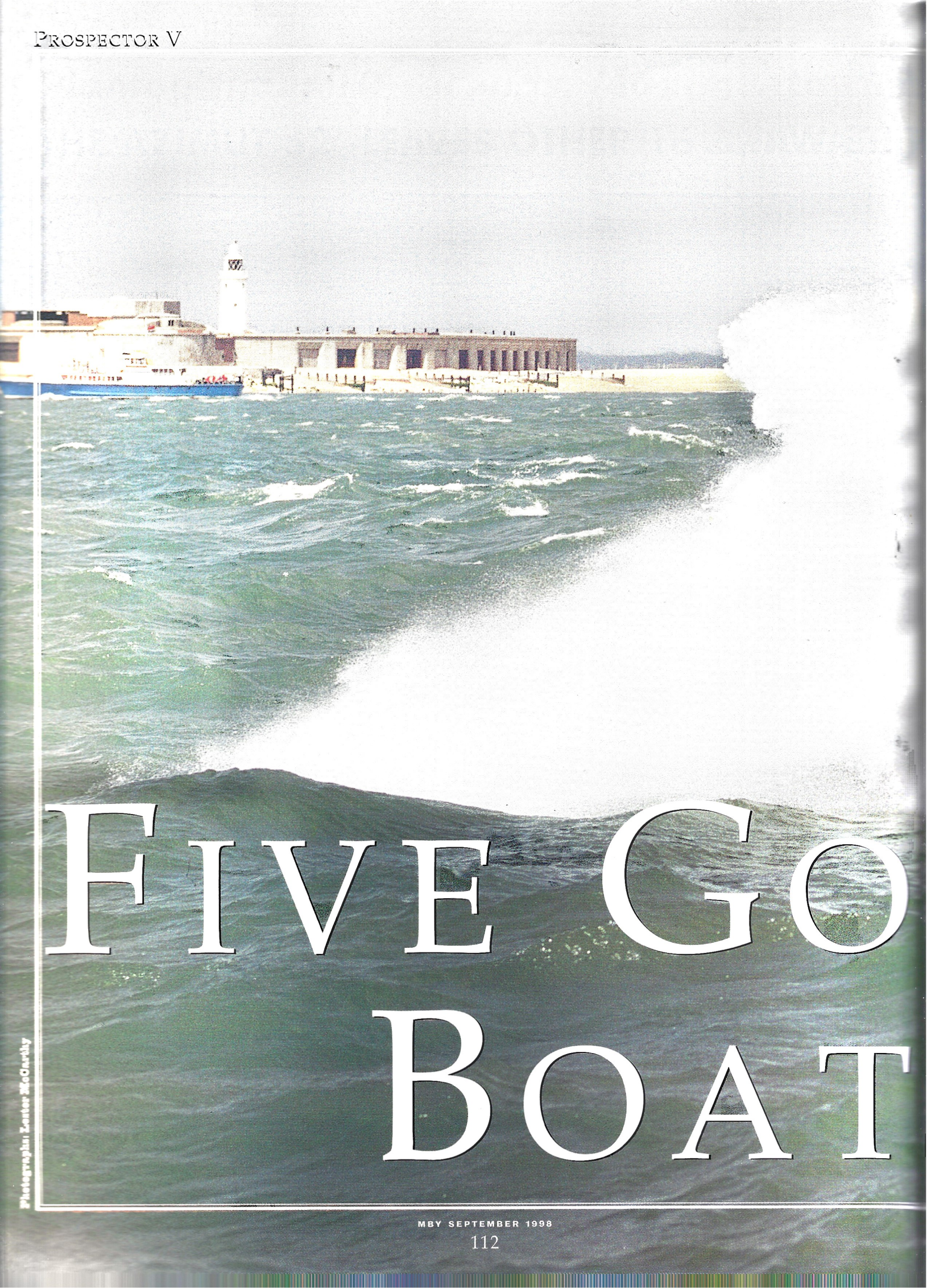
