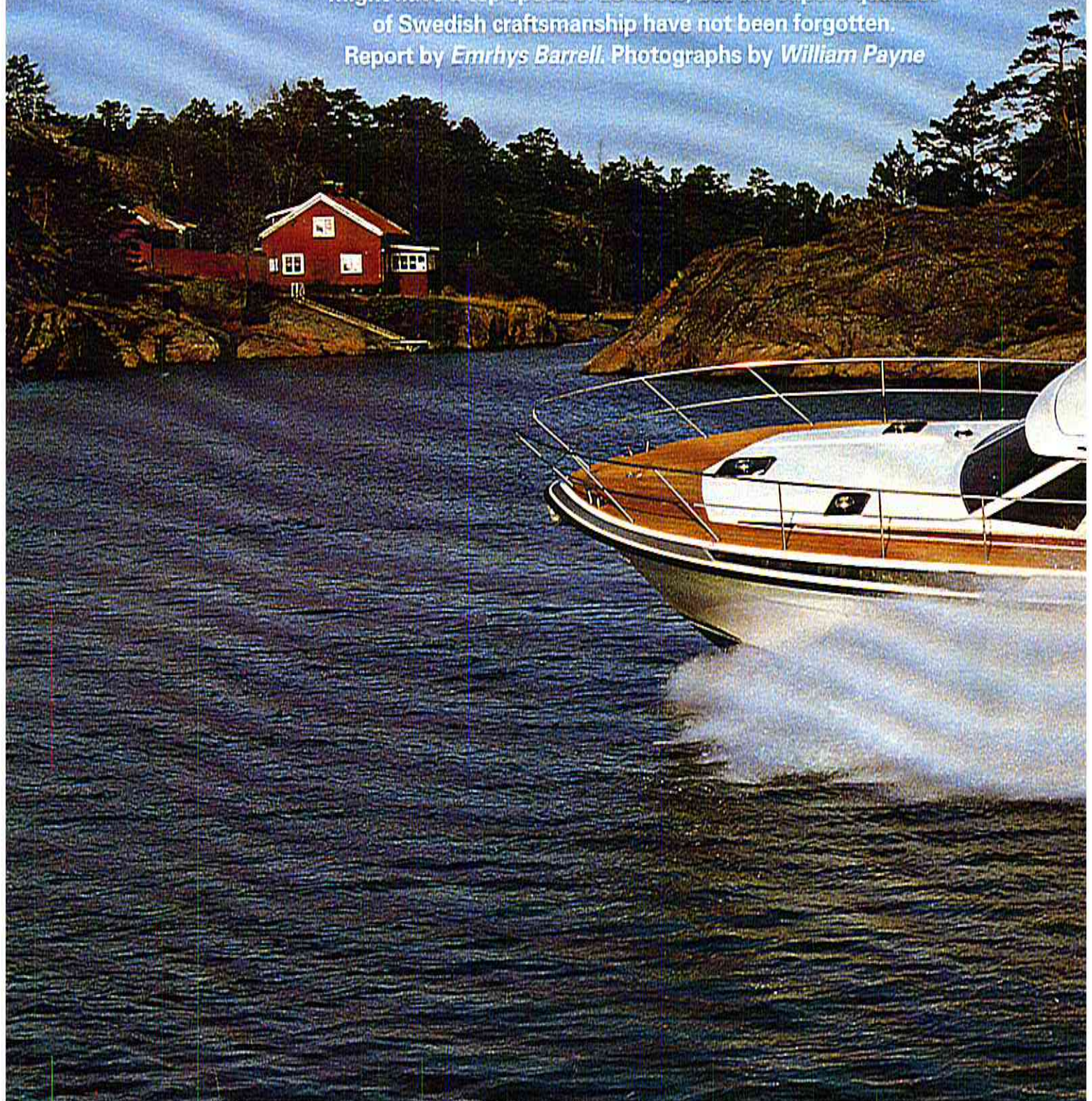


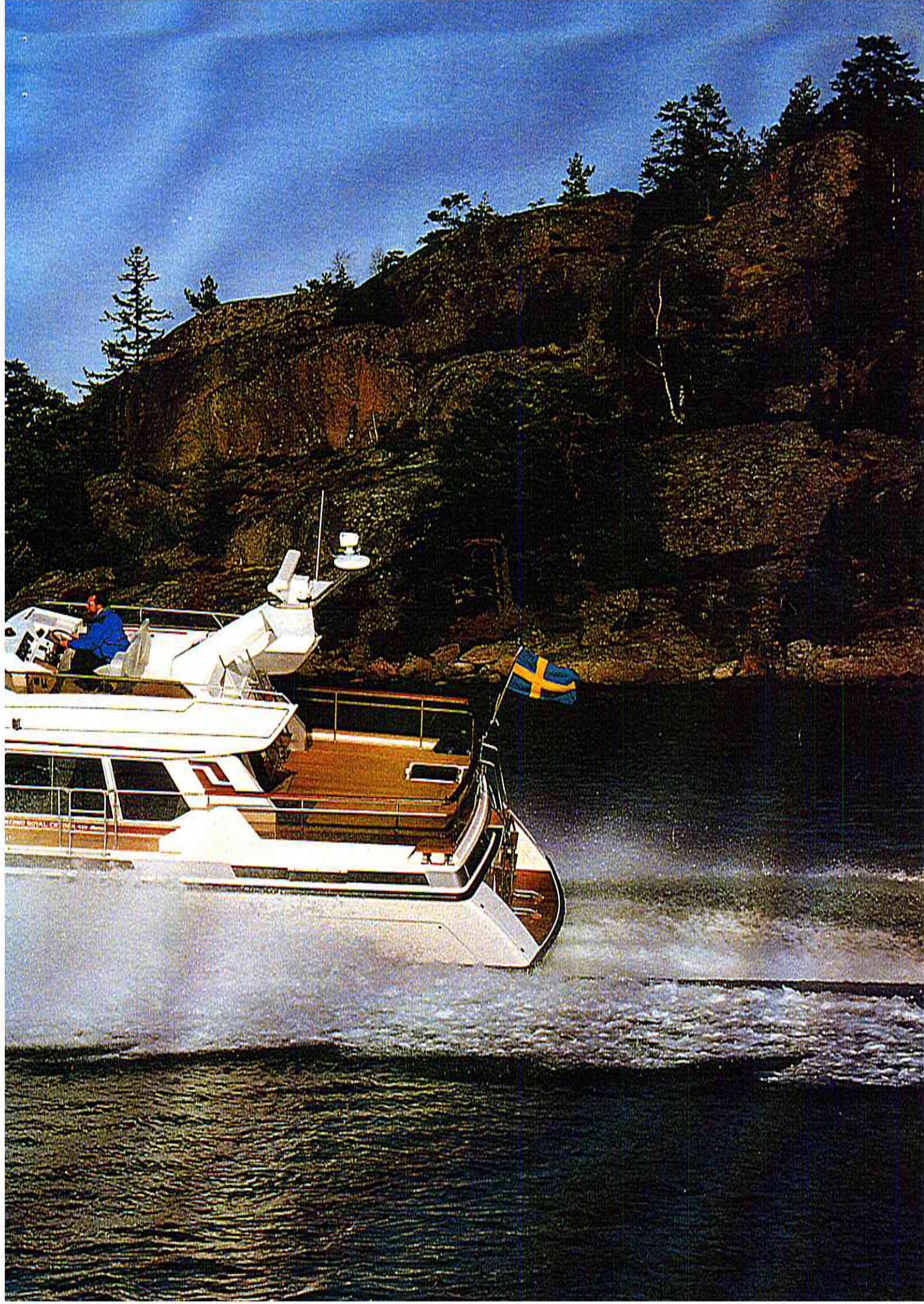
REVIEW

STOREBRO ROYAL CRUISER 420

Catering to the demands for higher cruising speeds, Storebro's new high-performance deep-vee hulled Royal Cruiser 420 might have a top speed of 28 knots, but the superb qualities of Swedish craftsmanship have not been forgotten.

