



FACT FILE
Aquador 28HT
LOA: 28ft 10in
(8.08m)
PRICE: £119,950
TOP SPEED:
40 knots

MOTOR BOATS TESTED

Aquador 28HT

This stylish walkaround with a sturdy hardtop, sliding sunroofs and comfortable accommodation, could be the ideal boat for UK cruising REPORT BY MARK TURLEY

This smart Finnish range may only span from 21ft to 32ft, but the yard offers no less than a dozen different models, so there's bound to be one boat that fits the bill; whether it's a walkaround with an overnight cabin or something that provides protective, northern clime, family cruising. This 28 Hard Top, fills the niche for those that want to be in when they are out, and out

when they are in. This might sound complicated but, on a typically changeable test day, it proved to be quite simple.

Design & Build

Although it's great to have a degree of protection there is a point on sub-30-footers where any full-on shelter can become a bit too close for comfort inside, while also limiting deck space

outside. Of course, we need not have worried, as this is a Finnish boat and the Finns thrive on keeping things practical.

The half in-half out cockpit area feels right whether you are basking in full sun or battened down mode, with two sunroofs in the hardtop and a simple but excellent canopy that encloses the rear. It is important to get the cockpit right on a boat like this as it doubles as the main living

area and in this case it includes a decent working galley opposite a comfortable, convertible dinette. This cockpit provides good seating for three across the helm area as well as full headroom, without the hardtop making the boat look top-heavy.

Down below the big surprise is a separate cabin tucked under the helm and while we have alluded to the fact that the upper area is the primary living spot, a generous dinette forward is inviting too. The warm cherry woodwork and smart but comfortable upholstery make it a place you want to dive down to and get cosy.

If all this warm, practical detail leads you to believe that we are talking semi-displacement performance here, think again. The 28HT sports a dynamic deep-vee hull good for the best part of 40 knots from a single sterndrive installation, as well as some throw around handling.

Design & build

Clever, neat marriage of hardtop to cockpit



Exterior

The bathing platform is just the right depth for safe boarding and from there you have neat integral steps up to the side decks. Another neat design touch you come across is the fender locker that has been let into the transom, far better than having to root around under cushions for your fenders. Teak decking comes as standard on the bathing platform, cockpit and foredeck, but oddly you need to pay extra for a windlass.

Access along the side decks doesn't feel too dicey as handholds fall where you would like them to be, but we do wonder whether the yard has missed a trick here by not going down the asymmetric route and shunting the superstructure over to provide a single, wider run of deck on one side or the other.

The cockpit dinette – a comfortable convertible

with a hefty wood table – is partially protected by the hardtop structure but to get it fully undercover all you need to do is pull out the canopy frame from the hardtop moulding and, if needs be, zip in the side curtains. The squared-off nature of the canopy means that it doesn't impinge on the headroom of those seated and you certainly don't feel restricted as you move

“The hardtop is substantial and it doesn't encroach on your view too much”

around the cockpit. This is doubly important given the likelihood that someone is probably going to be hovering in and around the galley, whether they're making a cuppa or preparing something more substantial. And serious

cooking is a possibility, as the designer has wangled the chef extra counter space by making the underside of the hinge-over passenger seat part and parcel of the worktop; the whole run being





finished in hard-wearing Corian. Another nice touch is the galley's 'soft-close' drawers. Overall this is a well-appointed spot, which comes complete with a diesel-fired stove, circular sink, fridge and a useful amount of storage to help keep your galley clutter-free.

Other stowage around the cockpit runs to a number of underdeck lazarette lockers, namely a huge void beneath the hinge-over passenger seat and another beside the enginebay towards the transom.

The hardtop looks substantial and it doesn't encroach too much on the view or the amount of light getting into the cockpit. With twin sunroofs, that manually slide open, there is every chance of a tan through the decent-sized opening over the helm, a plus point for sun worshippers.

