

Design & build

There's a good reason why our test boat was named *t sjatje*, which roughly translates as 'sweetie'. The 25.9 is incredibly cute, especially when lined up against some of Linssen's bigger 40-footers. But there are marked differences from its larger sedan siblings, the 29.9, 33.9, 34.9 and 40.9. Arguably the biggest is a new roof line that runs almost to the transom. This extends the profile of the boat, making it seem longer than its 26ft, and has allowed Linssen to do away with a separate cockpit to create a much larger saloon area.

Wraparound canvas sections keep the bad weather out of this big living space when it's raining, but when the sun appears and all the canvas is stowed in the cavernous lazarette under the saloon floor, the 25.9 almost becomes an open boat – a feeling amplified when the large sunroof is pulled right back.

The only snag is getting out of the boat with all the canopies in place. Given its likely popularity with Thames boaters, coupled with the constant need to get out of the boat to negotiate locks, it would have been good to see an easy-access panel built into the starboard section of canvas, as exiting the boat requires you to reach out of the boat's warm insides and fiddle with a run of clips.

The differences between the 25.9 and the larger Linssen sedans continue elsewhere. The superstructure is angled inwards to a greater degree than on the other 9-series craft to allow for good-width side decks; a co-pilot's chair has been fitted across from the helm station so more than one person can sit and see out forward; and



Good-width side decks make moving about easy

enlarged windows in the saloon mean the dinette seating no longer offers a restricted view.

The rest of the boat, however, sings off the Linssen hymn sheet. The prop and rudder are protected by a chunky keel, the quality of the steelwork is superb (especially all those bulbous end sections), and the interior is fitted out in warm American cherry.

A single Vetus diesel engine rated to 33hp provides the power. The best way to get at it is by kneeling on the companionway steps and

leaning in. In doing this, all major engine check items are within easy reach. And you can also see the blackwater and freshwater tanks, each of which have a handy visual level indicator. >>>

Design & build

The generous saloon area is the real winner here

✓✓✓✓✓

FACTFILE

Linssen 25.9
LOA: 26ft 10in (8.2m)
PRICE: from
£109,655
TOP SPEED:
6.4 knots

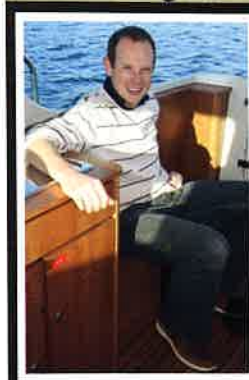
MOTOR BOATS TESTED

Linssen 25.9

Has this Dutch yard spotted a gap in the market that everyone else has missed, or is this 26-footer just a really expensive dayboat? **REPORT BY STEWART CAMPBELL**



Stewart says...



Building a 26ft steel boat is a brave move from Linssen, and it can only work if the builder manages to squeeze in all the comfort and cruising practicalities of its larger craft. The big question is: did the Dutch company pull it off?

You think you know the Dutch – conservative, efficient, predictable, blond – and then they go and do something radical, like build a 26ft steelboat with no natural competitors, and which represents a completely new way of thinking about inland cruising.

What makes Linssen's 25.9 even more extreme is that it forms part of the builder's 9 series, a line-up that is to boats what mild cheddar is to cheese – nice, but not very challenging. But that's because Linssen knows its audience intimately. Its customers don't want avant-garde design that dates, they have no need for fancy drive systems that go wrong and as for sweeping window lines,

forget it. The biggest priorities for a Linssen buyer are build quality, economy, comfort and practicality. And this is exactly what you get from a company that has the following slogan proudly positioned at its Maasbracht yard, "The bitterness of poor quality remains long after the sweetness of low price is forgotten."

Packing all these prerequisites into a big hull is one thing, but trying to do it in 26ft is quite another. What's more, this isn't just a new boat – it's a new market. No one else is making such a small steelboat. With a recognised audience for the rest of its range, Linssen is gambling that there are buyers out there for a single-engined, single-cabin, mid 20-footer made of metal.



The lounging space offered by running the living accommodation right to the transom is superb, and the equal of much larger boats



A separate co-pilot's chair sets this Linssen sedan out from the crowd, and allows more than one person to see out forward and be involved when underway

Exterior

The sandy-coloured rope fendering that wraps around the 25.9's topsides immediately signals it as a Linssen, as does the green 'go-slower' stripe just above the waterline. The rope does have its practical purposes, offering a degree of bump insurance for the starter boaters this craft is designed to entice.

A teak-capped locker, which houses the gas bottle and optional transom shower, is found on the bathing platform. Access forward is through a neatly rounded-off transom door that blends seamlessly with the adjacent steelwork.

With the canopies in place, the only realistic access to the generous side decks is by using a step set into the starboard quarter of the saloon.

All the glistening stainless steel on show is of excellent quality

To directly access the port-hand side deck, you'll have to step on the settee – regardless of whether the canopies are up or not – or walk round the front of the boat. For this reason, mooring starboard-to will always be the preferred option. Once up on the teak side decks, however, moving around is easy, thanks largely to the angled superstructure and

grabrails that run the length of the coachroof.

