



The brief...

The end of last year saw the debut of two new aft-cabin boats around 40ft. We tested the Haines 400 in the December issue, so now it's Westwood's turn. How will it stack up? **Mark**

LOA: 39ft 5in (12.04m)
PRICE: from £257,318 with a single engine
TOP SPEED: 26 knots with twin engines
BUILDERS: Westwood Marine
ENQUIRIES: Tel: 01427 890555
www.westwoodmarine.co.uk

BOAT REPORT
WESTWOOD A390

"The A390 is available with single and twin installations"

Westwood A390

This 40-footer has been designed to lure buyers away from the steel boat sector and with its extra pace it is a real force to be reckoned with **REPORT BY MARK TURLEY**

PHOTO: Joe McCarthy

Westwood has just celebrated its 10th anniversary and in that short time it has built up a sound reputation and a loyal following among inland boaters. The yard's three-boat range includes the well thought out open cockpit ST290 (tested May 2008) and a pair of mid-30 footers – the single-cabin C340 coupe and the twin-cabin, aft deck A350. The latter model successfully eased them into the aft-cabin

market, so the yard's next step was to develop a boat that could offer the extra level of space and comfort for those spending extended periods afloat and, importantly, take them into coastal waters.

A new 40ft aft-cabin cruiser was planned. However, rather than going down any tried and tested route, Westwood asked designer Andrew Wolstenholme to give it a steel boat look (whereas in fact it is GRP), which not only gives it an air of sturdy authority but also distances it

from the usual soft look that is the norm among moulded craft.

Staying true to its inland roots, Westwood also ensured that the boat would be available with a river-friendly single engine as well as the offshore twin installation we tested.

Design & build

To get that steel boat look Andrew dispensed with the usual arched curves and radiuses and

kept things much more honed and angular. The A390's bow sections have the same sharp entry and high chine that fabricating in steel invariably gives – a nuance from the cone-derived curvature that you get from rolling steel plate. However, the clever part is that he has achieved this look without the end result becoming boxy or slab-sided. It was a bold decision to take this route but it has delivered a smart, definable alternative to what we are used to seeing in this class.

Underwater there is a full run of keel. This supports the prop shaft and sterngear on single-engined examples but it is still maintained on twin-installation versions and keeps the overall design squarely in the semi-displacement camp.

Having said that, this boat's ability to crack on is likely to lure people away from its slower steel competitors. The A390 weighs in at roughly 10 tonnes laden but a similar-sized steel vessel weighs a good 50% more. This means (ignoring

hull design capabilities for generating lift) a GRP boat can readily push into the low teens with just a single engine, whereas a steel-hulled vessel is left back in full-displacement mode.

Looks aside, the A390's layout is pretty orthodox. Two double en-suite cabins, a lower dinette, galley and an upper saloon create a comfortable home-from-home, that is practical and well finished without being overly frivolous. Just like a steel boat then!



"The generous saloon has sociable U-shaped seating"

Interior

Good-sized cabins and tidy fitout

The upper portion of the **saloon** resembles a generous lounge and there's a well placed sideboard – complete with a pull-out TV – opposite the sociable U-shaped seating.

The **dinette** and nicely proportioned galley is set at a lower

level but it still benefits from plenty of natural light from overhead. The table here drops to form a double and if you end up with additional guests the seating in the upper lounge can be converted as well.

The **galley** is equipped with domestic-sized appliances, including a four-burner hob and a proper oven (gas is the norm) and there is still a decent amount of Corian countertop even with the twin sinks. Storage can be found in a collection of cupboards

and a large cutlery drawer but if you run out of space the adjacent steps lift to reveal a useful void, ideal for bulk storage.

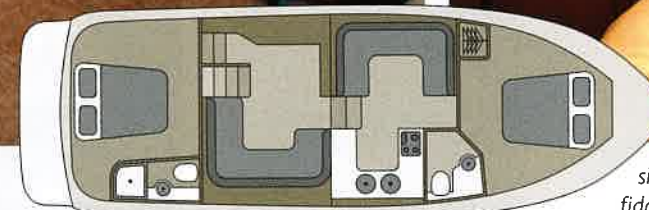
The **forecabin** has a large, if unusually shaped, central double but storage is a bit hit and miss. There is a good-sized wardrobe and a cupboard tucked under the foot of the bed plus a couple of small lockers for valuables, but there are no on-hand lockers either side of the

berth. Just putting a deep fiddle to the shelves that are already there would help resolve this niggle.

