

On test

Chip off the old block

MOODY 40

Moody's new launch replaces one of their best-selling yachts, the centre-cockpit 38. Matthew Sheahan went to find out if she was a worthy successor

After the last three Moody boat tests, I have found myself comparing each new addition to a single – and now discontinued – yacht in their five boat range, the Moody 38.

I've made no bones about it in the past: this centre cockpit boat has never been among my favourites. Even some of Moody's staff will criticise certain aspects of her performance, stowage and layout. Yet despite all this, the centre cockpit 38 was one of the yard's most successful boats ever.

So why replace her with three boats?

The truth of the matter is that there is only one boat specifically designed to be her successor and that is the new Dixon-designed centre cockpit Moody 40.

Of the other two, the S38 is an after cockpit boat of a different style altogether, and the 36 is only associated with the 38 because she barely feels any smaller (see YW Jan 97).

ON DECK

No-one denied – as we walked down the pontoon to climb aboard the Moody 40 – that there was a feeling of déjà-vu about this boat. In appearance she is strikingly similar to the 36: you would be hard put to it to tell the two apart at a distance and still have trouble close up.

We could only find two really distinguishing details: a single porthole high in the hull's topsides and an even higher freeboard – 120mm (5in) more than the 36.

It was the latter that presented the most problems. I am aware that I do not have the

lower body proportions of Naomi Campbell, but then neither have many other people, and unless you are a long-legged supermodel, you are going to have trouble climbing aboard this boat. Unless, that is, you have a boarding gate fitted which, sadly, is not standard.

Once aboard, you can feel this increase in height even before you set sail, as from her cockpit you look down on most of the other boats around you.

As well as the increase in height, the 40's cockpit is longer than that of the 38 and addresses one of the common criticisms of her forerunner which could only really seat four in any comfort. The 40 can easily cope with six.

Volume has been added to the deck stowage, too, with a pair of large lazarettes aft and a full anchor locker forward, with enough space for fenders and warps.

Beyond this, her layout and brand of equipment are identical to the 36, with Lewmar winches and most of the control lines being led back to within easy reach of the helm and crew in the cockpit.

RIG AND SAIL PLAN

Her rig is the same, too, at least as far as the suppliers are concerned. Selden supply the complete set of spars and rigging for this masthead boat, providing a choice of either in-mast furling or slab reefing mainsail at no extra cost. A furling headsail unit is supplied as standard in both.

The mast is deck-stepped with aft-swept spreaders and conventional 1x19 wire rigging, which, though set up rather slack for the conditions of our test, should provide ample support for the mast, particularly as a set of both forward and aft lowers are provided as standard.

As with the 36, the 40's basic sail wardrobe is supplied by Lymington-based Hood Sailmakers. Unfortunately, in winds of 25-30 knots we were not able to use full sail and could not make a more detailed assessment of the standard wardrobe.

ACCOMMODATION

We did, however, take a long look at her accommodation. If there's one thing that Moody know for sure, it is the power of the yacht's accommodation to sell boats. Large and sumptuously presented after cabins, ample galleys and navigation stations of office proportions, all work wonders on customers' cheque books.

With such a long and successful background, it is of little surprise that the Moody 40 has all three of these elements. What does surprise is that she has more.

Aboard most similarly sized cruisers there will be one spacious double cabin aft for the owner to relax in, and a smaller, more restricted guest double cabin forward.

Aboard the 40, Dixon and his team have worked hard to increase the size of the forward cabin as well as providing an en-suite head. In this respect they have improved upon the 38's layout in this area. The owner gets even more space, with a wider double berth in the after cabin and one on which you can sleep head aft.

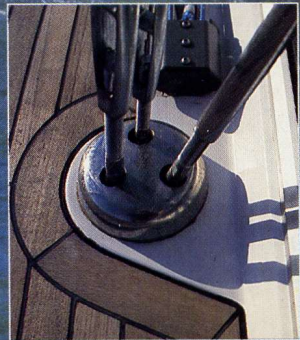
Where they appear to have scored a draw is in the provision of a third cabin. The prototype 40 we tested was fitted with two single bunk type berths in the amidships cabin, abaft the navigation station on the port hand side.

Although long enough for most adults, you would again need the figure of a supermodel to fit into the top berth, so narrow and cramped is this area. A single lower bunk is the suggested alternative.

