

MOTOR  
BOATS TESTED

# Fairline Targa 44 Gran Turismo

**FACT FILE**  
Fairline Targa 44  
Gran Turismo  
LOA: 44ft 11in  
(13.68m)  
PRICE: £381,900  
TOP SPEED:  
35 knots

**This eagerly-awaited, IPS-powered craft comes with a state-of-the-art hardtop and joystick controls as standard, but is it worth the hefty price tag?** **REPORT BY MARK TURLEY**

**F**airline is no stranger to hardtops, but the new 44 sports a second generation roof, while underwater, the British yard has finally hit the IPS trail. So, with state-of-the-art stuff above and below the waterline, how does the rest of the boat fare in between? A lively day's cruising off the French Riviera gave us all the answers we were looking for.

## Design & Build

We say 'second generation' because hardtops to date have tended to be easy-to-deploy measures to protect the cockpit – in lieu of struggling with a canopy. In this instance, the hardtop concept is incorporated into the boat's overall design, both in terms of how the boat is used and how it has been engineered. Indeed, the hardtop arrangement has had a development and test

programme of its own, and while the structure might look a bit heavy-weight on the outside, it's necessary as the solid sliding roof is something to be reckoned with. First off, it's fully automatic. Not only does it open and shut at the touch of a button but pneumatic seals inflate around its rim, once it has glided into the desired position, which keeps weather, noise and rattles at bay. This takes us back to how this area is used, as

Fairline has upped the ante with both a design and fitout that smacks more of a high-quality spa, than plastic loungers around the pool.

The form of engine power Fairline has chosen – by way of IPS – means there is that bit of extra space down below and the midships cabin and saloon area both benefit from this.

And the third thing that needs highlighting – along with the hardtop design and commitment to IPS – is Fairline's clever balancing act between a clean, often bold fitout combined with practical aspects, all of which are built to last.

## Design & Build

A sophisticated boat in unassuming ways



## Exterior

The 44's hardtop is designed to let the good weather in, rather than shield it from the bad and, with the subtle certainty that this brings, the cockpit is designed and fitted out to saloon levels of comfort, ready to be enjoyed morning, noon and all night long. The boxy upholstery – which is more comfortable than it looks – is covered in pseudo-suede and the chunky oiled woodwork is inviting to lounge in and enjoy.

The rear cockpit sports a large wooden table that swings through 90 degrees depending upon who wants to use it, and the back rest of the rear

seat sinks at the flick of a switch, transforming the transom section into a sunpad within seconds.

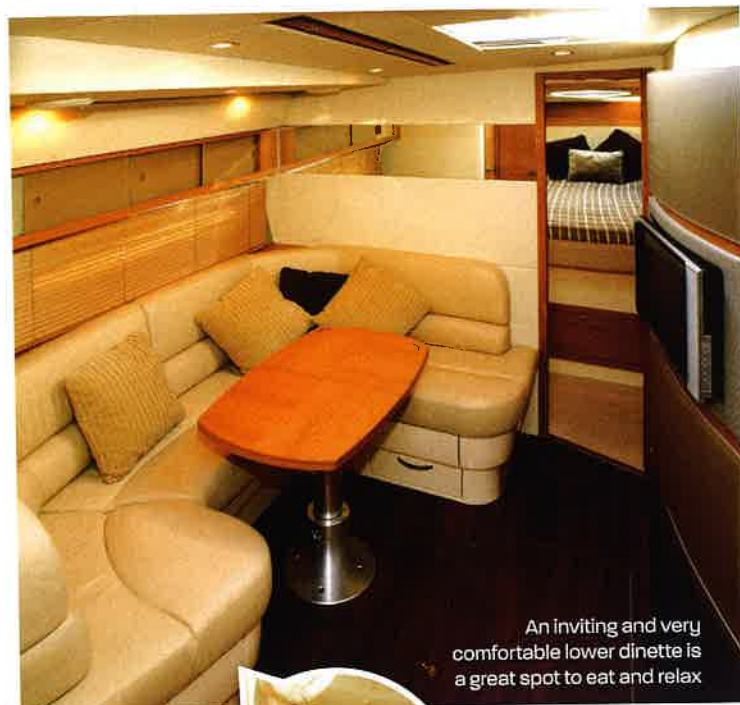
Opposite, is a sizeable teak-clad wet bar that can be loaded up with a fridge, ice-maker and griddle to make a decent outside galley; the Corian worktop and good sized sink area make this a reasonable prospect.

There are some neat takes on stowage too, with a rear boot set in the transom coaming to swallow fenders and lines, an easy to access spot for the liferaft, and a neat cubby-hole to bung shore-side shoes. These areas all

“It's a pricey package, but it's not without justification”







An inviting and very comfortable lower dinette is a great spot to eat and relax



It looks cool, but this is a galley that can also stand the heat

benefit from being lined, and there are several other lockers about the cockpit area.