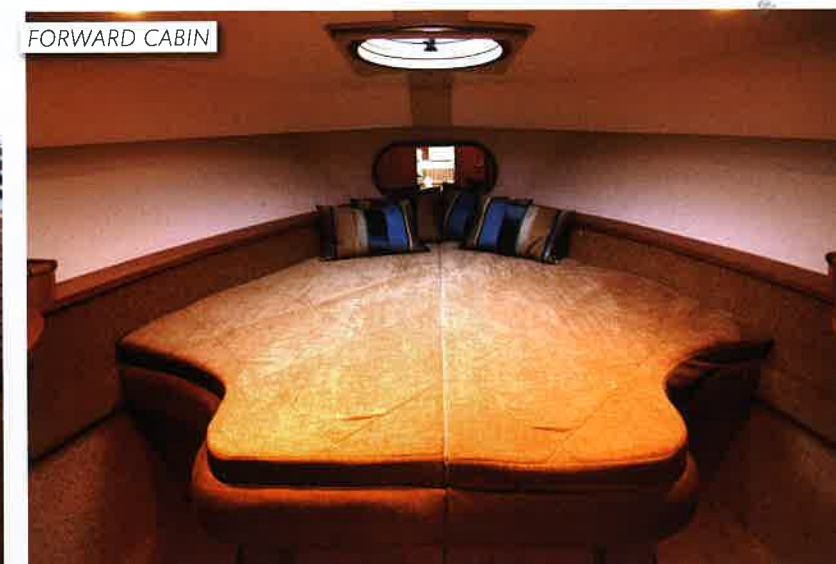
Locker space in the **aft cabin** is much better and again the berth is a good size with space to move around it easily. However, the same shortfall of hands-on **stowage** is evident in both of the en suites, even though a large locker is provided under the

sink units. A slightly raised, fiddled area across the countertops – to hold wash bags in situ – is all that's required. Both the **en suites** are fitted with electric toilets as standard, as well as extractor fans, but only the aft cabin benefits from a separate shower stall.

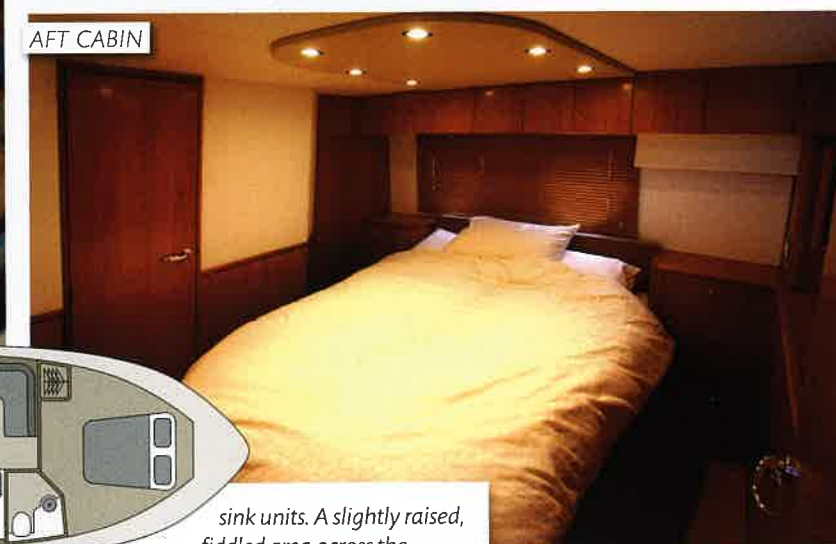
Headroom is generous throughout and the cherrywood joinery is solid and nicely finished with subtle-height fiddles.



FORWARD CABIN



AFT CABIN



GALLEY



PULL-OUT TV



SALOON



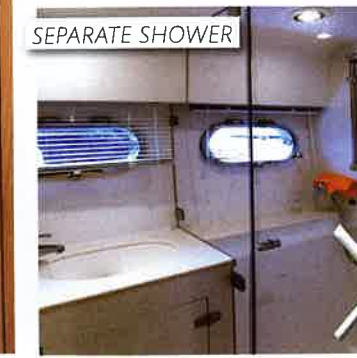
SWITCH PANEL



EN SUITE



SEPARATE SHOWER





HELM

"A wet-bar is a useful addition on an aft-deck layout"

From the helm

Well thought out console

Two fully adjustable helm seats sit before a neat console with two tiers of readily viewed instruments. There's space for a decent-sized widescreen **plotter** to be sited between the skipper and co-pilot so that both can keep an eye on it. We also like the fact that there is a sizeable fiddled tray

ahead of the wheel to keep loose items safe, plus another deeper, angled area where a pilot book could slot.

