

Owner's report

With: Barry and Julia Norton



VIEW

Reverse sheer windscreens add to the excellent all-round view

SUNROOF AND DOOR

Huge sliding roof and large door giving a remarkably open feel to the wheelhouse

ENGINE ACCESS

Sterndrive access via lifting panel in the bathing platform

SIDEDECKS

No step in the walkaround sidedecks provides safety for all crew members

Value **£160k**

Minor Offshore 28

This month's owners wanted year-round ability in a sub-9m package

MEET THE OWNERS

When Barry Norton and his wife, Julia, decided to move from sailing to motorboating, plenty of protection and safe decks were key

THE BOAT

Model	Minor Offshore 28
Name	Hannah
Year built	2012
Owned since	May 2012
Engine	Single Volvo Penta D6 330hp

We are fortunate that our second home in Christchurch, on the outskirts of Bournemouth, has its own mooring. And although our experience has been mainly with sailing boats it was considered prudent that, with neither my wife nor I getting any younger, a powerboat was the sensible alternative to "rag and stick".

The harbour also runs short of water on anything less than half-tide, making it quite awkward if you've a yacht with a deepish draught. We also wanted a boat

that the two of us could use and cruise easily, yet with room enough for day trips with family and friends.

WHICH BOATS DID YOU CONSIDER?

First and foremost, the size of the boat was determined by the limit imposed by the 9m mooring. It also needed to be a full-on planing boat so we could undertake cross-Channel hops in a reasonable time-span.

The second important factor was that we wanted a boat that could be used all year round,

meaning it needed a wheelhouse, and also be safe and seaworthy, both in terms of seakeeping and when moving about outside.

With the latter in mind, a boat that boasted walkaround decks protected by a bulwark made perfect sense and this led us towards three builders in particular: Botnia Targa, Nordstar and Sarin (which builds Minor).

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A MINOR OFFSHORE 28?

The Targa 27 has an enviable reputation as a great sea boat, but although it has been updated



SKYLIGHT
Brightens up the forward cabin

FOREDECK SEAT
Set into the cabin top

ANCHOR
The anchor is offset to one side to provide easy bow boarding

it still feels rather old fashioned. We wanted something with a more modern, less utilitarian look and good degree of comfort along with a toilet accessible directly from the wheelhouse rather than from outside (a facility that the 27 now incorporates). The Minor also has slightly deeper and more readily negotiated bulwarks, and with no step in the walkaround side decks it is incredibly safe for older crew members and grandchildren. Another bonus is that the

Minor's design incorporates a sunroof in the wheelhouse, which obviously allows in loads of fresh air and daylight and alters the whole feel of the boat. The Nordstar is a nice boat but it was discounted because it lacked the out-and-out quality that is clearly evident in the Targa and Minor. Overall we felt that the Minor offered exceptional build quality, a good standard specification and reliable seakeeping while still being competitively priced. We

“We also wanted a boat that we could cruise easily, with room for day trips”



Sliding roof lets in plenty of fresh air and daylight

WHAT WE LOOKED FOR

Wide side decks that are safe to move around for kids as well as the more mature crew members

Protected helm position but one with good visibility

A seakindly hull that will give us a comfortable and safe ride on passage

Quality build and small enough to fit into our 29ft 6in (9m) berth





Helm seat swivels to face the U-shaped dining area

also received exceptional service and attention from Marco Marine in the lead-up to ordering the boat and which is ongoing to the present day.

WHAT WAS THE DEAL?

At the time we were looking there was only a Minor 25 in the UK so needed to travel to the Hamburg Boat Show to be able to see the

28. We enjoyed the weekend trip and were made very welcome by the builder's European agents, who had been alerted by Marco Marine and went over the boat with us.

Once back in the UK we struck what we considered a good deal with them on the proviso that they could exhibit our 28 at the Southampton Boat Show

and use it for a few sea trials.

Marco Marine was also able to make several modifications to the boat – such as snap davits for a dinghy and a crane for the outboard – without delaying the handover.

They also gave a lot of help and advice on kitting out the boat and provided safety equipment such as lifejackets and flares.

WHERE DO YOU KEEP HANNAH?

