

WINDY 31 TORNADO

A mould-breaking cockpit design and an efficient hull give this new sportscruiser looks to die for and a sparkling performance.

Scandinavian boatbuilders have a well-founded reputation for producing competent small to medium-sized fast motorboats which do what they are supposed to do rather well. Among the Norwegian builders, Windy Boats have developed a range of sprightly sportscruisers from 24ft (7.3m) to 41ft (12.5m) and have an unsurpassed reputation for high-quality building standards.

Their latest offering, the Tornado, sits neatly in the middle of their range of fast sportscruisers, and its combination of brisk performance and a

highly innovative design kicks the company up a gear in their chosen market.

We were in Norway in midwinter for the launch of the twin-engined version, and following its British preview at the London Boat Show we got to try a single-engined version in the UK.

Design

The 31 Tornado is the sixth Windy from the drawing board of Hans Jørgen Johnsen, who was a production engineering member of the Fjordplast design team in the 1970s. For speeds up to 40 knots and the option of single or twin diesel or petrol engines, he has delivered a monohedron hull of variable deadrise, 20° at the transom, and it comes with three sprayrails per side,





the outer one running right aft.

Hull construction is largely from bi-directional woven rovings, with foam stringers and plywood bulkheads and frames, while the topsides feature a lay-up of chopped strand mat stiffened with Divinycel, with a pronounced knuckle above the waterline. The bathing platform follows modern practice, being integral to the topside mouldings.

Johnsen's brief from Windy was to produce an all-activity craft capable of handling fishing, skiing,

weekending or more prolonged holidays. But it had also to look good, and it does.

Exterior

The overall lines of the Tornado are pleasing to the eye, with a purposefully raked forefoot, matched by a deck which tapers neatly down to the stem. Usable side decks, with flush-fitted fuel and freshwater fillers, are contained within a low-line stainless steel

bow rail, and that line is picked up and complemented by the substantial wraparound windscreen, with its oval section surround. Also oval, the portholes are set into the topsides.

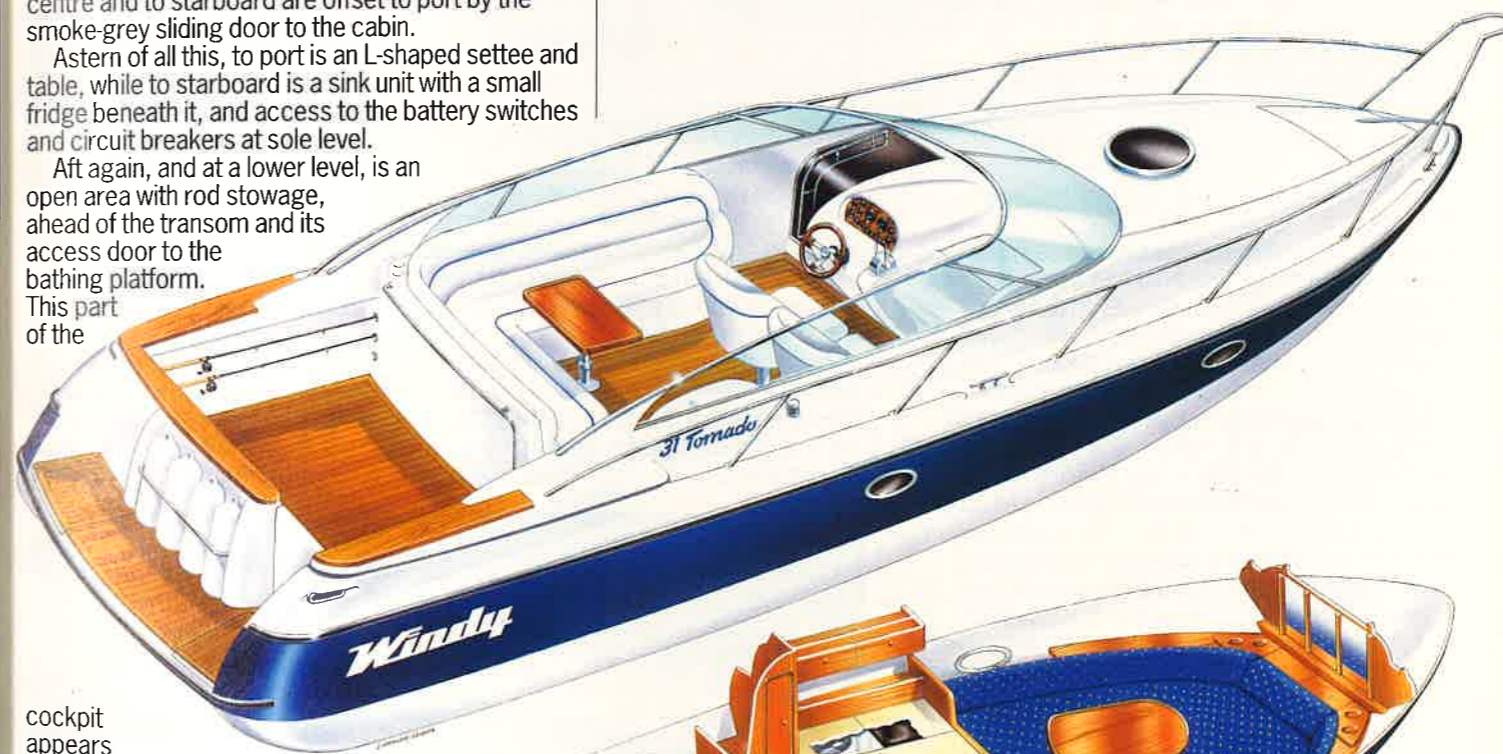
Tubular stainless steel fairleads carry mooring lines neatly to the aft cockpit cleats, while the aft quarters are supplemented by stylish GRP mouldings which disguise the engineroom air intakes. These and the transom top are surmounted by oiled-teak capping rails.

