

MOTOR BOATS TESTED

Broom 365

A clear challenge to the fast flybridge brigade, Broom's latest aft cabin offering is a red-blooded planing cruiser with a 30 knot top end

REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON

BOAT REPORT

BROOM 365



FACT FILE
Broom 365
LOA: 36ft 6in
(11.1m)
PRICE: From
£217,900
TOP SPEED:
29.7 knots

“Leaves the widely held belief that Brooms are for meandering down the Broads trailing in its wake”





The aft cabin is far superior to an equivalent aft cockpit boat

With all the big names striving to fit full-beam master cabins into their flybridge boats, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on the aft cabin. This design of boat not only gives you the space but also the privacy of a master cabin, about as far away from the riff-raff as a boat's length will allow. Take this 36ft Broom as a case in point; with a full planing hull, it matches the performance of a similarly sized flybridge boat while delivering the master cabin of a boat some

15ft longer. Not a bad combination don't you think? So why aren't we buying more of them then?

Design and build

The 365 is the smallest boat in the new-look Broom range, replacing the 345 and 36, two very different boats meant for very different purposes. Hence the 365 is available with an optional skeg, dropping down from



Two transom hatches add light and drama in equal measures

the boat's standard keel, turning it into a more river friendly and far cheaper single engine cruiser. But make no mistake, this boat is first and foremost a coastal beast, with a 620hp, twin-diesel set-up to prove it, and the new Andrew Wolstenholme-designed hull as its most newsworthy feature.

The medium vee hull's small keel helps keep the slow speed handling on the straight and narrow but the intent of the boat's performance is shown with three chunky spray rails at the bow. Higher up, a knuckle turns into a full chine to push the beam out and create some lift and stability. The end result should be a ride drier than Kent gardens in a hosepipe ban.

A summer boat test this may be, but we first looked over the 365 some eight months ago at the London Boat Show, where the Broom chairman and head of family, Martin Broom, was good enough to give us a guided tour. He offered an insight into the decision-making pressures a builder faces. Unlike an aft cockpit boat with its gargantuan lazarette, an aft cabin boat has to work harder and smarter to deliver good deck stowage. A bench seat is one answer but the space within is compromised by an unsupportive helm position, which is why Broom has opted for two comfy bucket seats on the 365.

That still leaves the question of stowage. Looking below decks, in the bright saloon, the huge spread of U-shape seating clearly holds one solution within its base, but getting at these

voids is not a pleasurable experience as the bases are formed of raw ply. Surely a bit more finish is called for in a place where owners will be getting up close and personal on a daily basis? With mould and tooling specialists Aquafibre part of the Broom family, perhaps a neat GRP seat base would be the ideal solution.

Good build, quality materials and design that actually works will shine through long after the glossy veneer has faded. But let's face facts; it's the veneer that attracts us, gets us onboard and, ultimately prides the old chequebook out. Now, Broom enjoys the kind of brand loyalty no amount of marketing money or gloss could buy. Broom owners, having realised this marque's strong underlying strengths and purist cruising credentials, are happy to stay with the company for the long-term ride. But you can't help but wonder what sort of response this cherished Norfolk yard would enjoy from the market if they upped the style ante.

The two cabin layout, with its large, open saloon and – shock horror – proper, useable galley, offers superb function but underplays the form card: one example being the neat, if rather bare, saloon. It's not as if aft-cabin boats have to be conservative – just ask the chaps at Pearl. So perhaps a bit more

glamour and finish would entice new buyers into what is a well built, utterly capable range of cruisers.

Family boaters, certainly, should be enamoured of the new aft deck design, which pushes right up to the transom, creating a spacious and very safe cockpit enclosure. The sliding doors that lead out onto the side decks are a great feature, completely sealing the aft deck off when underway.

With the aft deck pushed right back, there is no walkaround deck as seen on the Broom 39, so access up from the bathing platform needed to be re-thought here. Luckily, the answer was not far away...in fact, it was attached to the excellent

Design & build

Planing hull and aft deck bode well but finish lacks gloss



Accommodation

Stay a few nights on a Broom and it all starts to make sense. MBM's last boat, a 39ft Broom, was incredibly crew-friendly with its easy-living, onboard space. For the owner, the aft cabin layout cannot be beaten in terms of space and privacy; no similarly sized aft cockpit cruiser can hold a candle to it. The Broom's aft stateroom has space all around a double berth that sits nice and



Heads are simple in finish, aft has a separate shower room



No side door but these steps are easy to use

low, rather than the type that requires climbing gear to get into. And that all-around-space means that you can carry out minor jobs like putting your trousers on in the morning without dislocating a hip.