Visibility from the helm is fine. The bow stays down in the low teens and the generous screen – serviced by two wipers – gives good protection.



AFT DECK

On deck

Excellent side decks and neat wet-bar

The A390 boasts excellent **side decks** that you can waltz along safely without the need to hang on. This is partly down to the good-width decks being furnished with high toerails and beefy guardrails, and the fact that you are not crowded by the superstructure.

This feeling of security first emanates from the **aft deck** thanks to its bulkhead-like coamings that put plenty of solid material between you and the sea. These are topped with handrails and everywhere you go there seems to be something substantial to grab hold of.

Access over the stern via the stairwell to port is fine, however; if you're moored starboard-side-to and there's a dinghy across the transom, stepping aboard will be awkward. The alternative is to use the drop-down side gates that double as steps let into the side deck guardrails.

Deck hardware includes a manual windlass as standard and two sets of spring cleats, rather than just one, either side. There's a handy rope bin next to the transom gate and as



STOWAGE

with any boat geared towards inland use, the **radar mast** is engineered to fold down; reducing the air draught to 10ft 7in (3.23m).

The seating arrangement on the aft deck is pretty simple. Both the supportive helm seats swivel round to face the comfortable transom bench with lockers beneath.

The GRP cockpit table had yet to be fitted to the test boat, even though the neat **wet-bar** was ready for action. This is a particularly useful addition to any aft-deck layout, yet rarely found, as it reduces the need to go below decks to get a drink or wash your hands after grappling with ropes. The wet-bar comes with a sink, cupboard and bin as standard, but it will take a barbecue grill and fridge.

AFT STEPS



DROP-DOWN STEP



MANUAL WINDLASS



SIDE DECKS



WET-BAR



Performance & handling

The sea was particularly mucky off Chichester on the day of our seatrial with uncomfortable short, deep waves pushed about by 20 knots of wind. If anything was going to show up awkward slamming, indifferent handling, creaks and groans these conditions were it. We were delighted, therefore, that once we eased into semi-planing mode – 16 to 18 knots – the hull and fitout never uttered a single squeak and gave a very decent, solid ride even into the head sea. Once up and running the hull didn't kick up much spray either, even if it took a bit on the screen as we motored out past Chichester Bar in displacement mode. The infill canopy between the radar arch and the windscreens kept us dry and the demisters (fitted as standard) ensured the

screen stayed clear on the inside too.

Turning through this sharp, unpleasant sea to run down hill didn't induce any complaints from the hull and we concluded our speed trials at full revs, achieving slightly shy of 25 knots. Earlier tests in better conditions, conducted by Volvo Penta while certifying the engine installation, delivered 26 knots.

Back in the calmer sanity of the harbour the hull's generous keel ensures it tracks without recourse to the wheel. The full keel also did a helpful job of counteracting the side wind we encountered once back at the berth.

All A390s – whether single or twin – come with a bow thruster fitted as standard and as part of the bathing platform moulding, there is a built-in tunnel to house an optional stern thruster.



"There were no squeaks or complaints from the hull at 18 knots"



Specification & value

From the company's experience of supplying ready spec'd boats for its inland customers for an all-in price, the yard has followed the same route with the A390. This means that aside from some electronics, there is little you will want to add. A bow thruster, trim tabs, heating, shorepower, fender racks and even a rudder indicator and TV antenna are all included as standard, plus Westwood has gone the extra mile and fitted electric toilets. The only items you might want to add are an exterior fridge and some decking to the aft deck.

So where does that leave the A390 among the home-grown competition? Having done our best to check twin-engine specs and prices, Westwood's A390 comes out over £30k less than the Haines 400 and some £75k cheaper than the Broom 395.

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS	
BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	39ft 5in (12.04m)
HULL LENGTH	38ft 6in (11.74m)
BEAM	13ft 2in (4.04m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 3in (1.00m)
AIR DRAUGHT	10ft 7in (3.23m)
DISPLACEMENT	9 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	200gal (900lt)
WATER CAPACITY	100gal (450lt)
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	12in (30cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 5in (1.98m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 4in x 4ft 8in (1.93 x 1.42m)
MID CABIN BERTH	6ft 4in x 5ft 0in (1.93 x 1.52m)
PERFORMANCE	
Engines	twin Volvo Penta D4-300 diesels
Configuration	4cyl, 3.7lt, 300hp @ 3500rpm
conditions	wind SW'ly, Force 4/5, sea moderate
Load	fuel 75%, water 60%, crew 2

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. These figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temperature, crew numbers, hull fouling, fuel quality and other issues. Noise readings in dB(A) were taken in the saloon.

