

# MOTORBOAT & YACHTING

# SAY 42



‘LEAVES  
COMPETITORS  
IN ITS WAKE’

AS TESTED IN THE NOVEMBER 2023 ISSUE OF

**MOTORBOAT** & YACHTING

# SAY 42

*If weight is the enemy of speed then this featherlight new sportsboat, from the man who crafted carbon-fibre mouldings for McLaren supercars, will leave competitors in its wake*



WORDS: Hugo Andraee



Ultra-light carbon-fibre build and outlandish styling give credence to its claims of being a fuel-efficient superboat

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**E**very car and boat builder knows that weight is the enemy of speed. Colin Chapman, the founder of Lotus sports cars, summed it up particularly well, saying, "Adding power makes you faster on the straights. Subtracting weight makes you faster everywhere."

Exactly the same principle applies to boats, especially planing ones, but it's the effect weight has on fuel efficiency that is arguably even more compelling given the financial and ecological pressure bearing down on boat owners. The heavier a boat is, the more power it needs and the more fuel it burns. The more fuel it burns, the larger the tanks have to be and the more weight you end up carrying. It's a vicious circle that results in a heavier, slower, thirstier boat with larger fuel bills and a bigger carbon footprint.

Colin Chapman's solution was to make his cars simpler and lighter than the competition. It worked – in 1968 Graham Hill won the F1 world championship in a Lotus 49 weighing a meagre 499kg – well under half the weight of a modern Mini!

Perhaps it's no surprise then that the man behind SAY Carbon Yachts, Karl Wagner, also comes from an automotive background. His previous company, Carbo Tech, produced carbon-fibre mouldings for the likes of McLaren and Aston Martin as well as various F1 teams. Now he's using that expertise to build lightweight carbon-fibre sportsboats. There are currently two models in the range, the SAY 29 and this boat, the SAY 42, although a SAY 52 is also in development.

## WEIGHT WATCHER

Almost every moulded element of the SAY 42 is made of carbon fibre, from the hull, deck and bulkheads to the seats, locker lids and windscreen frame. And anything that can't be moulded also goes through a strict weight control process to ensure it's as light as it can be. That includes the engines, which is why this 42ft day cruiser is powered not by turbo diesels but twin petrol V8s.

If that sounds counterintuitive for a company that prides itself on fuel efficiency, take a look at the stats; a single 440hp Volvo D6 DPI weighs 790kg, whereas a 430hp Volvo V8 petrol weighs 441kg – a total saving of well over 700kg by the time you've taken into account the extra oil, fuel and cooling requirements of the two big diesel lumps. The upshot of this strict weight watching regime is that a SAY 42 tips the scales at 4.5 tonnes, less than half the weight of a Fjord 41 XL (11.5 tonnes).

It's not just the build process that differentiates SAY from its rivals, the hull design does too. Drag is just as important as weight when it comes to running efficiency so to keep the frontal and wetted surface areas as small as possible, the SAY 42 has an unusually slender, shallow draft hull with a razor sharp entry that flares out dramatically above the waterline. Remarkably, even though it's much slimmer and shallower than a Fjord 41 below the surface, at deck level it shares exactly the same maximum beam of 13ft 1in.

The downside of narrow hulls is that they tend to be less stable, but perhaps to help counter that the SAY 42 has a big fixed bathing platform that extends well beyond the hull sides, ▶



LEFT: The view from the helm leaves you in no doubt about its performance MIDDLE: The table drops down to create a second sunbed RIGHT: There's room for a Seabob and SUPs under the aft sunpad

wrapping around the stern like a buoyancy aid. There is also a special compartment for a Seakeeper 2 gyro under the deck. It certainly feels stable enough and is rated as RCD category B for up to 12 people – impressive for such a lightweight rocketship.

