

Karnic 2660

The flagship of an emerging Cypriot range is a practical sportsfisher with excellent cockpit space, family accommodation and the option of twin diesels. But has it got the performance or the pedigree to challenge its market rivals? **REPORT BY HUGO ANDREAE**



A single large overhead hatch and three opening portholes let plenty of natural light and fresh air in. A variety of overhead spotlights and twin reading lights take over when the sun dips below the horizon.

A fourth porthole provides the ventilation for the toilet compartment, which has 5ft 8in of headroom. The moulded sink has storage underneath, and a pull-out shower head and a sea toilet takes care of all your basic needs, although you will have to specify the optional calorifier if you like your showers warm.

The galley, opposite the WC, is equipped as standard with a two-ring gas hob, a good-sized fridge and a small sink. Overhead cupboards are large enough to hold tea and coffee-making

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Not the last word in luxury, but usable, comfortable and airy.

facilities, and a larger one under the sink should keep the chef in business for a weekend or so.

EXTERIOR

One of the beauties of this design is the versatility of the deck layout, and especially the cockpit, which is set on two levels

The raised forward section comprises the helm station to starboard and a combined sunlounger and navigator's bench opposite.

The single helm seat is wonderfully supportive and adjustable fore and aft, although not for height. A flip-up bolster enables you to sit or stand comfortably. But it's a shame the navigator has to face inward rather than forward, especially when there's a

Cypriot boatbuilders Karnic are rapidly establishing themselves as major players in the ever-expanding sportsfisher market. Helped along by their enthusiastic UK importers, Yellow Penguin of Poole, their 20ft-26ft walkaround craft are already a common sight in the UK.

Our first taste of what they have to offer was the versatile 2260 Weekender, which we tested last year (see MBM Dec 03 p48). That left us keen to have a look at their newest model, and their largest to date, the 2660.

DESIGN & BUILD

Once you've hit upon a successful design theme, there is little point in changing it, and so it goes with the 2660. As with previous Karnics, an unusually deep-vee entry point flares up into a tall, beamy bow.

The vee does shallow out as it moves aft, with pronounced chine flats and a pair of sprayrails helping the boat to plane efficiently and remain stable at anchor. Even at the stern, however, the deadrise is a fairly sharp 20°.

The construction process is conventional,

but the deck moulding is permanently bonded on top of the hull to make up a second internal skin, and the voids between the two layers and the main bilge section are filled with foam for extra flotation and noise insulation. Karnic appear to have done a good job of producing a safe, solid-feeling boat, which they confidently back up with a 10-year hull warranty.

Being a sportsfisher, the 2660's emphasis is on cockpit space, with plentiful seating, walkaround decks, an optional hardtop canopy over the helm position and all the

storage you could wish for.

Down below, the designers have still found space for a usable double-berth midships cabin, a convertible dinette forward and a separate toilet and shower compartment.

Although twin petrol outboard engines are an option, we expect most UK buyers to plump for diesel sterndrive power. The choice includes both single and twin set-ups, from Mercruiser or Yanmar.

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Not the prettiest model in the range, but tough and practical.

surprisingly spacious double berth. It's a bit of a stoop to crawl into, and there's no doorway or curtain to preserve your privacy, but the berth itself is just shy of 6ft long and maintains a 4ft width for its entire length.

An average-sized couple could sleep here in some comfort, and still leave space for a couple of kids or one tall adult in the vee-berths forward.

This second sleeping area is made up by sitting a rigid infill cushion on top of the dinette's adjustable table. Although fully 6ft wide at its maximum, it is only 5ft 4in long and narrows dramatically towards the bow.

For daytime use the cuddy is well proportioned, with standing headroom for six-footers and enough space to move about freely. The dinette comfortably seats five people around the small oval table, which can also be deployed in the cockpit.

All of the seats have storage underneath, although this is simply by way of painted-out voids with ply lids, rather than moulded lockers with doors. Cushioned backrests also form a wide shelf.

ACCOMMODATION

In testing a similar-sized sportsfisher from Seaswirl last month, we were a bit disappointed to find a rather cramped cuddy with overnighting potential for two at a pinch, and a very basic galley unit. The Karnic is in a different league, not least because it has two separate sleeping areas.

Set back behind the wide companionway leading down into the cuddy, and extending underneath the raised helm area, is a

below With a usable galley and WC, the Karnic is practical for weekending. The forward vee-berths are short, but the crawl-in midships berth feels spacious.



below Opposite a comfy helm seat is a sunlounger.





above With a transom bench and seats on both sides, the cockpit is a versatile space for socialising.

