

Windy

34 Khamsin

Comfortable cruising combined with prodigious performance. Can you have too much of a good thing?

With a comprehensive line-up of larger sportscruisers to their name,

Norwegian builders Windy have been edging back towards their roots over the past year or two, bringing to the market a number of new models which are more sports than cruiser.

The 34 Khamsin, which was launched late last year, redresses the balance. In fact, it does a good job of fully amalgamating two oft-conflicting sides to boat design: easy living and sure-footed performance.

Design & layout

The underwater sections of the 34 Khamsin are very much based on those of the strikingly nimble 25 Mirage: a deep-vee hull with a deadrise of no less than 24° over much of its planing area.

The more acute the vee, of course, the less lift it creates. So to mitigate this, designer Hans Johnsen has incorporated no fewer than four sets of sprayrails. Apart from deflecting spray and helping the boat to grip the water, their flat undersides reintroduce hydrodynamic lift so that the boat can plane efficiently.

Above the waterline, a good 50% of the Khamsin's length is dedicated to the cockpit and bathing platform. With side decks having been dispensed with, the cockpit is generously proportioned, having a supremely comfortable, roomy dinette-cum-sunbed aft, while the helm area allows three to share the speedier thrills in bolstered comfort.

The other 50%, tucked under the low profile of the foredeck and accessed via an opening section of the chunky windscreen, is fitted out to include a midships cabin, tucked partially under the cockpit, as well as a convertible dinette forward, a usable galley and a

toilet compartment.

Even with the fineness of the hull and the lean lines of the superstructure there is still reasonable standing headroom, at 5ft 10in (1.80m) over most of the cabin area, although the WC boasts rather less, due to the shower tray moulding.

What is not lacking, either in the loo or anywhere else, is attention to detail and solidness of fit-out. The standard of well-matched joinery, the teak and holly sole and the padded, alcantara-lined bulkheads give the boat a luxury edge.

A range of twin outdrive options

are offered, topping out at 375hp petrols. However, practically all the boats built so far have been fitted with a pair of Volvo Penta's KAD300 EDC diesels, which turn out a useful 285hp each on a DuoProp leg. Less potent diesels are available, but it seems a shame to upset the builders by doing the boat an injustice!

Performance & handling

We had the pleasure of two separate excursions out on a Khamsin.

The first was from Windy's home port of Arendal on the southern

coast of Norway, which although sheltered by a fringe of small islands can nevertheless experience some impressively chunky seas. The second was on the Solent, which bared its usual short, sharp teeth in a wind-against-tide scenario.

The hull rode both types of sea state remarkably smoothly, and not just at a 20-knot cruising speed either; the longer, well developed breaking rollers courtesy of the Skagerrak could be yomped over in any direction and at almost any speed. The more prickly Solent did its utmost to jar, but the faster we went the more the hull seemed to like it, stretching over the wavetops before they could needle and smack the hull.

Handling is wonderfully precise and sure-footed, although passengers will thank you if you warn them before having a blistering time on any imagined slalom course — not least because, like any deep-vee hull, this one is prone to banking quite steeply with any over-zealous use of the wheel.

But it is hard not to just carve



BOAT REPORT

another turn when everything is working so perfectly together. The uprated DuoProp legs of the KAD300s cope with plenty of power through the turns and stay well dug in, so there is little chance of experiencing much venting or cavitation.

Relatively lightly laden, we recorded a top speed of 44 knots with the tachos showing 3800rpm.

Where you set your cruising speed is really up to you, because it is unlikely that you are going to be uncomfortable. However, as an indication, 3500rpm gave us 37 knots, with our fuel data suggesting an economy figure of nigh on 2mpg, while easing back to a wholly sensible 30 knots at 3000rpm pushed this up to 2.4mpg,

for a very acceptable range of around 300 miles.

If haste is not required, then 2400rpm will keep you moving along at an easy 21.5 knots.

Tickover is just below the 5-knot mark, and low-speed tracking is commendably steady, with no yawing about as you are obliged to over-correct on the helm.

