



PHOTOS: Graham Snook

Marex 320 ACC

This quirky aft-cabin format delivers class-leading accommodation to the sub 35ft sector REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM

The brief...



*Traditionally it was simple. If you wanted a 32ft boat you bought a sports cruiser or a slightly topsy flybridge. Trust the Norwegians to re-write the rules. Welcome to the Marex 320 ACC. **Nick***

LOA: 32ft 9in (9.99m)
PRICE: from £199,950
TOP SPEED: 25 knots
BUILDERS: Marex A/S
ENQUIRIES Tel: 01202 700702
www.wessexmarine.co.uk

The Marex 320 ACC is all about accommodation, but so what? Boatbuilders have been making voluminous cabin-biased cruisers for donkeys. What sets the Marex apart from the crowd is the way it has done it. Typically the route to extra space is to build high and wide, sacrifice the side decks, shrink the cockpit, and you end up with a boat that's more holiday home than seagoing vessel.

The Marex, however, still looks like a proper boat, with a low cabin profile, flared bows, sleek sheerline and wide side decks, this is no floating apartment. Instead of just building up and out, this Norwegian yard's route to maximizing accommodation is very simple: just use the whole length of the boat.

Design & build

Step aboard via the teak laid bathing platform and the first thing you'll find is the deep window line of the aft cabin, topped by a huge sunbed. A wide companionway on the starboard side leads to a door in the coaming accessing the cockpit, and this is where it begins to get clever. Leave the 'pram hood' aft canopy up and the roof closed and you've got a big fully enclosed deck saloon with a large dinette to port around a folding table, facing a perfectly adequate galley. It's comfortable, well sheltered, and the big windows offer a great view out. Yet to transform it into a proper open cockpit is simple. The aft pram hood canopy drops down, still on its frame, into a dedicated

channel concealed under the sunpad aft. One clip and the full-width vinyl sunroof slides right the way back, opening the whole area to the elements. Then simply flip the forward end of the dinette's backrest backwards, raising the seat base as it goes, and you've got a forward facing double seat alongside the helm. It's utterly brilliant, completely transforming this enclosed saloon area into a wonderfully open cockpit, allowing the crew to soak up the outside experience almost as thoroughly as

they might in a dedicated sports cruiser.

And it's this duality of purpose that is key to the 320's ability to provide so much living space within its compact dimensions because by placing all of the day space up top, it allows the lower level to be given over to nocturnal use. The forward cabin is well lit by long deep hull windows. An abundance of storage is built into the aft bulkhead, and another huge locker lives under the massive bed (double berth completely undersells it), accessed by simply lifting the base on its gas strut. Headroom is off the scale too. The separate toilet compartment is a good size for a 32ft boat with a separate

shower stall cunningly sunk into the centreline of the boat to create generous headroom. Somewhere in Norway there is a very tall boat designer that had a hand in this one.

Steps at the back end of the cockpit lead down to the very generous aft cabin where a single and double berth give useful flexibility while the deep wraparound window line gives an even better view out than the forward cabin. So good are both these cabins that it's hard to pick a master, a far cry from the usual 'one good, one average' cabins of old. The only slight issue for the aft cabin is having to nip forward for the toilet.



FOLDING CANOPY





COCKPIT/SALOON

On deck

Practical touches abound

Wide bulwarked **side decks**, a large bathing platform, double spring cleats, and a large **transom locker** with built-in fender storage attest to this boat's practical nature. Being Scandinavian, a stern anchor and winch is an option. **Hull colours** are also on the options list and rather than

being restricted to two or three choices, owners can pick any tint from a gelcoat colour chart, and Marex will comply. The foredeck features a deep **anchor warp** locker, although unusually there's no chain just leaded warp. The **pulpit** extends right back to the cockpit and features a second solid mid rail for additional security. Clever features include a 'pram hood' **aft canopy** that transforms the saloon into an open cockpit in a jiffy and a **dinette seat** that converts into a useful forward-facing nav seat.



