

Windy 31 Zonda

Windy has given us some great day cruisers down the years, the 8000, the Tornado, the Khamsin, but now it's created something far more aggressive. It's called the Zonda and it is, quite simply, awesome

REPORT BY CARL RICHARDSON



"This is Windy's statement of intent"



PHOTOS: GRAHAM SNOOK

The brief...



I love old Windys, because they look great and handle well. But the main reason I love them is that I can actually afford to buy into all this quality. Windy tell me the Zonda is its new 'old' boat, a homage to classics of the past. It costs £200,000 and I think it is going to upset me. **Carl**

LOA: 31ft 6in (9.6m)

PRICE: from £194,400

TOP SPEED: 39 knots

BUILDER: Windy Boats AS

ENQUIRIES: www.berthon.co.uk

Before we start, a question. Do you have children? If the answer is yes, then we have another question. How much do you like them? We only ask because Windy's new 31 Zonda is a beautifully built, seriously capable and utterly beguiling boat with only one berth, and little in the way of cabin space. Helpfully, for those of us with children, Windy will continue to offer the Tornado GT – a boat of similar length and price that can sleep four – but it can't hold a candle to the Zonda, if handling and sheer on-water presence count for anything.

The Zonda is Windy's statement of intent: a reminder that having focused on larger

cruisers of late, it can still build one of the most capable sportsboats you could wish to blast across to your favourite port on, spend the night in some comfort, and then blast back again. Windy calls it a day cruiser, but that's far too friendly for a boat which looks this aggressive. That is has a cabin, a galley and a toilet compartment qualifies it as a cruiser, but make no mistake, this is a high-performance, purist sportsboat armed with an RCD category B badge.

Windy offer a range of single and twin Volvo Penta engine installations to power the boat. However, it is clearly trying to push the idea of the single-engine boat, which is no bad thing

when the starting price kicks in at £200,000 – you don't need something like an extra engine making it worse.

Now, depending on where you reside, the idea of sticking a single engine in a 30ft offshore craft will either sound A) crazy (UK), or B) perfectly normal (the rest of the world). But to help us Brits out, Volvo has designed a new throttle control that looks like it is for twins. So we can pretend to have a 'proper' boat, whilst simultaneously enjoying the improved performance and lower running costs which a single engine delivers.

Having created one seriously cool-looking craft, you'll find the Zonda is sharper than other

models in the line. Where the Tornado is rounded and accommodating, the Zonda is lean and angular. It sits low, giving the boat a sleek, prowling line, more in keeping with a supercar. Following the automotive line, you get to choose from a vast range of gelcoat and paint colours, upholstery finishes and accented on-board finishes, drawn up by London-based superyacht design house Eidsgaard. Still, the same old Windy qualities persist, with teak backed stainless steel cupholders and grab rails adorning the boat, along with some very smart walnut woodwork in the cabin.

Out of the water, you really get to understand the essence of the boat. There's nearly as much

hull under the waterline as there is boat above it. A deep vee hull, that for once is true to the name, comes with a sharp 24° deadrise.

At the same time, Windy hasn't tried to deliver a cabin you can stand up in. Instead, it's focused on a vast cockpit packed with seating and space, the lack of side decks allowing it to gain 10in of width over the Tornado GT. There's plenty of stowage and a neat canopy system that tucks inside the engine bay and pops up on its own gas struts.

The only issue we can really find is that you'd struggle to fit a retro-fit radar mast anywhere. As issues go though, that's not the worst we've ever encountered.



COCKPIT



FENDER LOCKER



STOWAGE



STEPS AND HELM



FRIDGE



THROTTLE



DETAILING



On deck

Space, seating and about 100 options on finish

A vast sunpad dominates the stern of the boat, its sliding backrest allowing you to choose your

particular level of loafing. With the backrest pulled forward, you have a dinette arrangement with a glossy teak table, which then opens out for six people to gather around easily. The table looks good, but an oiled finish would surely be more practical on a serious sportsboat like this? The aft-facing lounge to port is a great

spot to nestle yourself. Well protected from the elements, it would be our pick for that end-of-day run back to port.

