

YACHTING

MONTHLY

ARCONA 435

**Greyhound of the sea
unleashed**



FIRST TEST

ARCONA 435

Swedish yachts are renowned the world over for their quality, but not necessarily for their speed. Graham Snook tests the Arcona 435 to see why this needs to change

Words & pictures **Graham Snook**

I am not usually one for tearing around the Solent looking for boats to race, but after a delightful sail on the Arcona 435 the Mr Toad in me had thoroughly taken over. Even though we were just about to return to Lymington and the unsuspecting 'target' was some way to weather, I couldn't resist the opportunity to throw the helm down and go off in pursuit one more time. It just felt so good, and I would rather be late coming alongside than give up the chance of sailing the Arcona 435 for a little longer.

As much as I enjoy sailing my own boat, she's not fast, and I can always conjure up a number of excuses why I am being passed by other boats, but the Arcona is quick and sailing a boat like her was a treat I rarely get to enjoy. I test many yachts, but few match the Arcona for sailing pleasure.





SPECIFICATIONS

MAKE Arcona

MODEL 435

PRICE FROM

£360,000 inc VAT

DESIGNER Stefan Qviberg

BUILDER

Arcona Yachts AB



RIGHT: A spacious and practical cockpit. Note the foot rest that hides a pop-up table

BELOW: The Arcona is in her element close to the wind. Jib sheet tweekers give accurate control of the jib leech

Fast cars are low, sleek machines that look like they're moving while parked. In fact, seeing one parked seems odd, as they should be driving along hairpin mountain roads. I had the same feeling when I saw the Arcona; seeing her low, sleek profile restrained (however neatly) to a pontoon felt wrong, like a greyhound on a lead. What had she done to deserve to be tied up?

It was a sunny, unseasonably warm October day, and even though the winds were a light Force 3-4 the Arcona needed to be sailed. She rewarded those who took her wheels. The helm was finger-light and responsive with just the right amount of feedback from the Jefa steering. Her hull is light and together with a generous sail area to displacement ratio, she's quick and easily powered, helped on this occasion by the North 3Di sails.

Even when over-powered with her large asymmetric she retained her composure elegantly so that only the weight on the helm and her speed increased. She sails as sleekly as she looks, making over 10 knots under asymmetric and increasing wind.

The seating for the helm, outboard, is a bit low when sailing on an even keel, but with a bit of heel it starts to feel more natural.

There is a raised lip inboard which gives something to grip on (as do the pull-up foot rests), but a little more height would keep your rear protected from a wet deck and make sitting a little more comfortable. As it is, you can sit aft, astride

or forward of the wheel and still have access to the mainsheet winches (both were electric driven on this yacht) and the mainsheet traveller which is forward of the wheel binnacles. There is space aft of the wheels, doing away with the perched-on-the-transom feeling, but there is also the option of having the aft end of the cockpit more enclosed by way of well-placed cockpit boxes with a semi-open transom.

WIDER AND FASTER

Unlike her predecessor, the Arcona 430 that started life with a single wheel, the 435 was designed with twin wheels from day one. This has made the hull carry the beam further aft for more width in the cockpit, and with a flatter underwater profile for speed, her aft sections lead up to a soft, rounded chine that gives more space in the twin aft cabins. While looking modern, the hull hasn't followed the fashion of hard angular chines, twin rudders and high freeboard. It's an easy step up from a pontoon to the deck, but the headroom below hasn't taken a beating because of it.

The coachroof windows come in three options, two with the frameless look shown on this test boat — with one option of having the windows opening, the other for them to be fixed. The third option is for a line of opening black-framed hatches more familiar to current Arcona owners.

The deck forward of the cockpit is clean and clear, even the furling line from the through-deck furler is led under the deck, as is the mainsheet, albeit from a point aft of the mast. Having said that, the tack line from the bowsprit is led across the foredeck just above ankle height to disappear into the forward end of the coachroof. There's a good walkthrough between the shrouds to windward, but the jib is also sheeted through the gap and there's a jib sheet inhaul running across the deck from below the vang to catch out the unwary.

Curved corners and slight reclines make the cockpit a comfy place to be. At anchor or in harbour the cockpit table pops up from the sole (it's housed in the space between the twin aft cabins). The lid, in the cockpit sole, provides a decent foot brace for the crew. She has Harken 60ST manual genoa sheet winches. The German mainsheet system is controlled by two Harken 46ST winches; one option is for a single electric mainsheet winch that can be operated



from either of the helm positions.

Main, genoa and spinnaker halyards are spectra and these, along with other lines from the mast, are led under the deck to an optional Harken 46ST electric winch to starboard. The port winch is manual, but the lines can be crossed over.

