



MOTOR BOATS TESTED

Trusty by name, trusty by nature

FACT FILE
Blue C Marine
Trusty 23
LOA: 22ft 7in
(6.92m)
PRICE: £54,995
TOP SPEED:
7.5 knots

This punchy 23-footer exceeds expectation in both its design and fitout

REPORT BY MARK TURLEY

They must put something in the water in Kidderminster as although it's land-locked there's clearly a penchant for building boats there. It's home to Sealine at one end of the scale – geared to producing many hundreds of boats a year – while at the other end of the spectrum

you'll find Blue C Marine. A bit of a minnow by comparison perhaps, but with its Trusty range it offers a welcome alternative in a market where speed has become king. Blue C Marine has produced two wholly displacement Trusty models; a 23-footer and a scaled-down 21ft version, both with diesel inboard power.

Design & Build

Of course, any boat can jog along slowly but most motorboat hulls these days are designed with performance in mind, which means flattish sections, chines and a fat lump of transom. This mix invariably finds plodding along through the water rather awkward, while a true displacement hull with rounded sections, deep forefoot and keel, and a chamfered stern is much more sea-kindly in terms of shape.

Trusty hulls are typical of the latter, plus the 23

boasts plenty of freeboard, as well as sturdy bilge keels to enable the boat to take the ground.

The wheelhouse – which incorporates a well-planned galley along with convertible dinette and helm – might look cute but there is

“The finely worked fitout smacked of big-boat quality”

no shortfall on headroom. Down below it's all open-plan, leading to an angled double berth across the bow with a nicely appointed, separate toilet compartment.

Outside there is a good-sized cockpit with an inviting seat across the stern and, as an option, this area can be enclosed with a canopy that practically doubles the length of the wheelhouse. However, what really got us excited is the level of design



Both the helm and the galley make the best use of the space available

detail and finely worked fitout that smacks of big-boat quality from a top-end, mainstream builder. A good example of this is the judicious mix of mouldings and joinery. Too much of the latter can push the price up but careful detail incorporated into mouldings means they work with the wood to create some real depth.

Design & build

Roomy, with a well thought out and executed fitout



“The Trusty is easy and pleasing to helm and answers quickly to the wheel”



Designer deck hardware



Plenty of console space at the helm

Exterior

Nipping on and off is easy as there are side steps built into the coamings just where the wheelhouse finishes, and you are never short of a handhold or two. We also applaud the fact that the whole run of cockpit coaming is topped off with a guardrail and this helps make the rear bench seat a safe, inviting place to lounge. A table is also provided and the lockers beneath are fully lined. All round the cockpit every void is put to use, with cubbyholes for the gas bottles, battery switches and the fuel tap, as well as lots of extra storage.

A neat corner sink is incorporated to one side of the door but the teak decking out here, which sets off the boat splendidly, has to be specified as an option. The fishing fraternity will also be interested to learn that an outside



The handy cockpit sink



The coachroof overhang means the double wooden doors can be left open under most circumstances



Tight side deck but plenty of handholds

steering position is offered, tucked in on the starboard side of the wheelhouse bulkhead. The side decks are easy to get up to and although not over generous they still feel safe because the guardrail runs all the way back and

there is plenty to hang onto. On the foredeck there is some sturdy looking hardware as well as stern and midships cleats. It is necessary, however, to specify a windlass.

Exterior

A great cockpit and purposeful hardware



Accommodation

Fitting just a single pre-fab door to the wheelhouse would have been a cost effective way of doing things, but the solid wood double doors fitted not only make a pleasant feature but they also fold back, and don't get in the way.



Plenty of room given the size of the boat and we love these port holes



Although it's an open-plan layout, the berth area can be curtained off

The patchy rain during our trials also made us appreciate the slight overhang fashioned into the wheelhouse roof, meaning the doors can be kept open under most circumstances.

The cabin sole is a couple of steps down from the cockpit, which is how the design doesn't become top heavy, yet it still maintains generous headroom; it also means that the cockpit is fully self-draining. The window line is deep and it was good to see that the side ones have sliding sections to help with ventilation, there is also an opening hatch in the moulded deckhead.

The dinette is more of a generous two-seater than a banqueting four, which converts to a child's double or a single adult berth and contains underseat storage.

To create more counter space at the galley the helm seat hinges forward to reveal a work surface that doubles as a drainer. A microwave can also be housed here to supplement the two-burner gas hob. There's also a stainless steel sink and it was good to find that hot water is included as standard. Set in the wood counter is an optional fridge and a cupboard with single drawer above.

Ahead of the dinette is a sideboard complete with a hanging locker, and the angled berth. This open-plan layout works well as it doubles as a day-lounger, while for night use a privacy curtain can be drawn across. Our only misgiving here is that the double berth gets narrow towards its foot, but there is lots of lined storage in its base.