Broom uses a natural, quite light-grade cherry wood for the cabinetry, which creates an inviting charm. There is plenty of stowage too. One of the two facing locker doors on the forward bulkhead

hides the main 12v and 240v circuit board, all neatly laid out and sensibly positioned, when you consider it allows the skipper to turn off any unnecessary electrics before turning in.

With the en suite toilet and separate shower stall running to starboard, there is still a full-beam element across the aft of the cabin, allowing the feeling of space to remain.

Back up at deck level, the saloon's main feature is a huge spread of U-shape seating, its main omission the very useful sliding door

we had on our old 39. The sofa's high backs and good cushioning make it a treat to sit on and a superb occasional berth, too, thanks to its easy, pullout base. Available in a wide range of finishes, our test boat's soft blue upholstery was as supple as Alcantara, with a similarly expensive feel. With no side door, a long run of cherry cabinetry has an entertainment console angled in towards the seating – here you can pay for a fancy pop-up television or opt for a traditional set behind locker doors.

The surround of windows that makes this saloon such a great place to be will slide open for even more atmosphere. And those who prefer blinds to curtains will be happy to discover that Broom is offering them as an option.

Moving forward and below decks, there's a classic U-shape galley arrangement. >>>

Stay a few nights on a Broom and it all makes sense



Seat bases lack finish



The forward, below deck sections stand out with a great galley complete with a gas oven, grill and hob



That sofa is even more comfy than it looks, and with the table leaves folded out will seat five for dinner



A low-glare grey gel is used across the helm console.

This makes a mockery of what most other cruisers offer. For one thing, you get a decent oven and grill so you can actually cook proper meals. The design of three-burner gas hob follows the lead of the cabinetry with the inclusion of a fiddle – so you can boil a kettle, heat soup, make pasta or whatever your speciality is while under way. The sink is huge and comes with a rinser, and on top of this you still get a microwave, refrigerator and plenty of workspace along with the seven drawers and other larger lockers. It is a galley to be used and, if you like to cook onboard, you will appreciate it. Our only request is for a proper extractor be fitted

The Broom's day-loo lies opposite. Like the owner's en suite, it has a basic, plastic appearance but is a perfectly good loo. An optional shower can be included, a privacy curtain keeping the worst of the water in. Forward from here is a traditional vee berth cabin, which is disappointingly small, especially

after extolling the virtues of the rest of the interior. These guest quarters are really only suitable for children, with no room for a double berth insert. But stowage is adequate with a ¾-length hanging locker, drawers and under-berth bins. Broom may look at an offset double option but, as it stands, this second cabin feels too small when compared to the rest of the boat.

Accommodation

Aft cabin bias means the owner gets the best deal



Exterior

Crowning the impressive level of thought and design that has gone into the aft deck is the quick-action canopy system. This is sure to be a winner. Canopies have been likened to pram hoods, a comment no boat designer will thank us for



Like the Broom 45, the 365's flanks are layered with teak steps, making boarding a doddle



New helm seats adjust up, down and all around

“Quite simply one of the very best accelerating cruisers we have tested”

repeating, but perhaps they were missing a trick? After all, you don't see many mothers grappling with ill-fitting canvas and dodgy poppers while trying to cover little Tarquin from the rain.

No, all boat builders can learn something from the humble push-chair...Broom certainly has. Its ingenious stainless steel framework allows the main spray-hood to pull down and snap onto the windscreen in the time it usually takes to decide which poor sap has to climb out on the foredeck to start fastening those godforsaken poppers. And it gets better. The radar arch can also be lowered down, either manually or by an optional hydraulic push button system, quickly, easily and with the canopy still connected. It's all perfect for owners who prefer inland cruising.

The decision to go for twin bucket seats is the right one, but the more practical bench seat, with its added stowage, is still available. The twin seats sit on a well-designed base jutting out from the coaming and with a small hatch.



With gas bottles and liferaft in place, stowage space is quite limited

The aft seating is comfortable and keeps everyone in touch with the helm when underway