

# MOTOR BOAT

& YACHTING

EUROPE'S BEST MOTOR BOAT MAGAZINE

## XO 270 RS

*If you're serious about  
all-year boating then  
this boat should  
be jumping  
off the page*





# BIGPICTURE

*The image that really rocked our boat this month*





# Rough with the smooth

*Military chic has never looked so good*

What do you get if you combine a 5mm-thick, professional aluminium-grade hull, 24° deadrise, sub-three-tonne displacement and a snarling 4.6-litre, 370hp V8 diesel? The XO 270 RS, that's what. Surely one of the meanest-looking boats on the market endowed with super-smooth performance and handling to back it up 100 times over. In short it's one of the best boats we've ever driven, so turn the page to see just what it is that makes the stonking 270 RS so special out at sea.







# XO 270 RS

No matter what we threw at it, it just wouldn't slam – meet the fiendishly addictive speedster that's absolutely astonishing to drive

Text: **Jack Haines** Photos: **William Payne & Wessex Marine**

Just imagine if you were heading into a quiet port at night and suddenly this XO 270 RS came hurtling out of the darkness towards you. Spotlights ablaze, V8 diesel engine howling as its razor-edged hull cut through the inky waves with flecks of white spray dashing down the matt-grey topsides. You'd be forgiven for thinking the SBS had been sent out to give your boat the once over.

Military chic suits this rugged weekender well, though. The owner of this particular boat has really gone for it and, as if the carbon-effect 3M hull wrap wasn't enough, has also added black powder coat to the stainless steel railings and those fantastic

spotlights – more boats should have them. He'd even asked for the radar scanner to be sprayed in its own sinister shade of black, although XO dealer Wessex Marine hadn't been able to do it in time for our test.

You can soften the looks with whatever wrap you like but even in Barbie pink or leopard skin, with its blade-like aluminium hull, upright bow and aggressive wheelhouse you'll never hide the mean machine beneath.

Thankfully the XO's talent out at sea can back up the no-nonsense statement it makes on the pontoons. With Yanmar's thunderous 4.6-litre twin turbo 370hp V8 diesel doing the leg work in the engineroom and a ZT370

sterndrive leg feeding this power into the water the XO 270 is so good to drive it's breathtaking. Everything is good; XO hasn't just done the steering well, or the throttle response or the balance of the hull, it has nailed every single individual component which makes driving a boat so pleasurable. As the helmsman you feel totally connected to everything the boat's doing; there's a purity to the way a sterndrive puts power into the water with the propeller being attached to the part of the drivetrain which actually does the turning. And my does this thing know how to turn. With the engine humming at its max rpm and the speedo





Despite its size the wheelhouse doesn't feel at all claustrophobic



The dinette in its converted state is fine for a night or two on board



ticking over to 40 knots you can hunker down in your seat, swing the perfectly proportioned steering wheel to full lock and hold on tight as the boat whips round in an effortless and perfectly smooth turn. Even at this speed the XO's turning circle is only about 60ft, it's astonishing.

The sterndrive leg coupled to this magnificent 22" deep-vee hull provides so much grip it's likely that your internal organs will give up and detach long before the XO's vice-like hold on the water does.

In the turns the hull is athletic and poised but throttle back to 30 knots and settle in for the cruise and the 270 will track dead straight

and plant itself solidly in the water. It's relaxed, quiet and refined, carving through the waves with effortless ease.

The boat weighs just under three tonnes but it feels four times as heavy if you try to get it to leap off waves, so planted and soft is the ride. I was trying my best to get some good hang time for the photos as I attempted to leap over the wake of our Botnia Targa photo boat (not a boat that is shy on the wake front) but the XO wasn't having any of it. Flat out, terrible angle of attack, aiming right at the largest part of the Targa's wake and... nothing. The bow doesn't even lift as that cleaver of a hull shreds the wake and the

boat lands squarely and softly on the other side. Boring for photos, fantastic for long journeys in a lurching swell.

That is the core of this boat's purpose, to transport you in comfort through whatever the water can throw at you. It may be only 27ft 6in (8.4m) in length but it looks after you better in the rough than many boats twice the size. With the navigator seat in situ there are three forward-facing seats and the dinette is cosy enough to wedge yourself in during lumpier journeys.

On a small boat a wheelhouse has to be bright and well ventilated otherwise it will feel stuffy in minutes, and thankfully XO has



# *It's so good to drive it's breathtaking. XO has nailed every individual component that makes driving a boat so pleasurable*

done its homework here. The wraparound windscreen provides a superb view out whether seated or standing. For most of my time on board I found myself doing half and half and using the tall helm seat as a leaning post. XO has installed two manual hatches in the roof, which slide back to provide good ventilation.

The helm station isn't luxuriously fitted out but it is clear, simple and very easy to use. The adjustable wheel and throttle fall easily to hand and the view of the chartplotter and compass is good as well. The only downside is that the switchboard and battery separators are located on a panel down the side of the helm seat and therefore are quite difficult to access in a hurry.

How you find the rest of the interior will depend on what boat it is you are coming from. If you're coming from a 27ft cabin cruiser you will feel like you're being sold short on accommodation but if you're coming from a RIB (and a lot of XO customers are) you'll find the covered wheelhouse and proper toilet the height of extravagant luxury.