Noise levels in and around the cockpit, at just 79dB(A) at 3500rpm, are low given the style of boat and the fact that there is 570hp of high-revving diesels in the vicinity.

The driving position is excellent, and even though the seats are not adjustable (apart from the hinged squab) you are going to have to be a pretty strange shape not to find it acceptable. The well upholstered

Decks

There are no side decks, although steps have been moulded-in on both sides, at around the midships point of the cockpit, to facilitate boarding from alongside.

Access to the foredeck is via a run of easily negotiated steps between the helm console and the companionway, through an opening portion of the windscreen. The treads are finished in teak as standard.

Once up on the non-slip moulded foredeck you are reliant on the swept guardrails for support. But the outboard edges of the deck have been sculpted with a lip, to act as a kind of toerail.

Deck hardware includes a flush-mounted electronic

windlass feeding into an accessible chain locker, and an ultra-smart stainless steel anchor.

Foredeck and stern cleats are reasonably sized at 10.5in (24cm), but the midships ones are just 8in (20cm), even though they can end up taking the tails of two lines.



Galley

The galley is a very useful size and enjoys plenty of handy storage in smartly finished mahogany cabinetry. This includes segmented areas for crockery, a range of large drawers, and a neat line of mug-holders.

The Avonite worksurface has three intrusions into it: a top-loading fridge lid at one end, a lid to hide the circular stainless steel sink at the other, and in between a double-hinged cover for the two-burner Wallis hob.



Forward cabin

The forward dinette features the usual blunted-vee arrangement of seating. By dropping the table and fitting an additional wood infill, this converts to a sizeable double berth, 6ft 1in (1.86m) long by 5ft 5in (1.65m) wide.

There is good sitting headroom here, although in fair weather it is going to be the outside dinette which holds

sway when it comes to entertaining.

The underseat lockers are fully lined, and running around the backrest is a shallow fiddled shelf. There are also a couple of small chest-height cupboards, but none of this really amounts to serious clothes storage; if cruising with more than just a couple on board, a holdall with weekending requisites may have to be stowed in the midships cabin.

Midships cabin

The 6ft 6in (1.98) long by 5ft 3in (1.60m) wide midships berth looks as if it might split into a couple of decent-sized singles, but this is not the case. That said, it is surely wide enough that any non-co-habiting incumbents won't get the wrong idea!

There is no sitting headroom at what might

usually be considered the headrest end, so you are likely to end up lying with your head at the forward end. This is endorsed by the fact that reading lights are let into the shelves directly overhead.

The area within the bunk-bases houses the water tank, and cut-outs allow access to this. However, this arrangement means that there is little stowage besides the medium-sized hanging locker.



Toilet

An Avonite countertop, the mirrored wooden cabinet and the shelf above it do sterling work in smartening up what would otherwise be a sensible but bland moulded WC.

The builders have also seen fit to hide the manual sea toilet beneath a separate hinged seat moulding. This keeps the loo from getting soaked while you are showering, and indeed allows you to sit while doing so, which is thoughtful as there is only stooped



standing headroom.

Not merely relying on the opening port, the compartment is fitted with an extractor as well.

Helm

The two-person helm station is not only smartly laid out, with chrome-bezelled fascias, but has plenty of practical flourishes.

There are a couple of handy indentations for stowing bits and pieces, a chunky handrail for the co-driver which also serves to protecting the ready-use switches, and a sensible-sized Perspex-fronted chart area.

The stainless steel-framed screen has the usual Windy detail of an internal handrail running round it.

Both seats are heavily bolstered and, although not adjustable, have the definite benefit of lifting squabs. With these hinged down, you are well protected by the screen;

with them up, you are at the right height to see over it. The adjustable wheel and throttles fall readily to hand.

A limited electronics package is included as standard, namely a combined speed/depth unit and a VHF set. There is plenty of space for fitting additional navigation aids.



Bathing platform



A gap in the seat cushions and a well placed teak step in the curved transom (which on our test boat had the optional wood veneer finish) take you down from the cockpit to a deep, uncluttered bathing platform.

