

FAIRLINE TARGA 36

Stylish and sporty, the latest of the Targas builds on the popularity of its predecessors. We found some choppy conditions to test its capabilities.



Fairline launched the latest in their Targa range of open-cockpit sportscruisers at the Southampton Boat Show.

It follows the family style, with ample open-air entertaining space yet at the same time a roomy interior, with full-standing headroom, six berths and a layout designed for serious cruising. The styling is modern but not too flamboyant, and takes a leaf from the latest Italian books, with a straight-across windscreen and a heavily curved sidescreen profile.

Design and construction

Designed by Bernard Olesinski, as are all the Fairline range, the 36 has a variable-deadrise medium-to-deep-vee hull, maximising interior space but giving easy planing, fine head-sea performance and good handling in quartering seas. Deadrise is 25° amidships, reducing to 18½° at the transom.



Sprayrails improve handling and, together with a chine flat, give extra lift at the stern and a dry ride.

Construction takes the usual Fairline route, with an isophthalic resin gelcoat, backed by a first layer of glass that uses similar resin and power-bound mat. Isophthalic resin is more expensive than the orthophthalic resin used for the rest of the construction, but reduces water permeation and hence decreases the risk of osmosis in later life.

The hand laid-up laminate is a combination of chopped-strand mat, unidirectional and woven rovings, and top-hat section stringers, frames and stiffeners. The hull gelcoat can either be white, as standard, or coloured, for £600 extra.

Exterior

The Targa features the typical integral bathing platform as one route of getting aboard from the pontoon, though to do so you have to stretch out and swing round its 'wings'. Otherwise it is a tall climb up to the side decks and then down into the cockpit.

The bathing platform is surfaced in teak, neatly set into a moulded recess in the GRP, the most economical way of giving it a comfortable and luxurious non-slip finish. A central seat/locker provides somewhere to put on your underwater gear and store it, but does reduce the available space. Behind this, a hinged hatch in the transom makes a secure but invisible locker for up to four fenders.

Either side of the locker are pop-up aluminium cleats set in the transom face, which provide a neat mooring point for a tender. These are complemented by stainless steel grabrails on the platform wings. Telescopic dinghy davits are a £1400 option, but the mounting points for these are

Left: the latest Targa performed well for our photoshoot and also in uglier weather in Portsmouth Harbour and the Solent. Above and below: the fashionable helm position is comfortable whether you want to sit or stand.





already moulded into the transom top so they are a neat and unobtrusive addition.

To port, a hinged lid covers the boarding ladder, while a perspex door leads into the cockpit. Alongside, a hot-and-cold shower is partially recessed into the moulding, but still projects enough that it is likely to be caught by anyone walking through.

The cockpit of the 36 is on two levels, the lower one being aft.

This area has seating for six to eight people, around a table that drops to form the infill for a sunlounger, and stows in a deep locker underneath. A second locker here provides the gas-bottle stowage.

Opposite to port is a small wet-bar, with a sink and a top-loading chest fridge with its own cooling element. Drinkers are further catered for by a cut-out perspex corner holder for three glasses, though this is attached only by tiny velcro pads which could let go if the boat is bouncing around.

The whole floor lifts up to give access to the engines. Lifting out the floor of the base locker under the single seat next to the bar reveals the fuel cut-offs, though getting at these is a stretch, even once you have removed everything in the locker.

One step up, the forward cockpit level has an L-shaped seat to port, with room for three or four people, and the helm position to starboard, wide enough for a second person to perch on its corner.

The port seat back has no lower section, so loose items could slide off into the aft cockpit when the boat comes up on the plane, a point we have criticised on earlier Targa models; there is a locker under part of this seat, and a shallow glovebox ahead. The helm seat's squab hinges up, making the position comfortable whether you sit or stand. When sitting you look through a tinted screen, with your vision further impeded by the instrument panel; when standing up, you look over the screen and can get a lot of wind in your face, though whether this is caused by the straight-across top to the screen is not immediately apparent.

