

Phil Pickin recently travelled to Kate Boats, Stockton Top Marina to see one of the most distinctive and eye catching boats on the waterways today



# Valhalla

on  
test

**Clockwise from top:** *Valhalla* presents a brooding presence moored at its marina berth; Corridor and mat detail in the cabin; A study in shades of black and grey make for a stunning exterior.

Once seen never forgotten is one way to describe *Valhalla*, the 57ft live aboard from Kate Boats built to its owner's very specific specifications.

The jet black craft stands out from the crowd and to some it would seem to be somewhat depressing. But that would be to dismiss this boat too quickly. For me, the first indication that this boat is something special (apart from the conning tower – more of that later) is the way that the name *Valhalla* has been written on the side in black on a black



background! Sounds odd, but it stands out because the hull is matt and the name is gloss. Subtle but it does the trick and is indicative of many of the innovations used on this boat.

## Ingenious space use

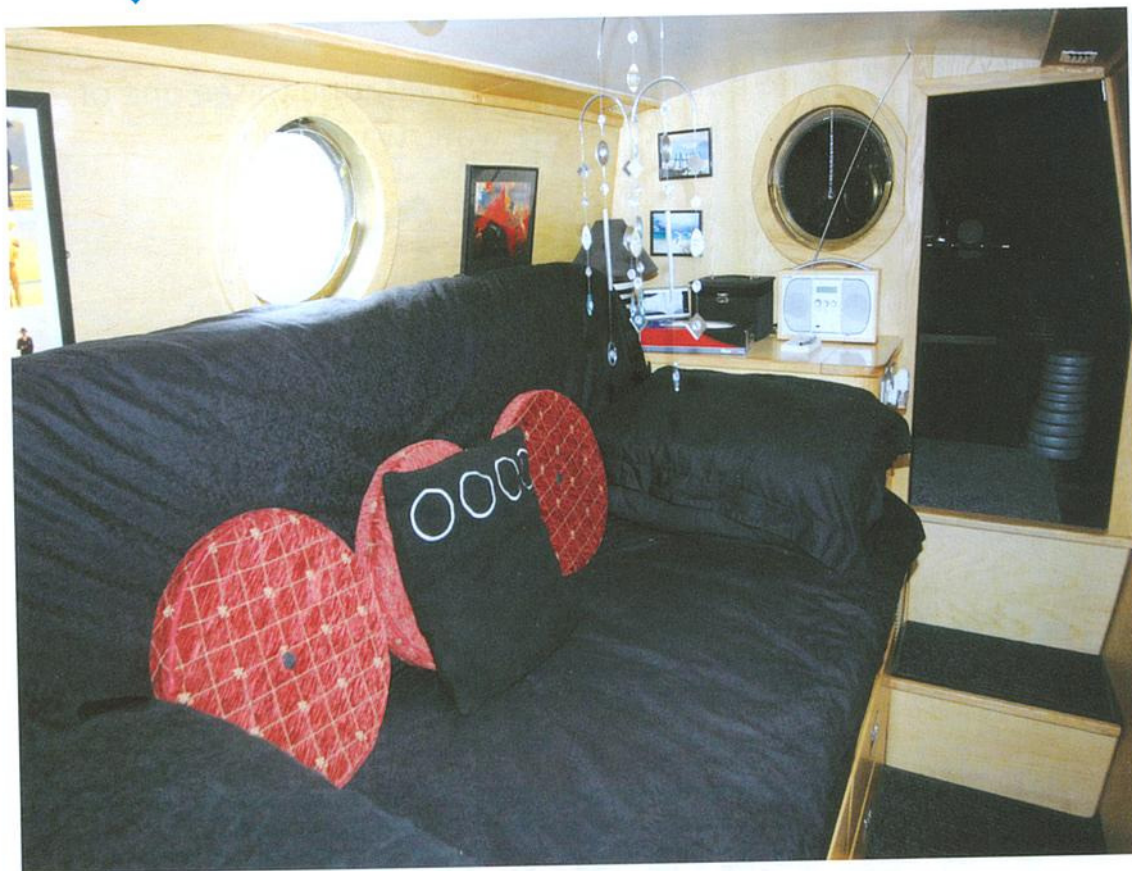
The boat's owner laid down some very tight criteria for the builders to meet. The result is a boat that makes more use of 57ft than you would think possible. Some of the ideas they have incorporated

should, in my opinion, be utilised in more boats as they make a significant difference to the space on offer. One of these is close to the entrance and within what has jokingly been referred to as the conning tower. This roof extension has added extra space in the entrance area and the few added inches have been put to very good use.

