

BOAT REPORT

Fairline

Phantom 43



Is this two-cabin flybridge cruiser a good little sister to the three-cabin 46?



Fairline Boats launched two new 40-footers last year. One was the open-cockpit Targa 40 that we tested in Mallorca (see MBM Jul 00 p26). The other was a two-cabin addition to their line-up of flybridge cruisers, the Phantom 43.

A respite in the winter weather allowed us to catch up with an example of the latter, on its pre-delivery sea trials out of the Chichester base of distributors B A Peters.

Design & layout

As usual, Bernard Olesinski has undertaken the hull design and naval architecture aspects of the 43, while much of the layout and design detail is worked out in-house by the Fairline design office.

The hull is worked around his variable deadrise, medium to deep-vee formula, with the propellers set in tunnels to keep the angle of the drivetrain to a minimum and the engines as low in the boat

Bathing platform



The outboard line of the bathing platform tapers in from the fuller beam of the topsides so that there is less chance of catching it when manoeuvring. However, the moulding still pushes out far enough to allow easy boarding, and between the teak deck finish — which is standard — and the handrails, it feels safe.

Two hatches set in the

decking give access to a wide, shallow locker and the swim ladder, which has comfortable, wide wood treads. A shower unit is installed in the port topside return just adjacent to the solid, good-sized door through to the cockpit.

Decks

A couple of easy stair-treads run up to the side decks, which for the most part are just a tad under 10in (25cm) wide and bordered by a good height of toerail.

Where they narrow, towards the bow, it is

simply a matter of transferring to the coachroof. This has been designed quite flat for just this reason, making it easy and safe for the crew to move around. The coachroof is also equipped with handrails, as is the main superstructure.

The ground tackle is handled by an electric windlass, half concealed by one of the chain locker hatches, which also



opens onto a couple of handily placed fender holders. Other mooring hardware amounts to sensible-sized 12in (30cm) cleats forward and midships with two pairs to handle the stern ropes; the extra set are particularly handy when Med-mooring.

as possible.

As is now common practice, the 4ft (1.22m) bathing platform is not just an overhang, but is supported by the full structure of the hull beneath it. This effectively creates a longer waterline length, which is advantageous as far as sea-keeping and performance is concerned, as well as increasing the usable internal volume.

The upper works are pushed well forward to make even further use of the boat's length, with the split window line being used to give the superstructure a distinctive styling. The forward screen follows Fairline's current trend of appearing largely flat, with a 'chine' rather than a curved design to its leading edge, taking the window line down the sides.

The 43's interior layout is for two cabins, both having sizeable en-suite facilities, with the usual L-settee dinette

Cockpit

The cockpit's proportions are just sufficient to accommodate a few free-standing chairs to supplement the bench seat running across the transom, the

centre section of which is designed to hinge clear when the lazaret hatch is raised. Tucked on either quarter at side-deck level are a couple of handy rope bins to tidy away the mooring lines.

The 43 sports the teak, open

tread flybridge stairs that Fairline first introduced to good effect on the 46. However, although a banister-type rail is provided on the inboard side, a further handrail is required further up

to provide a steadying hand through the deck opening. Incorporated in the superstructure return, opposite the stairs, is a cupboard that hides away the fuel shut-offs and the manual bilge pump system.

As to the lazaret, this is completely lined-out so that nothing is left to lie in the bilge or interfere with the steering gear. That said, access to both is well thought-through, with several cutouts in the GRP liner to items such as the anodes, while to get at the steering gear and the compartment's electric bilge pump, a large panel hinges clear. The water tanks are set outboard and are again boxed off.

Further storage is to be found within the bench-seat base, with a two bottle gas locker on one side and a deep, general stowage compartment on the other.

Flybridge

On this size of boat it can be tempting to cram in too many different areas on the flybridge, and often this leads to pokey and ineffectual results.

Fairline have recognised this and have opted to do away with any dedicated sunpad area, prioritising the helm and dinette instead. Each is given plenty of space, while the table to the

latter can always be dropped to make a sunbed if required.

We also liked the way that there has been plenty of consideration for people moving around, with handholds and rails, and even the backs of the helm seats having handholds built-in.

