

# MOTOR BOAT & YACHTING

## FAIRLINE TARGA 45 GT

EXCLUSIVE  
TEST

NEW SERIES

START  
BOATING

Your guide to  
getting afloat  
this summer

*I did it!*

46-year-old boater  
virgin reveals his  
first purchase

TESTED  
PRINCESS  
X95

34-PAGE SPECIAL  
CUSTOM  
YACHTING

*'I bought a  
superyacht  
by mistake'*

*The ultimate mid-life crisis!*

GUERNSEY GUIDE

Everything you need to know  
about this local cruising gem





BOAT TEST

# FAIRLINE TARGA

*A blustery test in Ipswich gives us the perfect opportunity to see if the GT is the version of Fairline's entry-level Targa 45 to go for*


Words Jack Haines Photos Paul Wyeth





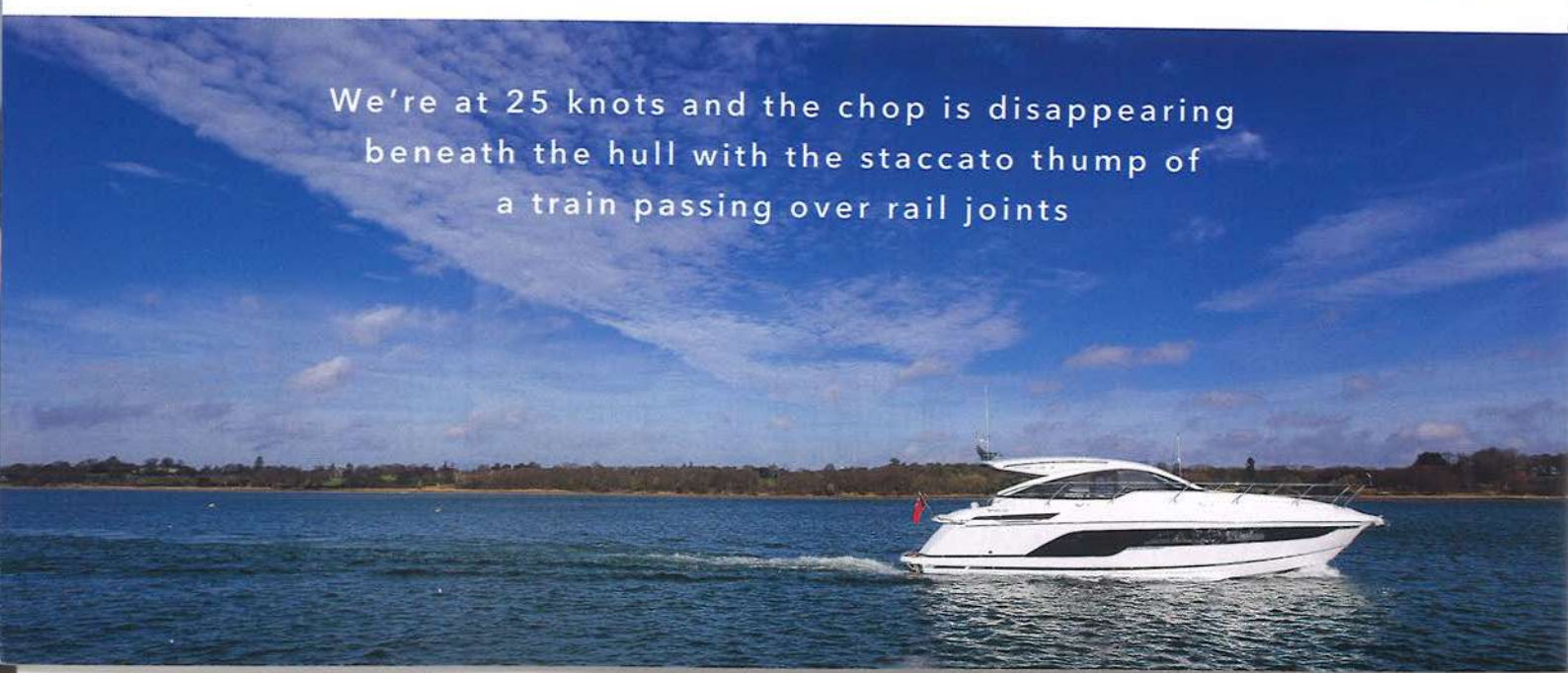






A canopy slides out from the overhang so the cockpit can be protected from the elements

This photograph shows the interior of a yacht's cockpit. A large, light-colored upholstered L-shaped sofa is positioned around a central wooden table. A sliding canopy, which is currently extended, covers the seating area. The floor is made of teak planking. In the background, a glass door leads into the cabin, and the sea is visible through the open side of the cockpit.