You can choose from a vast range of colours and finishes for the upholstery, including a deeper Nextel suede, a textured Niroxx fabric, or the more glitzy Silvertex. Apart from the niceties of style,

though, the cockpit is very practical. The near-flat foredeck is easy to use, and there is plenty of stowage, including a neat under-sole fender rack at the cockpit entrance. It's also an improvement on the Tornado, in that you can now use the transom-to-cockpit walkway when the engine hatch is raised.

"It's called a day cruiser, but that's far too friendly"



CANOPY



Interior

Small, but beautifully formed

Owner feedback told Windy that making up a dinette into a berth was a job no one relished, so it decided to go for a fixed double berth. There is seating room down here, but at under 5ft, only the kids you might have left at home could stand. In spite of its dimensions, two areas do stand out.

One is the finish, which sees a new walnut cabinetry mix perfectly with brushed steel lockers. The intricacy and workmanship is impressive, not least a wonderful section of curved walnut, which hides the second interior high point – the toilet and shower compartment. This obviously isn't going to be the biggest, but as a loo it works brilliantly with a comfortable and whisper-quiet electric flush system, more akin to that found on a 40ft craft.

The cabin is light thanks to the long hull windows, the see-through cockpit door and overhead hatch. That said there is no blind or curtain for the door or hatch, so you'll be up with the larks too. Stowage is good with 'his and hers' lockers and a smart moulded out cave under the berth to take a large kit bag. Other smart features include a diesel hob and a fridge mounted under the teak sole by the cabin entrance, so it can be used whether below or on deck.

Overhead LED lights are fitted, but there's no switch by the berth so you have to remember to switch them off before you turn in.

CABIN



GALLEY



TOILET COMPARTMENT

From the helm

Power of one helps layout

Two big bolster seats are set before the helm, with a third seat over to port. Each offers excellent support and, when seated, guests are safely cosseted within the window line. The windscreen incorporates a handrail which is only newsworthy in that other yards are still to steal what is a great standard Windy feature. The console is simple but highly effective with space for a 14in plotter, instruments to starboard and a chart area to port, while a row of rocker switches are set low on a stainless backing plate. The steering wheel is adjustable and the throttle and trim controls are all perfectly placed whether seated or standing. The instrument layout works easily with a single engine, but it will be interesting to see how Windy squeeze in the dials for a twin.

HELM





Performance & handling

As well as being a fantastic driver's boat, the Zonda is also a party political broadcast on behalf of the single engine party. With a 370hp version of Volvo's D6 fitted, we topped out at 40

knots and hit 30 knots in just 10 seconds. The balance of the boat is perfect, and if you do use the standard fit trim tabs, the hull responds without fuss.

The hull itself feels big, powerful and totally in control, but at the same time it delivers a tight,

"The boat feels like a solid piece of waterborne armour"

sporty ride which belies its size, turning like something half its length. The Zonda is clearly capable of more speed and would be the perfect vehicle for Volvo Penta's new 400hp version of the D6. As it is, you simply set the revs to reflect your mood rather than the sea conditions. The test day delivered exactly the kind of seas you are likely to find on a channel crossing. We ran every which way and never felt out of control once. No one was more surprised than us when we saw pictures of the hull clean out of the water; on board you just didn't know. It's a very dry ride too, with the spray pushed well away from the boat.

So how good is the Zonda? Well, we would go so far as to say it is Windy's best-ever hull. It's Mirage is more nimble, but then at 25ft long, it should be. This powerful Hans Jürgen design offers so much pace and ability, it has to be the family favourite.

In terms of efficiency, with a vee this deep, the hull was always going to require a bit of energy to carve through the sea. Still, 3mpg at 30 knots is hardly a poor return for one of the great sportsboat rides.

SUBSTANCE BEHIND THE STYLE

The Zonda's design and build encapsulates everything the Windy name stands for. The hull harks back to its sportsboats of yesteryear, with a simple, but brutally effective deep vee design. While its 24° deadrise will need plenty of power to push it along, this hardly represents a problem to a boat harnessed with a low-drag single outdrive

knocking out 370hp.

Technically, the build is about as cutting edge as GRP construction gets. Windy has perfected its vacuum infusion lay-up technique. Gone is the slightly hollow feel that this lighter, more exacting build process can return. The lay up is bolstered by an insulating Divinycell foam core, while

durable vinylester resin adds an extra layer of protection.

