

**MOTOR  
BOATS  
TESTED**

# Minor Offshore 28

A solid all weather performer that won't let you down. From £150,000



## Nick says...



Minor Offshore tackles the Botnia Targa with its own take on the sub 30ft wheelhouse walkaround market.

It's interesting to watch the priorities of major boatbuilders change over time. Responding to customer demand, larger yards seem to be designing their boats from the inside out these days, concentrating on getting the maximum amount of cabin space into a given hull length.

Boats get steadily higher and wider as customers demand more en-suites, ceiling high fridge freezers, huge TVs and king sized berths. It really is possible to walk onto a modern 50-footer and find more space than on 10-year old 60ft model – the Princess 52 is a perfect example.

Particularly interesting about this long term trend is what's happening in the margins as specialist manufacturers are filling the void, building craft that are boats first and foremost, with any accommodation that can be squeezed in regarded as a bonus.

Finnish builder Botnia was one of the first to really take on the 'boat for boat's sake' mantle with its Targa range. David Adams of Wessex Marine, importer of the Targa range into the UK, once told me that it took two years to sell his first Targa as people struggled to come to terms with a boat that didn't even

try to compete inside, instead concentrating purely on useability and seakeeping. They sell like the proverbial warm comestibles these days however.

It's no surprise that Finland was the birthplace of such a craft, as boats get used very seriously over there. So it's equally no surprise that the main challenge to the Targa throne comes from the same country. Sarin Marine has been making island hoppers for its local market since the 1960s, but more recently has been looking to the world stage for its new range of Minor Offshore powerboats. Divided





Double bucket seats provide a comfortable secure location at speed

a far cry from the chest high decks of many modern boats. Once aboard, side decks over a foot wide, with no steps and protected by bulwarks up to 2ft tall, make this one of the safest and easiest boats to move around that you're ever likely to find under 30ft.

The aft deck is

completely uncluttered, with just a seat set into the aft cabin bulkhead and a couple of corner seats in the stern quarters that incorporate rope bins for the stern lines. Stainless steel gates and a very shallow step lead out onto a large bathing platform

that incorporates a lifting teak tread to allow access to the tilted sterndrive should it ever be needed to clear snagged lines. A further seat is set into the cabin top at the bow.

Twin sliding side doors either side

## The commitment to useability is evident

of the wheelhouse gain access to the welcoming interior. Two comfortable bucket seats face a workman-like helm, the entire lower section of which tilts to allow a seated or standing driving position while under way, or swivel to face a

U-shaped dinette, allowing six to sit around the small folding table. A basic galley comprises of a diesel-powered ceramic hob and sink with a small work space in the forward corner next to the helm. Lift the starboard corner of the dinette seating and you'll find access to a small aft cabin with a double berth squeezed under the wheelhouse sole. 'Compact' best describes this area, lacking standing headroom and featuring only one tiny opening port hole. The sleeping area forward of the wheelhouse is much better, with an offset double berth, full standing headroom and a large

PHOTOS: Mike Jones

broadly into three camps, Minor build a commercial range of custom built boats for professional markets, such as the police and pilots, a semi-displacement shaftdrive range, and a fast sterndrive range of five boats from 25ft to 36ft, with the Offshore 28 being the second smallest in the range.

## No-nonsense build

The commitment to useability is evident the minute you step aboard. Rails that circle the low gunwhales dip at the centre of the side decks making access easy at the mid point,



Offset anchor for easy bow boarding



Huge solid sliding roof section



Sterndrive access via lifting panel



Access to the aft cabin is beneath the dinette



The aft cabin lacks natural light



**6.6** The Offshore 28 thunders imperiously up the Solent



Standing headroom in the forward cabin



Compact, practical toilet compartment

deck hatch above providing natural light and ventilation. The toilet compartment is at this end of the boat which, like everything else, is compact but perfectly functional.

What this boat unashamedly is not, then, is a floating caravan, although two completely separate sleeping areas in a sub 30ft boat is not to be sniffed at.

### Solid performer

Take the big carbon fibre and stainless steel wheel with its steering ball, fire up the meaty Volvo Penta D6-330, and settle into the comfortable helm seat to discover what this boat does best. Reverse sheer windscreens give an almost pilot boat-esque feel to proceedings and the view out is excellent, both fore and amidships, only when looking aft does the helmsman need to crane around the C-pillars a little. The Offshore rises onto the plane with imperceptible bow lift, meaning it will run at lower planning speeds without sliding off the 'hump', and high speed cornering is decidedly sportsboat-like, banking

confidently into the turns and tracking tightly and accurately. But the big news is the sheer passage-making ability. The doors and the huge sliding roof are open

on our test day giving a remarkably open feel to the wheelhouse as the Offshore 28 thunders imperiously up the Solent, with 3000rpm equating to a very comfortable and quiet 27 knots. Or drop back to 20 knots to achieve over 3mpg. But any boat would be great on a day like this; where the Minor really scores is with the roof shut and doors closed. Big windows and a great view out means there's no

sense of compromise, and suddenly you realise that the weather doesn't matter anymore. Wonderful on a warm sunny day, but equally as enjoyable on a blustery January jaunt, this is what Minor is all about. Useability, and the ability to go boating almost irrespective of the outside elements.

### With thanks

to Barry and Julia Norton for the use of their Offshore 28, *Hannah*, for our test

### SPECIFICATION

<b>LOA</b>	28ft 10in (8.80m)
<b>BEAM</b>	9ft 8in (2.95m)
<b>ENGINE</b>	Volvo Penta D6-330 330hp diesel

### PERFORMANCE

rpm	knots	lph	gph	mpg	db
1500	6	9	2.0	3.0	68
2000	11	16	3.5	3.1	75
2500	20	27	5.9	3.3	79
3000	27	44	9.7	2.8	82
3500	32	66	14.5	2.2	85

**PRICE** from £150,000 inc VAT

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### CONCLUSION

**FOR** Useable, practical and sturdy

**AGAINST** Slightly limited accommodation

**VERDICT** A boat for boating, regardless of what the weather is doing outside

**MBM**  
rating

