

**BOATS  
SALE INSIDE**

Europe's Premier Motor Cruising Magazine

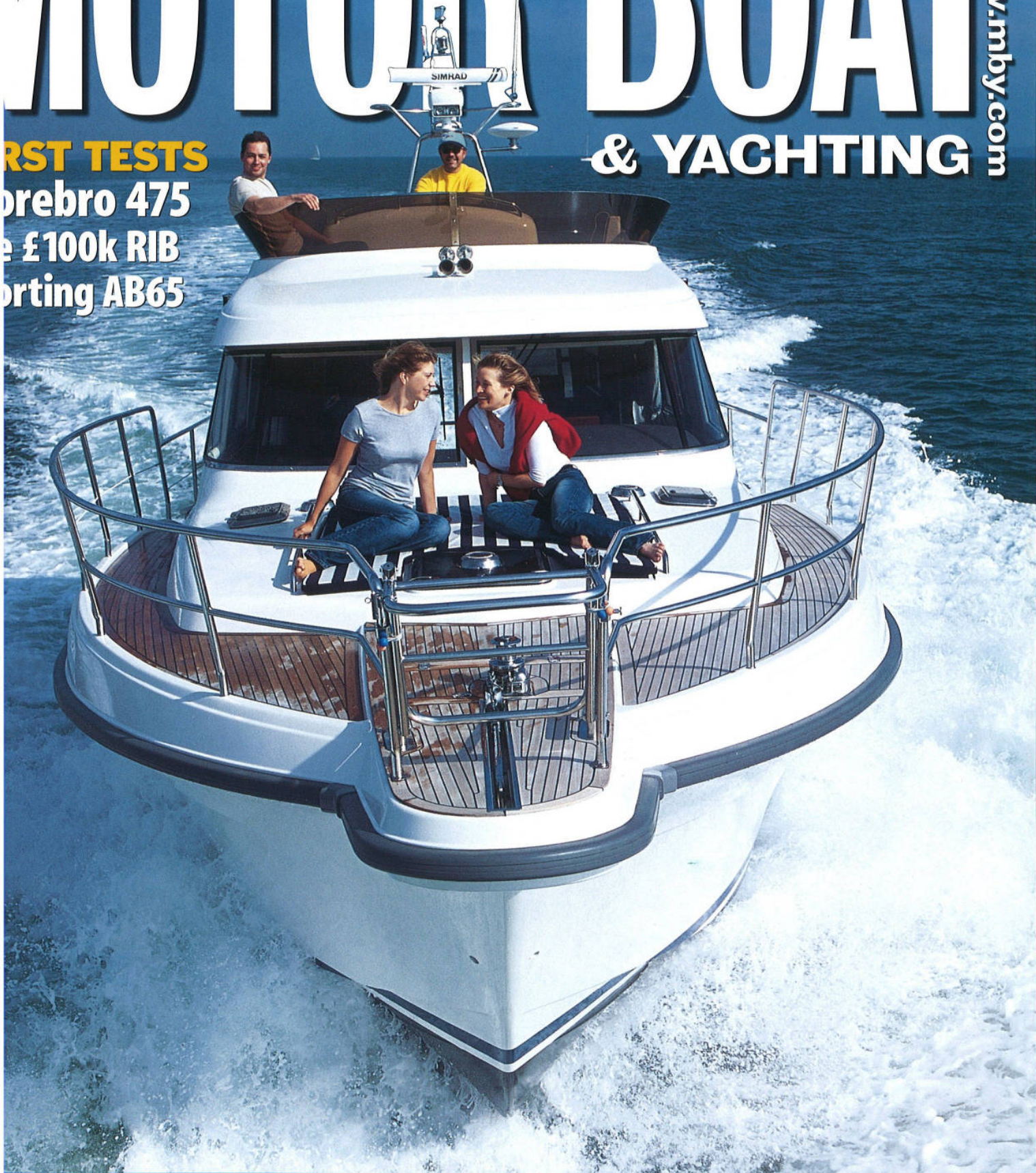
DECEMBER 2002 £3.50

# MOTOR BOAT

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**FIRST TESTS**  
**Forebro 475**  
**£100k RIB**  
**Porting AB65**



# Flying high

You know what you'll get with a Storebro: understated looks, tremendous quality and a price tag that'll unblock your sinuses. But the 475 Commander also weighs in with a surprisingly sporting performance



