

# BOAT REPORT



## WOLFE IN WOLF'S CLOTHING

# WHITEWATER WOLFE 46

To many, the name Westerly is synonymous with a family of British-built sailing yachts, but for the motorboating fraternity, it will hardly ring any ships' bells. This is all set to change with the Whitewater Wolfe, their debut into the fast offshore cruiser market.

BOTH in concept and size, the Whitewater Wolfe 46 is a quantum leap for Westerly. Their current largest sail boat is around the 41ft mark, and there are bound to be sceptics who consider this top end of a different market a brave but vulnerable step for any yacht builder. However, producing near enough 300 craft a year, and celebrating their silver jubilee in 1988, the Waterloo-based company have an enviable pedigree of experience behind them. Westerly admit they don't want to lock bow rollers with established motor cruiser builders, concentrating instead on producing complete, high specification craft where even the most exacting owner can obtain exactly what he wants — all within a given price.

The Wolfe 46 isn't just a one-off model either, Westerly have a forty footer already on the drawing board and a flagship to the Whitewater range — well over fifty foot — planned for the latter half of next year.

### Design and construction

Westerly are building the 45ft 3in (13.8m) flybridge Wolfe in the UK under licence from Long Beach sited Hans Christian Yachts, the original design coming from the board of American Gary Grant.

In general terms, the hull is medium-vee, with a constant deadrise of 18°, running from just abaft of amidships to the transom. However, as favoured by many American designers, Grant has opted for slightly convex underwater sections rather than flat panels. This curvature enhances hull strength and gives seakindly performance, at the expense of a reduced effective planing area, and also marginally increasing power-absorbing wetted surface. To regain lift, and drive unwanted spray back into the wake, two broad spray rails run full length from the bow, with a six inch flat at the chine. Although there is considerable rake in the bow profile to promote a sleek,





## BOAT REPORT



## WHITEWATER WOLFE 46



**Bottom left: the spacious interior helm position. Clockwise from top left: the galley with domestic size units. Comfortable dining for six. Two views of the owner's suite situated in the bows. Top right: the sociable open plan saloon, galley and helm position superbly finished in white oak.**

aesthetic appearance, the sections are full enough to provide adequate amounts of reserve buoyancy when travelling in following seas.

In common with the underwater sections the topsides are slightly convex — rather than slab-sided. Again, this promotes strength while producing an elegant, fair hull finish; often difficult to achieve in this size of craft with large, flat panels.

Hull weight has been reduced without any loss of strength by using a comprehensive grid system of foam-cored, deep frames and longitudinals. This matrix of stiffeners allows less actual laminate thickness for the same rigidity and strength, producing a boat with an impressively light displacement of around 12.5 tons.

The hand-laid laminate comprises mainly woven rovings with some chopped strand mat, and unidirectional reinforcement in high stress areas. Both the gelcoat and main lay-up resins are of the superior — and more expensive — isophthalic type.

During our inspection, we were pleased to find the Wolfe is divided into three separate watertight compartments, each serviced by its own automatic bilge pump. The interior of the hull is painted out with gelcoat to above the waterline as a defence against bilge water absorption, and also to aid cleanliness.

## Accommodation

The Wolfe 46 we tested was the first off the production line. This version provides accommodation for six in three separate, spacious double cabins, along with an open plan saloon, galley and helm position. Westerly are working on an alternative arrangement to install a crew or children's cabin beneath the cockpit sole by reducing the size of the cavernous lazaret.

The saloon is entered from the aft deck via a wide, substantial patio door to starboard. Open, this effectively converts both areas into a single one for some serious entertaining, especially since the flybridge deck — fitted with lights on the underside — overhangs and protects a sensible portion of the cockpit.

Immediately to the left of the access is a deeply unholstered six to seven seater U-shaped settee. This is not only comfortable, but from a practical point of view, the high, angled back and wide seats make for a safe, snug repose for those not on watch, even in the worst conditions. Stowage here along with most of the under bunk spaces is awkward to get into. The plywood hatches are exceptionally large which, although providing good access for bulky objects, requires that all the cushions have to be completely removed before delving into the locker beneath. An



# BOAT REPORT

attractive octagonal table can be dropped to form the infill for an occasional double berth, or removed to the cockpit for al fresco dining.

The warm lustre of American white oak abounds throughout the boat and is beautifully matched. This makes a welcome change from the paler ashes and pines that many manufacturers favour, while still matching the lighter styling that is demanded by today's motorboat designs.

Opposite the settee is a run of deep shelves — usefully angled to keep their contents in place — that also incorporates an entertainment centre featuring a stereo radio/cassette, video and TV. All are hidden behind sliding doors when not in use. A substantial bar unit completes the area.

