



# Stunning looker, *serious performer*

An undeniable beauty from the western shores of Sweden, the Arcona 400 has looks to die for and a performance to match. **Duncan Kent** reports.

**T**he Arcona range of fast cruising yachts is built by the Swedish yard, Boo Marin and imported into the UK by Arcona Yachts. Boo Marin has been building quality sailing yachts for the past 49 years and the first of its latest generation, the 400, was awarded Boat of the Year at the Stockholm Boat Show in 2001, the year of her launch. Since then, a 370 and 460 have joined the line up and a 430 is rumoured

to be on its way in time for this year's Southampton Boat Show. Around 15 Arcona 400s are built each year and 120 have already been launched – 18 of which are in the UK.

The Arconas are built to withstand the toughest of conditions likely to be met at sea. At the heart of their structure lies a substantial galvanised steel cross frame to which the mast, rigging and keel are all firmly attached. This removes any rig loads from the hull itself, which can consequently

be made lighter to improve her performance under sail. The hull and decks are made from 20mm thick Divinycell foam, sandwiched between a tough, water resistant, multi-axial polyester laminate. In high stress areas, such as around the keel and rudder, however, the lay-up is solid and the plywood bulkheads are bonded onto the hull and deck for extra rigidity. Her keel has a cast iron stub of varying lengths that is bolted to the steel cross frame at the top. At the bottom is a 2,700kg antimony

hardened lead bulb, firmly attached to the stub keel with 20mm diameter stainless steel bolts.

Arconas have earned an enviable record on the Baltic racing scene – the 400 finishing 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th out of the 80 ORC yachts in the 2006 Gotlandrund race. However, equal care has been taken to ensure she is easy to sail shorthanded and is well equipped for comfortable family cruising.

The level of craftsmanship throughout the mahogany interior matches that of many of the other

better known Swedish builders – in fact the yard is so highly thought of that Nautor has even asked it to construct a dozen Swan 42s for the New York Yacht Club on its behalf.

## On deck

Being quite a beamy boat she manages to have nice wide side decks without cramping the interior volume, so access all around the boat is excellent.

Her cockpit has been ergonomically designed with

considerable thought as to how she would cope as a two-handed cruiser, as well as a fully crewed racer, and the result is particularly user friendly. She has a big wheel, which means she can be easily steered from the coaming, which in itself has been lowered, widened and flattened each side of the helm.

This arrangement means the helmsman can move around the wheel fairly easily, without climbing over the seating, and he can reach the mainsheet on its track, just forward of the wheel. In

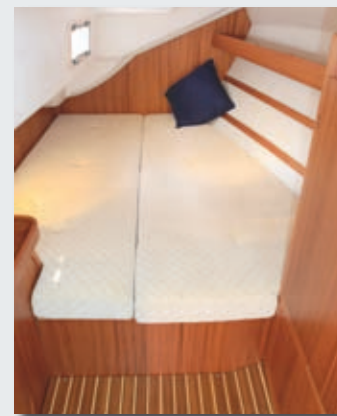
fact, with just a little stretching he can reach the primary winches to trim the jib as well, although you'd need to move forward of the wheel completely to tack single-handed. A foot bar and a sturdy pedestal with a tall handrail provide superb support for the helmsman's feet and hands when heeled.

The two seats are straight and set close enough together for the crew to brace their feet, but neither houses a locker in the twin aft cabin version – instead these are in the quarters and are full depth. There »





The Arcona's saloon is exceptionally comfortable.



is a permanently open walkway through to the transom step and boarding ladder, which allows you to stand behind the wheel if preferred. It also means the deck space between the seats makes up for the rather short transom step when bathing, showering etc.

All sail control lines are led aft through covered garages, which look really neat, but present a very large area of shiny GRP on the coachroof with no non-slip surface. She has two huge hatches, one over the saloon, the other over the forecabin, and her coachroof drops gently down towards the foredeck, which is spacious, uncluttered and sports moulded non-slip, as with the side decks, unless the teak option is ordered.

The furling drum is neatly mounted below deck level, so that the foot of the jib can be cut to sweep close to the deck. It also allows the furling line to be taken through the chain locker, which has a windlass plinth and is deep enough for plenty of chain.

The standard Swedish version has two gas bottles in the after end of this locker, but the UK model has room for one bottle only in the port quarter locker. Most customers usually choose the former option.

### Rig and sails

The 9/10th fractional rig sports a bendy, keel-stepped, triple spreader Seldén mast supported by discontinuous cap shrouds, intermediates and twin aft lowers leading to single deck plates each side, which in turn are connected to the steel cross frame via a pair of chunky tie bars. Her backstay is divided a few metres above the cockpit, so that a powerful 6:1 tackle can be added for some serious tensioning in strong winds. A rod kicker is provided as well as a topping lift.

