

A SWEDISH REVOLUTION

Understatement is the Swedish way. So, while a switch from single to twin wheels for the new Arcona 410 may seem minor, it is the watershed moment when a traditional yard has embraced current design trends. Toby Hodges discovers if performance has been sacrificed to modernity

Photos: Richard Langdon/Ocean Images

It is almost standard for 40-footers to have twin wheels nowadays. An Arcona launch is a different matter, however, which is why the two wheels on their 410 will raise eyebrows. Their clients are conservative and their ethics traditional so Arcona have been staunch advocates of the single wheel. The rest of the boat stays true to a philosophy grounded in the tried and tested, so this departure is no gimmick.

No, the twin wheels on the 410 are symptomatic of a hull that has received a modern design makeover; the aft end makes her nine-year-old predecessor look as slim as a folkboat. Twin wheels make sense for cockpit layout and practicality.

The trump card of Arcona boats has always been their agility on the water; they have an unnerving ability to embarrass flashier yachts. The question is whether the extra beam and potential power means the revised 410 will be less slippery than her predecessor. We went to Stockholm and the archipelago off Varndo to find out.

Successful formula

Torgny Jansson inherited the Arcona yard from his father, who started it in 1968. They've found a successful formula and stuck to it, Stefan Qviberg drawing all the hull lines since the Seventies. Of the 410 Jansson says: "As you can see, it's still very

much an Arcona." His clientele will be pleased; 95 per cent of them cruise "or are certainly interested in getting the best performance and feel out of the boat," Jansson believes.

Arcona produced 60 boats last year, an increase of 50 per cent from 2008, and have the potential to produce 100 a year. But, as Jansson says, by keeping overheads to a minimum, with just 35 full-time staff and subcontracting hull lay-up, it wouldn't matter if they built only 15 boats a year.

The larger boats (the Arcona 430 and 460) are built on the west coast of Sweden, while the smaller members of the fleet (34, 37, 400 and 410) are built in Estonia. »

ON TEST ARCONA 410

The lightest of touches

Here's a piece of advice for anyone who wants to get the best out of an Arcona 410 in light airs: don't touch the wheel. She was so well balanced in our Force 2 to 3 test sail through the archipelago that any human intervention would only have been liable to create drag.

I'm always impressed with the sailing ability of Arconas and first impressions of the 410 were excellent. She was perhaps even more nimble and balanced than previous models I've sailed, and despite the move to twin wheels, Arcona had retained an excellent communication. Sailing close-hauled under jib, we made 6-6.8 knots, slipping easily over flat water, pointing very high and maximising every half-knot puff of wind.

The cunningham, outhaul and inhauler control lines were all tweaked to get the best out of the Matrix carbon double taffeta UK Sails. Then came the party piece for these conditions, the perfect sail for these islands: the Code 0.

In only 5-10 knots of wind, we were making 7-8 knots nose-up (up to 30° apparent) and the 410 still felt totally obedient and light on the wheel.

As the wind started to die later that afternoon, we put up the gennaker. Although we could not even feel the apparent wind, the log recorded 4-4.5 knots beam to broad-reaching while every other yacht seemed stationary with a flapping kite.

In the clear downwind

A bowsprit prodder and masthead halyard give downwind sails clear air, alleviating Arcona's previous problem of the fractional gennaker being sucked into the main's draught. Torgny Jansson feels these changes will put paid to those 'it's only half an hour to the headland, so not worth the bother of a kite' times, and the downwind sails will come out more – in the 410's case flown out of a compartmentalised sail locker.

I found the deck set-up simple for short-handed cruising. The helm is comfortable, with the pushpit to lean against, lifting foot chocks to brace against and a slight coaming to sit on.

The helm is also good from either side, including when straddling the wheel to windward to work the main or the traveller – sole-mounted, with angled cleats to allow easier control from the side deck. "The common ingredient is our clients want to feel the boat perform well," Jansson says. "If you let the traveller down, they want to feel the change."