The galley is sited to starboard, forward of the main saloon, and thoughtfully designed in a horse-shoe arrangement. A double sink with mixer tap lies outboard, with domestic sized fridge and deep freeze units beneath. On this prototype boat, these are 240V powered, as are the microwave and the audio-visual gear in the saloon. However, Westerly are trying to fit 24V dc motors to subsequent units. At present, a four burner, electric Philips hob is set into the aft facing counter, but on future models this will be sited forward, swapping places with the microwave, in order that an extractor hood can be fitted to remove cooking smells.

Stowage for pots, pans and crockery is provided in substantial swing shelves housed beneath the counter top. A large rubbish hopper and four-drawer chest are usefully sited towards the saloon side of the galley, allowing the rest of the crew to reach them without disturbing the cook.

The helm position to port, opposite the galley, has a single pilot seat — which although fully adjustable — cannot overcome the limitations on view caused by one of the windscreen pillars that falls in line with the bow. The instrumentation and control panels are comprehensive to say the least, although ammeters are missing from the VDO engine gauges. Instead, it is necessary to monitor the main dc/ac breaker board, sited by the skipper's right knee.

The line-up of nav aids is impressive, with a large Plastimo steering compass, echo sounder, log, Navico VHF, Navstar Decca, Cetrek autopilot and intercom system to the flybridge all being fitted as standard. Westerly will substitute a Loran set for the Decca should the boat be Med-based.

The stainless steel wheel is vertically mounted at a comfortable height, with single-lever throttle controls falling to the right hand and trim tab switches to the left. A ready-use switch panel for bilge pumps, lights and windscreen wipers, along with a separate board for ignition switches and generator controls take up further room, but there isn't space for even the smallest of chart tables.

This is disappointing in an otherwise impressive, and well laid out helm position. However, navigation manuals, binoculars and folded charts can be stowed outboard on angled shelves adjacent to the main console.

The Wolfe's master cabin is forward and comes complete with an en suite toilet compartment to starboard. A large double berth is located centrally and bordered by deep fiddled shelves outboard. Deep drawers and two half-height hanging lockers provide ample clothes storage, while bulkier items can be stored beneath the bunk. As mentioned previously, under berth stowage is awkward, but on the plus side, the lockers have removable bottoms, allowing good access to the bilge. They are also wood lined, and commendably finished with a healthy coat of varnish.

Retracing your steps towards the saloon, you find two guest cabins of similar proportions, one on either side of a central corridor. On the test boat, both have double berths, although twin single bunks can be fitted in the starboard one. Again there is ample stowage, both in hanging lockers, and chests of drawers.

Both cabins share a good-sized toilet compartment to port. This is smartly and on the whole practically finished (the GRP moulding is detailed to incorporate a soap holder adjacent to the usefully-sized basin) but on the prototype, has a shortage of dry stowage. Westerly are fitting a further vanity unit to subsequent boats.

The majority of the interior is carpeted, but areas where traffic is heaviest — around the galley, helm position and walkway between the sleeping cabins — are sensibly decked in a heavy-duty non-slip finish. All joinery and fittings are to a high standard, capable of withstanding the heaviest use, while recessed spotlights and padded velour headlinings complement the finish.

All cabins are equipped with substantial opening ports and hatches, while the windows