### BIG STEP FORWARD

The final piece of the jigsaw is the recent addition of a Petestep hull. This patented hull shape uses curved spray rails that fan out from the keel in a vee shape rather than the usual straight-edged parallel ones. These divert the spray back under the boat creating a localised high pressure 'cushion' of water under

the planing surface that is said to increase speed and efficiency while reducing noise and slamming. We've tried Petestep hulls before on the X-Power 33 and Fugu 29 RIB, both of which are among the softest riding, best handling boats in their classes.



RIGHT: Some of the carbon mouldings are lacquered rather than painted so you can see the tightly woven fibre

INSET: Shockwave suspension seats look and feel the absolute business



The logic behind the design may be entirely rational but the result is one of the most extraordinary looking craft on the water – in a good way. Whichever angle you look at it from, it has an other-worldly presence with its mix of sharp creases, subtle curves and extravagant protrusions all coming together in one long, lean, low-slung profile. It screams superboat in much the same way as a Lamborghini screams supercar.

It's not just the styling that sends out the right vibes, the helm does too. A pair of thinly padded carbon-fibre bucket seats mounted on Shockwave suspension brackets embrace you in their grasp as securely as any Group A rally car. But it's the wheel itself that really sets the tone, with its deeply recessed boss and long-angled spokes thrusting the rim out towards your chest – it looks and feels like it belongs to a top fuel dragster.

### FUEL FOR THOUGHT

Despite its intimidating looks, the SAY 42 turns out to be remarkably docile at low speeds. With those smooth-running V8s purring away at idle, controlled by a slick-shifting electronic throttle/gearbox and linked to a pair of relatively small diameter duo-props, it's actually pretty easy to handle in confined spaces, especially if you take advantage of the standard Volvo joystick to edge it sideways on and off the pontoon. The only thing we weren't able to test was whether its light weight makes it more prone to being blown around in a crosswind.

Those refined manners continue out at sea. In flat water with a perfectly clean hull, SAY reckons you can cruise at 20 knots while burning just 45lph. We couldn't quite match that, but even in the swell outside Palma with four of us on board we managed 50lph at 20 knots, which equates to a modest 2.5 litres per nautical mile. The aforementioned Fjord 41 XL fitted with twin 440hp D6s burns around 85lph at 20 knots or 4.25 litres per nautical mile. At this speed, the SAY is as refined and civilised as you could wish for, slipping through the waters almost as serenely as a Slipper launch, but push the throttles all the way forward and you'll unleash the beast within.

The moment those V8s fill their lungs and start to sing, the 42 takes off like a cheetah hunting down a gazelle. With so little inertia to shift, its acceleration is in another league to heavier diesel-powered dayboats like the Frauscher Demon or Fjord 41. It's the same story flat out, reaching a two way average of 47 knots compared to 39.3 knots in the Frauscher or 37.3 knots in the Fjord. Unlike some larger performance boats with protective hard tops or wheelhouses insulating you from all the sound and fury, you really do feel and hear every one of those knots. The hull and suspension seats do a fine job of ironing out the smaller waves, but there's no getting away from the throaty roar of the engines or the blast of apparent wind whipping over the top of

It has an other-worldly presence, with its mix of sharp creases, subtle curves and extravagant protrusions



Jekyll and Hyde character of the hull allows it to sip fuel at 20 knots or rocket along at 47 knots

that aeroscreen. It's exhilarating stuff that is guaranteed to set the pulse racing but not something you are likely to want to maintain for hours on end; far better to ease it back to 30 or 35 knots and cover ground quickly while keeping a lid on fuel burn and extending the range to over 200nm.

In the swell off Mallorca, the 42's heavily flared bow and reverse angled spray rails did a fine job of keeping the nose high and the decks dry even when yomping over a following sea, but as with any slender, near vertical stemmed performance boat there is a risk of stuffing it into a deep trough if you get too carried away. You'd be going some to overwhelm its lateral grip, though, as the combination of that tenacious Petestep hull, lightweight build and grippy DuoPROP drives means it tracks round turns like a slot car racer.