The dinette and navigator seat combine to create a reasonable double berth – the only trouble being that the excellent windows that you'll enjoy so much in the day mean that you'll be woken up as soon as the sun peeps over the horizon. Beneath the helm station and extending out to the forward cockpit is an extremely snug single berth which I struggled to squeeze myself into. Realistically it's strictly for children but is better used as a plush and weatherproof storage space.

What is a real bonus is having a proper sea toilet on board with crouching headroom and, if you think you are going to be making a lot of overnight stops, you can replace the double bench aft of the helm with a compact galley module for tea and bacon butties.

It's a dayboat at heart with overnighting capabilities if need be and, once again, it's all

down to what you expect from the boat. One area that XO could make more of is the aft deck, which felt redundant on the boat we tested. Yes the black framework with built-in fender holders and a flip-down bench look the part but this area is not particularly useful as the bench is hard and uncomfortable and you sit with your face about six inches away from the cockpit doors. XO hails from Finland, where the 270 is used as a fast, island-hopping commuter boat and the Finns would most likely leave this area bare for transporting a quad bike or the like but here it would probably be better if it was covered in thick sunpad cushions to provide a place for those on board to stretch out at anchor.

The other end of the boat is much better, the forward cockpit is deep and safe with plenty of seating for people to sit around the table that can be plucked from the wheelhouse and slotted into place outside. XO is flexing its engineering muscles here – all of the lockers beneath the seats are flawlessly smooth and the mechanism that opens and closes the access door to the wheelhouse is a thing of beauty.

Similarly the engine bay, accessed via the aft deck which raises up on twin gas struts, provides good access to all parts of the engine.

If you're serious about year-round boating then this boat should be jumping off the page and screaming at you. If you like the feeling of being out on a chilly, crystal-clear day while you speed along with the heating up and T-shirt on then the XO is what you're after. It gives you the thrill and adrenaline rush of a small sportsboat while providing shelter and the sort of majestic ride that will see you challenging yourself to see how far you can go. And, in your spare time, you can hoon around in the dark scaring the living daylight out of fellow boaters.

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The tenacity of the hull is utterly addictive and needs to be driven to be believed

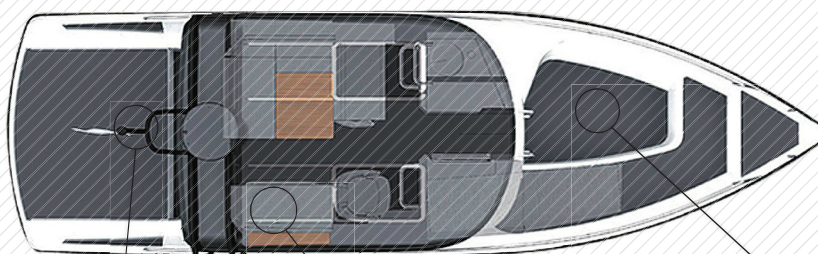


Engine access is brilliant, it's just a shame the deck on top of it isn't put to better use

## THE DATA

**LENGTH OVERALL** 27ft 6in (8.4m)

**BEAM**  
8ft 5in  
(2.6m)



There are plenty of engine options on the 270: Volvo and Yanmar from 260hp-370hp

This is where the optional galley unit would go if you chose to have it over the bench seating

There's a real feeling of safety in the bow thanks to the deep bulwarks and guardrails around the perimeter

**FUEL CAPACITY**  
75 imp gal (340 litres)  
**WATER CAPACITY**  
13 imp gal (60 litres)  
**DRAUGHT**  
3ft 1in (0.95m)  
**RCD CATEGORY**  
C (for 10 people)  
**DESIGNER**  
XO Boats  
**DISPLACEMENT**  
2.8 tonnes (light)  
3.1 tonnes (loaded)





**+** Snug single berth is pretty tight but also good for stowing kit



If you don't feel the need for a loo this area can be left as a storage space



Plenty of smooth storage lockers in the deep and practical forward cockpit



## THE HELM VIEW



**+** The 270 is peppered with handholds including this prominent one on the helm station

**■** The helm is clear, solid and well finished but could do with a little more finesse to make it feel special

**+** The design of the single Yanmar throttle is perfect for resting your wrist on in rougher seas

## PERFORMANCE

### TEST ENGINES

Single Yanmar V8 8LV 370.  
370hp @ 3,700rpm. 8-cylinder 4.6-litre diesel.

### MBY Test Figures

RPM 2300 2500 2700 2900 3100 3500 3700

Speed 21.2 24.2 26.6 29.0 32.5 36.6 40.1

### Sound Levels dBA

Saloon 74 76 78 78 81 81 80

## THE COSTS & OPTIONS

Price from £133,650 (Yanmar 4BY2 260hp)

Price as tested £175,614 (Yanmar 8LV 370hp)

Bow thruster £2,950

Raymarine C127 chartplotter £3,250

Raymarine 4kW radar £1,425

Triple Hella spotlights £1,095

3M carbon-effect hull wrap £1,445

Esthec teak decking £1,995

Webasto diesel heating £2,325

Toilet with holding tank £1,095

Transom shower £480

■ = Options on test boat

Speed in knots. No fuel flow data available. Sound figures measured with the roof and aft doors shut. All prices include UK VAT. 70% fuel, 0% water, 3 crew & minimal stores, 15°C air temp, slight seas, F1 for speed trials.