The forward seating, across from the helm, is raised and the view from here while underway is excellent. Alternatively, it's a prime spot to do a bit of sunbathing once the hardtop is given the go ahead to open up. The sliding portion, which opens up a decent section of the roof, runs on a roller-coaster-type rail section and, as we've already explained, once the roof stops, a pneumatic seal closes up the clearance and stops it moving around. We never heard a squeak or



Cute crockery locker

groan from it the whole time we were out. To top it all off, a run of skylights lets in plenty of light when the sunroof is closed up.

Extra space has also been gained in the cockpit by not having a dinghy garage, which delivers a generous bathing platform too; the wings of which run right outboard for easy boarding.

Access along the side decks is easy enough, and between the guardrails, toerails and handholds,

making your way forward isn't difficult. Handy rope lockers are let into the coachroof ahead of the screen, and the deep chain locker, although not entirely sectioned off, will take a couple of fenders.

#### Exterior

A great outside/inside space that begs to be used



#### Accommodation

On some below-deck saloons, you feel as if the designers merely needed to fill the space with something. The same can often be said of the galley. But here, you immediately want to get around the table, find a book, get friends over, or maybe put your feet up in front of the TV and have a good meal.

The dinette seating is extremely comfortable for six, and if extra guests arrive, a couple of stools can be pulled out from under the forecabin berth. The elongated port gives a useful measure of natural light and above this there's a handy run of shallow, eye-height lockers. Here, as everywhere else, the satin oak joinery is well executed.

When it comes to preparing a meal aboard the 44, there is plenty of countertop space, even though there are two sinks fitted into the dark



The cockpit's upmarket feel is pushed by this teak-coated wet bar and grill



#### BOAT REPORT FAIRLINE TARGA 44

The all-conquering hardtop allows for some luxurious seating options

Corian work surface. To break things up a bit, the area over the sizable fridge is wood – or grass to be precise, as it's made of bamboo. Cooking is split between a two-ring electric hob and an combi-microwave oven. And, if there is no shorepower, it's just a simple matter of switching on the standard generator set.

Initially, stowage looked like it might be an issue, but it's actually pretty good, especially once you find the rubbish bins tucked under the steps, and the ready-segmented crockery drawer located in the end of the dinette. Bulk goods can wind up in the hatch in the saloon sole, which is the moulded-out false bottom of the bilge.

Talking of bilges, it was good to find plenty of access and clearly labelled items in the bilge. Another example of this ship-shape thinking is the owner's manual, which has been thoughtfully written and made much more user friendly.

The forecabin sports the usual central double berth (which holds its shape, rather than becoming ripped in towards the bow) and with the mix of lockers running round the periphery, a drawer in the end of the berth and a good-sized wardrobe, there is plenty of storage. The en suite, with its circular partitioned shower stall, is smartly finished and moulded surfaces are kept to a minimum; the ceramic basin standing on a Corian surface. The toilet here, and in the midship's en suite, is electric as standard.



Volvo's IPS joystick controls come as standard on the Targa 44



Grin side seats; the forward wraparound winner



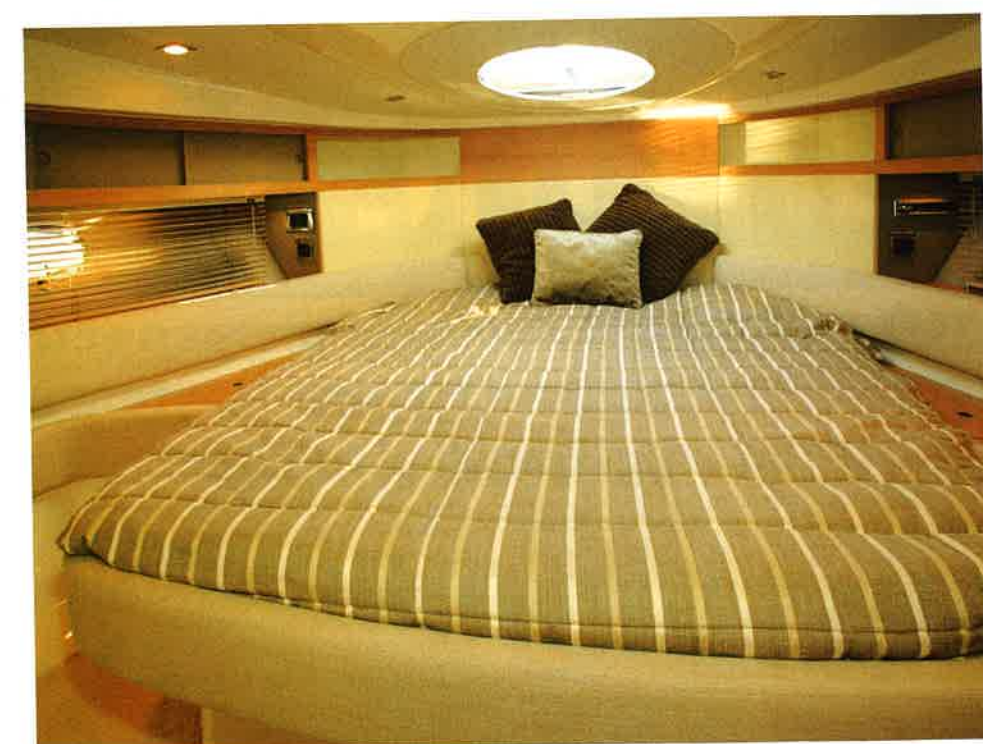
Detail and quality are what make this boat special