## At a Glance

**Length**  
46ft 5in (14.20m)  
**Flat out**  
34.5 knots  
**Engines**  
2 × 480hp Volvo  
TAMD74P EDC  
**Price from**  
£493,451 inc VAT

## Storebro 475 Commander

TEXT DAVID MARSH  
PHOTOGRAPHY LESTER MCCARTHY

**A** lot of potential buyers will look at the price of the Storebro Royal Cruiser 475 Commander and gulp uncomfortably. After all, for those brought up on swoopy modern designs it looks a bit clunky. And some might see elements of the trawler type in the 475's hull, which surely means it's a lot slower than the typical planing powerboat. But this reaction would be a shame, because not only does the 475 easily match the performance of most of its flashier counterparts, it dishes up a number of enticing features that makes the price a lot more reasonable than it first appears.

### Under way

One of the 475's most attractive aspects is the peace and quiet under way. The loudest noise on the flybridge at cruising speeds is from the water streaming off the chines – a blissful experience that I've had on few other planing powerboats. It's also quiet down below. Storebro construct their floors from a thick, sound-deadening sandwich, so although the 475 has no carpets (which would dampen the noise further), conversation is easy. Speed, and plenty of it, is an even more surprising feature. Traditionally styled it may be, but the 475's impressive 34.5-knot top speed embarrasses many a sleek sportscruiser.

We didn't have much rough water during the test – a 12-18in chop out past the Needles, and a slightly more feisty wind-over-tide sea through Hurst Narrows. In these conditions, the hull was okay, if not in the same league as the best of the deep-vee Olesinski offerings or the Botnia Targa boats. The upwind ride is not as smooth, and the high windage of the 475's superstructure makes it prone to heeling in cross-winds. With 70% fuel and 75% water, our boat trimmed quite high, and using the trim tabs improved the speed and the ride all the way up to 2,300rpm and 29 knots. However, even running at its maximum 7.0° with the





trim tabs raised fully, the visibility from both helm positions is excellent, so the high trim is not a problem, just unusual.

The initial response to the wheel is very good, especially as the 475 (surprisingly, at this price) does not have power steering. So although the steering may not be the lightest I've tried, the initial turn in is very quick – a bonus at any speed. However, as more helm is applied and the turn progresses, instead of continuing to bite, the 475 at times seems to 'give up' and the turning circle increases again. The feeling is most obvious when side on to the wind and tide, when the boat feels as if it is gently slipping sideways. I'm almost certain (and Storebro agree) that the transom-hung rudders are aerating – that is, sucking air down on to their low-pressure side. Storebro are looking at adding more fences to the rudders.

Handling the 475 around the marina was a doddle and, with a touch of rudder, it was possible to meander downriver on one engine. Volvo's electronic controls are smooth, the 475's deep tunnels provide extra grip on the water, and the powerful 10hp bow thruster makes windswept pontoon approaches much easier.

The upper helm works fine. Its comfortable and supportive helm seat is fully adjustable, although a tilting wheel would have added the final element of flexibility. All the essentials fall to hand – wheel, throttles, bow thruster, VHF, and the trim tab and autopilot controls.

The oval dash will nudge owners in the direction of landscape-oriented nav-aids rather than portrait displays. Storebro include the expensive Simrad CR40 colour radar/chart plotter and the DS42 repeater in the price and these are excellent pieces of kit.

The clear-topped chart drawer is useful, although it needs a deep lip adding across the back to stop charts and odds and ends dropping down into the slot at the rear. Other good touches are the small screen keeping the glare and the spray off the instruments, the clear, vertical compass card, and the four tinny holders. Buyers might be surprised, though, by the lack of warning gauges on the flybridge dash. I'd feel uncomfortable relying on the 475's basic warning lights and alarms. In my experience, gauges often provide clues before alarms are triggered.

Up on the flybridge, the deep windscreen does an excellent job of deflecting the wind, although as a 5ft 6in (1.68m) helmsman, I'm fed up of peering through tinted screens. It's odd that Storebro should use such a dark tint, because down below their lightly tinted side screens are definitely the clearest I've looked through.

