

ON BOARD

Malö 41

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This elegant Swedish cruising yacht is beautifully put together, but how does she sail? James Jermain reports

It is an interesting statistic that, of the 25 or so boats Malö builds each year in Kungsviken, Sweden, nearly half end up in the UK, through British agents Nordic Marine. We like Malös, it would seem, and it is easy to see why.

In style, the boats fall into roughly the same category as the Hallberg-Rassy and Najad ranges – well-built and finished, moderate- to heavy-displacement, long-distance cruising yachts. What makes the Malös different is their aft cockpits.

With such a small output, Malö is able to build each boat to order, so no two are quite the same. Since its launch last year, 10 of the Leif Angermark-designed Malö 41s have now been built, to two different basic interior layouts and two hull forms. Our trial boat had the 'Standard' hull, with its retroussé stern, as opposed to the 'Classic' option, which has a plain counter and a much larger after deck which extends the overall length by over a foot. It was fitted out with two after cabins, while the boat more usually has a single after cabin, a bigger saloon and more cockpit stowage.

Photos: Graham Snook / YachtPhoto



Design

Each successive Malö, including this one, places a greater emphasis on performance, with a tendency for the hulls to become lower and sleeker while the coachroofs become more prominent. She has moderate but elegant sheer and a traditional profile, moderated by the owner's choice of transom design.

Waterline beam is quite narrow and the turn of the bilge is gentle, so she has limited form stiffness. Nevertheless, a high ballast ratio and flare above the waterline mean she stiffens up considerably when heeled beyond 10° or so. With its double peak, her stability curve is interesting: it shows a very high level of maximum stability and an equally high angle of vanishing stability – 128°. The statistics suggest she will be stiff and stable, particularly in stronger winds.

She has a short waterline length by modern standards, with a gracefully raked bow. Below the waterline she is deep bodied and veed forward, where the sections are quite full, becoming increasingly U-shaped aft. The keel is a long, deep, plain fin of conventional shape. The propeller shaft runs in a moulded log, which gives good support and contributes to straight running. The rudder is hung on a half-skeg and semi-balanced. The amount of balance is less than on previous Malös, which gives more feel at the expense of greater weight.

Her high length/displacement ratio and generous sail area/displacement ratio suggest that, while no sluggard in light airs, she will be at her best when the wind pipes up a bit.

Test sailing the Malö in 30-knot winds





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Below decks

Immediately you get to the bottom of the companionway, you are aware that Malö has put a lot into this boat, yet there is still a feeling of spaciousness. The mahogany woodwork and panelling are lavish and extensive lockers and shelving fills the main cabin. But there are also long sightlines, leading right into the forecabin.

This first impression of quality is reinforced when you get down to detail: doors are solidly panelled, with delicate beading; deep, lined lockers with fiddled shelves are everywhere; doors and lockers have ventilation strips; the brightwork is superb and all the fixtures are good quality.

On our boat, the second after cabin, to starboard, pushes the heads well forward so that it is opposite the galley. With the large navigation area ahead of that, there is only room for an easy chair before the forward bulkhead. It is a perfectly sound arrangement if you require berths for six without using the saloon, but the alternative, single aftercabin allows the heads to be situated behind the companionway to create a much larger, more open saloon, with either two easy chairs or a long settee – and the company will modify this basic pattern in almost any

way to suit the needs of their usually knowledgeable and experienced clientele.

The C-shaped dinette, with plenty of space for six people, is standard in all versions. The table is a cunning design which, in its folded form, is large enough for ordinary day use and is fiddled for sea going. Turn it through 45°, unfold the four corners and a large, flat dining table is created. There is stowage under the settees and lockers behind their backs. Above are two shoulder-level lockers and a bookshelf on each side. The long leg of the 'C' can be used as a sea berth and leecloths, most unusually, are standard. Headroom ranges from 195cm to 193cm (6ft 5in to 6ft 4in). The sole is carpeted over a teak and holly-splined sole. Light and ventilation are well provided through a Dorade vent in addition to six opening ports.