We're at 25 knots and the chop is disappearing beneath the hull with the staccato thump of a train passing over rail joints

This photograph shows a white yacht with a dark stripe along its side, cruising on a body of water. The yacht is moving from left to right, leaving a white wake behind it. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds, and a distant shoreline with trees is visible in the background.





SEE MORE  
mby.com/45gt

**T**he 45-minute trip down the River Orwell from Ipswich Haven Marina to the North Sea gives you plenty of time to think. If you're driving a boat for the first time, it also allows ample opportunity to get to know it as the engines patiently hover at 800rpm and the speedometer barely ticks past 5 knots. You sit high on the Targa 45 GT with a commanding view through a one-piece windscreen and over the foredeck. The leather trimmed steering wheel – of perfect diameter and gauge – feels great beneath your hands and sits in close proximity to both the throttles and IPS joystick. The dashboard is a good balance of style and practicality with plenty of space for electronics but also a trio of analogue dials across the top for quick glances at revs and the steering angle of the pods.

You may sit high but Fairline has thought about this and included a thick step that drops down to give you somewhere to rest your feet so your legs aren't left dangling. It also provides the extra elevation needed to poke your head clear of the windscreen when the sunroof is open. It's quite a sunroof, too. The aperture is smaller than the canvas roof of the 45 Open but thanks to a pair of glass panels it still allows natural light to saturate the helm and forward end of the saloon even if the weather isn't good enough to open it.

In truth, I am relatively familiar with this boat having tested the 45 Open, on which it is based, back in 2018. The GT, though, is – as Fairline likes to describe it – a boat for everywhere. Its split

main deck with outdoor dinette and sunpad aft, and luxuriously crafted enclosed saloon forward, make it a versatile beast with across the globe broad appeal. Fairline has sold them into the Mediterranean and other sun-blessed destinations but, as if to perfectly demonstrate the point, the boat we're testing is due to be shipped across the pond to its new home on the Great Lakes a few days after our test.

The day we have it, there is a Force 6 barrelling up from the south and we leave behind the meandering sanctuary of the Orwell to tackle the stacked chop that is steepening across the shallower depths outside of Felixstowe's main shipping channel.



soft and impressively dry given the messy conditions, and as we head up wind, though I can hear and feel the occasional hard slap on the hull, the interior doesn't squeak, groan or rattle at all. It's exactly what you would expect of Fairline's iconic sports cruisers of old and it's great to be at the helm of one of these new generation models, experiencing how it handles these challenging conditions with the same fluid grace. ▶

**ABOVE:** The roof isn't as large as the Open but it's still a good size  
**INSET:** The neatly integrated wetbar provides outdoor cooking facilities





TOP: The quality of interior fit out - especially the woodwork - is outstanding

ABOVE: The galley is on the small side but its intelligent packaging makes it perfectly usable for light meals

BELOW: The microwave is cleverly concealed behind the pop-out fascia above the counter top



Unlike its predecessors, the 45 is only available with pod drives; in this case a pair of Volvo Penta 6-cylinder D6 motors with either twin 440hp IPS600s or 480hp IPS650s. The more powerful option wasn't available when I tested the Open, which had the previous generation 435hp IPS600s, and it felt a little bit lethargic. Tellingly, despite having the additional weight of the hardtop, cockpit doors, a 250kg gyro stabiliser and water bag in the garage to simulate the presence of the tender, the 45 GT performed in much the same way as the lighter Open. Outright speed is on the modest side but there's enough elasticity in the cruising band that you can travel at a relaxed 22 knots or crank it up to 28 knots with no major knock to fuel efficiency. Settle her down at 25 knots and 3,500rpm and she'll be happy in most conditions, even head on into the lumpy sea state we experienced during our sea trial. Down wind the 45 loves life and surfs the waves beautifully. Occasionally you yearn for a bit more mid-range wallop from the engines but for the most part they perform effortlessly. They're quiet, too. This is another benefit of the enclosed saloon because the doors add another sound barrier on top of the generous layers of sound insulation that Fairline has coated the engineroom in.