Exterior
A busy cockpit that manages not to feel too cramped
✓✓✓✓✓

Accommodation

Down a couple of steps there is a bulkhead either side – partitioning off the midships cabin on one side and the well-proportioned toilet compartment on the other – leaving the area at the bow to be filled with a commodious, comfortable dinette. Seated headroom here is fine even if the overall cabin height dips



Decent bucket seats at the helm, with lifting squabs



A full working galley is situated in the cockpit



The good-sized dinette is protected by a simple but effective pull-out canopy

just below the 6ft (1.83m) mark. Stowage is as good as space permits with lined storage bins under the seat cushions, a hanging locker, a further cupboard or two and proper fiddled shelving outboard. The dinette converts to a sizeable double, or given that the seat bases are a good width – 2ft (60cm) – they could work as a pair of V-shaped singles.

Usually on a boat of this size the midships cabin ends up as little more than a mattress area squeezed under the cockpit with the minimum of standing room at the entrance. Not so here. By pushing the cabin bulkhead out a touch, you get just that bit more elbow room, a handy seat, plus a decent amount of stowage.

The toilet compartment, which doubles as a useable shower, shares the cherry wood detailing found throughout the boat and benefits from a good run of countertop plus a couple of lockers. However, if you're after a hot shower there is one thing missing, heat. You'll need to choose the hot water package off the options list, which is an odd omission on what is an otherwise impressively spec'd boat.

Accommodation
Cosy yet still spacious and snugly finished
✓✓✓✓✓

Engine Options & Access

Aquador isn't shy when installing horsepower, and in this instance all of it is diesel. The starting point is 300hp Volvo Penta D4 and tops out with a 370hp D6. The latter 6cyl unit is almost certainly the way to go but the D4 is still going to give you all the performance you need. It's worth noting that Volvo has actually dropped the particular rating we tried, one producing 350hp, in favour of a 330hp unit, but even so you are not going to want for power.

Access to the main engine check points is fine although the hefty cockpit table needs removing from its pedestal before the deck hatch can be lifted; some minor modifications here might allow it to rise up without having to fiddle with the table. In fact, the hatch only bears the forward part of the compartment and for more major servicing the rear seat base needs to be unscrewed and removed, but it is less of a problem given items like the water strainer and



A handy transom boot for fenders



Whether you're after sleep or social time, the warmth of the cherry joinery is incredibly inviting down below



The midships cabin has its own door, standing headroom and a seat



A smart toilet compartment

Engine options & access
Useful range of diesel options and tidy installations
✓✓✓✓✓

Performance & Handling

The data in our performance table is based on the test boat's 350hp unit and therefore boats sporting the re-rated engine will almost certainly fall slightly short of the 36 knots we clocked.

However, the hull's performance will remain the same, which means a quick and easy lift into planing mode and cruising in the high twenties without the boat, engine or occupants feeling any strain. The underwater sections benefit from a useful amount of deadrise and this translates into a pretty soft ride coupled with some tight, sporty handling, so be sure to give your crew some warning before you start slinging it around. Having got that out of your system, it's simply a matter of getting the engine settled around the 3000rpm mark, with a bit of trim on the leg, and you'll be eating up the miles to the tune of 28 knots.

The hardtop gives excellent protection and while the roof can be kept open in all but the



Lazarette storage in the cockpit



The engine hatch exposes the main service points

BOAT REPORT

AQUADOR 28HT

worst conditions, it was good to see that the screen is also fitted with a demisters for those instances when you have to batten down. We also appreciate the trio of individual seats at the helm. These nicely contoured seats, with flip-up squabs do a great job of keeping you comfortably ensconced when underway.

Visibility is good, although check thoroughly before making a hard turn as your side view is obscured for a few moments by the hardtop until

you straighten out a touch.

Performance & handling

Plenty of pace without the wind in your hair



Everything for the skipper falls nicely to hand although we noticed larger electronics need to be bracket mounted, even if there is plenty of dash space for small items.

Specification & Value

The boat's standard spec is pretty good except for two noticeable omissions; hot water and shorepower. However, being a Finnish boat it comes with heating and demisters – always a bonus – plus the cockpit is given the teak treatment, not simply the bathing platform. And you don't have to pay extra for the blue hull, which some manufacturers load-on from the options list, plus Aquador set you up with some basic electronics.