The chart table is large and well supported, with instrument space and stowage for charts and other paraphernalia. The switch panel is comprehensive, with room for expansion, and the wiring is extremely well installed, if a little short of labelling. Ahead of the chart table is an easy chair which we felt was a bit flimsy and susceptible to being used as a grab handle. On the same subject, there is a stout rail

down the centreline but nothing outboard. This is the sort of area, however, where owners will have their own ideas, and Malö will be quite happy to accommodate them.

The galley is large but open, which is good in harbour but not so secure at sea. There is a reasonable amount of working surface in grey Corian, into which is set a washing and draining sink and one or two cool boxes. The cooker is a sophisticated Smev model with a locking mechanism which allows it to be fixed at various angles of heel. However, the gas pipe is too short and the swing angle somewhat restricted. Stowage is very good and access to seacocks easy. A surprising lapse, we felt, was that there were no restraints on the drawers to prevent them falling out if they were opened on the port tack. The same applies to the chart table drawers on starboard.

The master suite is forward, where it is allocated more space than is usual. It is comfortable, very well fitted out and has 1.93m (6ft 4in) headroom. The centreline bunk is 1.98m (6ft 6in) long and up to 1.44m (4ft 9in) wide. There is an enormous amount of stowage, including shelves, drawers and hanging lockers. The hatch is fitted with a fold-down stainless steel step so that it can be used as an escape route.

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Above: the large, open galley. Right: the dining table is cunningly designed



There is also an opening port, while artificial light is supplied by three overhead spots and two good-quality reading lights.

The forward heads is a good size, with white laminated walls and blue Corian surfaces. It is well lit and ventilated, and a holding tank is standard. The after heads is similar in size and fit-out.

The two after cabins differ in subtle ways, though in general the space and arrangement is similar. Both have 1.93m (6ft 4in) headroom in the generous standing areas, and both have escape hatches to the cockpit. The starboard cabin has a squared-off bunk 1.95m (6ft 4½in) long and 1.42m (4ft 8in) wide. Lockers line the outboard side and there is a unit with shelves and a small hanging locker. Light comes from two opening ports and there is a suitable array of overhead and reading lights.

The port cabin's bunk is veed at the head end. Standing space is slightly less but the bunk is marginally longer and wider. In addition to the stowage of the starboard cabin, there are a couple of lockers on the inboard bulkhead – a very unusual feature.

It is not enough just to build a beautifully crafted interior, for a boat to be successful as an offshore cruiser the overall design and detail have to be right as well. As presented, this Malö impresses on all three counts, with the added benefit that any shortcomings owners might find, or imagine, can be sorted out at the building stage (or in the commissioning process in this country).

It is a point worth making that the boat is put together in the following order: hull and deck bonded; pre-fabricated furniture fitted; electrical and plumbing work completed; then engine and mechanics installed. The significance of this is that all parts of the boat are accessible for service and repair and nothing is built over and enclosed so that it is unreachable.

On deck

The cockpit is quite definitely designed with sailing rather than sunbathing in mind: it is long and narrow, leaving plenty of space outboard for wide sidedecks. All lines, except spinnaker and staysail gear, are brought aft, not to the coachroof, as is

usual, but to winches on the cockpit coamings. This makes the boat very easy to manage singlehanded, since sails can be set and reefed from behind the wheel. The main and genoa sheets are also well within reach. The main traveller is safely out of the way on top of a moulded arch. The arch also provides a mounting for the sprayhood and cockpit canopy, both of which are standard, as is the curved, fixed screen. The well is deep and the seats comfortable and a secure distance apart. There is plenty of room behind the wheel but the helm seat is flat. The sole, though, is gently angled in the wings.

The two after cabins restrict stowage space but there is a large locker under the helmsman's seat and, if the Classic stern is chosen, an enormous lazarette.