There's a 1.35m (4ft 5in) deep sail locker aft of the chain locker, with windlass. A single bow roller is integrated into the carbon bowsprit.

There are two large lazarette lockers aft of the helm. One neat touch I've not normally found on other boats is that these lockers are illuminated, so even as darkness approaches you can still find what you're looking for.

There are rope bins in the forward end of the coaming as well as a cubby hole in the coaming aft of the sheet winch for the coachroof lines, and beneath the helm seat in the deck for the genoa sheets and genoa car adjustment line. One gets the impression that, unlike some brands, those involved with the Arcona have spent time at sea and want to rid sailing of the annoying niggles we all encounter.

NICE AND SAFE

Below decks, you'll find an elegant, understated fit out. There's little wrong with the interior and it plays to the strengths of Arcona. It has the traditional feel of lots of quality woodwork with white hull sides, which is good, but it's conservative and doesn't stand apart. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing bad about this, but it's understated rather than setting the world alight or pushing the boundaries of yacht design.

The interior is a pleasing mixture of Khaya mahogany and white tongue-and-groove effect panels outboard. There were a few areas that could have been improved upon (the fiddle above the locker in the port aft cabin for instance), but when the whole boat is so good I was looking harder to find areas that weren't up to the general high quality found on board. There are deep fiddles-cum-handholds around the J-shaped galley and chart table, and together with

BELOW: With the asymmetric set, the speed jumped up to over 10 knots without losing any composure

PERFORMANCE FIGURES

POINT OF SAIL	AWA*	AWS**	SPEED
Close hauled	27-30°	12-14 knots	6.0-6.9 knots
Fetch	60°	11-13 knots	7.0-7.8 knots
Beam reach	90°	6.7-9.7 knots	6.4-6.6 knots
Broad reach	120°	5.2-5.6 knots	4.4-5.0 knots
Run	180°	3.8-5.0 knots	3.6-3.8 knots

Under power, 1800rpm, 6 knots with a two-bladed folding propeller.

*APPARENT WING ANGLE **APPARENT WIND SPEED



Even when overpowered as the wind built, she retained her composure elegantly



The materials used throughout are of the highest quality

Khaya mahogany is deployed extensively below decks and creates a warm and traditional ambience



There's no chartplotter mount at the navigation station to keep the space open



The J-shaped galley has plenty of worktop space with a three-burner stove and soft-close drawers. While the fridge appears on the small side, it is actually 92L. There is the option of a drawer fridge in the return of the galley



A sizeable island bed sits centrally in the master cabin. Around it are useful overhead storage spaces with top-hinged lockers



Both aft cabins are well thought out. All the lockers have ventilation above the doors



The heads could be improved if they had a separate shower compartment



All boats should have illuminated lockers – it makes finding gear so much easier



A good-sized cockpit table pops up from sole



RIGHT: A fine bow makes the Arcona a quick boat to windward



the suede-covered stainless-steel grab rails and deep mahogany handrails (at deck level) they make negotiating the saloon feel safe at sea. I did notice that when the blinds are fully down they obstruct the long deck-level handrail though.

The galley is also well thought out. At the base of the companionway the J-shaped galley has workspace both inboard and outboard meaning your motley crew can assist the cook without getting in their way. Perspex sliding locker doors outboard are great as you can see where something is before rooting around every locker in the galley. There is a line of drawers aft, all with soft closures, and forward of them is the three-burner stove (two burner is standard). There's also a nice bottle locker in the aft workspace which is easily accessible while cooking. The standard fridge isn't the largest (at 37cm/1ft 2in deep), but this boat had the option of the drawer fridge in the return of the galley, which makes getting drinks for the cockpit dwellers a breeze.

It's the details that reveal the workmanship in this boat. The L-shaped chart table opposite the galley, forward of the aft heads compartment, has a one-piece laminated 3cm-deep fiddle that typifies the quality of finish on board. Unlike the 430, the navigation station feels open. Gone is the plotter mount that came out forward of the chart table. This also makes the saloon feel longer, too. The chart table support houses four long drawers, all just waiting to be filled with clobber that requires quick access.

There are hull windows which are sleek and barely noticeable as little more than bumps in the cove line from the outside. While they do make the interior a little lighter they seem to be an acknowledgement of the current fashion for hull windows, rather than a whole-hearted embracing of it.

COMFORT AND STYLE

The Arcona's cabins continue the theme of a conventional, but extremely high-quality design. The forward cabin is a pleasant, comfortable area



RIGHT: Saloon seating has been pushed well outboard to create a sense of space

BELOW: Low, sleek lines and a moulded bow sprit for the kite



A true performance cruiser, the Arcona takes it all in her stride

with a long, wide island bed. There are top-hinged lockers, which on this boat did not have supports to hold the doors open, but these will be included on all subsequent boats.