The helm area itself is excellent, with three individual, wide and comfortable seats. The skipper's, sited centrally, is adjustable, while every seat

plinth has a modicum of stowage.

The console is well laid-out, with an easily-viewed wraparound of engine instrumentation and thoughtfully spaced-out controls. These include areas easily to hand for electronics, with a Tridata and dual station VHF being included as standard. Situated to port, in front of the

co-pilot, is a covered chart area with stowage beneath.

Between the helm and dinette area is a wet bar moulding complete with sink and cupboard, into which an extra fridge can be fitted. A barbecue griddle is also an option.

Right aft, the bench seating will easily accommodate six, even if the table itself is not really geared for this number. Hinged hatchlids, beneath the cushions, open into the usual locker spaces.



L-settee dinette featuring in the saloon. Noticeable modifications to its predecessor of similar length are the new model's capacious galley, and an interior helm position that has two individual seats to allow for easy movement around the helm.

A similar idea has been used at the upper helm position, but here three individual forward facing seats are situated across the front of the flybridge, with the rest of the area being taken up with a large seating area and wet bar.

Engine options extend from a pair of 370hp Volvo Penta TAMD 63P series diesels through to twin 74s rated up to 480hp apiece. Our test boat had the latter.

Performance & handling

Although the day of our test out from Chichester Marina appeared to be delivering little more than a southwesterly Force 4, a steady blow over the previous few days had heaped up the seas over the bar and beyond.

The result was a fairly uncomfortable, uneven and steep sea which had little to commend itself to any form of boating.

However, with some minor experimentation on the speed front, we found that the Olesinski hull could comfortably make a good 20 knots, with very little slamming.

Saloon

A straightforward, single sliding door opens into the saloon which is conventionally laid-out with an L-shaped settee across from a second two-seater affair.

The former incorporates a proper foldaway sofa-bed, rather than obliging you to piece together several infill cushions, while the seat bases of the smaller settee can be pulled across to give extra seating around the dinette table. This in itself is a smart cherry wood affair to match the rest of the joinery, and when the extension flaps are



folded in, benefits from having a built-in fiddle. In fact, there are very few flat surfaces which are not

fashioned with fiddles, even down to the area of counter above the cocktail cabinet located at the far end of the settee. In addition, this area also benefits from a handrail, nicely turned out of wood and matching the grabrail set into the deckhead. At the other end of the smaller settee is a cabinet geared towards housing the entertainment centre and optional bar-fridge.

The view is good when seated, thanks to the low window line, and headroom is adequate at 6ft 2.5in (1.89m).



Downwind you could really put the throttles where you liked, although to give the photographer a chance we settled for an easily-maintained 25 knots. Best of all, what spray did find its way aboard rarely made it

as far as the flybridge, not even during turns where the chines inevitably tend to eat into the wave tops and catch more water.

As to the driving position up here, this is well laid-out and both the

controls and instrumentation fall nicely to hand and eye. The helm has just the right amount of tension to give some feel, while still allowing relaxed, one-handed steering.



panel, protected beneath a clear Perspex screen.

In and around the console there has been consideration for stowing loose items, and if it begins to get a bit stuffy then the front, arch-shaped side windows open at the touch of a button. The main screen is serviced by two large pantograph wipers, which clear the major portion of it.

the more inboard of the two, is fully-adjustable and even swivels. As to the console itself, this benefits from a matt charcoal finish to help reduce glare, with the instruments falling either side of a central return. This houses the throttles and ready use switches, allowing either crew member to get to them easily.

The skipper's side of things has plenty of space for electronics, with the actual engine instrumentation in a veneered fascia further ahead, topped off with a wetcard compass.

Meanwhile, it is back to the drawing board for the co-pilot who has a neat, pull-out chart table at his disposal. Immediately in front of him is the vessel's main electrics

double-bench arrangement. As such, this allows either party to move around without disturbing the other. The seats are bucket-shaped and offer a measure of lateral cossetting, while the skipper's,



Forward suite

The double berth appears to be pushed well forward into the



vee of the bow, and as such narrows quite quickly towards its head. However, there is plenty of room at the shoulder with a width of 4ft 4in (1.32m)

and a length of 6ft 1in (1.86m). Beneath the mattress is a large, lined storage area and at its foot is a pair of good size drawers.

