

NORTH-LINE

Able to deal with the choppiest of seas, the attention to detail in this wheelhouse cruiser inspires confidence from the second you start the engine

42

Text: **Jack Haines** Photos: **Lester McCarthy**



The Waddenzee, between The Netherlands' northern coastline and the Frisian Islands, is a challenging body of water. It's a vast expanse of sea, exposed to the North Sea from above and with little protection being offered from below by the pancake-flat landmass that is Holland. The string of islands lends a touch of shelter from the bleak North Sea but not much and, from our base in Harlingen, there is one narrow major channel with perilously shallow water either side that leads out to the nearest island of Vlieland, so it's plagued by the wash of powerboats and yachts criss-crossing their way to island life. The Waddenzee is, in short, boat test heaven.

With these challenging conditions in mind, the boat we've travelled here to test makes a whole lot of sense. You only need to clap eyes on the North-Line 42 and the immediate thought is: "Well, that means business." Arthur Mursell's legendary Nelson hull provides a muscular basis for the 42's

design and the deep cockpit, towering guardrails and hefty, black rubbering strake trick you – from a distance – into thinking the 42 is the local pilot boat. The commercial look is enhanced on our test boat by the owner's decision to omit both the table and cushions from the cockpit and to fit a wheelhouse-mounted spotlight of such comical enormity it could stand in for the moon in the event of a lunar malfunction.

The yard that builds North-Lines was founded in 1976 and used to turn its hand to all sorts of boatbuilding – from fishing vessels and sailing boats to cabinetry work. The North-Line name arrived in 2004 when CEO Sipko van Sluis saw the opportunity to take the Arthur Mursell hull and make a few tweaks to increase living space and comfort on board. He sent 50 changes over to TT Boat Designs to create the original 37 and these amendments have been filtered into the 42. The main changes were an increase in freeboard and beam to provide more headroom on board, a second cabin amidships, and amendments to try and dry up the notoriously wet ride.

MASTERING THE CHOP

As we nudged out of Harlingen on course for Vlieland, the Waddenzee wasn't at its boiling worst but would still provide us with a suitably choppy passage to give the 42 a properly challenging shakedown cruise. A trip that, thanks to the 42's protection and refinement, should be achievable in even the filthiest of conditions.

Our test boat was fitted with a pair of Cummins 480hp QSB 5.9s. They're great engines – compact, smooth and quiet but with bags of grunt to get the 42 to just shy of 30 knots flat out. Unfortunately, an exhaust issue kept us from maintaining higher running speeds (and meant we couldn't take our own fuel figures) so we spent most of the cruise at 17 knots. The 42 behaved acceptably at this speed but felt more comfortable on the occasions we did increase the revs to cruise in the low 20s. It may have been the wave pattern on the day but at the lower cruising speed I found myself having to put in a lot of work at the helm to keep her on the straight and narrow as the keel sniffed out troughs, especially with the sea behind.



Traditionalists will love it. More teak than Titanic and handholds wherever you look

At higher speeds the additional lift seemed to make it easier to keep her on course and meant I could relax on the helm a bit more.

You may have to work for a bit, but put in the effort and the 42 will monster rough seas. The ride is freakishly assured, refined and smooth – we had a big chop to contend with on the journey out to the island but the 42 ironed out everything that came its way with a confidence that would keep you plugging on even if the weather deteriorated. In fact you rather hope it does because this is a boat that begs to have spray bombarding the wheelhouse. Conveniently, this is something that happens on regular occasions even with the adjustments to freeboard and spray rails. It is certainly drier than the traditional Nelson hull shape but you would still want to keep the windows shut in a chop because there was plenty of water finding its way on board.

The helm station is clearly laid out and functional but don't expect many party tricks. The single chair is comfortable and infinitely adjustable and there is very little to distract you from the business of guiding the 42 through the crests. Our boat didn't have it fitted but there is the option to have a Webasto sunroof or, if you're concerned this may compromise the boat's ruggedness, watertight hatches can be installed, instead. It certainly needs something in the roof – although the owner of this boat felt differently – because it would add light and a means of ventilation.