PRICES

STANDARD BOAT	Inc VAT
with single 220hp diesel	£257,318
with twin Volvo Penta D4-300s	£295,826
BOW THRUSTER	standard
HEATING	standard
SHOREPOWER	standard
WOOD-EFFECT COCKPIT DECKING	£2387
COMMISSIONING & DELIVERY	£2706

BOAT AS TESTED **£335,288**



Enginebay

Single-engined A390s are fitted with 220hp-260hp units that can push it into the low teens. The recommended twin installation is a pair of Volvo Penta D4 300hp units.

Full access to the enginebay compartment is achieved by lifting panels in the saloon sole but for a quick gander to check and clear the raw water strainers, there is a removable hatch in the aft cabin's forward bulkhead. The engineering appears sound and well executed, and good attention has been paid to providing noise insulation.

THE VERDICT

Westwood has delivered a tidy package with the A390's sharp, steel-boat aping lines working very well. This resourceful thinking is aimed at taking on the Dutch when it comes producing a comfortable, easy-to-live-on boat for lengthy trips around the European waterways. However, this boat is capable of much more than inland cruising. The A390 is a sound seaboat too and the fact that it costs less than most other 40-footers, regardless of what they're made of, is a massive advantage.



Meet the family



SMALLER

Westwood A350 from £188,467

LOA: 35ft 0in (10.67m)

Both cabins still have their own en suites but there is no lower dinette. The saloon benefits from a side door for easy access when mooring.



SMALLER

Westwood C340 from £156,000

LOA: 34ft 0in (10.37m)

Aft cockpit version of the 350 with patio doors through to the saloon, so no rear cabin and an inside helm position adjacent to the side door.

The rivals



Broom 395 from £333,840 (single) £374,760 (twin)

The popular 395 has had a facelift inside to give it a more contemporary feel but it still boasts a lower dinette and two en-suite cabins. Tel: 01603 712334 www.broomboats.co.uk



Haines 400 from £265,200 (single) £328,000 (twin)

Two en-suite cabins and a very smart fitout. Available with either a semi-displacement or full-planing hull, with a single or twin engines. Tel: 01603 713434 www.hainesmarine.co.uk

Aft cabin three-way review

How do the main rivals stack up?

Broom 395 MBM tested Apr 2004

Since the yard's takeover last year, this well-regarded model has a more contemporary fitout. The forward cabin has a V-shaped berth with an en suite, although it misses out on a separate shower, but the aft cabin benefits from running full width.



Aft deck: Like the Haines the cockpit coamings are set inboard of its side decks that then run down to the bathing platform with steps down either side. The double helm seat can be switched to face the tidy U-shaped seating.



Saloon: The upper saloon seating can be increased with an additional settee if you are happy to forego a lower dinette. The remaining space opposite the galley then becomes a utility area.



Aft cabin: The Broom's toilet and shower facilities are split, falling either side of the cabin's entrance. This allows the owner's cabin to stretch out across the beam, beating its rivals on space while working in lots of cabinetry.

Westwood A390 Tested Apr 2011

Westwood's aim to give the A390 steel boat looks gives it a different air to its competitors, however, unlike the Haines and Broom, it lacks an additional shower stall forward.



Aft deck: The full-beam aft deck is well protected by solid bulwark-like coamings. Seating runs across in one straight bench but there is just one set of steps up from the bathing platform.



Saloon: The light and airy saloon has an open-plan feel to it, even though it is essentially split between a lower dinette area opposite the galley and a lounge-orientated upper portion.



Aft cabin: The aft cabin's en suite takes up the majority of the starboard side but it stops short of the rear bulkhead so it doesn't crowd the head of the berth. Opposite is a full run of cabinetry and a hanging locker.

Haines 400 MBM tested Dec 2010

Haines is happy to customise the layout to a high degree and on the boat we seatrialled the galley ran across the hull's full beam at a lower level. The fitout is high quality and contemporary in style and both cabins have en suites that benefit from separate shower stalls.



Aft deck: There is a real cockpit feel to the 400's aft deck with the U-shaped seating tucked behind coamings inboard of the side decks; each of which has a stairwell leading to the bathing platform.



Saloon: Shown here with facing saloon seating and a full-beam lower galley, you can opt for a lower dinette freeing up more space for the saloon. Extra light floods the saloon thanks to the large overhead skylight, just visible.



Aft cabin: The port side of the aft cabin is taken up by the en suite. However, the cabin is allowed to open up a little more with a good run of low-level cabinetry opposite. A domestic-sized double berth completes the picture.