Perspex-covered chart area ahead of him.

Also here are a pair of cup-holders and a side locker deep enough to take several bottles of refreshment.

A small step down, the main cockpit area aft has its own wet-bar and sink, located behind the helm seat and hidden away under a hinged lid. Cushioned benches on each side provide further seating, with painted-out wet lockers underneath.

The importers plan to provide extra cushion infills to link these seats up with the transom bench and convert them into sunloungers. But even without these there is enough lounging and sitting space to make this the party boat of choice when you are rafted up with others.

Rod-holders set into the coaming show that the 2660 hasn't completely abandoned its fishing pretensions, but the huge bathing platform with its fold-away ladder and walk-through gate gives more clues as to how this boat is likely to be used: it's big enough to prop a tender on, or, with extra supports, a PWC.

Chunky steps on both sides lead up from the cockpit to generous 8in non-slip side decks. The hefty stainless steel canopy frame offers handholds to ease your path forward, and there's even a pair of deck lights recessed into the steps to light your way at night.

A pronounced toerail and pulpit increase your feeling of security as you make your way to the anchor platform. Our boat was fitted with the optional electric windlass, which sits

in the anchor locker to leave a flat foredeck free from toe-stubbing obstacles.

A clip-on cushion can be attached to the coachroof behind to create another lounging area when you are at anchor, and solid 10in cleats fore and aft, with 8in ones amidships, mean there's no excuse for sloppy ropework.

ENGINE OPTIONS & ACCESS

Craft of this length are right at the watershed between single and twin-engined installations, and both set-ups are available.

Since there is not much price difference between specifying two compact 116hp Mercruiser 1.7 DTIs and a single 250hp Steyr 256, we suspect most buyers will opt for the reassurance of the twins, as fitted in our test boat. Performance addicts can even choose a pair of 220hp petrol V6s.

We were concerned that a twin installation might make engine access awkward on what is a relatively small boat, but our fears were quickly allayed when we opened up the engine hatch. The entire aft bench hinges upwards on gas struts to reveal a wide, uncluttered bay giving access down both sides of the power units.

A full-width section of the cockpit floor also hinges forward, allowing you to climb right

down into the bilges with no elbow scrapes.

The twin batteries and primary fuel filters are located under this flap for easy access, while all the belts and secondary filters are easily accessible too. Only if you specify the optional calorifier, which sits outboard of the port engine, would things become a little tight.



Lots of engine choice, and superb access for a boat of this size.

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING

A 28ft sportsfisher packing a total of 232hp is never going to send Sunseeker scurrying back to the drawing board, but few buyers will feel frustrated by the 2660's lack of power.

There's a slightly agricultural clunk as you engage drive, but in every other respect the two 4cyl Mercruiser diesels are admirably smooth, refined and punchy.

Accelerating from idle to 20 knots takes a creditable 9sec, at which point the Karnic is comfortably on the plane at 3000rpm. Given that they will happily rev to their 4600rpm limit without sounding strained, this is a very relaxed cruising speed.

Knock it up a couple of notches to 4000rpm and you'll be doing 28 knots. Maximum revs delivers an impressive 33 knots.

Even flat-out, sound levels in the cockpit remain well contained, with a peak of 82dB(A), thanks in part to a new lightweight soundproofing material supplied by 3M and fitted by Yellow Penguin. At 24 knots, they drop to a creditable 79dB(A).

Being small-capacity turbo diesels based on modern car engines, the Mercruisers are extremely well behaved, with none of the clatter, vibration and smoking inherent in older, less sophisticated designs.

The hull handles pretty cleanly for a boat of this size, banking gently into turns and giving us a slight shudder only when landing off our photo boat's wake. Although our boat was fitted with the optional trim tabs, these were rarely needed except for levelling the boat's attitude when unevenly loaded.

Both the helmsman and crew feel safely ensconced within the tall topsides, and protected from spray by the flared bow.

The helm position itself is both comfortable and practical, with a height-adjustable steering wheel and a wide array of clear instrumentation. Our only criticisms are the lack of a footrest when you are seated, and the obstruction to your vision caused by the tall electronics panel ahead of the wheel; given that there is another overhead locker in the hardtop, we'd be tempted to have this moved.

Its tall topsides make the boat liable to wander when manoeuvring at low speed in strong winds, but the twin-engine set-up gives you good control when coming alongside. The factory does not yet offer a bow-thruster.



