

BOAT REPORT WINDY 11600

Norwegian builders Windy have been improving their flagship model, with a new interior layout option.

SINCE its launch in 1991, Windy's 38ft flagship has been given different interior layout options, as well as undergoing subtle but inviting changes in the cockpit area and in its engine line-up. We looked at a Yamaha 420 STI diesel-powered model which boasts a more open-plan format than the twin-cabin arrangement seen previously.

Design

A new designer, Hans Jorgen Johnson, has brought a certain softening to the lines of this latest Windy, even if the shape remains true to the marque's traditions both above and below the waterline.

The hull is deep-vee, turning in at 22° from midships to transom, with no fewer than four sets of sprayrails and plenty of body to the forward topsides, ensuring there is a goodly amount of buoyancy as well as below-decks volume. Headroom is still a little more than 6ft (1.85m) over most of the accommodation, even with the coachroof lifting only slightly above deck level.

Windy use a sandwich construction for the hull and superstructure, to add stiffness and strength, but this does not mean they lower their lay-up specifications as some manufacturers do to save

weight and gain performance; in fact their panel weights are greater than most. These boats are built to stick to the water, and not to dance to any blow or ripple.

Exterior

If you take your boating with plenty of sunshine, you will appreciate the 11600's generous and well proportioned cockpit, whether helming or indulging yourself with al-fresco dining, sunbathing or watersports.

The double adjustable bucket-style helm seat to starboard is supplemented by a single on the other side of the companionway, both positions having plenty of adjacent stowage.

Instrumentation is set into a tiered walnut veneered console, allowing plenty of room for the usual array of electronic extras.

Standard kit includes an electronic compass and an Autohelm Tridata log/depth unit. A moulded return along the outboard coaming provides a landing for the throttles and trim-tab rockers, while the main switch panel lies to the right of the smart, comfortable-to-handle wooden wheel. The co-driver's seat has a small perspex-covered pilot-cum-chart area, while in the base of

the main helm seat is a recess for a couple of fire-extinguishers.

Taking up the middle of the cockpit is a spacious dinette whose substantial table can hinged in half when not used for eating; seating capacity is further enhanced by a folding settee which pulls out from the port coaming. Just ahead of this arrangement is a wet-bar complete with sink, fridge and dedicated bottle and glass stowage, while abaft of it is a large cave-type locker for fenders and bulky items.

A couple of steps moulded into the coaming side give access to the side decks.

Right aft is a sunlounger area which can be made rather larger by altering the attitude of the athwartships seat-back. The mattress here, as with all the boat's upholstery, is generously thick and smartly finished.

Telescopic davits are incorporated within the transom coaming, and through the robust transom door is an integral bathing platform, which is equipped with a shower and a sensibly sized bathing ladder hidden under a hatch. Two further compartments here add to the already cavernous stowage found beneath the cockpit sole and the seat and sunbed bases.

In typical Windy fashion, the handsomely





proportioned yet slick wraparound screen has a handrail running around its inboard edge, continuing right aft and across the transom. Such details are not forgotten outside the safety of the cockpit, the coachroof being provided with handrails to supplement the keen sweep of bow and side rails.

Clean lines are also preserved by the vertical windlass being dropped into the foredeck locker. This has a simple grill above the chain area, which allows the bow mooring lines to be stowed without becoming entangled with the former.

The camber of the coachroof is minimal, making it eligible as a foredeck, and it is covered with moulded non-slip, as of course are the 7in (18cm) side decks. These are fashioned with a slight lip of toerail, scalloped out to take the 10in (25cm) cleats sited fore, aft and amidships.

The bulk of the full-headheight canopy wraps securely and tidily up to the arch mast, making it easy to stow and rattle-free.

Interior

The layout allows for either one or two dedicated sleeping compartments, with the midships one joined by an optional double cabin towards the bows.

Instead of the latter, our test boat had a

Clockwise from bottom left: the toilet compartment is well fitted out, with practical GRP at lower levels and elegant teak above. Our test boat featured a convertible C-shaped dinette in place of the optional bows cabin. The midships double cabin has standing headroom over the dressing area. Storage space is plentiful in the smart galley. The spacious cockpit is comfortable for dining or lounging in the sun, with generously plush upholstery.



generous C-shaped dinette forward, plus a smaller adjacent two or three-seater sofa and table. The dinette converts into a huge double which can be curtained-off for a modicum of privacy. The seat-backs are comfortably angled and lockers beneath the base are fully lined.

Running from the companionway door to the dinette is a well appointed galley. A double hinged work surface covers the stainless steel sink and twin-burner paraffin-fired ceramic hob, while a top-loading fridge/freezer takes up the remaining countertop.

Storage is plentiful and well thought-out, with segmented crockery stowage and eye-level units outboard, plus cupboards below for pots and pans and bulk items. An opening half-size hatch is let into the coachroof.