Boats based outside Scandinavia will have a single or double bow roller. A recessed Furlex, soft padeye through the stem, large working foredeck and carbon prodder make setting foresails a tidy and simple operation



The threads in the cockpit sole can be used to accept a footbrace (as we had) or a table, which stows in a mid-size aft locker

The deck is covered in grey non-slip except on the coachroof, so working by the mast can be perilous in the wet

Chainplates are outboard because Arcona found that owners were not using overlapping headsails downwind. This permits a reduced mast profile to create a more easily managed sail plan

Running rigging is led under the coachroof which, sensibly, has removable plates

Stanchions angled outwards provide extra side decks space. Not so clever when going alongside, however

While winches aren't recessed, the coaming is used well as a crew backrest and protection, and also hollowed to swallow all cockpit line tails

‘Timeless look’ below

She’s built well and she sails well. But the over-riding impression below was, well, just a little dull. Put it this way, were you to go aboard with your partner at a boat show, the 410 would be a tricky sell compared with any modern European production boat; spinning the line to your nearest and dearest about a ‘timeless look coupled with sailing ability’ might fall on deaf ears. And it’s a little difficult to see immediately where the extra £70-80,000 has been spent compared with the competition.

But you can’t get away from the fact that this is a traditional yard with a loyal clientele who know what they like. And if the 410 is any guide that’s a satin-finished mahogany interior arranged in a dependable layout.

Although there are no frills, this is a practical boat below decks. The windows, lockers, latches and general fittings leave something to be desired aesthetically, but they work and are easy to replace/fix.

The finish was very respectable for a prototype too, although it lacks the sheer quality of some Scandinavian builders. Lockers bang noisily and the click of latches reverberate, but surfaces are all fiddled and lockers are ventilated.

While the 410 feels like a large 40-footer, in this format there is only one heads and no separate shower. Headroom is very generous in the saloon and galley, but not so much in the forward cabin. A look behind the scenes is revealing: a glimpse at bilge access, gelcoat, wiring looms, etc, all show a tidy installation and finish.



Galley For a prototype, the 410 had some practical additions such as a bin under the sink, a slide-out chopping board, a kitchen-roll holder, etc – none of it particularly glamorous, but all good practical stuff. Flush-top double fridges and covers over the double sink provide plenty of workspace, but there’s only a two-burner oven. Soft-closing drawer latches would do wonders.



Saloon The heart of the interior is generous, with a sofa to starboard and a berth to port that’s long enough to sleep on; with inserts it can be used as a double. With leaves, seven can sit at the table, but you have to step over the seat ends to get into the C-shape portside seating area. Tanks are below the berths, but stowage is good elsewhere, with large raised bookshelf areas lit by hull windows.



Forward cabin Arcona say they prefer to direct buyers to the 430 rather than make the forward cabin an en-suite, but they can offer a heads by shortening the (huge) berth and reducing the sail locker space. As it stands, it’s very much a ‘one big berth’ cabin, with little locker or standing space. Below the berth are large drawers (tricky to use, though) and ample room for sail stowage. After generous headroom in the saloon, the doorway is a low 5ft 8in even if the sole is lowered.



Aft cabin Near-identical double cabins aft, or if choosing a two-cabin layout, room for a shower area and workshop to starboard. The soles are raised, but allow good headroom. That said, you still have to duck to get into the berths. Practical stowage is poor, however, with just one small locker. My advice would be to ditch the fiddled top – there’s plenty of shelving aft – to create around 8in more height for hanging wardrobes. Good light throughout, including a sleek hull window.