### DAYBOAT DUTIES

So much for its driving credentials but how does it perform in its role as a platform for entertaining guests? Better than you might expect is the simple answer. The fixed bathing platform and absence of a tender garage means you'll struggle to store anything other than a lightweight inflatable on board but there is a sizable locker in front of the engines for a couple of Seabobs, SUPs or a liferaft. There's another locker under the rear bench seat for a Nautibuoy platform/dock and a built-in pump to inflate it. The bench seats themselves are rather flat and unsupportive for such a quick boat but it does mean you can squeeze plenty of people on them (unlike sculpted individual seats) and lower the table, fold the cushions over and create a second big sunpad to supplement the stern one. There's even a circular cutout in the middle of the cushions to house a champagne bucket!

Two smaller seats either side of the radar arch provide a more protected and close-up view of the action, especially if you opt for the T-Top roof to add a bit of shade. Recesses along both sides of the cockpit provide storage for lines, fenders and other assorted kit. Between the radar arch there's a small sink and fridge but no space for a grill or fiddled storage for glasses, crockery and the like.

A couple of grabrails on the seat backs and underside of the T-Top provide something to hang

on to but there are no exterior guardrails or toe rails to steady your path along the side decks or hang fenders from – four pop-up cleats on the angled topsides take care of the latter. Thankfully the side decks are unusually wide, flat and laid with teak so at least they offer a broad, grippy surface to plant your feet on. The swing-out anchor system can all be controlled from the helm even if, like us, you prefer to keep eyes on the anchor when it's being retrieved.

We've already mentioned the helm seats but it's worth noting that they also adjust for reach and have an integrated flip-up bolster, but with a good view forward even when seated and shock absorbers doing the work your knees would normally do, this is a boat that feels more natural to drive sitting. The position of the throttles and trim tab controls support that too. The twin angled MFDs allow you to display the engine info, boat systems and navigation in whatever configuration you like but we'd still like a few analogue dials and switches for immediate access to key information and systems.

### CABIN SPACE

The one piece of design where form seems to take precedence over function is access to the cabin. Press a button inside one of the two dashtop gloveboxes and the angled carbon-fibre door swings down electronically down to form a stairway down to the lower deck. It's a very neat idea that doubtless saves weight

BELOW: The cabin is relatively basic but bright and well executed, as is the spacious day heads



You've got to admire the bravery and execution of such a single-minded craft



too but the entrance is just too tight and the drop too steep to be comfortable for anyone over a certain age or size – all it needs is a bigger cutout and an extra step or two to avoid a rather undignified crouch and shuffle. It's a shame because the cabin is quite impressive for such a focussed performance boat. A huge central skylight and two big hull windows angled down towards the sea throw masses of natural light around the space (if not much in the way of a view) and although that slender underwater hull section limits the amount of floor and bed space, the heavily flared topsides ensure there is plenty of shoulder room to counter any feelings of claustrophobia. A couple could certainly spend a night or two on board provided they ate out. The designers have also made space for a good-sized heads/wet room with standing headroom for a six-footer and a shower behind the door.

The focus on weight saving means the decor is quite basic with the bare minimum of soft furnishings and not even a hint of wooden cabinetry or stone surfacing, but there is something strangely appealing about its clean lines, wafer-thin carbon-fibre locker lids and minimalist colour scheme. There is another fridge and quite a lot of dry storage down here, including a big recess under the cockpit that could just about fit a mattress and a couple of children, but don't kid yourself into thinking it's a family boat. There's a reason craft like the Fjord are that much heavier.

**VERDICT**

You've got to admire the bravery and the execution of such a single-minded craft. The fact that it looks as good as it does and delivers on its promise of exceptional performance and class-leading efficiency is a formidable achievement, especially in a market that seems to value creature comforts and volume over everything else. It will take a particular kind of buyer to appreciate just how rare and precious a thing that is because there are plenty of builders that can offer more performance (Brabus), more space (Fjord) and equal style (Frauscher) but none that can deliver all three while burning less fuel than any of them. The fact the SAY 42 also works well as a dayboat for guests and is just as happy playing the docile kitten at 20 knots as it is the rampant tiger at 47 knots only adds to that accomplishment. Colin Chapman would have loved it and so do we.

