



# Thinking outside the

Windy have refined their superbly handling small sportscruiser design into a 46-knot performer that really is a Porsche of the pontoons

TEXT DAVE MARSH PHOTOS LESTER MCCARTHY

**E**xactly how fast do you want to go in your sportscruiser? Thirty knots? Forty? How about the 46.8 knots that the Windy 32 Grand Tornado can reach? Just like speedy cars, fast planing boats need big engines. But here's a wonderful thing: mile for mile, cars with lots of power under the bonnet invariably burn more fuel than those with less grunt, whereas boats with large engines rarely consume any more fuel for each mile they travel than their weedy-powered counterparts. In some cases, they actually burn less.

#### Driving the Windy 32 Grand Tornado

Outright speed is all very well, but how much fun it is depends on the vehicle you're in. You can hare round corners at 150mph in a V6 Vauxhall Vectra, but I bet that you'd rather be doing it in a Porsche

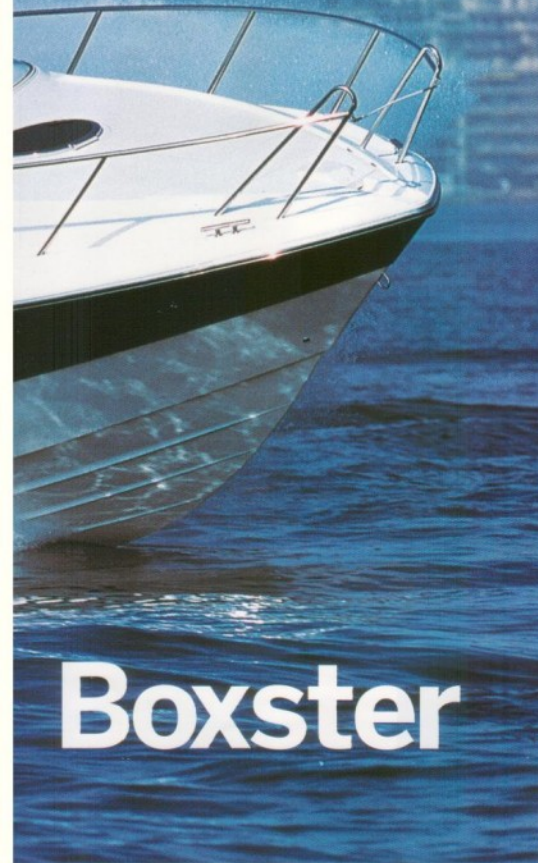
Boxster. The 32 is quick and a huge amount of fun to drive: it's no Vectra. Indeed, if you wanted its automotive counterpart, the Boxster is about as close as you'll get.

The 32 doesn't inhabit true 'superboat' territory – it's not an equivalent of a supercar like the Lamborghini Diablo, say – as it has too many creature comforts and lacks raw-edged performance. That, perhaps, is reassuring for most of us. In a boat weighing only five tonnes and measuring just 32ft (9.7m) overall, you don't want so much performance on tap that you need the driving skills of an offshore powerboat racer to control it. Those who truly feel the need to move into the next performance league up should be looking for something slimmer and more single-minded than the 9ft 10in-wide (2.99m) Grand Tornado – a mean machine like the 80mph (70-knot) carbon fibre

Hydrolift C-31R (*MBY* September 2004), for instance.

What is on offer with the 32, as with the Boxster, is terrific handling and an effortless performance that is easy to control. It's an everyday, everyman's boat. Driving the Grand Tornado in the choppy waters around Cannes, I was struck by how forgiving the boat is. With so much power and speed, the boat still needs trimming correctly, but if the set-up is right no amount of abuse can upset it.

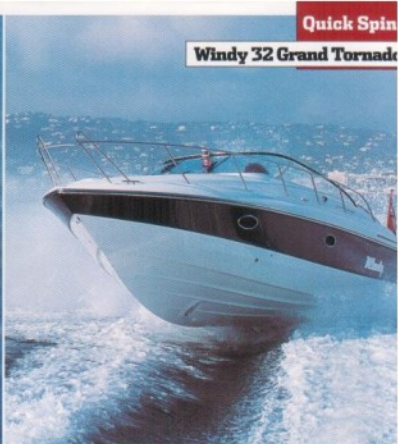
The confused water in the wake of another bigger boat is often the most disturbing place for a small boat to be – more unsettling than regular waves. But barreling along in the wake of our 40ft (12.2m) photo boat, the Grand Tornado always remained completely composed, almost serene. It was possible to inch forward, steer properly and accelerate



# Boxster

## At a Glance

Length	31ft 11in (9.72m)
Flat out	46.8 knots (54mph)
Engines	2 x 285hp Volvo KAD300 EDC
Price from	£140,129 inc UK VAT



Calling plan: it's see a chart table dash has no space for a fixed

cleanly over the wake. Of course, this is not the sort of behaviour we're recommending, but these crazy antics do provide a good indication of the boat's capabilities and unflappable handling in rough conditions. Its Duoprop outdrive legs grip well, and even trimmed up to around +3° they refused to cavitate or let go of the water, despite the most ferocious of turns.

