

Targa 32

BOAT REPORT



MOTOR BOAT & YACHTING

December 2011

BOTNIA *Targa 32*



**WATCH
THE VIDEO!**
mby.com/bt32



For those who want to go anywhere and do anything – this Finnish powerhouse is a meticulous homage to craftsmanship

Text: **Jack Haines** Photos: **Lester McCarthy**





At September's PSP Southampton Boat Show the latest variant of the Botnia Targa range hit the water, the Targa 32. It replaces two models, the 31 and the 33, with headline

highlights being improved space in the accommodation and, with the optional twin IPS400 engines, the potential to be the fastest Targa ever created. A fearless, hard-as-nails, 46-knot bruiser of a boat and one that *MBY* couldn't wait to have a tussle with.

Herds of marine journalists have tested the countless versions of the Targa, but with only the entry-level 23.1 under my belt this seemed the perfect opportunity to test the 32 as a boat in its own right. Seeing past all that has gone before and the reputation that precedes it, how does the 32 stack up as an individual boat? And are the traditional charms of everyone's favourite high-speed potting shed still as relevant now to a 30-35ft market which is pumped full of choice and innovation?

PRACTICAL DELIGHTS

The first thing you have to do is get past the looks – if you don't like the styling then you're unlikely to get much further than that. If you look closely at the rearmost windows on the 32 you will spot a small diagonal kick in the bottom corner. There was plenty of deliberation about this radical (for Botnia) stylistic quirk at the factory and it nearly didn't make it. Some clear evidence if ever there was any of how proud the yard are of their no-nonsense design.

However, there's much to be said for clean rugged styling and with this boat you open yourself up to a whole host of practical benefits. The decks are deep and safe and there are above-waist-height guardrails all the way round, and the ones aft are topped with teak. There isn't a sunpad in sight but you have got two separate seating areas fore and aft. The front area is best suited to dining with its U-shaped seating and the head of the table perched on the raised moulding that transforms the forward cabin. The teak table, which at first seems far too lovely to be used to eat off, folds neatly into a locker in the bow.

The aft deck is left completely open and is therefore extremely versatile – it can be used as a dive platform, a watersports changing area, fishing spot or just somewhere to unfold a pair of deckchairs. The twin transom gates are safe and their large opening creates a real connection with the water when the boat is at anchor and an inviting pathway down to the large bathing platform. The bathing platform, incidentally, sets the tone for a whole host of practical features, which, in all honesty, make

The double navigator's seat to port now has a hinged backrest so that with a mere push it's reversed and joins up with the dinette

the Targa 32 what it is. There's a thick rubbing strake around its perimeter which then continues around the rest of the boat, and Botnia have had the foresight to install an inspection hatch in the middle of the platform for unrestricted access to the sterndrives. How useful is that if something gets caught around the prop or a leg is playing up at sea?

Deck storage is superb as well: every seat, both fore and aft, has a locker beneath it and the lids are held shut with chunky latches. Fenders are dealt with in fiddled slots beneath the flybridge helm seats and they're held down with a nice, reliable length of cord. The boat is peppered with details like this – the boat hook is locked in place by clips and a bungee cord inside an upright coaming in front of the helmsman's sliding side door. On the inside there are catches on every drawer, cupboard and cubby, no matter how small, and crockery and glassware is held in snug-fitting fiddles. Handholds protrude from anywhere that they can be squeezed onto, even the wheelhouse, despite the towering bulwarks.

STEP INSIDE

The theme of practicality continues when you enter the saloon via one of two sliding doors. There's more wood in here than in a sauna factory and it's all of the very highest quality, with every drawer snapping shut with an engineered 'clack'. The main change over the previous models is one of the simplest alterations but it works brilliantly. The double navigator's seat to port now has a hinged backrest so that with a mere push it's reversed and joins up perfectly with the dinette. The optional KAB helm seat on our test boat also swivelled so it could join the party, meaning that six people can sit in comfort for dinner. The table does the usual Targa party trick of sliding upwards and out of the way via the pole on which it's mounted. This is such a great feature because the table has boundless scope for adjustment, for example it can be raised high enough to be used as a second chart table that you can stand next to on passage.