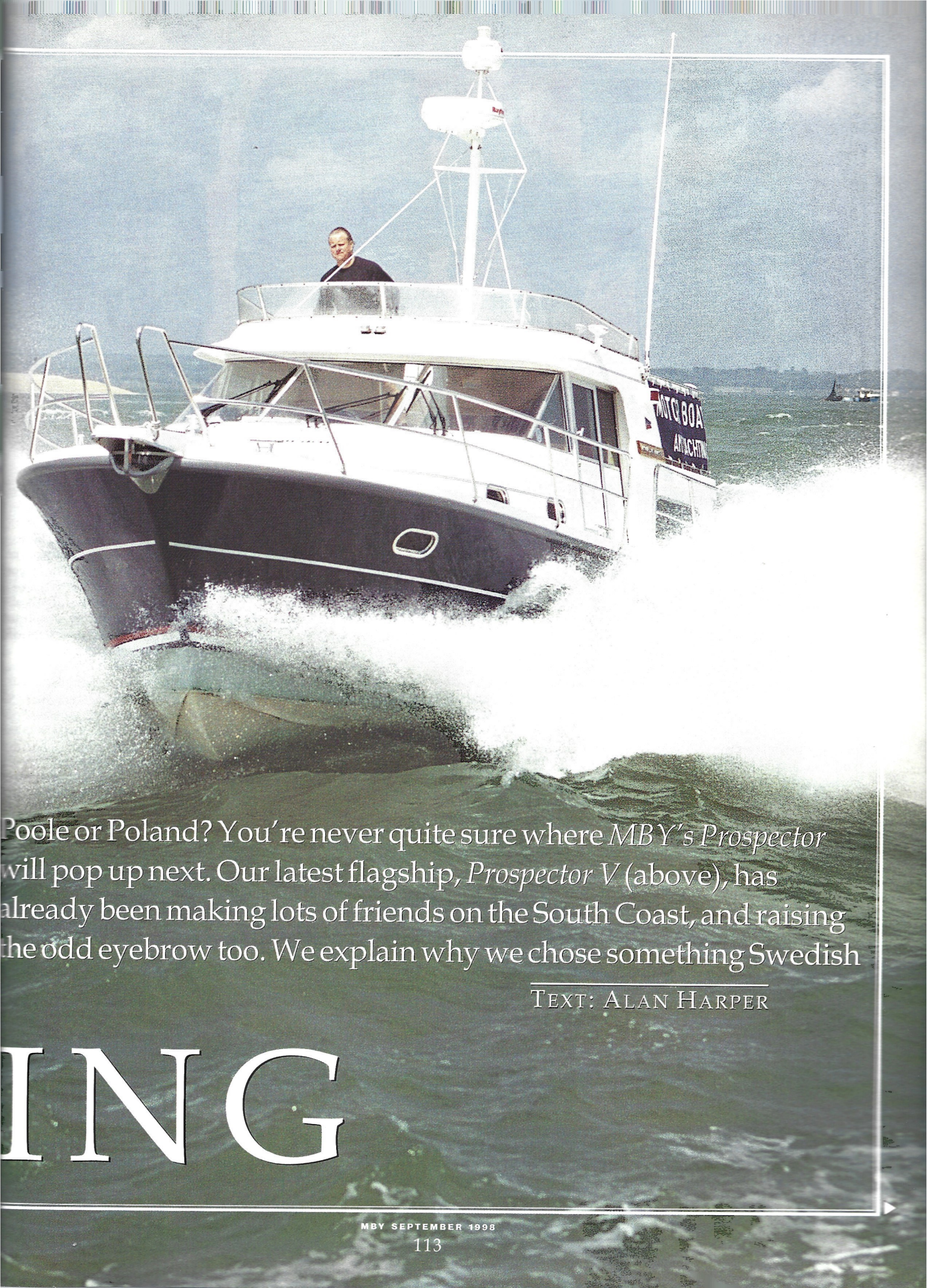