#### ENGINE ACCESS

The machinery space is accessed two ways, via a quick inspection hatch on the port side of the transom or by lifting up the floor of the tender garage on its powered ram. The former really is just for quick checks, sticking your head inside to make sure everything looks as it should. Even daily service items like oil and raw water strainer checks, especially on the starboard engine, will be difficult but with the tender out and the garage floor raised there is superb access to both the engines and pods. For any involved work this is the way to go and kudos to Fairline for countering rather average day-to-day access with such an effective solution. A tender garage is always going to lead to a compromise of engineroom space but on a boat of this size, which doesn't have a huge bathing platform, having the tender tucked away so you don't have to launch it every time you want to lower the platform for a swim is a useful benefit. It also helps keep the decks uncluttered and preserves the clean, sporty lines of what, to my eye, is a great-looking sportcruiser.

Designer Alberto Mancini has done a fine job of disguising its generous internal volume. Standing in the amidships master cabin with well over 6ft of headroom, you'd expect the boat to look like a plastic tower block from the pontoon but it doesn't. Headroom aside, what stands out most below decks is how beautifully made everything is. The gloss walnut timber, an £11,976 option, is exquisitely finished and glistens with hard candy lustre. The door handles have an engineered tactility to them and they click shut with magnets not hinges. The Fairline eye for attention to detail winks at you throughout, down to the smallest of things such as the chopping board that is built in to







**ABOVE LEFT:**  
As an option you can have sliding twins in the amidships cabin; storage space is very good

**ABOVE RIGHT:**  
The forward cabin can be the master if preferred. Here it's in VIP mode with scissor-action berths

the underside of the sink cover and the way the microwave is neatly hidden away behind a pop-out fascia. The galley is on the small side but it's usable, if more for light lunches than full-blown evening meals. There isn't space for a full-height fridge/freezer so an under-counter one has to suffice and for that reason I would add the optional fridge in the upper saloon as it's also in a useful position close to the wet bar in the cockpit.

One key difference between the GT and the Open is that, because there is a dinette in the saloon, Fairline offers the option to delete the one on the lower deck and replace it with a third cabin instead. In this guise, a bulkhead partitions off the area opposite the galley, creating a separate twin cabin with bunks. This, for me, would seem the most sensible arrangement given



the comfortable saloon upstairs but Fairline hasn't built many with this option. Perhaps owners of boats like this tend to go boating by themselves with their children or guests only staying over occasionally. Or it might be that the cosy lower dinette is a nice more private place to tuck yourself away in a busy marina for a quiet morning coffee away from prying eyes. The lower deck is also likely to feel more spacious without the cabin bulkhead looming over the galley.

The two standard cabins are very good and offer the flexibility of selecting either one as the master suite. If you would prefer the master forward then day head access to its ensuite is blocked off from the saloon so you can only get to it via the cabin. The door to the amidships cabin is then pushed aft so it can be closed ►

The Fairline attention to detail winks at you throughout - the gloss walnut timber glistens with hard candy lustre





Its sealed deck is as usable if you're cooling off in Ibiza or trying to keep warm in blustery Ipswich



Delightful detailing extends to the cleats



The garage floor lifts up for engine access

but still leave access to its bathroom for use as a day head. Our test boat had its master amidships and this feels like the more natural configuration. This way guests get a lovely double cabin forward, though scissor-action twins are an option if preferred, with plenty of storage and ensuite access to their own bathroom, while the owner has a private full-beam master amidships. This space is beautifully fitted out and exhibits Fairline's timber craftsmanship to its fullest. Storage is once again excellent, even if you opt to swap the chest of drawers at the end of the bed for a sofa, and it's worth noting that if you opt to have this cabin as the VIP then you can have twin beds that slide together, in place of the island double, for greater versatility.

### A BOAT FOR ALL SEASONS

The cockpit, clearly, isn't as big as the one on the Open and if you dream of packing the boat with family and friends and heading out for day trips to swim, sunbathe and do some watersports with little concern about adverse weather then that is probably the one to go for. That said, what there is in terms of cockpit space on the GT is well designed and you get the same sized sunpad as the one on the Open. As an option, the folding teak table can drop away behind the seating to open the space up a bit more and there's another clever design trick – this time fitted as standard – in the partition window to port which springs upwards

to open the internal dinette out to the cockpit.

After testing the 45 Open a couple of years ago, its price preyed on my mind.