The helm itself is well laid-out, and the engine controls fall easily to your right hand. Trim controls



Fairline Targa 36

Engines twin Volvo Penta KAD42 diesels, 230hp at 3500rpm, 6cyl, 3.6lt.

Conditions wind SW Force 3, sea calm. Load fuel 100%, water 25%, crew 2.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range*	trim	sound levels dB(A)		
							saloon	helm	cockpit
2000	13.6	6.6	30	2.06	230	—	—	77	83
2500	19.5	11.2	51	1.74	195	—	—	78	84
3000	25.7	13.6	62	1.89	217	—	—	79	84
3300	28.5	15.4	70	1.85	207	—	—	81	85
3600	32.5	18.6	85	1.75	196	—	—	82	85
3900	34.8	24.0	109	1.45	162	—	—	83	86

(* allows 20% margin)

Loa 36ft 11in (11.26m) Air draught 10ft 2in (3.10m)

Hull length 35ft 6in (10.82m) Displacement 6 tonnes

Beam 11ft 8in (3.54m) Fuel capacity 140gal (635lt)

Draught 3ft 2in (0.97m) Water capacity 66gal (300lt)

Price from £112,695 ex VAT with Volvo Penta KAD42s



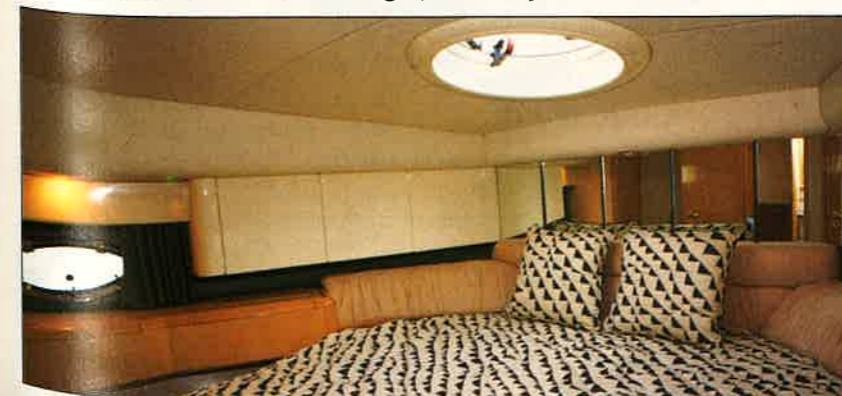
are similarly well placed, with power trim to the left of the wheel and tabs ahead of the controls, though the trim gauges are set in the top of the dash, so cannot be seen when you are seated. The combined echo-sounder/log is set clearly to the left of the wheel, while further left a column of ready-use switches neatly follows the moulded edge of the console. The compass is easy to read at all times, as is the display of engine instruments set forward across the dash.

The instruments are by Robertson, their fashionable white faces contrasting with the green gelcoat of the dash. On a more practical level, the red warning lights set into the individual gauges give immediate visual notice of low oil, low volts or high temperature. These are backed up by audible alarms which can be muted if desired — a welcome feature.

Climbing out of the cockpit onto the side decks is helped on the port side by a moulded step, but to starboard you have to stand on the seat and clamber around the goalpost radar mast.

The decks themselves are 6in (15cm) wide at the aft end, with an angled gunwale lip and guardrails. Moving forward is helped by the fact that the navigation lights are cleverly-recessed (though they still shine far enough ahead), but the mounting feet of the midships cleat can trip you. The moulded non-slip continues over the coachroof, where there is also a recess for a three or four-person sunlounger, flanked by low inboard rails and with

Top left: the lower cockpit level features a wet-bar and top-loading fridge. Below left: a convenient seat helps make up for restricted headroom in the aft cabin, and the top steps alongside the galley lift to reveal a domestic-sized rubbish bin. Above: the table in the dinette hinges open to double its size, and has built-in recesses when closed. Below: the well-lit master cabin is dominated by a large central berth.



two banks of glassholders at its head.

