

Finnmaster Grandezza 27 OC

Tired of the current crop of entry-level sportscruisers?
Then take a look at the future REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM

The brief...



Finnmaster has torn up the rule book with its new Grandezza 27 OC, delivering a boat that is both striking and practical. It was a hit at the boat show, but does it really work on the water? **Nick**

LOA: 27ft 2in (8.3m) **PRICE:** from £113,910
TOP SPEED: 34 knots **BUILDER:** Oy-Finn Marin Ltd
ENQUIRIES: www.bosuns.co.uk

Imagine you've been given a clean sheet of paper and you're asked to design the perfect sub-30ft family cruiser for the UK. Forget about traditional U-shaped dinettes below decks, how about fixed beds downstairs so that you're not forced to pack bed linen and in-fill cushions away in order to restore your dinette? You'd lose the saloon in the process of course, and maybe the galley, so let's put those upstairs in the cockpit where there's more space and light.

Too much like camping under the canvas up there? Then we'll put a hardtop over it, extended all the way back to the transom so there's room for a huge solid sliding section. And to finish it off, we'll fit a single diesel to keep the running costs down and the

performance up. Sounds good doesn't it? Sounds better than good, it sounds perfect. Which is why there were people crawling over the new Grandezza 27 OC at its Southampton Boat Show debut. And not just the public, other boat builders were spotted aboard. Why? Because this might just be the future of entry-level sportscruisers.

Checklist of success

Big accommodation in small boats has been tried before of course, but the difference in this Finnish builder's new baby is the way it has married form and function so successfully. By sinking the floor in the centre of the cockpit, full standing headroom is gained. It is then raised on the starboard side to give the dinette area better visibility, while also allowing the option of standing at the helm and looking

through the open roof to gain extra visibility for close-quarters manoeuvring. On the port side it's mostly galley anyway, so the floor height issue disappears.

As a result they've been able to keep the hardtop low and the profile sleek and eye-catching. This is perhaps the first sub-30ft sportscruiser that doesn't force the customer to choose between style and space.

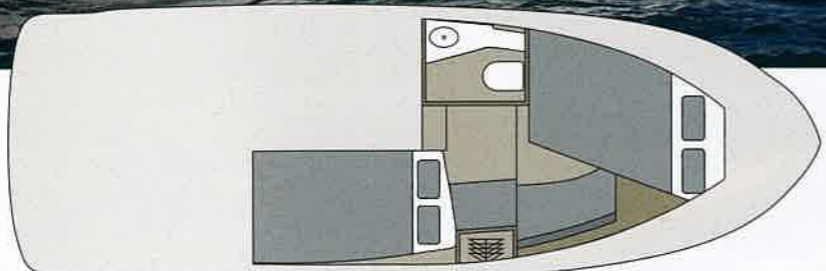
Lower accommodation is given over to 2 x 6ft+ double beds, one fitted diagonally in the bow complete with small settee, the other running back under the starboard side of the cockpit. The open-plan layout does lack privacy for two couples, but is fine for a family provided the kids don't mind sharing a double. More of an issue is the toilet and shower compartment which is small and lacks standing headroom. Curiously, though, it comes with two cup holders next to the toilet.

Storage is excellent in the Grandezza, with four large soft-close drawers beneath the helm seat, lockers beneath the galley, and a double hanging locker between the berths below. The smartly finished hardtop features slim wooden



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BOAT REPORT
GRANDEZZA 27 OC



trim fillets and plenty of lighting that, with the help of the easily erected aft canopies, turn this area into a cosily enclosed saloon at night. Satin lacquered walnut cabinetry is the finishing touch, and standard fit Webasto central heating extends the boat's all-seasons practicality even further.

In the cockpit, the raised helm seats two comfortably. The neat galley lives aft of a navigator's seat to port that hinges forward to increase worktop space. The raised dinette to starboard can seat five and allows an excellent view, with the large fixed table

dropping to make a sunpad or occasional double. However, as this is the only social area on the boat, we'd like to see a folding table, or one that can be removed completely, to make this area more accessible, especially when underway.

As it's a hardtop boat, Finnmaster had to include sidedecks to allow access forward. These are narrow but perfectly useable, leading up either side of the bathing platform. Finnmaster has sensibly sited the stanchion bases outboard, maximising width and easing

Below decks

Big on sleeping, but tight in the toilet

A cabin area given over completely to sleeping accommodation means no more converting beds to seats and back again. Privacy is minimal, but no less than most sports cruisers of this size. The only moot point is a small toilet and shower.



On deck

Lots of stowage keeps things tidy

Grabrails everywhere, on the trailing edge of the hard top, on the inside of the rear sides of the hard top, at the helm, in front of the navigator, and across the transom. Stainless steel cleats are a good size, but the spring cleats would be better sited further aft. Stowage is another plus with a large transom 'boot' swallowing warps and fenders. On the social side the deck saloon and galley intergrate into the cockpit, with the hardtop keeping things snug when the weather turns.





Performance & handling

Visibility is usually an issue on boats of this type and size, but the first thing that becomes apparent at the helm of the Grandezza is the excellent view out. A high-quality, soft-touch and dark finish to the console area beneath

the screens banishes unwelcome reflections. Couple this with the raised helm and thin mullions forward, means peripheral vision is excellent. But what is particularly noticeable is the way that the hardtop design eradicates rear three quarter blind spots completely. With no radar arch or thick C pillars, a quick

glance over the shoulder is all that's required to ensure that the execution of a course change doesn't cut across the bows of anyone coming up behind. Not that many boats will be overtaking you.

