



Wellcraft 2400 Martinique

This American sportscruiser would make a good first family boat, with a full package of facilities at an affordable price.

REPORT BY JOHN WOOD

Apart of the massive Genmar group, American builders Wellcraft are probably best known for Scarab performance and racing craft, but their range now encompasses many different types of craft.

They include the eight-boat Martinique line-up of sportscruisers, of which we tested the smallest, the 2400.

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Sportscruisers are all about space and pace. Buyers want comfortable weekending for a family, but also watersports capabilities. In smaller models this is a difficult balance to achieve.

Following a common formula in order to maximise the volume of accommodation, builders struggle to make their craft look

different; and, sure enough, the 2400 is not a design that stands out from the crowd.

They can also easily end up with dumpy styling, all height and beam, as they try to pack as much as possible in. But Wellcraft's designers have done their best to accentuate the hull's length, with the aid of simple graphics, a rubbing strip that drops towards the stern, and prominent bow rails, which draw the eye away from the height of the cockpit and foredeck.

In the cockpit, they have managed to pack in a sunbed opposite the helm, plus aft seating and a small bar with a

sink and a removable coolbox.

The aft seat-base hinges up into the transom if more open space is needed. Or the forward lounge can be folded up to create an aft-facing seat, and a table erected to offer al-fresco dining for four, but only just.

The hinge-down panel for the electrical circuit-breakers and battery master switches is a convenient feature, but only the under-sink locker provides any stowage.

Down below is the tried and tested sportcruiser layout, comprising a convertible forward dinette, a generous midships cabin, a galley and a toilet compartment.

POWER OPTIONS

Petrol engine options are all based around a 5.0lt block from Mercruiser or Volvo Penta. The base options are a 220hp Mercruiser 5.0L or a 220hp Volvo 5.0 GL SX, whereas the fuel-injected alternatives a 240hp Mercruiser 5.0L MPI/Bravo III or a 270hp Volvo 5.0 GXI/DuoProp, with freshwater cooling if required.

Mercruiser provide the cheaper of the diesel options, by way of the 165hp D2.8L D-Tronic Bravo III, but you can choose the 160hp Volvo Penta KAD32P/DuoProp.

Our test boat had the 220hp Mercruiser petrol, on a Bravo III leg.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

On what is a fairly heavy craft, 220hp does not equate to neck-snapping performance, but it can still give an exhilarating ride for a family day out on the water. We squeezed over the 30-knot barrier, with the engine turning over at 4000rpm.

Dropping back a little, 3500rpm gave a good fast cruising speed of just under

worth a look



HEADROOM

Recessed flooring means there is excellent headroom in the cabin.

REMOVABLE COOLBOX

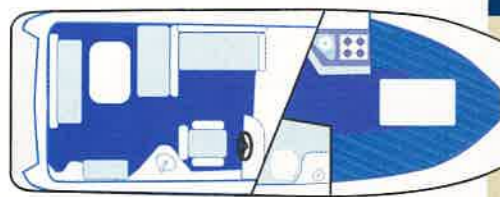
On day trips, this is more useful in the cockpit than a built-in fridge.



SUNLOUNGER

At the forward end of the cockpit, the sunbed does not compromise the aft seating and dining layout.





accommodation

The conventional sportscruiser layout is well executed, with a spacious feel thanks to the excellent headroom, and light fabrics making the best use of daylight from a deck hatch and portholes.

The forward dinette converts into a double berth.

Although tucked under the cockpit, the midships cabin is not at all claustrophobic and has some stowage.

In the WC, however, there is not quite full standing headroom for the average man. A portable toilet comes as standard, but a flushing one with a holding tank is an option.



helm The simply laid-out dashboard has gauges and switches set on a burr wood-effect background, behind a tilt-adjustable steel steering wheel. The bucket seat is swivelling, which adversely affects its sturdiness, but there is a moulded footrail to brace yourself against. The forward section of the base cushion hinges up to offer a lean-back driving position.



forward dinette Underseat stowage will hide bedding, and there is shelving behind the seat-back.



toilet The moulded compartment has an inset stainless steel sink, and the tap has a wanderlead to double as a shower.



galley A sink and a single-burner stove with a hinged top are set into the moulded worktop, with a fridge and a locker underneath.



midships cabin The generous double berth has kneeling access from just aft of the galley. A porthole lets in daylight.



