

Moody's new

The Moody 46 received wide praise at the London Boat Show in January. Matthew Sheahan was the first to find out how she performed in testing conditions



South-west Force 5 or 6, gusts to 30 knots, increasing south-west Force 7 at times later on Monday afternoon. Gale Force 8, occasionally severe gale, Force 9, on Tuesday morning,' read the Metfax on a miserable Monday morning in early March.

Not exactly the weather I'd been hoping for to test the latest and largest new Moody. On the other hand, what better trial of her suitability as a go-anywhere, short-handed cruiser?

The fact is, she's just the kind of boat to lure those harbouring a lifetime's dream to head off over the horizon. If you are one of them, the chances are that you will encounter some rough stuff from time to time, and complete faith in your boat will count for a great deal.

Has the 46 got what it takes?

On deck

This is the third boat in a line of new Bill Dixon centre cockpit designs for Moody, (the previous

two being the 36 and 40 models), and replaces the company's most recent flagship, the Moody 44. This successor shares little of the 44's looks, yet displays some familiar traits.

The most obvious are the fullness in her forward sections and near plumb bow profile. Add to this her slab-sided topsides and you have a boat that unquestionably follows her two smaller sisters in style.

There's little doubt that she has been pushed to the limits of available volume, as indeed have

flagship

ONTEST

MOODY 46



many other modern cruising designs. But you're also left in little doubt that she's a quality boat, and although Moody have always claimed this of their smaller range, pushing them forward into the luxury marketplace like a proud parent pushing its child onto the stage, the 46 is clearly a boat more at ease with the requirements for the upper league of quality cruisers.

Bulwarks, teak decks and chunky polished stainless steel horn cleats are good indications of Moody's intentions to create a solid bluewater

cruiser. The deck layout is what you would expect of a centre-cockpit boat of her type, but the few extra details – stainless steel drain guards or the layout of the running backstay parking lines – plus the overall quality of build, highlight the extra effort that has gone into this design.

She has points of genuine innovation: the single-line operation of the fold-down bathing platform, complete with guardwires, is a good example. But, as always, the real test of her layout was to see how easy she is to manage underway.

The basic fact is that two people can handle this boat with ease. The boat we sailed was cutter-rigged and although the addition of another headsail is often the excuse for a cat's cradle of extra ropes and controls, the 46's cockpit layout is refreshingly simple.

The staysail is a self-tacking affair where the sheet is led up the mast and back down to a single Lewmar 30ST winch on the port side of the coachroof, adjacent to the companionway hatch.

The yankee sheet and running backstay ▽



Cherry joinery and leather seats provide the finishing touches to a well built interior. Above right: self-tacking for staysail. Right: a single line operates the neat folding transom



The 46 is clearly a solid bluewater cruiser, more at ease with the requirements for the upper league of quality cruisers



Left: spacious and secure galley, even in a seaway. Above: the practical navigation station is close to the companionway. Right: portlights bonded in with stainless steel trims. Far right: padded backrests in the cockpit



tails then share the primary winches, a pair of Lewmar 54STs which, aboard our boat, were fitted with the electric power option. The mainsheet winch and traveller controls are close at hand for the helmsman, sited just abaft the cockpit coamings.

The layout works well as the helmsman can reach everything except the staysail sheet – and as this is a high aspect ratio sail and a self-tacker, out of reach is not a big problem.

There are, however, a few things I would change if she were mine. The staysail, if used as your primary foresail when the going gets tough, can carry some pretty high sheet loads which are made more difficult to handle by some abrupt turns to get back to the cockpit. Low stretch Spectra or Dyneema sheet would be of benefit here instead of the more stretchy braid on braid

standard line. (Following our test we were told that this would be standard on future boats).

I would also go up at least one size on the sheet winch, which is underpowered in strong winds. I would go for the electric option on the primaries and also fit an electric unit for the mainsheet winch as this makes life so much easier for the helmsman to sheet and trim the mainsail, especially when gybing.

Under way

Our first day's sail started in 20 knots true where she bowled along at 8-9 knots under full sail on a beam reach. As the wind increased in the gusts to around 24 knots true, she did become more of a handful.