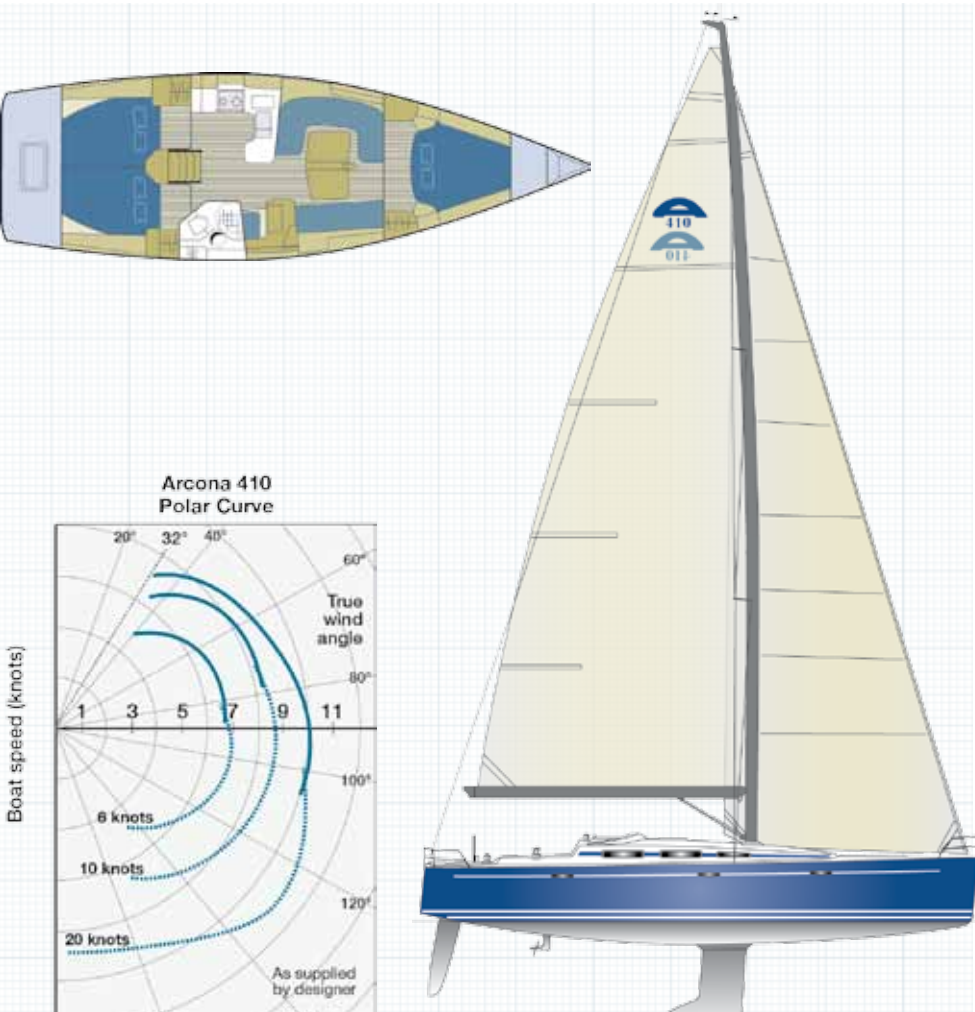
CONCLUSION

Arcona’s current sales figures seem to prove there is wisdom in sticking to what you know. The Swedish yard do not do modern gimmicks; any changes are subtle, but make an impact on the water, proving that, three decades on, Arcona’s designer still knows his herrings.

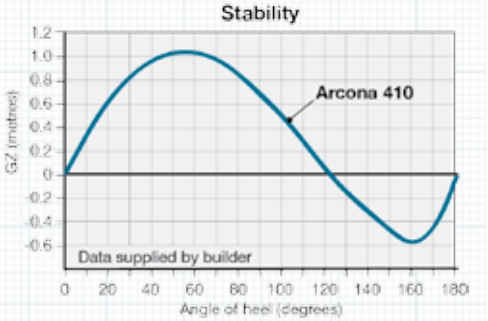
Yet I can’t help but feel that some more thought about stowage solutions in the cabins would have been good. All cabins have enough space, they just need to use it a bit more wisely to incorporate the type of hanging stowage needed for anything more than a weekend’s cruise. To be fair, Arcona say they are looking into this.

Similarly, boats such as the Dehler 41 and Salona 41 can make the 410 seem quite expensive – she falls into the same price bracket as the new Xp 38 – therefore some higher quality detailing inside should be expected.

But on a day when we feared we wouldn’t even get to sail, especially on a cruising boat, she slithered upwind like an eel, surprising us by rarely dropping below five knots. That’s excellent value in my book. With a Code 0 set at a tight angle, she demonstrated how pleasant it can be to sail in zephyrs. Deftly light on the helm, with beautiful balance, the 410 is at least born to go.



SPECIFICATIONS	ARCONA 410	
LOA	12.20m	40ft 0in
LWL	11.20m	36ft 9in
BEAM	3.90m	12ft 10in
DRAUGHT	2.25m	7ft 5in
DISP (LIGHTSHIP)	7,800kg	17,196lb
BALLAST	2,600kg	5,732lb
SAIL AREA (100% FORETRIANGLE)	94.10m²	1,103ft²
BERTHS	6-8	
ENGINE (SAILDRIVE)	Yanmar 40hp saildrive	
WATER	28olt	62gal
FUEL	15olt	33gal
SAIL AREA: DISP	24.3	
DISP: LWL	155	
PRICE (EX VAT)	£209,000	



Designed by Stefan Qviberg
Built by Arcona Yachts
www.arconayachts.com



See our in-depth video of the Arcona 410 test at yachtingworld.com/video
OR IF YOU HAVE AN iPhone, USE THIS CODE TO VIEW THE ARCONA VIDEO
1. Search for QR Reader in your app store. Download your selected app.
2. Scan the code with your phone, using the app.
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