In the pilothouse, Storebro have treated the helmsman to a near-perfect set-up. As well as the full-size chart table there's a second navigator's position off to starboard. They have sensibly left the tint off the corner screens, which improves night vision no

end, as does the adjustable red-light system for night-time use. Storebro's dark mahogany joinery cuts down on daytime glare, and they wrap the back of the instrument pod in a non-reflective black vinyl to reduce daytime reflections. There's a two-speed intermittent wash/wipe in place of the usual elementary offering, and for shorties a full 7in (180mm) of vertical adjustment on the seat. Keeping a proper lookout at all times, as required by law, is not going to be a problem on the 475. That can't be said of all boats.

The fully adjustable helmsman's seat is fabulous. It sports folding arms, a pneumatic lumbar support, and a degree of suspension that made a big difference to comfort when the 475 was powering over the lumpier seas around Hurst Narrows. What a shame that you have to perch uncomfortably on the end of this superb example of leather-clad decadence to reach the throttles.

### On deck

I spent a lot of time cruising on *Prospector V*, MBY's Nimbus 370. Like the 475, it had steps between the flybridge and the pilothouse, and access from here onto the side decks through side doors in the coachroof. I can't overemphasise just how much easier and safer this feels compared to a conventional flybridge boat. The steps in the middle of the boat encourage you to nip down to quickly check your position on the charts. Even heading below to make a cup of tea or go to the loo no longer seems such a chore, especially in rough seas. Of course, the 475's arrangement is not unique, but side doors and secondary flybridge steps are usually the preserve of 60-footers and upwards, and their steps are frequently gymnastically challenging saucers with no sides and few handrails.

The easy movement and safety themes continue, with taller than usual guardrails, grippy teak-laid decks as



### Engines

Twin Volvo TAMD74P EDC, 480hp @ 2,600rpm, 6-cylinder 7.28-litre diesels, 1.77:1 gearbox ratio. 4-bladed non-cupped props, 24in (610mm) diam, 31in (790mm) pitch, 87% blade-area ratio. No engine options but Volvo TAMD75P replaces TAMD74P.





standard, and the four bathing platform safety rails, which can be removed individually and stowed in the lazarette. Getting ashore is easy with Storebro's Scandinavian-style open pulpit, complete with folding ladder. Varnished mahogany rails run round the aft cockpit and they provide an extra feeling of security, as well as fender hanging opportunities and something to hold on to. The only thing you might grumble about is the steepness of the steps down to the forward cabins.

Easy movement makes for easy mooring. With only 9in (230mm) at their aft end, the side decks are narrow, but with the convenient side door I found I rarely used them. However, the 475 needs some fender baskets on the guardrails to supplement the four across the transom, otherwise you will find yourself crashing through the saloon with enormous white sausages. The cleats are so tall that you can easily pass a rope around each vertical stem,

effectively doubling their capacity. But ideally the 475 would have a second pair of springs and secondary aft cleats for stern-to mooring.

On the flybridge Storebro have sneaked a second small sunbed forward of the helm – easier to get to than the aft sunbed, which necessitates an awkward step over the void of the flybridge steps. All the cushions have mesh bases that help the water drain effectively, and expensive Sunbrella fabric, which not only looks classy but is waterproof and very hard wearing. Other good features are the watertight hatches under the flybridge seats, and the cockpit canopy panels that roll up into themselves and clip simply onto the overhead.

I'd make two changes. The cockpit seat-backs are very comfy, but at only 14in (360mm) deep the seat-bases are unnecessarily short and uncomfortable. And there are two knee-height low points on the flybridge where the

**Lay-up weights** *(reinforcement only)*

**Deck** 8.4/11.3oz/ft<sup>2</sup> (2.55/3.45kg/m<sup>2</sup>) plus 15/30mm foam core

**Topsides** 9.7oz/ft<sup>2</sup> (2.95kg/m<sup>2</sup>) plus 20mm foam core

**Chine** 30.7oz/ft<sup>2</sup> (9.35kg/m<sup>2</sup>)

**Bottom** 26.1oz/ft<sup>2</sup> (7.95kg/m<sup>2</sup>)

**Keel** 56.7oz/ft<sup>2</sup> (17.3kg/m<sup>2</sup>)





windscreen doesn't quite meet the lovely teak-capped rails. Joining the two would add to the 475's exceptional feeling of security.

**Accommodation**

For those used to forests of bright, ultra-high-gloss American cherry, first impressions are of a sombre interior. Storebro's practical teak and holly floors and their sober blue upholstery are as much responsible for this as the dark joinery. Change the fabric for a light, creamy leather and add more halogens in the three forward cabins, and I feel the 475 would be transformed into something bright enough inside for most tastes but still restful.