Simply furling the yankee away and sailing under full staysail and full mainsail restored

comfort right up to 30 knots true and produced speeds of between 6.5 and 7 knots, while remaining light on the helm.

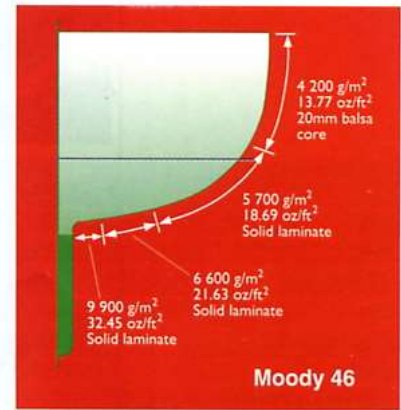
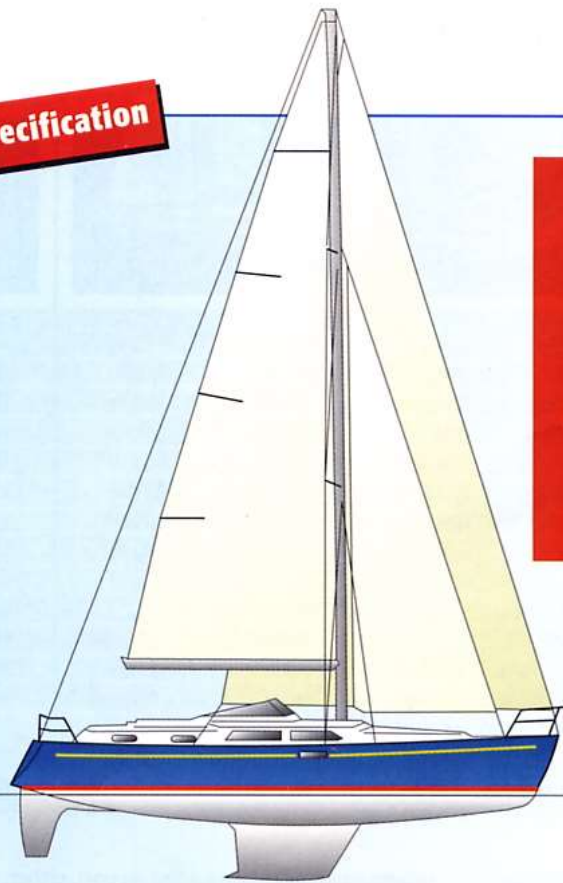
True to the weatherman's prediction, the following day's sail back from Lymington to Hamble was in more boisterous conditions. A steady 35 knots greeted us at the end of the river and limited visibility warranted navigation lights. The breeze then built as we headed up the western Solent, regularly gusting to 44 knots during our downwind sleigh-ride.

Our test boat had an in-mast furling mainsail and, with just 50 per cent of the main unfurled and no headsail at all, we still bowled along at between nine and ten knots, with an occasional burst to 11 knots. Once again, she felt safe and secure and, given the sea state, pretty dry.

The 46 is a good solid cruising boat with a

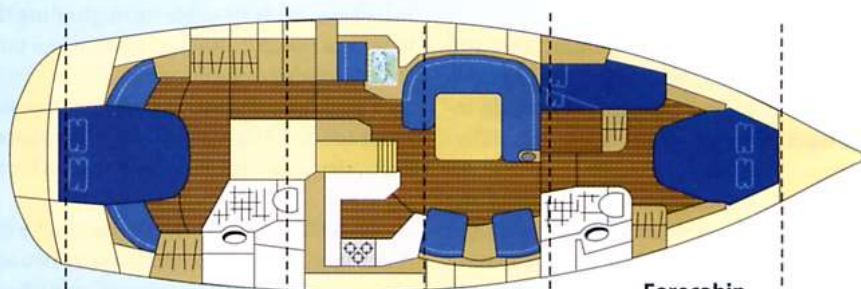
Specification

At last! Easy access from pontoon to side deck. The boarding ladder doubles for the transom. Below: powering along in 25 knots plus, she was close to her limit for full sail



Designed by: Bill Dixon.
Built by: Marine Projects (Plymouth) Ltd, Newport Street, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 3QG Tel: (01752) 203888. Fax: (01252) 203777.