The other news is in the cabins, which are located at either end of the boat. The forward cabin, accessed by double doors and a hatch which hisses open on twin gas struts, now has standing headroom at the bottom of the companionway stairs so you can get changed without developing a kink in your spine. It's still pretty cosy but the berths are plenty long enough if a little narrow. Storage is in the form of two cave lockers at the head of the berths (designed for sleeping bags apparently), some shelving on either side of the cabin and some hooks. Okay for T-shirts, shorts and hanging a waterproof but leave the Armani suit at home.

Guests will have to make it across the saloon to go to the loo in the night, which is a bit of a pain, but at least when they get there it has full standing headroom, another improvement on the 32. It's a very good heads, actually, with light from a big port, three separate storage areas and a pull-out shower head plus hooks to hang wet waterproofs. The aft cabin has three berths all together, one big double, which is compromised a touch by its proximity to the saloon floor, and a coffin-like single berth behind the ladder that leads down into the cabin. This won't be anyone's first choice but it's great to have the option and is ideally suited for a child. Storage is much better here with a big hanging locker and two deep drawers in the same unit as well as more hooks.

OUT ON THE WATER

Having got over the initial disappointment of our test boat not being equipped with the mighty 400hp Volvos (this is a Scandinavian-specced boat and they go for all the creature comforts and the smallest engines to keep an eye on the environment, according to Wessex Marine), I pulled myself together and realised that actually, the twin D4 260hp lumps would give the 32 enough grunt to make the sportiest of sportcruisers shudder. We managed a whisker under 36 knots on test and, crucially, the transition from displacement to planing is pretty much unrecognisable with a responsive burst of urgency accompanying every forward nudge of the throttles.

The sea was flat calm on our test day but the wake churned up by our Targa 44 chase boat was more than enough to learn that the Targa 32 positively relishes the challenges of a chop. Even crossing the wake flat out leading with the chine the boat refused to slam, shudder, wobble or even seem the least bit perturbed by this onslaught of unsavoury driving. This is a boat you will take on a 120-mile round trip for lunch even if the weather is a bit iffy.

The only dampener on what is an excellent driving experience is the shape of the seats at the raised helm. For a boat with this much grip and agility the flat seats don't cut the mustard – the optional bucket seats are an absolute must in my opinion. Some fore and aft adjustment for the helm seat would be a welcome addition too, and the tachometers up here would be much easier to read if they were on the flat section of the dash near the compass rather than on the angled section where they currently reside. The outside helm position does add a valuable extra element to helming the 32 though, both at speed and when it comes to berthing, where the helmsman's view of the stern is excellent. In contrast, the lower driving position is right on the money in every



The table can be locked in any position along the pole upon which it's mounted



Cockpit has a great connection to the water through transom gates





The helm seat and navigator's bench can both be made to face the table



Welcome standing headroom in the ensuite heads aft



The forward cabin now gets a spot of full standing headroom



A CLOSER LOOK WITH JACK HAINES

GALLEY

The galley has fiddles, cubbies and drawers all over the place, with the sink and hob revealing themselves from beneath a big slab of teak. This is ideal for chart work on passage too.



BOAT HOOK

This doesn't seem remarkable but the boat hook, made of the same wood as the interior, is stowed snugly in a recess just forward of the helmsman's sliding door so it's within easy reach.



WIRING

In the engineroom it's all very chunky and will withstand hours of punishment. The wires are clipped to within an inch of their life and tidily threaded around the engineroom's perimeter.



THE ENGINEROOM

Having two separate opening hatches means you can inspect the engines individually and leave one hatch down so you can still navigate the cockpit safely. The installation is flawless with decent access to both sides of the engines and an immaculately smooth finish on the floor. Even with the largest engines fitted you'll be able to swing a cat about in here with the greatest of ease.