The foredeck is well laid out, with a semi-recessed Lofrans electric windlass handling the anchor through a stainless steel stemhead fitting. A half-width hatch gives access to a large chain locker, but there is no partition in here, so ropes or fenders could get jammed in the chain. Mooring is taken care of by 10in (25cm) aluminium cleats forward, midships and aft.

Interior

A central sliding perspex door gives access to the cabin. Four steps lead down into the saloon, with a galley to starboard and a dinette to port.

The galley is a good size, in a one-piece moulding with the plain gelcoat set off by neatly inset green Avonite panels for a practical but attractive effect. A double gas hob and sink are concealed beneath lift-out panels, giving maximum worktop area when required, with a small moulded fiddle all round. Underneath are a gas oven, a fridge and a medium-size locker.

Tailored crockery stowage is set into the worktop, with further small lockers overhead. There is more storage space under a hinged hatch in the sole, its volume being ideal for tins, bottles and other stores. The only problem is that the space goes right down to the vee of the keel, which means any water running through the bilge will damage the goods; it would have been easy to put a simple floorboard in.

The top two steps alongside the galley lift on gas struts to reveal a cleverly located rubbish bin — not the usual shoebox size, but a practical domestic kitchen-sized bin with a hinged top, a ring to hold the liner bag and room alongside for dry rubbish. This arrangement is very welcome. Any boatowner will know that we produce just as much rubbish afloat as we do at home, yet most boats seem to be designed by people who never have to deal with the realities of life aboard.

A second hatch in the sole gives access to the shower sump pump-out box, plus space for a second bilge pump, though this is apparently not fitted as standard. Just one bilge pump on a 36ft boat costing over £130,000 seems an unwise economy.

Above the galley is a clear and simple electrical distribution and switch panel.

Opposite to port is the curved dinette, seating up to six people. The table, which drops to form the infill for a double berth, is a clever and attractive design, with hinged flaps to double its size and recesses in the top when closed. As with the rest of the interior, it is finished in maple, to the excellent standard that has become a Fairline hallmark.

Four lockers above the settee, and more underneath, provide a moderate amount of storage space. The forward end contains a pull-out cocktail drawer, with tailor-made bottle and glass stowages.

At the forward end of the saloon, to starboard, is the toilet compartment, a good size and well planned. It can be entered either from the saloon or from the forward cabin, giving the occupants of the latter some extra privacy.

The shower and toilet are separated from the rest of the compartment by a cylindrical perspex door, and a lid over the loo allows it to double as a seat when you are showering. The large sink is part of an all-moulded module, with Avonite infills providing the contrast, and the teak and holly sole is attractive,

with a teak grating in the shower. There are lockers above and below the worktop, plus an outboard shelf.

The master cabin forward has a large central double berth, with walkaround room at its foot and 6ft 2in (1.88m) headroom at the aft end. Storage is provided by a locker in the foot of the berth, while the rest of the space is taken up by the water tank. There are three-quarter-height lockers port and starboard, one for hanging clothes and the other with shelves, plus a small dressing table on each side and three overhead lockers. Light and ventilation come from an overhead hatch, plus outboard portlights.

At the after end of the saloon, a door to port leads into the aft cabin. This runs under the cockpit, but makes good use of the space and would be suitable for a couple to use on longer trips. You have 6ft 3in (1.90m) headroom over 20% of the area, and a small seat which is very useful, avoiding the need to lounge on the bed when you do not want to stand. The athwartships berth can be either two singles or a double.

Stowage includes a dressing table and a small locker, plus a narrow hanging locker. A large amount of space is found underneath the berth(s), but again this goes right down to the keel. Given that the manufacturers have gone to the trouble of hinging the boards under the mattresses, it would have been little extra effort to put in a false floor across the stringers.

Light and ventilation come from a sliding window that gives onto the cockpit, plus outboard portlights.

Engines

Power comes from twin outdrives, from either Mercruiser or Volvo Penta. Options run from 235hp to 330hp petrols, and from 200hp to 275hp diesels.