The 32 is deceptively fast, thanks largely to its low noise levels and smooth ride. With the engines maintaining an easy-going 3,350rpm and less than 80dB(A) finding its way into the cockpit, cruising at 40 knots doesn't feel at all rapid until you poke your head above the parapet – or, as we happened to do on test, catch a wave unawares and found ourselves temporarily airborne. It is possible to cruise down around 20 knots but this feels laughably slow. Even 30 knots (2,600rpm) feels like

dawdling. In calm conditions the Grand Tornado is capable of covering the ground very quickly indeed.

Fast means efficient, and the boat excels in this respect. It achieved 46.8 knots with twin 285hp KAD300 Volvos, whereas the Bavaria 32DC (*MBY* December 2004) reached 39 knots with twin 260hp Volvos. That is a significant gap – and it's reflected in the running costs. So at 36 knots the 32DC achieves 1.95mpg, whereas the Grand Tornado delivers 2.44mpg – a 25% increase. Although the Grand Tornado should be more economical as it's lighter and slimmer than the 32DC, and the gap narrows noticeably as the speed drops, it's nevertheless a significant saving for those concerned about running costs.

Like the Bavaria 32DC, the Grand Tornado also has the new 210hp and 260hp Volvo D4 engines on its options list.

## + We like

Accessible handling and sparkling 50mph-plus performance; versatile cockpit seating.





**Stern looks:** the bathing platform incorporates two self-draining lockers and folding swim ladders.

The 260hp D4s, in particular, are real powerhouses, with awesome torque that will give the boat a tremendous kick, even more than the 285hp KAD300s. And if the results of our early engine tests prove consistent, the indications are that the 15hp reduction won't result in any loss of speed because of the extra efficiency of Volvo's new DPH outdrive leg.

However, a pair of D4s add around 200kg to the stern of the five-tonne hull – and this on a boat that likes to be trimmed a little tighter than usual to keep the nose tucked down to prevent the boat porpoising through the long swells we found. Although we picked up a little top speed by running with the outdrive legs set to +2°, below 40 knots the boat ran better and felt more firmly planted with the legs tucked in to between -1° and +1°. As always, test the boat with your engines of choice before you buy.

Simple overnight accommodation. The galley will have more storage when eye-level lockers are fitted.



It is possible to cruise down around 20 knots but this feels laughably slow. Even 30 knots feels like dawdling



**Any switch way:** electrically powered sliding seat-back gives you the choice of big sunbed, or smaller sunbed and seating.

#### Single-minded

Windy have always concentrated their efforts on handling and performance, paying less attention to details down below. While the simple two or four-berth interior is okay, it's certainly not breaking any new ground or offering anything more than its competitors. Our early prototype boat had been hastily shipped out to Cannes for our test, and Windy are confident that their production boats will be more refined, so bear in mind that our photographs do not represent the finished product. As usual, Windy were open to suggestions, and they took on board several of ours, largely aimed at improving the meagre lighting and making more of the Grand Tornado's limited storage.

The most remarkable thing about the interior is how creak and groan free it is, even driving flat out through choppy seas. Every bit of furniture that can be used as a

On future boats reading lights will be moved to the head of the berth and more lights will be added.



secondary structure has been securely bonded to the well-built hull, and Windy refuse to use moulded GRP headliners because they are noisier. These techniques improve the already quiet ride, and it's particularly reassuring not to hear any strange noises coming from below.

Raising the large engine hatch gives unimpeded access to the tops of the engines, although depending on the length of your arms, you may be faced with an awkward scramble across the engines if you want to reach the service items or dig deeper inside the engine compartment. As with all small outdrive-leg boats, the 32's engineering installation is straightforward, and it had been competently executed.

My only real concern is the bizarre siting of the 12/240V circuit-breaker panels and battery switches in the cockpit only millimetres above the teak-laid deck, wholly exposed and with no covers to hold back water. However waterproof their makers claim the panels and switches are, I'd feel far safer at sea if they were hidden away in the big locker under the aft seat.

