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MOTOR BOAT & YACHTING

EUROPE'S BEST MOTOR BOAT MAGAZINE

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SHOW
SPECIAL

BOAT SHOW STARS

22 NEW BOATS ON TRIAL

INCLUDING:

- FAIRLINE SQUADRON 42
- SUNSEEKER MANHATTAN 63
- PRINCESS V52 & 64
- BENETEAU ANTARES 30
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CRUISING GUIDE SPECIAL

WALES & IRELAND

Where the bays are always empty and the pubs full



Who, for instance, buys a Pershing?
Probably the same guy who falls for
the big-name engineering of a
Lamborghini



TESTING TIMES

DAVID MARSH: Both are fast, sleek and effortlessly stylish – for the most part – but which boat brands and automobiles make the perfect match?

What if boats were cars? Which car brands do our well-loved boatyards have the most in common with? Boatbuilders, of course, like to

be associated with the most illustrious automobiles, which explains why the cross-platform marketing that we see invariably involves Bentley or Aston Martin. But not everyone can claim kinship with this exalted pair (cue horse's head in bed after angry Italian builder decides that our Fiat Panda comparison is not in line with his Maserati Gran Turismo expectations), so who are the genuine kindred spirits?

Who, for instance, buys a Pershing? Probably the same bloke who falls for a Lamborghini. He feels only modest shame buying a gas-guzzling thrust-mobility, because he buys carbon offsets when he flies and genuinely believes that flamboyant chattels like these attract the ladies! But deep down he's a sensible sort who appreciates great products and the reassurance of genuinely

impressive big-name engineering (Audi and the Ferretti Group respectively) behind the scenes tinkering away.

Then there are the supermodels. The most stunning boat I have ever seen is a Riva, specifically the dazzling Aquariva, and the most breathtaking car – a silver and black Bugatti Veyron. Now I understand why squillionaires happily pay a million quid for these. Plus, it was millionaire playboys and their glamorous entourages that popularised the original wooden Riva Aquarama runabouts along the Riviera.

Botnia Targa proudly proclaim to be "the 4x4 of the sea", so a Land Rover it is. The Defender is too primitive and the Range Rover too posh. So for nutty Targa owners, always keen to get places fast, the closest animal would be a no-frills Discovery, powered by the five-litre supercharged engine from the Rangy Sport for maximum beastliness.

Princess boats may now combine British and French ingredients, but I reckon they possess Teutonic genes. Their boats have always been ruthlessly well designed and engineered. However, their closely related creations, for instance 50, 54 and 58, look

remarkably similar – even close up, which makes them more Audi saloon than edgy BMW. That innovative edginess belongs to Princess's arch-rival, Fairline. Just as Chris Bangle did with BMW, Fairline's designers are more willing to go off-piste, and they have a tremendous eye for detail. Just pray they never produce anything like the BMW X6.

How about those innovative continentals, Bénéteau? Almost too easy – it has to be Citroën. Inventive, quirky, manifestly French, with open-top models to choose from, and blessed with the most disparate range of any single major European car/boat manufacturer. They're so alike, it's impossible to tell which one the aforesaid words best refer to.

British-based Sunseeker might most like to assert the Aston or Bentley association. And no doubt many a monstrous banking bonus sought out this threesome in times gone by. Yet if Sunseeker was a car brand, I think it'd be Mercedes. They build everything from elegant saloons (the Manhattan range), to sedate people carriers (the 37M Yacht), to speedy SL500 counterparts in the form of the 50-knot Superhawk 43. So where does that leave Sunseeker's Italian rivals Azimut? With an equally disparate range, there's no obvious top-end Merc alternative left; Vauxhall and VW just don't cut it on the image front. How about Maserati flair with Toyota competence? If you have any better ideas, let us know.

Finding a bedfellow for Sealine is tricky because they have all-but reinvented themselves. Originally (and still outwardly) British, they now have foreign owners. They have a newborn range which owes little to their past heritage, including some cracking products which handle brilliantly and have a unique style and design cachet. Now who does that remind you of? Mini, perchance?

So does anybody deserve to align themselves with Aston Martin? Ostensibly British, utterly glorious to behold, and built in small numbers for enthusiasts who clearly enjoy the driving experience as much as the brand's iconic status. Well, that has to be a Hunton we're talking about **MBY**

What kind of car can
match your on-water toy?