The sidedecks are wide and bounded by a high, moulded toerail. Teak decking is standard on both the decks and coachroof. The foredeck is long, wide and uncluttered, since the anchor is permanently mounted on a self-launching roller in a slot through the stem. The anchor well is deep, but we

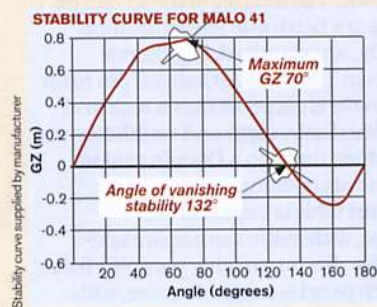
MALÖ 41: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS & OPTIONS

Specifications

Price inc VAT	£278,475
LOA (standard)	12.82m (42ft)
LWL	10.80m (35ft 5in)
Beam	3.97m (13ft)
Draught	1.97m (6ft 4in)
Displacement	11,000kg (24,263lb)
Ballast	4,200kg (9,264 lb)
Sail area	1,065sq ft (99m ²)
Berths	4/6
Fuel	373 litres (82 gal)
Water	550 litres (121 gal)
Engine	Yanmar 75hp diesel driving a three-bladed fixed propeller through a moulded shaft log.
Batteries	1x75ah engine start, 3x140ah service batteries
Disp/length ratio	243
Sail area/disp ratio	17
Ballast ratio	38
RCD Category	A
Design	Leif Angermark
Builder	Malö Yachts
UK agent:	Nordic Marine Tel: 01202 700089

Options

Classic transom	£6,500
Twin after cabins	£3,200
Roller main	£5,600
Storm jib	£650
Bow thruster	£3,750
Autopilot	£2,950
Radar/plotter	£3,057
Delivery and commissioning	£4,500

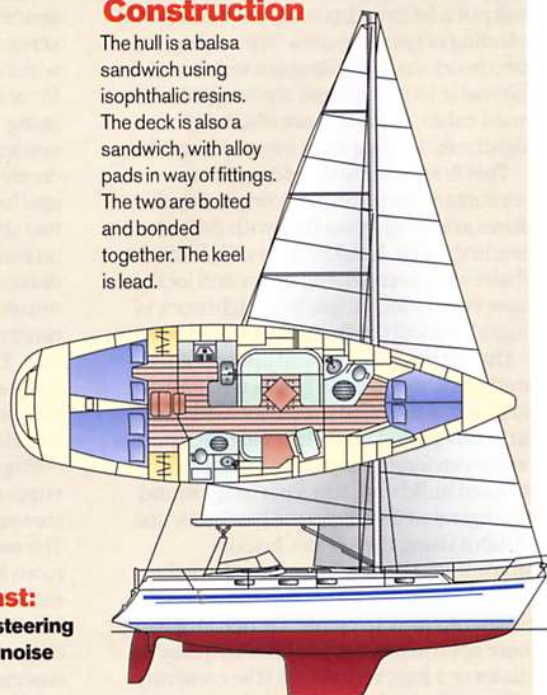


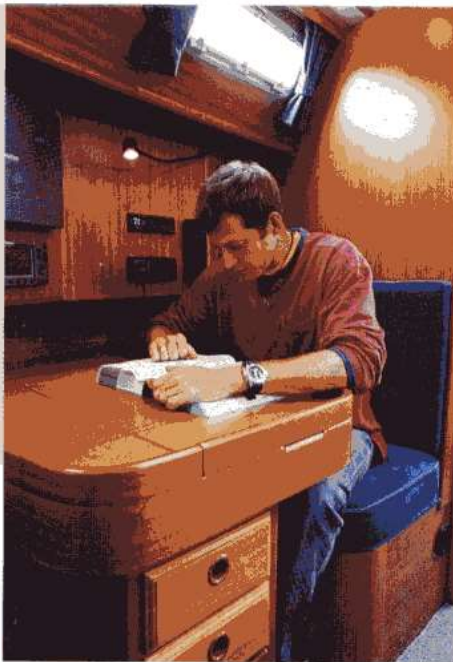
For:
High-quality build and finish
Complete inventory
All-round performance

Against:
Heavy steering
Engine noise
Price

Construction

The hull is a balsa sandwich using isophthalic resins. The deck is also a sandwich, with alloy pads in way of fittings. The two are bolted and bonded together. The keel is lead.





Far left: the chart table is large and well supported. Left: the forward heads. Above: the comfortable master suite, forward, has a wealth of storage space

were slightly concerned that, given the size of the anchor slot, there was only one (rather small) drain hole for it. The electric motor for the windlass is in a watertight locker. The six, gunwale-mounted mooring cleats are massive and strongly attached.