Reasonably quick and sure footed, with impressive refinement.

SPECIFICATION & VALUE

A starting price of £67,934 for a diesel-engined 2660 sounds quite steep in isolation, but there is very little else that competes with it.

The Boston Whaler 275 Conquest is as close as it gets, but that is available only with petrol outboard power, and at considerable extra cost. The Seaswirl Striper 601 with a single diesel engine is cheaper, but has only one double berth. That leaves the 2660 sitting pretty in its own niche.

The price does include the fitted galley, toilet compartment, transom shower and optional extended bathing platform, but that still leaves a few desirable extras.

The hardtop adds a hefty £3,738, while a canvas package to enclose the helm area costs £595 and extending it around the cockpit another £995. We would also recommend paying the extra £795 for the smart blue hull.

As tested, our boat came to £76,657, which looks fine until you compare it with alternative single-engined sportsfishers like the Glastron

GS279 at £49,995 or the slower but larger Jeanneau Merry Fisher 925 at £75,570.



Not exactly cheap but fair value for money given the lack of rivals.

Verdict

There is something reassuringly honest and unpretentious about Karnics, and it's a quality reflected in the enthusiasm of their UK dealer.

The 2660 isn't the last word in style or performance, but it is a well-built boat that will fill a variety of roles. It is just as happy weekending with a family of four as it is entertaining double that number on a sunny day.

And none of its home comforts compromise its practical nature. If fishing is your thing, its uncluttered cockpit offers all the wet-lockers and rod-holders you need. Most important of all are those swift, economical twin diesel engines.

If there's a question mark, it concerns price. At about £70,000, this is a big step up from Karnic's smaller offerings. But once buyers have got over any brand name prejudices and discovered that there is nothing else quite like it for the money, we think they will be delighted with the end product.

MBM RATING 8/10



Karnic 2660 technical data



specifications

BUILD	glass reinforced plastic
RCD	design category B
LENGTH OVERALL	28ft 6in (8.70m)
BEAM	8ft 5in (2.59m)
DRAUGHT	1ft 5in (0.45m)
AIR DRAUGHT (WITHOUT HARD TOP)	6ft 11in (2.1m)
DISPLACEMENT	2.8 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	77gal (350lt)
WATER CAPACITY	13gal (60lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECK	0ft 8in
HEADROOM IN CUDDY	5ft 11in
HEADROOM IN WC	5ft 8in
MIDSHIPS CABIN BERTH	5ft 10 x 4ft 2in
FORWARD BERTH	5ft 4in x 6ft 0in

performance

engines twin Mercruiser D1.7L DTI diesels.
 configuration 4cyl, 1.7L, 116hp at 4600rpm.
 conditions wind southwesterly Force 2, sea calm.
 load fuel 75%, water 0%, crew 4.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2500	12	2.8	13	4.3	265	76
3000	20	4.2	19	4.7	291	78
3500	24	6.2	28	3.9	242	79
4000	28	8.8	40	3.2	198	80
4600	33	11.3	52	2.9	180	82

Range figures above are in miles, with 20% margin. acceleration 0-20 knots in 9sec. Noise figures are in dB(A), recorded in the cockpit.

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with single 320hp Mercruiser 350 Magnum	£57,995
with twin 120hp Mercruiser D1.7L DTI	£67,934
BLUE GELCOAT	£795
TRIM TABS	£995
HARDTOP	£3,738
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	£1,245
HOT WATER SYSTEM	£995
BOAT AS TESTED	£76,657

ENQUIRIES
 Yellow Penguin Ltd, Mitchells Boat Yard, Turks Lane, Poole, Dorset BH14 8EW. Tel: 01202 710448.
 www.yellowpenguin.co.uk

the rivals



GLASTRON GS279
 from £49,995
 A sportsfisher rather than a sportsfisher, but remarkably good value for a single diesel engined craft of this size.
 Tel: 01753 851717.
 www.ryb.co.uk



BOSTON WHALER 275 CONQUEST
 from £85,000 including engines
 A fine hull and top-notch build quality, but available only with petrol outboard power, and at a price.
 Tel: 01202 674531.
 www.bostonwhaler.co.uk



SEASWIRL STRIPER 2601
 from £50,000
 The huge open cockpit is ideal for fishing, and the hull works well with the single D4 engine, but the cuddy is basic.
 Tel: 01634 843576.
 www.medwaybridgeboatsales.co.uk



below There is excellent access to the engines, but an electronics panel mars the view from the helm.