Our demo boat had the practical and popular German style, double-ended mainsheet arrangement that allows the mainsheet to be taken back to the spinnaker winches close to the helm.

She comes with a 110 per cent jib, which is sheeted to short tracks on the coachroof, giving the sail a tight sheeting angle for closewinded sailing. A pair of genoa tracks is also provided on the side decks as standard. A 100 per cent, self-tacking jib is also an option and a short bowsprit can be supplied for those wanting to fly an asymmetric chute, along with the full spinnaker gear. The pole track on the mast is supplied as standard.

Dacron cruising sails are

supplied, the mainsail being 80 per cent battened with two single line reefs and provision for a third if required. The outhaul is also led to a halyard winch.

### Accommodation

As with all the Arcona range, the 400 is fitted out to an extremely high standard below.

Her satin varnished mahogany joinery is beautifully finished with plenty of gentle curves and solid trims. Handrails are abundant, solidly mounted and in the right places and the layout is well designed for family living, despite her racing pedigree.

The aft quarters can have one or two cabins and there is an option of a second heads in the forecabin. The twin aft cabins model has two identical berths measuring 2.02m L x 1.56m W (head) x 1.07m W (foot), both with hanging lockers and floor space for dressing. In the single aft cabin model the berth is 300mm or so wider, the heads is larger with a separate shower compartment and there's a huge, full depth cockpit locker to starboard.

Her saloon is spacious, conventional and very comfortable with straight settees. It has a warm ambience thanks to all the wood,

but a white vinyl deck head, huge hatch and large portlights keep her from being gloomy. Headroom is generous, being 1.90m at the foot of the steps, dropping to 1.82m by the mast (6ft 3in/6ft). There is stowage aplenty in lockers above and bins underneath the seating. A sensible, twin leaf table seats six comfortably for meals. The port settee is longer (2.20m/7ft 3in) than the starboard one (1.85m/6ft 1in) and makes a good sea berth. It can also be turned into a narrowish double berth with an infill.

The U-shaped galley is a reasonable size for cruising and has plenty of stowage for crockery, pots and pans etc. There are several handy drawers, a waste bin and a chopping board that slides out. It also has twin sinks, a full size cooker with oven and a deep, well-insulated fridge. Its shape ensures you can wedge yourself in when preparing meals underway, although a continuation of the superb saloon handrails would improve safety further, even if a bum strap were fitted. A small hatch overhead provides ventilation and there are three halogen lights.

The heads is a good size, even in the twin aft cabins model we reviewed, and there's a wet locker behind the toilet. Headroom is



**Top (clockwise from top):** A good size galley that's easy to use at sea; even heeled so far she doesn't lose her grip on the water; one of two identical aft cabins; the heads is spacious and features a wet locker. **Above:** Bright and airy saloon. **Right:** Spacious vee berth forward.



okay at 1.85m (6ft 1in) and there is good stowage, a sturdy grab rail around the round, stainless sink and ample ventilation from a small overhead hatch.

Just forward of the heads is a proper navigation station, which sports a forward-facing chart table and plenty of space for gadgets

and instruments in lockers and console panels. There is a deep bin for pilots etc beside the seat and a comprehensively equipped, hinge-down electrics panel with breakers and volts, fuel and water gauges. Two 70Ah services batteries are provided, installed under the aft berth, and there is room for a third.



### THE OWNERS

The owner of our 2006, 3-cabin model, *Arc de Mer*, is Tony Bottomly. Tony is a keen racer and cruiser who bought his first Arcona four years ago and liked the boat so much he formed Arcona Yachts UK to enable others to find out about the brand and join the slowly expanding band of UK owners. Tony, a fashion consultant, and his wife Sue met when sailing dinghies at university and

have sailed many miles together since they were married. Although now UK based, 15 years of their life together were spent living in Sweden where they learned to pick their way around the shores of the Baltic and all around Northern Europe. Tony first chose the Arcona because of her massive build strength, quality of fit-out and impressive sailing performance and says he hasn't been disappointed. He sold his first boat last year for more than he paid for her three years previously.

The seat houses the diesel tank, but there are four good drawers in the pedestal for the bosun's stores.

The forecabin is a good size without the heads and has a roomy 2.07m L x 1.92m W (head) x 0.70m W (foot) berth. There are two large clothes lockers and a seat, one of which is lost, together with the seat, if you opt for the second heads. Headroom is 1.83m (6ft) under the hatch – less in the heads, which is rather compact.

Her engine is one of Volvo's latest 38hp D2/40, 4-cylinder, freshwater-cooled diesels with rev counter and alarm panel, driving

through a Volvo Saildrive unit to a 2-bladed folding propeller. Access for maintenance is good through panels right around it.