To the right of the entrance steps is a space that drops below the level of the main floor. The







result is a deep wide but narrow space in which wet coats etc can be hung. Not only that but two bikes had also been folded and stored in the same place, and you wouldn't know they were there.

### Galley

The steelwork is by Colecraft of Long Itchington and this too has been altered from the norm with the position of the gunnels being changed to make the most of the internal space. The layout places the galley toward the

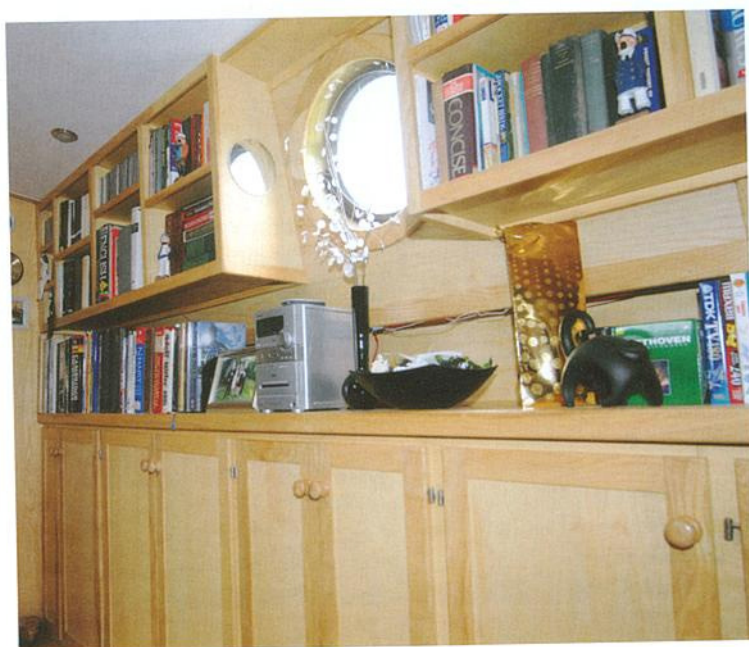
IT'S RARE TO SEE SO MANY FRESH IDEAS IN SUCH A SPACE AND IT WOULD BE EQUALLY ENCOURAGING TO SEE MANY OF THESE BEING USED IN OTHER BOATS....

stern and is equipped with all of the normal domestic appliances you would expect. The owners have not gone overboard on the complexity of the galley as they see the area as mainly functional. Having said that, it would be

more than acceptable to most of us.

### Saloon & dining

Moving forward there is a raised seating and table area which is quite high, but below this there



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is a rather large holding tank. The table too is somewhat larger than the usual sized tables found in most boats. The thinking behind this is to allow two people to comfortably use the table for writing and to use a laptop at the same time. Something you could easily overlook, but it does prove the level of detail that owners have gone to when designing the boat.

In the main part of the saloon two free-standing chairs provide the seating and the whole of the remaining right hand wall is taken up with book shelves and storage for papers etc. So many books are held on this side that the weight was taken into consideration when the ballast was laid out under the floor. This floor is made from Karden and matches in well with the Ash lining and internal woodwork. The ceiling has been finished in white making the interior a dramatic contrast to the exterior. In an unusual twist, the inside is lighter than outside in some

**Clockwise from top left:** cosy bedroom at the stern with sofa converting to double bed; midships galley; comfortable dinette; vanity unit in the bathroom; electrical panel and engine controls; excellent cabinetmaking throughout.



ways - and you can't say that very often.

## Bathroom

The bathroom on *Valhalla* has a walkthrough layout and is probably the most conventional part of the boat. That is not meant as a criticism but the layout is fairly straightforward with the exception of the shower

area. This is closed off with a solid door and when entering the cubicle you find yourself in an enclosed space with tiled walls. There is no waterproof, clear door as you might expect on a normal shower. However a substantial sill has been made and the shower base is set behind this to retain the water. When it's not in use the owners store a small, wheeled





shelf/cupboard unit in it, making more use of space.

Moving forward you pass a couple of doors just before entering the bedroom. These doors run from roof to floor, are double doors and are split to half-height. They conceal the wardrobes. His and hers, above and below wardrobes have been created and, by setting a limit of 'no item longer than a jacket' to all the clothes carried, they have double the amount of carrying capacity the wardrobes have and all in the same amount of floor-space.