AT CLOSE QUARTERS

The jam-packed harbour on Vlieland gave us the perfect opportunity to assess the practicality of the 42's deck spaces. With its inspiration in the commercial sector it's not much of a surprise that crewing this thing is a delight. You step out of a deep, well-protected cockpit on to huge side decks with guardrails that nearly reach your armpit. Movement around the boat couldn't be any easier or safer. That's just as well because without an anchor locker on the foredeck, everything has to be stowed further aft in the voids beneath the cockpit benches or in crates in the engine room. There is fantastic access to this space thanks to the cockpit sole, which opens fully on a hydraulic ram, although a ladder down into the machinery space might be helpful for people in tight jeans or with bad hips.

What about life away from the nuts and bolts? Traditionalists will love it. More teak than *Titanic*, corners with a gentle radius not sharp edges, and handholds wherever you look.

Wraparound windscreen? You must be joking. Three separate flat screens like a Severn Class lifeboat, that's what you get.

IN THE CABINS

The interior has two dinettes, one in the wheelhouse, which gets the best views, and a larger, more comfortable one opposite the galley on the lower deck. Surrounded by storage for books and board games, this is where you will find yourself on a day when the weather does manage to hem you in – kettle whistling away on the hob or, slightly less romantically, plugged into a socket.

The master cabin is in its proper place up in the bow and, thanks to the height of that coachroof, it gets masses of headroom. The beds are aligned in a V-formation with space down the middle to climb up on to them. Storage is okay but the owner of this boat had opted against hanging space and instead requested lots of shelves. There's no avoiding the feeling of coldness in this cabin, though. There's a lot of (albeit very nice) teak and a bland white lining above the berths which all looks a little overbearing. The same can be said for the ensuite, which, although being peppered with timber and Corian, still feels clinical.

The guest cabin amidships, which also has a small ensuite, has three berths. With a large double to port and a small single bed opposite, it's an ideal set-up for a couple of parents and a child. This cabin does have a hanging locker and there's space for a washing machine to be concealed in a cabinet at the aft end.

On the whole, the traditional values and style of the interior work brilliantly, especially the lower saloon and its spacious galley, but the cabins feel like the poor relations and could do with a few more splashes of luxury for a boat that costs north of €800,000.

MONEY WELL SPENT

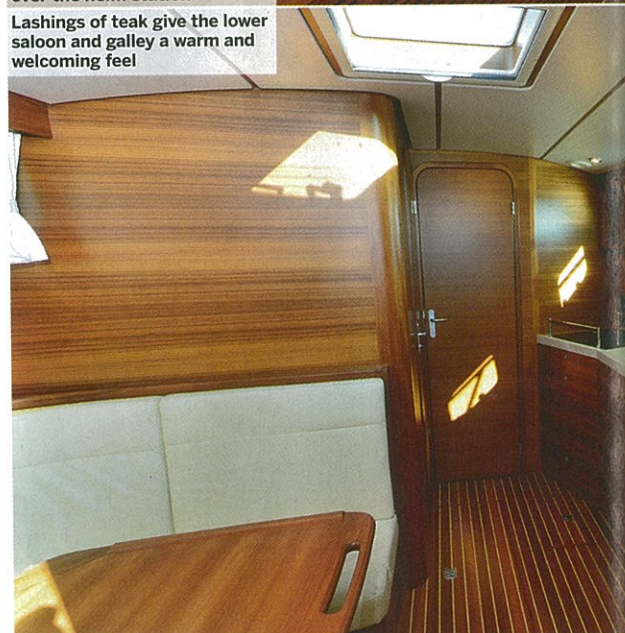
There's no way of hiding from the North-Line's price. For a 42ft boat with two cabins it seems expensive when it's sitting in the berth; you wonder where the money is going. But then, when you get out to sea, it's clear that the cash has gone into making a boat that will get you through whatever the weather can throw at you.