Twin guest cabin bunks 'scissor' into a double berth



The guest toilet compartment (right) is impressive



The forward master suite features a full-width double berth and plenty of bed side manners



Three tiers of instruments work well, but it's the overall power and poise from the helm that impresses





IPS drives leave lots of engine bay area to move in

### Engine Options & Access

The 44 has been designed specifically around the IPS system, and while other builders offering IPS-powered models have tended to hedge their bets with a choice of power trains, the Targa 44 is purely IPS powered, with D6 units rated to either 370hp or 435hp (Volvo's 500 or 600 models).

Engine access could not be simpler. An electro-hydraulic powered hatch towards the rear of the cockpit lifts to allow a quick check, or it's an easy hop down to the tread plate, between the engines, where all the necessary service items can be reached. The immediate area around the drives is also clear of obstructions, making it hassle-free to move around in. The fuel tanks are

situated outboard and the associated filters are readily accessible. Installed across the forward bulkhead is the generator set – a 4kVA unit as standard with the option of a 9.5kVA available.

### Engine options & Access

IPS – like it or not. Tidy installation and simple access



### Performance & Handling

Fairline hasn't been in a rush to launch an IPS-powered boat, but this doesn't mean wheels haven't been turning behind the scenes in terms of long-term testing. In fact, two previous models were re-configured before the yard committed itself and, of course, its customers to IPS.

So how does it stack up? In terms of how the overall boat feels and drives at sea, it's nothing short of a good'un. The unpleasant, lumpy conditions we encountered on the day were clearly taxing larger boats than us, and that's without all the twisting and turning that goes on during a photo shoot.

The hull and IPS drives grip the water well, allowing plenty of responsive, clean handling but without getting overly exciting – which is what we have come to expect from IPS boats – with handling falling somewhere between shafts and outdrives. Of course, the method of propulsion certainly contributes to a boat's seakeeping characteristics, but it has to be hats-off to the Olesinski design office for delivering yet another easy-running hull. Between Olesinski's design and Fairline's build quality, we never managed to wrong-foot the 44 once.

A little less clear cut, however, is how the performance stacks up. This is because the Volvo IPS units are meant to equate to a 600hp inboard installation (which is whopping for the size of

boat), even if the engines are actually rated at 435hp. So, to save too much confusion, we'll stick with the 435hp designation, as that is what is actually being churned out and guzzling the fuel. Top speed on the 44 is 35 knots, perhaps a little kinder on the day, with an equivalent GPH figure of around a gallon per mile. This can, of course, be improved on if you drop back a little. Not bad, it has to be said, when compared to shafts, but check this against the sterndrive powered Princess V45 (around the same weight) we

featured in September, and it is clear just how efficient outdrives are. The V45 clocked much the same top speed from twin 350hp units, while the consumption figures at a fast cruise made heartening reading: a

thimble under 1.4mpg. So, IPS may be putting the boot in on shafts – as they were intended to do – but given the potency of the latest sterndrives, which tip into this size of boat, and you have to be wary when performance and efficiency figures are waved about.

Digression aside, what is the 44's driving position like? In a word – versatile. The helm seat sports a neat drop-down footrest and lifting squab that adjusts fore and aft to cater for every size and shape and, of course, you can pop your head out the sunroof opening. We also liked the terraced console, which was easy to scan, plus there is room for an E80 Raymarine screen either side of the wheel, if you really want to go to town

**“We didn't hear a squeak or a groan from the hardtop, the whole time we were out”**



IPS drives provided a quiet but wonderfully potent set up

on the electronics. But there is still room for a folded chart and some cubby holes for bits and pieces you want out of the way.

The vis is good forward through the one piece screen, and down the sides, but the hardtop begins to get in the way soon after that. So, be sure to remember the driving lesson adage of 'look, signal, manoeuvre' before you put the wheel over.