THE DATA

LENGTH OVERALL 35ft 5in (10.78m)

BEAM
11ft 1in
(3.37m)



The heads unit has standing headroom, neat storage solutions and hooks for wet gear

Not for those who suffer from claustrophobia but this extra berth in the aft cabin is useful to have

It may only be a small area but it's great to be able to stand up and get changed in the forward cabin

FUEL CAPACITY

176 imp gal (800 litres)

WATER CAPACITY

26 imp gal (120 litres)

DRAUGHT

3ft 6in (1.10m)

RCD CATEGORY

B (for 10 people)

DESIGNERS

Oy Botnia Marin Ab, 2011

DISPLACEMENT

6.2 tonnes (light)

We did a whisker under 36 knots and even crossing the wake flat out it refused to slam, shudder or even wobble

Wherever there's a gap, there's a handhold on the 32. Even at the base of the windscreen!

way. The dials and plotter couldn't be clearer, the KAB helm seat is fully adjustable and has suspension to deaden any (unlikely) nasty bumps. As with all Targas, the panel with the wheel and throttles on it can be adjusted for standing or sitting. Unless it's really rough though, I would always drive seated because you can sit back comfortably and reach all the major controls with ease. It's great to be able to slide the side door open to get the breeze in your face too, but in the wheelhouse with the doors shut and the engines' grunts sealed away in the cockpit you can cruise at 25-30 knots and it's very civilised indeed.

VERDICT

A UK-spec Targa 32 is likely to cost around £285,000 and that is a hell of a lot of money for a boat of this size. However, people who buy a boat like this buy it because nothing else will do. Get past the humdrum looks and it doesn't take long to see where the money is being spent: materials, detailing and rock-solid construction. Yes, you have a lot of choice for this sort of money but spend time in a rough sea on the 32 and you'll soon be brandishing a biro and looking for the dotted line. **MBY**

Contact Wessex Marine.

Tel: +44 (0)1202 700702 Web: www.targa.fl

THE HELM VIEW

This flat area to port of the helm is just what you need for chart work when the boat is moving

This is a great spot for the dials, clear and very easy to read

The VHF is a bit of a reach here – it might be better alongside the dials above the helm

This part of the helm station tilts, moving both the throttles and the wheel in unison – a great idea

PERFORMANCE

TEST ENGINES: Twin Volvo Penta D4 260.
260hp @ 3,400rpm. 4-cylinder 3.7 litre diesels

MBY TEST FIGURES

	2,000	2,200	2,400	2,600	2,800	3,000	3,200	3,400
RPM	12.4	15.4	21.1	24.5	26.9	29.3	34.0	35.9
Speed	35	44	49	55	61	70	80	102
LPH	7.6	9.7	10.8	12.0	13.4	15.4	17.6	22.0
GPH	1.63	1.59	1.95	2.04	2.00	1.90	1.93	1.60
MPG	229	223	275	287	282	267	272	225
Range								

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)

	71	70	73	74	75	75	78	77
Helm	84	86	86	88	87	90	89	89
Cockpit	76	75	78	78	79	80	80	85
Saloon								

THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from	£184,200
(Single Volvo Penta D6 400hp)	
Price as tested	£299,622
Bow thruster (7hp)	£5,590
Teak-capped rails in cockpit	£520
Teak bathing platform/inspection hatch	£2,340
LED rope lights on wheelhouse	£610
Wheelhouse spotlights	£1,580
Snap davits	£990
Bimini top	£1,770
Webasto diesel heating	£2,980
Non-standard hull colour	£3,240
= Options on test boat	

RIVALS

NIMBUS 31 NOVA S
Price from approx £209,684
Stepped hull and 33-knot performance from a single D6.
MBY tested November 2011

PARAGON 31

Price from £248,463
A fantastic deep-vee hull and outstanding build quality.
Buy the test: mby.com/p31

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on readings from on-board fuel gauge; your figures may vary considerably. All prices include UK VAT: 57% fuel, 100% water, 3 crew + safety stores (no liferaft), 27°C air temp, flat seas, F1 for speed trials