The way it romps through waves without a hint of a slam, squeak or shudder. The thickness of the mouldings and how beautifully smooth they are. The gauge of the stainless steel, size of the cleats and fairleads and the first-rate engine installation all boost your confidence in the way the boat will handle



You can have twin hatches or an electric sunroof installed over the helm station

Lashings of teak give the lower saloon and galley a warm and welcoming feel



The master cabin has enough space but feels a little bit sparse

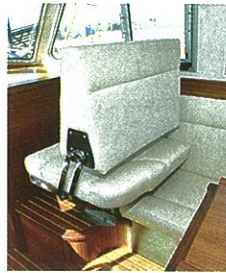




A CLOSER LOOK WITH JACK HAINES

PARTY TRICK

At the touch of a button the forward section of the dinette glides forwards and upwards to transform into a forward-facing double bench.



WASHING MACHINE

Having a domestic washing machine on board is a handy addition on a boat of this size. You can just have storage in this space if you prefer.



CHART TABLE

As well as being a large, flat space in front of the navigator, the table lifts up to reveal bags of storage for charts and nav gear.



THE ENGINE ROOM

The compact Cummins lumps leave huge amounts of space to move around in the engine room. It's a steep drop down though, and a small ladder would be a useful addition.



THE RIVALS

Dale Nelson 38

Price from £696,000

Built by Dale in Neyland, Wales, the aft cockpit 38 is a classic Nelson design, even closer to those workboat roots than the North-Line 42.

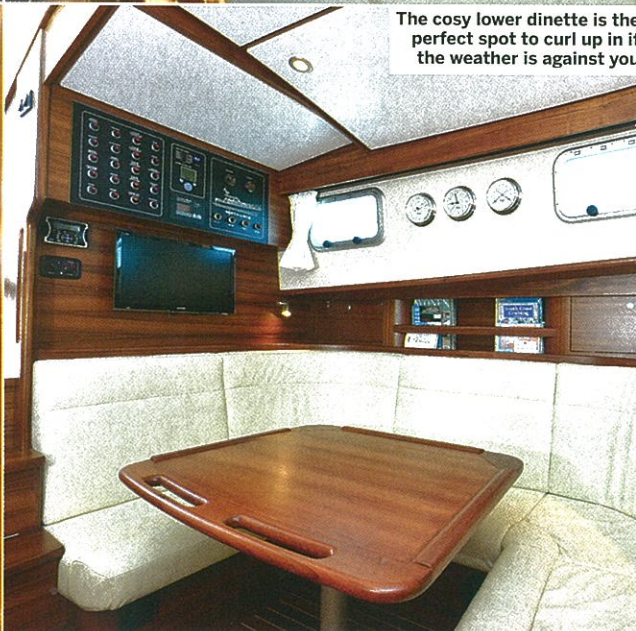
Seaward 42

Price from £625,000

The 42 is made by Seaward at its yard on the Isle of Wight. It is available in both aft cockpit and aft cabin variations.



The cosy lower dinette is the perfect spot to curl up in if the weather is against you

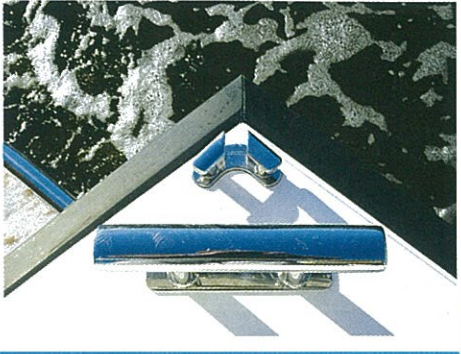


Good storage levels in the master ensuite



Three berth guest cabin is ideally suited to families

Deck gear is lovely and solid and the thick rubbing strake will save any berthing blushes