Our second home on the banks of the Stour that runs through Christchurch has its own freehold mooring.

We already owned the house and mooring before looking for a boat and hence we had a size restriction in terms of length. In fact, this caveat in terms of size has proved useful as it kept the lid on what we could consider as it is all too easy to think you need something bigger, which turns out to be a lot more work and trickier to handle.

The entrance to Christchurch harbour is interesting to

say the least and the main channel up to the town and the confluence of the Avon and Stour rivers is pretty thin in terms of both width and depth at low water.

This makes it a bit daunting for large boats to pass to and fro, so it is quite a genteel spot and feels like a real backwater.

Our mooring does not dry out at all and we can invariably make it out on all but very low waters. Once out into Christchurch Bay you've got the Solent in one direction and Poole harbour in the other, both less than an hour's run.

WHERE DO YOU CRUISE?

We mainly use *Hannah* at weekends and run up to the Solent with usually just the two of us as crew. The cabins aren't large by any stretch of the imagination

but it is handy having two of them just in case

someone else needs a bunk for the night.

We find the forward one works best as there is standing headroom and more natural light.

Sometimes we're

Day trippers

We're often joined for day trips by our son, Dale, and his family. This makes for quite a crowd, given the size of the wheelhouse, but we all manage to get a seat nevertheless.



The two-seater helm has a good all-round view; the compact galley is to port



“The seakeeping is excellent and has more than lived up to expectations”

joined for day-sorties by our son, Dale, and his wife and children.

This makes for quite a crowd given the size of the wheelhouse but we all manage to get a seat nevertheless. Once moored up we can spread out, thanks to the safety factor afforded by the solid bulwarks and walkaround deck.

This year we aim to be more adventurous and have plans to cruise in company to the Channel Islands and possibly France.

Fuel consumption is much as we were led to expect and pretty economical, as long as you are not heavy-handed on the throttle. We tend to cruise in the region of 18 to 22 knots with consumption

about 1.5 litres per mile. Flat out we clock 32 knots.

HAS THE BOAT LIVED UP TO EXPECTATIONS ?

We're glad to report that the boat has excelled. The performance and seakeeping are excellent and that, together with the build quality, has more than lived up to our expectations.

Early on we experienced a problem with the Volvo power steering. This, along with a warranty recall, was satisfactorily carried out by the engineer who commissioned the boat.

On each occasion Marco Marine were the point of contact and

coordinated everything.

It would have been useful to have had an autopilot fitted when new, but I am not otherwise aware of anything we would change.

Hannah is now two years old and, having been out of the water over the last winter when she was professionally cleaned and serviced, she looks and performs just like she did when we took delivery.

I believe in using the appropriate skilled people when it comes to maintenance and engineering jobs and, while I like to know how things work, leave most jobs to the professionals.

HAS IT BEEN MONEY WELL SPENT?

Absolutely – we have enjoyed many hours and days out on *Hannah* and are looking forward to many more and venturing further afield.

She is an ideal size for the two of us to handle – not too big – while giving us all the creature comforts we want. The protection afforded by the wheelhouse means we never need be put off by inclement weather and the built-in safety factor associated with the walkaround sidedecks gives complete confidence while moving about. In a nutshell, we're well pleased!

FACTFILE

Price paid	£182,000
Approx value now	£160,000
First season engine hours	70hrs
Fuel consumption (approx average)	Around 30lph at 20 knots
Berthing fees	None
Insurance premium	£1,011
Annual servicing costs	£2,000
(Includes a hull wax and polish, prop polish and everything needed to keep her looking good)	

YOU CAN BUY A SIMILAR BOAT

As we were compiling this report the builder changed the name of the range from Minor to Sargo.

Whatever the name, the fact is that this model has only been around for a couple of years. There don't appear to be any secondhand examples up for grabs, and it doesn't sound like Barry and Julia will be parting with theirs any time soon. Marco Marine tells us that a similarly specced boat to theirs – with extras such as heating, hot water and shore power – would be in the region of £189,200, while a base boat starts at £155,000 and is fitted with D4-260hp unit. There is roughly a four-month lead time.