Elsewhere in her layout, the proportions are good and can comfortably cater for up to six adults, despite a few areas on the prototype ▷

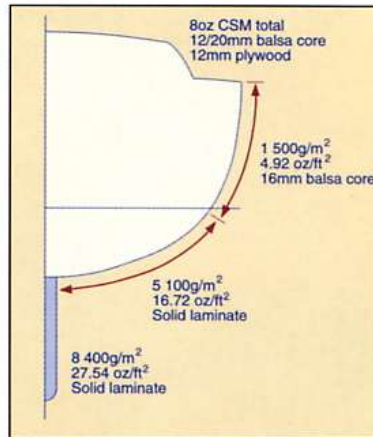
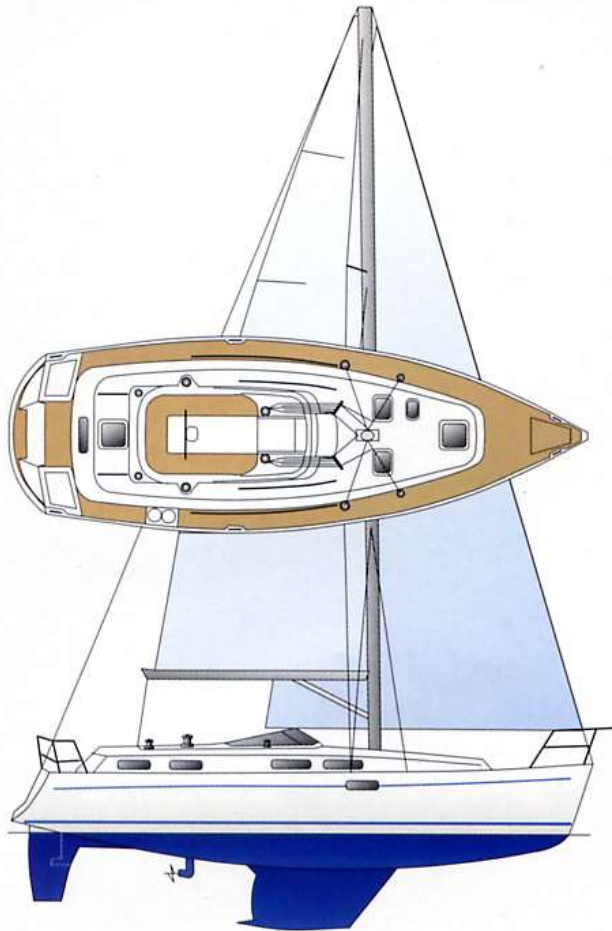
All photos: Malcolm White



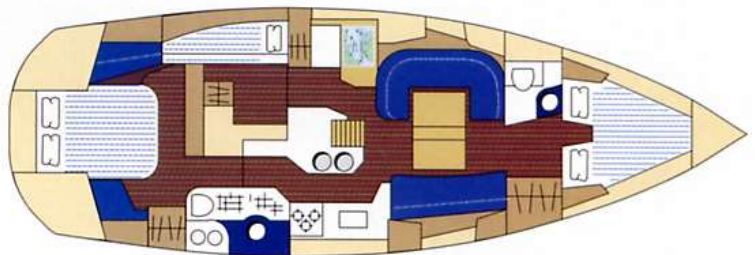


Technical data

MOODY 40



Designed by: Bill Dixon
Built by: Marine Projects (Plymouth) Ltd, Newport Street, Plymouth, Devon PL1 3QG. Tel/Fax: (01752) 227771/266760.
Marketed by: Moody Marketing & Development Ltd, Swanwick, Southampton SO31 1ZL. Tel: (01489) 885000. Fax: (01489) 885509.



Prismatic coefficient	N/A
Immersion	N/A
Ballast ratio	33.1
Personal stowage	13.04 per cent

Stowage factor: 3ft³ per person for stowage of personal effects. Factor is shown as a percentage of total volume.

Pounds/inch (kg/cm) immersion: How much weight it takes to sink the boat parallel to DWL.

Prismatic coefficient: The ratio of volume to displacement to a volume of LWL and the maximum cross sectional area below the load waterplane. An indication of fineness or fullness of the hull.