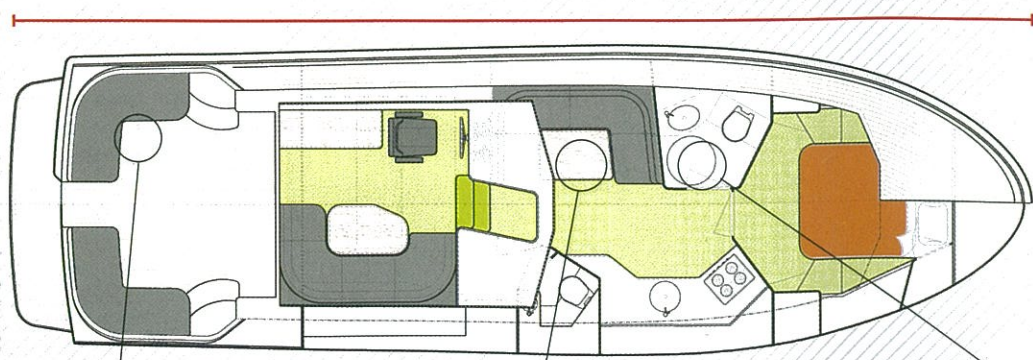
The mast folds down at the touch of a button to reduce air draught on the waterways



THE DATA

LENGTH OVERALL 45ft 3in (13.8m)

BEAM
13ft 5in
(4.1m)



The test boat didn't have them but we would spec these bench seats for the cockpit

Lower dinette is spacious and comfortable plus located opposite the galley, which is useful

Cabins are a little sparse but they're very spacious and get their own bathrooms

You may have to work for a bit, but put in the effort and the 42 will monster rough seas

No anchor locker means no storage at the bow and access to the chain is via the forward cabin



itself when the conditions turn nasty. Scratch beneath the surface of the 42 and you can see where North-Line is spending the money.

If it were my boat I would make some tweaks to the deck layout, such as adding a large table to the cockpit and some cushions and backrests to the seating around the transom. This would give you a really good outdoor living space and soften the slightly commercial feel of the boat we tested.

VERDICT

There's no doubt that the 42 is going to appeal to a very specific type of boater. Compare it to other 42-footers on the market and you will

question the relative lack of space, cabins and innovation on the North-Line, but it's that same no-nonsense ethos that makes the 42 so attractive to the right customer. There are no complex folding mechanisms to jam or panes of glass in the hull to worry about, just solid, reliable boatbuilding that you can bank on to get you home whatever the weather.

If you treasure unseen details and quality craftsmanship with the backing of a hull that has an unrivalled reputation for seakeeping then the Waddenzee is just crying out to welcome you to Holland for a sea trial. **MBY** Contact North-Line. Tel: +31 (0)517 391054 Web: www.north-line.nl

THE HELM VIEW



Compass could be in a better position for quick glances at your heading

The dash may not look that fancy but it is clear, concise and sensibly laid out. Dark material reduces glare, too

The touchscreen Simrad multi-function displays are too much of a stretch, but at least there's a control pad closer to the steering wheel

FUEL CAPACITY
462 imp gal (2,100 litres)
WATER CAPACITY
154 imp gal (700 litres)
DRAUGHT
3ft 9in (1.2m)
RCD CATEGORY
A for 12 people
DESIGNERS
TT Boat Designs
and North-Line
DISPLACEMENT
13 tonnes

PERFORMANCE

TEST ENGINES Twin Cummins QSB5.9.
480hp @ 3,300rpm.
6-cylinder, 5.9-litre diesels

MBY FIGURES	ECO		FAST	MAX
RPM	1,100	2,300	2,600	3,300
Speed	7.0	16.0	20.0	30.0
LPH	8.0	69	96	180
GPH	1.8	15.2	21.1	39.6
MPG	3.98	1.05	0.95	0.76
Range	1,470	390	350	280

Speed in knots. GPH & MPG figures use imperial gallons. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. Calculated figures based on North-Line supplied test data, your figures may vary considerably. Prices include VAT at 21% in The Netherlands

THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from €605,000
Price as tested €880,000

Twin Cummins 480hp engines upgrade	€62,500
Leather upholstery	€4,750
Simrad nav package upgrade	€37,000
KVH Tracvision	
M5 sat TV	€5,950
Double glazing	€4,630
Eberspacher heating	standard

■ = Options on test boat

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