The 475's saloon does not have the wide-open feeling of its more glamorous counterparts – the main reason being that Storebro have their galley up here, opposite the dinette. But having experienced this arrangement on *MBY's Nimbus 370*, I know how very easy it is to cook, drink beer, chat and serve all at the same time. I think it's a great layout.

Although it's not huge, the galley has plenty of dedicated stowage for cutlery and crockery in the eye-level lockers. These have the perfect doors – tight-fitting roller panels with no rattles, no hinges to adjust, no door obstructing proceedings, and no chance of accidentally opening under way. Other fine details were the coffee thermos clipped to the bulkhead, the opening

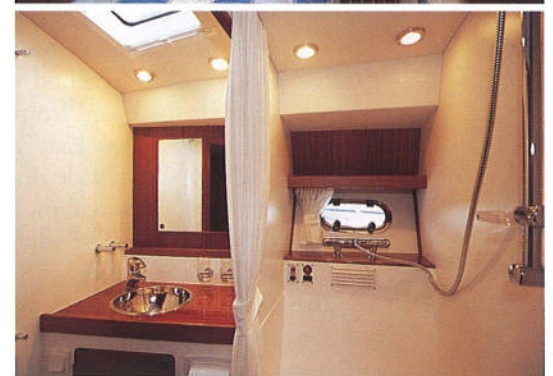
window next to the cooker, and the top-opening fridge, which is a safer and more efficient arrangement at sea than a front-opener, because nothing can fall out, including the cold air.

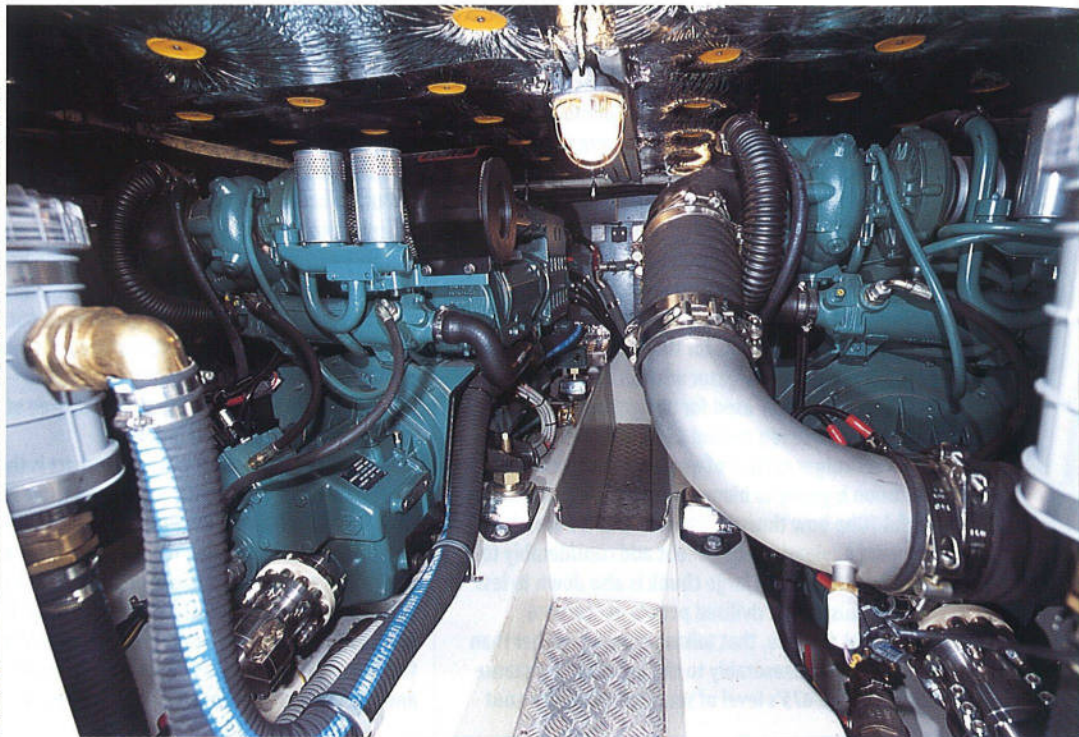
Opposite, Storebro have come up with a fine 'combo' seat with deep bases and tall seat-backs, making it suitable for loafing and dining. There's space for four on the firm cushions, although three loose stools would be needed for meals with the 475's full complement of six.

