

BRITAIN'S **BEST SELLING** MOTOR CRUISING MAGAZINE

AUGUST 1997

MOTOR BOAT


AND YACHTING



TESTED

STOREBRO ROYAL CRUISER

430 BISCAY



Length
45ft 5in (13.83m)
Top speed
28.1 knots
Engines
Twin 420hp
Caterpillar 3126
Price from
£262,500 ex VAT

Royal stan

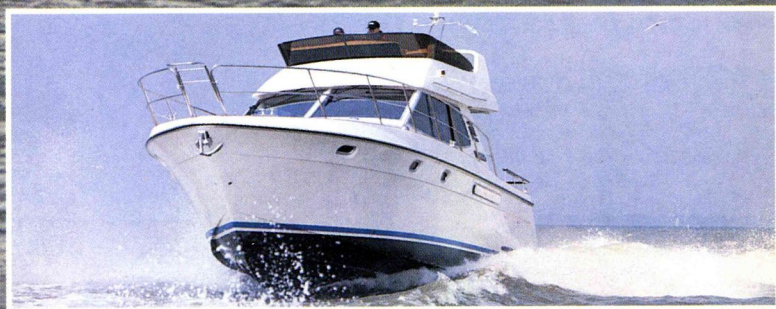
The majority of Scandinavian boats we've looked at in the past decade have usually had us hailing the quality but bemoaning the price. A strong pound is changing all that. Dave Marsh visits Holland to go on test with the Storebro RC430 Biscay. Photos by Lester McCarthy

Boat report

Storebro RC430 Biscay



Standard



Sorebro were founded in 1728, and currently build between 35-40 boats a year. Although they use standard glassfibre hulls and superstructures, their flexibility allows them to customise their

boats to a reasonable degree. Their engineering and construction standards have typically been very high. This level of customisation and quality does not come cheap, and Storebro have a reputation for

their high quality being matched by their price. However, the strength of sterling has changed their position in recent times: Storebro were keen to know how they compared with their obvious UK competitors. ▷

Storebro RC430 Biscay

ACCOMMODATION

Storebro's reputation for high-quality joinery is well deserved. Dark satin finish woodwork is used throughout the boat. It is more serviceable, and imparts a more traditional feel to the boat than its high gloss counterpart. However, other finishes and styles can be specified. Internal appearances can be transformed by using different fabrics, and Storebro have no limits on choice.

There were two small questions of style and finish that deserve comment. Firstly, the woodwork was extremely well

finished and fitted. To my eye, this obvious quality formed an odd juxtaposition with the sight of self-tapping screws holding on trim pieces. As there were only a few examples of this, it begged the question, why had they not been hidden?

Secondly, the move towards stainless steel frames for windows and cockpit doors as a perceived measure of quality has been inexorable. What looks strange is the combination of the two: the stainless sliding aft doors contrasting oddly with the unpainted aluminium window frames.

Guest cabin and day-heads

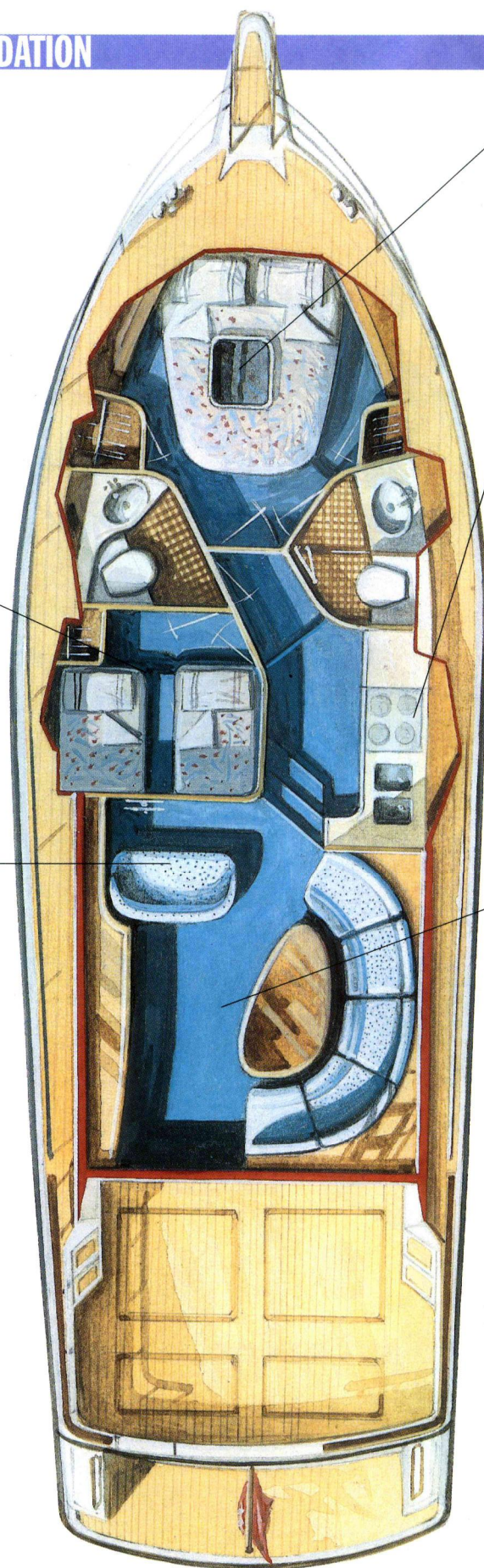
The heads is quite a dim compartment with too little illumination, and the cabin is even gloomier. Although light is

