

Boat Report

TARGA 27

Silent running? Wheelhouse on 28ft? Outside loo? A sliding door you can sit on? New to the UK is a versatile craft in unique style from Finland.





We reported from the Southampton Boat Show last year that the Targa range from Finland had been reintroduced into the UK by Wessex Marine, with five models in a line-up running to 33ft (10.1m).

All five feature a saloon, galley and interior helm in a centrally located wheelhouse, and (except on the 23) a further exterior driving position to the rear of the superstructure. The design allows for a walkaround deck plus forward and aft cockpits, all girded by a substantial bulwark, with a cabin tucked down to the rear of the wheelhouse. The windscreen is angled forward in true workboat style, to reduce confusing reflections at night.

Slap-bang in the middle of the range is a 28-footer which we tested out of Poole Harbour during the winter.

Design

The 27 is a beamy boat for its length, offering plenty of efficient planing area and transverse stability. The underwater sections are pared away to give something approaching a medium-to-deep-vee hull amidships, with a deadrise of no less than 24°, flattening on its run aft to 19° at the transom.

The boat's full beam has been pushed as far forward as possible at deck and bulwark level to give the accommodation maximum volume, with attractive flare and reserve buoyancy towards the bows. The topsides are clean, with just a single knuckle running a foot or so beneath the rubber fendering at the gunwale.

Fendering also protects the sides of the moulded bolt-on bathing platform, which is full-width for ease of boarding. It is finished with teak grating infills, the middle one of which can be hinged open for some access to the outdrive leg.

Exterior

A substantial amount of design detail deserves closer examination, not least the exterior helm.

Reached via a couple of inset steps from the rear cockpit, this has a single adjustable pilot seat to starboard alongside a tight two-person one, with plenty of handholds to add confidence to what might seem a tender perch. The console has the standard



array of secondary engine instrumentation, ready-use switches and a compass, while in front of the port-hand seating is a perspex-covered chart area.

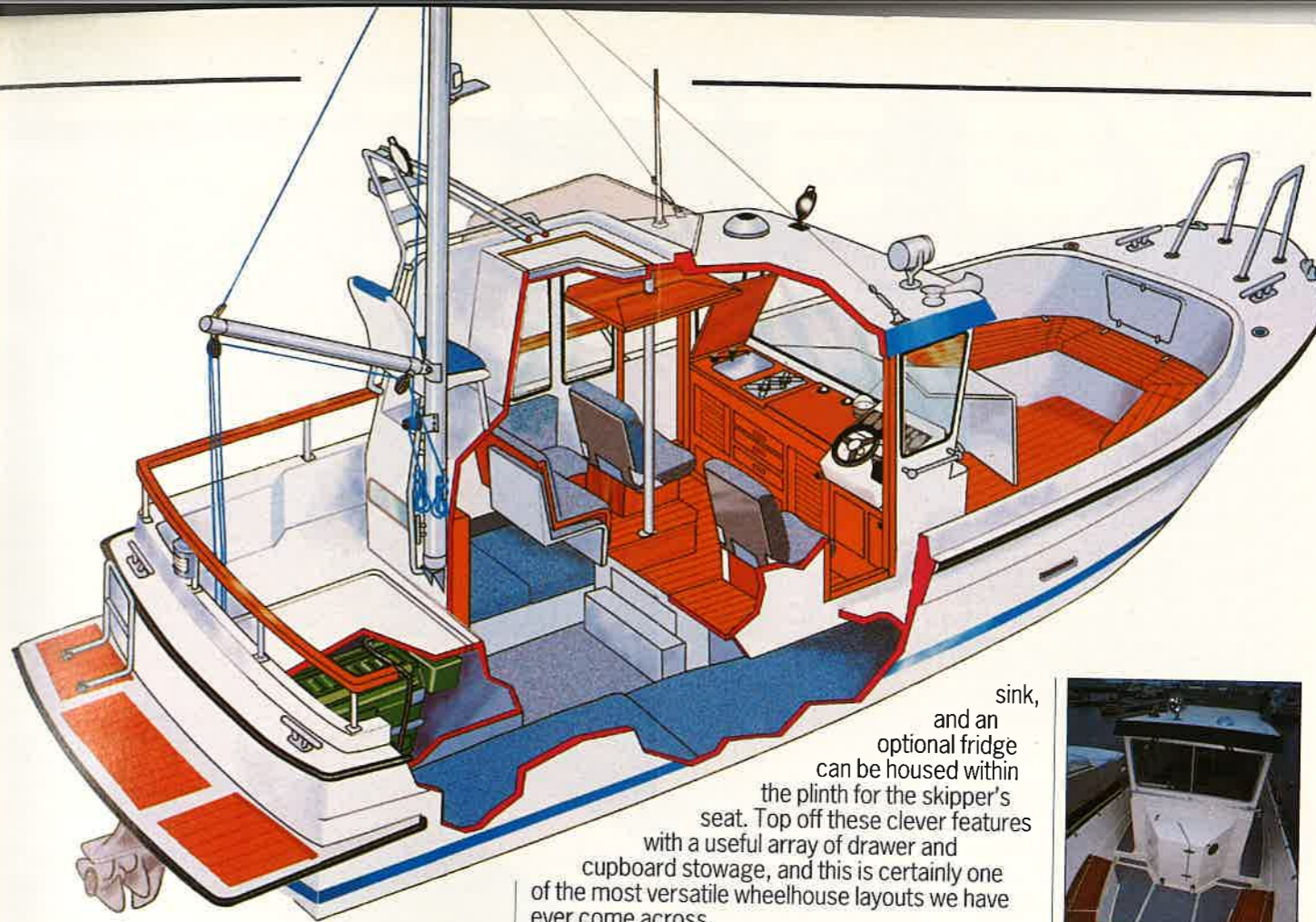
In addition to the small, but still effective, screen, a full-headheight frame arrangement is available, partially supported by the stainless steel aerial hoop. This also provides a landing for the sidelights, which are fitted with blackened lightbox screens in an attempt to reduce visibility-impairing glare at night. Likewise, the masthead light on the aluminium mast has a blanking screen. The boom and associated tackle on our test boat is a playtime option, albeit useful when lifting the dinghy or shipping its outboard.