Occupying about two thirds of the deck space, the teak-laid cockpit is perhaps the most striking feature of the design.

Unusually, the helm position is located on the centreline of the vessel, with the wheel nestling in the lee of a neat instrument console. Oil pressure and water temperature displays, voltmeters, tachometers and fuel and freshwater gauges fit neatly here, as do trim tab and power-trim controls. These all come neatly to hand, as do the single-lever engine controls set handily to starboard of the wheel. Twin height-adjustable helm seats at the centre and to starboard are offset to port by the smoke-grey sliding door to the cabin.

Astern of all this, to port is an L-shaped settee and table, while to starboard is a sink unit with a small fridge beneath it, and access to the battery switches and circuit breakers at sole level.

Aft again, and at a lower level, is an open area with rod stowage, ahead of the transom and its access door to the bathing platform. This part of the



cockpit appears perfectly suited to sunbathing and the handling of ski lines or fishing gear. The outer transom contains fender baskets, while a bathing ladder and freshwater shower are contained in lifting flush-topped lockers moulded into the platform itself.

An optional hinging sunbed fills the aft cockpit when folded out, but might possibly infringe on its other functions, notably depriving the crew of ready access to the rods, the manual bilge pump and the shorepower connections.

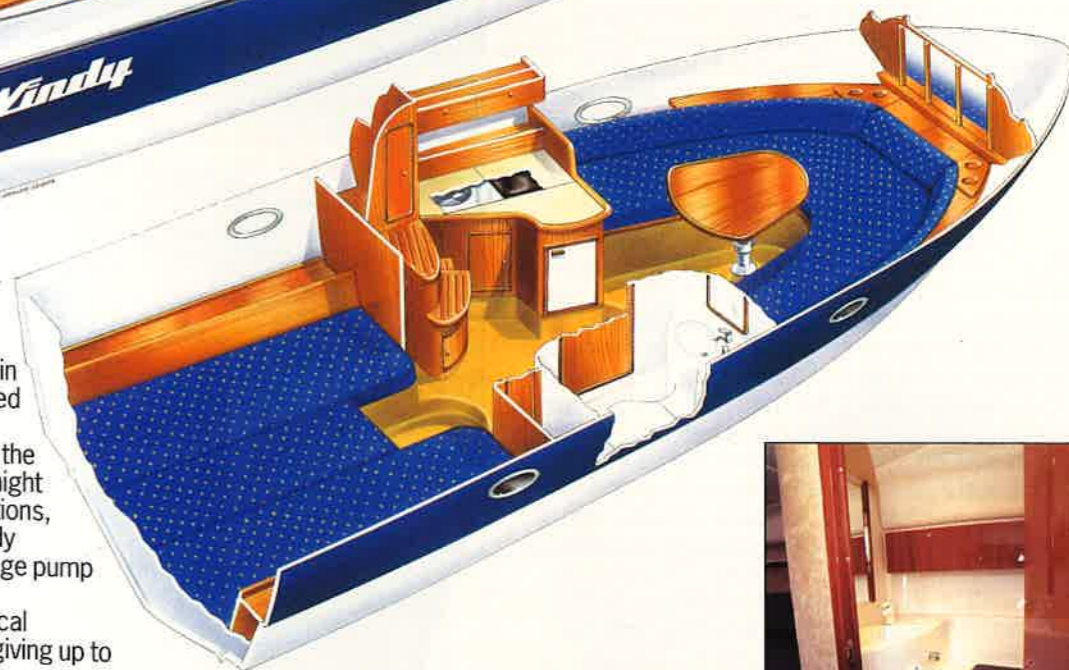
The Tornado comes with a typical two-piece canvas cockpit cover, giving up to 6ft 2in (1.88m) headroom.

Interior

Interestingly for a nation who have always prided themselves on their indigenous timber finishes, all



Above: forward of the practical galley is a vee-dinette which converts into a double berth. Left: the neat helm console is positioned on the centreline, with a co-pilot seat to starboard and the companionway to port.



