

PREVIEWS
INSIDE:

WINDY 37
SHAMAL

INVICTUS
GT320

DUTCHCRAFT
25

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BRITAIN'S BEST POWERBOATING MAGAZINE
NO. 160 MAR/APR 2020

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Botnia Targa 25GT

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All-Electric Modular Superyacht Tender: DutchCraft 25 [p34](#)

Launched at Düsseldorf, the innovative electric-powered carbon-fibre DutchCraft DC25 is a boat as focused on versatility as it is on efficiency. PBR takes a look ...

Windy 37 Shamal [p38](#)

Making its premiere at the Düsseldorf boat show, the Windy Shamal 37 looks to be one of the most exciting sports boats of 2020.

Invictus GT320 [p42](#)

The Düsseldorf boat show always plays host to a variety of craft that rarely get shown in the UK. The Italian-built Invictus GT320 caught PBR's eye.

A Highland Fling - Cruising the Inner Hebrides

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Alex Whittaker visits a world-class show inside a world-class venue and reports on the fashion and trends found at this year's boot Düsseldorf.

Living with a FishPro p100

Two hundred and seventy nautical miles, a giant cooler of fish caught and cooked, wild swimming, fireworks, huge waves, 65-knot winds, a new friend ... None of this was in the Sea-Doo advert! Grant Wyness muses about life on a Fish Pro ...



RYA Tender Course p144

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Paul Glatzel discusses some of the tasks that should be on your to-do list at the start of a new season's powerboating.

Walking on Water p154

Jim Russell, discusses why chine walking occurs and how to fix it ...

Choose It, Wear It Your Life Could Depend On It

The allure of the sea is tempered only by its unpredictability. Accidents happen, even to the most experienced boater, and we, or our crew, can end up in the water unexpectedly. So what can we do to help make sure our next adventure is not our last? The RNLI's Ross Martin shares his thoughts ...



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A Rite of Passage

The Northwest Passage

HMS interviews Tim Soper, co-founder of EYOS, not only on his voyaging and exploration of the Northwest Passage, one of the most challenging stretches of water in the world, but also on what it takes to be a small-boat/RIB boatman taking charge of the all-important support craft that operate at the sharp end of the EYOS ocean-going Damen exploration vessel.



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Welcome to Issue 160 - Mar/Apr 2020

If you love boats, then you will love this incredible show; it's as simple as that!

The 2020 Düsseldorf Boat Show, as reviewed in this edition of the magazine, provided an unrivalled window on the world of boating and all its related interests. If you love boats, then you will love this incredible show; it's as simple as that! Furthermore, it's a short and relatively inexpensive hop by plane from any UK airport, and once there, access to the show is simple and uncomplicated. The event site not only has lots to see throughout its 18 halls, but also the Messe restaurants might be better described as 'banqueting halls' full of the most wonderful, freshly prepared food. Also, similarly to that of the old London Boat Show, the historic centre of Düsseldorf is just a cab ride away. So that which wasn't ruined by the RAF in the last century is attractive, invariably cobbled, and full of restaurants and bars that provide a true flavour of the Rhineland. In other words, the event lends itself to a very pleasant, if not cultural, two or three days' winter break away.

But no doubt many of you will now be bracing yourselves for recommissioning your boats for the season ahead and the prospect of your first spring outings. I really hope that this edition of the magazine will inspire you to explore our precious and varied coastline, maybe even cause you to venture into waters new if you have the opportunity. Our Hebridean RIB cruising feature is a case in point. And for those of you who are even more serious-minded, this edition of PBR might help set you on the road of becoming a professional skipper or helmsman aboard a support craft or exploration vessel. Nonetheless, the real blockbuster this edition has to be the article, 'A Rite of Passage'. In true PBR style, we've dedicated a serious chunk of pages to this special feature which gives a real insight into one of the world's last truly great frontiers; the famous and infamous, North West Passage.

Whatever your specific interest or particular boating passion might be, I hope you'll find Issue 160 to be both enlightening and entertaining!

Best wishes to you all.



North West Passage



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Raymarine and CZone in Digital Switching Collaboration

FLIR Systems, Inc. have announced that their Raymarine Axiom multifunction display (MFD) line is compatible with CZone digital control and monitoring systems.

The resulting collaboration will enable boatbuilders and system integrators to deliver custom CZone digital switching solutions with rich graphical interfaces controlled through Raymarine's line of Axiom MFDs.

CZone digital switching simplifies the installation of boat electrical systems through the replacement of complicated and often cumbersome traditional switch and fuse panels with networked digital switch interfaces, providing enhanced control of on-board electrical systems. When integrated with the Axiom MFD, the CZone system offers control of many different types of on-board electrical devices, including lighting and climate control.

Jim Hands, Director of Marketing for the Maritime Division at FLIR, said: 'We are pleased

to offer CZone digital switching integration with our Raymarine Axiom platform. Raymarine and CZone compatibility opens a wide range of integration and customisation options for our boatbuilding partners. CZone integration with our Axiom MFDs is a win-win for the industry.'

www.raymarine.co.uk / czoneonline.com



Gill Get Active

The Gill 'Active' line, designed for life on and around the water, has benefited from some new additions as part of the marine apparel brand's latest seasonal collection.

Now available in stores and online at www.gillmarine.com, the Active range's standout new releases include the eye-catching Broadsands Jacket - a lightweight yet technical marine jacket that has adopted waterproof and breathable technology, complemented by fully taped seams and a durable water-repellent finish.

The jacket features a roll-away hood with two-way volume adjustment, adjustable cuffs for wet-weather protection, an inner storm guard and an internal security pocket.

The unisex jacket (XS-XXL) is available in blue or medium grey with signature Gill flashes of tango. www.gillmarine.com

Spinlock Win Tech Award

Marine design and manufacturing company Spinlock have won the Marine Tech Company of the Year award at the South Coast Tech Awards. Spinlock manufacture sailboat and personal safety equipment products and are official life jacket suppliers to the Clipper round-the-world yacht race. Two years ago, the company invested in a tech firm to work with its team on creating multiple data-driven sailing sensors and applications to advance performance and safety out on the water. Spinlock's CEO, Chris Hill, said: 'Our data-based sailing products for improving the management of sails using apps linked by Bluetooth, including the measurement of hours use and degradation, as well as UV light measurement and asset management, are proving extremely popular with both end-user customers and trade clients.' The award judges said that Spinlock have 'an impressive track record in personal safety products and are a success story in developing technology for sail monitoring and management'. www.spinlock.co.uk



Zhik Launch APEX Clothing Range

New for 2020 is Zhik's APEX range of jackets, shorts and long pants, made from a highly breathable, two-layer, waterproof fabric with a DWR (durable water repellent) coating and fully taped seams.

The APEX jacket is an all-round coastal/offshore jacket with an adjustable hood, high collar and tapered face shield that tucks into a stowaway pocket. There are two large utility pockets, a chest pocket and fleece-lined hand warmers. Inside, a lightweight soft mesh lining increases airflow and adds comfort, while adjustable inner PU cuffs offer double waterproof protection. A reinforced rear panel protects against wear, and Reflexite shoulder and wrist reflectors ensure you show up in the dark.

The new APEX pants and shorts are made from the same fabric as the jacket. These waist-high, fully waterproof trousers and shorts offer a comfortable and flexible alternative for

sailors and powerboaters, especially in warmer conditions. They are designed with a fitted, tapered cut and raised waist with silicone waist grips to protect the lower back.

To find out more visit www.zhik.com



British Motor Yacht Show Set to Expand

The 2020 British Motor Yacht Show (BMYS) will be extended to four days from Thursday 14th to Sunday 17th May and will include more craft than ever before.

Backed by British luxury motor yacht brands Fairline, Princess and Sunseeker, and hosted by Premier's Swanwick Marina, the show will deliver carefully curated on-water and shoreside display areas, including model premieres, featuring motor craft from around the globe ranging in length from 32 to 95 ft.

Graham Bristowe, Swanwick Marina's general manager, had this to say: 'We are always proud to host such a plethora of motor yacht brands over this period. The British Motor Yacht Show offers buyers the chance to see beautifully designed boats from global brands up close and personal, and attendees appreciate the private time and space to talk to the experts, who have a passion for their brands.'

Further information on the exhibitor line-up at Premier's Swanwick Marina can be found at www.britishmotoryachtshow.com

Seakart UK Product Launch

Searific Marine Distribution have announced that the UK product launch of their Seakart hybrid craft will be at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in July this year.

The Seakart 335 is a hybrid designed to combine the speed and excitement of a jet ski with the safety and comfort of a RIB. This recreational craft is well suited to a family wanting a fun weekend small boat or a yacht owner looking for a cross between an entertaining watercraft and a tender. It can provide the thrill of a kart on the water or the

calm relaxation of a family outing.

At 3.5m long and 2m wide, with a choice of two 4-stroke Yamaha jet engines of 110bhp and 180bhp with maximum speeds of 45mph and 65mph, respectively, the ultimate aim of the Seakart 335 is to give owners an enjoyable and fast thrill ride.

www.searific.co.uk





Pulse58 Electric RIB Launched at Boot

RS Electric Boats officially launched their new electric RIB, the Pulse58, at boot Düsseldorf.

Joint RS CEOs Alex Newton-Southon and Jon Partridge spoke about the vision for this project and what they had planned for the future: 'We are delighted to have brought the first 100% fully integrated electric production RIB to market. The response at the show has been overwhelmingly positive. We felt that it was time for change and to challenge habits. From the conversations we've been having around the Pulse58, it's so apparent that we're not the only people who think it's important.'

During the launch, Alex, RS technical CEO, talked through the innovative technology used for the 100% electronic RIB and the hydrodynamic design. From the initial design, manufacturing and distribution, the Pulse58 has been packed full of sustainable credentials that complement its zero-emissions propulsion.

www.rselectricboats.com / www.rssailing.com



Humber Head for the Olympics

Humber RIBs of the UK have landed a prize contract that constitutes a fitting tribute to the company's outstanding record of supplying professional RIBs to the international offshore market for some 50 years now. The contract is for the supply of no less than 10 Ocean Pros and Offshore 7.5m RIBs to be used as official chase and marker boats throughout the 2020 Tokyo Olympics due to take place from 24th July through to 9th August.

Andrew Roffee, Head of Humber Global Sales, told PBR: 'We are all delighted that Humber have been chosen from the hottest competition and rigorous evaluation process. It's a credit to our hard-working team and underscores the fine reputation that our Ocean Pro and Offshore models have acquired

over the years. It's also been to our advantage that we always carry a good amount of stock. This means quick delivery times for customers. Indeed, this was another key factor in our ultimately securing this particular contract.'

Tender applications were apparently screened and judged on the basis of build quality, value for money and the chosen manufacturer being able to guarantee the necessary build schedule, as laid down by the Olympic committee responsible for the procurement of craft. In our next issue we shall be publishing a full feature on the Humber Ocean Pro as well as a detailed look at what's involved in the professional coding of such a craft.

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New Beneteau Initiatives

Beneteau have announced the launch of 'Project E', comprising two luxurious yachts designed for ocean cruising.

These two craft are the result of Beneteau's collaboration with Massimo Gino (Nauta Design) and Amedeo Migali (MICAD) and capitalise on the success of the Swift Trawler range of practical, spacious boats.

The first model is 18.95m long, has a hull beam of over 5m and is designed for six to eight people plus crew, while the second model is 22.28m long and is designed for eight people and four crew.

Meanwhile, 'BoatingOS' is a major new initiative by Irish marine technology company Raceix in association with Beneteau, their global development partner. BoatingOS is an entirely new operating system that will power the next generation of chartplotters. It's an always-connected platform that delivers data to the helm in a usable, understandable and contextually aware way, while also unlocking millions of completely new data points aimed at enriching the boating experience on board.

For further information visit www.beneteau.com



Navico and Brabus in Partnership

Navico have announced a strategic partnership with Brabus Marine, who have chosen Navico's Simrad marine electronics brand for their new Brabus Shadow 900, which made its world premiere at the 2020 Düsseldorf Boat Show in January. The new Brabus Shadow 900 bridge incorporates four Simrad information display screens, dual 12in and dual 9in, which give a real 'glass bridge' feel. The 'Loop P' digital switching system on an additional 7in display delivers a fully integrated boating experience.

Alexander Berg, Director of OEM Integration, Navico EMEA, commented: 'We have been working very closely with the team at Brabus to deliver an integrated system bespoke to the Brabus brand. Navico and Brabus Marine are very progressive when it comes to technology and design, and this stands out in the seamless, customised integration on board.'

