley stairs or removing hatches in the sole.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	trim	noise
1200	10.4	6.2	28	1.68	672	2.5	69
1500	11.0	10.6	48	1.04	416	3.5	70
1800	12.6	15.4	70	0.82	328	4.5	72
2000	15.8	19.4	88	0.81	324	5.0	75
2200	18.8	25.5	116	0.74	296	5.0	77
2400	21.4	33.0	152	0.65	260	5.0	78
2650	23.6	42.2	192	0.56	224	5.0	79

range in miles, allows 20% margin.

noise in dB(A), in saloon.

conditions wind northeasterly Force 4, sea slight.

load fuel 90%, water 50%, crew 4.

## specifications

<b>BUILD</b>	glass reinforced plastic
<b>RCD</b>	design category B
<b>LENGTH OVERALL</b>	47ft 11in (14.61m)
<b>HULL LENGTH</b>	44ft 0in (13.41m)
<b>BEAM</b>	15ft 11in (4.84m)
<b>DRAUGHT</b>	3ft 7in (1.10m)
<b>AIR DRAUGHT</b>	14ft 8in (4.48m)
<b>DISPLACEMENT</b>	14.5 tonnes
<b>FUEL CAPACITY</b>	498gal (2275lt)
<b>WATER CAPACITY</b>	175gal (800lt)
<b>ENGINES</b>	twin Volvo Penta TAMD75Ps 6cyl, 7.28lit diesels 480hp at 2600rpm
<b>BUILDERS</b>	Sea Ranger Yachts Ltd, 20 Nene Valley Business Park, Oundle, Peterborough PE8 4HN. Tel: 01832 272993. <a href="http://www.searanger.com">www.searanger.com</a>
<b>SUPPLIERS</b>	Imperial Motor Yachts, Harefield House, Harbridge Court, Somerly, Hampshire BH24 3QG. Tel: 01202 826800. <a href="http://www.imperial-motoryachts.com">www.imperial-motoryachts.com</a>
<b>PRICE</b>	from £474,452 inc VAT

## conclusions

### LAYOUT

The highly sociable saloon is also extremely businesslike for passagemaking, not least because of the mate's dinette across from the helm, and there is plenty of privacy given the two separate, comfortable cabins. Outside, it is a very easy boat to use and move around on, with an inviting flybridge.

### BUILD

The quality of the joinery and fit-out is extremely high, in terms of both materials and workmanship. And the harder you look, the better it gets.

### PERFORMANCE

Yes, the hull can certainly press on at 23-24 knots without bother. But perhaps the best feature of the boat is that it is happy to motor at any speed with which the crew feel most comfortable. The same easy countenance goes for its handling of untidy conditions.

## MBM verdict

The owners of *Arctic Owl* have been boating for the best part of 30 years, in yachts and latterly with a Storebro Royal Cruiser.

Their type of cruising is the equivalent of an outward-bound adventure, and the Sea Ranger 448 is going to provide them with exactly this capability.

It will allow them to press on in comfort without being too fussed about the conditions, while giving them a relaxing, uncompromising home away from home wherever their journeying takes them.

It appears to be an excellent choice.

## the rivals



### GRAND BANKS CLASSIC 42 £452,000 inc VAT

Available with two or three cabins, and capable of speeds up to 20 knots.

Tel: 023 8045 8990.

[www.boatshowrooms.com](http://www.boatshowrooms.com)



### SABRELINE 395 £276,125 inc VAT

Of American origin but built in the UK, this is a two-cabin boat offering up to 25 knots.

Tel: 01243 512611.

[www.northshore.co.uk](http://www.northshore.co.uk)



### HARDY COMMODORE 42 £384,000 inc VAT

A three-cabin boat with a very sociable flybridge arrangement and a top speed of 27 knots.

Tel: 01692 408706.

[www.hardymarine.com](http://www.hardymarine.com)