Report by *Emrhys Barrell*. Photographs by *William Payne*







Saloon with helmstation to port with double seat in hard-wearing and easy to clean blue dralon upholstery. The mahogany table can be lowered to create an occasional double berth

The new Royal Cruiser 420 marks a significant move forward for this Swedish luxury motorboat builder. All the previous models through the company's 40-year history have had semi-displacement hulls, with rounded chines, and a flat run aft. The new boat marks a departure from this pattern, with a deep-vee hull form. The change has been prompted by the ever-increasing speeds of today's craft, brought about partly by customer demand, and partly by the greater powers available with modern high-speed diesels. The semi-displacement form is ideal up to around 20 knots, giving an easily-driven hull, and good sea-keeping. Once you go above this speed, however, the power requirement increases disproportionately, and the boat becomes more sensitive to lateral trim. A deep-vee hull on the other hand will carry on up to 30 knots and more, with less power, and ample lateral stability. Head-see performance also improves, and the boat is generally drier in rough and windy conditions. Correctly designed, the deep-vee form will also perform better in quartering and following seas, having more dynamic stability, and less tendency to broach. So it is that Storebro have moved over to the new form, both for this boat and their other new model the 380. The design of the two hulls has been the responsibility of Johan Bjorklund, with both being produced in full-size wooden prototype form before going into production. This is standard practice with all Royal Cruisers, enabling the company to test the best configurations of engines, shaft angles, rudder size and positions, and interior weights. When all these are considered correct, the prototype becomes the plug from which the production mould is taken. Further features on the hull, which were perfected by this process include tunnels for the propellers, and underwater exhausts, which emerge through the bottom of

an extended transom, that also carries the integral bathing platform. The purpose of the underwater exhaust is to lower noise levels on the aft deck, and reduce any tendency for fumes and spray to be sucked back on board. For the exterior styling and interior design of the 420, Storebro have stayed with their long-time partner Winfried Wilke. Wilke has been responsible for all the company's designs over the past 27 years, and he has given them their classic elegance and style that have won loyal customers all around the world. This timeless look has been responsible in no small measure for the boats' reputation for retaining their value, which has in turn contributed to their popularity amongst experienced buyers. The other trademark of a Royal Cruiser is its flawless mahogany joinery, fashioned by craftsmen, and finished in many coats of satin varnish, to give a richness and depth of colour that cannot be beaten.

The layout of the 420 features a master cabin aft, saloon, double cabin forward, and either a third double cabin, or a convertible dinette opposite the galley. The aft cabin layout gives the boat a large aft deck for entertaining, as well as a respectable flying bridge. As you step aboard, the first feature you encounter is a clever opening section in the guardrails amidships. This either slides forward for entry from a tall dockside, or hinges down to allow you to climb up from a low pontoon. Underfoot you immediately notice the immaculate laid teak deck, which surrounds the boat, including the aft deck. This is bounded by guardrails that are capped in mahogany, with smoked perspex dodgers to keep out the wind. A ladder leads down to the integral bathing platform, whose 'wings' provide excellent stowage space, and a concealed location for the stern anchor and its windlass, a necessity in Scandinavian waters,



The dinette and galley in rich mahogany

where the custom when mooring is to let out an anchor aft, then nose up to the rocky shore of the tideless Baltic. Conventional bow anchoring is catered for equally well by a foredeck locker housing a concealed anchor windlass. A short ladder leads up from the aft deck to the flying-bridge. Here you have a pair of bucket seats forward, facing a well laid out helm console-



The aft master cabin with sliding door to the bathroom to save space and walk-round double bed

le. This has all the necessary instruments, plus neat covered recesses to take charts, VHF, GPS etc. The seats are mounted on a plinth, that hinges round through 90° to face an L-shaped settee/lounger to port. Liquid requirements up here are catered for with a wet-bar aft, and a bottle store set behind a hinged panel in the starboard side. Storebro have moved on from the more normal goalpost mast to a single-upright mast, with a reversed wing on top. This complements the modern lines of the boat, though the corner of the wing is close to forehead height as you go down the ladder. The mast can be lowered for transit, or negotiating low bridges.

The saloon is entered via a half-height sliding door from the aft deck, and a flight of steps. The interior finish is everything we predicted, with expanses of superb mahogany, set off by simple blue dralon upholstery. The whole effect is at once breathtaking but welcoming and warm. On your left is a sideboard, with sensible amounts of locker space, and a practical shelf on top for loose items. A cocktail locker is located here, with further bottle stowage in a corner locker under the helm seat forward, and room for a TV, on a neat hinge-out plinth.

