

Tester says...



Aft-cabin boats make perfect sense – they offer plenty of privacy and volume, so I was intrigued to see what this well-found yard would make of the concept.

**MOTOR BOATS TESTED**

**FACT FILE**  
SeaRanger 43AD  
LOA: 43ft 6in (13.2m)  
PRICE: from £414,000  
TOP SPEED: 27 knots

# SeaRanger 43AD

**This British boatbuilder proves customised aft-cabin cruisers need not cost the earth** REPORT BY MARK TURLEY

**S**eaRanger has been building boats for a good 20 years, sometimes for sale under its own name like the 44ft trawler yacht we tested back in 2002, but more often than not it has produced vessels for high-profile companies, such as Atlantic – the Dutch company that specialises in GRP aft-cabin boats. In fact, just recently the relationship between the two has

become closer than ever with SeaRanger now marketing the entire Atlantic line-up, with this new 43 taking the middle ground in terms of size.

**Design & build**

As with many of SeaRanger's boats, the hull and superstructure are the work of John Bennett, but to increase the interior volume the design team has pushed up the freeboard by a significant

degree. This helps add to the feeling of space and tops up the headroom, making this 43-footer look very substantial indeed.

That said, there's a slight twist in the underwater form. While our test boat sported a straightforward vee with a small keel, there's also a shallow-draught version available with prop tunnels, geared towards those who spend the bulk of their time inland.

Whichever way you fall, the comprehensive interior volume stays the same, and although the design can be tweaked to suit, the layout lends itself to two comfortable en-suite cabins, kept apart by a two-tier living area and an excellent liveboard galley.

Up on deck the serious cruising theme continues with wide, well-protected side decks and an aft-deck cockpit that makes you feel safe underway and doubles as an ideal socialising spot when tied up. The whole aft deck can also be fully enclosed with an all-inclusive rear canopy, which supplements the infill canvas that

**Design & build**

Traditional layout but with plenty of elbow room



protects the helm. The radar mast that supports both canopies is engineered to hinge down to reduce the air draught sufficiently when motoring through European waterways.

**Accommodation**

One of the bugbears of aft-cabin boats is that you are always faced with steps to get between deck level and the accommodation. So, to make toing and froing as easy as possible SeaRanger has built the companionway treads to domestic building regulation dimensions giving them, and the door opening, plenty of width and an easy rise.

The fiddle-topped sideboard over to port takes care of the other home-from-home aspects, such as the TV and pull-out cocktail cabinet; and if you

Well-protected side decks and a solid aft-deck cockpit make you feel safe underway

mention your favourite tipple while the boat is in-build SeaRanger will ensure there's an appropriate-sized bottle slot. Opposite here is the lounge-orientated seating area – the comfortably upholstered arc of the settee is high-backed, great for really settling into, while the window line is just the right level to ensure you don't lose the view.

The lower portion of this relatively open-plan saloon is given over to a generous six-seater dinette and across the way there is a capable, liveboard galley. Along with a good level of appliances – halogen hob, twin sinks and combination oven/microwave – there is plenty of storage with a good variety of cupboards and drawers. These, along with the rest of the joinery, are turned out to a high standard both in terms of finish and seaworthiness. The granite work surface is similarly attributable and sets the woodwork off a treat.



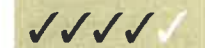
An abundance of natural wood gives this split-level saloon a warm and inviting touch. The split side windows allow a good view out and plenty of light in

The same counter finish finds its way into both toilet compartments, which helps to lift the practical build materials of GRP and textured laminates. Both en suites have proper shower stalls – in fact, the aft cabin's is completely separate – and electric toilets come as standard.

When it comes to the cabins, in both cases there is plenty of space to move around the good-sized

**Accommodation**

Spacious without wasting space and an excellent fitout



island doubles plus decent headroom. Neither lack for storage and like the galley there is just the right assortment, including dressing tables, hanging space and deep lockers for bulky fleeces.

