

BOAT REPORT

# Oostvaarder 1200

*With a steel hull, a canoe stern and a steadying sail, this go-anywhere Dutch kotter is a head-turner. We tested the first twin-engined example.*





## BOAT REPORT

The small Dutch yard that builds Oostvaarders clearly knows what it wants to achieve: nicely turned-out displacement boats that are equally happy cruising inland, nudging along the coast or setting out across the sea to pastures new.

It produces three traditional kottier-style models, the 1200, 1140 and 1040, all with rounded sterns and pukka ship-like raised gunwales. Being Dutch, it is no surprise that they are fabricated in steel, but the quality of the steelwork gives them the outward appearance of being moulded.

When Richard Curry decided to replace his previous steel boat, a contemporary but rather shoebox-styled craft, it was these rather prettier but still sturdy vessels that caught his eye, and he bought one of the 40-footers, the first to be fitted with twin diesels.

He liked it so much that he has since set himself up as a UK agent for the range.

During a break in the autumn gales, we joined him aboard his own boat, *Oosterhaven*, for an outing into the Solent, to try to find out what it was that attracted him.

### Design & layout

On initial inspection the hull appears to be round-bilge in form, which would be a nightmare to fabricate in steel. In reality, of course, it is not. The chine is set well under the waterline before it changes the angle of the plate, and runs across to an extremely wide and heftily-built keel section.

The keel runs almost three-quarters of the hull's length, starting just a little way back from the deep forefoot and finishing a metre or so short of the waterline astern. On the single-engined 1200 it supports the sterntube and the

shoe extension for the rudder; on the twin-engined version skegs have been added to support the two sets of sterngear.

The rounded appearance of the topsides has been neatly achieved by disguising the angled weld line at the gunwale with a chunky rubbing strip.

Scantlings for the steel fabrication are in tune with those of other Dutch yards, using 4mm plate with strengtheners every 16in (40cm).

The cockpit and outer helm position are positively yacht-like — and this is a positive, in that it feels snug and well protected. When the weather closes in, you can resort to an inner helm within the comfortable wheelhouse/saloon.

A convertible dinette lies across from the galley at the lower level forward, and ahead of this are a split toilet and shower compartment and a decent-sized

### Cockpit & exterior helm

The rounded 'canoe' stern makes for a smaller but cosier cockpit than you get with a squared-off transom, and it is here, more than anywhere, that you feel you are on a yacht rather than a motorboat.

This sense is heightened by the central helm pedestal, a smart fabrication of varnished wood, with its vertical wheel and top-mounted throttle.

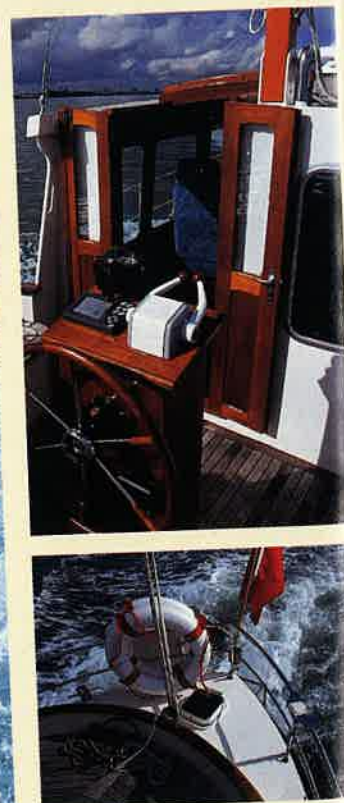
There is also room to mount a few basic items of electronic equipment directly to the

pedestal, although the VDO Logic instruments fitted at the interior helm can quite readily be viewed through the open door; their large analogue faces were specified with this in mind.

The U-shaped cockpit seating is sheltered and comfortable, and the coamings are finished with a run of taffrail

(wood capping) and topped with a solid guardrail giving a good sense of security.

The seat-bases are finished with 10mm-thick teak decking, and hinged lids on each side lift to reveal a useful amount of stowage. The port locker is properly segmented to double as a gas bottle housing.