Of the three hatches let into the decking, two provide access to a pair of self-draining lockers; the middle one hides the teak-treaded swim ladder.

Also sunk into the moulding, just adjacent, are a couple of small handholds that can double as a securing point for a tender.

Handrails run along the topside returns, but these protrude and do not allow the platform to be readily used for boarding from an alongside pontoon.

Cockpit

The cockpit is just what a sunny day afloat calls for: loads of wide, comfortable seats that allow you to get your feet up, together with a beautiful fold-in-half wooden table which is large enough for dining al-fresco, but does not get in the way.

Then there is a bar moulding, which has an ice-cream van type coolbox with a top lid rather than a front loading fridge so that nothing will drop out when you open it. There is also a sink here, while bottles and glasses find a spot in a nifty flip-out locker set in the coaming, just in front of the forward passenger seat.

Practical design details do not finish there. The treads of the side steps hinge to reveal drinks-holders; the canopy and frame both tuck tidily out of the way behind the transom seat-back; and the pièce de resistance is the extension that trundles out from the starboard seating, at the touch of a button, to create a larger sunpad. Also under here is a readily accessible stainless steel rack to take the fenders.



A couple of smallish cupboard-type lockers are incorporated in the aft seat moulding, where the battery switches are also housed. For bulkier items, there are two lined lockers in the sole, the larger one being big enough to take a rolled-up dinghy.

Teak decking, as fitted to our test boat, is an optional extra.





Windy 34 Khamsin

BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

RCD

Design Category B: Offshore

DIMENSIONS

LENGTH OVERALL

34ft 8in (10.56m)

HULL LENGTH

32ft 7in (9.92m)

BEAM

10ft 5in (3.20m)

DRAUGHT

3ft 3in (1.00m)

DISPLACEMENT

4.5 tonnes

FUEL CAPACITY

154gal (700lt)

WATER CAPACITY

44gal (200lt)

ENGINES

twin Volvo Penta KAD300s

6cyl, 3.59lt diesels

285hp at 3800rpm

PRICE

from £137,198 inc VAT with 270hp

Volvo Penta 5.0 Gxi/DP petrols;

£156,830 inc VAT as standard with

KAD300 diesels;

SUPPLIERS

Express Cruisers Ltd,
The Shipyard, Bath Road,
Lymington, Hampshire SO41 3YL.
Tel: 01590 673312.

BUILDERS

Windy Boats AS,
Skarpnes, Box 40,
N-4854 Nedenes, Norway.
Tel: +47 37 05 85 55.

squab makes for a comfortable perch, and the footrest takes up any slack caused by lack of height.

The wheel (which has just a couple of turns lock-to-lock) and throttles are positioned just right, and the power-trim and tab rockers are where you instinctively want to find them, just ahead of the throttles.

Conclusions

Windy have always been renowned for offering well built boats with plenty of practical touches and especially good handling. The Khamsin has all these attributes in spades, coupled with more sparkling performance than seems decent, both in and out of the rough.

As for the layout, we especially like the roomy cockpit and the well thought-out engineroom. We doubt whether the through-screen foredeck access is going to appeal to everyone, but we recognise that this allows the design to succeed in other areas.

A bigger niggle is the scant amount of stowage for clothes down below. But then there have to be limitations to how much of a good thing one should legally be allowed to own. □



Engineroom

To get at the engines, it is simply a matter of removing the cushions from the transom seating and actuating the electrohydraulic lift mechanism from the helm console.

The moulded seat structure lifts far enough to let you right in and over the engines and drive housings, without having to limbo. In fact, most of what you need to inspect or reach for maintenance purposes can be got at from the excellent treadplate area to the front of the engines.

Also accessible from here

are the primary fuel filters mounted on the forward bulkhead (behind which lies the fuel tank). The battery banks and calorifier lie outboard, but even with these in the wings there is plenty of space down either side for changing filters — and you have enough space between the engines to get at any service points.

The whole installation is supremely tidy and well executed. Two matters of minor detail that we especially liked were the safety locking device to keep the seat moulding secure in its raised position, and the drip tray liner under each engine.