# WHITEWATER WOLFE 46

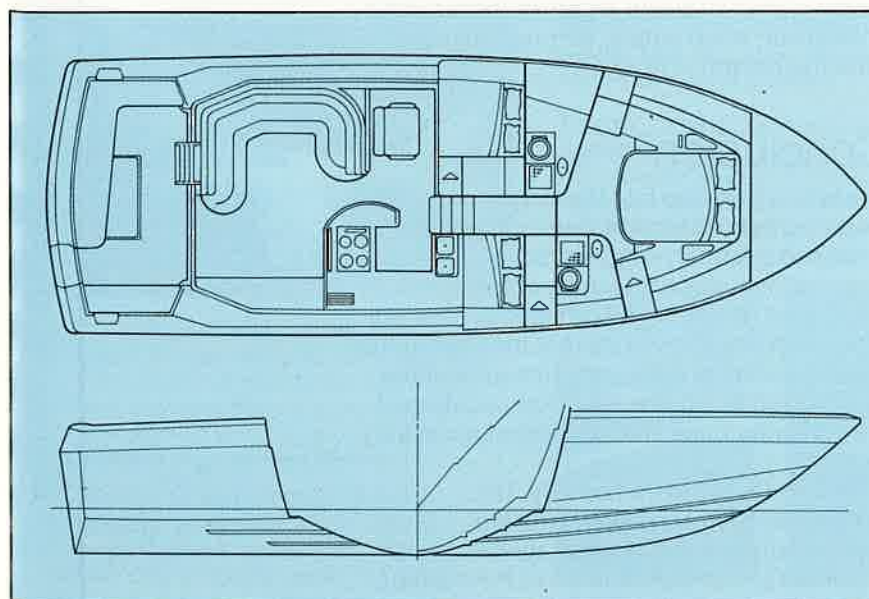
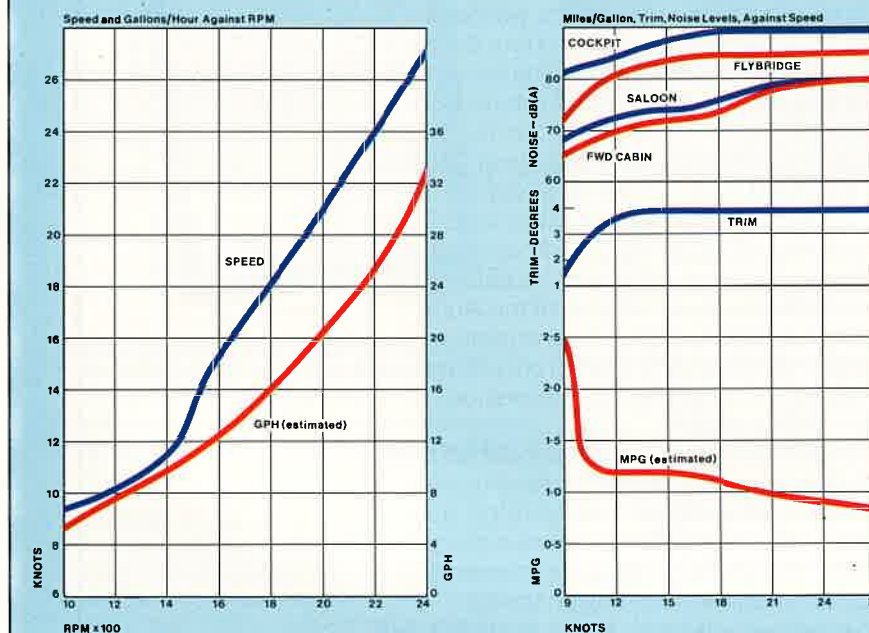
## Whitewater Wolfe 46

**Engines:** Twin Iveco 8361 SRM37 diesels, 370hp at 2400 rpm, 8100cc, 6 cyl.

**Conditions:** Wind force SW 2, sea calm;  
**Load:** fuel 75%, water 100%, crew 3.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	Sound levels dB (A)			
						Saloon	Fwd cab	Ckpit	Flybdg
1000	9.3	5.2	23.4	2.48	996	69	65	81	72
1200	10.1	7.9	35.6	1.29	520	70	67	83	76
1400	11.2	9.5	42.7	1.22	472	71	69	84	79
1600	15.2	12.2	54.9	1.20	498	74	72	88	83
1800	18.1	16.0	72.0	1.13	452	76	74	90	85
2000	20.6	20.1	90.4	1.01	400	79	78	90	85
2200	24.2	25.2	113.4	0.96	384	80	79	90	85
2400	27.0	33.0	148.5	0.82	330	80	80	90	85

Acceleration, 0-20 knots, 10secs



LOA	48ft 10in (14.9m)
Hull length	45ft 3in (13.8m)
LWL	37ft 3in (11.4m)
Beam	15ft 8in (4.6m)
Draught	4ft 2in (1.3m)
Displacement	12.7 tons
Fuel	400gal (1,800 l)
Water	150gal (680 l)
Price with twin Iveco 370hp	£209,500 ex VAT
<b>Builder:</b> Whitewater International, Hamble Point Marina, School Lane, Hamble, Hants. Tel: 0703 453071	

in the main saloon are fitted with effective drip channels to catch condensation or leaks. One niggle about the interior was the lack of fiddles in the galley and on the saloon shelves, while a few well-placed handholds wouldn't go amiss.

## Exterior

Boarding the Whitewater Wolfe is best achieved via the bathing platform, rather than scaling the generous topsides. Using this route, the safety of the cockpit is gained via a large transom door. The platform itself is wide, and teak gratings make for a sure footing, although a handrail around the cockpit coaming would be further aid to security.

The cockpit is sheathed with teak decking while the side decks are coated with a good non-slip paint. High, sturdy stainless steel guardrails running right back to the cockpit are further assurance when moving to and from the foredeck.

However, the quality of some of the stainless steel welding was not in keeping with Westerly's workmanship; pitting and the first signs of rust were in evidence.

Deck hardware includes two sets of substantial cleats either side of the transom, a further pair forward and spring cleats amidships. The foredeck is suitably equipped with electric windlass — remotely controlled from either interior or flybridge helm positions — complete with a 22lb Bruce anchor and chain. A large locker takes care of the latter, along with warps and a couple of fenders.