For more information go to www.navico.com and/or www.brabusmarine.com



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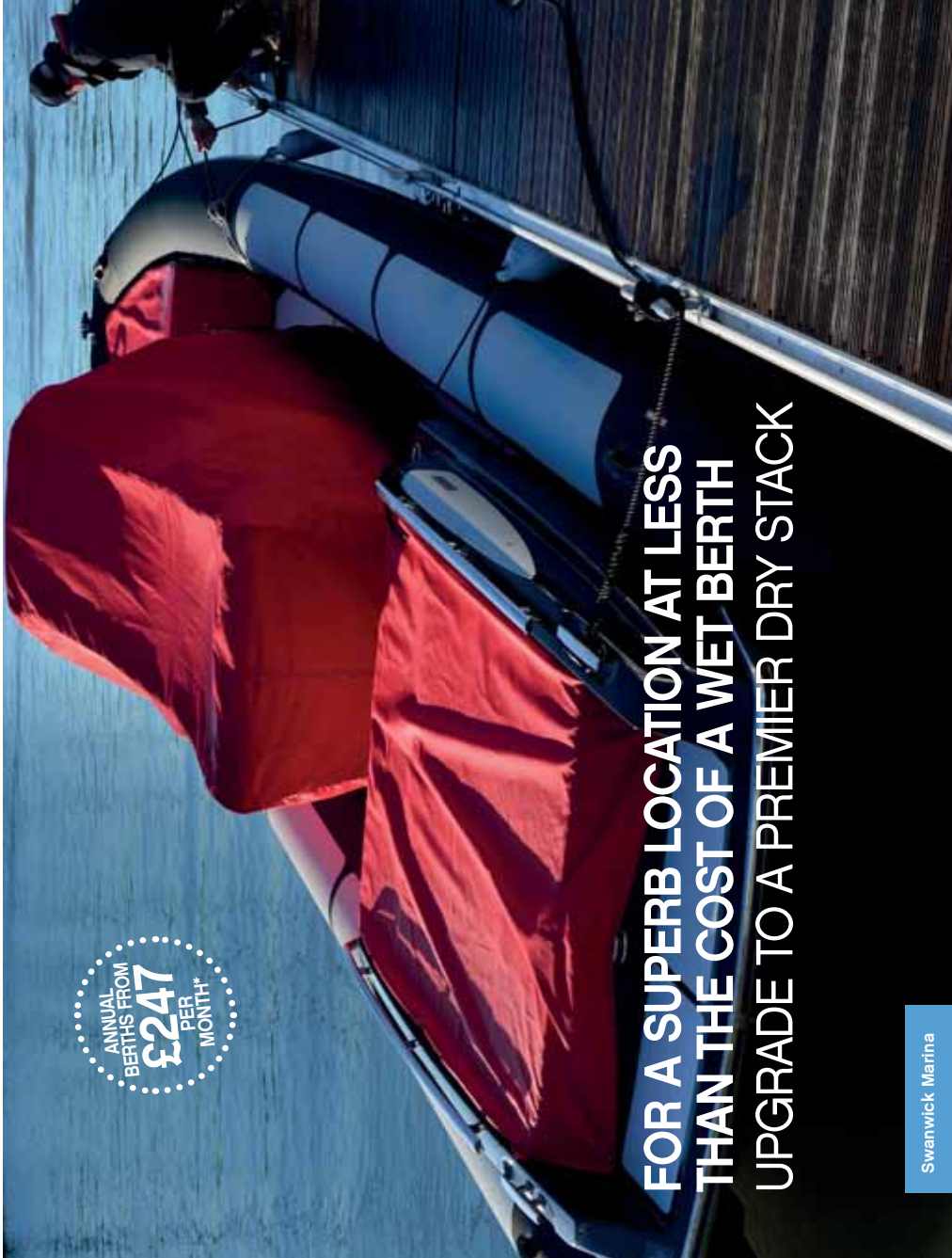
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Windy Announce New Chase Boat

The new Windy SLR 60 is a powerful 60ft chase boat developed in collaboration with Malcolm McKeon Yacht Design.

With a range of 850nm at 25 knots, the Windy SLR 60 has been designed as a superyacht chase boat for long-distance excursions; however, it will also serve as a nimble sports boat for diving and fishing, as well as supporting shoreside exploration. The boat is fitted with a large swim platform aft of the luxurious guest area and bar, making it an attractive vessel for socialising and enjoying relaxing times on the water.

The first vessel has been commissioned by an experienced superyacht owner and has been designed to meet their stringent requirements. Following delivery of this first SLR 60, the design will be going into production at the Windy yard in Sweden, making it the largest Windy available and establishing the 60-footer as the company's flagship.

Further information can be found at www.windyboats.com

New Distributor for OXE and Moteurs Baudouin

The UK Docks Mashfords are the new distributor for Moteurs Baudouin and OXE Diesel outboards. They become the first official OXE dealer in the UK.

UK Docks Mashfords' David Hoskin said: 'We are pleased to be working with Proteum Ltd and to become the authorised distributor for Moteurs Baudouin and OXE Diesel outboards. We are excited to offer these high-quality marine products and look forward to a positive and fruitful relationship with Proteum and our future customers.'

For more information on UK Docks Mashfords visit www.ukdocksmashfords.co.uk



Redbay's Biggest and Best

Redbay Boats continue to develop their successful offshore model range of RIBs, with plans now well underway to build their largest vessel yet, the all-new Stormforce 1450 'super-RIB'. Work has already begun on the plug and mould production for this latest craft.

Redbay MD Tom McLoughlin told PBR: 'We have already secured two orders, with the first planned for March 2021. At 14.50m, the Stormforce 1450 is being developed as an 'all seasons' expedition-style cruising RIB. It will have full live-aboard facilities complete with two twin cabins and one double cabin, delivering the potential for eight people to cruise and sleep in comfort.'

Available with either Volvo IPS or DPI sterndrive, the new Stormforce will have a range of 650 miles and cruise comfortably at 25-28 knots.

For regular updates on this new craft as the build process develops visit www.redbayboats.com

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Recyclable Affordability

After 10 years of manufacturing, Norwegian leisure craft builders River Boats recently not only declared their 10,000th boat built and sold but are now looking to the international market to expand the brand further. As a consequence, this range of affordable, cathedral-hulled sports and runabout craft are to be sold in the UK via the exclusive distributorship of RIBS Marine of Poole.

Paul Woodlock, RIBS Marine general manager, told PBR: 'We are excited about taking on the River Boat leisure range of craft, because not only are they great fun boats, but they offer affordability and, importantly, score highly in terms of their eco-friendly construction. The extremely impact-resistant and durable polyurethane material from which they are built is 100% recyclable, produced using sustainable green Norwegian electricity. We have a growing number of customers who really want to own craft made from more eco-friendly materials.'

PBR have plans to test the River Boat later this spring, but in the meantime, you can visit www.ribsmarine.co.uk for further information.



Ring Appointed Official Partner to Arksen

Manufacturers and distributors Ring Powercraft have been appointed as the official partner to work alongside aluminium and high-speed craft builders Arksen to produce a new range of power vessels, built to accommodate a wide range of uses, including pleasure, adventure, diving, tourism, charter, expeditions and research. Ring Powercraft have established a reputation for producing high-performance hulls with a high level of manoeuvrability and rough-water handling, which are already being utilised in commercial and military markets.

Sustainable approaches and methodologies will be applied to the design and production

of these vessels, which will be offered with a range of power and propulsion options to suit different users, including outboards, sterndrive and water jet propulsion systems, with petrol, diesel and hybrid power plants.

Ring CEO David Jackson commented on the partnership: 'Arksen's innovative approach is a perfect fit with our strategy on development projects, and together we plan to deliver a unique British offering in short- and medium-range adventure boating. Our experience in the commercial and defence sectors will add durability, range and no-fail mission features.'

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RNLI Memorial Rings in New Decade



A bell-ringing ceremony, attended by approximately 200 RNLI staff members and volunteers, took place on Tuesday 21st January 2020 to celebrate the first RNLI lifeboat to host the names of thousands of loved ones. As per nautical tradition, the bell rang eight times to signal the 'end of watch' on a naval ship and the start of a new watch.

Over 9,500 people are being commemorated in a unique and special way, as their names are proudly displayed in the operational letters and numbers on the hull of the new Launch a Memory boat. A minute's silence was held just before midday to remember loved ones whose names had been carefully placed on the side of the lifeboat and to also pay respect to five crew who perished in the Fraserburgh disaster 50 years ago to the day.

The Agnes A P Barr – the first Launch a Memory lifeboat in the RNLI's history – will be stationed at Invergordon Lifeboat Station in northern Scotland once a series of sea trials and tests are complete on the Shannon-class boat.

For more information about Launch a Memory visit rnli.org.uk/bytheirsideside



Boat Network Launched by Actisense

Marine electronics specialists Actisense have launched a larger version of their Self-contained Boat Network, aimed at RIB owners wanting to connect an NMEA network on board.

The new SBN-2 provides the ability to set up a fully 'plug & play' NMEA 2000 network with a complete NMEA 2000 backbone in a single device. With built-in termination resistors, the SBN-2 provides eight NMEA 2000 drops, meaning that up to eight NMEA 2000 devices can be connected.

The SBN-2 is manufactured using a ruggedised, watertight and flame-retardant overmoulded housing, making it suitable for wet and harsh marine environments. It comes with an integrated EMI shield and a 3m UL-rated power cable.

Phil Whitehurst, CEO of Actisense, said: 'When we released the SBN-1 a couple of years ago, it came with four NMEA 2000 drops. Our engineering team has been working on ways to give our customers the ability to connect even more devices to their boats. The low-cost SBN-2 is highly durable and quick and easy to install.'

www.actisense.com/products/a2k-sbn-2

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Cory Extend Invicta Range



Cory Yachts have developed their Invicta range with the introduction of the 315 model. The design is suitable for many different types of cruising, including extended passage making in all weathers or slower-speed river and estuary exploration. On-board life is focused on comfort and space for long-term living aboard.

The Invicta 315 walk-around deck design is asymmetric. The port-side deck connects the side boarding gate, wheelhouse door and

cockpit on a single level, making for easy and safe movement on board. The extended wheelhouse roof option and the double bi-fold doors to the wheelhouse link the cockpit to the accommodation.

Powered by an inboard diesel engine with a fully protected shaft and rudder, a

number of engine sizes are available offering cruising speeds up to 24 knots. In development is the option for hybrid power with silent electric propulsion for slow-speed cruising.

Built to order, clients have a wide choice in the specification of the boat, including layout, engine, timber species and navigation instruments.

www.coryyachts.co.uk

Invictus Unveil GT 320 Atelier at Boot

The new GT 320 Atelier from Invictus made its world debut at the recent boot Düsseldorf International Boat Show. The GT 320 Atelier is an example of the Atelier Invictus customisation skills, as customers are guided through a virtual laboratory in which a yacht is designed with individual material inserts and dedicated equipment. The owner in this case requested an elegant and unusual combination of colours - the shiny black hull and the personal white sides are in chromatic contrast, like the 'Eclipse' cockpit, with its black and cream-coloured leatherette, and backrests in ivory fabric, creating a natural linen effect.

www.invictusyacht.com



Tecnorib Pirelli 42 Premiered at Boot

The boot Düsseldorf International Boat Show was the venue for Tecnorib to give their new Pirelli 42 model its world debut. This walk-around boat heralds a new range for the Milan-based shipyard, and it has already attracted a number of new owners. The new model is 13.10m long, with a beam of 4.1m, and can be fitted with inboard or outboard engines, diesel or petrol, with a range of power ratings up to a maximum speed of about 45 knots to meet the needs of a broad range of owners, including those looking for high-speed performance.

Gianni De Bonis, Tecnorib managing director, commented: 'The success of the Pirelli 42 has far exceeded our expectations. After the official presentation of the scale model in Portofino several months ago we were contacted by numerous owners. Even before its launch and official debut we had allocated 90% of this year's production. Then at boot, our walk-around continued to attract a surprising level of approval and interest from both the public and the media.' www.tecnorib.it

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A large, sleek, white and orange boat hull is the central focus of the image, displayed in a museum-like setting with a high, industrial ceiling. The hull is white with a bright orange section towards the stern. A large white number '3' is visible on the orange section. In the foreground, a stainless steel railing runs diagonally across the frame. The background shows the complex metal structure of the exhibition hall and other visitors in the distance.

BOOT DÜSSELDORF

WINTER *Wonderland*

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY | ALEX WHITTAKER

Alex Whittaker visits a world-class show inside a world-class venue and reports on the fashion and trends found at this year's boot Düsseldorf.

Depending on whom you listen to, the Düsseldorf Boat Show, usually referred to as 'boot Düsseldorf', is either the biggest indoor boat show in the world or the biggest boat show in Europe. No matter, it's unlikely you will ever find a bigger or more impressive marine exhibition anywhere. The 'Big D' is a monster blend of trade show,

boat exhibition and equipment stands. It also gives an unrivalled window into evolving boat designs, technologies and trends. But with seven exhibition halls, it means that you'll invariably be doing a lot of walking! Ideally, you should think in terms of making a trip of it, wear your comfy shoes and, if the budget allows, definitely make plans to stay for more than one day.



The metrics

250,000 - plus

visitors from 106 countries
(up from 2019's 247,000)

17 exhibition halls

1,900 exhibitors

**96% visitor
satisfaction rating**

Travel

I, along with two other PBR team members, duly prepared for 'the off' with film cameras, tripods, DLRs, microphones and mobiles stowed in a host of travel bags and hard cases. We travelled by turboprop from Manchester on Flybe. Coincidentally, this was on the very day Flybe narrowly avoided falling into receivership.

The Q400 Dash 8 aircraft flew a bit lower than a holiday jet, but frankly it had more legroom. It was a 1 hour 40 flight in all. The return fare for a three-day trip per person cost £160.

Once there, there really is so much to take in and you'll find yourself walking all day. One particularly keen member of the PBR team covered 35km over the

Find out more about the show at
www.boot.com





... it's a short hop away and an inexpensive one by plane from most UK airports.

three days we were there, which gives you some idea of just how big the site really is.

Welcome to the show

Messe is the name for the whole enormous boot complex. I admit, being a boot 'new boy', that my first impression of the Rhine waterside complex was one of sheer awe.

Upon arrival, we rode down the big escalators into a vast glass atrium to then be quickly enveloped by a flood of humanity coursing towards the hall gates. Even though they weren't due to open until 10.00am, such was the orderly behaviour displayed by our 'Continental cousins' that the security staff hadn't even bothered to secure or lock the doors holding back the growing thousands of expectant 'early birds'. It was as if this flock swarmed as one, governed by a single recognition that above all else, order should prevail - no matter how great the desire to commence the advance before the PA gave the order.

As mesmerised as I was by this display of solidarity, I was also impressed by how many people were thumbing through copies of PBR. The official magazine display here in the north main entrance to boot is a great service that features selected titles from all around the world for the public to take free of charge. PBR and Boat International were in fact the only two UK titles being represented, with each publisher having stocked in the

region of 1,500 copies.

Then, at the top of the hour, the doors finally opened and into the halls the waiting throngs flooded. Indeed, over the total 10-day show period there would be a staggering quarter of a million like-minded folk visiting this great event!

Choices, choices

The various halls had been divided into a number of zones of special interest or focus. The Superyacht Show was exquisite. It was definitely a shrine for the sybarites - an unashamed temple of conspicuous consumption. Majestic and voluptuous hulls, elevated high into the gods, were dramatically lit, some even adorned with real palm trees under their stems. The sheer theatrical quality of the presentation created by the leading builders and brands was utterly world-class. However, much as this outpouring of advanced capitalism pleased me, I moved ever onward to the offshore, the sporting and the performance categories.