Set either side are a pair of waist-high lockers – OK for jumpers and other pieces of clothing that do not mind being bundled up – and there is also a large hanging locker.

The en-suite toilet compartment is spacious enough for the shower to be in use while someone is at the sink; the circular shower cubicle being quite tucked to one side. As with the day

toilet there is an attractive combination of wood and Avonite used, with cupboards set either side of the shelf that runs beneath the portlight.



Galley

The Fairline design team have excelled themselves here, with an excellent array of stowage in lockers, drawers and cupboards. There is even a dedicated towel-rail holder, together with a slot to stow the Avonite infills from the double sink and three burner hob arrangement, not to mention the built-in garbage receptacle.

For bulk victuals they have incorporated a moulded underfloor compartment and on the safety front it was good to see handrails along the counter surfaces, which are themselves fashioned with fiddles.

Equipment, over-and-above the gas hob which has an extractor above it, includes a large fridge with freezer compartment, while the combined microwave/oven unit featured here is an extra.



Midships cabin



The two berths, arranged lengthways, are a good width at 2ft 3in (0.69m), but being only just over the 6ft (1.86m) mark in length, and being tucked slightly under the interior helm's footwell, are pushed for sitting headroom.

A small table, with cubby-hole for valuables, lies between them, while for

clothes there is a good-sized hanging locker, together with a deep, moulded locker beneath the most inboard berth. Access to this is good, thanks to part of the base simply hinging up, perfect for sticking kit bags straight in.

In addition, a wide shelf runs full-length outboard, beneath the two opening ports.

Day toilet

This is both en-suite to the midships cabin and has a door directly in from the lobby so as to act as a day toilet. The compartment is a good size, with a separate circular shower



stall, squared off in part to give more elbow room once the door is pulled across.

With any splashes less likely to escape, a measure of woodwork lifts the otherwise largely moulded fit-out and combines with the Corian surfaces to give a convivial warmth to the whole proceedings.

Stowage is down to a couple of useful cupboards, one behind the sensibly-proportioned sink, the other under it.

The toilet here, as in the forward en-suite, is of the electric variety and both compartments benefit from an extractor.



Engineroom

A large hatch in the cockpit, supported by gas-struts, is the day-to-day way into the engine compartment. In addition, the saloon sole can be readily opened up to provide better access to items that cannot be got at in the ordinary way.

The complete area immediately beneath the hatch is finished in a no-nonsense chequer-plate decking, which extends well outboard and between the engines, with

lifting sections to give access to the bilge areas and stern glands.

The battery box lies just to port of the hatch, making it a commendably easy job to manhandle these heavy items up on deck if needs be. There is also loads of space to secure toolboxes and spares down here out of the way.

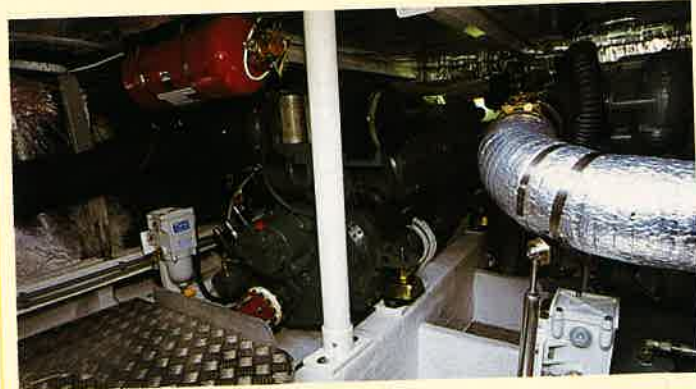
The main fuel filters are set on the engine-bearers towards the rear of the compartment, making them easy to check and change the filters on, while the majority of the other service

points are handed inboard, again making checks and maintenance that bit simpler. There is also a very reasonable gap between the engines to get past them so as to inspect the raw water filters located on the forward bulkhead.

However, we were less happy with the amount of room between this bulkhead and the front of the engines. At best, there is a gap of about 8in (20cm), which is going to make it awkward for dealing with the likes of belts and pumps.

Back on the plus side, we were pleased to find that the fuel tanks sited outboard were well-insulated and that this, and the rest of the insulation on the deckhead and bulkheads, was of the rubber 'loaded' variety, not simply foam.