Underneath, there are beautifully finished wooden lockers, but the exhausting struggle to replace the unyielding seat-bases will probably limit their use to long-term stowage. Further forward in the pilothouse, fiddles keep everything in place, and there's an oilskin locker just inside the side door. With this door open, along with the patio door and the four sliding windows, the breeze whips through the saloon, even at rest.

Forward, the main cabin is ensuite to both heads compartments – an unusual arrangement that's good for couples cruising alone. All but one of the six berths in the three cabins are a decent size – 6ft 5in (1.96m) or longer – and the forward double sports a comfortable sprung mattress.

The comparison with the 475's mainstream rivals is interesting. The 45 and 46-footers from Princess, Fairline and Azimut, for instance, typically have better main and second cabins, but the





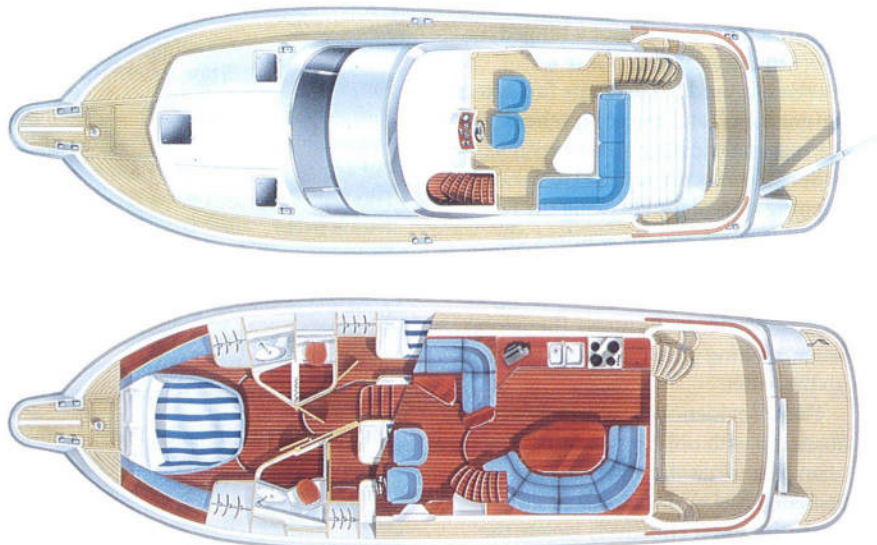
Storebro 475 provides a proper third cabin rather than token bunk-bed quarters.

**Engineering and construction**

More than anything, it is Storebro's detailing that helps justify their high prices. Their moulded internal stringer system is not unique, but it is one of the best-designed I've seen. It rises to floor height forward, so water cannot slop around the boat, and the resultant cavities provide the tidiest, most storage-friendly under-floor spaces you'll see on a production boat. Storebro also engineer the moulding to

give a sealed, double-skinned compartment under the forward berth that provides a crash bulkhead in case of a collision in the forefoot. Even under the berths, Storebro use drop-in moulded liners, so there's good access to the engineering services underneath.

The very sturdy stainless steel radar mast can be hinged down quickly and easily for shooting low bridges. Other fine details were the oversized-mooring cleats, the all-stainless hatches and the solar-powered vents, which will help keep the 475 fresh inside. The dark satin joinery is as good as any I've seen, and





**Verdict**

Regardless of price, Storebro's 475 offers several things that make it a great cruising boat. Ease of movement and good visibility are stand-out features. Cruising short-handed on our similarly arranged Nimbus 370 changed the way I feel about boats – the benefits of being able to move around as easily, safely and quickly as possible can't be overstated. Short-handed, you need to keep as good a lookout as possible as you won't always have another pair of eyes as back-up. The 475 scores highly by making it as easy as possible for the helmsman to see out, and by providing the navigator with an excellent lower helm that can be safely used for navigation on the move.

Still, with a price tag around £500,000, it is difficult to avoid the vulgar subject of money. The standard specification is partly to blame – teak-laid decks, a powerful 10hp bow thruster where 6-8hp is normal, and the top-end navigation equipment add considerably to the starting price. But a large chunk is also down to less obvious details. Those civilised people at Storebro obviously feel, like I do, that talking normally rather than shouting adds immeasurably to the joy of long-distance cruising. But the 475's level of soundproofing does not

come cheap. It's not a simple matter of adding another layer of foam – the boat needs to be expensively engineered from scratch. The 475's moulded structural grid also adds to the quality and the price.