All this adds up to a boat that, on test, feels like a single solid piece of waterborne armour, but even so, Windy is to beef up the insulation in the cabin to dampen any through-hull noise that the mix of waves and a hull travelling at 40 knots might be expected to create.



Zonda production line with boats in various states of build. The engine bay (above) is fully insulated

Specification & value

A 30ft boat asking £200,000 is not really something we at MBM would usually consider value for money, but with its fine lines and immaculate build, the Zonda looks like it's worth every penny.

With a pretty full specification including teak decking, heating, hot water and a 12in Raymarine plotter, the price will struggle to pass £240,000 inc VAT. Add in the near certainty that the Zonda will hold its value well and (if you go for the single engine installation) offer pretty friendly running costs, it does start to look like good value.

To make your boat as pretty as this won't hold any option price horrors either, the full hull paint job costs just £1563, with the blue or cream gelcoat option costing slightly more.

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LENGTH OVERALL	31ft 6in (9.6m)
BEAM	9ft 8in (2.97m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 6in (1.1m)
DISPLACEMENT	3900kg
FUEL CAPACITY	113gal (517lt)
WATER CAPACITY	22gal (100lt)
HEADROOM IN CABIN	4ft 8in (1.46m)
BERTH	6ft 5in x 4ft 8in (1.98 x 1.4m)
SUNPAD	6ft 5in x 5ft 6in (1.98 x 1.70m)

PERFORMANCE

Engines	Engine Volvo Penta D6-370DP
Configuration	8cyl 5.7lt 370Hp @ 3500rpm
Conditions	South westerly force 4 sea state slight Load
Load	75% water 25% crew 2

RPM	KNOTS	LPH	GPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
3500	39.4	78	17.1	2.3	208	76
3300	37.0	67	14.7	2.5	226	75
3000	33.1	51	11.2	3	271	75
2800	29.6	44	9.6	3.1	280	76
2500	25.4	35	7.7	3.3	300	75
2200	20.8	27	5.9	3.5	316	74

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 cockpit.

PRICES

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
With single 300hp D4 engine	£194,400
With single 370hp D6 engine	£205,000
With twin 220hp D3 engines	£211,000
TEAK COCKPIT AND PLATFORM	£5983
TEAK BATHING PLATFORM	£1963
DIESEL HEATING	£3499
TONNEAU COVER	£1364
PAINTED HULL	£1563
UK DELIVERY / COMMISSIONING	£1020

BOAT AS TESTED £235,000



Enginebay

Lifting swiftly on a hydraulic arm, the enginebay is easy to access, especially in this single engine format. The finish is simple but immaculate. While it might not be up to Nord West standards, it is a far more realistic lesson to other yards in how an engine bay should look. Only one issue caught our eye, and that was a clump of wiring in the starboard quarter. Away from the actual bay, Windy fit bespoke stainless steel fuel, water and waste tanks that match the angle of the bilge to maximise volume and get weight as low down into the boat as possible.

THE VERDICT

In a world that values berths and internal volume, this is a hard sell. After all, if you want something fabulously fast with an overnight cabin, there are plenty of boats happy to do a job in exchange for £200k. But we can't think of one that will offer the class and ability on offer here. Put simply, if you want a truly great boat and only plan short stays aboard, buy a Zonda and be happy for a very long time.



Meet the family



BIGGER

35 Khamsin from £273,797

LOA: 35ft 0in (10.6m)

Big powerful sports cruiser with the emphasis firmly on the sports. Not masses of cabin space, but four berths and huge cockpit.



SMALLER

28 Ghibli from £156,080

LOA: 27ft 10in (8.2m)

A few feet smaller, but a world away from the Zonda's powerful lines. A great day cruiser in its own right, with a good hull and overnight cabin.

The rivals



Goldfish 29 RIB Tender from £180,277

Make a statement and know that you own one of the great driver's boats. Five-step hull and specially tuned 380hp turbo diesel.



Chris Craft Corsair 32 approx £200,000

So taken are we with the looks and on-board detail of these classically toned boats that we rarely mention their exceptional handling.