# FIVE GO BOAT

Photograph: Lester McCarthy

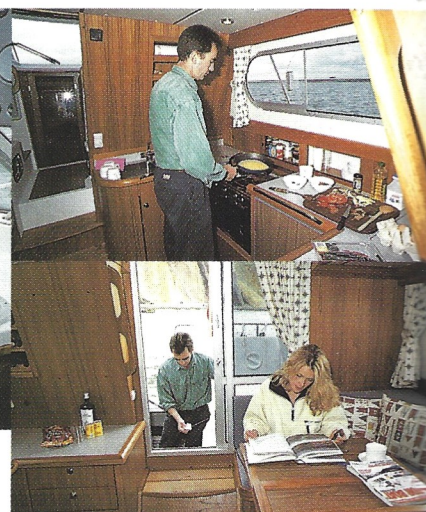
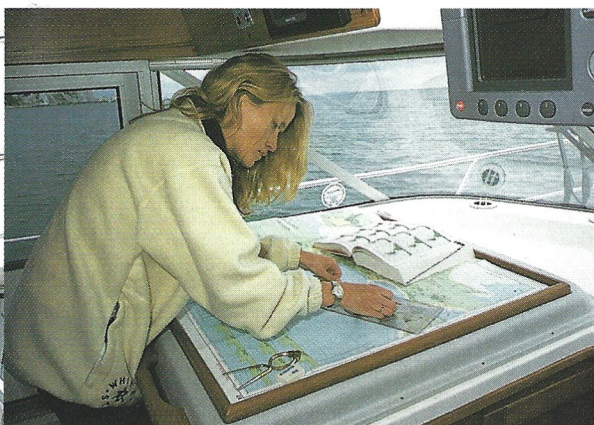
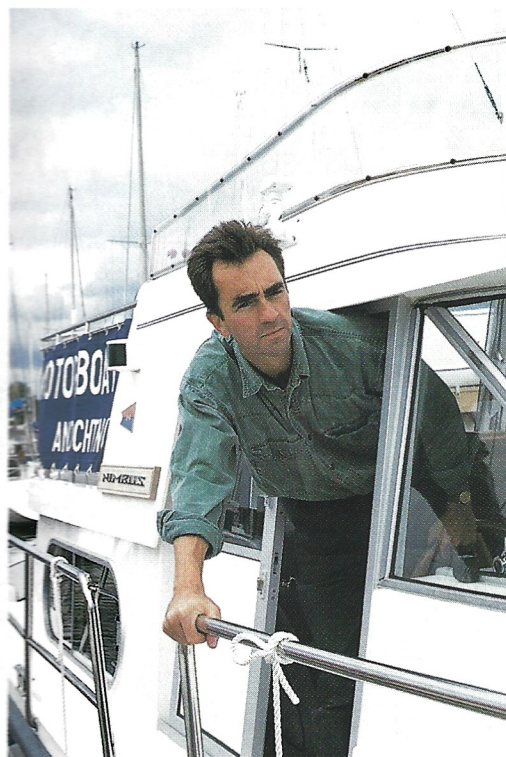


Poole or Poland? You're never quite sure where *MBY's Prospector* will pop up next. Our latest flagship, *Prospector V* (above), has already been making lots of friends on the South Coast, and raising the odd eyebrow too. We explain why we chose something Swedish

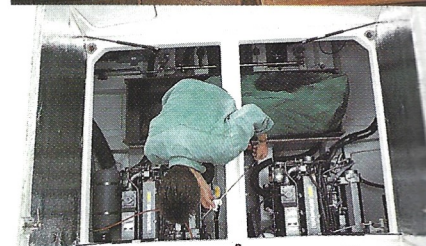
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TEXT: ALAN HARPER

# ING



Sliding doors on each side of the wheelhouse (left) provide excellent deck access, while that chart shelf (above) is superb for a boat this size. Right, from the top: the galley, an integral part of the saloon; engine checks need not disturb the guests; access is excellent.

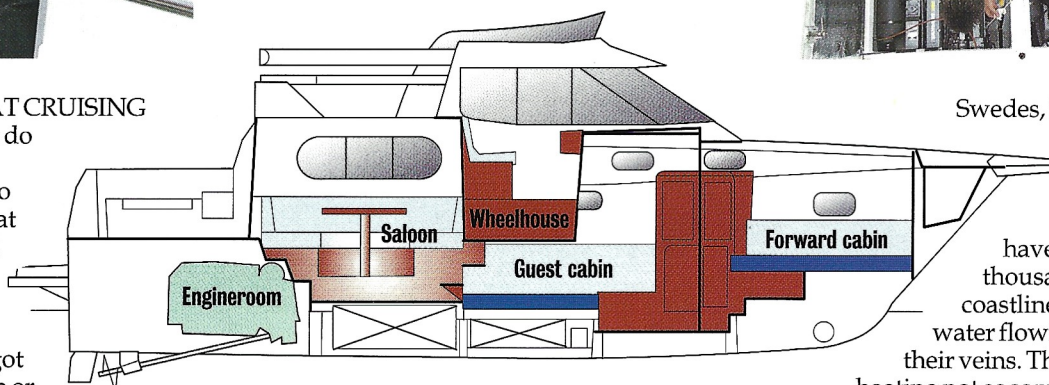


IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT CRUISING boat design has little to do with repressed sexual urges and everything to do with breakfast. If that Huge Thrusting 42 AC performs as advertised it will undoubtedly cause girls to throw their knickers at you, but if it has got nowhere to stow a frying pan or unfold a chart then I'm afraid it's a bit limp in the all-important cruising department. Picture the scene: it's a fine morning in a tranquil anchorage. Your partner is putting the kettle on and rooting around in the fridge for the bacon. Your cruising companions are just surfacing from the guest cabin, and their enormous teenage son is snoring on the convertible berth in the saloon. You're clear of the bathroom and on your second cup of coffee, and decide to use the time before everyone's properly up to look at the charts, check the tides, inspect the engines, and generally put the day in order and your mind at rest.