But for half-a-million pounds, there were a few things I'd expect to see: stainless steel patio doors, power steering and an adjustable wheel, flybridge gauges as well as warning lights, drip-free sternglands, and secondary springs and aft cleats. These are not major shortcomings – overall the 475's standard spec is excellent and the boat is beautifully detailed – but some owners might expect that final degree of refinement for the money involved.

What owners probably wouldn't expect is the great performance. At 34.5 knots, it's around three knots faster than Sealine's S48 and the Princess V50 powered by the same 480hp Volvo diesels. This performance feeds directly into improvements in fuel consumption and range. And with its low noise levels, the 475 can quickly chew up the miles without wearing out its occupants, as if you were touring in a big Mercedes. As a safe, practical, peaceful and speedy cruising boat, it's hard to beat. **MBY**

wiring running outside the conduits is clipped into anti-rattle, anti-chafe rubber-lined clips.

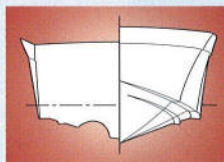
Given the 475's price, a few things puzzled me. Princess fit classy stainless steel patio doors, drip-free sternglands and beautifully machined twist-and-lift hatch catches on their £300,000 Princess 45, so finding alloy patio doors, conventional stuffing boxes and relatively cheap pressed-steel catches on the 475 was unexpected. And I was surprised that Storebro had not capitalised on their internal moulding expertise (as Sealine do on their £250,000 F42/5) to provide a fully moulded lazarette compartment.

There are two routes into the engineroom – through the saloon floor and via a loose panel (not a hinged door) in the lazarette. The front entrance is used to check the fuel filters, the engine oil and the comprehensive manual/electric bilge system with its switchable selector valves. The lazarette opening is ideal for checking the raw-water strainers and the gearbox oil. Access to the service items is generally okay and Storebro fit their own engine coolant header tanks under the saloon settee, making it easy to check and top up the water.

There's evidence of Storebro's obsession with noise reduction in the form of underwater exhausts and insulated fuel tanks, as well as soft mountings that effectively isolate the saloon from the main hull structure.

**Data**

<b>Overall length</b>	46ft 5in (14.20m)							
<b>Hull length</b>	41ft 8in (12.73m)							
<b>Beam</b>	13ft 11in (4.25m)							
<b>Displacement</b>	13.0 tonnes light; 14.9 tonnes loaded (loaded = light + 100% fuel & water)							
<b>Draught</b>	3ft 3in (1.00m)							
<b>Air draught</b>	17ft 2in (5.24m) to top of mast, 13ft 5in (4.10m) mast lowered							
<b>Fuel capacity</b>	343 imp gal (1,560 litres)							
<b>Water capacity</b>	132 imp gal (600 litres)							
<b>RPM</b>	2,000	2,100	2,200	2,300	2,400	2,500	2,600	2,700
<b>SPEED</b>	23.9	25.7	27.3	29.0	30.5	31.9	33.2	34.5
<b>TRIM</b>	7.0°	7.0°	6.0°	6.0°	5.0°	5.0°	5.0°	4.5°
<b>GPH</b>	16.7	19.1	22.0	25.3	29.3	33.7	38.4	43.5
<b>MPG</b>	1.43	1.42	1.24	1.15	1.04	0.95	0.86	0.79
<b>RANGE</b>	394	393	341	315	286	260	238	218



Range allows for 20% reserve  
70% fuel, 75% water, 3 crew, no stores  
25°C air temp, 20°C water temp, 1,022mb pressure  
1ft chop, Force 1 for speed trials

<b>Slow cruising</b>	25.7 knots, 393 miles @ 2,100rpm			
<b>Fast cruising</b>	31.2 knots, 273 miles @ 2,450rpm			
<b>Flat out</b>	34.5 knots, 218 miles @ 2,700rpm			
<b>Price from</b>	£493,451 inc VAT with 480hp Volvo			
<b>Price as tested</b>	£493,451 inc VAT with 480hp Volvo			
<b>Designers</b>	John Lindblom & Storebro, 2001			
<b>RCD category</b>	B (for 12 people)			
<b>Contact</b>	Chris at Offshore Powerboats. Tel: +44 (0)1590 677955. Fax: +44 (0)1590 671890. Email: <a href="mailto:chris@offshorepowerboats.co.uk">chris@offshorepowerboats.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.storebro.se">http://www.storebro.se</a>			