To starboard is a settee, with room for six people to sit round a table that drops to form the infill for an occasional double berth. The front section of the settee cleverly hinges up and over, to form a forward-facing double seat, ideal for passengers to sit up high when on long passages. Opposite to starboard is the helm position, again with a comfortable double seat. This faces a console that is both practical and neat. All the engine instruments are set in a panel forward, with navigation instruments in panels overhead. To your left is a comprehensive electrical panel set in the window shelf, with ready-use switches at the forward end, and main breakers behind. A 3/4-size chart-area ahead has a hinged lid over stowage beneath, with a hinged corner section to take a recessed radar set.

Steps lead down forward, to the galley to starboard. This is a good-size, with lids over cooker and sink adding to the feeling of space. Another lid in the worktop lifts to cleverly reveal a top-



Neat stern anchor and windlass compartment



Understair access to the Volvo TAMD72's

loading freezer beneath, fitted as an option in addition to a normal fridge. Cooking is handled by a three-burner gas hob, plus microwave. Opposite is the option of a dinette, which converts to a double berth, or a cabin with twin bunks, one over the other.

Forward is the guest double cabin, reached through a sliding door, with a clever automatic catch to hold it open. The cabin has a central double berth, and excellent headroom, at 1.95m (6ft 5in). It has its own bathroom en-suite, to starboard, with a second shower compartment to port. Perhaps surprisingly neither of the toilets are accessible from the saloon, without going through a cabin. Ample stowage is provided, with two hanging lockers, and large lockers under the bed. This latter has an interior-sprung mattress, rather than the uncomfortable plain foam rubber that we still so often find. However, the Storebro attention to detail lead them to find a manufacturer who could provide the springs in galvanised steel, to avoid any problems with corrosion, which might discolour the fabrics.

The master cabin is reached from the aft end of the saloon, down three steep steps, with a small door and hatch at the top of them. The cabin is full-width and spacious, with a walk-round double bed, and toilet compartment en-suite. This latter is reached through another sliding door, which avoids taking up cabin space. It also has a shower stall en-suite. Clothes storage is provided by large lockers port and starboard, that to starboard having a sensible stack of shelves in it. A wide shelf over one locker provides further space, but there is no dressing table. Lifting the front of the mattress reveals a tailor-made tool tray. Something of a Royal Cruiser speciality this, it contains simple tools to cover most emergencies, plus a selection of spare parts, including bulbs, fuses, engine filters, and gel-coat for small repairs. So simple and neat, it always surprises us that other builders do not copy the idea. Lifting out the tool tray reveals the ship's batteries, 2x 170Ah for engine start, and the same for domestics. This might seem a surprising loca-

tion, but it helps get the boat's trim right, and with plumbed-in ventilation for the low-maintenance Tudor batteries, the installation is safe and convenient. Power for the 420 comes from a pair of 430hp Volvo TAMD72s, located under the saloon. Routine access to these is by lifting the steps from the saloon down to the galley with hatches in the saloon sole giving access for more major repairs. Reaching most of the service points in the engine room is easy, but the fuel filters, particularly the port one, are very awkward to get to, with the generator, a £10,000 option, getting in the way.

Underway, the 420 proved the success of the new hull. Slow speed manoeuvring was straight forward, with Hynatic controls giving precise movement of throttle and gears, and a bow thruster, available as an option, further simplifying matters. At speed, the 420 reached an easy 30 knots, and turned as tightly as you wanted, with none of the steering problems that propeller tunnels can give. Noise levels were generally excellent throughout the boat, though did become more noticeable in the aft cabin.

So, all the old Royal Cruiser qualities are still there in the 420, with the addition of a new hull to take the marque into the 1990s. □



Bow windlass, remote control and gas stowage



Sliding gate/stop in the guardrail

SPECIFICATION

LOA	12.88m (42ft 3in)
Beam	4.20m (13ft 9in)
Draft	1.20m (3ft 11in)
Displacement	12 tonnes
Fuel capacity	2 x 800lt (350 gal)
Water capacity	600lt (130 gal)
Power	2 x 430hp Volvo TAMD72s
Speed	28 knots
Builder	Storebro AB, S-59083 Storebro, Sweden. Tel: +46 492 30160. Fax: +46 492 30300
UK Supplier	Paul Hadley Boat Sales, Northney Marina, Hayling Island, Hants. Tel: +44 (0)705 461672. Fax: +44 (0)705 463492.
Price	From £295,000 ex VAT As tested, £330,000 ex VAT