The halls were well signposted, but navigation requires care. To aid one in the business of locating the correct waypoints, I noted clearly marked suggested 'walks' to match one's given interest. This proved invaluable given the gargantuan size of the event. So, during this first morning, while the other members of the PBR team had dispersed to meet their various appointments and 'callings', I trundled my camera wheelie bag through the Sailing Centre, the



1. Style and performance with a touch of retro - the Chris-Craft Launch 25 GT. 2. and 3. The Superyacht Hall was beautifully staged. 4. There were halls dedicated to most water-based activities. 5. Amazing USB-powered air conditioner from www.evapolar.com. €95. 6. Windy's new Shamal 37 made her debut at Düsseldorf. 7. Aqualine 550 - cool black updated retro looks with chrome accents. Nifty. 8. Constantin Buschmann, aka Mr Brabus, was charming. Your scribe next to him. 9. New SHOCK-WPV P shock mitigation seats with Fox Float technology. 10. Quadruple Mercury Racing 450s on the stern of the Bernico RXP 14.



1



2

In the early days of the new year, without doubt, boot Düsseldorf provides an educationally eye-opening, inspirational and entertaining experience to more than combat the winter blues.

Refit Centre, Beach World, the Sports Fishing Centre and Travel World in order to finally land where our world lay: the perfectly sumptuous, exotic and utterly compelling exhibition hall known as ...'Powerboat World'!

Powerboat World

This zone, as large as one of the biggest Birmingham NEC halls, is without doubt a powerboat and RIB enthusiast's 'glory hole'. The sheer range and quantity of boats on display was, to say the least, impressive.

In addition to the big, well-known US, Australian, South African and Continental boat brands, there were even one or two Chinese suppliers. The UK was also represented by several RIB manufacturers, a variety of equipment suppliers, UK boat dealerships and distributors taking their place on the stands of their relevant parent companies, as well as specialist service entities taking smaller booths. But in the main, representatives from our industry remain in the minority and there

is still much potential for many more UK companies to join the throngs, albeit the show tends to be only really relevant to those seeking business from outside their home shores. But as you can imagine, many of the biggest and brightest names in the sports boat sector could be found here, and not only the hardware, but also many of the key people behind those brands. This latter ingredient makes the show's mixture truly special and provides a pretty unique opportunity for both press and public alike. Plus, if you visit the show over the first couple of days, you'll likely also catch some of the product launches taking place, many of which are choreographed to ensure they are, in every sense, true 'show-stoppers'.

Eco aware

There is no question that one of the major trends seen at this year's show was the sheer number of boatbuilders launching and displaying electric, battery-powered craft. Some of these

vessels featured new power trains and even propeller systems. However, virtually all these craft were essentially ship-to-shore-type boats or craft perhaps suited to slow-speed patrol or standby work. Currently, the technology developed to date means that

high-speed performance tends to be limited to about an hour at full throttle. Low-speed operation, though, can extend that time typically to approximately eight hours, and a full recharge tends to be an overnight affair.

However, we are clearly on the cusp of some very interesting developments spearheaded by companies that really mean business. But as regards greener, more ecologically friendly power, several big engine companies are also researching the potential of hydrogen-based fuel cell technology. PBR considers this to be a 'fuel'/power source of much potential, as was eluded to in our 'Energy Observer' feature in #159.





Retro cuties

The market for powerboats modelled on classic, vintage designs seems stronger than ever. This year's boot provided much evidence of this, with a host of continental boatbuilders displaying beautiful, retro-styled craft. Among them were some exquisite 'lake boats' sporting luxury-crafted leather and chrome interiors, automotive-type dashboards and sumptuous teak-type deck inlays.

In this related vein, this year's show saw a special exhibit involving the restoration of an original 1928 Chris-Craft. The boat was stripped out to show its bare wooden frame and internal structure, which in turn displayed its original wiring, gears and throttles, aft petrol tank, engine shaft and steering system. This

boat's hardware and hull technology were a clear reminder of

the extent to which technology was advancing during the Edwardian era - a hundred years ago!

Fashion trends

In addition to battery power, retro styling and super-RIBs, other notable trends and developments included the fact that bigger boats are setting themselves ever more apart. The bigger motor yachts are getting much bigger, and more luxurious and exclusive than ever before.

Environmental awareness is no longer just a buzzword. Genuine environmental concern is now seen by manufacturers as good business, with alternatives to GRP being employed in the construction of craft. We came across several sports boat, utility craft and RIB builders using bamboo weave alternatives.

The trend toward outboard power and multiple-outboard



1. Glastron GT 245, new to Europe for 2020.
2. American manufacturer Regal put on a very impressive display.
3. 4648 The Axopar aesthetic is alive and well, and being actively imitated by many.
4. Impressive tech - new Candela, 100% electric as well as a hydrofoil boat.
5. LotusGrill lightweight smokeless charcoal turbo grill. About €129.
6. Outboards have definitely retrenched themselves in the market.

installations continues. Outboards are certainly ousting inboards wherever there is an opportunity to do so. One of Europe's most respected leisure craft manufacturers informed PBR that they are soon to be launching an outboard-powered flybridge cruiser, would you believe. Watch this space ...

Bigger RIBs and RIBs with consoles and enclosed forward deck areas that provide varying degrees of accommodation are on the increase. Even if a RIB doesn't feature a berth or two up forward, a sea toilet compartment within the helm console is becoming the norm in many instances.

Likewise, in this same sector, shock mitigation continues to be adopted by more and more RIB builders. This not only includes different forms of suspension seating but also closed-foam cushion technology, the latter being utilised within the traditional jockey seat and therefore offering a very sensibly priced alternative to the mechanical options being proffered.

Hulls and steps

Modern hulls, but with rearward-raked dreadnought-style stems, are likewise on the increase. These designs, in some instances, are being employed to create more internal space for the forward cabin, while in others, designers are following the trend of seeking to introduce a semi-wave-piercing-type quality to their craft. Knife-like entry, often expedited by the introduction of steps to the hull (another obvious trend on the increase), and a hull form that flattens aft, was quite a frequent sight at this year's boot.

Speaking of the latter, there were certainly a lot of steps being employed, and perhaps more than all else in the leisure boating world, 'steps' could be described as the 'in vogue', in fashion' statement at this present time. But caution is required, for it's clear that not all boatbuilders and designers truly understand how steps work, and in some cases, their hulls would arguably be better off remaining standard deep vees - the reason being that stepped hulls, particularly those

powered by monster amounts of outboard power, require know-how and expertise in order to be driven effectively and safely. Furthermore, not every owner of a fast sports boat or RIB can be expected to understand the peculiar hydrodynamics involved or the potential dangers if such a hull is not driven as it should be.

Accessorise

When it comes to boating accessories, 'USB powered' has now become the canny boater's new equivalent of '12-volt powered'. Lots of new accessories are now essentially USB devices. Wireless charging is also on the way, and the advancement in screen technology is remarkable.

Integrated on-board systems that have the power to speak to each other and/or be controlled remotely are relentless and inevitable. The best of the best was here at boot, inviting one to play, including the very latest in audio entertainment.

On one's metal

Aluminium boats with sporting, semi-high-performance hulls are also gaining acceptance. In fact, there were some beautiful examples on display - and not just in the fishing boat categories. Aluminium is starting to be seen by some as being well suited to dayboat and family-orientated 'all-rounders'. New Zealand manufacturing may be the



1. Presige in the big hall. 2. Boston Whaler's new 11m 380 Realm made her European premiere. 3. Style and performance with a touch of retro - the Chris-Craft Launch 25 GT. 4. Shock mitigation seats. 5. E-Tech presented marine electric motors in a range of sizes. Note water cooling. 6. Bernico demonstrated how to pack a boat and helm with race-proven features. 7. Big just got bigger! The new 16.8m (55ft) luxury RIB from Anvera. 8. Pirelli Tecnorib - RIBs with accommodation represent a growing market sector. 9. Young chap trying his hand at the Virtual Reality Boat Driving. 10. French giant Beneteau had a very large stand with an extensive range of boats.



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epicentre of such boatbuilding know-how, but others, of course, are now exploring this construction alternative to GRP - among them, those builders choosing the hybrid route of 'mixing GRP with aluminium, which sees aluminium hulls being coupled to GRP superstructures.

Food glorious food

From the perspective of a show visitor, one cannot underestimate the importance of the 'whole experience'. This includes the

event hospitality, not least, of course, the food. That's right, it's not just about the boats!

I often associate big shows with expensive and sometimes disappointing food. Happily, though, at boot Düsseldorf you can put that thought far from your mind. The self-serve catering at this show is incredible! All the food on sale throughout the event halls is freshly prepared, wonderfully presented and represents a veritable banquet selection of both hot and

cold delights. I guarantee you won't find anything that even approaches this standard of catering here in the UK - not at any exhibition at least. Furthermore, boot's kingly menu is fairly priced and caters for all pockets.

The verdict

In the early days of the new year, without doubt, boot Düsseldorf provides an educationally eye-opening, inspirational and entertaining experience to more than combat the winter blues. It's really got the lot. And in its favour, too, it's a short hop away and an inexpensive one by plane from most UK airports. Plus, if you stay a day or two more, then modern Germany is on your doorstep and well worth a gander.

All in all, especially if you haven't been before, we wholly recommend this show and the power it has to take you to a whole new 'Winter Wonderland'. **PBR**

Accommodation

The Düsseldorf Holiday Inn Express Nord Hotel cost around 500 euros for three nights. It had compact but immaculate rooms, but I would not recommend eating there. Last year the PBR team stayed at the Radisson Blu Hotel near the show centre/Messe. It offered well-priced, good food and a well-stocked bar, and was altogether a big step up from the likes of the Holiday Inn Express hotels in terms of its facilities.

Breakfasts this year were a bit of a bun fight, while evening offerings seemed to revolve around pizzas. Better to jump into a cab to the pleasant old town (altstadt) where, if you dig deep, you will find surprisingly good-value restaurants. We liked the inexpensive Quang Mini Asia in Neu Strasse, so I'd avoid the new town. Local cabs were dearer than, say, Mallorca or Ibiza, but there are also local bendy buses, trains and trams. Just note that not all cabbies would take a card, so take some spare euros. Most of our taxi prices between the town, the hotel and the venue were close to the threshold of pain, each costing at least 25 euros. Also be sure to fasten your seat belt - most Düsseldorf cabbies are clearly part-time rally drivers!

All-Electric Modular Superyacht Tender: DutchCraft 25

Launched at Düsseldorf, the innovative electric-powered carbon-fibre DutchCraft DC25 is a boat as focused on versatility as it is on efficiency. It has a modular deck design allowing for fast and easy changes between different modes, such as superyacht tender, dive boat, sport fisher, ski boat or family cruiser.

The low and compact electrical drivetrain frees up deck space, which DutchCraft have optimised with their modular deck system, providing a wide variety of facilities. The key features are its capacity, the flexible layout and ease of

use. It has a number of seating options and almost the entire deck space is open, except for the helm station, which is covered by a collapsible hardtop, allowing easy storage. The aim has been to create a boat that fits as many requirements as possible into one vessel. Behind the centre console, furniture and fixtures are quickly interchanged along double deck railings, such as padded bench seating or custom dive racks, for up to eight sets of scuba gear and two seabobs. The benches can be converted into different set-ups to change

THE BOAT IS STATED TO HAVE AN **EFFICIENT PLANING HULL**, WHICH, WITH ITS RELATIVELY **LOW DISPLACEMENT**, AIMS TO MAKE BEST POSSIBLE USE OF ITS **ELECTRICAL PROPULSION SYSTEM**.

Set in sunbathing mode.



passenger interaction on board. When the deck is cleared, there is enough space to transport small vehicles like quad bikes, a pair of jet skis, provisions or accessories. The aft section is large enough to carry several motocross bikes, stand-up paddleboats, a 5m sailing dinghy - or even a compact submarine, it is claimed.

Additional padded benches convert it into a comfortable taxi with space for up to 12. For showers, rinsing and washdowns, the freshwater 40-gallon tank has ample capacity. Another unique layout feature is the



proprietary hinged bow door design. Guests can walk directly to and from the beach via the foredeck, without getting wet. A high freeboard gives an enhanced sense of safety and protection, while the transom opens to create a spacious swim platform.

The boat is stated to have an efficient planing hull, which, with its relatively low displacement, aims to make best possible use of its electrical propulsion system. The maximum battery capacity is 134kWh, while the continuous power is 100kWh. The boat is able to cruise fast at 32 knots for up to 75 minutes, which is more than enough to deliver guests from a superyacht to the shore and

ADDITIONAL PADDED BENCHES CONVERT IT INTO A COMFORTABLE TAXI WITH SPACE FOR UP TO 12.

Set for luxury fishing.



Plenty of open-deck storage.



SPECIFICATIONS

Length overall: 8.04m (26.3ft)
Length at waterline: 7.3m (24.0ft)
Beam: 2.38m (7.8ft)
Draught: 0.82m (1.48ft)
Max. speed: 32 knots
Continuous power: 100kW
Peak power (20 sec): 135kW
Battery (standard): 89kWh
Battery (optional): 112Wh & 134kWh
Fresh water (optional): 150L (40 gal)
Range: Up to 6 hours at 6 knots
Construction: Carbon fibre
Naval architecture: DLBA

It has a huge battery storage cavity below deck.



Propulsion is via a MerCruiser stern drive.

back several times, or even to go waterskiing. At the same time, it can cruise for up to six hours at 6 knots, allowing peaceful exploration of hidden forgotten bays and islands.

A limousine version of the DC25 is currently in development, offering a higher degree of weather protection. The DutchCraft 25 has a starting price of €275,000. [PBR](#)

Contact: www.dutchcraft.com



You could get away with dry feet.



The 1st Mate system comprises an app, up to seven wearable tags and a SmartCraft engine.

Mercury 1st Mate and New Tiller Control

FOR INFORMATION VISIT WWW.MERCURYMARINE.COM

When you are probably most likely to need it, this system can provide security and MOB awareness for your tender.

1st Mate is the world's first engine-integrated man-overboard and proximity-based theft deterrent system. Utilising a wearable device/tag that integrates with Mercury SmartCraft systems, it works on the signal denial concept.

The system includes a wearable wristband, fob or carabiner for the captain and up to seven passengers that syncs with the 1st Mate app. This notifies a boat's skipper or its passengers if someone has fallen overboard, and optionally

sends notifications to emergency contacts via the mobile phone network. If the fob is out of range, the system disables or puts the engine into safe mode. If the system detects that the helmsman has fallen overboard, the device sends alerts to the system's hub, its app and all the crewmembers' wearable devices. The system cuts the engines and sends specific instructions to the passengers' smartphones via the app. The instructions guide the crew through restarting

the engines and safely steering the boat back to the location of the man-overboard event. If a crewmember falls overboard, in the same way the system sends alerts to the skipper and other passengers. The skipper then receives heading instructions to return the boat to the location of the man overboard.