### Decks

Breaks in the guardrail on each side allow easy access up onto the deck from pontoon level, even if there is still the reassuring 11in (28cm) height of



gunwale to step over. Handrails along the coachroof also help to make the 18in (46cm) wide side decks safe for crewing duties, and you are really enticed to use the whole deck area even while underway.

Moreover, the bulwark rises even higher towards the stem, and the foredeck is sizable enough to sit around for a quick 'hornpipe' on our test boat's solid teak decking.

Other features that



contribute to the little-ship feel are a horizontal windlass, the large freeing ports cut into the bulwarks, the Panama-type fairleads for mooring warps and the wholly practical 9in (23cm) T-bollards situated forward, amidships and aft.

Also worthy of praise is the way the side lights are housed, in proper black-painted sidescreen boxes at the front of the wheelhouse. This ensures they will produce minimal glare



for those on a night watch, which is an important consideration for a seagoing displacement vessel.

The mast and steadying sail arrangement is well conceived, with just a couple of quick-release turnbuckles to flip when you need to lower it for clearance under a bridge. The whole assembly simply hinges forward to lie on top of the wheelhouse roof.



forecabin. Ideal for kids or guests is a mini-cabin at the stern, accessed through a hatch in the cockpit seating.

Throughout the accommodation, the decks have a teak veneer finish, with plenty of hatches giving access to the bilges and machinery. Just about every top surface is finished with a fiddle.

Single and twin engine installations are both based on the 65hp Vetus Deutz DT4.29 four-cylinder turbocharged diesel, which is a Deutz base engine marinised by the well respected Dutch engineering and chandlery firm Vetus den Ouden.

Unusually, this particular unit is cooled by its lubricating oil rather than by a water-based jacket, with the oil in turn being cooled in the usual way via a raw-water heat-exchanger. The idea is to reduce the

number of component parts, and the possibility of deposits building up in the cooling channels.

One result of the lubricant also having to do a cooling job is that the engine's oil capacity is greater than one would usually expect from a unit of this size. However, this works to a displacement boat's advantage, in that service intervals are extended, which is useful when you are likely to be clocking up a high number of engine hours.

### Performance & handling

With two quite widely spaced engines, and with plenty of hull in the water to stop her being blown about, the bow-thruster option usually fitted to single-engined Oostvaarders was not thought necessary on *Oosterhaven*. When

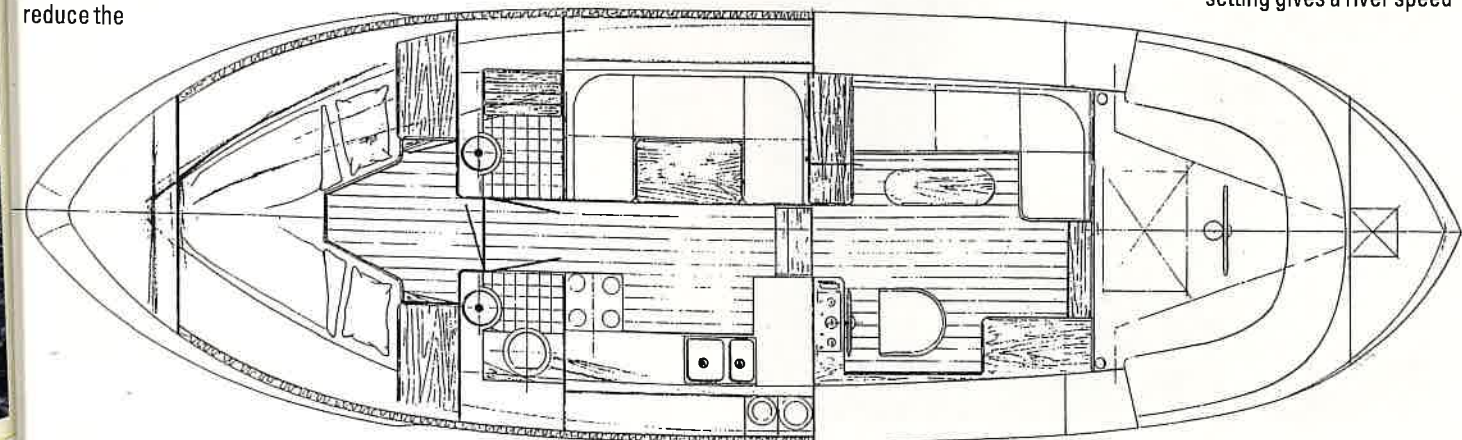


manoeuvring she is solid and predictable, whether you are going forward or astern, with the finer cut of the canoe stern doubtless helping in the latter case.

