

# BOTNIA TARGA 27.2

*In the evolution not revolution world of Botnia Targas, the all-new 27.2 marks a sweet spot in the range*

Words Jack Haines Photos Lester McCarthy



# W

hen it comes to design language, Botnia Targas tend to modernise at roughly the same pace as the Royal Family. So imagine my surprise when I turned up to Salterns Marina in Poole and found that the Targa I had come to test was not only white – instead of the usual cream – but

had black guardrails, grab handles and cleats in place of stainless steel. This is the Blackline package, a £4,788 option that sees the metalwork powder coated in black paint and, though it's not exactly a radical departure from the Targa norm, it adds a contemporary twist and a point of difference over the standard cream and navy colour scheme.

The 27.2's roots can be traced all the way back to the Targa 27, which was launched back in 1991. In 2003 it was upgraded to the 27.1 and there was a final revamp in 2014 that saw an improved cabin design and the option to have internal access to the toilet, which previously could only be entered from the foredeck. The 27.2's layout is mostly identical with the heads forward and a double cabin tucked aft, though the hull is totally new and carries slightly more beam and, despite the name, it's just over 30ft long.

There are three engines on offer; all variations of the Volvo Penta D6 block in 330hp, 370hp and 400hp outputs. The boat we have on test has the largest motor and it sits in a pristine engine bay that is accessed via a huge hatch in the cockpit. Targas are built by the Finns to be used as workhorses and commuting tools

all year round so dependability and ease of maintenance is key. That's why as well as having an engineroom that is neater than an architect's pencil case there is a hatch in the bathing platform that allows you to clear anything that gets wrapped around the sterndrive leg or propeller without having to get into the water.

The lower helm is equally fit for purpose and has enough adjustment between the sliding helm seat and tilting dashboard to fit skippers of all dimensions. The smell of teak fills your nostrils as you slide through one of the side doors and into the wheelhouse. Parts of the dashboard flap open and slide around to reveal a two-burner gas hob and sink and storage for charts and navigation equipment. There is a place for everything, even the shot glasses are emblazoned with the



Targa logo so you can remain on brand downing the schnapps.

There is very little to distract from the job of driving the boat as most functions are incorporated into the MFD. Overhead analogue dials show crucial engine information so you can check them at a glance without having to scroll through a ream of menus. It's an easy boat to navigate from a berth; there is decent punch from the prop as you engage gear and the bow thruster is powerful enough to make light work of flicking the bow into shape. The steering is light and quick between locks so it's easy to manipulate the leg and place the boat exactly where you want it. The big D6 can feel a little throaty at tickover and dead slow ahead but open the taps a touch and the din melts away.

Performance is laughably potent and without any discernible hump the 27.2 is up and romping along at 25 knots in the blink of an eye. This is a seriously laid back and comfortable cruising speed for the boat with the engine pulling at a lazy 2,500rpm and consuming a staggeringly modest 31lph. Wind it out a bit more and at 35 knots, where it really feels like you're travelling, the boat is still good for 250 miles of range and you can guarantee it will be doing it when most planing boats have slowed to a trickle.

We peel out of Poole Harbour with the spikey overfalls of Peverill Point in our sights. A Targa 35 accompanies us as a chase boat and the pair stream past Old Harry Rocks with great sheets of spray flinging from their hulls. There are few finer sights in the world of motorboats than a Targa giving it the beans. The sea is kind but the surface begins to undulate gently as we bear down on Peverill Point and the Targas leap athletically across a building swell. The throttle remains untouched as the infallible hull relishes the challenge of carrying speed despite the sea's best attempts to lob watery obstacles into its path. In these conditions the boat is resolutely sure-footed, solid in its landings and freakish in how well glued to the water it feels. Yes, it generates a fair bit of spray that can be lashed across the windscreen in a breeze but nothing will stop it getting on with the job in hand.

We head back towards Poole and tuck into Studland Bay for some high-speed runs and another side to the Targa's character reveals itself. The playful side that, no matter how many times you drive a Targa, it always makes you smile. It's the preposterous juxtaposition of something that looks like it was designed with a ruler and a pencil being able to turn and heel and delight like a sports cruiser. Imagine a beige cardigan-clad uncle ▶



Smell of teak confirms quality of the build with great views from wheelhouse



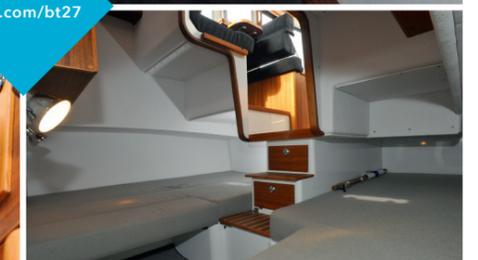
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Massive fold-out table perfect for outdoor dining and drinks



There's plenty of storage and branded crockery adds class



Cabin accommodation is spacious enough for a couple



Perfectly comfortable saloon with good views out



There are thoughtful storage spaces in the cabin



Heads with shower is compact but functional



Big engine hatch almost fills cockpit and will get thumbs up from mechanics at service time



Powder coated in black, the metalwork contrasts strikingly with the white and grey deck



Most potent version of the Volvo Penta D6 makes 400hp but it remains refined

## There's something alluring about that RIB-baiting near 40-knot top speed



surprising everyone with some impromptu break-dancing at a family wedding and you'll get an idea of what it's like.