A further grabrail around the rear of the roof, or a more bulbous finish to the steelwork at the back of the saloon overhang would aid access to the starboard side deck, as you have to grab blindly for the existing grabrail when pulling yourself up and out.

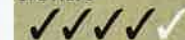
Unlike Linssen's other sedans, which feature full-length side deck bulwarks, the bulwarks found on the 25.9 only start halfway down the boat, but they are a reassuring presence when they do eventually get running by the wheelhouse windows. The foredeck is just big enough to lie out a towel and get some sun, and if wet, the steelwork is dimpled to aid grip.

All the glistening stainless on show is of excellent quality, and Linssen is especially proud of its patented cleats, which it claims keep ropes from rubbing on the steelwork. The stainless guardrails are just the right height – a break about halfway down would help pontoon access but strength issues rule this out.

Low bridges should never be a concern in the 25.9. The whole boat slinks down to just 7ft 9in with the mast down, which is easy enough to manhandle into its wooden cradle.

Exterior

All the classic Linssen touches are here



Accommodation

It's when you get under the long saloon overhang that this boat truly impresses, with the full-standing headroom and spacious saloon

belying its 26ft length. William Payne, MBM's long-serving photographer, even exclaimed that this was the biggest 26ft boat he'd ever been on. Coming from a man who's photographed them all, this counts for a lot.

The comfortable dinette seating takes five adults with ease, with the possibility of a sixth in a freestanding chair to starboard. If it were possible (the RCD category of C limits the 25.9 to carrying six people), the boat could easily accommodate more guests on the various 'perch' points around the saloon.

For around £1000, you can option in the Easy Sleep System, which converts the dinette to a double berth, but I'm not sure you'd want to sleep out here with just the canopies for protection. If you do, Linssen plans to make some blackout material available that should keep the morning sun off your guests' faces until a civilised hour.

Opposite the dinette is the galley unit, featuring a two-burner gas hob and deep aluminium sink. Slow-close drawers add a touch of class, as do the downlights set into the roof – but watch out, these can get pretty hot after being on for a long time. The half-size fridge is set into the plinth supporting the pilot's chair, and is very reasonable for a boat of this size, easily swallowing milk, snacks and everything else you might need for a weekend on the water.

This rear section of saloon is bracketed by two vast windows, which almost run down to the level of the side decks, and only add to the overwhelming sense of space. This 'open' feeling is given another boost further forward by the big sunroof aperture. On the test boat, the aluminium sunroof was fitted, which is a breeze to open, but on the base boat this will be fabric.

Good visibility forward is offered by the height of the pilot and co-pilot's chairs, the former of which is adjustable forward and back. Your feet rest very comfortably on the stainless steel foot bars down low and the large expanse of curved wood forward of the helm station is handy for storing charts and other bits. It would have been good to see some more fiddled edges around the helm station and co-pilot's chair so phones and keys stay where you left them, but Linssen insists fiddles don't fit with the 25.9's more modern interior fitout.

Old-fashioned practical details like a lifting instrument panel which exposes all the wiring for easy repair still abound, however, as does Linssen's use of a floating floor to absorb engine noise and vibration. The 30mm of cork-filled pressure-treated plywood throughout the boat rests on 15mm of foam, which really does reduce engine noise to a pleasing background murmur.

Down the good-width companionway you're presented with the real winner on this boat – a double island berth with separate toilet and shower compartments. Little niggles like the fact the toilet and shower doors hit the bed when they're about halfway open are quickly forgotten by the room given over to ablutions and the fact



The functional galley features soft-close drawers



Wide open spaces: the separate toilet and shower

that real thought has gone into this design – the cabin door opens to the left so the toilet is always accessible.

The starboard-side toilet compartment, we were told, was actually moulded around a sitting man, and I can believe it. The legroom is extraordinary for a boat of this size, with loads of counter space for toiletries and other items – a couple of issues of your favourite boating magazine, even. The shower compartment opposite is equally expansive, with a bench seat for those too tired after a day's boating to stand.

The headroom in the forward cabin is a bit more pinched than the saloon at 5ft 9in but this

is still impressive, as anyone with experience of other 26ft forward cabins will tell you. Given the beamy nature of the boat, and the relatively small engine, storage options throughout are superb. There's a massive void underneath the lifting double berth to store items, and the bed is framed by wood-lined lockers for everyday items.

Accommodation

A double berth and separate toilet and shower – amazing



More storage under the cabin's sole is accompanied by a hanging locker in the companionway, and a large void under the saloon floor.

