



Boat Report

# WINDY 31 SCIROCCO

*The latest of this family of open sportscruisers arose phoenix-like from the ashes of a factory fire for our test in Norwegian waters last summer.*





The Scirocco's interior sports a more classical finish than you might expect from its outward appearance. The galley (above) has plenty of usable stowage and the dinette (below) generous seating for up to six people, while the midships cabin (below right) offers two 6ft 3in bunks.

Last summer we were invited to join the Windy Owners Club on an excursion to Norway, to visit the factory and take a two-day cruise up the coast to Oslo.

Just before our departure, the manufacturers' main moulding shop suffered a serious fire, which caused major production problems. One might assume this would have put the mockers on our trip, and our chances of trying out the new 31 Scirocco, but instead management and staff worked flat-out both to entertain their British guests and to rebuild moulds and keep production going.

Six months later, we can report that things are back to normal, with both building and R&D on future models continuing apace.

Windy entered the 1990s with the clear objective of creating a cohesive family of open Offshore

Sportscruisers, which will soon extend to a shaft-drive 41ft (12.35m) model, all from the board of Hans Johnsen. What are now called the Classic range, the highly capable 7500, 7800 and 8000 designed by Jan Linge, are still in production as pedigree dayboats and weekenders.

The 31 Scirocco is the smallest of the Offshore Sportscruisers.

### Design

Johnsen has embraced the need for plenty of room both inside and out, while maintaining the highest standards of comfortable seakeeping and the nuances that make this marque something a little special.

The underwater sections are a medium-to-deep

vee, with a deadrise of 25° amidships, running out to 20° at the transom. Inboard of this are three sets of sprayrails, the inner ones fading out on their run into the outdrive legs. All underwater corners are heavily radiused to cushion the boat against hull noise and knocks.

The topsides below the gunwale strip have been kept clean, with just a single knuckle, while style lines have been incorporated to break up what is still a fair height to the deckline and coachroof.

In true Windy fashion, the stem has some slight curvature, which in turn gives plenty of flare to the bow sections as the topside runs from the cutting underwater forefoot to the gunwale.

### Exterior

You board either down the steps moulded into the port coaming or over the integral bathing platform and through the good-sized transom door. Small, flattened areas in the tops of the curved topsides help you if you are moored alongside rather than stern-to.

These step pads are set with a small piece of teak decking, a finish which can, as an option, extend across the bathing platform. Lockers and a boarding ladder are incorporated into the moulding, and the transom is sculpted with stowages for four fenders and plinth landings for davits should they be required.

The side decks are just sufficient at 5in (13cm) in width with a good depth of guiding toerail, although we would have felt more comfortable if the guardrails had extended an extra couple of feet further aft; should the fore portion of canopy be in place, there is a bit of an area bereft of handholds before you reach the cockpit arch. Right forward, the non-slip moulded coachroof is plenty flat enough for you to stand safely.

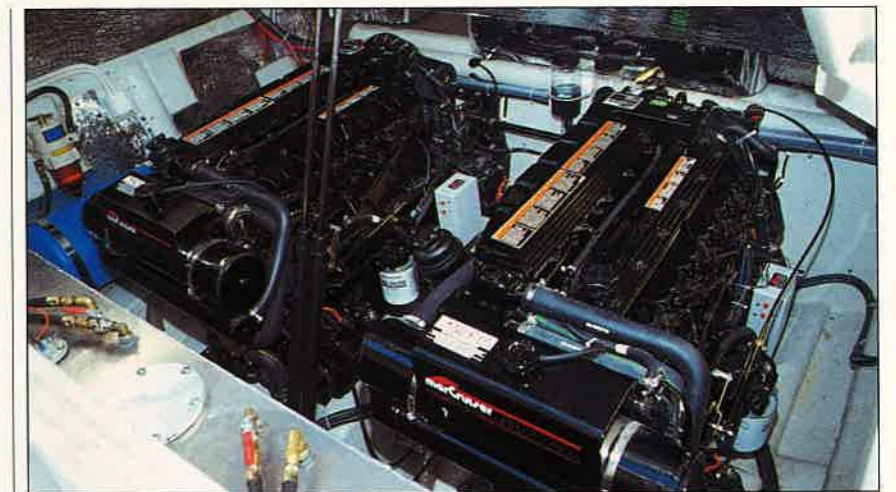
Deck hardware consists of an electric Simpson Lawrence vertical windlass, running the chain into a hatch-accessed locker, and 10in (25cm) mooring cleats sited forward, amidships (on the toerail) and at the quarters.