If a boat's skipper is alone and the system detects that they have fallen overboard, it sends a distress message to the emergency contacts previously entered into the app. The distress message includes the GPS location and the time and date of the man-overboard event. This function is also useful in instances where the helmsman is not alone and falls overboard, but the passengers, for whatever reason, are unable to return the boat to the location where they fell overboard, or are unable to pull them back on board.

Theft deterrence

It also provides an effective deterrent to boat/engine theft. The Theft Deterrent System can lock your engine(s) to prevent unauthorised use. With 1st Mate, you can unlock the vessel via the proximity of the skipper's wearable tag and/or the unlock function of the app. Mercury SmartCraft engines can also allow high-idle operation for service access without unlocking it.

Some of the system's theft deterrence capabilities vary according to the boat's engine technologies. In all cases, the system provides engine-locking functions. For boats with Mercury SmartCraft technology, the system not only requires an 'unlock' command from the captain's app or wristband to operate the engines, but it also requires engines that have been removed from the boat to be reactivated via an electronic 'handshake' before they can be restarted. By employing this 'user password' protection, stolen engines can't be subsequently used if fitted to another boat.

New Tiller Control, 40-115hp

Mercury claim this new tiller is the most versatile means of controlling a tiller-steered boat. It allows the boater to comfortably operate the tiller regardless of drivinghand preference. The 40-115 hp tiller is the only tiller with the ability not only to swap the shift handle to either side of the tiller, but also to reverse the throttle grip rotation to the boater's preference. It also has sidetoside adjustments up to 18 degrees port and starboard. Likewise, the user may also adjust the vertical angle through an autotilt lock system or

downstop angle micro adjustment knob.

It also comes standard with Mercury Troll Control, which allows precise trolling speeds by tapping a button to increase or decrease speed by just 10rpm increments. A novel feature for a tiller is its integrated engine warning display, which includes visual and audible warnings for engine oil, temperature, electrical and other minor faults. A unique extra that will likely be popular is a heated grip with three temperature levels for coldweather conditions.



Tiller ergonomics can include a heated grip.

The tiller can be adjusted and set to up to 18 degrees either side of centre.

It can also be set to a wide range of heights.

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The helm is very contemporary.



A sizeable area in which to entertain.



Plenty of sunbathing space aft.

Windy 37 Shamal

A real show stopper, sharply styled with an impressive power-to-weight ratio, this boat truly symbolises the Windy brand.

Making its premiere at the Düsseldorf boat show, the Windy Shamal 37 looks to be one of the most exciting sports boats of 2020. Powered by twin 440hp Volvo D6s, the latest incarnation of this renowned 5.5L diesel engine, the Shamal should be a 45-knot boat. Transmission comes in the form of two DPI duoprop sterndrives, which were specifically designed to handle the extra power of the new D6.

Winning an innovation award at Düsseldorf, these drives are impressively engineered. Designed to handle and deliver increased performance, and provide easier maintenance and improved reliability, they use a new hydraulic clutch system. This will

produce near silent and smooth shifting, as well as the ability to 'slip the clutch' at low engine speeds, enabling easier berthing. The hydraulic clutch, together with electric steering - which is now standard for DPI - gives an improved joystick docking function. The DPI also comes with the Dynamic Positioning System, which automatically maintains a boat's heading and position, even during strong currents or windy conditions - ideal when preparing to berth.

The Shamal is the work of Espen Øino, a designer new to the Windy fold. He has taken his direction from the Windy Khamsin 35, and with a good measure of modern retro styling. This is certainly no bad thing as the Khamsin is a great boat to both drive and behold. Like the Khamsin, the cockpit



The head is impressive for a 37ft sports boat.



Blue is one of many colours the Shamal comes in.



The long bathing platform adds considerably to its LOA.



is the focal point of this boat, which, pushed out to the extremities of the boat's beam, provides enough space for a decent-sized wet bar/galley opposite a generous U-shaped seating area. There is a new innovative canopy top available, and the option of a T-top, enabling this thoughtfully designed cockpit space to complement the accommodation below. With a fairly generous 11ft beam, this boat comfortably fits a treble sunbed over the transom, with a walkway on the port quarter. Deck access is via a central windscreen gate, with a teak walkway leading to the windlass, and in typical practical Scandinavian style the foredeck guard rails are sensibly high.

With Windy sports boats you sometimes get the feeling that below decks comes second to the boat's driving and cockpit credentials. Though it does not aim to provide any lounge space below, it has an unusual below-decks design. It manages to fit in a decent-sized under-sole mid cabin, which you would not expect when looking at the boat externally. There is also a double bed in the forepeak, which is, in effect, the master cabin, separated, one presumes, by a curtain. Remarkably, the head compartment has a separate shower, so somebody will likely use it in earnest. A long slim galley sits opposite the head, which, combined with the wet bar, will provide plenty of catering facilities. The design is well thought out, as four people can comfortably sleep below, with a head set-up that they will not baulk at using, and a capable galley for those crucial morning brews and butties. This means living and socialising goes on up top, which in the sunny climates this boat is designed for, or with the diesel central heating that will no doubt be offered, is not a problem.

Sports cruiser or sports boat, the label is irrelevant, as this boat, like its siblings, will drive superbly. What we can be sure of is that the price tag will be high, and the waiting list long. **PBR**

Contact: www.berthon.co.uk



The forepeak is, in effect, the master cabin.



Long and slim, the galley is complemented by the wet bar.



The under-sole mid cabin is an unexpected bonus.

FLIR Latest-Generation Thermal Imaging Night Vision Kit

With a long-established track record in military and law enforcement night surveillance, it is no surprise that FLIR are always pushing the boundaries of maritime night vision.

Like all new technology, it gets smaller, better and costs less. In particular, two new products launched at the end of last year are looking to bring thermal imaging (TI) to a wider audience.

The FLIR M300 Series is a new generation of maritime thermal cameras delivering 'advanced awareness-enhancing technologies' and seamless integration with on-board boat systems. The latest industry-leading M-Series, the M300 Series, consists of five models. All feature rugged and robust new pan and tilt housings, as well as integrated attitude heading reference system sensors (AHRS) - providing a steady view in rough seas. The top-of-the-range dual-sensor M364C and M364C LR models blend thermal and high-definition visible colour video via patented Color Thermal Vision (CTV) technology for enhanced identification of buoys, vessels and other targets at night. The cameras also feature FLIR MSX imaging technology, which extracts edges and borders from the HD-visible camera and blends these elements with the

thermal image, giving skippers improved visual recognition of distant objects.

This is particularly useful in low light, or in daylight conditions at long distances when the naked eye can still operate but can be easily confused as to what it is seeing, and at what distance. People often do not realise that TI can work in daylight just as effectively as at night-time, as it sees heat, enabling it to easily differentiate between a buoy and cold seawater. In comparison, image intensification devices, often referred to as 'starlight scopes', although generally good when it comes to definition, must have some degree of ambient light to be effective, and can't work in daylight. Thermal imaging has been making a lot of ground in recent years in terms of picture definition, hence its ability to integrate with high-definition colour video.

For those that want compact portable night vision, the new Scion OTM (Outdoor Thermal Monocular) is a handheld thermal camera with

a wide range of uses. Developed in conjunction with the Scion PTM (Professional Thermal Monocular) - a powerful law enforcement tool - the OTM punches above its weight. It enables mariners to locate other vessels, landmarks and floating debris in total darkness, or through glaring light or haze. It may not have the range of the more powerful M300, but for on-deck work like picking up a buoy it will be a godsend on a pitch-black night or foggy day. Built around the FLIR Boson core, the Scion OTM produces clear thermal imaging and records geotagged video and still images for playback later. A rugged, IP67-rated housing ensures that the unit can be used in all weathers, and intuitive controls allow single-handed operation in the most demanding conditions.

The Scion costs from £2,500 to £3,000 depending on the resolution. The M300 ranges greatly in price from £7,000 for the M300C to £33,000 for the M364C LR, a top-of-the-range long-range thermal camera.



The top-of-the-range M364C can make spotting navigation marks in all conditions easy.



The M300 is easily mounted, giving 360-degree all-round vision.

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Invictus GT320

The Italian builder, Invictus, seem to never stop launching new product. Fast and stylish, the GT320 combines both form and function.

The Düsseldorf boat show always plays host to a wide variety of craft that rarely, if ever, get shown in the UK. The Italian-built Invictus GT320, designed by Christian Grande, is one of those boats that caught PBR's eye. It is typically Italian - stylish, eye-catching, built for the pleasures of open boating and, of course, fast. Power options are either diesel or petrol, up to a maximum of 860hp combined. It is the smaller sibling to the Invictus 370, which until now was the only twin-engine stern-driven boat that this exclusive yard built. The GT320 is a smaller clone of the GT370, and, being able to house two of Volvo Penta's new-generation 430hp compact V8 petrols on duo-prop sterndrives, it is a quick 50-knot boat. Many will consider the smaller 350hp V8s, but in keeping with this boat's character, I see little point. It is a bit like a Chris-Craft inasmuch as fitting diesels would spoil its luxurious and indulgent personality. There is the big diesel option, which of course is the proven

duo-prop 400hp Volvo D6. Though this will be far from sluggish, and the 'sensible skipper' will likely be tempted by it, I can't help but feel it is a bit like drinking alcohol-free lager - afterwards you will wish you had gone for the real deal.

It is designed to give you the best of both worlds - room on deck and a soft ride. It achieves the former with its 3m beam, and the latter with its sharp-entry deep-vee hull. This is evident when looking at the boat bow on out of the water, as the forward lines that lead up to its reverse bow are pretty sharp for what is a relatively beamy boat. Providing a dry ride for a boat with little hull flare is achieved by spray rails running up to substantial

A deep full-width bathing platform makes boarding easy.



chines, and above that a knuckle running all the way around the hull.

Life on board seems to be no less important than the driving experience. The unusually large bow sunbed that fills out the whole foredeck, right out to the toe rail, is more in keeping with a 40-footer. The helm has two wide securing



The sunbed fills the entire foredeck.



helm seats with drink holders between, and the dash is a glass bridge affair, with another display above it. Like many T-topped Med-orientated boats, it focuses its catering department on a wet bar galley, and an extra

fridge at the bottom of the companionway steps. The carbon-fibre T-top, come rain or shine, makes life 'up top' a more realistic affair.

Below decks is sensible for this size and type of boat. The forward cabin is designed around an L-shaped settee with a drinks cabinet opposite. This can convert to provide extra sleeping space, but few who buy this will want to cram it with sleeping guests. If you choose to overnight in some forgotten anchorage, a couple will have no problem getting their heads down in the under-sole mid cabin.

In keeping with this brand, pretty much every boat is bespoke to varying degrees. Build quality and attention to detail are of the highest standard. It has a starting price of around £220,000. www.invictusyacht.com



1. An under-sole mid cabin hides behind the companionway steps. 2. A generous wet bar/galley. 3. A modern glass bridge helm. 4. A drinks cabinet sits on the starboard side. 5. Chunky bolster seats. 6. Fit and finish are of the highest standard.

XO DFNDR

Dave Marsh TAKES A CLOSE LOOK AT TWO XO CRAFT, THE DFNDR AND THE 270, IN THIS DUAL TEST REPORT ...

Please don't make the same mistake I did before I finally got to grips with the DFNDR on a perishing day in December, i.e. to dismiss it as no more than a cunning marketing exercise. What, with a name that is a barely disguised variant of Land Rover's most overtly hardy vehicle? Plus a black snorkel that rises imperiously above the cabin top

in a way that suggests some indefinably rugged purpose, rather as it does on, well, dare I suggest, an old Land Rover Defender? What other conclusion was a freezing journalist to come to except to see the boat as the child of a wily marketing department?

Well, how wrong I was. To get to the point, it transpires that the wheelhouse cage (can we agree to give it this? – pilot house





seems too grand) is far more than a stylist's flight of fancy; it works brilliantly in every regard, transforming the non-wheelhouse version of XO's 250 (which I tested in 2015) into a more practical and versatile animal, and along the way giving its owners a genuine ability to undertake intrepid trips on a grander scale, if that's what they wish for.

Several key things contribute. Most unexpected of all was the

degree of protection afforded by the narrow wheelhouse cage, which borders on freaky. Despite frostbite conditions that threatened early amputation of my fingertips, Ideal Boat's head honcho Neville insisted on leaving the zip-in side covers off, and nor did he offer to turn on the diesel heating that uses that rugged black snorkel to exhaust the gases harmlessly above head height. But despite hurtling along

The wheelhouse cage can be equipped with racks for wakeboards and the like.

Flat out, the single 300hp Mercury gives around 43 knots (50mph).



at close to 43 knots (50mph), the biting wind did not swing around the front pillars and onto the driver and passenger as expected. Instead it magically flowed past, leaving the air inside the cage

SPECIFICATIONS

XO 250 DFNDR

Length: 7.76m (25ft 6in)

Beam: 2.28m (7ft 6in)

Fuel capacity: 355L (78 imp gal)

Water capacity: 0

Draught: 0.90m (3ft 0in) leg down

Air draught: 1.98m (6ft 6in) + mast

RCD category: C (for 5 people)

Displacement: 1478kg (excl. engine)

Transom deadrise: 24 degrees

PRICES (inc. 20% UK VAT)

Starting price: £72,995 single 225hp

As tested: Circa £87,995 single 300hp

ENGINES

Smallest: Single 225hp outboard

Biggest: Single 300hp outboard

Test engine: Single 300hp Mercury 3.4L V6 outboard

Top speed: Circa 43 knots (50mph)

largely undisturbed. Doubtless XO did not test the DFNDR inside a wind tunnel, so the fairy-tale aerodynamics must simply be a lucky happenstance.

Even in its open-sided form, the wheelhouse cage also provides an indefinable but very tangible sense of security that outstrips the archetypal open sports boat. With the two big clear side covers zipped into place, that gets better still, and protection from the elements is complete. It's this sense of safety and security and shelter that makes the DFNDR such a good vehicle for intrepid passage making, even if the deep-vee alloy hull underneath is no different from the original open boat (note: the open XO 250 is no longer listed on XO's website).