On any boat where the only place to look at a chart or browse through a pilot book is the saloon table, you'd have to wait until junior was up and out of the way. And with midships engines it would be the same story: stack the hatches up on top of the slumbering youth and try to avoid poking him in the eye with the dipstick, or wait until he's surfaced - by which time breakfast will be ready, and you'll have to wait until that's cleared away. By then everyone is up, impatient to be getting going, and you've still got all your chores to do.

It doesn't have to be like this.

There's a fundamental difference between cruisers from Scandinavia and cruisers built practically anywhere else, and while it's hard to say exactly why, it is probably true that not even a Swede would buy a Nimbus to improve his chances with the opposite sex. Pickled herrings and other Nordic cuisine also come into it.



Swedes, Norwegians and Finns may not be island races but they do have hundreds of thousands of miles of coastline, and pure salt water flowing through their veins. They love their boating not as something to look

forward to when you've sold the wife, divorced the business and moved somewhere hot, but as one of life's simple, basic pleasures. They have short summers, but long evenings. They tie their boats to rocks, eat prawns by the shovelful, and all's well with the world.

So Scandinavian boats still have a conceptual simplicity about them that the main British boatbuilders, in their fight for the more varied, complex and perhaps more sophisticated markets of the Mediterranean, have sadly all but abandoned.

Our last boat, the beautiful *Prospector IV*, was as British as they come: designed in Cowes, built in Plymouth and propelled by heavy metal from Peterborough. In fact, thanks to the Peterborough effect, which we specified particularly, she's probably the most patriotically assembled motor cruiser to come out of these islands since the 1970s.

*Prospector V*, on the other hand, a Nimbus 370 Trawler, is an unusual polyglot: Swedish-built, with Japanese engines fitted as standard. Scandinavian

she may be, but *Prospector V* is anything but a simple boat. Her interior design is particularly unusual and ingenious. But in creating this complicated, clever craft the Nimbus designers have never lost sight of the fundamental principle that this is a boat for cruising.

One of the keys to the success of the 370's layout is the V-drive gearboxes that allow the engines to be sited right aft. This obviously means that engine access, through two large hatches in the cockpit sole, is very easy, but more important from a cruising point of view it

### Prospector V's vital stats

#### Critical dimensions

|                  |                                     |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Length overall   | 36ft 9in (11.20m)                   |
| Hull length      | 32ft 10in (10.00)                   |
| Waterline length | 28ft 3in (8.60m)                    |
| Beam             | 11ft 10in (3.60m)                   |
| Draught          | 2ft 11in (0.90m)                    |
| Displacement     | 6.8 tonnes                          |
| Fuel capacity    | 166gal (755lt)                      |
| Water capacity   | 95gal (430lt)                       |
| Engines          | Twin Yanmar 4LH-STE diesel inboards |
| Max power output | 230bhp (169kW)                      |
| Max rpm          | 3,300                               |
| Cylinders        | 4 in-line                           |
| Capacity         | 3.455lt                             |

also means that daily checks and maintenance can be done without disrupting the saloon – or without even going through the saloon, thanks to those sensible doors in each side of the wheelhouse.

That wheelhouse feels more like a ship's bridge, and thanks to beautifully thought-out lines of communication which place it at the heart of the boat, it can function as a true command centre when you're under way.

Sitting in the single helm seat to starboard, you have a door onto the side deck on your right, and the companionways up to the flybridge and down to the saloon just by your left shoulder. Across to port is the two-seater navigator's station, with its own side deck door, excellent view forward and vast chart shelf. This in itself is practically unheard of among modern flybridge cruisers, but for a boat of this size to also allow three people to sit down inside with a good view forward is a major contribution to safety and comfort on a long passage.

The nav station itself is simple and clean: instruments overhead, a bookshelf behind, an oddments bin at your knees, and plenty of chart stowage. While it is superb for a boat of this size, it's still something of a compromise: but then to provide a chart table that you sit at, rather than a shelf that you have to lean over, would have meant sacrificing the easy side deck access that is so important. The designers made the right choice.

For either helmsman or navigator it's just one step out onto the deck – making life safe and easy when coming alongside, particularly if you're short-handed – and just two or three steps to either flybridge or galley. Have you ever had to take coffees up a flybridge ladder? It's hard enough in port, let alone at sea. But the 370 makes it about as easy as it gets to keep the upper deck crew fed and watered.