Back in the cockpit once again, there is seating for ten or more around bench seats, with fender stowage under. The lazarette is enormous, even with a 150gal (680 l) stainless steel water tank stretching across the forward bulkhead. Even so, we were pleased to see that the tiller arms had been boxed in to avoid being jammed by loose



# WHITEWATER WOLFE 46

equipment, and that provision for an emergency tiller had been made. Although the cockpit is self draining, there are also freeing ports at the aft end as further assurance of clearing any large volumes of water.

Seating for half a dozen around the aft end of the flybridge is supplemented by space for two more alongside the skipper at the helm position. Duplicate engine instrumentation and controls, along with repeaters for the log and echo sounder are all clearly displayed. The whole run of the flybridge coaming is equipped with lockers to provide an abundance of stowage.

## Engines

Access to the engineroom is through a good sized hinged hatch at the after end of the saloon, and this reveals a real treat in competent, well-planned, marine engineering. Twin 370hp Iveco 8361 SRM 37 turbocharged diesels — new to the Iveco range — are flexibly mounted on GRP bearers that run nearly the full length of the boat. Examples of attention to detail are the stainless steel brackets that support the exhaust pipe, while all wiring and fuel pipework is ducted out of harm's way. A fuel line manifold allows each engine to draw and return to either of the two 200gal (900 l) aluminium fuel tanks secured outboard; large Racor fuel/water separators are easily inspected and serviced.

The engines are at the forward end of the compartment, allowing plenty of space abaft of them for the G&M 9.6 kW generator in its own soundproofed box. The standard generator set is a 6.6kW unit, but Westerly have installed the larger one on this boat with a view to fitting air-conditioning. Electricity is 24V dc, with two 102amp/hr batteries for engine starting, and a further four for the domestic system. This may seem over generous, but all 240V appliances can also be run from a static inverter installed in the engineroom, yet another standard fitment. With such a number of batteries sited outboard of the port engine and not altogether easy to inspect — it is sensible that their box has its own extractor fan.

Seamanlike as ever, Westerly have covered the shafts, couplings and lower regions of the bilge with non-slip GRP mouldings. Inspection hatches in these give access to the stern glands and through-hull transducers. Two automatic fire extinguishers are sited to the rear of the compartment.

Raw water strainers are of adequate size, and these, along with the rest of the service points can be readily inspected. It was also noticeable that the manufacturer has ensured adequate ventilation for the engines.

Except for the fuel tank sides, the whole engineroom is heavily insulated with a foam/lead sandwich.

## Handling and Performance

Unfortunately amidst much bad weather, the day of the test featured a flat calm and we couldn't find anything more taxing than the wakes of passing ferries. The Cowes hydrofoil gave the most sport, but the Wolfe turned cleanly out of its wake without any sign of tramlining. We have also encountered the Wolfe 46 during various sorties in the Solent when conditions have been less kind, and have not noticed any obvious vices. The steering proved light enough giving a reasonable turning circle at high speed, while the boat tracked on a set course without constant attention to the helm.

With the tabs completely lowered, we achieved a running angle of three degrees; with them fully raised this rose to just over six degrees. For maximum speed, we found adjusting the running angle to four degrees also ensured good visibility. Top speed with both engines running at their rated 2400 rpm, with full water and three-quarters fuel, was an excellent 27 knots giving a range of 330 miles — plenty for longer cruising. Dropping the revs to 2000 brought consumption down to 20gph, the Wolfe still attaining 20.5 knots with an extended range of 400 miles. Acceleration proved the most remarkable of the Wolfe's performance characteristics, attaining 20 knots from a standing start in only 10 seconds, practically taking it into the sportsboat waterskiing league.

Engine noise in the accommodation is good, 80dB(A) being the maximum reading obtained anywhere. The cockpit and flybridge fared less well, the former suffering an uncomfortable 90 dB(A). This would no doubt be improved by additional sound-proofing on the aft engineroom bulkhead, and in any event, will certainly be dampened by the inevitable accumulation of owner's gear in the lazarette. This locker, when empty, acts as a highly effective sounding box.

## Conclusion

Westerly's first step into the large cruiser market is by no means tentative. They have produced a soundly-engineered, appealing boat that includes a fine array of standard equipment. This will give prospective owners the comforting knowledge that they can motor into the sunset at a pre-set price without the hassle, further expense and complication of having to purchase and fit a host of necessary extras.

We liked the boat immensely. The accommodation and deck areas are thoughtfully laid out, comfortable and most importantly — in the tradition of their sailing boats — workmanlike and shipshape. ■