Without the old boat to hand, it was difficult to tell whether the seating height was higher on the DFNDR, but it certainly felt like that, and the view forward is very clear and commanding. XO fit shock mitigation seats as standard - a generous touch on a small aluminium boat that can be had for as little as £72,995 - and they seemed to work well. Consequently,

there's very little reason to stand. However, XO's designers have made that possible by incorporating a well forward of the seats that can be exploited by lifting a folding floor hatch, allowing the crew to drop their feet into the well and stand. Unfortunately, even with the seats pushed right forward, in the seated position the geometry of the hatch and the standing space leaves the angled footrest plate too far away to offer support. If this

were my boat, I'd add a transverse spacer to solve that issue, and accept that the two-part hatch cannot be folded fully forward.

The big flat dash helpfully points the screens directly at the crew's eyes, and handrails abound. There's a perspex lidded locker for odds and ends, but it would be great to add a fiddle around the horizontal shelf at the top of the dash - that would then provide a secure place for the small invaluable oddments, such



Even with side screens removed, the wheelhouse cage provides good protection.

IT'S THIS SENSE OF
SAFETY AND SECURITY
AND **SHELTER** THAT
MAKES THE **DFNDR**
SUCH A GOOD VEHICLE
FOR INTREPID PASSAGE
MAKING ...

as handheld VHF, sunglasses and mobile phones, that follow the crew around. The wheelhouse cage also provides a framework for mounting all manner of things: spotlights, VHF aerials, navigation lights, radar and GPS – equipment that invariably benefits from elevated positioning. XO have also integrated a handy fender rack into the rear of the cage. My only grumble is that the nuts securing the overhead hatch, and maybe the top rails of the cage itself, could do with some



Fender stowage is an extremely practical feature on a small boat.

protective padding to stop the tall and the unwary from unwittingly denting their craniums – this sturdy little boat is not one that bends easily!

With its transom boarding, secure walk-around decks and near 50mph top speed, the DFNDR will make a good water sports platform. You could dispense with the spotlights and use the optional roof rack to store waterskis and surfboards or even small windsurfers. However, XO have devised a canny arrangement for the roomy, full-width forward deck locker that largely eliminates that need. The back face of the locker comprises a detachable slot-in panel; remove that and anything longer than the locker can poke out and sit along the side decks. It's a tiny masterstroke of design, and a cornerstone of the DFNDR's very versatile deck arrangement.

50mph – almost!

Although our test day was relatively calm – no more than F3 – relentless 60mph winds the day before had left us with an uncomfortably steep and closely spaced swell to contend with as soon as we stuck our nose out



Shock mitigation suspension seats are standard issue – a generous touch.



The bow locker's removable back panel allows longer items to be stowed.



XO owners can customise their boats with innumerable vinyl wrap options.

The wheelhouse cage can be completely enclosed with clear zip-in side panels.



of the protected harbour at Ideal Boat HQ in Pwllheli in North Wales. Undertaking trustworthy speed and fuel consumption trials was out of the question, but we did attempt top-speed runs. This involved waiting for the biggest swells to pass through, then blasting flat out in the lee of the short breakwater towards the pebble shore, a run of no more than 200 metres. Despite repeated attempts, it's still unclear whether the DFNDR is a true 50mph boat with its single 300hp Mercury or whether my wimpy reluctance to risk running aground and being catapulted through the windscreen at 49mph was an impediment to achieving that last 1mph. For the record, I clocked 50.9mph (44.2

THE BIG FLAT DASH HELPFULLY POINTS THE SCREENS DIRECTLY AT THE CREW'S EYES, AND HANDRAILS AROUND.

knots) on the 300hp Mercury-propelled XO 250 in 2015. Either way, this is a nippy boat, and even the modest 225hp option should be good for around 42/43mph (37 knots).

Just like its discontinued 250 sibling, the DFNDR sports impressive handling, performance and agility. Even when I did get things wrong and unwittingly thumped into the back of a big swell or an unexpectedly steep

head sea, the DFNDR always felt very solid and reassuring. It boasts an impressive 24-degree deadrise at the stern, which doubtless enhances the rough-weather ride. However, it is important to remember that this is ultimately a small boat capable of 50mph, with a waterline length of under 7m. So if you intend to drive at high speed in challenging conditions, you will need to pay attention to optimising the DFNDR's trim. With this in mind, I'd implore you to specify the excellent Zipwake interceptor trim system fitted to our boat. This highly versatile system can be fine-tuned to suit the conditions, the DFNDR's payload and even the skipper's individual driving technique, for

example leaning away from the waves in a beam sea. The Zipwake system is also extremely fast-acting, certainly far faster than even the most gifted throttleman could ever manually trim the outboard or conventional trim tabs.

Conclusions

Who would have thought that a simple aluminium cage could so transform the workings of a small sports boat? Of course, the original 250 was a far more sociable affair, with its central four-seat cockpit plus a foredeck seating area suitable for entertaining duties too. But if that is the sort of boat you are looking for, then XO can oblige with their new XO 260 T-top. As it stands, the DFNDR is an obvious rival for the more accomplished fast RIBs, often chosen as hard-core A-to-B sprinters and cruisers, capable of exploring in challenging conditions. And as a platform for water sports, the XO DFNDR gets top marks. Proof that a spot of original thinking goes a very long way indeed.

+ HIGHS

- + Wheelhouse cage works incredibly well
- + Impressive handling and agility
- + Very versatile deck arrangement
- + Hard-as-nails aluminium alloy hull
- + Standard-issue suspension seats
- + Deck layout and sturdy hardware

— LOWS

- Angled footrest too much of a stretch
- Wheelhouse overhead needs cushioning

In praise of aluminium

Superyacht owners will happily spend millions building gigantic boats constructed entirely of aluminium, and yet it's not always easy to convince buyers of small production boats that aluminium is a viable alternative to the usual glass fibre - which is ironic, because the smaller the boat, the more pronounced the myriad advantages of owning a boat built of aluminium.

Most obviously, glass fibre has three potential foibles that aluminium simply cannot suffer from: gelcoat crazing, osmosis and orange peel effect - the surface rippling caused by long-term shrinkage of the gelcoat down onto the top layer of fibreglass, an effect that is more evident and commonplace on dark hulls living in hot and sunny climates. Another benefit is that aluminium can be recycled in perpetuity, whereas GRP is extremely difficult and expensive to salvage, so eco bonus points to the alloy brigade. One enduring myth is that metal boats are noisy underway. Well, that has emphatically not been my experience to date. They

do sound different, but solid muffled thuds from wave impacts, on a par with the quieter foam or balsa-cored glass fibre boats I've tested, are all I've had to endure.

Marine-grade aluminium is also incredibly tough and strong - like Jason Statham tough. We could examine any number of scientific properties, but perhaps it's enough to know that aluminium's physical properties are so impressive that they usually allow stiff alloy boats to be constructed without the bonded bulkheads that would be essential in their floppier glass fibre counterparts. Like steel, alloy is quite stretchy, and marine-

XO 270

Choice is a wonderful luxury to have on a small boat. I'm not talking about the usual optional extras, I'm referring to significant alternatives such as a whole extra twin-berth cabin, a choice you might expect to find on a voluminous 60ft flybridge cruiser but not on a sports boat like the 8.60m (28ft 3in)-long XO 270. Yet that very thing is available on XO's 50mph pilot house speedster. The 270 is also available with a wide range of engines, comprising a multitude of petrol outboard models (single 250hp to 300hp, and twin 150hp to 250hp) plus three diesel sterndrive versions (300hp or 370hp Volvo, plus 370 V8 Mercury). And because the alloy XO hulls

are vinyl wrapped, not painted, there is an almost limitless opportunity to customise the look of your XO. So with all that choice, where to start?

Decisions decisions

I've been fortunate enough to test this boat in most of its incarnations: with single and twin outboards, with mighty 370hp Volvo and 370hp Yanmar diesel sterndrives, and in forward cabin and conventional layout forms. Converting the dinette in the pilot house is all very well (and at 2.06m [6ft 9in]-long it's generous too) but it cannot match the convenience of the permanent V-berth in the Front Cabin version (as XO

label it), especially with the unusually fiddly conversion that involves six separate cushions. However, that front cabin option gobbles up the lovely foredeck seating area that our test boat had, a space that sports three handy deck lockers, plus a useful working area that makes it easier to moor and anchor, and to disembark.

If you feel that sacrifice is worthwhile for the pleasure of a more comfortable permanent bed, don't forget to ponder the inextricably linked question of the engines. Hinging seats in the cockpit may well give you all the outside socialising space that you need (enough for six adults to cosy up around the removable



grade alloy can typically elongate by 10% before it will tear or puncture. Along with its strength, this means that in practice it's surprisingly difficult to hole an aluminium boat. Instead, when steel or alloy boats hit something, they tend to stretch a lot first. And metal boats are very easy to repair, either by welding in new plates or by knocking out smaller dents. Neither process requires the repairer to bother much about temperature and humidity, as GRP repairs do.

The threat of corrosion still looms in some minds - not helped by the fact that some specialist anodes are made from aluminium alloys. However,

aluminium anodes typically contain 5% zinc plus a little iron. The tough alloy that XO use (along with most other builders of aluminium boats) is 5083 marine-grade alloy. This has a vastly different composition containing around 5% magnesium, plus a smidgen of manganese and silicon and chromium, hence its excellent resistance to corrosion.

Aluminium alloy also has an invaluable self-healing property. Unlike steel, it doesn't really matter if an accident chips away the paint and exposes the raw metal. Strictly speaking, in these circumstances both metals technically do the same

thing: they rust. However, whereas steel produces unsightly red stains, oxygen in the atmosphere or the water rapidly combines with the exposed aluminium to form a protective film of aluminium oxide, and this appears to be relatively innocuous. So although aluminium can be affected by galvanic corrosion, this self-healing property is its saving grace. So effective is this restorative oxidised skin that some owners choose to leave their alloy boats completely unpainted except for the antifouling. Of course, that's not the XO way - the vogueish lure of a fashionable vinyl wrap is too good an opportunity to miss.



Few boats this small have sociable seating areas at both ends of the boat.



Well-disguised head compartment to port has sitting room only.

DESPITE ITS WEIGHT,
THE 760KG D6 370HP
VOLVO STERNDRIIVE
270 I TESTED
PERFORMED JUST AS
WELL AS THE LIGHTER
OUTBOARD BOATS ...

table), but that arrangement is only possible if you have the outboard version. The engine room hatch/cockpit floor is necessarily much higher on the inboard sterndrive version, so even with Volvo's smallest D4 300hp diesel in place, the seating is supplanted by a wide flat deck space, suitable for storing and launching wakeboards and waterskis.

Inside the pilot house, the combination of convertible dinette, helm station and optional pantry (galley) module on the starboard side, plus the optional toilet module just in front of the crew seating on the port side, inevitably gobbles up most of the floor space – you will need to squeeze past your other crew if they're not sitting down. But it doesn't feel unnaturally squashed for a 28-footer, and the headroom along the walkway is 1.91m (6ft 3in). If

you opt for the standard version and eschew the front cabin, there is a long pilot berth running forward from the helm station, which doubles as an exceptionally large inside locker.

If your choice between diesel sterndrive and petrol outboard is based on costs, then although

SPECIFICATIONS

XO 270 Cabin

Length: 8.60m (28ft 3in)

Beam: 2.59m (8ft 6in)

Fuel capacity: 450L (99 imp gal)

Water capacity: 100L (22 imp gal)

Draught: 0.95m (3ft 1in) leg down

Air draught: 2.50m (8ft 2in) + mast

RCD category: C (for 10 people)

Displacement: 2250kg (excl. engines)

Transom deadrise: 24 degrees

Design: XO

PRICES (inc. 20% UK VAT)

Starting price: £157,470 single 250hp

As tested: Circa £178,236 twin 200hp

ENGINES

Outboard engines: 250hp to 500hp

Inboard diesels: 300hp to 370hp

Test engines: Twin 200hp Yamaha

Top speed: Circa 43 knts (twin 200hp)

the maths is straightforward, the decision is not so simple. Very approximately, based on all the data I've accumulated over five 270 tests, if you cruise for around 50 hours (according to Volvo, the UK owner's average annual run-time) at around 30 knots, diesel will cost you about £2,000 a year, whereas petrol will set you back around £5,000. However, the cost of the annual servicing on an inboard diesel and its sterndrive leg (the frequently forgotten cost) can be eye-watering. And if a major problem did arise in later years, the potential payback provided by the typically longer warranties offered on the outboard engines could easily trump the diesel fuel saving. You'll also need to factor in the higher initial cost of the diesel boat.

Two more things, both surprising. Despite its weight, the 760kg D6 370hp Volvo sterndrive 270 I tested performed just as well as the lighter outboard boats, achieving 42.4 knots – pretty much

THE NOISE AND VIBRATION FROM THE BIG D6 370-POWERED BOAT WERE VERY ACCEPTABLE ...

the same top speed as our twin 200hp Yamaha outboard test boat. You would expect a single to be more efficient than a twin installation (due to reduced appendage drag), but that's still impressive when you consider the Volvo boat was around 300kg heavier. The noise and vibration from the big D6 370-powered boat were very acceptable, and Volvo recently completely re-engineered the D6 and D4 diesels and introduced a new sterndrive leg, so noise, vibration and performance will only improve further. Nevertheless, it's remarkable just how smooth and quiet the modern generation of outboard motors has become. If it's finesse you're after, the outboard-powered XO 270 is every bit as refined.



Twin overhead hatches improve through-boat ventilation no end.





Deck lockers are secured with adjustable catches.

WHICHEVER VERSION APPEALS, THE RESULT IS A POTENTIALLY **50MPH POCKET ROCKET** THAT IS CAPABLE OF **HIGH-SPEED** PASSAGE MAKING IN QUITE CHALLENGING CONDITIONS.

Blast off

Whichever version appeals, the result is a potentially 50mph pocket rocket that is capable of high-speed passage making in quite challenging conditions. Trimmed correctly, the boat runs level and the helmsman's view out is good. Personally, I'd ditch the comically weedy windscreen wipers completely and instead apply a

good water-shedding coating like Rainex. Our twin 300hp Yamaha-powered test boat sported the Mente Marine trim system, but the current XO extras list shows the Zipwake, which is an option on the DFNDR. Insist on the Zipwake, which feels far faster-acting and more effective, and is more versatile and programmable too. With the engine weight comprising

up to 25% of the total boat weight, and a wide range of such notably different engine configurations too, correct trimming is key to getting the best out of these boats.