The toilet compartment opposite is vented in the same way. Entered either from the main cabin or from the midships sleeping compartment, it is again fitted out to a good standard, the lower levels in GRP for easy cleaning and the rest given the same elegant lining and trim as the rest of the accommodation. A drop-down cover hides the sea toilet, and a shower tray is incorporated in the base moulding. There is also plenty of dry storage.

The midships cabin has standing headroom over the dressing area and a small seat next to the three-quarter-height hanging locker. A vertical run of mirrored doors suggests somewhere to store clothes but in fact just gives access to the rear of the electrics panels on the other side of the bulkhead. In reality, the only additional stowage is in a locker at the foot of the huge, 6ft 6in x 5ft 0in (2.0m x 1.52m) mattress area.

The latter has plenty of sitting headroom, a comfortable bolster arrangement and a pair of reading lights at its head. Natural light and ventilation come from two ports, one opening outboard and the other into the cockpit.

Windy have done a fine fitting-out job on the 11600, everything being there for a practical purpose whilst being complemented by the warm opulence of the teak joinery (much of it solid), tailored head linings inset with mini-spotlights, and cossetting soft furnishings.

Engines

Several engine options are listed, from the Mercruiser, Volvo and Yamaha outdrive stables.

Basically, the potential customer must decide between two powerbands of petrol units, totalling around 550hp or 660hp, or go the diesel route with a pair of 230hp Volvo KAD 42DPs or twin 247hp Yamaha 420 STIs. We tried the more potent of the latter installations.

Access to the top, sides, front and rear of the engines, and indeed to the whole compartment, could not be better. Most of it is exposed by raising the substantial sunbed-topped hatch on its electrohydraulic rams, whose mechanicals have now been beefed up because they struggled when the base lockers were full.

A smaller hatch in the cockpit sole, adjacent to the transom door, also gives access to the main engine compartment as well as to a storage bin outboard of the port unit. Auxiliaries such as pumps and the calorifier (complete with immersion) are mounted in a similar disposition to starboard, with the Racor fuel/water filters close

at hand and easily inspected.

Insulation has been fitted to all surfaces, and the bilge is serviced both by an automatic electric unit and by a manual pump switched from the cockpit.

Fuel cocks are located under a cut-out within the dinette base (there being just a single stainless steel tank), while the batteries and main isolator are beneath removable hatches in the cockpit sole; a further electronic battery switch is found by the main breaker panel just inside the sliding companionway door.

Performance and handling

We took the 11600 out on a couple of occasions courtesy of Express Cruisers of Lymington, now the sole UK concessionaires for Windy boats.

The first sortie was too grey and lumpy for gathering data, but hit the mark in providing testing conditions for sea trials. Force 5s and 6s over the previous week had built up an adequate swell in the English Channel, bunching up as they rolled into the shelving coastal waters of Christchurch Bay, west of the Solent.

Running into them, the legs were kept tucked in to keep the keener sections cleaving and cushioning our passage from one wave-top to the next, giving a comfortable, solid ride with no banging or crashing from below even at almost flat-out. The Yamaha controls incorporate a single thumb-rocker in the inboard throttle to actuate both drives, making for immediate, fingertip control; for trimming them individually, a further pair of switches are situated in the pedestal.

Backing off a touch, half a turn on the wheel brought an easy, well mannered turn. A touch more left-hand-down and there was more exhilarating deep-vee heel. A quick flick to straighten her up and we were off downhill. You could simply trim out and leave the hull to look after you; after all, this was a Windy, prototyped and trialed.

On our second excursion we completed the usual test runs. Full throttle, at 3900rpm, achieved just over 35 knots, with consumption around 27gph (123lph). Knocking back to 3500rpm for a fast cruising 31 knots gave an indicated 20gph (90lph), while at a more sedate, even gentle, 3000rpm we could relax at 25 knots using around 15gph (68lph).

Sound levels in the cockpit at these lower revs were a very reasonable 78dB(A), and even flat out these rose only to 83dB(A) on the seat over the engine hatch, an excellent figure for a diesel-engined boat.

Neither could acceleration be faulted. We timed 0-20 knots at a whisker under 8sec, which represents true performance. The light turbos employed on the Yamahas pushed out power quickly and smoothly, as a bonus keeping smoke emissions down.

Conclusions

The 11600 is supremely worthy of being the flagship of a renowned marque. Something of the subtle Windy tone has been lost, it must be said, but there is no getting away from the high standard of the fit-out, sound engineering practices and fine seakeeping we have come to expect from the company. □

Windy 11600

Loa 38ft 0in (11.60m).
Hull length 36ft 6in (11.12m).
Beam 11ft 5in (3.48m).
Draught 3ft 3in (1.00m) with drives up.
Displacement 7.5 tons.
Fuel 220gal (1000lt).
Water 53gal (240lt).
Price from £94,852 ex VAT with twin 260hp petrols; £110,370 as tested with Yamaha 420 STI diesels.
Builders Windy Boats A/S, Skarpnes, PO Box 40, N-4875 Nedenes, Norway.
Tel: (47) 41 95 600.
Suppliers Express Cruisers Ltd, Town Quay, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ET.
Tel: 0590 679355.