However, we did spot that the base price doesn't include shipping and commissioning, and this will add on an extra four and a half grand to the price,

which is certainly a point to haggle over.

Specification & value

A bit pricey but you can see where the money is spent



Negotiating skills aside, with the 28HT you are sure to end up with one of the best equipped and well-presented boats in its class.

Verdict

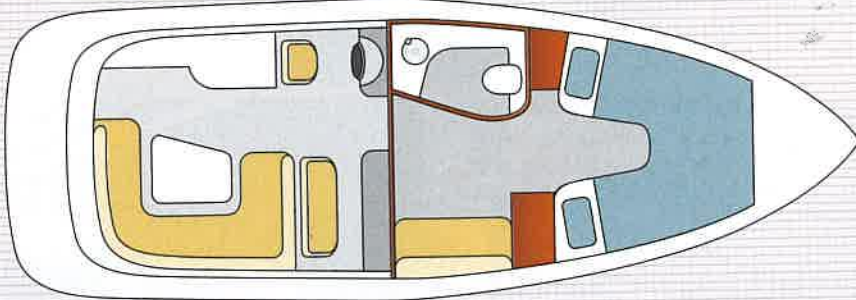
We thought Aquador's 28HT would be a great compromise between a full-on wheelhouse walkaround and a sports cruiser. In fact, it isn't a compromise at all – it's way better than that. What we have here just might be the perfect marriage of pace and cruising practicality

9/10

MBM rating



Aquador 28HT technical data



specifications

BUILD	GRP
RCD	C
LENGTH OVERALL	28ft 10in (8.80m)
HULL LENGTH	27ft 8in (8.43m)
BEAM	10ft 2in (3.10m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 0in (0.90m)
DISPLACEMENT	4.4 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	84gal (380lt)
WATER CAPACITY	21gal (95lt)

key dimensions

WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	6in (25cm)
HARDTOP HEADROOM	6ft 5in (1.96m)
HEADROOM IN CABIN	5ft 10in (1.78m)
FORWARD BERTH	6ft 6in x 6ft 0in (1.98 x 1.83m)
MIDSHIPS CABIN BERTH	6ft 4in x 4ft 2in (1.93 x 1.27m)

performance

Engines	single Volvo D6/DP 350hp diesel
Configuration	6cyl, 5.5lt, 350hp @3500rpm
conditions	wind NE'ly, Force 4, sea slight
Load	fuel 70% water 50% crew 3

Rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	noise
2500	21.3	5.7	26	3.74	251	78
2800	25.6	7.4	33	3.46	232	79
3000	28.5	9.2	42	3.10	208	80
3200	31.6	11.4	52	2.77	186	81
3600	36.1	14.5	66	2.50	167	83

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to imperial gallons. These figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temperature, crew numbers, hull fouling, fuel quality and other issues. Noise readings in dB(A) were recorded at the helm.



prices

STANDARD BOAT	inc VAT
with single Volvo D6 330hp	£119,950
BOW THRUSTER	£2245
HEATING	standard
ELECTRIC WINDLASS	£2146
SHOREPOWER	£1237
TEAK IN COCKPIT	standard
DELIVERY & COMMISSIONING	£4658
BOAT AS TESTED	£129,100

ENQUIRIES Sea Ventures Ltd.

Tel: 01590 672472. www.aquadorboats.fi

the rivals



SEALINE SC29

From £132,080

Slightly larger, and available with twin engines. Sealine's soft canopy arrangement offers plenty for its size, with a galley down below. Tel: 01562 749100 www.sealine.com



NIMBUS 30 NOVA S

From £142,000

Like the Aquador, the galley and dinette reside in the cockpit of the Nova, which frees up space for two good sized cabins down below. Tel: 01590 677955 www.offshore-powerboats.co.uk



JEANNEAU 30S

From £116,250

More of a conventional cruiser in terms of layout than the Aquador, and it has one of the best mid cabins you'll find on a boat of this size. Twin installations are the norm. www.jeanneau.com