The flybridge (okay, upper helm) used to be an option on the 27.1 but it is now fitted as standard. As useful as it is to have this elevated, outdoor driving position, for the first time it struck me that the design of it felt lazy. The ergonomics are way off compared to the superb lower helm and it's not all that comfortable to stand or sit. Sit and you're too low to see your path clearly. Stand and you have to crouch, legs splayed like John Wayne, with your hand lying at an awkward angle on the throttle.

It didn't help that this flybridge wasn't fitted with a plotter or even a joystick for the bow thruster so it looked particularly sparse. There is some more thought required to turn this area from one that is nice to have, into one that you genuinely want to steer from.

In a range where all models, no matter the size, serve their function so well the 27.2 appears to be in a sweet spot. It's big

enough for a couple to spend extended time on board without feeling cramped but it's not in the realm of crazy money given its remarkable capabilities.

Using your boat is the only way to justify the high cost of owning the thing and the Targa is a boat that can be used more than most. You could feasibly save some money by opting for the smaller engines and performance will still be fine, but there is something alluring about that RIB-baiting near 40-knot top speed. Black detailing and bright white superstructure are a sage nod to forward thinking but Botnia is too smart and too good at what it does to abandon its well-trodden path.

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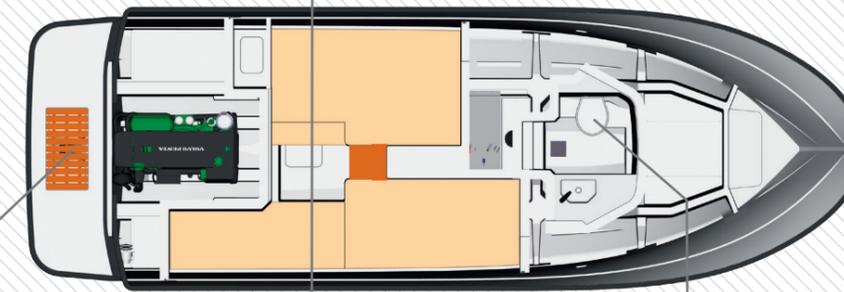


TWO-BURNER gas hob and sink, with useful drawers below, all under sliding teak dashboard

FUNCTIONAL CONTROLS are easy to use with most information on the MFD

TILTING DASH and sliding helm seat provide plenty of options for all shapes and sizes

## BOAT TEST



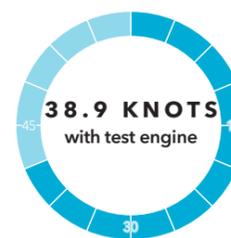
**BATHING PLATFORM**  
This hatch allows you to check the sterndrive or clear obstructions from on board the boat

**CABIN ACCESS**  
The centre squab of the aft bench in the saloon lifts to grant access to the cabin

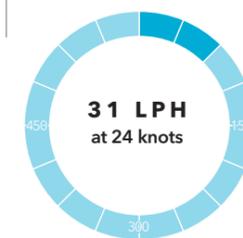
**BATHROOM**  
The heads is at the opposite end of the boat from the cabin but it's a good size

**TAKE A BOW**  
The clear path through the bow rails allows easy access on and off the foredeck

### TOP SPEED



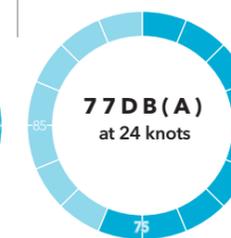
### CONSUMPTION



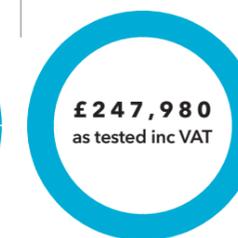
### RANGE



### NOISE



### PRICE



### SPECIFICATION

LOA 30ft 1in (9.19m)  
Beam 10ft 2in (3.1m)  
Draught 3ft 6in (1.1m)  
Displacement 4.2 tonnes  
Fuel capacity 530 litres  
Water capacity 100 litres  
RCD B for 6 people  
Designer Botnia

### COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from £203,460 inc VAT  
Blackline trim £4,788  
Electric windlass package £4,836  
Bow thruster £5,688  
Raymarine Axiom 12in MFD £3,996  
Raymarine 90 VHF £1,260  
Shorepower + cable £1,224  
Teak foredeck table £1,116  
Hot water system £1,488

### PERFORMANCE

Test engines Vovlo Penta D6 400. Single 400hp @ 3,500rpm. 6-cylinder, 5.5 litre diesel.

	ECO	1,500	1,750	2,000	FAST	3,000	3,250	MAX
RPM	1,000	1,500	1,750	2,000	2,500	3,000	3,250	3,600
SPEED	6.5	8.6	11.0	14.6	24.0	31.1	34.3	38.9
LPH	3.3	13	20	26	31	47	58	82
LPM	0.5	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.3	1.5	1.7	2.1
RANGE	838	281	234	238	329	282	252	202

Speed in knots. Calculated figures based on manufacturer readings, your's may vary considerably. All prices include UK VAT. 50% fuel, 50% water, 3 crew + safety stores. 15 degrees air temperature