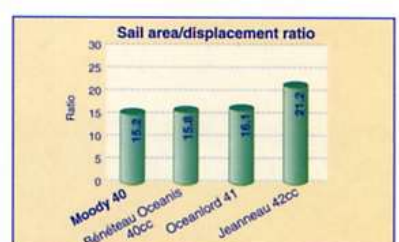
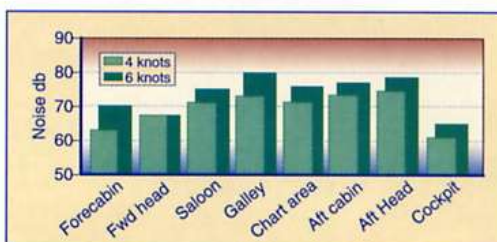
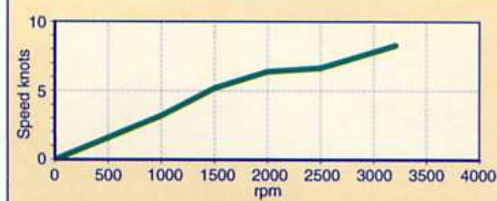
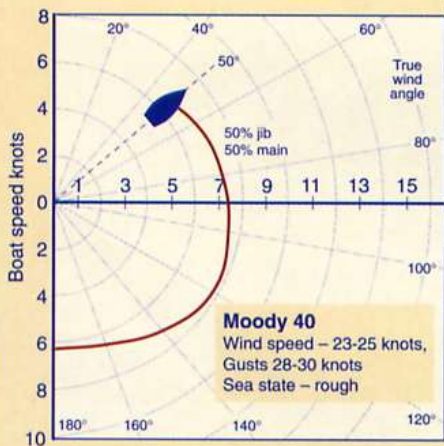
Polar diagram: Shows the optimum close-hauled angle to the true wind. Also shows speed attained on all courses. Important – consider in conjunction with the true wind speed during the test.

Sail area: displacement ratio: This ratio gives some indication of power available. Higher numbers = greater performance.

$$\frac{SA(ft^2)}{(\text{Displacement (lb)} \div 64)^{0.66}}$$

Ballast ratio: A comparison between displacement and the weight of the ballast.

Displacement:waterline length: Performance indicator. Low numbers = higher performance. $(\text{Displacement (lb)} \div 2240) \div (0.01 \times \text{LWL (ft)})^2$



COMPARABLE BOATS

	MOODY 40	BENETEAU OCEANIS 40CC	OCEANLORD 41	JEANNEAU 42CC
LOA	11.91m	39ft 1in	12.50m	41ft 0in
LWL	10.26m	33ft 8in	11.20m	39ft 9in
Beam (max)	4.04m	13ft 3in	3.89m	12ft 9in
Draught	1.85m	6ft 1in	1.70m	5ft 7in
Disp (lightship)	9,500kg	20,944lb	8,500kg	18,739lb
Ballast	3,149kg	6,942lb	2,400kg	5,291lb
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	67.00m ²	721ft ²	64.90m ²	699ft ²
Berths	6	4	5	6
Engine	Volvo MD22L	Volvo MD22L	Volvo 2040	Volvo
Power	37kW	50hp	37kW	50hp
Water	386lt	85gal	500lt	110gal
Fuel	273lt	60gal	200lt	44gal
Sail area:disp	15.2	15.8	16.1	21.2
Disp:LWL	245	169	213	231
Price (ex VAT)	£126,750	£133,689	£144,672	£126,379

On test



The Volvo Saildrive installation goes a long way to providing a quiet, vibration-free ride



Above, her steering is a big improvement over the 38 she replaces. Below, details like the dressing table in the spacious aft cabin are good selling points



At last! A boat without Velcro fastenings for the back cushions – well done!

that were due for a dimensional tweak before full production commences.

Overall, the quality of joiner work throughout the teak-finished accommodation was good and, in the main, solidly built. Like the Moody 36, there were still areas where pencil marks and small overlength cuts spoiled the effect behind the scenes, but there were thankfully fewer of them.

CONSTRUCTION

While you're poking behind the scenes, it's worth noting how this boat is constructed – although she's the same as the 36, she is built very differently from the traditional way in which the 38 was bolted and bonded together.