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)	Saloon	Helm	Cockpit	Flybridge
Slow cruising @ 25.7 knots	69	68	74	68
Fast cruising @ 31.2 knots	70	69	75	69
Flat out @ 34.5 knots	73	72	79	72

**The Rivals**

With an excellent 34.5-knot performance and a three-cabin layout, the 475 could successfully pitch against plenty of mainstream flybridge boats. But if the 475 appeals, then non-mainstream builders are probably what you're looking for. Storebro Royal Cruiser 475 Commander: £493,451 inc UK VAT  
34.5 knots with 2 x 480hp Volvo.



**Sabreline 47**

Lovely boat to be aboard. Twin side doors, enormous saloon and lighter woodwork make it feel far larger than the 475. Aft-cabin format provides a much better owner's cabin along with unmatched privacy. Although past experience suggests the 47 is unlikely to match Storebro's extraordinarily low sound levels, Sabreline's attention to practical, sensible engineering detail is on a par with Storebro's. Approx £600,000 inc UK VAT  
24 knots with 2 x 500hp Yanmar



**Grand Banks 46**

Even with its biggest engines, the 22-knot performance is no match for the 475, but otherwise the GB46 has very similar benefits. The big advantage of GB46 is that it's available in three distinctly different forms, allowing owners to fine tune the boat to their needs. Like the 475, the GB46 is pricey, but in my opinion worth the premium. £545,300 inc UK VAT  
22 knots with 2 x 450hp Caterpillar

**Thumbs up or thumbs down?**

- UPS**
- Build quality
  - Low noise levels
  - Helmsman's visibility
  - Ease of crew movement
  - Performance
  - Lower helm layout
- DOWNS**
- Steering problem
  - Steep forward steps
  - Cabin lighting

# STOREBRO

— a piece of Fine Craftsmanship —



## STOREBRO ROYAL CRUISER 410 COMMANDER — NEW 2003 —

In 2003 Storebro will introduce a completely new addition to their fleet of exclusive motorcruisers. It will be a smaller sister to the well received Storebro Royal Cruiser 475 Commander.

The new boat will be put in series production in the autumn 2003.

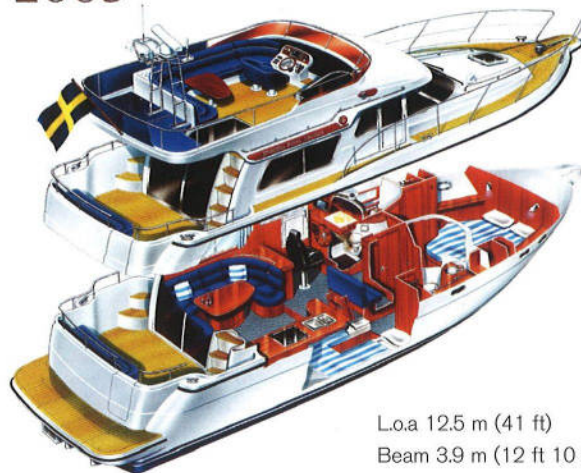
The 410 Commander has a large command bridge which can be reached via stairs both from the spacious aft deck and from the pilot house.

The pilot house has easy access to both side decks via two practical side doors.

Owner's and guest cabin both have separate heads with shower. The owner's with a fully separated shower cubicle.

The pilot house features a comfortable captains chair as well as a double sofa facing forward for the passengers and co-navigator. Directly connected to the pilot house, in the widest section of the boat, lays the light and airy deck saloon and the galley with level access to the aft deck.

The hull design has much in common with the SRC 475 Commander and incorporates Storebro's efficiently shaped propeller tunnels giving both a shallow draft and much reduced wake behind the boat. The boat will be equipped with twin Volvo Penta diesels and will have a top speeds in excess of 30 knots.



Lo.a 12.5 m (41 ft)

Beam 3.9 m (12 ft 10 ins.)



## STOREBRO

TRUE SCANDINAVIAN

STOREBRO BRUKS AB, E-MAIL: LARS.BJUREUS@STOREBRO.SE, PHONE +46 492 195 11

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STOREBRO IS PART OF THE LARGEST BOAT BUILDING GROUP IN SCANDINAVIA AND HOLDS THE RYDS, NIMBUS, MAXI AND STOREBRO BRAND NAMES.