At manoeuvring speeds we've found that *Prospector V* handles beautifully on throttles alone, and the bow thruster has barely been necessary. Under way in a short chop she's inclined to give a harder ride than I became used to with *Prospector IV*, which had such a long, deep forefoot. But she's perfectly happy punching into longer seas, and whatever our opening photo might suggest – it was a blustery day, with wind against tide – the ride is pretty dry. Downwind she tracks sure-footedly, and needs next to no input from the helm.

The engines, although mounted well aft, do invade the accommodation space. Problems of access don't arise because Nimbus have thought them out in advance – guests wonder why we keep a spare gearbox in one of the galley lockers – but it does mean that noise levels are slightly higher than you'd find in a layout that allowed the engines to be banished completely to the stern, or buried beneath the saloon sole. This is one of the very few clues in the 370 that the hull is only 33ft (10.5m) long.

The engines themselves are delightful: surprisingly smooth for four-cylinder units, and pretty quiet considering the power they're producing. The change from large-capacity, medium-speed motors (*Prospector IV*'s 300hp, 2,600rpm Perkins Sabres) took some getting used to because the Yanmars' maximum torque comes much higher up the rev range, making the boat seem sluggish to get up on the plane. Once up and running though, she feels positively nippy, and the speed tops out well into the upper 20s. Because we have two of them we have been thoughtfully supplied with an identical pair of official Yanmar toolkits, whose red plastic containers look set to outlast their contents. I have seen more impressive puncture repair outfits. Fortunately, Nimbus also supply a nifty little designer kitbag that contains a variety of useful items made of proper steel.

So far we haven't needed any of them.

The problems that can plague any new boat have so far turned out to be surprisingly few. No doubt this is partly due to the efforts of Offshore Powerboats, whose pre-delivery inspection seems pretty thorough, but also Nimbus do try to make life easy for them: when we inspected the boat fresh off the truck from Sweden she did seem in a remarkably complete state.

A lack of stays on the mast is the only major problem we've encountered. There were stays on it, but they were purely cosmetic, and once out at sea with our large and heavy Raytheon Pathfinder radome in place, the mast began to work so alarmingly

## Previous Prospectors



### Prospector I 1989-90

Fairline 36 Turbo

**Length overall:** 36ft 6in (11.13m)

**Engines:** 2 × 306hp Volvo TAMD61

A perfect match of hull and engines, and a superb and powerful sea boat. Took us far and wide: Holland, Brittany, Scillies, Channel Islands.

**High point:** Southern Ireland, July 1990 – Valentia, the Skelligs, Baltimore, Kinsale.

**Low point:** a reader writing in to say he'd seen her looking grubby in a West Country marina. There was a hosepipe ban at the time!



### Prospector II 1991

Princess 330

**Length overall:** 33ft 8in (10.26m)

**Engines:** 2 × 200hp Volvo TAMD41

An excellent cruiser, but a little small for us – hence just the one season. Still kept her busy though: Brittany, Channel Islands, West Country.

**High point:** Cargreen, Fowey, Newton Ferrers, July 1991.

**Low point:** jammed starboard throttle cable, St Peter Port, August 31. The yachtman in the way was very understanding!



### Prospector III 92-93

Princess 35

**Length overall:** 35ft 3in (10.74m)

**Engines:** 2 × 230hp Volvo KAD42.

Our busiest boat so far, with over 3,000 miles/260 engine hours in just her first season.

**High point:** Baltic cruise, 1992 – former East Germany, Poland, Sweden and Denmark. First British boat into some ports since 1939!

**Low point:** starboard engine self-destructing just after the Whitbread start, September 1993.



### Prospector IV 94-97

Princess 360

**Length overall:** 39ft 7in (12.06m)

**Engines:** 2 × 225hp Perkins Sabre (1994-95); 2 × 300hp Perkins Sabre (1996-97)

Not very fast, but the best sea boat of all the *Prospectors*: 20 knots through practically anything. Excellent engines.

**High point:** Scotland's West Coast, 1995-96.

**Low point:** very public port exhaust overheat and fire, MBY Festival of Power, August 1994. Everyone found it hilarious!

that we had to lash it in place with rope. Since then Offshore Powerboats have fitted a pair of stays leading forward from the mast – secured with pelican hooks so it can still be folded down easily – and it's solid as a rock.

*Prospector V* is having a pretty easy first season. We've been running her in fairly gently, and her first long trip was down to Torquay for the RYA Raid in May (see p70). As we go to press we're getting her ready for the MBY Shopping Hop from Dover to Calais (August 7-9) and then, of course, she's attending our Festival of Power in Cowes (August 19-23). After that, all being well, we might take her on a short late-season cruise, but in the meantime she probably won't stray too far from her new berth at Mercury Yacht Harbour on the Hamble. So keep a good look-out, and give us a wave. **MBY**