Under sail

The masthead rig is substantially stayed, with modestly swept double spreaders. Upper and intermediate shrouds are discontinuous and secured to big tangs, as are the fore and aft lowers. The backstay is split some distance above the deck and not adjustable. The standard sail plan includes a fully battened main with lazy jacks and a roller-reefing genoa of around 120%. There is also a demountable inner forestay for setting heavy-weather and storm canvas.

We had contrasting conditions for the two days of our test sail out of Poole Harbour: the first produced strong winds up to 30 knots and a choppy wind-over-tide sea; the second offered much lighter airs of six to 10 knots and calm seas. She proved stiff and powerful on the first occasion and remarkably easily driven on the second.

On day one, we began with a reef in the main and six rolls in the genoa, in winds of 22 knots plus over the deck. We quickly dropped in another reef, though, as the wind freshened and apparent wind speeds topped 30 knots.

Setting off on a close reach, we were soon bowling along at a spanking 8.5 knots, with the wheel well balanced but a little heavy. This was partly due to the lack of balance in the rudder and also to a certain amount of drag from the autopilot.

Meeting the race off Old Harry, she drove through the confused seas powerfully, though with the occasional slam into the back of the steeper waves. We shipped a fair bit of water over the bow, but any spray which found its way aft was effectively deflected by the screen and sprayhood.

Clear of Handfast Point, we hardened up for Anvil. At 30° to the wind we still made a

full seven knots in 28 to 30 knots apparent wind. She felt stable once she had heeled the initial 10°, and was seldom pushed beyond the psychologically important 20°. The motion was comfortable considering the confused nature of the waves.

Once clear of the race, speed picked up by another half knot. We tacked through 85° into Swanage Bay and then tacked out again as the wind rose to well over 30 knots for a while. She came through the wind positively but not particularly quickly, giving the crew plenty of time to get the sheets in. The Andersen 58ST sheet winches were adequate in manual mode but we appreciated the optional electric motors after a couple of tacks. Before turning for home we hove to comfortably at 50° to the wind. Leeway was encouragingly little but she fore reached at about a knot.



There are two stern-design options – this is the 'Standard' version

Under way again, we freed off to a fetch and speed rose to over eight knots as she really got into her stride. The helm remained a little heavier than we would have liked, but the rudder was giving very positive control and only a small amount of weather helm. On a close reach she made nine knots, rising to 9.4 knots with the wind on the beam. Downwind she was generally easily controlled, though the drag in the steering made it quite hard to hold the wilder swings as we ran back through the Anvil Race. Surfing down the waves, we recorded a best speed of 11.9 knots.

On the second day there was no problem setting full sail in light airs. Beating out of the harbour, we recorded 4.5 knots in eight to 10 knots or apparent wind and up to six knots on a close reach.

Overall she is a good all-round performer, close winded in cruising terms

and more than adequately fast in both light and moderate to heavy conditions. We are not sure the steering geometry is quite right, but it is a marginal matter at worst and some owners prefer a firmer feel to the wheel than some modern yachts offer.

Under power

The 75hp Yanmar diesel is well installed under the companionway, which hinges forward for access. This is not ideal and it is a bit awkward to reach some of the key service points. However, for more serious work, the hinges can be unscrewed and the whole cover removed. In extremis, the engine can be lifted straight out through the companionway.

Under way the noise levels were quite high both on deck and down below. Top speed was 8.6 knots at 3,700rpm, with a

comfortable and economical cruising speed being 7.5 knots at 2,800rpm. Her turning circle ahead was a length and a half both ways. Astern she turned quickly and tightly to port, but to starboard she need to pick up a bit of speed to overcome prop walk. Even in a strong crosswind, however, she completed a full

circle astern both ways. A bow thruster is an option for skippers of a nervous disposition.

Verdict

This really is a superb offshore cruiser for couples, families or full-strength crews. The basic layout options are sensible and can be modified to a significant extent to accommodate more unusual requirements. She is beautifully put together and has a splendid inventory. This includes inexpensive but telling items such as lee cloths and jackstays, as well as more sophisticated (and expensive) items such as hot-water central heating, which can be independently controlled in the saloon and forward master suite. Also on the standard list are the electric windlass, holding tanks and full sailing instruments, including GPS. Long-distance cruisers will be pleased with the size of the fuel and water tanks. ▲