25 knots, with an acceptable cockpit noise reading of 82dB(A). With plenty of time to get where you are going, you can slow it down to an economical 3000rpm, giving 17 knots and 81dB(A) in the cockpit.

The sea state in Tor Bay on the day of our test did nothing to unsettle the 2400. Crossing back through its own wakes, it resumed normal attitude quickly and without fuss and gave no indications of wanting to slam. Trim tabs come as standard, and are

necessary given the boat's deep freeboard.

With the Bravo III leg, handling was assured at all times, with no sign of any propeller ventilation, and the hull swung round smoothly through tight turns.

The Mercruiser throttle control is fairly well placed, albeit with a long throw and an uncertain feel in neutral. Whether you choose a sitting or lean-back driving position, you get good protection from the windscreen.

decks

The need to maximise interior space means there are no side decks, and access forward is through the opening centre section of the windscreen. Grabrails and the bowrails offer handholds as the foredeck slopes gently down towards the bow.

At the stern, the bathing platform is well above water level so a boarding ladder is provided to port. The

platform itself is narrow, but benefits from a grabhandle and extends aft beyond the flanks to allow boarding from alongside.

Steps are set into the cockpit moulding both port and starboard, so you can also board from a raised dock. When you do this, you will probably use the coolbox lid as a stepping stone.



access Steps set into the sliding cabin door moulding facilitate access forward through the opening windscreen.



foredeck Our test boat had a tidy through-deck fitting for the anchor and windlass, with remote operation, but this is an optional extra.

engineroom

For access to the engineroom, you raise the aft cockpit sole on twin gas struts.

There is enough room to get down into the compartment if necessary, and the installation is neatly carried out, with all regular service points readily accessible.

If partitioned, the port and starboard areas could provide extra stowage.



specifications

BUILD	glass-reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	24ft 7in (7.49m)
BEAM	8ft 6in (2.59m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 11in (0.89m)
DISPLACEMENT	2.6 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	70gal (318lt)
ENGINE	single 220hp Mercruiser 5.0L petrol outdrive with a Bravo III leg
SUPPLIERS	TL Harvey Ltd, Whitworth Close, Darlaston, West Midlands WS10 8LJ. Tel: 0121 568 8837.
BUILDERS	Wellcraft, 1651 Whittfield Avenue, Sarasota, Florida 34243, USA. www.wellcraft.com
PRICE	£33,995 inc VAT

conclusions

LAYOUT

The apportioning of space is probably in favour of the cabin, but the flexible layout of the cockpit gives it great usability.

BUILD

The boat is a little too obviously mass-produced in places, with a few rough edges, but is competent bearing in mind the price.

PERFORMANCE

The hull is easily within the performance limits of the engine, so our test boat would make an ideal craft for those new to the water. Foolproof handling is a boon for families, but those trading up from faster sportsboats might seek more get-up-and-go.

MBM verdict

In a competitive market sector, the 2400 Martinique scores well in terms of use of space and competitive pricing.

It offers four berths and full facilities, along with a cockpit to stretch out in, and Wellcraft have made a decent job of the styling.

Those used to performance will want to opt for one of the fuel-injected engine options, to add some spice to the boat's competent handling.

the rivals

BAYLINER 2455 CIERA SUNBRIDGE

£39,995 inc VAT

A similar layout, but more expensive. Tel: 01202 701707. www.pooleaquatic.co.uk

SEA RAY 240 SUNDANCER

£50,758 inc VAT

Piling on the build quality, with similar specification. Tel: 023 8045 3005. www.marinamarbella.com