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**THRILLING SPEED**

# Free as a bird

Nautor Swan's nippy 13.2-metre Swan Shadow offers a tantalising mix of style and performance, says *Kevin Koenig*

**W**hen I started reviewing yachts 14 years ago, my late mentor, yachting journalist Richard Thiel, gave me a piece of advice: "Never let them see your tongue loll out of your mouth." It's wisdom that has served me well as I've crawled over nine-figure superyachts and loud go-fasts. But every once in a while I come across a boat that makes it difficult to keep my enthusiasm under my hat. Nautor Swan's Swan Shadow is one of them.

I sea-trial the Shadow the day after the 2023 Miami International Boat Show ends. Boat-show breakdowns are dusty affairs, rife with thick-wristed men and all manner of clangs and bangs, and the pretty little boat looks so out of place in this scenario. She is done up in a crisp off-white with blue accents, a colour scheme that pops vibrantly against the deep greens of Biscayne Bay. The ruler-straight sheer line sets the tone for an aggressively low-slung profile, reminiscent of a



Clockwise from top left: minimalist lines and crisp interiors; the axed bow is part of the pared-back design; the untreated teak throughout is richly grained and expertly cut; the geometric console

classic sloop. When paired with an axe bow, the design practically screams out its Nordic descent. Despite being an Italian-run company, Nautor Swan builds in Jakobstad, Finland, though the motor yacht division is in Bergamo, Italy. The no-nonsense Finnish influence shapes this boat's identity. She feels like a pared-back sailing boat on board, with wide gunnels and an open transom.

Where she most certainly does not feel like a sailing boat is at her aft end, where triple 300-horsepower Mercury outboards stand to attention. This 13.2-metre boat displaces a scant 5,800 kilograms, so I knew that, once we got out on the bay, I was in for a wild ride.

Nautor Swan is best known for building wind-powered vessels, so this powerboat – launched in 2021 but new to the US – may seem a bit unexpected to some. But it was a necessary evolution. "The decision to build it was automatic for us," says Fabio Marcellino, chief technical and operations officer of the company's motor yacht division. "Lots of our clients were asking who they should buy a tender from. You get a few requests like that and it becomes very obvious what to do."

Both the interior and exterior are by Jarkko Jämsén of Helsinki design firm Navia. According to Marcellino, Nautor Swan required straight lines and a minimalistic appeal, which manifests itself everywhere from the cleats to the geometric console and satchels on the inside wall of the gunnels. Oh, and the wood: Nautor Swan is known for woodwork and the untreated teak throughout the boat is richly grained and expertly cut. It will be a major draw for those seeking a tender to complement their Swan yacht.

The Shadow has a stepped hull as requested by Roy Capasso, Nautor's commercial director. "We needed this boat to be high performance," he says, "there was never any doubt about that." My one

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Nautor Swan reports the Shadow can reach about 55 knots

concern with this boat, just from looking at her, was whether she might be a little wet, with those all-but-not-there hull sides. The weather wasn't nasty enough on the bay to find out either, but I relay my concerns to Marcellino. "When I first saw this boat I thought she would be wet too," he says. "I've driven her enough in choppy water to assure you that she is actually very dry."

As I take the wheel and putter away, I am immediately taken by how sturdy the boat is at slow speeds. She looks like she might rock but she doesn't. Once out in open water I lay on the throttles with a stopwatch in hand. She gets up on plane at 11 knots and hits 40 knots in just 22 seconds. The top end I see is 43.5 knots, though

Nautor Swan says she can do about 55 with triple 350s. At 38 knots I take her hard over in about a boat length and half, and her hull latches securely on to the light Biscayne chop.

It feels strangely familiar. I own a 1987 Mercedes 560SL convertible, and the sensation of driving that car and this boat is very similar. There's a lot of power, you feel the driving environment viscerally, and the amount of control at the wheel is outstanding. I love that car, and if I ever write that *New York Times* bestseller, the Shadow could very well be the next toy on my list. Because I found myself smiling hard into the whipping wind, and I was at pains to keep my tongue where no one could see it.

**"There's lots of power, you feel the driving environment viscerally"**



Above: the neutral palette speaks of the yacht's Nordic roots. Left: the three Mercury outboards. Below: visibility from the wheel is excellent

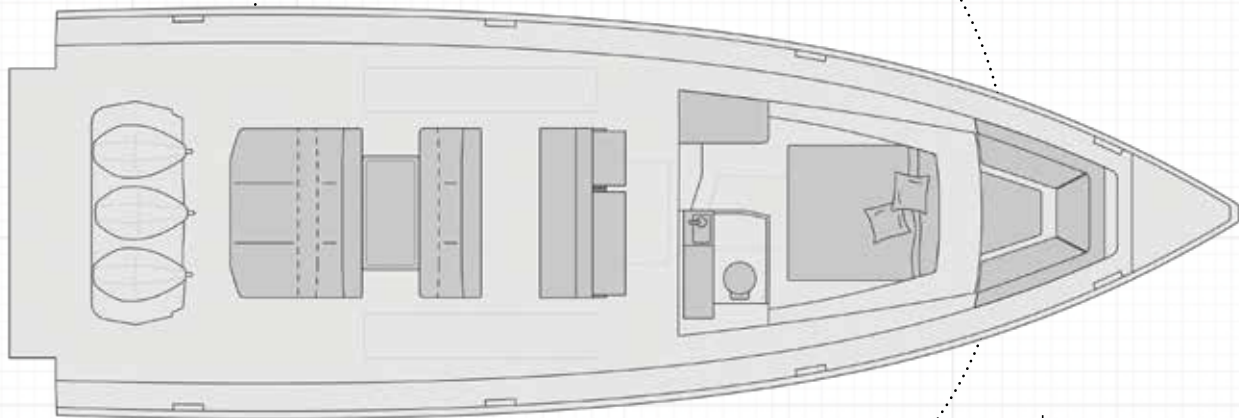




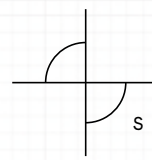
Triple 350hp Mercury outboards had the Shadow up to 40 knots in just 22 seconds with our writer at the wheel



Satchels on the inside wall of the gunnels show the close attention to every detail



A grippy and easily manoeuvred steering wheel gives a reassuring feeling of control when at the helm



Specifications

Model	Nautor's Swan
	Swan Shadow
LOA	13.2m
Beam	4.3m
Draught	86cm
Fuel capacity	950 litres
Water capacity	130 litres
Max speed	52 knots
Cruise speed	37 knots
Engines	3 x Mercury
Price	from €595,000