Large rudders give her not just steady steerage but plenty of response when required. Add in the effect of the propellers, and the

combination of helm and paddlewheel effect can make for some excellent precision handling for those who like to prove their seamanship. The hydraulic steering has a good feel about it, and is ideally set up with five turns lock-to-lock.

Opening up slightly, a 1000rpm setting gives a river speed





of just on 5 knots, but there is plenty of scope in the rev range to reduce your pace in congested waters without continually having to nudge in and out of gear.

Helming from the cockpit station at first appears tricky, unless you are standing, because of the wheelhouse in front of you. But by sitting to one side of the wheel you can keep a good watch directly forward, checking the obscured bow by glancing through the wheelhouse windows, which are at just the right height.

If you are all snuggled down for a longish trip, the view from the inside helm position is good all round.

For passagemaking you need around 2000rpm, which brings a speed of just over 8 knots, although we are told a cleaner bottom should push this up to more like 8.5 knots. There is plenty more in the engines, even if they add only a further knot when flat-out.

For a displacement boat, an



## Wheelhouse/saloon

A pair of nicely finished wooden doors lead from the cockpit through to the wheelhouse, with its nicely cambered, handrail adorned deckhead. Headroom inside amounts to 6ft 3in (1.91m).

The standard layout has a long settee to starboard, complete with a table, and is open-plan, with no more than a sideboard acting as a partition between the wheelhouse and the lower dinette. Our test boat

had the settee foreshortened, to make way for a second helm seat and a dedicated chart table, the latter incorporating more stowage space and forming a more definite partition between the compartments.

Future buyers' preference is likely to be swayed by their cruising plans; the two-seat helm arrangement perhaps makes better sense where lengthy sea passages are envisaged.

There are lockers let into the seating, and further easily accessible cupboards, protected by sliding doors, outboard to port and behind the companionway step. The latter in particular makes a good home for safety gear.

The settee is the right height for looking out through the side windows, but is too low for the windscreen. Notably, all the windows are Vetus double-glazed units.



## Interior helm

Oosterhaven's two armchair-style helm seats are extremely comfortable, which they need to be if you are to spend a few hours in them on a long passage. Everything on the sloping console is easy enough to find and view.

There is room ahead of the switch-breakers for items of larger electronics, but if they are to be easily watched from the cockpit helm as well, any standard-sized instrument heads would be best mounted along the overhead panel.

The windscreen is in four sections. One of them is an opening portion to help create a

cooling breeze in summer, while the others are serviced by robust-looking wipers.

Tucked out of harm's way are the battery switches, and the emergency fuel shut-offs which are located within the console. Also accessed easily are all the innards of the controls, and the wiring runs close to the top of the console hinge clear.

8-knot cruising speed is pretty fair, and the hull does not appear to struggle with it, slipping cleanly through the water without any huge bow or stern wave. This is attributable, no doubt, to the less boxy underwater hull shape and the swept stern rather than a flat wall of transom.

Interestingly, the bow does trim a little, but this appears to be due to a modicum of hydrodynamic lift rather than the stern dropping into a hole.

We could judge the hull's sea-keeping only by how it handled criss-crossing the wash of commercial vessels in the Solent, but it took this in its stride. With its large rudders and keel, the Oostvaarder was not to be pushed about, even when travelling with some sizable chunks of fast-moving water. The high bow gunwale is unlikely to be found wanting when it comes to shedding water, and for a displacement vessel the ride is commendably dry.

Richard says he has been well pleased with his boat's handling so far, having put some 150 hours on the clocks since June, including an 18-hour delivery trip from Ijmuiden

## Galley

One of the two steps down from the wheelhouse to the galley and dinette area hides a handy gash bin compartment, and that sets the tone for the U-shaped galley's plentiful storage.