Top: the midships cabin has a vast double berth, sitting headroom, and a curtain for privacy. Right: to starboard is a well appointed toilet/shower.



the interior joinery on this Norwegian boat has been sourced out of Italy, a sure sign that the Windy team view the Tornado as a truly European offering which has to measure up to its rivals when it comes to sophistication of interior treatment.

The first boat off the production line featured ivory-coloured overheads and stone-coloured carpets to complement its lacquered rosewood joinery. The effect was to transform what might otherwise have been a sombre interior into a light, bright finish that stands comparison with any of the model's rivals.

To port is a hanging locker and a galley featuring a sink, a twin-hob cooker and a refrigerator, plus plenty of stowage, all of which is attractively fiddled and finished. To starboard is a well-appointed toilet/shower compartment. Aft of a mirrored forward bulkhead, a twin berth in the vee can be infilled in the conventional way, using the table, and has a big Bomar deck hatch above it for natural light and ventilation.

A vast full-width double berth with sitting headroom is located midships, beneath the cockpit sole, separated from the saloon by a privacy curtain.

The finish on joinery, overheads and trim throughout the saloon, and indeed the whole vessel, is excellent for a boat of this size, conveying exactly the right degree of comfortable opulence.

Engines

A variety of single or twin, petrol or diesel, engines can be installed. Our test boat had a pair of 230hp Volvo Penta KAD42 turbo-diesels on Duoprop sterndrives, but we also ran a boat with a single engine of the same type in Solent waters.

Access to the enginespace is via a double-ram electrohydraulic lifting sole in the cockpit, giving acres of room, around twin or single units, in which to attend to regular daily inspection and service needs. The forward bulkhead is tucked well up the boat, and a neat, well-soundproofed installation features all the safety equipment so beloved of Scandinavian builders and the Norwegian (and international) Det Norske Veritas classification.

Automatic and manual bilge pumps, extinguishers and engine extractor fans come as standard, and the installation appears as tidy as any we have seen.

Performance & handling

If the Tornado is an exciting boat to look at, its performance lives up to that image.

Initially, when we saw the boat launched, in Oslo Fjord, it appeared to sit very high. But on driving it we found no indication of tenderness, and with the drives tucked beneath the stern platform, low-speed manoeuvrability off the docks was precise and well controlled. The Tornado feels solid and well found, and a good double-handful of throttle produces an immediate response with little sign of squatting, and with sight lines perfectly maintained.

Once up on the plane, at around 2000rpm, the combination of Duoprops and responsive diesels allowed us to adopt any throttle setting, with the boat feeling easy and unstressed. A 2500rpm setting produced 24 knots, 3000rpm gave 31 knots, 3500rpm saw 37 knots and we clocked 42 knots at 3800rpm, which, with less than three hours running on the engines, was as far as we could go. Windy's own test run, carried out later, produced a top speed of 41.9 knots at 3950rpm,

with full tanks.

Within the calm and cold waters of the fjord, the boat gave a dry and stable ride with no vices or deviations and as we sought more confused waters further out to sea, those characteristics were maintained.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of the ride was its near silence; we heard a worst case of 84.8dB(A) in the aft cockpit and 83.5dB(A) in the saloon, which is as good as it gets in a modest-sized, largely open boat at speed. Hydraulic steering gave fingertip control, and handling in all our trials was precise and progressive, never giving us the slightest cause for concern.

The single KAD42 installation produced a best speed of around 31 knots.

Lack of trials time meant we were unable to do our own fuel consumption tests. Windy sent us their own figures for the boat with the twin KAD42s, and these show that at 30 knots, a reasonable cruising speed, the engines burn a total of 47lph (10.3gph) or 1.56lpm (0.34gpm).

Conclusions

With their new Tornado 31, Windy have tackled their world market with foresight and verve, throwing aside the shackles of traditional Scandinavian building practices while not losing any of the quality and ingenuity which attends it.

As a fast sports cruiser and weekender, the boat goes head-to-head with a number of established builders, and with a combination of style and substance, should make heads turn in both northern and southern Europe.

Such performance, quality and style carry with them a premium price. But the 31 offers value for money and, as a prestige offering, should not only attract existing owners of the marque but also recruit new followers from surprising quarters. □

Windy 31 Tornado

Loa 30ft 11in (9.42m).
Hull length 23ft 4in (7.11m) excluding bathing platform.
Beam 9ft 10in (3.00m).
Draught 2ft 10in (0.86m).
Displacement 3.3 tonnes.
Fuel capacity 116gal (530lt).
Water capacity 33gal (150lt).
Engines twin 230hp Volvo Penta KAD42 diesels.
Price £99,536 ex VAT as standard; £102,036 as tested.
Builders Windy Boats AS, Skarpnes, Box 40, N-4875 Nedenes, Norway. Tel: (47) 37 09 56 00.
Suppliers Express Cruisers Ltd, The Shipyard, Bath Road, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 3YL Tel: 01590 673312.

Below: single or twin engine installations are neatly installed under the cockpit sole, which lifts on two hydraulic rams.