Our test boat was fitted with a pair of 230hp Volvo KAD42 diesels, driving through Duoprop legs. These are likely to be the most popular choice, and as our test confirmed they are ideal for the boat.

The engines are mounted under the cockpit. The sole is raised in one piece by an electrohydraulic mechanism, switched from the helm. Space in the compartment is tight, and the tendency is to stand on the plastic covers on top of the engines as you climb in. If you try to step down in front of the engines, your legs get very close to the various drivebelts.

Access to equipment on the forward bulkhead is reasonable, including the fuel filter/separators, the battery charger, blowers and trim-tab hydraulics. However, reaching the single electric bilge pump, between the engines aft, would be virtually impossible in an emergency.

The batteries and calorifier are mounted outboard to port, the former in a GRP box. Electrical power comes from two 12V 135Ah batteries, one for starboard engine start, and the other for port engine and domestics.

Handling and performance

The weather dealt us a perfect hand for our test: a southeasterly Force 5-6 with a nice chop and an underlying swell. These are not the conditions you would want to set out on a long passage in, but they are quite reasonable for short hops, possibly the kind of thing you might encounter halfway through a Channel crossing, and definitely what we like to help

us assess a boat's qualities.

We picked up our Targa from PJ Yachts at Port Solent, and the run down through Portsmouth Harbour first gave us the opportunity to try its low-speed handling qualities. It tracked a straight line, with easy control. As we picked up speed the superchargers on the Volvos started to cut in, which can produce a persistent whine, but in this case it was muted, possibly helped by the bathing platform locker reducing the noise coming up the transom.

Punching through the chop at the entrance to the Harbour, we were obliged by the speed limit to keep below 10 knots for some time, which can often produce uncomfortable chunks of water over the bow, but with the legs trimmed well out, the spray was minimal.

Out in open water, the Targa picked up speed smoothly, with no significant planing lag. Out of habit we trimmed the legs in to get going, but in fact it was possible to leave them in a mid-position and just use the throttles.

Running across the waves the boat was stable, with no rolling, and an easy motion at 25-30 knots. The inevitable lean into the wind was quickly corrected with the trim tabs. Downwind we opened the throttles wide, and surfed down the waves at just under 35 knots, completely in control. The power-steering was precise and light, enabling us to correct every movement, one-handed if required. Quartering seas were handled just as comfortably, with very little corkscrewing.

Driving into the waves, we started at 20 knots, but this left the bow just dropping into every crest, so we eased the throttles open slightly and at 25 knots found the happy medium. With the legs trimmed in to get the bow down, the 36 cut through everything that was marching up the Solent.

There is an exhilaration that gets to you at a moment like this, when you know you are in the right boat in the right conditions, with a perfect match of power and hull — just long enough and heavy enough to bridge the waves and not be thrown about, and with a reserve of power to respond immediately to the bigger holes. Occasionally, this being a very windy day, a big chunk of spray would be blown across the deck, but we had time to see it coming and duck.

The performance figures we recorded showed a maximum speed of almost 35 knots at 3900rpm. At this speed the KAD42s would be drawing 24gph (109lph). Backing off to 3300rpm gave a comfortable 28.5 knots on 15.4gph (70lph). And dropping down further to a steady cruising 3000rpm and just over 25 knots gave a fuel-conscious 13.6gph (62lph) and approaching 2mpg, for range of 200 miles plus.

Noise levels were fair to good, especially towards the helm. Our 3000rpm cruising setting gave 79dB(A) here, but a slightly more intrusive 84dB(A) at the rear of the cockpit.

Conclusion

Another worthy addition to the Targa family, the 36 is bound to sell well. It has plenty of space, in the cockpit and down below, while the quality of finish is excellent.

We were pleased to be able to find some serious testing conditions — not too rough to knock the boat off the plane, but enough to leave you agonising as to whether to go out — and Olesinski's hull came up trumps yet again. □

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