in short supply, good ventilation is certainly not. Throughout the boat every cupboard, locker and bed base has air holes incorporated. Returning to a musty, condensation-filled boat is unlikely with the Storebro. The twin beds are a good size at 6ft 7in x 2ft 4in (1.96m x 0.71m). Headroom is 6ft 2in (1.88m).

Internal helm

Storebro obviously expect their customers to indulge in serious navigation: at 43in x 25in (1.09m x 0.64m), the huge chart table swallows a folded Admiralty chart. The seat is adjustable, which brings the wheel to hand, but the throttles

are too far forward to operate fully when sat back in the seat. A single binnacle houses the easily read engine instruments: this has a matt black top surface, perfect for preventing glare. Further instruments can be housed in the 8in-deep (200mm) GRP overhead pelmet moulding spanning the width of the screens.



Forward cabin and ensuite heads

Attention to detail can be found here: lead sound insulation lines the floor over the bow thruster, even though

it is concealed under the berth. An archetypal layout sees a 6ft 7in x 4ft 9in (2.00m x 1.50m) bed

occupying most of the forward cabin, with drawers below. Sprung mattresses help to reduce condensation build-up.

Headroom in the cabin is 6ft 1in (1.86m).

CRITICAL DATA

LOA

45ft 5in (13.83m)

Hull length

41ft 11in (12.77m)

Beam

13ft 6in (4.11m)

Displacement

11½ tons

Draught

3ft 11in (1.20m)

Air draught (mast raised)

15ft 1in (4.61m)

Air draught (mast folded)

11ft 8in (3.56m)

Fuel capacity

352gal (1,600lt)

Water capacity

132gal (600lt)

Engines

Twin Caterpillar 3126

420hp @ 2,800rpm

6-cylinder 7.2lt turbo diesels

Four-bladed props, 23in x 33in (584mm x 838mm)

RPM	SPEED	TRIM	GPH	MPG	RANGE
600	4.5	0.5°	n/a	n/a	n/a
1,000	7.6	1.0°	3.9	2.05	577
1,500	10.2	4.5°	8.3	1.44	405
2,000	18.6	4.0°	15.0	1.27	358
2,500	26.7	4.0°	25.7	1.05	296
2,700	28.1	3.5°	36.6	0.77	217

Range figures allow for 20% reserve

25% fuel, 15% water, 2 crew

Sea state: 16in (400mm) chop

Wind strength: Force 3

Maximum speed and range

28.1 knots, 217 miles at

2,700rpm

Cruising speed and range

23 knots, 327 miles at 2,250rpm

Price from

£262,500 ex VAT

Price as tested

£297,535 ex VAT

Builder

Storebro Bruks AB,

S-590 83 Storebro Sweden.

Tel: 0046 49 219500.

Fax: 0046 49 230300.

Supplier

Kempers Watersport

Kudelstraat,

Kudelstraartseweg 226,

1433 GR Kudelstraat,

Netherlands.

Tel: 0031 297 385385.

Fax: 0031 297 385380.

Saloon

Storebro have managed to engineer the RC430 so that there is very little structure impeding the flood of light in to the saloon. Adults would

find enough space for four place settings at the table. Although the seating requirements for dining and lounging are different, Storebro have managed to find the ideal fusion of the two postures, and provide the

most comfortable 'combination' seats I have tried.

Storage is provided under the cushions, with further space opposite in the lockers. Headroom is 6ft 6in (1.98m)



Galley

Everything can be concealed under a multi-section Corian worktop: a four-burner hob, freezer, two good-sized deep sinks, and a storage cabinet. The cook also gets three drawers and two integral chopping boards. Roller doors on the overhead lockers were ideal to use because there were no catches or stays to operate. A 90lt fridge holds the cold stuff, while the hot stuff is dealt with by the multifunction microwave. Overall storage volume is good, but if more is needed, the whole of the galley floor lifts in sections for access to additional space in the bilges (which were completely dry).



