



Joinery and attention to detail is first rate. Owners can choose the fabrics, colours and woods used on the boat – green is optional.



The dash has good space for a big plotter and is well organised, though the positioning of the VHF lets it down.



Enjoy the view from the comfy and rather elegant transom seat.



A stop-and-look craft, for sure, where Cockwells' renowned craftsmanship is evident everywhere



The owner of this boat opted for a snug cabin for overnighting.

STARS OF
SOUTHAMPTONGLORIOUS
GOOD WOOD

The tools are down, the sawmills silent and every inch of the Cockwells 37 has been hand crafted to perfection. Now it's time to see how it fares on the water

TEXT: ROB PEAKE PHOTOS: LESTER MCCARTHY



Amid the mass of production boats in today's marinas, a custom-built wooden craft sticks out a mile. It wasn't hard to find our test boat as we wandered down Mylor Yacht Harbour's pontoons. *MBY* has been following the build of the Cockwells 37 over the past 18 months and I was fascinated to see the finished product. I'd viewed first-hand the painstaking work put in by the yard's workmen as they gradually crafted each nook of the vessel by hand.

Certainly, looking at the end result on the pontoons, it is a remarkably handsome beast. A stop-and-look craft, for sure – more so than our photographs can really show. However, it's one thing putting together a good-looking boat; how it

performs practically on the water, inside and out, is what really matters.

The 37 immediately scores well with its comfortable transom bench, complete with smart racing green cover and also a mini-step so you don't make a mess clambering on board. A swing door welcomes you into the saloon/cockpit where some fairly frightening green has been commissioned by the owner for the saloon seats. The colour does have something of the Victorian drawing room about it, so perhaps it fits the gentlemanly nature of the boat – but remember, each owner can have whatever colour they want on the seats and on the hull, and indeed whichever woods they want throughout the interior. This is an entirely custom build.

It is once you're inside the saloon that almost the best bit about the boat hits you: the smell. While a brand-new GRP craft can have a somewhat sterile atmosphere, on the 37 it is the warm and inviting aroma of wood that rules the roost. ➤



Cockwells' renowned craftsmanship is evident everywhere. There are production yards who sell boats with stunning joinery, but somehow knowing that everything on the 37 is cut at the yard's own sawmill and put together by hand on site makes one appreciate it all the more. The fold-out saloon table is a sumptuous object, with 3in-high fiddles fit for the *Cutty Sark*, let alone a weekend launch. To starboard stands a very important feature: a fine drinks cabinet containing three generous decanters.

The seats run either side of the saloon, with good stowage underneath up to the helm. There, the entire dashboard is encased in a glorious wooden arc. Getting this right was one of the trickiest bits of the build for Cockwells due to the unequal camber. They certainly managed it in the end – this is one of the most admirable pieces of workmanship on board.

The helm position itself is very comfortable. The dash is neatly laid out with paired dials, room for a sizeable plotter and charts, and the throttle levers well to hand. However, the VHF handset is quite awkwardly placed at the helmsman's right elbow. This moment of less-than-perfect design is all the more surprising aboard a boat that is so finely crafted, though in a curious way it underlines the 37's quirky, one-off nature.

All around, those huge windows make for a clear view and very open feel. Unusually for a modern motor yacht, the foredeck is flat, so when sat at the wheel you have acres of teak decking to look out onto – a far more pleasing sight than a couple of plastic sunbeds.

There are three steps down to the galley, which offers enough cooking and washing-up kit to see you through the weekend. With a small port, the space feels slightly enclosed but most owners of such a craft will probably be eating out.

Data

Overall length	37ft 6in (11.45m)
Beam	11ft 6in (3.50m)
Displacement	8.52 tonnes light
Top speed	24 knots
Engines	Twin 225hp Volvo D4 shaftdrive diesels
Price	£464,100 inc UK VAT
Contact	Cockwells. Tel: +44 (0)1326 377366. Website: www.cockwells.co.uk



This photo: owner's cabin. Inset: clever digital diesel gauge.



Twin Volvo D4s give the Cockwells 37 a turn of pace.

Knowing that every part of the 37 is cut at the yard's sawmill and put together by hand makes one appreciate this stunning boat all the more



The all-important handmade drinks cabinet.

The British businessman who commissioned this 37 wanted a weekender with a cabin. The cabin he's got is made up of an offset 4ft-6in-wide double with a small sofa to port. It's a cosy space, again probably suited to overnighting rather than cruising. To starboard, the heads contains a WC and shower. The saloon seats can also be converted to create two more berths but really the 37 is designed as a couple's boat.

Under way, the twin 225hp Volvo D4s get this 8.5-tonner moving quite swiftly and all feels comfortable at a cruising speed of 18 knots at 2,800rpm. Our test day gave us a useful bit of lumpiness to trial the Andrew-Wolstenholme-designed hull. The designer himself was on board and was happy to see the 37 motor gentlemanly through anything the Fal Estuary could throw up. Top speed is around 24 knots at 3,600rpm, which we reached in a sprightly 15 seconds, somewhat belying the gentlemanly image elsewhere. The hull barely leans in the turn, is responsive to the wheel, and felt very safe all day.

As we came back in to Mylor at the end of our test, something happened I've never experienced before on a motor boat: a passing yachting turned to give us a smile and a thumbs up. The mixture of admiration and envy on his face as he surveyed the passing 37 said it all. **MBY**



Though compact, the galley is just right for weekending.