The toilet compartment is worked in beneath the helm console and although the door isn't very wide it manages to maintain reasonable

headroom, so showering isn't a problem. Although the compartment is largely moulded there are neat details worked in, with fiddled storage and a towel rail around the corner sink.

Accommodation

Inviting, even if a few areas are a little pinched



Engine Options & Access

The 23 comes with a 4cyl Yanmar delivering 54hp through a straightforward shaft arrangement that nestles nicely under the sole without any raised box to trip over.

There are two hatches in the sole, the rear one gives you access to the fuel tank and associated filter while the larger, forward one opens up onto the engine itself. Most points are accessible from cockpit level but there is space to hop down should you need to. Everything is easy to get to and if the water pump impeller looks tight, it's because you haven't discovered the removable

panel within the step that leads through to the wheelhouse.

Again, the yard reveals its big-builder thinking by using a moulded liner in the enginebay to help keep things clean.

Engine options & access

There's good access and sound engineering



The large gas-strut supported hatch gives good engine access, and there's also room for a storage tray

BOAT REPORT

TRUSTY 23

controls and switches fall easily to hand. A second person can just about squeeze onto the bench seat and a sturdy footrest means you can use your feet to brace yourself if needs be, as well as leaving ample room to stand.

The Trusty is easy and pleasing to helm, answering quickly to the wheel but still happy to stay on track without assistance. The conditions on the day weren't arduous but the round bilge form gave a nodding, lullaby-ride over the slight sea we encountered, simply bobbing over the unpleasant wake of a passing tug.

Performance & handling

Good helm position and solid through the water



When manoeuvring around the marina it turns smartly in its own length and given its under water profile it isn't adversely affected by the wind, although an optional bow thruster is always handy.

“Visibility from the helm is excellent”

Specification & Value

We are fortunate in this country to have an array of interesting, small wheelhouse craft, the Orkneys and Seawards spring to mind. But the majority of these boats are geared towards speedier work with hull designs, engines and price tags that reflect this. Indeed, building small boats, such as the Trusty 23, is a pricey business so it is to the builder's credit that it has managed to get the price where it is, especially when you take the excellent fitout into account. Sure, the price pushes up once you add in a bow thruster, teak decking and shorepower, but

the base boat is still nevertheless sound. And while Blue C Marine may have made savings on the low horsepower involved, it is generous just about everywhere else.

Specification & value

Value that gets built-in rather than bolted-on



Verdict

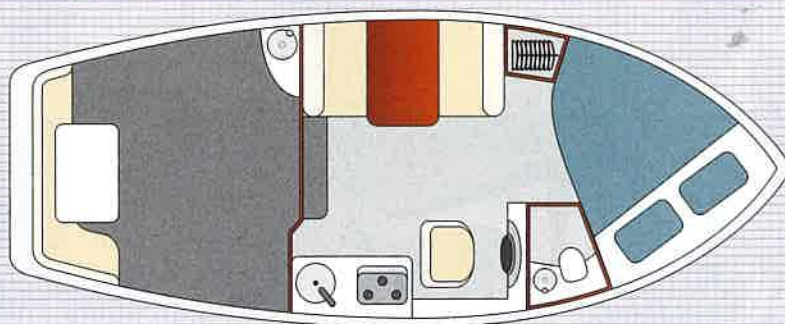
Pottering along at seven knots is not going to be for everyone but this perky, solidly built, nicely thought through 23-footer might create a few converts. And remember, the slow boat culture means fuel economy is measured in thimbles and not gallons.

9/10

MBM rating



Trusty 23 technical data



specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	22ft 7in (6.92m)
HULL LENGTH	22ft 7in (6.92m)
BEAM	9ft 4in (2.84m)
DRAUGHT	2ft 4in (0.70m)
AIR DRAUGHT	8ft 4in (2.54m)
DISPLACEMENT	2.6 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	24gal (110lt)
WATER CAPACITY	13gal (60lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	7in (18cm)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 3in (1.91m)
BERTH	6ft 0in x 4ft 6in (1.83 x 1.37m)



performance

Engines	single Yanmar 4JH4 diesel
Configuration	4cyl, 2.0lt, 54hp at 3800rpm
Conditions	wind SW'ly Force 3, sea calm
Load	fuel 100%, water 50%, crew 2

Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2500	6.0	0.6	3	10.0	193	74
3800	7.5	2.0	9	3.8	75	76

prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with single Yanmar 54hp diesel	£54,995
BOW THRUSTER	£1895
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	£1685
SHOREPOWER AND CHARGER	£1090
COCKPIT TEAK	£1325
REFRIGERATOR	£651

BOAT AS TESTED (EX ELECTRONICS)	£61,990
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