The tongue and groove-effect white hull sides give a classic feel, and a mahogany hand-hold makes entering and leaving the berth easier.

Under the aft end of the berth are four good drawers, while forward of these is stowage with a small protective box screwed over the log and echosounder, but this does make it less convenient to clean the log. There's a pipe, with a ball valve, running through this locker. It leads from the forward deck locker into the grey water tank beneath the saloon floor — the tank also takes the drip tray from the bottom of the keel-stepped mast and the drains from shower trays. The tank is then emptied via an automatic pump.

The ensuite heads is a reasonable size, although it doesn't have a separate shower compartment. It does, however, have a wraparound shower curtain. There's a good hanging locker outboard, though the wet locker in the aft heads will perhaps see more use as you would have to get wet waterproofs to the forward cabin via the bed to use this one.

Both aft cabins are a good width (158cm/5ft 2in) that extends under the line of top-hinged lockers outboard. These, like all lockers on board, have ventilation above them. It is an option to have a pull-out shower from the tap in the aft heads, but this yacht's owner chose not to have a shower aft.

PRACTICAL LIVING

This is a boat that offers elegant and practical living space. The saloon feels wide as the seatbacks have been taken well outboard. While this does limit the storage space behind them, the trade-off is the sense of space. There are also plenty of hand-holds, except on the large fold-out table. There are lockers forward, complemented by bookshelves under the hull windows. With the tankage under the seats (fuel to starboard, water to port) stowage is limited to the ends of the C-shaped seating to port.

There are also nice hidden features such as stainless-steel water tanks with catering-grade pipework. The fixed table is good and has a deep drawer in its support. Unfortunately, the bilge pump is on the port side of the table and is awkward to access as one has to crawl under the fixed table. There are options for the table to have fold-down leaves.

Engine access from the front and rear is excellent, though less so from the sides. Inspection panels can be added on request.

The hull is foam-cored and vacuum-infused using vinyl ester resin; the foam goes down to around a 50cm each side of the centreline. The deck is foam-cored and injection moulded, but care has been taken to hide any exterior fittings and the finish of the headlining is excellent.



ARCONA 435

THE TEST VERDICT

There are few boats that offer both speed and a genuinely quality interior, but the Arcona is one of them. She was a joy to sail for the helm and comfortable for the crew. The sail handling is well thought out and works whether you're sailing fully crewed or short-handed.

Arcona are owned by Orust Quality Yachts, the same owner as Najad Yachts and as you'd expect from a company of this pedigree, the quality is very high both in terms of workmanship and the materials used.

The UK spec boat has a host of extras like 3Di sails, a spray hood, sail cover, an electric halyard winch, asymmetric spinnaker and is very close to the boat that was tested. It's not necessary to have all of these, and any owner can of course spec the boat to suit. This doesn't do much to reduce her price, but you don't buy a Ferrari to put on cloth seats and remould tyres.

WOULD SHE SUIT YOU AND YOUR CREW?

While one might expect passage times to be reduced in a yacht like the Arcona 435, I fear, however, that won't be the case, and why would you want that? Anyone buying such a boat will be sailing her further, faster and make any trip last as long as possible — just for the sheer pleasure of sailing her. She really is a delight.

Where many performance cruisers try to save weight with the quality of the interior fit-out, no such economies are visible on the 435, except, perhaps for the lack of locker door supports. If you want even better performance there's the option for her hull and deck to be built in carbon with a carbon rig, and you can also have a deeper keel too, but you'll have to find an extra £96,000 for that luxury.

Even without these, the Arcona 435 is a performance-cruiser in every sense. If you want to cruise with speed and style, she delivers. But should you wish to throw her around the race course, then relax in comfort afterwards, the Arcona will take it all in her stride — she is all you could want her to be, and more.

PROS

- + Sailing experience
- + Good performance
- + Comfortable and practical interior

CONS

- No separate shower compartments
- Low seating at helm

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE AS TESTED
£440,000

LOA 13.80m (45ft 3in)

HULL LENGTH
13.20m (43ft 4in)

LWL 12.20m (40ft)

BEAM 3.98m (13ft 1in)

DRAUGHT
2.30m (7ft 7in)

DISPLACEMENT
8,900kg (19,621 lb)

BALLAST 3,400kg
(7,495 lb)

BALLAST RATIO
38.2%

DISPLACEMENT 135.8

SAIL AREA 111m²
(1,195sq ft)

SA/D RATIO 26.3

DIESEL 180 litres
(40 gal)

WATER
300 litres (66 gal)

ENGINE 45hp

TRANSMISSION
Saildrive

RCD CATEGORY A

DESIGNER
Stefan Qviberg

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