In terms of speed, the 240hp Volvo Penta D4 and DP outdrive fitted to our test boat makes it quick off the mark, with no excessive bow lift onto the plane. Once there, the hull is easily capable of running at 30 knots through the typical Solent chop which we encountered, with little slamming or banging. If you can bear to rein in the revs, 20 knots will deliver you near 6mpg, an impressively efficient return.

A few hard turns demonstrate decidedly sporty handling which is completely at odds with the cruiser bias of the design, banking eagerly and tracking sure-footedly. When cruising, the high screens provide excellent shelter from the wind blast, while the large sliding roof keeps the crew in touch with the elements. Noise levels are low enough to be able to have a sensible conversation without shouting.

If there are any criticisms, it's that screen wash is essential on any hardtop boat so its omission here is an odd one, particularly since the standard specification is comprehensive enough to include a chartplotter. Windscreen wiper buttons are also obscured behind the steering wheel making operation difficult. Strangely there's a slim, neatly finished pipe that runs up the starboard mullion, our best guess about which is that it's a conduit for wiring. It's not particularly intrusive but even so, why put it on the helmsman's side?

Specification and value

The Grandezza range, comprising a 23, this 27 and a larger 31, is marketed as the more glamorous stand-alone hardtop brand from Finnmaster's more utilitarian norm. The quality is every bit as good as we've come to expect from the Scandinavians, from the interior finish to the way the boat feels on the water. The price is high, but the specification is comprehensive, with heating, a chartplotter, teak decking, a canopy, and holding tank all included.

Inevitably there are a few essential extras, a bow thruster, electric anchor windlass, shorepower and of course an echo sounder being the most obvious. There's little to compare this boat to on the marketplace currently. Jeanneau will sell you a similar concept at 32ft for the same price, but it won't have the same intrinsic quality. Meanwhile, Aquador's 28 delivers on quality, but doesn't have such a clever layout. It seems Finnmaster has something special on its hands and with hardtops growing in popularity, that could bode well for resale values.

GRANDEZZA 27

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	C
LENGTH OVERALL	27ft 2in (8.30m)
BEAM	9ft 3in (2.85m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 3in (1.0m)
DISPLACEMENT	3000kg
FUEL CAPACITY	58gal (263lt)
WATER CAPACITY	16gal (73lt)
HEADROOM IN CABIN	5ft 7in (1.72m)
FORWARD BERTH	6ft 5in x 3ft 10in (1.95m x 1.17m)
MID CABIN BERTHS	6ft 4in x 3ft 9in (1.93m x 1.15m)

PERFORMANCE

ENGINE	Volvo Penta D4-260 DPH EVC-EC
CONFIGURATION	4cyl 3.7lt 260hp @ 3500rpm
CONDITIONS	variable, Force 3, sea state slight
LOAD	fuel 50%, water 0%, crew 2

RPM	KNOTS	LPH	GPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
2000	11	12	2.64	4.2	195	78
2500	20	16	3.52	5.7	264	79
3000	28	34	7.48	3.7	172	81
3500	34	52	11.44	3.0	139	82

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 in dB(A) were taken at the helm.

PRICES

STANDARD BOAT	Inc VAT
Volvo Penta D3-220DPH EVC-EC 220hp	£121,750
Volvo Penta D4-260DPH EVC-EC 260hp	£126,345
Volvo Penta D4-300DPH EVC-EC 300hp	£131,250
BOW THRUSTER	£2430
ELECTRIC ANCHOR WINDLASS	£2565
THIRD 100AMP BATTERY	£297

BOAT AS TESTED **£131,637**

Engine bay



Clean, tidy and accessible sums up the smoothly gel-coated engine bay. Access is via a large hydraulically powered engine hatch that takes the dinette table with it. There is no secondary inspection hatch but the main one can be opened manually. The centrally mounted single Volvo D4 engine, batteries, wiring and ancillaries are all tidily installed and very easy to get at for service checks.

Meet the family



BIGGER

Grandezza 31 OC from £176,255

LOA 30ft 11in (9.44m)
Stunning quality again, but more traditional in style, design, and two-cabin layout. Single diesel sterndrive power option makes this a very efficient performer.



SMALLER

Grandezza 23 OC from £69,565

LOA 22ft 10in (6.96m)
More daycruiser than true sports cruiser, but it's still infused with the same levels of Scandinavian quality. Design changes are also expected for the 23 in 2012.

From the helm

Excellent viz and dash design

There's plenty of room on the flat panelled soft-touch dash for the standard fit Raymarine C90 plotter, or C120 upgrade. The omission of an echo sounder is mystifying on such a well specified craft; the lack of a tray or recess for oddments is merely annoying.



The rivals



Jeanneau Leader 9 from £131,582

LOA 32ft (9.77m)
Similar concept, similar money, larger boat. Our favourite Jeanneau has a dinette-down layout but it works well, especially the large mid cabin.



Aquador 28C/HT from £142,504

LOA 28ft 10in (8.8M)
A pretty boat and beautifully made. Choose between the highly practical C version or the more accommodating HT.

THE VERDICT

Welcome to the 21st century. With its new Grandezza 27 OC, Finnmaster has proved that there is more to sub-30ft life than the simple evolution of conventional layouts, and that practicality and style under 30 feet are no longer mutually exclusive.