**Exterior**

The extra-deep bathing platform seen here on our test boat is going to be made less so on subsequent builds, but we are told that this won't make any difference to the easy sweep of teak-treaded steps that lead up the transom. The design also takes into account the importance of being able to get back and forth via the side decks, and so the sturdy guardrails are fabricated with drop-down sections to double as steps. These steps are particularly helpful due to the extra height of the freeboard. The forward rails are also fitted with sets of fender hoops to make up for the lack of any bulk storage lazarette. The side decks are a good width and all-in-all this is an easy, safe boat to move about on. And lastly, for a

bit of added interest, the foredeck is inset with a teak well around the windlass.

Back aft the raised deck feels well enclosed thanks to the GRP coamings, topped off with handrails, and all the seating benefits from the built-in protection afforded by the console and screen. Three people can be accommodated

“A sideboard, TV and drinks cabinet take care of all the home-from-home aspects”



If it's comfortable cruising that you're after, this boat has it in spades



The pull-out drinks cabinet and built-in LCD TV are neat features

across the helm in comfortable bucket seats, while on the same moulding is the rear-facing portion of the main settee. The moulding – which

**Exterior**

Safe decks plus a clever twist gives more cockpit space



doubles as storage – is attached to deck runners that allow it to be shunted forward when you are finished at the helm, helping to expand the area and open up the rear seating.

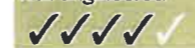
**Engine options & access**

Two engine options are offered, either twin 330hp or 370hp Volvo units of the same 6-cylinder D6 block. Our test boat had the more potent 370s which would seem the preferred choice given that this is a heavy boat.

When it comes to access, the yard has tried to get round the usual problem associated with aft-cabin boats – of having to lift the saloon carpet and dig up a floor panel or two to get at the enginebay – by fitting removable side panels either side of the rear companionway. These panels are not designed to give full body access, although at a pinch a lithe person could get through the starboard-hand one, but at least they allow the skipper to inspect the fuel and raw water filters. However, if you are a dipstick checker then it's back to removing floor panels. With a large section of sole lifted it is possible to reach all the service points with standing room between the engines. The fuel tanks are set outboard and there is also adequate space forward for a gen set. To help negate the odd maintenance job gel

**Engine options & access**

Useful access options. The bay is well engineered



batteries are fitted by the yard; a pricier option than the norm. We were also pleased to find good attention has been paid to the vessel's sound insulation.

**Performance & handling**

This sort of design lends itself to inland waters and whether you opt for the shallow draught version or not, the hull's small area of keel helps keep the boat on a tight track at low speeds. However, get the keel proportions wrong and it can make the hull jittery once in full-planing mode. We are glad to report that the 43AD pushes along without a murmur, right through to its top end speed of 27 knots. It also responds well to both the wheel and throttles and it's happy to sit at whatever revs you choose, as it doesn't have an ungainly mid-teens speed where it puts its nose in the air. That said, to get places you are looking at a rev range falling between an easy 2800rpm, giving 19 knots, and 3200rpm, which perks cruising up to just under 24 knots. The good news is that anywhere around this sort of speed averages out at about a



The forecabin's generous berth is surrounded by plenty of assorted storage options



The galley exemplifies the quality of the fitout



Both toilet compartments have separate shower facilities



This classically luxurious master cabin really impresses and headroom is never going to be an issue here



Three-seater helm benefits from moulded bucket seats



This drop-down guardrail acts as a step, aiding access



Plenty of space and seating on the aft deck



...thanks to removable panels in the below decks companionway



A practical, drop-down guardrail section



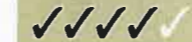
Moulded steps run up the transom

mile per gallon.

The driving position is as comfortable and well-appointed as the rest of the boat. It's also worth noting that it's possible to get at all the helm instruments and switches from both the skipper and the co-driver's seat, which makes for the best sort of helm. And the occupier of the third seat can be left in charge of spotting pot markers, as there's no centre mullion in this one-piece screen to interrupt the view. Lastly, the

**Performance & handling**

Easy going ride, good standard electronics



term 'well-appointed' is certainly justified here as SeaRanger fits all the electronics you could ever need as standard, including a Garmin touchscreen 12in plotter and radar.