For the same rough-weather reasons as with the DFNDR, we weren't able to conduct credible speed and fuel consumption trials. But like the DFNDR, we did see 49mph on the clock before the looming pebble beach halted our progress. Our twin 200hp Yamaha test boat proved remarkably agile, but not so lively that it felt flighty, and it steadfastly refused to lose grip in tight turns. That said, it does feel slightly different to the Volvo D6 370hp sterndrive boat, which seems even more firmly planted – hardly surprising given its extra weight and its more deeply immersed single drive, complete with its astonishingly grippy duoprop propellers.

Conclusions

You could use the 270 simply to hurtle from A to B as quickly as is possible, safely cocooned inside the warmth of the pilot house, and then employ your credit card in the nearest B&B or restaurant or bar. Or you could pack both ends of the 270 with water sports toys and

head off for the day. Alternatively, with the Front Cabin version, and especially in diesel sterndrive form (with its much greater range), the 270 has the makings of a serious long-distance passage maker for a cosy couple. What a marvellously multi-talented metal miracle! [PBR](#)

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www.idealboat.com

<https://vimeo.com/361150937>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2_Bx0pyNVY



XO 270 Front Cabin version

+ HIGHS

- + All-weather boating potential
- + Numerous mix 'n' match options
- + Big sociable foredeck area
- + Alternative Front Cabin version
- + Inboard sterndrive & outboard power
- + Optional head compartment
- + Ultra-tough construction

– LOWS

- Weedy windscreen wipers
- Electrical panel positioning





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Glomex Extend Connectivity 15 Miles From Shore

It seems that the concept of life without the Internet is now just as daunting on board as it is at home.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.GLOMEX.IT

Getting Internet coverage offshore is no easy feat; unless you opt for a more costly satellite set-up, 4G is the only way forward in this area. Glomex have been focused in this field and have recently launched their new weBBoat 4G Lite system.

4G Lite is an Internet antenna that receives both 3G/4G cellular and Wi-Fi signals up to 15 miles away. It then amplifies them and creates a secure personal hot spot. Up to 24 devices can connect simultaneously for everything from entertainment to navigation. It has an integrated SIM card slot to take full advantage

of most mobile providers' areas, while reducing roaming costs.

It comprises simply a compact 140mm (W) x 200mm (H) radome, in which there are no less than three antennas: two for 3G/4G reception and one for Wi-Fi. It has an internal router with an Ethernet LAN port for direct wiring to a networked device.

To make things easy, there are free Android and iOS Glomex apps. Users set up the device and monitor and control the SIM card. Additionally, the apps log performance data and automatically download firmware updates.

Installing the weBBoat 4G Lite is a plug-and-play affair, and it requires a 10-30 v DC power supply. Mounts are available from Glomex to suit almost any marine application.

The cost is around £500 and it is available in most large UK chandlers now.

The antenna, at 200mm in height, houses no less than three antennas.



The new evo3S system comes in three display sizes: 16, 19 and 24in.

Simrad NSO evo3S

Simrad's new NSO evo3S Glass Bridge display is the latest high-tech tool aimed at making navigation even quicker and easier.

Powered by the latest iMX 8 six-core processor, this compact 'black box' provides the core for a powerful multifunction on-board network, integrating every system. It offers seriously rapid response times, creating seamlessly smooth screen transitions. With up to twice the CPU performance of many of its previous contemporaries, it not only offers instant access to its huge storage capacity but enables instant switching between display layouts.

The system's ultrabright displays and wide viewing angles make use all the easier, even when wearing polarised sunglasses. Needless to say, it offers a plethora of touch screen controls and the option to configure up to six panels in a split-screen layout. In today's technology-fuelled world, marine electronics

have been closely focused on providing an intuitive product, and Simrad claim this new display system to be exactly that.

Not surprisingly, it connects with phones, tablets and local or on-board Wi-Fi hot spots. Its built-in wireless connectivity links the NSO evo3S to mobile devices for remote viewing and control, and delivers easy online software upgrades. Wired Ethernet, NMEA 2000 and J1939 networking provide almost limitless integration options, from vessel-wide display systems to radar, sonar, engine integration and much more.

This system can be built around 16, 19 or 24in displays, or



The evo3S integrates with all on-board systems.

the iMX 8 can be bought on its own. There is also the option of an external keypad control, and the ability to connect a USB mouse or keyboard.

Costs start at 7,415 euros for a 16in display system pack including the processor, with a 24in display system costing 11,226 euros.



The components of the 16in display system pack.



VISIT - WWW.SIMRAD-YACHTING.COM

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The basic system comprises the core, a stainless control switch and one tag.



RRP: OLAS Guardian: £210 (inc. VAT). An additional pack of four OLAS tags costs £175 (inc. VAT)

CONTACT
www.exposurelights.com/marine-lights

OLAS Wireless Kill Cord

Easy to use and monitor, there is no way to forget this 'virtual kill cord'.

The OLAS Guardian from Exposure OLAS is one of the most comprehensive and cost-effective wireless engine kill switch systems to date. Acting as a virtual kill cord, it stops the engine within two seconds of a person going overboard. To be fair, the concept is not totally new, as Raymarine launched an MOB alarm some 12 years ago that worked on much the same signal denial principle, but did not cut the engine. The OLAS Guardian is a more versatile tool, helped, of course, by advances in technology.

It will cut the engine within two seconds should the skipper, or a crewmember, fall overboard or move out of range of the

system. It works by wirelessly logging up to 15 crewmembers to the heart of the system, known as the core, via wearable transmitters - either OLAS wrist tags or OLAS Float-On lights. Float-On lights are high-intensity floating strobes, normally worn on a life jacket, that when submerged will trigger an MOB alert. Unlike the wrist tag, they make an additional transmission rather than breaking contact. This enables the system to know where the MOB is in relation to the boat. In the case of the wrist tag, when submerged or separated by sufficient distance to lose signal, the connection is then broken, causing the core to cut the engine and trigger an inbuilt 85dB 'klaxon-like' alarm. The engine

can be restarted after five seconds, and a rescue can be performed if needed.

Each time the engine ignition is switched on, the OLAS Guardian prompts the skipper to activate the system by continually beeping. This is done by the skipper pressing and holding the button on his tag within 2m of the dash-mounted stainless control switch, which also serves as an antenna for the core, mounted behind the dash or inside a console. A confirmatory beep tells you the Guardian is good to go; it then scans the nearby area for 30 seconds, automatically connecting any working tags/lights within 2m. Unlike an old-school kill cord, you can't ignore or forget it and then subsequently start the engine and drive off. Once every tag/light is connected, they can move more than 2m from the core, but there is a limit, which, on the basis that this system is rated for a 50ft boat, is around 25ft. It is recommended that one crewmember moves around the extremities of the boat to confirm the system can receive them.

As with all radio transmitters, the tag's range can be affected by external factors, such as thick or multiple bulkheads, large metal appliances and, in particular, aluminium boats where the tag's range will be substantially reduced. To cater for this there is the OLAS Extender, which is in effect a mini rebroadcast station, which, once paired with the core, will extend the range into black spots, or over long expanses of deck. The Extender is either DC powered via a USB connection or can run for 48 hours from its stand-alone battery, so it can be easily moved to other locations as and when needed.



The OLAS app enables control and system awareness anywhere on the boat.

Not too surprisingly, there is an OLAS Guardian app, which I will say really completes the system. Though everything can be controlled by the small dash-mounted stainless switch, and the alarm is sounded by the internally mounted core, the app really makes it tick. It provides easy monitoring and tracking for each tag, which can be personalised with individual crew names, and it displays which tags are connected. It also displays the remaining battery power within each tag. With the touch screen app you can quickly disable any departing or absent crewmembers, or even pause the Guardian while you step ashore to tie your lines. When they or you return on board, all of the system's call signs are then relogged when the touch screen pause is released. When crew return to the boat after the engine has been switched off, the skipper can easily check whether everyone is scanned in within range of the Guardian by looking at the app screen. Alternatively, if they fail to do this, the sound and visual indicators on the console switch will alert them that somebody has not returned.

Just as you can with the on-board hardware, you can configure the app to simply sound the alarm, rather than cut the engine, in an MOB situation. The app also enables you to easily activate this feature individually for specific crewmembers. This could be crucial when driving fast through big seas, as you would not want to lose power, even for a few seconds, if someone other than the helmsman went overboard.

If a solo skipper goes overboard, the OLAS app can automatically send an SMS message with the location and time of the incident to the skipper's emergency contact number – whoever they nominate. As the core has an inbuilt GPS receiver, it has the vessel's coordinates ready to send, so the contact will have a position in Lat/Long when contacting the coastguard. You can also input your vessel's details (vessel type, name, size, call sign, MMSI) into the Mayday facility of the app, so this can be instantly passed to the emergency services. This is via either on-board Wi-Fi or, failing that, your phone's connection through a minimum of a 2G network.

The system is easy to set up by simply connecting in parallel to the existing kill switch system with waterproof connectors and cables. It is recommended that the original kill switch system is left in place, as it will kill the engine immediately the skipper leaves the helm. The panel-mounted stainless steel control switch fits into the steering console through a 21mm hole. It should be connected to the vessel's main power supply immediately after the battery main cut-off switch, ensuring it is always working when power is running.

The OLAS Guardian is supplied with an OLAS tag, power and kill cord connection wires, a stainless steel control button and a quick start guide. **PBR**



The stainless control switch glows green when all registered tags are connected.



The core can be mounted hidden or externally and is waterproof.



The wrist tag is the size of a watch.

Latest Yanmar 6LF and 6LT Engine Series

Yanmar increase their portfolio, with bigger and punchier power plants.

Yanmar's move into the bigger engine market will no doubt be welcomed by many who have come to appreciate the durability of their middleweight power plants. With their previous flagship, the 440hp 6LY440, providing a healthy power-to-weight ratio for mid-range shaft- and surface-driven powerboats, we can expect the bigger 6LF and 6LT range of engines to be equally appealing.



Launched at boot Düsseldorf in January, this new six-model line-up quite substantially extends Yanmar's portfolio of common-rail marine diesel engines. The LF and LT series range from 485 to 640 hp, enabling Yanmar to supply high-performance solutions for a wider customer base, especially as these engines are ideal for leisure boats as well as light-duty commercial applications.

The two series - consisting of the 3000rpm 6LF485, 6LF530 and 6LF550, and the more powerful 2530rpm 6LT500, 6LT580 and 6LT640 engines - feature Yanmar's next-generation VC20 vessel control system for an easier boating experience. As of yet, nothing seems to be known about the VC20, but we can expect

Yanmar have always managed to produce relatively thin engines for the power output.



The new 6LF is available up to 550hp.

a new take on joystick/thruster control for shaft-driven boats. The global emission-certified diesel engines also offer improved efficiency and are compatible with a wide range of fuel types. Though this has not been confirmed, one can suppose this means that the lower-output models are fully compatible with the lower-cetane diesel fuels available outside the EU, including the US.

Available as a complete package including engine, ZF transmission

and VC20 vessel control system, the 6LF and 6LT are supplied with a wide range of options. New owners of the 6LF and 6LT series will have the advantage of Yanmar's global distribution network, including good local dealer support and an effective worldwide spare parts supply network. They will be available at the end of the summer, and further details, such as engine capacity, weight and costing, will be known soon.

VISIT WWW.YANMAR.COM

ROKK Wireless – Edge

Tough, durable and waterproof, the ROKK make flat batteries at sea a thing of the past.

The ROKK Wireless - Edge from Scanstrut is the latest addition to the waterproof wireless charging phone mount range. The Edge securely holds and wirelessly charges your phone even in the roughest outdoor conditions. With a small footprint, you have even more choice of how and where you install your phone mount and charger. Crowded consoles, side-mounting, flat and vertical surfaces are all suitable for the Edge.

You can rotate your phone from portrait to landscape to view your favourite navigation app, or simply fine-tune the position for the optimum viewing angle. Powered by 12/24v and being IPX6 waterproof, the Edge is perfect for marine use, or on any vehicle outside in the elements. The simple one-handed operation enables you to easily dock and instantly start charging your phone. The

self-aligning, high-grip jaws accommodate all wireless charging phones, and securely hold your device in the optimum charging position every time. A secure three-point fixing system and a footprint of just 50mm (1.96in) in diameter increase your choice of location, and a waterproof grommet completes the install. It uses Qi-certified wireless technology and a 'smart' LED that indicates when your phone is charging. It has a 'foreign object detection' and thermal cut-off providing safe, reliable charging in all environments. Charging is also possible through non-metallic, waterproof cases.

As with all Scanstrut products, the ROKK Wireless - Edge is designed and created entirely in-house, and it joins the existing range of Scanstrut outdoor-ready wireless chargers: Hidden, Surface, Bezel and Active.



Portrait configuration is optional.



Easy one-handed use.

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BOTNIA TARGA | 25GT

BOTNIA'S DECISION TO OFFER AN OUTBOARD-POWERED VERSION OF THEIR CLASSIC 25 CRAFT IS APPRAISED BY *Dave Marsh ...*







The Targa 25GT also comes in optional flybridge form.



Big plus on the outboard-powered 25GT is the additional space.

WITH ITS **SPORTY HANDLING AND PERFORMANCE**, THE **45-KNOT OUTBOARD-POWERED 25GT** WOULD BE A CANDIDATE FOR ANYBODY LOOKING FOR A **HIGH-SPEED ALL-WEATHER DAYBOAT ...**

relocated to the digital domain, functionality has rocketed: joystick control, geostationary positioning, remote monitoring, accurate fuel burn readings, cruise control – you name it, the outboard engine control and monitoring system is likely to offer it. It's only a feeling, but I reckon we've experienced a cultural shift too: European boat owners somehow just feel more at home with big outboards than they ever used to – something that was previously the preserve of our American counterparts.

Outboard vs sterndrive

If money is the driving force behind your outboard versus sterndrive deliberation, then only you can calculate your specific financial maths. If you have a very good

It's hard to believe that I first tested this boat in 1998. Unlike me, it does not seem to have aged – the myriad qualities that made it such an impressive boat back then felt every bit as valid when I finally jumped on board again after two decades of absence. The appeal of the five core design elements that underpin the 25 does not fade as time goes by – the deep

walk-around side decks, a fully enclosed wheelhouse, overnight accommodation, a hugely sociable foredeck space and sturdy construction are timeless elements. In fact, the older and creakier we get, the more the safety-related aspects become indispensable!