There are two double cupboards, a couple of drawers and a run of shallow lockers outboard for frequent-use items such as tea, coffee and

mugs. All the cupboards are lined, and have fiddled shelves.

It is to ensure that every void offers stowage that a top-loading fridge/freezer is fitted, let into the work surface rather than taking up cupboard space. Similarly, the cooking arrangements comprise an eye-height microwave, rather than an oven built in under the four-burner hob.

A pair of opening ports provide ventilation, but there is no extractor.



## Forward cabin

Three different arrangements of the forward cabin are possible: our test boat's vee-berths, a central island berth, or an offset double.

In this case the berths were a good, comfortable size, measuring 2ft 6in (0.76m) wide by 6ft 3in (1.91m) long, and retaining plenty of width at the foot of the vee.

There is plenty of standing room and a useful amount of clothes storage, with a cupboard to one side fashioned into a hanging locker while another opposite has shelves built-in. The countertops above these are finished with fiddles,

and the storage areas within the bunk-bases are wood-lined. The deckhead incorporates an opening hatch, and there are side ports also.



## Dinette

The dinette has a fiddled table which can seat four people, and which can be dropped to make a 6ft 0in (1.83m) by 3ft 6in (1.07m) berth.

There is quite a reasonable amount of stowage both under the cross-bench seating and in a couple of drawers beneath the raised sole.

Outboard is a deep shelf, with a pair of opening ports above it. Hatches in the sole give access to the bilge, seacocks and tanks.



## Aft cabin

An access hatch and washboard within the aft portion of cockpit seating leads, via an almost vertical two-step drop, to what can be either a gloryhole of a stowage compartment or an occasional cabin fitted out with two berths.

Our test boat had the latter arrangement. Although not exactly spacious, it is certainly in no way cramped, as long as you view it as a spare sleeping



space for short-term occupation.

With the hatch closed up, there is plenty of sitting headroom to the berths, which run down either side. Both measure 2ft 6in (0.76m) wide at the shoulder, while one is slightly longer than the other, at 6ft 6in (1.98m) rather than 6ft 0in (1.83m).

Clothes storage is likely to be limited to kit-bags stowed on the two or three areas of fiddled shelf space, as the voids beneath the bunk-bases go straight onto the hull and are

really for access to the steering gear and auxiliaries. However, the area between the berths is fashioned with a lift-out panel, and could give some proper cupboard space if required.

On Oosterhaven, the compartment is partially filled by a Victron battery charger/inverter, ensuring that electrical equipment such as the microwave oven can be used without the benefit of shorepower.

Besides the access hatch, there is an opening port for ventilation.

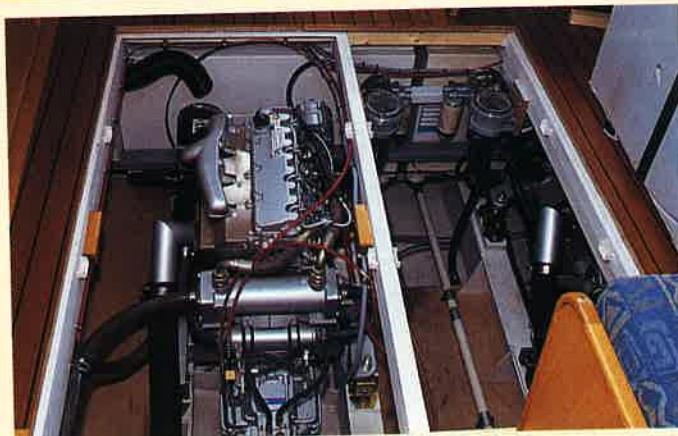


## Engine room

For day-to-day checks, engine access is via a couple of central, lift-out panels in the wheelhouse sole. With the likes of the raw-water strainers and primary fuel filters all located inboard, it is a simple job to inspect them and the dipsticks.

For more major maintenance work, the rest of the sole lifts readily to reveal the tidy installation.