DINETTE



GALLEY



SIDE DECKS



DOUBLE NAV SEAT



STORAGE



DECK ACCESS



ANCHOR WARP

Interiors

Two wonderfully spacious cabins

Quite literally a 'space ship', the Marex 320 offers not just tremendous accommodation for its size, but with totally separate forward and aft cabins, tremendous privacy too.

Headroom is phenomenal everywhere, even in the shower due to the clever step down into the centreline of the boat. **Alcantara upholstery** in the saloon lends a upmarket feel while still offering great practicality, and the pale oak woodwork is a no cost option, although traditional teak is still the preferred choice of most Marex customers. The only downside is that a small opening porthole is the only ventilation in the aft cabin when the companionway door is closed.

FORWARD CABIN



AFT CABIN



AFT STORAGE



HEADS



SHOWER



From the helm

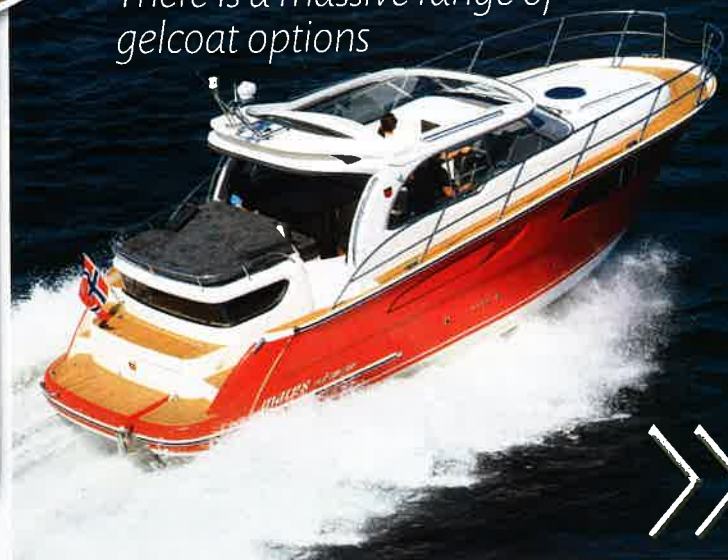
Easy and effortless



A comfortable, high-backed, adjustable arm chair trimmed in Alcantara delivers a top class driving experience. In conjunction with an angled footplate and tilt-adjustable steering wheel, the helmsman can make him or herself comfortable, settle back, and enjoy the view over extended cruising periods. Space for a massive chartplotter puts it within easy reach and sight, while the switchgear is easy to find and operate.

Hull colours

There is a massive range of gelcoat options



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CHRIS NEWMAN, HERTFORDSHIRE

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BOAT REPORT
MAREX 320 ACC



Performance & handling

Traditionally there's always been a performance versus accommodation trade off. In very simple terms a square box is the best shape for space and the worst for hull dynamics, and a slim pencil shape is the exact opposite. The Marex certainly isn't boxy but all that accommodation must effect its seakeeping qualities.

With an established Easterly Force 4 picking up a big rolling swell off Poole Harbour, we've got the right conditions to find the definitive answer to this quandary, but first we need to wriggle out of the confines of Salterns Marina. A single shaftdrive engine is possibly the hardest to control in tight close quarters maneuvering. With no way of directing prop

thrust, options are inherently limited but the 320's huge rudder gives excellent steerage and a tight turning circle, while the standard-fit bow thruster and optional stern thruster give the skipper further flexibility.

The joy of Poole Harbour in winter is no speed limits, so we're quickly up to 15 knots. Despite being a full planing hull there is no obvious hump speed, so the 320 will plane easily at fairly low speeds. The view from the helm is unimpeded, the ultra slim mullions allowing almost unbroken vision forward and to the sides. It's typically Scandinavian – comfortable, quiet and effortless.

