

MAREX 360 CC

The Norwegian yard has made its name building practical and cleverly thought out boats but the 360 CC is one of its best yet

Words Jack Haines Photos Richard Langdon





ruising along at just shy of the 10-knot speed limit inside Poole Harbour, the 360's helm is a pleasant place to be. We negotiated Salterns' tight and twisting marina basin with ease thanks to the powerful bow thruster and twin sterndrive diesel motors and set a course for the mouth of the harbour where we can pick up some speed. The helm station is about as good as it gets – comfortable, adjustable and clear and sensible in a way that the

Scandinavians understand so well. There are no unnecessary fripperies, just two 12in MFDs (one is standard), a neat run of switches and, helpfully, a pair of analogue rev counters for quick glances. The bucket seat is clad in grippy Alcantara to keep you in place and it has a bolster so you can stand just as comfortably as you can sit. The wheel is adjustable and the throttles are mounted on a chunky plinth, which thrusts out towards your right arm to put them as close to you as possible. The whole dash is coated in low-glare grey material to minimise the dazzling effect of bright sunshine overhead.

Two manual sunroofs overhead mean that plenty of sunlight is allowed to fill the main deck and combined with an open aft end and big glass area, create a feeling of openness that few hardtop sports cruisers can match. Thanks to all of the glass and slim mullions, the view from the helm is excellent, with clear sightlines all around the boat. It's a good place to be and only improves when the throttles are edged forward and the full force of the twin 300hp Volvo Penta diesels surges through the props.

QUALITY FINISH

The 360, for its size, is one of the most practical and well-finished boats you can buy but it's the driving performance that really grabs your attention. Taking just 17 seconds to reach 30 knots, its effortless, unruffled progress is made all the more enjoyable by the precision of the controls and smooth action of the steering. It's a boat with a generous beam – though the sidedecks aren't overly wide because there is access to the foredeck via steps in the dash – but despite not being a razor-hulled sportsboat, it's a huge amount of fun to drive. It banks enthusiastically into turns and relishes the chance to show off the grip levels of its twin sterndrive powertrain. The steering is light enough to make changes of direction immediate but not so light that you feel detached from the machine and have to correct the wheel in a straight line. Six hundred horsepower adds some proper punch, so if you do get bogged down in a hard turn or, more realistically, fighting to get up the back of a wave in following sea, you won't be there for long.



Deck storage is easily accessed thanks to locker lids that lift on gas struts

Our test boat had the older generation D4s, future models will get the latest ones with 320hp per side so, given we topped out at 38 knots with full fuel and water, you could reasonably expect 40 knots out of the 360 with the latest engines. There is the option to have twin 260hp Mercury diesels but if you don't want twins the single D6 400hp (soon to be 440hp) option is likely to be an excellent match for the 360. The top speed will be more in the region of the 31 knots but the handling will be as sharp and you'll save the cost of an annual engine and leg service.

Efficiency isn't an issue with the twins and in fact it pays to travel faster to reap the benefits of those slippery stern drives. The most efficient speed in terms of range once the boat is on the

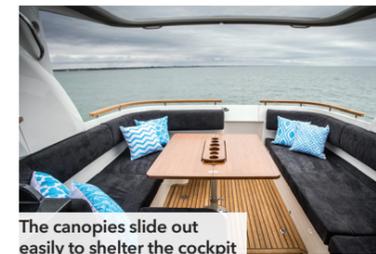
plane is 29 knots (for a range of 232 miles with 20% reserve) and even at full speed, the boat will cover just under 200 miles. The one real benefit of the big twin engines is how much flexibility they give you in terms of cruising speed. Twenty knots will feel like walking pace but it's quiet and comfortable and if you're in a hurry then doing a 35-knot cruise isn't going to feel like the 360's breaking a sweat either.

Away from the helm things are just as rosy. The 360 is an expensive boat (over £400,000 as tested) but it feels a top quality bit of kit. The teak on the decks is thick and oiled to perfection and there's more teak employed for the cabinetry in the galley where every drawer, some housing bespoke fiddles for crockery,



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Use of teak in the heads creates an upmarket feel



The canopies slide out easily to shelter the cockpit



The flip-up counter section joins the two galley units

glides shut gracefully. The Corian countertop looks and feels expensive and is inset with wooden sink covers that double up as chopping boards and the tap has a flexible neck so it's a more useful tool for washing up. The charcoal grey alcantara upholstery looks smart but it's tough and practical, and beneath every seat in the dinette there is lined storage with locker lids held in place by gas struts. Even on the transom the deep compartmentalised lockers designed to hold lines, fenders and the gas bottle, double up as a little bench so adults can monitor the kids while they swim from the comfort of a waterside pew.

Marex's curtain canopy system, where the cockpit covers stow within the supports for the roof, is still the best solution I've



The 360 CC is a joy to drive at speed thanks to its light steering and tenacious hull



Deep hull windows provide sufficient natural light



Headroom is tight amidships but the bed is a good width



Six hundred horsepower adds proper punch



TOP LEFT It's a bit of a faff to get into the engineroom but once in the space is excellent BOTTOM LEFT The hull provides a soft and dry ride ABOVE A single sterndrive is an option but the twin 300s have masses of grip and plenty of power in reserve to get you out of trouble

found for quickly and easily whipping the canvases away and, thanks to the two manual roofs, you can convert the main deck from fully enclosed to open in less than two minutes. The thought and time that has gone into designing the 360's main deck is clear to see and it's the clever details that leads to a starting price of £355,000. The 360 is not built to a price like so many of its mainstream rivals, it is built to work as well as possible and if that makes it expensive so be it. The shipyard is bargaining on a certain consumer appreciating that eye for detail and quality – many do.