Topping off the rear cockpit's bulwark is a stout run of teak rail, widened at both rear quarters to provide a more comfortable landing for one's own rear quarters. The centre portion aft hinges to allow access to the wood and GRP bathing platform.

Past the wheelhouse and into the forward cockpit, the bulwark handrails turn to stainless steel, with further waist-high grabrails attached to the superstructure. The sidedecks are no less than 17in (43cm) wide.

The forecockpit is roomy enough, with U-shaped moulded seating and an optional table which can be stowed away or used to create a good-sized sunbed. Any water taken over the bow is quickly

The Targa 27 bristles with clever design features. Top left: the outside toilet means the wheelhouse is not cluttered with doorways. Top right: a chart table beside the helm hinges to reveal galley facilities. Above: the dinette table stows upwards, on a pole which doubles as a handhold.



cleared by freeing ports let into the bulwark. Beneath the sole is a large lazaret housing the water tank and pressure pump, and serviced by a Rule 500 submersible bilge pump. The hinged access hatch is locked shut by a bolt which can only be released by a drawstring in the central seat locker. A similar arrangement secures the other two lockers, one on each side, meaning that only the centre lid need be padlocked for security. The array of stowage is further supplemented by a large locker, obviously for ground tackle, set within the raised foredeck. Unfortunately this area is devoid of a bow-roller and lead into the locker, a fault which could easily be redressed. There are adequate 9.5in (24cm) cleats forward and on either quarter. Springs can take a turn on slightly smaller ones amidships.

Interior

We were pleased to find the wheelhouse had a sliding door on both sides, not just to starboard alongside the helm. Indeed, practically everything in the wheelhouse/saloon has either two uses or two positions.

The console itself — with wooden wheel, throttle, power-trim and tab controls — tilts to both sitting and standing attitudes. The skipper's and co-pilot's chairs swivel to face inboard when required for socialising. The sliding door to the aft cabin area is seat-shaped and fitted with cushions, and when closed completes a full L-settee arrangement across the rear bulkhead. The dinette table has a hinged flap to reduce its size, but alternatively you can lift it completely clear by pushing it up its supporting pole to the deckhead. Not to be outdone, the good-sized chart table beneath the main windscreen has a hinged portion which reveals a neat galley unit, incorporating a twin-burner hob and



Above: the forward cockpit offers moulded U-seating and a large lazaret under the sole. Below left: access to the sleeping cabin is via a door which also acts as part of the saloon seating.



with the standard of joinery is pleasing right up to the veneered deckhead panels. Headroom is around 6ft 5in (1.95m).

Sliding back the door/seat reveals the cabin, down a couple of steps. The sleeping arrangement here is whatever you want to make of it, with two 12ft-long cushion areas outboard, in true quarter-berth style, with legs being tucked well down into recesses and heads together if you want to sleep four. The main portions allow 2ft 6in (0.76m) shoulder width.