### Under way

Under engine the 400 is quiet and precise, although we had the benefit of a 3-bladed prop, rather than the standard 2-bladed, which gave her a little more instantaneous bite. Her deep spade rudder and short keel has her pirouetting within just over a boat length and she goes where you point her, cruising comfortably and economically at 7kn+ at just »



# NEW BOAT TEST



## Arcona 400

LOA	11.98m	39ft 4in
LWL	10.50m	34ft 5in
Beam	3.82m	12ft 6in
Draught (std/deep/race)	1.9m/2.1m/2.25m	6ft 3in/6ft 10in/7ft 4in
Displacement	7,000kg	15,400lb
Ballast	2,700kg	5,940lb
Std sail Area (main/110% jib)	45.8m²/34.9m²	492ft²/375ft²
Fuel	150ltr	33gal
Water	260ltr	57gal
Berths (2/3-cabin)	7/9 inc saloon	
Engine	38hp Volvo Penta 2D40	
RCD category	A-Ocean	
STIX No.	37.0	
Angle of Vanishing Stability		124°

**Designer** Stephan Quiberg

**Builder** Boo Marin AB, Sweden +46 8 570 346 77

[www.arconayachts.com](http://www.arconayachts.com)

**UK main agent** Arcona Yachts UK, Hamble 023 8045 7770

[info@arconayachts.com](mailto:info@arconayachts.com)

**Price** £155,894 including delivery to UK and commissioning.

**Price includes:** Part-battened mainsail and 110 per cent jib, rod kicker, mainsail cover, spray hood, windex.

**Typical cruising extras:** Headsail furler £2,298; fully battened mainsail £378; lazyjacks £217; self-tailing halyard winches £399; Raymarine ST60 log, depth, wind £2,265; autopilot 6001 £3,261; Raymarine 240 VHF £1,206; VHF antenna £609; shore power £793; 25A battery charger £526; tri-colour £273; bow roller £881; electric windlass £2,791; cockpit table £533; fridge £1,129; heating £2,328; hot water £687; Transom shower £477.



**Clockwise from top:** With such a tight sheeting angle she points extremely well; the cockpit is easy to negotiate at sea; lines lead aft through a garage; the primaries are just out of the helmsman's reach.

over 2,000rpm, with a maximum of 8.65kn attained at 3,000rpm. In my opinion a bowthruster would be money wasted – it would be better to save it for the sails!

We set sail on a quiet winter's day with a perfect F4 westerly giving us a good reach out into a fairly calm Solent. *Arc de Mer's* owner, Tony, chose the laminated sails option for extra performance, so with full sail hoisted we took off like a true racer – with the log only

dipping below 7kn when I pointed her up to a particularly demanding 25° off the apparent wind. At 29° she again accelerated back to 7.1kn in just 12kn of true wind, increasing easily to 8.4kn close reaching and 8.7kn with 15kn true wind on the beam.

She tacks like lightning if the crew can cope and accelerates back up to speed within a couple of boat lengths. The wind picked up a tad as we reached the western end of

the Solent, at which point there was no holding her back, although the odd stiff gust did have us dropping the mainsheet traveller down the track a little. Despite this her helm was light, positive and perfectly balanced and the helming position really comfortable with plenty of support and excellent forward visibility.

Her fantastic pointing ability was obviously helped by the quality racing sails, but even with

the standard sails the fine sheeting angle attainable from the inboard jib tracks should give her a pretty impressive windward ability and a tacking angle of probably no more than 78-80°.

Off the wind she is directionally stable and positive on the helm. Her spreaders are not too far swept aft either, so the boom can be pushed well out for broad reaching and running. In short, she's an all round winner. ■

## Verdict

With a sailing performance to die for and a luxurious, warm and well appointed interior, the Arcona 400 is without doubt a real enthusiast's yacht. The standard inventory is a little light, though, so kitting her up to full cruising spec puts her firmly into the upper price bracket. But then they are known to hold their prices exceptionally well, so what you lose on the swings, you'll likely gain on the roundabouts.

### For

- Gorgeous, row away looks
- Very solidly built with solid steel chassis
- Well-appointed interior with beautifully crafted finish
- Very impressive sailing performance



### Against

- Not the cheapest 40-footer around
- Maybe a little bit on the racy side for some people
- Not too much deck gear stowage in the 3-cabin model



## Insurance Price Guide

### Arcona 40

Value £155,000: £714.19 Premium, £400 Excess

Comprehensive insurance includes: £3,000,000 Third Party Indemnity and Legal Protection with all taxes paid. Cruising range: UK coastal and inland waters extended to include Continental waters Elbe to La Rochelle.

Premium is representative example of what it would cost assuming maximum no claims bonus has been earned and that the mooring is acceptable to the underwriters.

For a personal quotation,  
call 0800 018 0012  
[www.stmargarets.com](http://www.stmargarets.com)

St.Margarets is a trading name of Amlin Underwriting Services Limited. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

**St.Margarets**  
DIRECT  
Part of the Amlin Group

The big bird in yacht insurance