Cockpit seating is of generous proportions, there being plenty of room to stretch out around the U-settee without dropping the folding-leaf teak table to make up the huge sunbed. The cushions for this have a dedicated stowage within the port coaming, over which there is a handy fiddled shelf for odds and ends. Adjacent is the gas bottle locker (should a gas hob be the owner's preference), and further astern a small bar affair which can have a fridge installed as an option. A manual bilge pump is also set within this coaming, as is a locker with the main battery switches and 240V shore supply connection.

At the helm is a single bolster seat for the skipper, with a cupboard beneath it, and a double alongside. Both have flip-up squabs so that you can stand or perch.

On the tiered console the engine instrumentation is right forward, with the larger area around the wheel sufficient for the ready-use switches as well as the smaller navigation heads such as a speed/log, an echo-sounder and an autopilot. Any bulkier equipment should happily sit in the fascia just the other side of the perspex chart area in front of the double seat.

Both the wooden wheel and the throttles fall readily to hand whether you are sitting or standing, with the trim tab controls being just ahead of the



latter beside the screen. Down by the skipper's left knee are a pair of extinguishers, one of which is plumbed through to the engine compartment.

A Windy trademark is the sturdy handrail incorporated around the inner side of the curved windscreen, which offers good protection and is served by three wipers.

Stowage around the cockpit is by way of under-seat lockers. Bulk items can be stashed beneath the sole in a couple of useful-sized compartments with hatches on gas struts.

### Interior

A handsome door and curved sliding hatch fabrication in toughened smoked glass and stainless steel gives access to a more classically finished interior than one might expect from the Scirocco's outward appearance.

Fit-out is largely in teak with pseudo bird's-eye veneer panelling, the deckhead giving around 6ft (1.85m) headroom and having any number of inset spotlights. The finish is to Windy's solid, unfussy but

Above: the 31's engine compartment is easily accessible, the UK-spec boat we tested being powered by twin 180hp Mercruisers. Below: the single helm seat and its adjacent double both have flip-up squabs so you can sit or stand in comfort.



elegant standard, with attention to detail extending right through to hidden areas.

The layout, conventional for this type of craft, has a galley area immediately to port of the companionway, a U-dinette right forward and a toilet compartment and separate midships cabin over to starboard. All are well proportioned and not in the least pinched.

The galley has plenty of usefully designed stowage and is equipped with a twin-burner alcohol or gas hob, a stainless steel sink unit and a fridge.

Six people can slide around the dinette's table, which drops to form a 6ft 0in x 5ft 10in (1.85m x 1.80m) double giving plenty of width right down to its foot. Although the seating itself is generous, the fineness of the hull beneath the chine is reflected in the rather small lockers underneath.

The fully moulded toilet/shower compartment is en-suite to the midships cabin as well as to the saloon area. It is adequate in size, and the moulding is fashioned to hide the pipework from the pump-out loo. An opening port gives ventilation and there is sufficient stowage.

A small bedside table separates the two bunks in the midships cabin, each measuring 6ft 3in x 2ft 0in (1.92m x 0.6m). The inner one houses the water tank underneath it, complete with an inspection plate, while other hatches in the bunk-bases give onto the hull and bilge stowage areas. Clothes storage is by way of a hanging locker and cupboard.

The overall finish is well up to Windy's usual standard, and we were pleased to see they have not skimped, as some manufacturers do, on finishing the carpet edges with durable binding, which can be lifted with out age to gain access to the various hatches for th icks.

## Engines

The line-up of twin engine options is comprehensive, with petrol and diesel variants totalling between 350 and 550hp from Mercruiser, Volvo and Yamaha.

The boat we tried in Norway had a single 230hp Volvo KAD42 diesel, an installation geared for the energy-taxed home market, which performed admirably. The UK-specification Scirocco we tested for performance figures had a pair of D3.6L 180hp six-cylinder diesel Mercruisers on Bravo Two single-prop legs, making a useful balance between performance and economy.