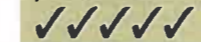
**Specification & value**

There's little doubt that SeaRanger puts plenty of man-hours and material into its boats and for the most part the quality is very good, in an understated and practical way. It all makes for a solid cruising boat that won't age, or if it does, only gracefully. Also in the 43's favour is its good level of standard kit, which includes heating, holding tank, bow thruster, teak decking, a good electronics package and an inverter – so at least you can boil a kettle when you're at sea.

This is all well and good but how does it stack up to other aft-cabin boats in terms of price?

**Specification & value**

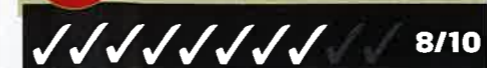
No-nonsense value, quality and spec from the start



You might be pleasantly surprised. The 43's £414k price tag for a fully spec'd standard boat comes in well below what its rivals are asking for a boat with the same specification.

**MBM verdict**

Aft-cabin boats are the sensible way to cruise. The space between the cabins, and the fact you are using the beamy stern for one of the sleeping areas makes perfect sense. SeaRanger has given this good design sense a further shot in the arm by making the 43AD notably roomy and comfortable, while delivering on style and value for money.



8/10

**SeaRanger 43AD technical data**

**specifications**

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	43ft 6in (13.2m)
HULL LENGTH	38ft 4in (11.69m)
BEAM	13ft 7in (4.1m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 7in (1.1m)
AIR DRAUGHT	11ft 7in (3.5m)
DISPLACEMENT	13.8 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	270gal (1227lt)
WATER CAPACITY	102gal (464lt)



**performance**

Engines	twin Volvo D6-370 diesels
Configuration	6cyl, 5.5lt, 370hp at 3500rpm
Conditions	wind NE'ly, Force 3, sea slight
Load	fuel 80% water 50% crew 4

**key dimensions**

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS (minimum)	11in (28cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 6in (2.0m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 3in x 4ft 3in (1.9 x 1.2m)
AFT CABIN BERTH	6ft 3in x 4ft 10in (1.9 x 1.4m)



Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
1500	8	4	18	2.0	243	68
2400	13	12	54	1.1	240	74
2800	19	18	80	1.0	229	74
3200	24	25	112	0.9	205	74
3400	25	29	130	0.8	188	75
3600	27	32	146	0.8	179	77

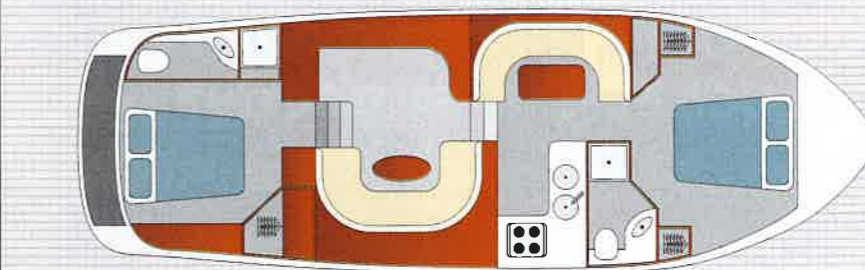
Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. These figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temperature, crew numbers, hull fouling, fuel quality and other issues. Noise readings in dB(A) were taken in the saloon.

**prices**

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with twin Volvo D6-370s	£414,000
BOW THRUSTER	standard
HEATING	standard
GENERATOR	£7000
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	standard
ELECTRONICS PACKAGE	standard
TEAK DECKING	standard

**BOAT AS TESTED £430,850**

ENQUIRIES SeaRanger Yachts Ltd Tel: 01832 274199 www.searanger.com



**the rivals**



**BROOM 425**  
From £369,650  
The 425 is an updated version of the much loved 42. Alternative layouts mean you can forego the lower dinette for the sake of a larger forward en suite.  
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www.broomboats.com



**TRADER 42**  
From £454,250  
A flybridge and hardtop option for the aft deck is offered along with either two or three cabin layouts. Trader's timber fitout is impressive.  
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**PRINCESS 42**  
From £355,000  
Clearly this isn't an aft-cabin boat but anyone keen to buy a 42-footer needs to take a look at this good quality, two cabin en-suite flybridge model.  
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