When I say 'first tested this boat', though, I need to clarify. Like the majority of the current Botnia Targa range, the 25 I tested at the Finnboat show was sterndrive powered – specifically by Volvo's 260hp KAD44 – which propelled our test boat to 35 knots. However, the GT nomenclature that our test boat bears indicates that it is outboard powered, in our case by the standard offering of twin 200hp 3.4L V6 Mercury engines, so it's no surprise that with 400hp to play with, our 25GT tore through the water a whole 10 knots faster.

It's no surprise either that Botnia have decided to offer an outboard-powered version of their 25, or that more GT models will

follow. Over the course of the last decade, we have witnessed paradigm improvements in outboard engines in every area – technology, reliability, fuel economy and functionality. No longer do you need to own a minor Gulf State to be able to fuel your outboard-powered boat. The remarkably long warranties offered are a good indication of how reliable a well-cared-for outboard motor is likely to be. Now that almost all engine controls have

SPECIFICATIONS

Length overall: 8.38m (27ft 5in)
Hull length: 7.68m (25ft 3in)
Beam: 2.88m (9ft 5in)
Fuel capacity: 420L (92 imp gal)
Water capacity: 100L (22 imp gal)
Draught: 1.05m (3ft 4in) leg down
Air draught: 3.15m (10ft 4in)
RCD Category C (for 8 people)
Displacement: 3825kg (test weight)
Design: Botnia Marin

PRICE (INC. 20% UK VAT)

From: £165,660 with twin 200hp V6 Mercury engines
As tested: Circa £200,000 with twin 200hp V6 Mercury engines

RIGHT: 200hp V6 Mercury on test boat, but other single and twin options are available.



Standard engines are twin 200hp Mercury, giving 45 knots.



idea of your annual running hours, it's simple to calculate the diesel versus petrol fuel costs - well, as long as you know how much time is spent stoozing around at low speed (top tip: it can be surprisingly high). Assuming you have a diesel heater (or you dishonestly claim to have one), don't forget to factor in diesel's typical 60:40 'heating' rebate at the pumps, and to ponder whether this anomaly will continue indefinitely. Annual diesel engine and sterndrive servicing is a major cost (circa £1,600), whereas if you opted for the Evinrude E-TEC G2 instead of the Mercury option, you would have no dealer service costs whatsoever for the first five years or 500 hours. Warranties cannot be costed as such, but it's worth scrutinising their terms and their duration, because a single major

LEFT TOP: Roomy foredeck seating accommodates a comfortable four or a cosy six.

LEFT: Optional head is accessed from the foredeck. Note abundant practical hooks.

engine problem arising in later years could easily make a nonsense of any other financial calculation you make.

However, it may be that money is not the biggest issue here. Although Botnia's standard sterndrive and outboard 25s are priced within a cockney 'bullseye' of each other, the twin 200hp Mercury-powered 25GT is a 45-knot boat, whereas the single Volvo D4 320hp sterndrive 25 does 36+ knots, so there's one very big divide. Service access is obviously unbeatable on the big outboards, and it's easier to disconnect the Mercury engines and have them shipped to a specialist repair facility if major surgery is required. In addition, the space where the big D4 320hp Volvo would live becomes a roomy machinery and storage space that could happily accommodate a small deflated tender (or 30 cases of attractively priced champagne brought back from a French hypermarket was my thought).

The biggest difference of all, though, is the driving experience.

CULTURE

Nowadays, most boat sales are driven by the lure of the new, so it might seem odd to be dissecting the pros and cons of a boat that is essentially over two decades old.

It's not just that the outboard boat has another 8 or 9 knots at the top end, it is intrinsically a much livelier boat. That should not be a surprise: the single central Volvo DPH duoprop sterndrive sits deeper in the water, and the contra-rotating duoprops themselves exert a tremendous grip on the water regardless of how highly they are trimmed. Volvo's D4 320hp weighs in at 663kg - 53% more than the two Mercury outboards (432kg combined) and the equivalent of an extra three grown men standing on the aft deck, pushing the stern deeper still.

There's no better or worse, it's just a case of what sort

Botnia Marin designed hull is a broad-beamed medium-vee.



of handling appeals - firmly planted comfy cruiser or lively sports boat-like handling with considerable extra oomph. In the bumpy conditions we encountered outside the protection of Poole Bay, the outboard-powered 25GT did demand more attention to trimming (trim tabs and leg trim) than I recollect its heavier sterndrive sibling needing. Upwind, we found that it paid to use a healthy dose of trim tab to push the nose down and smooth the ride. Actually, I'd become so used

NOTABLE EXTRAS

Bow thruster, head compartment, Simrad electronics, shore power, battery charger, side gates with teak-capped rails, galley, fridge, stainless steel anchor

ENGINES

Single and twin options available on request

Standard engines: Twin 200hp Mercury 3.4L V6 outboards

Test engines: Twin 200hp Mercury 3.4L V6 outboards

to Botnia's sterndrive boats giving the impression (in challenging conditions) of a much bigger boat that the liveliness of the outboard version was a useful reminder that the voluminous 25GT is a boat with a hull length of just 7.68m (25ft 3in). Although our 25GT had a zenith in terms of fuel consumption and range at 3500rpm and 25 knots, it has no discernible sweet spot to inhibit it - instead it cruises happily at any speed. In fact, with the correct trimming there is simply no discernible climb onto the plane, it just goes faster the more throttle you use. I think this is a really underrated bonus on a small boat.

Something old, something new

Regardless of what type of engine powers the next-to-smallest Targa, it's worth reminding ourselves of a few of the 25 and 25GT's key virtues. Most of all, it doesn't feel like a 25-footer. Its walk-around decks and deep bulwarks would shame most boats lacking the words Grand Banks or Fleming in their name, and along with abundant handrails at every turn



Surprising 1.85m (6ft 1in) headroom in aft cabin, and much more in pilot house.

and ultra-grippy non-slip decks (even without the decadent teak option), they make for super-safe movement around the 25GT in any conditions. Stir in twin pilot house side doors and the 25GT's adroit low-speed manoeuvring ability,

and here is a boat that you could easily handle and moor single-handed.

Memory can be fallible, but I reckon that Botnia's joinery is just a little more smooth, lustrous and lovely than it was 20 years ago,

PERFORMANCE DATA

	Slow cruise	Eco cruise	Fast cruise	Flat out
RPM	2750	3500	4000	5670
Speed	13.9 knots	24.9 knots	30.1 knots	45.6 knots
Fuel	35.3Lph	48.7Lph	64.8Lph	139.5Lph
Consumption	0.39mpl	0.51mpl	0.46mpl	0.33mpl
Range	132nm	172nm	156nm	110nm

Speed in knots. Range in nautical miles and allows for 20% reserve. 67% fuel, no water, 3 crew, F4, 6-C. Speed and fuel consumption data taken from October 2018 Mercury/Botnia sea trials in Finland and allow for a 20% fuel reserve. Your figures may vary considerably.



FOR A 25-FOOTER, THE HEADROOM IS AMAZING: 1.97M (6FT 6IN) STANDING AT THE HELM AND 1.85M (6FT 1IN) IN THE AFT CABIN.

and certainly I don't remember noticing the quality of the electrical installation, which was absolutely top class on our new 25GT. The construction also feels very sturdy. Even when I got the trim wrong and thumped into the back of a big wave, there was no creaking and groaning to suggest that things were moving around inside.

For a 25-footer, the headroom is amazing: 1.97m (6ft 6in) standing at the helm and 1.85m (6ft 1in) in the aft cabin. The unusual uber-long berths need explaining. With 3.35m to play with, if you sleep head to head you effectively have 2m for a tall adult, plus 1.35m (4ft 5in) left for a small child to stretch out in the other direction. Doubtless Botnia could have somehow contrived an internal route from the pilot house into the head compartment, which lives under a bulge at the front of the pilot house, but it would have decimated the excellent helm and the optional galley. So although it will bother some, I reckon the external foredeck access to the head is by far the best solution.

Verdict

With its sporty handling and performance, the 45-knot outboard-powered 25GT would be a candidate for anybody looking for a high-speed all-weather dayboat, or even a weekender to zip between shoreside B&Bs. If called upon,

though, it can deliver much more. Generous stowage, good headroom and the protection provided by its fully enclosed wheelhouse mean that it could easily undertake more intrepid cruises, albeit ones within its 172-mile range.

Nowadays, most boat sales are driven by the lure of the new, so it might seem odd to be dissecting the pros and cons of a boat that is essentially over two decades old. But we're not all on-trend victims, and the Botnia Targa 25 and 25GT provide irrefutable proof that a well-designed boat that does not pander to the ever-shifting whims of fashion can endure for a very long time indeed. [PBR](#)

CONTACT

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www.wessexmarine.co.uk

+ HIGHS

- + Oh boy, is it nippy
- + Voluminous for 8.38m (27ft 5in)
- + Resultant machinery space
- + Stowage, inside and out
- + Deep walk-around decks
- + Impressive headroom
- + First-rate electrical installation

— LOWS

- Demands attention to trimming
- The foredeck heads access

RIGHT: TOP - Optional micro-galley is hidden under hinged chart tabletop on port side.

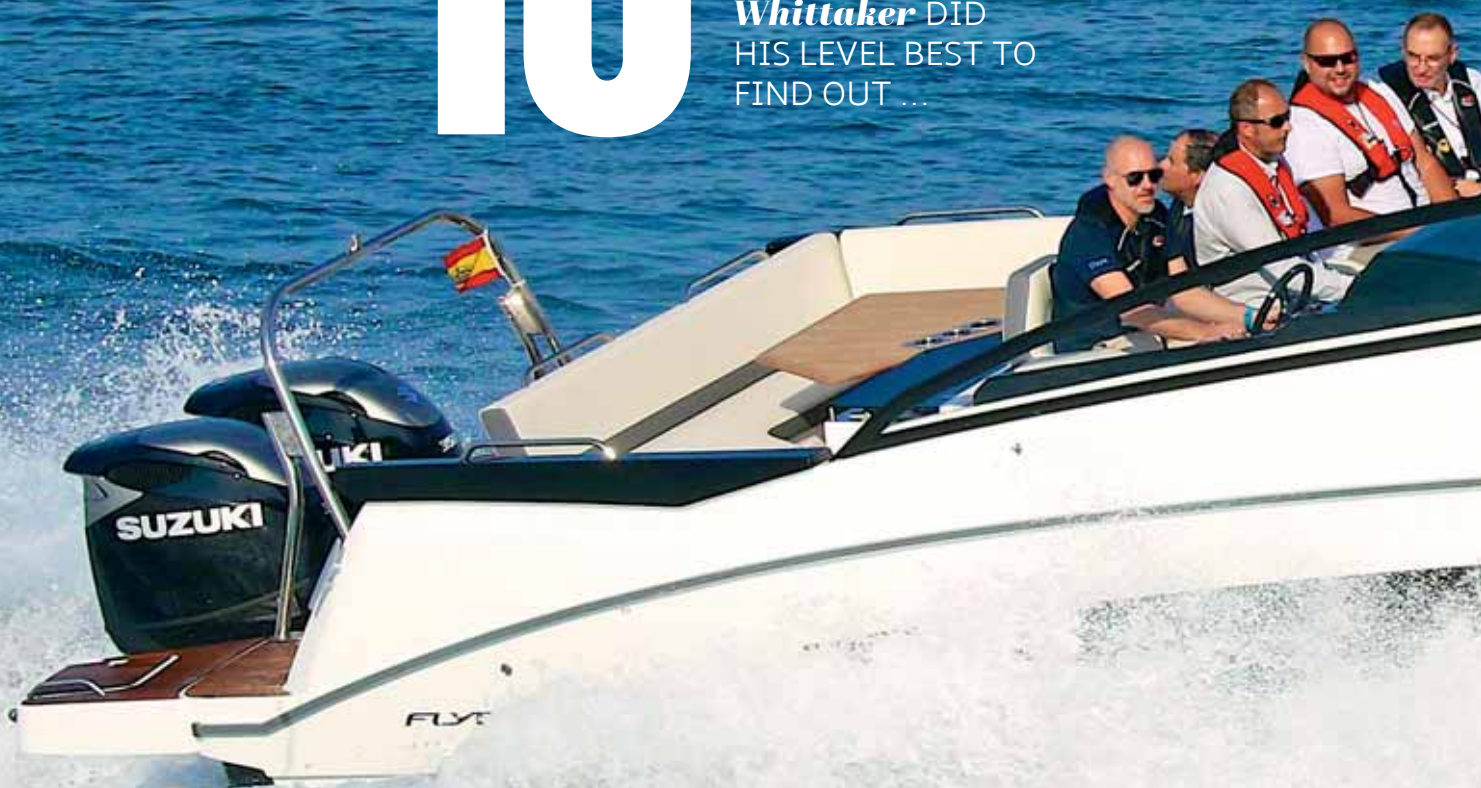
MIDDLE - At mealtimes, a table drops from overhead and helm seats swivel round.

BOTTOM - Botnia utilise every scrap of space for storage.



BENETEAU FLYER 10

CAN A FAST WEEKENDER FOR FOUR ALSO BE A COMFORTABLE AND CAPACIOUS DAYBOAT FOR 11? OVER THREE PUNISHING DAYS IN THE MED, **Alex Whittaker** DID HIS LEVEL BEST TO FIND OUT ...







This view gives some idea of the extent of the front and rear cockpits.

Beam forward

The Flyer 10 is a twin-outboard 32-footer with a beam of 11ft. She has that exciting open-boat feel, with no intrusive radar arch. Beneteau have revisited and imaginatively updated the original American 'walk-around' concept. They have been careful to carry her broad beam well forward, and to square off her excellent bow cockpit. This maximises the front deck area and delivers extra usable volume below decks.

Boarding platforms

Twin outboards are deeply groovy but can eat up useful boarding space. They can also restrict swimmers' access from the water. Beneteau have responded with two bathing platforms, complete with two folding reboarding ladders. However, these are linked by a walkway, made safe by a sturdy steel A-frame-cum-tow rail.

Rear cockpit

Access to the cockpit does not require clambering over cushions or tripping over a high coaming.

AT THE HELM

The helm is very modern and dominated by a vast multifunction display. This screen was clear, even in bright Med light.