Marketed by: Moody Marketing & Devt, Swanwick Marina, Swanwick, Southampton SO31 1ZL. Tel: (01489) 885000. Fax: (01489) 885509.



Aft cabin



Head



Galley



Nav station



Saloon



Forecabin



justifiable reputation. The bottom line is that she's a heavy boat with a semi-balanced rudder that will, if pushed hard enough, lose its grip and allow her to broach. Her wide transom, while generally making her stable downwind, is more prone to being thrown off course by the odd awkward wave than that of a more slender form.

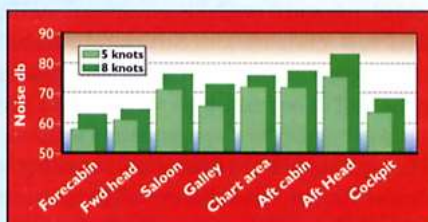
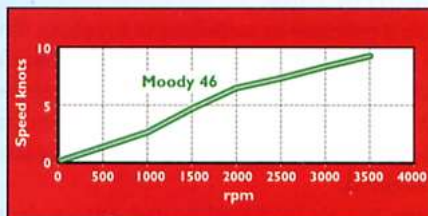
Once this happens, she can become a handful and round up, whether you want to or not. On the plus side, though, she is very stiff and loses control in a surprisingly undramatic manner, never heeling excessively and always feeling secure in the cockpit. In short, exploring the Moody 46's limits is far from frightening.

As for her handling under power, the combination of the fixed three-bladed prop, a 78hp Volvo turbo engine and a bow thruster, close quarters manoeuvring even in strong winds was not a problem. Under more usual motoring conditions, she's quiet and smooth throughout full rev range.

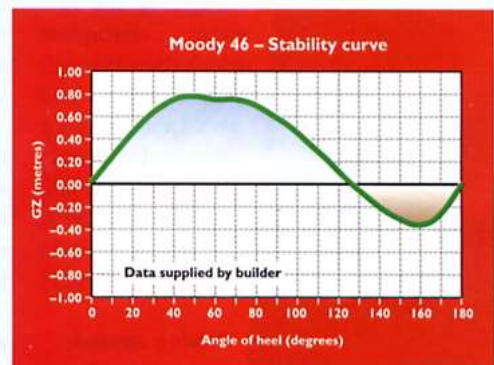
Accommodation

The Moody 46's glamorous and yet very practical interior owes much to lessons learnt aboard large powerboats – a fact that might stick in the gullet with some of the more ardent supporters of sail. But the 46 is undoubtedly better for it.

Finished in cherry, (teak is an option), she's an impressive sight. Joiner work is to a very high standard throughout and builder Marine ▷



Stowage volumes: Each red sailbag icon represents 0.2m³ (7ft³) and is a guide to the practical stowage space available





COMPARABLE BOATS	MOODY 46		WESTERLY 43		OYSTER 45		CONTEST 44	
LOA	14.06m	46ft 2in	13.25m	43ft 6in	13.49m	44ft 3in	13.41m	44ft 0in
LWL	12.00m	39ft 4in	10.95m	35ft 11in	11.58m	38ft 0in	11.66m	38ft 3in
Beam (max)	4.40m	14ft 5in	4.20m	13ft 9in	4.27m	14ft 0in	3.99m	13ft 1in
Draught	2.06m	6ft 9in	1.80m	5ft 11in	1.98m	6ft 6in	2.11m	6ft 11in
Disp (lightship)	13,500kg	29,762lb	13,500kg	29,762lb	13,600kg	29,982lb	12,899kg	28,437lb
Ballast	4,700kg	10,362lb	5,500kg	12,125lb	5,257kg	11,590lb	5,780kg	12,742lb
Sail area (100% foretriangle)	87.82m ²	945ft ²	95m ²	1,024ft ²	82.31m ²	886ft ²	87.31m ²	940ft ²
Berths	6		5		6		6	
Engine	Volvo TMD221 – turbo		Volvo Penta MD22L		Volvo MD22		Volvo Penta TMD 31	
Power	58kW	78hp	37kW	50hp	44kW	59hp	75kW	100hp
Water	772lt	170gal	600lt	132gal	636lt	140gal	623lt	137gal
Fuel	431lt	95gal	400lt	88gal	455lt	100gal	341lt	75gal
Sail area:disp	15.7		17.1		14.7		16.1	
Disp:LWL	218		286		244		227	
Price (exVAT)	£211,000		£199,000		£329,250		£195,000	

Projects appear to have addressed a bugbear of ours in the past, and improved the standard of workmanship on hidden construction details and joiner work.