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ABOVE: Twin 430hp V8 petrol engines are much lighter and more compact than diesels would be



**DRAGSTER WHEEL**  
This photo doesn't show how long the spokes are or how deeply recessed the boss is

**SAFE SPACE**  
Lockers are ideal for valuables. The left one also houses the cabin door switch

**THROTTLE UP**  
Standard Volvo controls look rather out of place on something this special

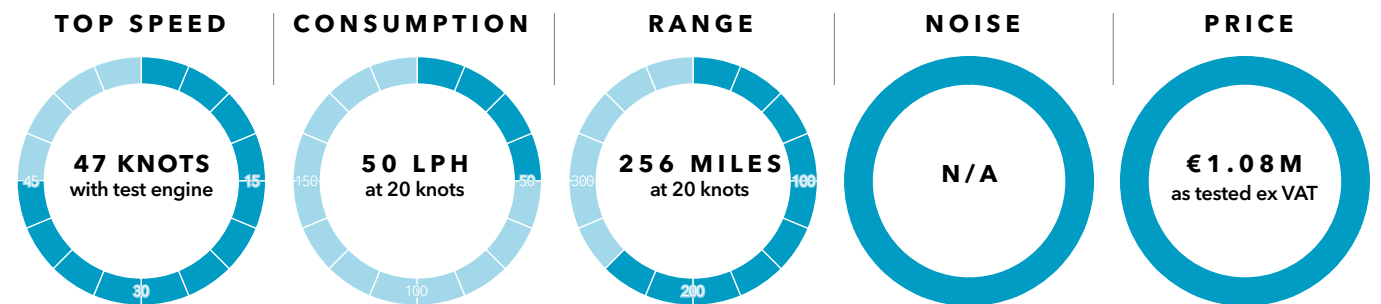


**PLATFORM WINGS**  
The fixed platform wraps around the topsides to add protection when berthing

**SEAT LOCKER**  
This has a built-in pump and room for an inflatable Nauti-buoy platform extension

**WIDE BEAM**  
The deck is considerably wider than the slender underwater hull sections

**GLASS DECK**  
This huge glass skylight lets natural light flood into the cabin below to impressive effect



**SPECIFICATION**  
**LOA:** 42ft 6in (12.96m)  
**BEAM:** 13ft 1in (3.99m)  
**ENGINES:** 2 x 430hp Volvo Penta V8 petrol  
**DRAFT:** 2ft 10in (0.89m)  
**DISPLACEMENT:** 4.5 tonnes  
**FUEL CAPACITY:** 800 litres  
**WATER CAPACITY:** 180 litres  
**HOLDING TANK:** 50 litres  
**RCD:** Category B for 12 people

**COSTS & OPTIONS**  
 Price from €937,500 ex taxes (2 x 380hp)  
 Upgrade to 2 x 430hp €24,250  
 Metallic hull colour €28,950  
 T-Top & aft bimini €39,750  
 Seakeeper 2 €52,750  
 Joystick control €19,750  
 Air-conditioning €13,950

**PERFORMANCE**

TEST ENGINES: Twin 430hp Volvo Penta 6.2-litre V8 petrols

					ECO					FAST	MAX
RPM	650	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	3500	4000	4500	5000	5500
Knots	3.5	5.6	8.3	10.6	16.1	21.1	26.0	30.5	35.5	41	47
Litres per hour	8.0	12.0	19.0	28	41	57	76	94	130	174	241
Litres per mile	2.29	2.14	2.29	2.64	2.55	2.69	2.92	3.08	3.66	4.24	5.13
Range (nm)	279	299	279	242	251	238	219	208	175	151	125

CALCULATED FIGURES based on real-time readings, yours may vary considerably. Range allows for 20% reserve. All options prices are ex VAT. Fuel 50%, water 50% Force 2-3 with a 2ft swell