

# Viki 32

**Plentiful use of opulent wood and neat finish make this an eye-catching cruiser. In single-engine, two-cabin guise, would it prove to be a Turkish delight, or just a turkey?**

REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON

**T**urkish boatbuilding has had little impact on western European thinking since the development of the traditional gulet sailing vessel hundreds of years ago. But that could be about to change: a thoroughly modern motor cruiser has emerged from the ancient city of Istanbul which offers a refreshing and attractively priced alternative to existing marques.

Viking Marin have been manufacturing traditional wooden boats since the 1940s but turned their attention to 40ft-60ft custom motoryacht design 10 years ago. Now a further change of direction has resulted in this latest assault on the smaller production market with the Viki 32.

Introduced to the UK at the 2002 Southampton Boat Show, this distinctive 32-footer is available in both sedan and flybridge guises (an aft-cabin 34 is also on the drawing board for next year). Although it is joining a fiercely competitive market, its new UK importers, Boat Showrooms, are confident it offers something a little different, both in culture and style.

We tested a flybridge boat with a single Yanmar diesel engine installation, to see if their claims hold true.

## DESIGN & BUILD

One look at its rich exterior detailing is enough to convince you that this is not your average north-European cruiser.

The coloured hull and thick teak capping give it an Italian flavour, being vaguely reminiscent

of the exclusive Apremare brand, and help to disguise a slight tubbiness in the topsides.

Another giveaway is that we don't come across many new boats which have solid iroko decking, complete with bona-fide caulking, in the cockpit and flybridge as standard. On future models this iroko is likely to be replaced by equally attractive teak, for no extra cost.

The rest of the exterior styling is more conventional, but none the worse for it. The superstructure is a little square and stark, but the finish is very good, while the shallow, tinted windows add a hint of sportiness.

Once again it's the woodwork that impresses most when you step inside, only this time it's glossy dark mahogany that covers almost every surface, including the

sole. Surprisingly, despite that weight of wood, the saloon still feels spacious. No doubt the low-set floor, which leaves an impressive 6ft 3in of headroom, helps.

The main layout choice facing buyers is whether to have the galley in the saloon and a guest cabin forward (a £6000 option), or do without the second cabin and have a bigger galley down below. Either way, you get a decent-sized master cabin served by an equally roomy toilet and shower.

Build quality is impressive. The mahogany and holly sole runs the full length and breadth of the saloon, even under the tidily constructed and lined storage cabinets and seat bases.

The hard-chine semi-displacement hull has fine sections forward and a flatter planing area aft. A fixed wing or tab, bolted and

bonded onto the transom extends the planing area and helps with lift.

The overall feel is of a heavy and solidly constructed boat that is let down only by a

few impractical touches, possibly betraying the yard's relative inexperience in this market.

✓✓✓✓  
Contemporary design values disguise a traditional edge.

## ACCOMMODATION

Besides glorying in its mahogany floor, the saloon boasts a crescent-shaped settee and a small but usefully fiddled table. You sit quite deep in the boat, below the side window-line, but with a decent view out through the patio doors.

On our test boat, opposite the seating lay a simple galley, with a gas hob, fridge and cylindrical sink but precious little work space. We understand that later boats will come with a hinged lid to hide all these facilities away and provide a useful platform for chartwork.

The reason why the galley is a little confined is that a disproportionately large helm console occupies the forward section of the saloon. The pay-off comes beneath this, in the form of a toilet/shower compartment which, although a little stark, is similar in size to those found on 40ft boats.

The optional two-cabin layout places the twin-bunked guest cabin amidships to starboard, and allows for additional storage space in the master cabin.

For a family with children, the advantage is obvious. For others, the choice may be harder; the second cabin is beautifully appointed with the usual mahogany detailing and a neat little cabinet, but it does feel very confined with the door shut.

The master cabin is a different story. Wide and high, it offers plenty of space and storage in beautifully crafted cabinetry. The highlight is a stunning marquetry panel of mahogany and holly flooring at the foot of the raised double berth.

Headroom is good throughout the boat, never falling below 6ft 1in and soaring to 6ft 7in at the helm. We'll come to the payback later.

✓✓✓✓  
A sea of mahogany with comfortable seating but quite a lot of noise.





**above** The second cabin is small but handy. The master one is a sea of beautifully crafted mahogany.



**above** The WC is stark, but bigger than most.

## EXTERIOR

The sloping sheer of the hull is matched by wide, attractive side decks that sweep back to the step up from the cockpit. They look fantastic, but when they get wet we suspect they could prove a tad awkward too. The port side in particular is littered with potential hazards, such as the shiny fuel and water filler caps.