Stowage is found beneath the treads of the steps and in a pair of cave lockers, and also in a slim hanging locker and on some shelves. Ventilation comes from a couple of opening ports.

Completing the accommodation is what amounts to an outside loo — a toilet/shower compartment tucked forward of and below the wheelhouse but accessed via an extra wide locker door from the forward cockpit. Fully moulded, it has a pump-out toilet, a basin, a shower drain, stowage and a vent. It appears a rather odd location, but its separate access means valuable interior wheelhouse space does not have to be devoted to incorporating yet another doorway.

Engines

The installation on our test boat was the larger of the two diesel options, a single 230hp Volvo KAD 42DP. The other is the 200hp AD41, and a 330hp V8 petrol outdrive is also offered.

Access to the engine space is via a full-sized hatch held open by an appropriate tie arrangement. This allows adequate room for checking the normal service points on the engine itself and items like the fuel/water separator, although most maintenance has to be achieved from deck level rather than while standing in the engine bay. The compartment is fully insulated, its hatch sealing on a good bed of rubber, while cables and wiring are suitably ducted out of harm's way.

The fuel tank is beneath the wheelhouse sole, where a hatch reveals the stopcocks as well as an inspection plate. Similarly, the batteries are located elsewhere, finding an accessible niche in the transom coaming with their isolaters just adjacent. A manual bilge pump, set in the aft-cockpit coaming and serviced by its own mini-inspection hatch, backs up the automatic submersible in the engine compartment.

Performance and handling

Whilst Poole Harbour offers excellent protection and Bournemouth is one of the top South Coast seaside resorts, nudge westward to Old Harry and there is usually plenty of water moving. On our test day with the Targa 27 we encountered the remnants of a southwesterly gale producing a moderate swell, the seas later being shortened and pushed up by a Force 4 from the south-east.

We nudged out rather tentatively, given our somewhat exposed perch above the not inconsiderable top hamper. Five minutes later we were bowling over the confused slop at 3000-3400rpm (later verified as 23-26 knots) with more concern about lobster-pot markers than about anything the sea was likely to come up with. The sharpest of sportsboat turns were implemented with little sign of wrongfooting the hull and barely a drop of spray finding its way aboard.



Above: plenty of handholds help out at the exterior helm, not such an insecure perch as it might seem. Left: the engine, a single 230hp Volvo diesel on our test boat, is found under a full-size hatch in the aft cockpit, with the batteries housed in the transom coaming.

If the ride up top was comfortable, helming from inside felt something akin to being in a hovercraft. The noise of the engine and the buffeting caused by the passing water seemed remote from our fully battened-down wheelhouse, a feeling partially confirmed by our sound-meter, which registered 80dB(A), although we had the impression it was less than that.

Making with the predominant seas is one thing of course, so we spun round to clip the seas head-on. Impressively, dropping the bow a shade brought much the same easy, quiet ride — a real treat.

On our run in we opened the throttle to the full 3700rpm to confirm just over 31 knots of the manufacturers' claimed 32, although this was in less than ideal conditions. Expect to consume around 6.5gph (29lph) when cruising at around 3200rpm.

Conclusions

This is one of the few boats we have tested that fails to drop neatly into any set category, yet its unusual format lends itself to a great many uses, in a most comfortable and competent fashion. Apart from a clever layout, the Targa also offers plenty of seakindly performance and fast passagemaking potential, together with a stout build. As one interested party at the boat show commented, "All you have to do is add some imagination as to what you want to do and where you want to go."

If the mast and the tubular antenna arch could be made to hinge to reduce air draught, the boat would be equally well suited for river cruising, where its roomy forward cockpit and easily worked exterior helm could be put to even better use. When, inevitably, the heavens open, it is simply a matter of retiring to the wheelhouse to enjoy the view. □

Targa 27

Loa 28ft 1in (8.56m).
Hull length 26ft 3in (8.01m).
Beam 10ft 0in (3.04m).
Draught 3ft 0in (0.90m).
Displacement 3.0 tons.
Fuel capacity 77-132gal (350-600lt).
Water capacity 44-66gal (200-300lt).
Engine single Volvo 230hp KAD 42DP.
Price £60,566 ex VAT, ex factory.
Builders Botnia Marin, PO Box 9, SF-66101, Malax, Finland.
Tel: (358) 61 365 1555.
UK agents Wessex Marine, Salterns Marina, Salterns Way, Lilliput, Poole, Dorset BH14 8JR.
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