Overall the engineering is extremely neatly executed as well as laid-out in such a way that it appears easy to trace and find the myriad of service items associated with a sophisticated motorboat.



lengths; giving the performance of a well-mannered sportsboat rather than a 13-ton cruiser.

Easing back to 2300rpm still gave a fast cruise setting of 28.6 knots, while a relaxed 2000rpm gave a flat Channel capability just under the 24 knot mark. Consumption at these revs will be in the order of 20gph (90lph), giving a figure well in excess of the 1mpg benchmark.

Noise level readings through the accommodation were well in bounds, not least at 2000rpm, which gave a figure of 78dB(A) in

the saloon. As is usual on flybridge designs, the cockpit noise levels pushed well into the 80s.

Dropping back further, we were impressed by the way the hull gamely hung on the plane right down to something akin to 16 knots, and with little significant bow-up trim. As to real slow speed work, with both engines nudged into gear the hull is quickly up to 6 knots, while to help with manoeuvring, a 6hp bow thruster is included as part of the standard specification.

The central flybridge helm gives

a good view for such close-quarters handling and the boat does not appear to have any quirky vices. The EDC throttles are well set-up, with the minimum of delay between selecting gear and the boat reacting.

Conclusions

Fairline's reworking of its Phantom flybridge line-up has been most worthwhile. The 46 (see MBM Sep 99 p50) makes for an excellent three cabin boat, and this, its slightly smaller sister does just the same job but in a two cabin format.

The loss of the extra cabin aside, both the interior and exterior work in much the same way as the 46, incorporating many of the neat ideas that came to light on the latter, not least the individual helm seats and roomy galley, while an extra couple can be accommodated on the saloon sofa-bed in any case. In fact, the accommodation is still full-on for six, with amenities and seating both up top and in the saloon to cheerfully take this number.

As to performance, the 43 is a true 30-knot-plus boat and the likelihood is that you are going to



Fairline Phantom 43

BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

RCD

design category B

DIMENSIONS

LOA

44ft 5in (13.53m)

HULL LENGTH

43ft 1in (13.13m)

BEAM

13ft 8in (4.15m)

DRAUGHT

3ft 6in (1.05m)

AIR DRAUGHT

15ft 5in (4.72m)

DISPLACEMENT

13.1 tons

FUEL CAPACITY

334gal (1520lt)

WATER CAPACITY

143gal (650lt)

ENGINES

twin Volvo Penta TAMD74P

EDCs

6cyl 7.3lt diesels

480hp at 2600rpm

PRICE

£283,853 inc VAT as standard

SUPPLIERS

Peters plc, Chichester Marina, Chichester, Sussex PO20 7EJ. Tel: 01243 511381.

BUILDERS

Fairline Boats plc, Oundle, Cambridgeshire PE3 5PA. Tel: 01832 273661.

Fairline Phantom 43

PERFORMANCE & FUEL CONSUMPTION

sound levels dB(A)

rpm	knots#	gph†	lph†	mpg†	range*	trim	saln	fwdcab	flybg	ckpt
1000	9.1	4.0	18	2.28	607	2.5	68	65	68	77
1400	11.3	8.8	40	1.28	343	4.5	72	68	73	80
1600	15.2	11.9	54	1.28	343	5.5	73	70	74	82
1800	19.6	15.4	70	1.27	339	5.5	77	73	76	85
2000	23.8	19.8	90	1.20	321	5.0	78	74	76	86
2300	28.7	28.6	130	1.00	267	5.0	80	78	78	87
2700	32.5	44.2	201	0.74	198	5.0	80	79	79	88

Measured by GPS. † Calculated from engine manufacturers' figures. * Allows 20% margin.

ACCELERATION 0-?? knots, ???sec

CONDITIONS wind southwesterly Force 4, sea calm

LOAD fuel 50%, water 75%, crew 3

use the best part of this capability due to the sea-kindly nature of the Olesinski hull.

However, best of all, is Fairline's ever-increasing commitment to make their boats not simply opulent in their fit-out, but also practical to use. With plenty of well-planned stowage and engineering access, the Phantom 43 is, for the most part, very well thought-out.