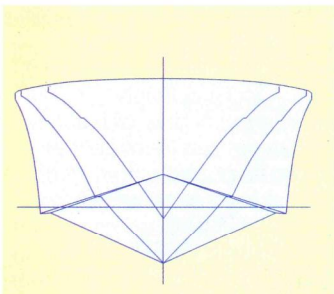
SOUND LEVELS dB(A)

Cruising @ 23 knots 79 85 75

Maximum @ 28.1 knots 82 88 78

SALOON
COCKPIT
FLYBRIDGE

DESIGN NOTES



1 The Storebro RC430 Biscay evolved from the 420 Baltic. The hull is the same, but much has changed: superstructure, engines and internal layout. Hull deadrise at the bow is typical for medium-sized production powerboats at 46°. However, it's higher than normal at the transom, where at 25° it will do much to reduce slamming in rough seas.

2 For a small manufacturer, Storebro have a refreshingly progressive approach to the use of high technology (see 'Cutting Edge', *MBY* July 1997). The internal layouts are designed using computer-aided design programs, which link directly to the equipment responsible for machining the furniture components. It explains why the assembly tolerances on the furniture were so consistently good.

3 Despite the use of dark mahogany joinery throughout, Storebro have (partly) achieved their stated aim of a lighter interior: the saloon and galley are among the brightest and airiest I have seen. The forward end therefore seems at odds with Storebro's objectives: the main cabin and twin toilets are not too dark, but the port cabin is distinctly gloomy. More abundant lighting in these areas would improve matters considerably, as would additional ports or deck hatches.

ON DECK

First impressions of the deck are deceptive – surely something is missing? The misconception is generated because it is so clean and uncluttered, an effect reinforced by the beautiful laid-teak decks. These run right out to the edge

great width and tremendous grip makes them far safer than any of their narrow GRP equivalents with toe-rails. Access to and from the side decks is very secure – it is always possible to maintain a positive handhold in both directions.

Sturdy 26in-high (660mm) guardrails run to the bow. Here, there is a clever variation of the typical open Scandinavian pulpit, incorporating a hinged ladder. This drops to allow bow-to-mooring, and simultaneously provides the



of the side decks, so there is no toe-rail. Interestingly, they will probably not satisfy the requirements of the EU's soon-to-be-mandatory Recreational Craft Directive and yet their

steps necessary to board easily. A traditional teak rail runs around the aft cockpit: it's invaluable for tying on additional aft-quarter fenders, in the area that often sees two

ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION

The standard of engineering throughout the range of Storebro boats has traditionally been very high. The electrical system provides a good example: every neatly installed wire in the main junction box is colour coded and numbered, and can be readily traced via corresponding coding at the equipment end, and tracked in the detailed owner's manuals. All the wires are conduit housed to reduce chafe.

The fuel shut-off valves are accessed through the bases of the saloon lockers. It's too fiddly and time consuming an operation (it took me two minutes) to contemplate in an emergency – Storebro's option of proper remote

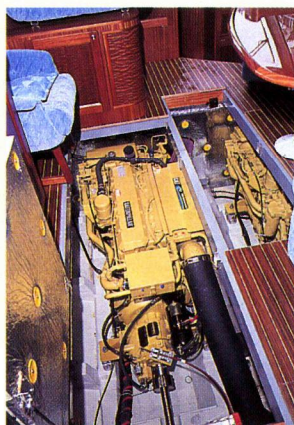
siting should be on the shopping list. Good remote access has been provided for the cooling water, with the header tanks sited in a cockpit locker, alongside the rudder gland greasers. The battery switches are located under the galley step: you would expect these to be labelled (as they are) but what is unusual is to see the fastidious marking of every

item of equipment throughout the boat.

The whole installation has been designed to encourage regular servicing by making maximum use of the lazarette to house secondary service items. What little equipment is in the engineroom is easily accessible: the fuel filters and raw-water seacocks are directly at the foot of the primary hatch, and the space around the handed Caterpillar engines allows comfortable inspection of the gearbox and engine oil dipsticks, and easy removal of the filters for oil and air.

Construction

The hand-laid glassfibre hull and deck laminates are very substantial for this size and speed of craft.



Boat Report

HANDLING AND PERFORMANCE

Caterpillar 3126 engines rated at 420hp at 2,800rpm provide the drive: these pushed the boat to 28 knots at 2,700rpm. I have previously designed boats around these engines, and found them to be quite sensitive to propeller size. Achieving 27 knots at 2,500rpm and then 28 knots with 100rpm still in hand, would suggest that



the boat was inappropriately propped, and I would anticipate a speed closer to Storebro's claim of 30 knots with more efficient propellers.