LINNSEN'S 9 SERIES

The Linssen 9 series first appeared on the scene in 2004 and now comprises seven boats – the 25.9, 29.9, 33.9, 34.9, 40.9, 43.9 and 45.9. The 29.9, 33.9, 34.9 and 40.9 all come in sedan and aft-cabin versions. The range was conceived to offer a production-line boat to the Linssen audience, one that is built quicker, more efficiently and so is cheaper than the builder's Mark II series line-up, which is made up of four models, from the 410 to the 500. The construction of the 9 series in the meticulously organised Linssen sheds really does work like a production line, with dedicated teams working on different sections as they move down the line. The components are mostly modular, slotting together in a giant boat jigsaw. Because of this the interiors of the 9 series boats are not as customisable as some of their competitors, but some alterations can be made in discussion with the builder. The family-run firm has recently added two more boats to its offering – the 60.33 and 60.43 – to celebrate its 60th anniversary (Linssen was established in 1949).



The showrooms as Linssen's yard in Maasbracht, the Netherlands



A Linssen employee gets to work on the steel hull of a future 29.9



The original concept layout for the 25.9 was done using cardboard and plywood



Standing headroom in the forward cabin is complemented by a 6ft 6in double island berth

Performance & handling

The first thing you notice when you're at the 25.9's wheel is just how nimble it is. The boat turns in its own length and responds to helm immediately, with just four turns from lock to lock. For such a dexterous boat, you might expect it to wander, but it doesn't. It rides very straight, helped no doubt by the full run of keel beneath your feet. This stability, backed up by an RCD C rating and a 6-tonne displacement, means that this boat should be more than man enough for light costal work. Although with a 6.4-knot top speed you will need to be tide aware.

Performance & handling

Nimble handling and a good straight-line ride

✓✓✓✓✓

Specification & value

Linssens are expensive, there's just no getting away from it. For just under £110k you'll get the base boat but once you've added in what we consider the must-have options, which come in two packages – Deluxe and Power Pack A – you're looking at more like £142,500. The strength of the euro doesn't help matters but when you consider that in terms of actual living

Specification & value

Standard spec isn't great, but there's a lot of boat here

✓✓✓✓✓

MBM verdict

Linssen really has pulled off a bit of a coup here – albeit an expensive one. The Dutch yard has crammed standard living accommodation into a 26ft hull without the boat ever feeling cramped, or in any way compromised. The single stumbling block is the price, and only time will tell if Linssen's gamble to prise open a market for a steelboat of this size will pay off.

MBM rating

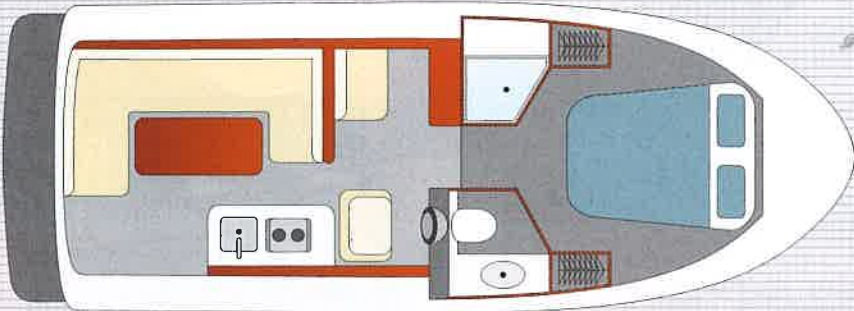
✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓ 9/10

On test we found a comfortable cruising speed at 2000rpm, returning close to 10mpg. However, if you do push the revs on a little the mpg will take a tumble for little gain in speed.

space, this boat is almost the equal of the larger 29.9 sedan (starting at £163,800), it becomes a more attractive proposition for go-slow boaters everywhere.



Linssen 25.9 technical data



specifications	
BUILD	Steel
RCD	C
LENGTH OVERALL	26ft 10in (8.2m)
BEAM	9ft 10in (3.0m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 1in (0.9m)
AIR DRAUGHT	7ft 9in (2.3m)
DISPLACEMENT	6 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	22gal (100lt)
WATER CAPACITY	22gal (100lt)

key dimensions	
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	11in (28cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 2in (1.9m)
BERTH	6ft 6in x 4ft 11in (2.0m x 1.5m)



performance						
Engines	single Vetus M4.15/TMC60E 33hp diesel					
Configuration	4cyl 1.5lt 33hp @ 3000rpm					
Conditions	Negligible wind, river state slight					
Load	fuel 100% water 100% crew 5					
Rpm	knots	gph	mpg	range	noise	
1000	2.7	0.25	10.8	190	58	
1500	4	0.4	10.0	175	64	
2000	4.9	0.5	9.8	170	68	
2600	5.8	1.2	4.8	85	71	
2950	6.4	1.8	3.5	61	73	

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 in the saloon.

prices	
STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with single Vetus M4.15/TMC60E 33hp	£109,655
ALUMINIUM SUNROOF	£9772
TEAK DECKING	£11,954
DELUXE PACK (ANTIFOUL, BOW THRUSTER, HEATING, RAYMARINE TRIDATA)	£7096
POWER PACK A (IMMERSION HEATER, SHORE POWER, DOMESTIC BATTERY)	£4034
BOAT AS TESTED	£142,512

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