Given that there are two engines in *Oosterhaven*, where previous 1200s have had only one, there is a surprising amount of room, with good access to any outboard service points and to the front of the



engines. The fuel tanks run across the forward end of the compartment, and the drivetrain and shaft logs are easy to get at back aft.

This part of the bilge is

served both by an electric pump and by a manual one located in the wheelhouse. The hatch panels are insulated with thick foam, and bed down snugly to keep noise at bay.

to Ramsgate in conditions which at times pushed up to Force 5.

Noise levels hovered around the barely discernible 60dB(A) mark both in the wheelhouse and cockpit at river speed, and at 2000rpm nudged up to 72dB(A) and 68dB(A) respectively, not irksome even for a long passage.

And what about the rag and stick? According to Richard, it can add half a knot to the boat's speed when the wind is more than 60° off the nose. More importantly, it both

dampens and reduces rolling, making for a wholly gentler motion in a seaway.

## Conclusions

Few mariners could pass this little ship and not take an interest in it. The cute but businesslike lines of the Oostvaarder's topsides and its nicely proportioned superstructure are, to our mind, hugely attractive.

Better still, there is an extremely solid, usable feel to the 1200. Certainly there is not as much room

in the cockpit as you would find with a full-width transom, but the seating is comfortable and it is easy to get around the decks.

Down below, the fit-out is sensible rather than showy, and is very well executed, with money spent where it is not immediately obvious, on double-glazed windows for instance.

We suspect the standard, more open-plan layout might be more versatile than that of our test boat, even if the latter has clear benefits when making lengthy sea passages. But the decision is down to personal preference, linked to the kind of cruising you envisage. The builders will do just about whatever you want, and either way you will have a well-found, handsomely finished vessel to take far and wide.

And if it takes that bit longer to get places than with a GRP planing hull, so much the better. □

## BUILD

steel

## RCD

build category B

## DIMENSIONS

### LOA

39ft 2in (11.95m)

### BEAM

11ft 9in (3.60m)

### DRAUGHT

3ft 7in (1.10m)

### AIR DRAUGHT

8ft 3in (2.50m)

### DISPLACEMENT

11.0 tons

### FUEL CAPACITY

110gal (500lt)

### WATER CAPACITY

88gal (400lt)

## ENGINES

twin Vetus Deutz DT4.29s

4cyl, 2.91lt diesels

83hp at 2800rpm

## PRICE

£158,000 inc VAT as tested

## SUPPLIERS

Bellus Marine UK,  
Unit 13, Hamble Point Marina,  
School Lane, Hamble, Hampshire  
SO31 4JD. Tel: 023 8045 8436.

## BUILDERS

Jachtwerf Oost BV,  
8491 GB Akkrum,  
Ljouwerterdyk 37, Netherlands.  
Tel: +31 05665 1632.



## Toilet & shower

Ablution facilities are split into two, with a toilet and basin to port while a separate shower cubicle, also boasting a sink, lies directly across the companionway to starboard. Both are a good size, and the latter feels especially roomy.

Stowage is most adequate, with the WC having a deep, fiddled shelf outboard for wash bags while the shower has a shelved cupboard. Neither compartment is fitted with an extractor, instead making do with opening ports.

A holding tank was not fitted on our test boat, but there is space for one.



## Oostvaarder 1200

### PERFORMANCE & FUEL CONSUMPTION

sound levels: dB(A)

rpm	knots†	gph‡	lph‡	mpg†	range*	trim	ckpit	whl‡se	fwdcab
1000	4.8	—	—	—	—	—	60	62	56
1400	6.5	1.4	6	4.6	408	—	62	67	59
1800	7.3	2.4	11	3.0	267	—	67	70	64
2000	8.1	3.4	15	2.4	210	—	68	72	66
2200	8.4	4.4	20	1.9	167	—	72	75	72
2600	9.0	6.8	31	1.3	116	—	72	76	73

‡ Measured by GPS. † Calculated from engine manufacturers' figures. \* Allows 20% margin.

CONDITIONS wind southerly Force 2, sea calm

LOAD fuel 75%, water 100%, crew 3