The result is a well built, comfortable and practical layout, designed for anything from two couples, plus children if necessary, to four shy individuals not wishing to share, in four very differently equipped cabins.

Two double cabins occupy the ends of the boat, with the after cabin as the traditional and plush owner's accommodation. Just forward of this, in the walkway area, (on top of a locker with the proportions of a built-in wardrobe at home), sits a comfortable, dedicated seaberth, where feet extend into a trotter box that is the top section of one of the hanging lockers in the after cabin.

From this berth you are close to the chart table, companionway and cockpit, as well as being in the most comfortable part of the boat.

The fourth cabin, however, is not so well thought out and possibly the only weak link in her layout. Set on the port side, forward of the main saloon, this cabin has twin bunks the top one of which feels too cramped for an adult.

The real problem, though, is the forward chainplate which slices through both bunks and would make sleeping when heeled on starboard painful and impractical. Sadly, the lack of leechcloths as standard doesn't

Driving upwind under staysail and main in 30 knots of true wind

improve matters when sailing on port, either.

Her saloon is spacious, practical and still has plenty of stowage space under the seats as well as in lockers, made possible through siting the saloon on a raised cabin sole, allowing all tankage to be fitted under the floor.

The galley is impressive, with enough storage space to see off the contents of a few supermarket trolleys, and excellent proportions for working at sea.

The influence of powerboats can be seen in items such as the centre sections of two leather clad armchairs on the starboard side which can be lifted out to provide stools round the saloon table, the fully bonded-in saloon windows with stainless steel trim and UV screen, and comfortable cockpit backrests that clip into place for use while under sail.

These are just a few of the subtle details that help to make this the most impressive yacht interior Moody have produced so far. Even more clues lie in the way her accommodation is built.

Construction

There is little new or surprising to say about the 46's construction: she continues the company's tried and tested approach, using a solid laminate with polyester resin below the waterline and an end grain balsa core above it. The deck is also balsa-cored.

She has an iron keel bolted onto a deep moulded stub and is available as conventional fin or shoal keel configurations. Structural members consist of conventional top hat sections glassed into the hull in her midships sections and tray mouldings bonded into stem and stern sections.

Her rig is supplied by Selden and can either be a sloop or a cutter. Given the overall proportions of her sail plan and the ease with which a cutter rig can be handled, I would say there would be little to favour the sloop option. □

SPECIFICATION AND OPTIONS LIST

✓ = standard	Hot water	✓	
Rig and sails	Shower and electric pump out	✓	
Mainsail	✓	Heating	£2,850
Genoa	✓	Radio/cassette player	✓
Jib	£770		
Spinnaker	£2,980		
Slab reefing mainsail	–	Equipment	
Fully battened main with lazyjacks	£1,485	Fenders (8)	✓
Furling mainsail	✓	Mooring warps	✓
Headsail furling	✓	Anchor	✓
Sailcovers	–	Electric windlass	✓
		Bowthruster	£2,400
		Folding propeller	–
Deck		Shore power	✓
Teak decks throughout	✓	Lee cloths	£76.50
Teak in cockpit only	✓	Sprayhood	✓
Lifelines	✓	Holding tanks	£690
Self-tailing winches	✓		
		Instruments	
Accommodation		Log	✓
Fridge	✓	Echo sounder	✓
Freezer	✓	Wind sp/direction	£563

Conclusions

In recent years Moody have made no bones about their intention to take their new range of boats up-market, placing themselves alongside builders such as Hallberg Rassy, Najad and Bowman in the quality stakes. Whether they have achieved this with the new range has been arguable – until now.

The Moody 46 is a big step forward for build quality, yet her price has been pinned down at a very competitive £211,000 ex VAT.

But can she cut the mustard as a bluewater cruiser and provide you with a comfortable home from home? Easily.