The situation could be helped by extending the guardrails further back, providing some outboard protection, and by redesigning the open-ended grabrails along the flybridge superstructure so that you can feel your way along with more security.

The cockpit features a classic combination of white mouldings and cushions with iroko decking. The flybridge overhang half-covers the space, leaving the aft bench (one of the few optional extras) exposed for sun-worshipping.

A break in the taffrail folds over and a transom gate opens out for access onto the large slab of bathing platform. Even with the rail above it, it would be safer to have the

door hinged so that it opens inwards, or at least have a decent lock fitted to it.

Access to the flybridge is straightforward, although, again, the hatch ought to be hinged differently so you can get to the grabrail provided.

As on any 30-footer, the flybridge is fairly exposed. The coamings are set low, and the Perspex screen (cheap-looking in the midst of all the wood and stainless steel) mysteriously disappears behind the console right where you need it most. There is a low grabrail running back to the radar mast.

From the helm, visibility is excellent in all directions, including astern. A bench seat opposite provides additional seating for guests.

✓✓✓✓  
**Competent and safe, but it could benefit from a few modifications.**

## ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

As far as engines go, you can have any colour you like, so long as it's silver. Viking have eyes only for Yanmar diesels, offering no

fewer than 10 options, split between single and twin installations.

The choice ranges from the base installation of a single 125hp unit for inland and estuary use, up to a pair of 240hp units for maximum grunt. We expect a twin 160hp or 200hp set-up to be the most popular choice.

Access to the enginebay and the adjacent lazaret is via a large hydraulic hatchway, and first impressions are excellent.

With just a single installation, as on our test boat, you can't really fail to offer space. But it's the high standard of finish, typified by the beautiful solid teak exhaust rest, and the neat uncluttered design of the compartment that really hits you.

That said, closer inspection brings some frustrations to light.

A raised floor of GRP tiles (lifting out for bilge access) adds to the neat look and eases access. Unfortunately, it also exaggerates the bay's lack of depth, caused by the low saloon sole.

This is especially problematic when you are

**above** Stainless steel fittings contrast with dark iroko decks.

trying to get from one side of the engine to the other, which you need to do to check the oil dipstick. With a twin installation, this could be even more tricky.

Also the raw-water strainer is set right at the front of the bay making it an awkward crawl to get to. Thankfully the pre-filters are by the entrance.

✓✓✓✓  
**A very neat enginebay, but ultimately a tricky one to get around.**

## PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

Our test boat's single 240hp Yanmar starts to pick up just as the turbo kicks in at around 2400rpm, delivering an easy 11 knots. The engine's optimum cruising speed of 2800rpm delivers 14 knots, and our top recorded speed of 21.5 knots was exactly as expected.

For the most potent engine option, a pair of the same 240hp engines, the builder quotes speeds in excess of 30 knots. And, unlike some similar-sized boats, we reckon the Viki is more than capable of handling it. Our boat felt happier the faster it went.

At 14 knots, the ride is still a little wallowy, albeit very comfortable. But the hull seems to

enjoy life further up the rev range. Running flat-out, it tracked across the waves in a far more confident manner than at slower speeds, while retaining the soft ride associated with semi-displacement cruisers.

It carried on tracking straight and true all the way up to its maximum speed. Then, just when things started to get exciting, the horsepower ran out and we were left wanting more.

Back at a calmer pace, the boat's manners around the marina are very composed and easy to control. As with most single installations, going astern under rudder alone is a tricky business, but with the assistance of a bow-thruster it's easy to bring your direction back into line.

Interior noise levels are on the high side, making the usually mute tones of the Yanmar appear quite harsh. At slower speeds all is well, but as the turbo kicks in at 11 knots the sound levels break through 82dB(A), and they go on to peak at a disappointingly high 88dB(A) at 16.5 knots.

✓✓✓✓  
**Good at slower speeds, but the hull suggests more can be expected.**

**above** An aft bench is one of the few cost options.

## SPECIFICATION & VALUE

Any new product needs a certain bedding-in time for the manufacturers' name and reputation to be cemented.

To help get the ball rolling, Boat Showrooms are offering the boat with a comprehensive standard inventory.

Shorepower, battery charger, iroko decking, trim tabs and water heater, along with the more fundamental issues such as ropes, an electric anchor, antifouling and full commissioning (with a two-day handover

**above** The low sole compromises the enginebay.



**below** Behind the large console, the galley is to be hidden under a chart table in future boats.

**below** An opulent mahogany saloon puts rivals to shame.

and RYA training) are all included in the price. Unlike many boats in this sector of the market the price you see really is the price you pay.