Nearly £1 million for a 45ft sportcruiser sat a little uncomfortably at the time but revisiting the boat in GT form three years on, and having driven it in some properly testing conditions, it's more apparent that you are getting what you pay for. This is evident not just in the way it drives, performs and handles but also in the beautifully finished interior. The Targa 45 feels as much of a quality product as the flagship Squadron 68. With the GT version you also get your money's worth through its additional versatility; its enclosed main deck is just as inviting when you're cooling off in Ibiza as it is when you're attempting to keep warm in a blustery Ipswich. And when you do want to open it up to the elements, its wide-opening doors, cockpit window and sunroof barely compromise the experience. It's that year-round usability which, for me, makes it the 45 of choice.

CONTACT [www.fairline.com](http://www.fairline.com)

#### WHEEL GOOD FACTOR

The steering wheel looks and feels great



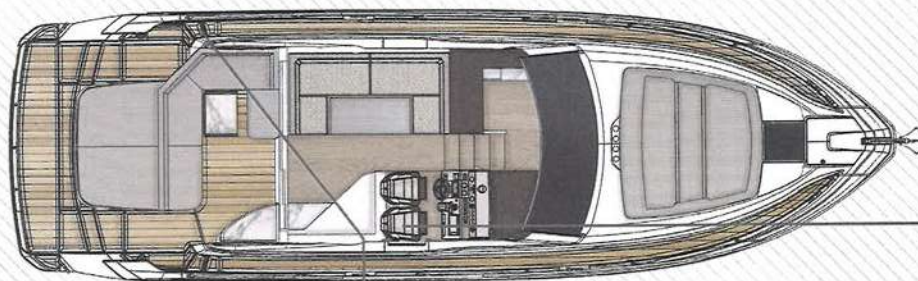
#### PLOTTER

No plotter on this boat, presumably because it's destined for the Great Lakes

#### STORAGE

Some more cubbies for loose items would be useful



**TENDER**

The garage is large enough for a Williams Minijet RIB

**DECK ACCESS**

There is access to the side decks from both sides of the transom

**THIRD CABIN**

Opt for this and you sacrifice the lower dinette for bunks

**NAV SEAT**

The navigator has to displace the skipper if they want to move

**TOP SPEED****CONSUMPTION****RANGE****NOISE****PRICE****SPECIFICATION**

LOA 46ft 6in (14.2m)  
Beam 14ft 2in (4.32m)  
Draught 3ft 10in (1.17m)  
Displacement 12.3 tonnes  
Fuel capacity 1,300 litres  
Water capacity 438 litres  
RCD B for 12 people

Designer Alberto Mancini & Fairline Yachts

**COSTS & OPTIONS**

Price from £699,600 inc VAT  
Anchor upgrade inc 21kg Ultra anchor £2,856  
Blue exterior mood lighting £3,168  
Folding teak cockpit table with stowage option £4,908  
Garage fitout for Williams Minijet £6,888  
BBQ in cockpit £2,256  
High capacity air-conditioning £27,576  
Hydraulic bathing platform £23,928  
Seakeeper 3 gyro stabiliser £45,408  
Walnut gloss interior wood £11,976

**PERFORMANCE**

Test engines Volvo Penta IPS650. Twin 480hp @ 3,800rpm. 6-cylinder, 5.5-litre diesels

|                 | ECO   |       |       |       |       |       | FAST  | MAX   |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| RPM             | 1,000 | 1,400 | 1,800 | 2,200 | 2,600 | 3,000 | 3,400 | 3,800 |
| Knots           | 6.2   | 8.5   | 10.4  | 11.4  | 14.2  | 19.6  | 24.6  | 31.3  |
| Litres per hour | 8.2   | 17    | 34    | 57    | 87    | 119   | 152   | 189   |
| Litres per mile | 1.32  | 2.00  | 3.27  | 5.00  | 6.13  | 6.07  | 6.18  | 6.04  |
| Range (NM)      | 786   | 520   | 318   | 208   | 170   | 171   | 168   | 172   |
| Noise dB(A)     | 59    | 61    | 62    | 64    | 67    | 70    | 73    | 76    |

Calculated figures based on real-time readings, yours may vary considerably. Figures allow for 20% reserve. All prices inc VAT. 100% fuel, 100% water, 3 crew + safety stores and water bag inside the tender garage. 10° air temperature, F4 and moderate for sea trial.