Low-speed manoeuvring was fine. Effective control is provided by the smooth separate gear and throttle controls, and the standard Volvo 9.5hp bow thruster. A long canal trip was followed by a testing passage across the lower reaches of the IJsselmeer to Hoorn. Wind speed was greater than Force 4. Our route took us northwards across a beam sea. Running across the waves, the RC430 definitely had a 'preferred' speed: too fast and the boat would roll, too slow and it was harder to choose a path avoiding the larger crests. Upwind and downwind the boat was stable and controllable at all speeds – in fact, the RC430 had the steady feel of a boat weighing more than its claimed 1½ tons.



sternlines and a fender line fighting hopelessly for space on a single cleat.

The flybridge follows conventional wisdom, with a sunbed at its rear, twin forward seats for the helmsman and navigator, and an L-shaped seating area in the middle.

The floor needs more stiffening as it currently flexes underfoot. In contrast to the rest of the boat, the flybridge suffers from a distinct lack of handrails. The narrow edge of the all-round perspex windshield does not provide an adequate handhold: running a rail around its top edge would be a big improvement. I was surprised

at Storebro's decision to replace their modern and attractive 'Gullwing' mast with a more conventional radar arch, just when other manufacturers are moving in the opposite direction.

The lazarette is big enough to accommodate a deflated tender. Attention to detail is very high (see

Engineering and Construction, opposite). For instance, the five water pumps all sit in a neat row. They are identical – what a great idea to ease maintenance, reduce the need for spare parts, and even allow for temporary emergency interchangeability.

Verdict

Along with the disappearing chart table, safety and security are two areas that are increasingly in danger of being overlooked in favour of style. Fortunately this is not the case on the RC430. The wide, grippy teak-laid sidedecks are a huge improvement over the narrow strips of GRP that many manufacturers now expect us to teeter along. Other than the two easily rectified failings on the flybridge, the deck impressed me with its tremendous feeling of security.

The standard of engineering was very high: I cannot remember a detail that could be significantly improved upon. Access to service items was particularly good, and this is bound to make a difference to all but the most conscientious of owners. During our three-day test, what also left a strong impression was the effectiveness of the saloon: the good internal helm, the comfort of the seating, and the amount of light.

Despite the small

numbers of boats they build – and the inevitable 'hand built by craftsmen' reputation that follows – Storebro have some impressive advanced technology at work: their computer-cut furniture and their single-piece moulded hull stiffening being two examples. Having examined their construction drawings in some detail, I can vouch for the substantial nature of the hull and deck construction.

Although the superstructure is new, the RC430 still remains very traditional in appearance compared with its obvious European competitors. They may be bought, as may the Storebro, predominantly because of the buyer's preference for a particular style. However it would be a mistake to presuppose that powerboats with more contemporary styling and glossier woodwork finishes somehow fulfil completely different functions. Anyone in the market for a safe, well-constructed and engineered, twin-cabin, aft-cockpit flybridge cruiser would be impressed with the Storebro RC430 Biscay. □

Storebro are using advanced building techniques for the stiffening: the hull framing system is laminated as a single-piece moulding, and then bonded into place with 12oz/ft² (3.6kg/m²) of mat. Overall, this was one of the strongest hull and deck structures I have come across.

Lay-up weights

(reinforcement only)

Deck

7.9 to 10.5oz/ft² (2.4 to 3.2kg/m²)

Topsides

9.8oz/ft² (3.0kg/m²)

Chine

25.2oz/ft² (7.7kg/m²)

Bottom

17.4oz/ft² (5.3kg/m²)

Keel

25.2oz/ft² (7.7kg/m²)



STORBRO J32. Those graceful lines, the exciting shape. With water jet and precise blending of nostalgia and new technology. STOREBRO RC 430 BISCAY. Spacious elegance and a new, more rounded design. A roomy interior characterised by Storebro's unique craftsmanship and tradition.

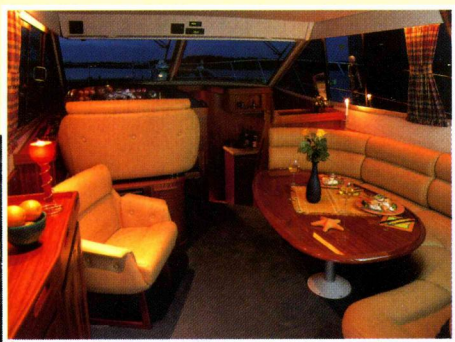
See our new boats at the **Southampton Boat Show, Berth 142**. Come aboard and experience the feeling that only a real Storebro can offer. Now and in the future...



STOREBRO
Royal Cruiser

STOREBRO BRUKS AB · S-590 83 STOREBRO · SWEDEN
TEL +46 49219500 · FAX +46 49230300 · WWW.STOREBRO.SE
UK DEALER: PAUL HADLEY BOAT SALES, HAYLING ISLAND, TEL +44 1705461672

LGN&Co · Granna, Sweden



Powered by
VOLVO PENTA