The 32 Grand Tornado's predecessor, the Tornado 31, was a ground-breaking boat with an unusual but wonderfully practical cockpit perfect for watersports enthusiasts. The 32 is aimed more at sun-worshippers. Like the Windy 34 Khamsin and the 28 Ghibli, it sports a more conventional sunbed-focused cockpit. An electrically powered sliding seat-back gives owners a push-button choice between big sunbed or smaller sunbed plus seating.

Wraparound seating that puts six people within easy reach of the large folding cockpit table means that dining outside is a real possibility. Its two leaves can be folded over, halving its size and exposing useful fiddles on the underside, or it can be stowed quickly and neatly under the port-side seat. The outboard seat-backs are uncomfortably upright, but otherwise the cockpit layout works fine.

## Datafile Windy 32 Grand Tornado



### Verdict

Us blokes undoubtedly possess a genetic predisposition to squander large amounts of cash on some non-essential forms of transport. It's nature, of course, and not something you'd be able to fight even if you wanted to. So, given that there's no escaping the inevitable, what form is your next reassuringly high-performing purchase going to take – fast new sports car or ultra-rapid sports cruiser? Well, there's good news for seafaring hedonists: cars don't plummet in value as most new sports cars do. And when it comes to indulging in speed, boat owners also have it made, because boats with big engines consume fuel at the same rate as those with small powerplants.

What you buy depends on your criteria. However, if you are looking for the aquatic equivalent of the Porsche Boxster, the Windy 32 Grand Tornado gets very close. It has excellent handling and performance, but more importantly, it's very accessible. The 32 is the sort of boat that won't bite back. When you're facing the compulsion to spend, my advice is to do the sensible thing and buy the boat. **MBY**

### Engines & drive system

Twin Volvo KAD300 EDC; 285hp @ 3,800rpm;  
6-cylinder 3.59-litre diesels  
Volvo DPG outdrive legs



### Data

<b>Overall length</b>	31ft 11in (9.72m)
<b>Hull length</b>	29ft 6in (8.99m) <i>MBY estimate</i>
<b>Beam</b>	9ft 10in (2.99m)
<b>Displacement</b>	4.6 tonnes light, 5.2 tonnes loaded (loaded = light + 100% fuel & water)
<b>Draught</b>	3ft 0in (0.91m)
<b>Air draught</b>	7ft 3in (2.20m) <i>MBY estimate</i>
<b>Fuel capacity</b>	130 imp gal (590 litres)
<b>Water capacity</b>	33 imp gal (150 litres)
<b>RPM</b>	2,100 2,400 2,700 3,000 3,300 3,600 3,900
<b>SPEED</b>	21.3 27.0 31.5 35.5 39.3 43.0 46.8
<b>TRIM</b>	4.0° 4.0° 3.0° 3.0° 2.0° 2.0° 2.0°
<b>GPH</b>	7.0 9.2 11.7 14.3 18.0 22.3 25.8
<b>MPG</b>	3.06 2.92 2.68 2.49 2.18 1.93 1.82
<b>RANGE</b>	319 304 279 259 227 200 189

*Speed in knots; GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons; range in nautical miles. NB: calculated figures based on standard (idealised) engine propeller demand data. Your figures will vary (sometimes considerably) depending on temperature, hull fouling, sea state, fuel & crew load, build weight variations, boatbuilders' changes, and other factors.*

Range allows for 20% reserve; 95% fuel, 100% water, 2 crew, no stores; 24°C air temp, 18°C water temp, 1.022mb pressure; light swell. Force 1 for speed trials

<b>Slow cruising</b>	27 knots, 304 miles @ 2,400rpm
<b>Fast cruising</b>	40 knots, 222 miles @ 3,350rpm
<b>Fiat out</b>	46.8 knots, 189 miles @ 3,900rpm
<b>Price from</b>	£140,129 inc UK VAT (twin 160hp)
<b>Price as tested</b>	£168,385 inc UK VAT (twin 285hp)
<b>Designer</b>	Hans Jørgen Johnsen, 2004
<b>RCD category</b>	B (for 8 people)
<b>Contact</b>	Andrew at Express Cruisers Tel: +44 (0)1590 673312. Fax: +44 (0)1590 676353. Email: sales@expresscruisers.co.uk Website: www.windy.no

SOUND LEVELS dB(A)	Helm	Cockpit seat
Slow cruising @ 27 knots	76	78
Fast cruising @ 40 knots	78	79
Fiat out @ 46.8 knots	79	80

