

MOTOR  
BOATS TESTED

# Maxum 2600 SE

**This sporty number's cool cockpit, good looks and better build quality means Maxum's star is on the rise**

REPORT BY JOHN WOOD

**FACT FILE**  
Maxum 2600 SE  
LOA: 27ft 0in  
(8.23m)  
PRICE: from  
£52,815  
TOP SPEED:  
40 knots

**C**onfession time. I always used to have a bit of a problem with what you got for your money with boats. Sure, there was plenty of volume – both in cubic metres and from the stereo – but put it next to what you could get for the same money on four wheels and, well...

Things have changed, though, and putting your

hard-earned into a hull rather than four wheels is now a far better proposition, especially as the road network comes closer to gridlock. You will get something that others will covet (I defy anyone to buy a boat they do not think looks good), something that is well made, stays together and is both practical and fun to use.

The 2600 SE ticks all those boxes. I will

remember some early tests in Maxums and there was plenty of shake, rattle and roll when the going got rough. Now they are as solid as they come and you can see where your money goes.

## Design and build

You want that volume (in the cubic metres – no worries about the stereo here, as it even comes

with an MP3 input and helm control) and you get it. But does it look good? Oh yes – the Maxum designers have gone a good way to making this boat sleek with some creative use of styling lines and graphics. It's no needle-point racer, but it looks fine and you'll buy a machine you will be proud of, even when you take off the rose-tinted spectacles after a few months of ownership.

Sidedecks are out, as cabin space is put to the fore. That beam is then retained a good way forwards, and the result is a generous forward berth and dinette, though the designers have had to work hard to disguise the boat's rather bulbous nose.

The hull has quite deep forward sections to slice through those waves and give a comfortable ride, but that leads to a tall freeboard, another challenge for the designer to overcome. But the

2600 SE is very well put together and feels solid when moving over the waves, as well as when moving round the cockpit and cabin, opening doors and sliding cupboards. The fittings are of decent quality, even if they are out of a central parts bin, and there is some cheaper finishing in a few areas where the accountants – not the designers – have had their say. This doesn't happen often, though.

Outside, a raked screen and rubbing rail that drops to the waterline at the transom all give sporting intentions, even if the waistline indicates otherwise. As you'll see when we get to the

performance that it's competent in matching up to the sporting pretensions of the styling.

✓✓✓✓✓  
Maxum quality has improved, and it certainly shows

## Exterior

The real design bonus on show here is Maxum's new – and quite innovative – take on the cockpit. For starters, the firm offers two layouts. The first (and initially the most interesting) is the Dual Aft system, where two sportsboat-style jump seats are placed to each stern quarter, leaving a central companionway out to the bathing platform. It really opens up the space but ultimately it pales when compared to the second layout – the Offset Lounger we tested.

The Offset is simple – the best things on boats usually are. Yes, this aft bench would have a kid's toy designer drooling. The whole seat slides back on lockable runners over the bathing platform and is able to stop at intervals, maximising either cockpit or bathing platform space. For a fun ride, you can leave the seat pushed right out aft,

“You can go for beefier options, but the Magnum 350 engine works for us”





## BOAT REPORT

### MAXUM 2600 SE



Exterior space has taken precedence over interior space – but this is still comfortable for a young family



The separate toilet compartment is surprisingly spacious for a 27ft boat

hanging over the bathing platform but still safely within the boat's LOA. Oh, and it also offers loads of stowage within.

The seat's back rest will then fold forward and drop into a sunpad extension, or even better will fold aft and down the transom to form a watersport bench, perfect for putting on skis. Another of the boat's features, the optional aluminium gantry, comes into play here, doubling as a wake tower, or folding down for low inland bridge clearance.

The helm seat adjusts for a good driving position and also swivels right round so that you



We'd recommend the electric lift for engine access

Stowage is excellent

Those cockpit credentials score high here

#### Accommodation

Like belly buttons, these pocket sportscruiser are either 'innies' or 'outies', depending on where the lion's share of space has gone. With that

great cockpit clearly hogging plenty of space, the berths are always going to struggle. For new owners looking for some extended weekend cruising, the Maxum should be perfectly fine for a family. It will be cramped for two couples cruising together, though.

The layout is pretty standard – a dinette vee-berth, galley to port, heads to starboard and aft berth under the cockpit floor – but it is hard to come up with anything different that works. Headroom is good in the main cabin, but the aft berth offers crawling room only.

A big plus, though, is the stowage and there are some neat design touches: the back cushions become base cushions when you convert the lounge seating to a berth (this saves continually moving spare cushions somewhere else); the hinge-out work surface at the galley is ingenious and there is a fair sized toilet compartment for this length of boat. To our eyes

the fake wood finishes look a little tacky in places around the cabin, but all the basics are certainly well taken care of.