## Master cabin

You wouldn't expect the bedroom to be conventional and it doesn't disappoint. The bed is what can best be described as 'couch style' and can be used by one person in its couch configuration. For two occupants the base is moved forward and the backrest drops to form the double width. Below the bed is, as you would expect, loads of storage and behind, (towards the left hand wall), is an additional storage 'box' into which rarely used items can be dropped. The

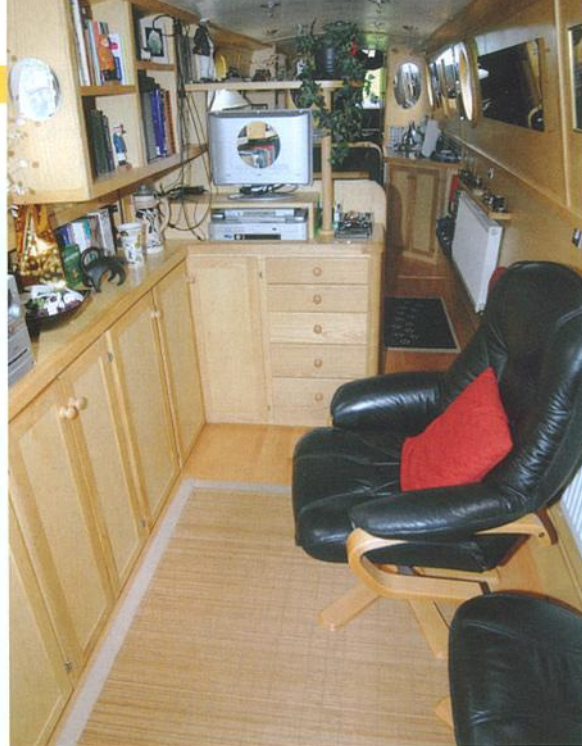
final area available within the bedroom lies between the bed and the end wall and this has been formed into a blanket box. Although not used for blankets (more often used for the storage of rucksacks), this deep, hinged topped box squeezes the very last amount of useable space out of the room.

## Bow deck area

There is no run-of-the-mill forward door on this boat. The exit to the forward deck area is via a door to the right of the boat and a few steps takes you into a very well covered area which tends to be used for storage and a very nifty swiveling lamp doubles as an interior light to this area or a forward lamp for tunnel passages. To round things off a porthole has been installed between the bedroom and the forward covered deck which is a nice touch and finishes off the room well.

## Quality, design and functionality

Throughout *Valhalla* the emphasis has been on quality, design and the maximization of space,



**Above,** Looking forward through the saloon towards the galley; **Below,** The same view looking aft - note the free-standing leather chairs.

and the result is a credit to both owners and builders. It's rare to see so many fresh ideas in such a space and it would be equally encouraging to see many of these being used in other boats. The design may not be to everyone's liking, and the exterior could well be seen as bucking the trend when it comes to colours and design but, whatever your views the resulting craft is both individual and very comfortable. 

## PRINCIPAL SPECS | *Valhalla*

A live aboard boat built to fulfill the customers very specific and exacting design requirements.

**Length:** 57ft

**Beam:** 6ft 10in

**Weight:** 21 tonnes

**Shell:** Colecraft, Long Itchington

**Steel spec:** 10.6.4.

**Stern design:** Traditional

**Fit out:** Ash linings and internals; Karden flooring (NO MDF).

**Electrics:** Mastervolt Mass combi 24VA, 4000kVA inverter/120amp charger. 6 x 95 AGM deep cycle batteries for domestic batteries and 2 x 95 AGM for the bow thruster. 1 x 95 for engine starting.

**Engine:** Beta marine 1903 with 1 x 12 volt 95ah alternator, 1 x 24 volt 120amp alternator.

**Gearbox:** 260 PRM 2:1 gearbox using Python drive coupling to propshaft.

**Bow thruster:** Nobles 24 volt 8Hp.

**Heating:** Eberspacher 24 volt hydronic D5 supplying double finrads and radiators.

**Toilet:** Tecma macerator to stainless steel holding tank.

**Cooker:** Hob Vanette 4000/2; Oven Vanette GG2000/200.

**For more information visit [www.kateboats.co.uk](http://www.kateboats.co.uk)**

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