Cruising at 20 knots with the tabs left well

alone the 320 deals with the large rolling swell and short sharp chop of our camera boat's wash with equal aplomb, cutting cleanly through the sea and throwing spray out low and wide. With the roof shut against the cold grey day it's comfortable, capable and most of all, confidence inspiring. As if that isn't enough, the big rudder grants the boat quite remarkable handling. It's not quite as point and shoot as the best sterndrive boats but within sensible limitations the Marex overcomes its keel's directional stability to lean keenly into turns, changing direction in a surprisingly sprightly manner.



"There was a
big rolling swell
off Poole
Harbour"



Specification & value

Marex offer the 320 with a big Yanmar V8 300hp diesel but the Volvo D4-300 of our test boat proves quite sufficient, offering strong performance and a 25-knot top end entirely in keeping with this style of boat. Standard equipment levels are high, including a bow thruster, teak laid cockpit, trim tabs, canopy and even Eberspacher central heating. Add that to the quality of construction and sheer volume of space, and it looks incredibly good value at a base price of just under £200,000.

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	32ft 9in (9.99m)
BEAM	10ft 10in (3.3m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 3in (1.0m)
AIR DRAUGHT	9ft 4in (2.85m)
DISPLACEMENT	5 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	106gal (480lt)
WATER CAPACITY	79gal (360lt)
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	11in (28cm)
HEADROOM IN CABIN	6ft 8in (2.03m)
FORECABIN BERTH	7ft 2in x 5ft 0in (2.19 x 1.52m)
AFT CABIN BERTH 1	6ft 6in x 3ft 11in (1.99 x 1.20m)
AFT CABIN BERTH 2	6ft 6in x 2ft 8in (1.99 x 0.81m)

PERFORMANCE

Engines	Volvo Penta D4 300 Shaftdrive
Configuration	4cyl 3.7 litre 300hp @ 3500rpm
Conditions	Easterly Force 4/5, sea state moderate
Load	fuel 35%, water 0%, crew 3

RPM	KNOTS	LPH	GPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
1000	5	5	1.1	4.5	591	64
1500	7	7	1.5	4.7	232	66
2000	9	14	3.1	2.9	148	76
2500	13	25	5.5	2.4	167	74
3000	19	37	8.1	2.3	232	76
3500	25	57	12.5	2.0	190	81

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 Volvo Penta D4-300 diesel	£199,950
STERN THRUSTER	£3900
RAYMARINE E95 GPS CHARTPLOTTER	£3834
ELECTRIC ANCHOR WINCH	£4980
SHOREPOWER	£2010
TEAK PLATFORM & SIDE DECKS	£4944
SUNDECK CUSHIONS	£918
COMMISSIONING PACK	£468

BOAT AS TESTED £225,492*

*Boat as tested price may include alternative options



Enginebay

A single shaftdrive configuration places the motor directly under the cockpit floor, where a full length opening section allows easy and unfettered access. The wiring and plumbing have been neatly installed, and access to the steering gear can be gained via a bulkhead hatch beneath the aft cabin table.

THE VERDICT

Compromise is a dirty word in boat design, suggesting a lowering of standards and a necessity to lower expectations. Yet on this occasion the balance between space and pace has been so finely honed that whether blasting through a big sea, enjoying the open air with the canopies stowed, or spending time aboard in port with the family, the word compromise never crops up. It's hard to think of another circa 30ft boat that covers quite so many bases quite so deftly.

Meet the family



LARGER

Marex 370 ACC from £329,740

LOA: 37ft 4in (11.37m)

Big brother of the 320, very similar concept but adds a toilet compartment aft



SMALLER

Marex 300 from £158,250

LOA: 31ft 3in (9.50m)

Open cockpit boat with sterndrive propulsion and aft cockpit layout

The rivals



Bella 9000 from £115,000

LOA: 29ft 11in (9.12m)

Smaller boat with a slower single shaftdrive engine, but similar aft cabin concept



Hardy 32 from £225,000

LOA: 33ft 9in (10.29m)

Aft cockpit and twin engine, a very sturdy wheelhouse boat at a similar price point