



MOTOR BOATS TESTED

Fjord 40

An exciting pre-launch peak at a potential style and design icon. **From £253,993**



awestruck schoolboys. What makes this feat even more remarkable is that the Norwegian-built Fjord is still a work in progress, a prototype with a long list of features and elements to be tweaked and reworked. As such, we have opted not to go for a full-blown test but to deliver a taster of incredibly exciting things to come.

Style makeover

What you see before you is the Mk1 Southampton Boat Show boat, which will have changed fairly significantly by the time you look at the MkII version at London ExCeL.

The mods run to a full sheet of A4 paper and mostly involve the kind of subtle, though vital, tweaks that only designers will lose any sleep over. Everything from the cockpit's fridge door to the mighty helm console and its overhead GRP canopy are to be altered in some way. The most important change, though, will be the option of an all-weather, fully-enclosed wheelhouse. This will

It's a very rare event when the MBM test team sit down and agree that we would all buy the boat we've just been out hammering on the water.

Usually, Neale says it's too slow, Mark complains that it's too fast, Will grumbles something about it not being as good as his old Fairey Spearfish, while Carl confuses everyone by comparing it to four other boats before asking where has the love gone.

However, on this cold bright October day, the Fjord 40 brought us all together like a bunch of



It is unlike anything you've seen before

require the open deck to rise up by 12m. But don't worry, the hull and that breathtaking prow will remain.

As good as it is, the styling isn't entirely new, but then nothing ever is these days. Designer Patrick Barnfield first came up with these

conceptual looks for the legendary Wally Tender, but what started as a superyacht plaything has now matured into a proper and, more importantly, affordable cruiser.

You still get a top speed of nearly 40 knots and those strikingly good looks, but instead of the £1m Wally pricetag the Fjord comes in at £320,000. And the amount of boat you get for that figure is massively enhanced by a 13ft 3in (4m) beam.

The vast deck area opens out into copious sunbeds, a huge wet-bar, a powerhouse of a helm and – before we run out of adjectives – exquisite and surprisingly spacious accommodation.

For all its design kudos the Fjord is also a stupidly practical boat where the adage 'less is more' has delivered the commodity of space with a cavernous lazarette beneath the cockpit sole. Engine access is equally

good with room both above and to the sides of the engines.

The forward thinking doesn't stop with on-board access. Even the length overall and beam is optimised to keep berthing costs down by being just 1cm under 12m (39ft 4in) and 4m (13ft 1in) respectively. The super-wide, teak capped bulwarks, not only do away with the need for upstanding handrails but they



The exquisite and surprisingly spacious cabin has his/her wardrobes, a flat-screen TV and a huge skylight to boot. The sleek, angular styling continues in the toilet



The mighty helm position is well protected by a near vertical forward screen



Alfresco cooking: a sink, twin hobs and a fridge sit out on deck

also give the boat a solid look and safe feel, instead the chunky grabrails are on the insides of the hull at waist height. Pop-up stainless cleats add to the streamline design and the feeling that every detail has been thought through.

There is plenty of owner choice available too. The hull is finished in Awlgrip paint and the colour options are pretty much endless. The three leather custom-made helm seats on the test boat are super comfortable and, although the mechanism is a little clunky when seated, you feel securely poised for the ride ahead.

Below decks a basic open-plan layout exudes luxury in the use of quality varnished wood and designer fittings. The single cabin layout has no need for a bulkhead, so the double sofa to starboard and two large his/her full height hanging lockers, either side of the double berth, generate a suite-like atmosphere. There are some design areas that some may struggle with, like the very angular and geometric cabinets. However, considering you can walk around the forward berth

with no steps and 6ft 4in headroom, you should be able to overlook these points. The en suite toilet and shower follows the same uncluttered style with a five-star feeling that is present from the tap fittings to the basin.

On test

On the water you have to keep reminding yourself that you are on a 40ft boat. This is partly down to some exciting and very assured IPS handling, but also due to the sheer on-board scale of the Fjord. The 13ft beam delivers a seating area normally only found on 70ft-plus flybridge boats. The six panelled roof is high enough that a tall man on stilts would still find it difficult to feel enclosed, the screen is huge and the console mighty indeed. It all works to create total protection while still feeling open to the world. The

IPS system gives you incisive control and a real big boat feel with a confidence that the boat is also riding high out of the water. Perhaps the most noticeable feature when cruising is the fact that the huge, near

vertical, forward wind shield gives you superb visibility and protection, the whole setup delivering an incredibly quiet, delightful even, 40-knot ride.

Before you – or we – put pen to cheque it's worth bearing in mind a couple of points. Firstly, we want Fjord to be happy with the current open boat design. As for the hardtop option, we expect it to be a popular



A cavernous locker within the sole




Forward steps make for easy boarding



Steps flip back to reveal the anchor

choice among North European and Med boaters alike. But, as the Bavaria 33 on page 34 shows, a hardtop can make a huge difference in both handling and character. Fingers crossed they can keep the same simple but beautiful ethos and deliver a finished design icon.

One thing's for sure, we at MBM will take it upon ourselves to make sure all is well with the new boats, even if that means going out again and again... 

SPECIFICATION

LENGTH OVERALL	39ft 4in (11.90m)
BEAM	13ft 1in (4m)
ENGINE	Twin Volvo Diesel 370 HP-IPS500

PERFORMANCE	
3500rpm	39 knots
2800rpm	30 knots
PRICE	from £253,993 as tested £320,130

ENQUIRIES	Fjord Boats UK Ltd Tel: 02380 455741 www.fjordboats.co.uk
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CONCLUSION

FOR Stunning yet practical cockpit oozes class

AGAINST Wheelhouse and MkII accommodation need to come on line

VERDICT Intelligent design executed to a high standard. There are areas that need to be ironed out but the Fjord could be the boat of 2008