Getting at the compartment for inspection purposes is simply a matter of hiking clear a couple of the seat cushions and lifting the rear portion of the cockpit. This comes up pretty well in total, seat-bases and all, and although supported on a hefty gas strut still requires a reasonable amount of effort. An electric ram might be preferred by some.

There is adequate room to stand in the compartment, and plenty of space all around the engines and drives for the usual inspection routines and servicing.

All-in-all the installation appeared well found. With the many different engine permutations available, the exact location of items such as batteries, calorifier and fuel/water separators will vary; the boat we inspected had the latter readily servicable outboard to starboard, and the single fuel tank itself running across the forward end of the compartment, with the shut-offs and an inspection plate to hand.

Noise insulation did cover much of the compartment, but was of the foil-faced, single-foam type, an industry standard with which Windy appear

happy. The only other criticism we voiced concerned the rather vulnerable location of the Par diaphragm-type bilge pump, which, not being a submersible, appeared altogether too low in the bilge and capable of being swamped; this was almost immediately acted upon, and in future 31s the pump is to be located out of harm's way. The two bilge compartments further forward feed back to this single discharge point.

## Performance and handling

Our initial run in the 31, with a single Volvo 230hp KAD42 diesel installation, took us in company with a 33 Mistral and a 38 Grand Sport (previously known as the 11600) from Arendal near the southernmost tip of Norway up to Oslo, a trip of around 100 miles. We took it in three bites of a couple of hours apiece, with rest and refreshment stops in between.

With as many as ten people aboard and sea conditions far from flat, a couple of metres of groundswell at times topped off at 90° with a confused sea thrown up around the exposed Rakke peninsula, this was sure to be an interesting sea trial, especially as many aboard were perspective purchasers. And the proof of the Scirocco's seakeeping and general performance is that two couples started negotiations that same evening.

For our part, we found the boat a comfortable ride, ready to stick to the water without letting the awkward combination of troughs and crests interfere with our 25-knot progress.

Back in the UK, we put a twin 180hp Mercruiser diesel model through its paces in somewhat calmer conditions in the Solent to gather data.

Three-up and with full tanks, this configuration gave just on 32 knots flat-out at 3900rpm, 27.5 knots at 3500rpm and 24.5 knots at an easy working 3200rpm. Pulling right back to 2600rpm with the legs right in still allowed us to keep out of the 'hole' down to 15 knots.

Noise levels were fine, at cruising speeds hovering around 80dB(A) at the rear of the cockpit and an easily talked-over 77dB(A) at the helm.

Although one of the least powerful engine options, this package still offers plenty of driving but without fuss and bother. It accelerates up to 20 knots from rest within 10sec, and it is then simply a matter of winding out the drives a touch and forgetting them, any need for levelling (which we found to be rare) being attended too by a touch of tab. The boat tracked tidily, both on the straight and with plenty of helm applied.

## Conclusions

Windy owners are conscious that the marque has a distinctive style and an edge on many others, and that a drive for excessive gloss and dash would spoil that, making this just another line-up of open Mediterranean cruisers.

So yes, perhaps the Scirocco and its year-older brother the 33 Mistral are different in styling from earlier models, but in embracing the 1990s they have nevertheless not lost their true character.

The aficionados on the owners club trip were quick to notice that the boat we saw in Norway was hastily pulled together for trials within a few days of the moulding shop conflagration. The fit-out and attention to detail on the boat we later tested in the UK was much more what we would expect from a Windy: still solid, comfortable and dependable. □

## Windy 31 Scirocco

**Loa** 30ft 7in (9.32m).  
**Beam** 10ft 8in (3.26m).  
**Draught** 3ft 0in (0.90m).  
**Displacement** 4.4 tons.  
**Fuel capacity** 110gal (500lt).

**Water capacity** 44gal (200lt).

**Engines** twin Mercruiser 3.6L 180hp diesels.

**Price** from £82,304 ex VAT with twin 230hp petrols; £93,520 for the standard boat as tested.

**Builders** Windy Boats AS, Skarpsnes, Box 40, N-4975 Nedenes, Norway.

**UK concessionaires**

Express Cruisers Ltd, The Showroom on the Quay, Town Quay, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 9ET. Tel: 0590 679355.