Today, in keeping with the S31, S38 and 36 and many other European-built production boats, bulkheads slot into grooves in the one-piece floor pan moulding and similar deck moulding, which are themselves bonded and laminated into the hull and deck.

The system makes perfect sense from a production viewpoint and has become common practice in the production boat field.

UNDER WAY

Casting off and getting underway aboard the 36 gave us the first hints of a boat greatly improved as far as handling was concerned. The same was true of the 40. Although the absolute sound levels don't show it, the Volvo MD22L 50hp saildrive unit fitted as standard provided

Above, addressing a common criticism of the 38, the 40's cockpit can easily cater for six people. The higher freeboard makes her feel a little exposed, however. Right, ideal for a couple of children, maybe, but it's a shame a few more inches couldn't be found to make this cabin more suitable for adults

a smooth and quiet ride out to sea, with a good range of speeds.

Handling was pretty good under engine, too, with a turning circle small enough to save you from embarrassment in the confines of your local river.

Under sail there was no mistaking her similarity to the 36 and improvement over the 38. Although not quite as responsive as her smaller sistership, the 40 is rewarding to sail.

Her smooth wheel steering could almost be rod linked instead of the cable system fitted. She points well and accelerates quickly as you crack off onto a tight reach, regularly hitting eight knots on a reach in the 25-30 knot breeze with only 50 per cent sail area.

Make no mistake, she will bowl along quite happily with the minimum of fuss and has sufficient control lines led back to the cockpit to allow you to change gear easily, should you wish to. Compared with the 38 she is a vast improvement, directionally more stable, better balanced and easier to manage.



CONCLUSIONS

For me, that would be enough to swing the choice in favour of the bulkier and less attractive Moody 40 over the more traditionally styled boats in their range. Her designer and builder have created a boat that easily out-performs the one she replaces and as a result is more suited to short-handed sailing.

I do think, however, that the height of her freeboard could make her a handful to dock for a family crew. The elevation above the waterline makes her feel slightly less secure in the cockpit when you're under way, compared with the 36.

Keenly priced at £125,250 ex VAT, her specification easily matches the competition. If you are an open-minded buyer with three Moodys to choose from, you might find that the elimination of one has just made your decision more tricky. □

11-15 METRES
36-50 FEET

Moody 40

Moody is arguably the oldest British production boat-builder. They survive because they bring tradition to their boats, yet move with the times. Some things never change, so while buyers are impressed by large aft cabins and stylish fabrics, at sea they'll find deep fiddles and a safe companionway

Trust Moody to come up with a serious solution in what is becoming the average cruiser size: 40ft (12.2m). Their new Moody 40, designed by Bill Dixon, is refreshingly free of odd surprises, just a perfectly suitable centre cockpit sailing yacht that won't frighten the horses, let alone the family, whilst going to windward with as much calm assurance under an easy-handling in-mast furling main and roller headsail, both of which, tellingly, are now standard.

Marine Projects, Moody's builder in Plymouth, are so confident about the current upsurge in the sailing yacht market that they're expanding, and one of the yachts carrying the highest hopes is this one. Not difficult to see why in this sturdy, well-finished cruiser with its easily serviced Volvo MD22L 50hp Saildrive and three cabins. The centre cockpit allows a vast aft cabin with no restrictions on headroom, and many people prefer handling a yacht while standing, or seated, exactly 6m (20ft) equidistant from bow and stern.

There's no disguising the volume in this 9.5-tonne cruiser, with its 4.05m (13ft 3in) beam carried right aft. That means the almost obligatory aft owner's cabin with full standing headroom. As for her looks, Dixon has done his best to blend hull and coachroof under a sensibly tall rig that allows the boom to be set high to clear vulnerable heads.

This is a family boat, above all, a joy to take down Channel and explore the harbours in Europe's Western Approaches, her galley and sensibly placed centreline sinks capable of handling both bacon sandwiches in extremis and Brittany lobster at the end of a satisfying thrash through the Chenal du Four. Right aft there's a small teak-decked area, with flush lazarette lockers on either quarter. As is becoming normal, the inventory is highly inclusive for the standard price, with everything from hot water to first aid kit – a 'turnkey' yacht from one of Britain's best.



MOODY 40

LOA 11.9m (39ft 1in)
Beam 4.05m (13ft 3in)
Draught 1.85m (6ft 1in)
Builder Marine Projects (Plymouth)