However, we have saved the best 'til last. When it comes to manoeuvring, Volvo's IPS drives can be coordinated via a joystick control and a healthy dose of black box cleverness. But where this is usually a pricey extra on other craft, it

comes as standard fit on the 44. So there are no 'if and buts' whether you need it, just get a light grip of the controls and put the boat where you will – it's quite remarkable and it's free, well sort of.

### Performance & Handling

Responsive at sea, and manoeuvring is child's play



### Specification & Value

Even without checking out what potential rivals come in at, you do not have to be too astute to realise that this is a pricey package. However, what is extremely important to realise here is that Fairline has pushed the envelope with its mix of hardtop design, IPS technology and joystick control. On top of these major persuaders – which are clearly costly – they certainly haven't scrimped on the spec, which includes plenty of teak decking, a generator and a very good electronics package.

So, yes, it's pricey, but it's not without justification. And, just as importantly, Fairline has developed a boat that is going to appeal to the next generation.

### Specification & Value

Fairline has taken this 44 to another level but it costs



## Verdict

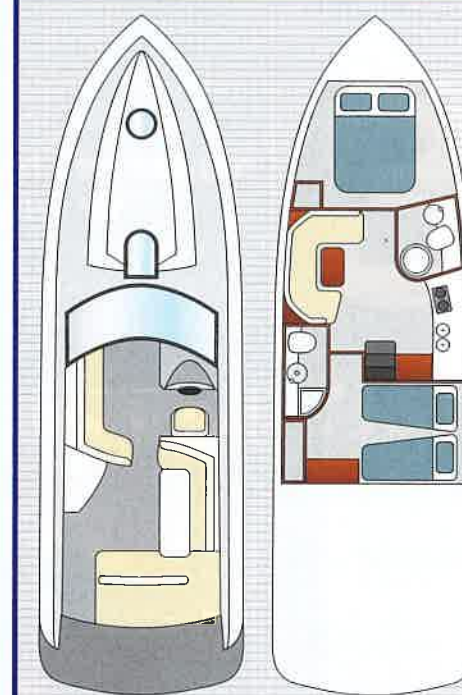
Fairline has created a masterpiece in sportscruiser design. The no-expense spared detail and top drawer specification slip seamlessly into a boat so smooth, so refined, it feels distilled rather than constructed. A top end product with a price to match, we were expecting more from the IPS, but this is still one hell of a boat.

MBM rating

8/10



## Fairline Targa 44 Gran Turismo technical data



### specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	44ft 11in (13.68m)
HULL LENGTH	40ft 10in (12.47m)
BEAM	13ft 3in (4.01m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 3in (1.0m)
DISPLACEMENT	11.3 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	219gal (996lt)
WATER CAPACITY	70gal (320lt)

### key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDEDECKS	7in (18cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 10in (2.08m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 3in x 5ft 0in (1.91 x 1.52m)
MIDSHIPS CABIN	2ft 10in x 6ft 4in (0.86 x 1.93m)

### performance

Engines	twin IPS600 D6-435 diesels
Configuration	6cyl, 5.5lt, 435hp @ 3500rpm
conditions	wind SE'ly Force 4, sea moderate
Load	fuel 50% water 0% crew 3

Rpm	knots	lph	gph	mpg	range	noise
2400	17.0	77	17	1.0	175	74
2700	22.3	86	19	1.17	204	76
3000	25.2	116	25.5	1.0	175	77
3300	32.0	145	32	1.0	175	78
3550	35.0	164	36	.97	170	79

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 are in dB(A) and were taken in the cockpit.

### prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with twin IPS 600 D6-435 diesels	£381,900
HEATING	£5,800
GENERATOR (4KVA)	standard
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	standard
ELECTRONICS PACKAGE	standard
TEAK COCKPIT	standard
LED COURTESY LIGHTS	£400
BOAT AS TESTED	£388,100

ENQUIRIES Fairline Boats Ltd  
Tel: 01832 273661 www.fairline.com

### the rivals



#### CRANCHI 43HT

From £305,300  
This IPS hardtop sportscruiser is £80,000 cheaper than the Fairline! Do you really need another reason to look at this boat?  
Tel: 01758 713434  
www.cranchi.com



#### PRINCESS V45

From £335,000  
OK, so it's not IPS but this sterndrive cruiser is cheaper to buy and more economical to run. A cracking package from the main British rival.  
Tel: 01752 203888  
www.princessyachts.co.uk



#### SESSA C46

From £369,000  
Sessa is really making a mark and this elegant and exciting boat is one reason why. IPS and a full beam midship owner's cabin feature.  
Tel: 01323 470066  
www.bateswharf.co.uk