PERFECT EXECUTION

It's a good job the main deck can be enclosed so easily because it is your living area come rain or shine, hence why there are heating outlets in the cockpit too. It's home to a dinette that spans the beam of the boat and a galley that does the same thanks to a bar-style panel that swings up to connect the two counters and make one large U-shaped work surface. There is just about room to duck beneath the counter if you've loaded it up with clutter but have to get down to the cabins to retrieve something. An Isotherm fridge and freezer of a reasonable size is tucked beneath the starboard counter but there is the sensible option of an extra freezer drawer beneath the helm seat.

There is so much space given to the cockpit that the cabins feel smaller than some rival boats of a similar size. The amidships cabin feels the pinch the most because the double bed, which sits at floor level, runs beneath the cockpit and is therefore a crawl-in berth with restricted headroom. There is space for a person to change in the entrance, where there is also a small bench, but it's pretty cosy. The master cabin, forward, is better and has standing headroom of over 6ft and a raised double bed that can easily be clambered in to from either side. With long

windows on both sides of the cabin and an extended hatch overhead it's bright, too. Neither cabin has ensuite access to the heads but it's not exactly a trek from either one. The use of smoked glass in the doors is clever; given the size of the landing at the bottom of the companionway steps it means you don't feel quite as hemmed in as you would if the doors were solid timber.

Marex is not a shipyard that is interested in following the crowd. It does things its own way and, for that reason, the 360 CC is a unique offering. Few boats boast its blend of usability, practicality and downright smart boat building. It's far from a bargain but there is a sense that this is a boat designed by people who go to sea and are unwilling to sacrifice quality and reliability in favour of saving money. We expect this from Marex but it's the performance and driving experience that seals the deal. Creeping out of Poole Harbour there was no indication as to the joyful driver's boat that lay beneath. Journalists harp on about hard turns and cornering, which may sound pointless on a boat, but this quick witted handling and agility makes negotiating rough seas a lot more comfortable upwind and outright fun in a swell.

The French and Germans will build you a boat of this size with lager cabins and a main deck with proper doors for less money. But they won't have the thoughtfulness, the eye on finish and execution that the Marex has and they are unlikely to be as talented from behind the helm seat either.

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CRYSTAL CLEAR
The dash layout is classy and simple; one 12in screen comes as standard

FULL THROTTLE
The throttles are mounted on a plinth to bring them close to the driver

VHF
It can be tricky to release the handset from its position behind the steering wheel

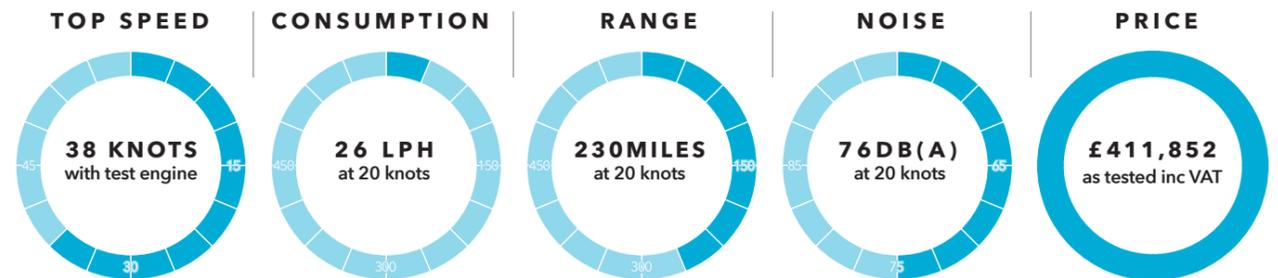


ENGINEROOM
The machinery space is immaculate and roomy even with two engines

GUEST BED
A good size but it's a bit awkward to get in and out of

SOFA
The settee in the guest cabin is useful for putting socks/shoes on

HEADS UP
The two cabins share one bathroom but it's a decent size



SPECIFICATION

- LOA 37ft 7in (11.49m)
- Beam 11ft 5in (3.49m)
- Draught 3ft 6in (1.1m)
- Displacement 7.7 tonnes (light)
- Fuel capacity 750 litres
- Water capacity 350 litres
- RCD B for 10 people
- Designer Marex Boats

COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from £355,800 inc VAT

- Electric windlass £5,868
- Teak decks £11,840
- Additional fridge/freezer £1,536
- Alcantara upholstery £2,364
- Twin Raymarine Axiom 12in MFD £10,680
- Raymarine VHF with AIS £1,656
- Foredeck sunpad cushions £1,176
- Upgraded stereo £1,020

PERFORMANCE

Test engines Twin Volvo Penta D4 300. 300hp @ 3,500rpm. 3.7-litre, 4-cylinder diesels.

				ECO	FAST		MAX
RPM	2,000	2,200	2,400	2,800	3,000	3,200	3,400
SPEED	14.8	20.0	21.8	28.7	31.2	34.1	38.0
LPH	46	52	58	74	86	100	116
LPM	3.11	2.60	2.66	2.58	2.76	2.93	3.05
RANGE	193	230	225	232	217	205	197
NOISE	74	78	80	78	80	79	80

Speed in knots. Calculated figures based on real-time readings, yours may vary considerably. Figures allow for 20% reserve. All prices include VAT @ 20%. 100% fuel, 100% water, 2 crew + safety stores. 21° air temperature, F1 and calm for sea trial.