Confined by that cockpit, but still ok for a family

#### Engine options and access

As you would expect from a Brunswick company, engine choices are all MerCruiser. Options are the 5.0L at £51,450, 350 Magnum (as tested here) at £52,815 and the 6.2L at £55,440. There is no diesel option available on a boat this size, but we reckon that the 350 Magnum will meet the demands of most owners.

Getting to see what you have put in the hull, though, is not so easy and we would tick the electric hydraulic engine hatch lift as the first item on the options list. Once you do lift the aft cockpit floor, though, access to the engine bay and supporting services is good enough for routine checks and more. All the cabling and



The helm seat is designed to work at play or at rest

pipings is run and clipped neatly, and indeed access to other boat services in various parts of the hull is also good.

Without that power lift, though, it's a major exercise for two people just to check the oil.

No diesel option. Neat, but do spec that electric lift

#### Performance and handling

Considering the boat's three ton weight, the performance from the 350 Magnum is pretty good, suggesting an efficient hull. We saw 40 knots on the GPS at top speed with the engine pulling just over 5000rpm. At full chat the hull still feels stable – and willing to go for more.

It gets up there pretty quickly as well, and with no dramas. Everything is unflustered and, while it might lack that extra spark of performance, everything here is solid and stable – an important factor for a boat in this market segment.

And despite the clear priorities of stability and ease of use, the handling is excellent. The hull never becomes unsettled, even in hard turns, and power delivery remains throughout, without any ventilation at the prop. The hull can clearly handle

more power if buyers are tempted to go for beefier engine options, but we'd have to say the 350hp works for us.

350 Magnum power fits the bill. Great ride

#### Specification and value

With items such full canvas pack, coloured hull and even – shock horror – a helm sidewiper, the standard specification is pretty generous. That transforming seat arrangement is a no-cost option, leaving just that gantry as a cosmetic addition. At £1550, it's about acceptable on value.

Of the other extras, most folks will be going for the £1500 windlass, though some may look at after-market fitting to save some money.

Another stress saver is the electric hydraulic engine hatch lift. Choose it – you'll only spend the £320 it costs at the chiropractors if you don't.

Moderate base price helped out by standard spec

## Verdict

The Maxum's neat build, versatile cockpit and confident handling will certainly reel you in. But will that smallish interior be enough to keep you there?

7/10

MBM rating

## Maxum 2600 SE technical data

### specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	Category B
LENGTH OVERALL	27ft 0in (8.23m)
BEAM	8ft 6in (2.59m)
DRAUGHT	1ft 11in (0.58m)
DISPLACEMENT	3.122 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	71gal (322lt)
WATER CAPACITY	17gal (76lt)

### key dimensions

HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 7in (2.00m)
BERTH DIMENSIONS	6ft 7in x 5ft 5in

### performance

Engines	MerCruiser 350 Magnum				
Configuration	V8, 5.7lt, 300hp@5200rpm				
Conditions	Warm, sunny, sea state choppy, Force 3				
Load	fuel 25%, water 0%, crew 2 adults, 2 children				
rpm	knots	gph	mpg	noise	
3000	22	8.9	2.47	76	
3500	26	11.2	2.32	78	
4000	29	14.8	1.95	80	
4500	34	19.2	1.77	81	
5100	40	23.2	1.72	82	

GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. Noise readings are in dB(A) and were taken in the saloon.

### prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with MerCruiser Magnum 350	£52,815
COCKPIT REFRIGERATOR	£640
HEAD SYSTEM VACUUM FLUSH	£640
RADAR WING	£1550
WINDSHIELD WIPER (PORT)	£100
AIR CONDITIONING	£2180
ENGINE HATCH LIFT	£320
SPOTLIGHT	£340
WINDLASS (WITH ANCHOR & ROPE)	£1500
ENTERTAINMENT PACK	£1630
NAVMAN ELECTRONICS PACK	£780

BOAT AS TESTED £55,968

ENQUIRIES Bates Wharf (Southern), Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne. Tel 01323 470 088, www.maxumboats.com

### the rivals



#### BAYLINER CIERA 265

From £45,495  
Not quite the finish but then not quite the price with the comparable engine to the Maxum coming in at just over £50k. Cabin has a different take on the dinette layout  
www.bayliner.com



#### SEA RAY 275 SUNDANCER

From £68,868  
Engine line-up starts with the 350 Magnum, but the extra money also goes into that Sea Ray quality. You also get a slightly cleaner and less fussy design.  
www.marinamarbella.co.uk



#### MONTEREY 250

From £49,950  
Simply a cracking amount of boat for your currency; its balance of quality, performance and price is hard to beat. Great diesel options too.  
www.montereyboats.com