But which layout and power option should you choose? If you really want to save money you can buy a Viki 32 for well under £100,000 inc VAT, so long as you're happy with a single-screw Sedan model and you don't need more than 12-15 knots.

However, we think most buyers will opt for the two cabin Flybridge model, and that means nudging the price to just over £115,000 with a single 240hp Yanmar or £138,600 with twins. That's considerably more expensive than either the Rodman 30 or Bénétteau Antares 9.80 and not far off the spacious new Sealine F34.

At least the Viki's high level of standard equipment and wordwork will count in its favour.

✓✓✓✓✓  
A high specification and good fit-out without breaking the bank.

## Verdict

The Viki 32 is a sturdy cruiser with plenty to shout about. It might not be the last word in innovation, but it offers a very distinctive style for surprisingly sensible money.

In fact we can't think of another boat that offers such an impressive display of woodwork and standard equipment for anything like the same price.

It's not all good news, though. The flybridge could do with more protection and handholds, the second cabin is cramped and the engine installation is neither quiet nor spacious enough.

Fortunately, the good stuff is really very good and beyond the reach of many mainstream builders who don't have access to the cheap labour and raw materials needed to build this style of boat. The negatives are, in the main, easily remedied details.

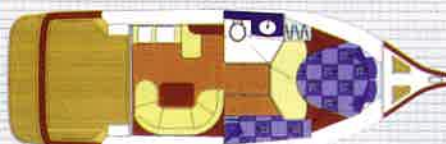
If the builders deliver on their promise to rectify these criticisms, this young Turk could yet mature into a true sultan of the seas.

**MBM RATING**

**6/10**



## Viki 32 technical data



### specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	32ft 8in (10.00m)
BEAM	11ft 2in (3.42m)
DRAUGHT	2ft 4in (0.75m)
AIR DRAUGHT	11ft 6in (3.55m)
DISPLACEMENT	6.0 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	110gal (500lt)
WATER CAPACITY	66gal (300lt)

### key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	0ft 11in
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 2in
HEADROOM IN MASTER CABIN	6ft 1in
HEADROOM IN GUEST CABIN	6ft 1in
MASTER CABIN CABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 4ft 5in
GUEST CABIN CABIN BERTHS	bunks, 6ft 3in x 2ft 4in

### performance

engine single Yanmar 4LHASTP diesel.  
configuration 4cyl, 3.45lt, 240hp at 3300rpm.  
conditions wind southwesterly Force 2, sea calm.  
load fuel 50%, water 20%, crew 3.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
1500	7.4	1.8	8.2	3.9	343	73
2000	9.0	3.1	14.1	2.9	255	78
2500	11.4	4.6	21.0	2.4	264	82
3000	16.5	6.9	31.4	2.3	253	88
3200	18.5	7.9	35.0	2.3	253	86
3400	20.7	10.5	47.7	1.9	167	86

Range figures above are acceleration  
in miles, with 20% margin.  
Noise figures are in dB(A),  
0-15 knots in 12sec;  
0-20 knots in 16sec  
recorded in the saloon.

### prices

TWO-CABIN FLYBRIDGE BOAT	inc VAT
with single 240hp Yanmar diesel	£115,372
with twin 240hp Yanmar diesels	£133,000
(includes commissioning, launch, antifouling, canopies, mooring kit, electric windlass, battery charger)	
TEAK DECKING	standard
BOW-THRUSTER	£1,745
HOLDING TANK	£710
AFT BENCH SEAT	£380
BOAT AS TESTED	£118,207

### ENQUIRIES

BOAT SHOWROOMS, Harleford Marine, Harleford,  
Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 2DX. Tel: 01628 471361.  
VIKIMARINE BOAT SALES UK, Port Dinorwic, Felineli,  
Gwynedd LL56 4JN. Tel: 01248 673273.

### the rivals



#### BÉNÉTEAU ANTARES 9.80

from £99,000 inc VAT

Smart, eminently usable French cruiser with a neat, modern interior.  
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www.dickies.co.uk



#### RODMAN 30

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Spanish contender whose modern lines give way to a luxurious big-boat interior.  
Tel: 01243 512454.  
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#### ASTINOR 1000LX

from £107,500 inc VAT

Another Spaniard which impresses with solid joinery and excellent handling.  
Tel: 023 8045 7656.  
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