There is easy, flat entry via a chrome transom gate to starboard (flat is good). This entry point aids circulation around the imaginatively shaped and large hi-lo cockpit table to port. I could see six or seven adults dining here. The wrap-around dinette seating is both comfortable and versatile. Its stern seat flips fore or aft to face the water or the cockpit. In addition, the whole dinette can be made up into a large sun pad. Frankly, for a jelly back like me, these multiple lounging options were a delight. To starboard is the main galley. It has a gas griddle, a sink, storage under and a 45L fridge (note that there is also a mini galley below decks). However, this al fresco module is in exactly the right position for efficiency, circulation

and sociability - a most impressive food and cocktail prep station. Ahead, four raised helm seats face the action. These are positioned either side of the continuous teak deck. As mentioned before, when it comes to cockpit decks, flat is good. Incidentally, the comfortable seats were big enough, supportive enough and high enough to give a commanding ride. There is only one walkway forward to the bow area, and the windscreen here is

hinged for access. This safe port walkway has deep bulwarks and is sheltered by the fixed side screen.

Helm

The helm is shiny black and dominated by a vast multifunction display. This screen was very easy on the old mince pies, even in bright Med light. The absence of two sets of analogue engine instruments gives a surprisingly uncluttered/minimalist feel to the



Easy cockpit access, and safe movement across the bathing platform.



1. The back deck is sociable, accessible and versatile. Lovely teak deck.

2. As well as the deck galley, there is a mini galley below with microwave and fridge/freezer.



3. The fore V-berth is large and there is more storage than you might expect. 4. Wheel and throttle lie to hand. Huge MFD is glorious. Note left-hand thruster joystick.



dash. It felt more utilitarian than classy, but I quite liked it that way. As a compact chap, I had no trouble getting a comfortable driving position, and the seat has a flip-up bolster. The wheel and throttles fell to hand, and the dash moulding's integral footrest allowed me to brace myself at speed. My throttle arm was supported by the side moulding, and there was a row of ready-use dashboard switches, which lit up blue. I noticed that southpaws had not been entirely forgotten: the bow thruster joystick is to the left of the wheel, and the VHF is also fitted to port. Suzuki gauges straddle the wheel. I wasn't so sure about that black helm in high-summer Med heat. Also, it might be a pain to keep gleaming and scratch-free, but the overall

HAVING TWO LARGE COCKPITS PLUS TWO USEFUL CABINS IN JUST OVER 32FT IS SOMETHING OF A TRIUMPH.

effect worked for me. Naturally, the stylish cabin sliding door matches the helm. I discovered that its dark smoked finish gave sufficient privacy below. Oddly enough, it also allowed more useful light into the cabin than I expected.

Forward cockpit

Sorry to go all Gallic, but for me this was the pièce de résistance of the whole Flyer 10 concept. Up forward is a vast comfy sunlounger for three. True, it was not as deep and protected as, say, a similarly

sized bowrider, but it was certainly bigger, especially given the width of the squared-off bow. This provided a wonderful lounging space at anchor.

Private cabins

I went down the easy-stepping companionway. This is furnished with a substantial grab handle, ideal for use in a seaway. Given that such a large sun pad resides above on the foredeck, I was pleasantly surprised to find two cabins below. One might have expected just a largish cuddy and V-berth with limited headroom, but this was not the case. Also, the sleeping cabins had privacy, since the rear double berth was snug behind its own cabin door. Its entry was via a tall and

nifty atrium or lobby, with large translucent windows above. This gave a lot of light, with easy standing and dressing space facing the 'thwartships bunk. Despite the lower clearance down the length of the bunk, it did not feel hemmed in. The hull side window at its head greatly assisted this general feeling of airiness. There was quite a bit of storage in this cabin too.

Head and shower

The nicely appointed head and its en suite shower is across the main cabin, behind its own door. This design means that, during the day, the head lies conveniently at the foot of the companionway from the rear cockpit. The corollary is that, at night, any crewmembers sleeping in the rear cabin have



The Flyer 10 is definitely a pukka sports boat.

SPECIFICATIONS

Length overall: 9.95m (32ft 8in)
Hull length: 9.63m (31ft 7in)
Beam overall: 3.35m (11ft 0in)
Hull beam: 3.32m (10ft 11in)
Displacement: 5243kg (11,558lb)
Fuel capacity: 2 x 400L
Water tanks: 160L
Max. engine power: 2 x 350hp
EC certificate: B8/C11
Naval architects: Beneteau
Price: From 96,100 Euro's

CONTACT

Web: beneteau.com
UK Dealer: bateswharf.co.uk

to breach the privacy of the main cabin to use the facilities.

Mini galley

With the accent on outdoor living, the galley on the back deck is the main culinary resource. However, there is a small galley with a microwave and fridge in the main cabin. This would be handy for more varied meals or

cocktail party snacks, or for those inclement evenings when cooking and dining on the back deck is just not practical. Overall, the cabin storage, which included hanging lockers, struck me as good for this size of boat.

Laminate finish

The days of bespoke yacht joinery in this segment of the market are long gone. If you are in the market for a modern boat with accommodation, you have to be comfortable with laminated interior finishes. However,

laminates, if done well, do give a neat, harmonious finish. Being a savage, I liked the fact that once you closed the lockers down below, the whole mini galley vanished behind those laminated doors! Mind you, there were one or two places where the curvy hull interior, in brilliant white gelcoat, intruded upon Beneteau's chosen laminate scheme - particularly so in both cabins, where the lower hull frames made of smart white fibreglass had proved tricky to integrate within the overall laminate approach. A pad had

been placed over one such white gelcoat hull projection in the rear cabin, which jarred aesthetically. Also, while I liked the particular wood grain on offer, there was so much of it below that in some lighting conditions it risked feeling sombre. Other laminate finishes are available, of course, and should be explored.

V-berth

The comfortably large forward V-berth translates into a substantial seating and dining area, with the large table and infills provided. On test, I discovered that the angle of the comfy seat backs was conducive to advanced intensive lounging - always a plus in my book. The large hull windows admit natural

SHE IS DEFINITELY A POWERFUL SPORTS BOAT AND HANDLES LIKE ONE - THE SORT OF BOAT YOU DRIVE UNTIL THE PETROL RUNS OUT, BEFORE FILLING HER UP AND SETTING OFF AGAIN.

PERFORMANCE

Five up, light breeze, 24 degrees, short Med chop, with some passing wakes to jump. Full fuel tanks, half water.

RPM	Knots	Litres/hour
1000	-	-
1500	5.05	16.5
2000	7.56	25.9
2500	8.46	41.2
3000	10.4	62.3
3500	19.3	73.7
4000	24.9	92.6
4500	29.6	115
5000	34.72	136
5500	38.1	187
6000	41.7	219
6250	43.81	228 WOT



Wet and wild! The well-designed hull efficiently shrugs off the spray.

light, but there are also numerous downlighters over the table and galley. There is also a large lazarette under the cabin floor that could gobble up lots of cold gear.

Driving experience

What is she like to drive? In a word, 'thrilling'. She is definitely a powerful sports boat and handles like one - the sort of boat you drive until the petrol runs out, before filling her up and setting off again. Really that good. On test, she also proved that she was equally happy as a fast large-crew dayboat or as a sporty four-person weekender. All-round vision is excellent. Unusually, I found driving while seated a rewarding experience. She feels suitably substantial. The ride is taut and she feels broad-shouldered in bigger waves. She accelerates very briskly, and she banks and handles like a pukka powerboat, not a chubby weekender. Even if you provoke her in the turns, as I did, her response is utterly secure. You also have enough horsepower to easily



Twin Suzuki 350s deliver sparkling performance even with five aboard.

power out of turns. The fine-entry, reverse-chined lower hull delivers a consistently dry ride, even when punching extravagantly through a passing wash. The responsive Suzuki 350s deliver notably quiet and refined fly-by-wire power, only beginning their friendly bellow beyond 4750rpm. I reckon that the Flyer 10 with twin Suzy 350s is easily a 45-knot boat with two up. Her performance with five up in an uncooperative Med chop was excellent. In less than ideal conditions, we topped out at 43.8 knots at 6250rpm, while burning 228L per hour, which is 50 gallons per hour in real money.

The verdict

This is a very clever design that achieves its complex mission with few obvious compromises. Having two large cockpits plus two useful cabins in just over 32ft is something of a triumph. True, she is sleeker from some angles than others, but overall she delivers the goods. If you are in the market for a truly sporty open 30-footer, with endless lounge space and versatile accommodation, move the Flyer 10 to pole position on your shortlist. [PBR](#)

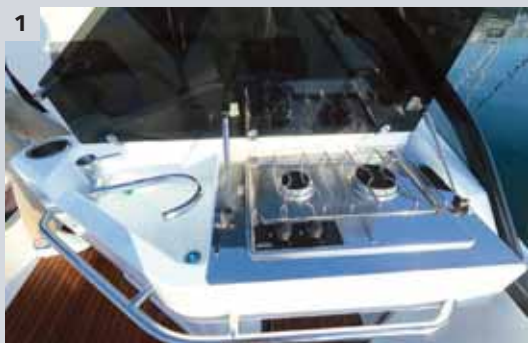
1. Back deck food prep station is sleek and convenient but doesn't obstruct.
2. Foredeck accepts three worshippers. Note padded backrest against screen.
3. The tow point is high enough, and that sturdy stainless guard rail is spot on.
4. The classy head, with storage and connecting shower, has all you need.
5. Forward cabin also has a table. Smoked door into cabin is more opaque than it appears.

+ HIGHS

- + Clever design
- + Sheer versatility
- + Updated walk-around concept
- + Air Step 2 hull delivers a sporty, dry ride
- + Flexible rear cockpit
- + Superb bonus three-person forward sun pad
- + Upper and lower galleys
- + Two private cabins
- + Classy head
- + Convenient shower
- + Beefy stainless steel rear safety rail and tow mount
- + Twin Suzuki 350hp power is the option to have

- LOWS

- Minor unresolved aesthetic issues between white grip hull projections and the laminate interior
- Sleek from some angles, but less so from others
- Twin outboards clutter the reduced boarding platform area compared to an inboard boat



FINNMASTER CUDDY | T6

MUST YOU INVESTIGATE THIS NEW SCANDI CUDDY? *Alex Whittaker* THINKS YOU SHOULD ...



None of us is truly impartial. When looking at powerboats, we all bring with us certain pre-existing desires, preconceptions and prejudices. So right now, I have to admit that when it comes to trailer boats, I may not always be clearly neutral. My other problem is that I have never met a boat I didn't like. So when I was recently asked to

look at two new sister boats from Finnmaster, I was hard-pressed to decide which to choose first.

Cuddy or bowrider?

When it comes to the age-old debate over cuddy or bowrider, the new Finnmaster T6 and R6 variants cover both bases, respectively. Now while I heartily approve of both types of boat, I decided to look at the T6 first. This is because

I have quite a bit of 'previous' with cuddies of this size and power. You see, when it comes to spending my own money, historically I have always come down on the side of the cuddy. Before I bought my present compact sports cruiser, I ran trailer boat cuddies for 25 years. This was because we towed our boat to the Med each summer, and for the rest of the year, this family boat had to deal



The T6 combines practicality and versatility in a compact package.



with unpredictable Welsh coastal waters. Getting a green 'un over the closed bow of a small cuddy is inconvenient; getting a green 'un over the open bow of a small bowrider can spoil your whole day. As a family, we also loved the basic 'camping' experience provided by cuddies. Indeed, I always slept a few nights aboard my cuddies throughout the winter months, just for fun. For us, the

ONCE YOU TURN THE KEY, YOU WANT TO CHUCK HER ABOUT.

'sweet spot' for cuddies lay just over 20ft, just like the T6. This size is more affordable, easy to tow and you can store her on your path all winter, thereby swerving any storage fees. In sheltered UK coastal waters, 20-odd feet proved to be a good safe size, and we could take three or four crew with us. Get the power option right and a good cuddy will let you ski, fish, sunbathe and fast-cruise seamlessly with the best of them. As soon as I stepped aboard the Finnmaster T6, I sensed that she might be able to carry out all these varied but essential family boating missions with few compromises. I just needed to find out for you.

Fully loaded

Note that I was testing a brand-new, 'fully loaded' model fresh from the factory. A number of the features mentioned below are costed options, but I would not

wish to be without them. The www.idealboat.com website lists all the options, and there are many.

Bathing platform

Stepping aboard a small boat often gets less thought from the designer than it deserves. I have seen otherwise robustly sensible Scandi boats that frankly had terrible rear footfalls on entry. The T6 avoids this with a boarding

platform that has substantial wings either side of the outboard well. There is enough room to pass from one side to the other safely, greatly assisted by the substantial stainless steel A-frame. This really does feel heavy-duty and secure. There is a folding reboarding ladder to starboard, and the neatly sloping rear bulwark here means you can step aboard without a trip hazard. The full-width transom

SPECIFICATION

Length: 6.39m
Beam: 2.29m
Draught (hull): 0.40m
Weight: 1160kg
Engine: 130-200 hp
Persons: 7
Berths: 2
Category: C
Deadrise angle: 18°

PRICE

From: £49,700 incl VAT, with Yamaha 150hp. **As tested:** £56,000 incl VAT with Yamaha 200hp. Excludes trailer.

CONTACT

Idealboat.com
01758 703 013 / 07813 581 937



Cuddy entrance is a decent size. Note steps have teak caps.



Neat helm and grippy seat arrangement works well.

is substantial and has no door or gaps. Personally, I prefer this approach with all such smaller craft, which have necessarily lower aft freeboards; however, it does mean that you have to step over and into the rear cockpit. Fear not: the wrap-around rear seat cushions have a space for a nifty teak-laid step down into the cockpit. The teak continues inside the cockpit and gives a touch of class and practicality. This wrap-around seating is spacious, and the Silvertex covering is highly practical. I'd have preferred a lighter colour, but that is just another of those personal prejudices I mentioned earlier.

In time-honoured Scandi fashion,

the folding (full-height) camper hood sleeks down nicely into its own 'garage' at the transom. The removable table slots into the cockpit sole, making a pleasant dining area. Five could easily eat here, six if you were chummy. The bases of the seats form spacious lockers, accessed with the use of substantial stainless steel grab handles. A further advantage is that this area may be turned into a sun deck with infill cushions. The supplied fire extinguisher lives here too. Significantly, the large seat lockers are secured with over-centre latches, which did not rattle at speed. I also liked the way the backrest on the wide observer's seat to port could be articulated

fore and aft. In this way, for sociability, all the seated crew can face each other and share the table. On cruise there was also the choice of viewing aft - say, to watch a waterskier or tuber - or facing forward for navigation. The pièce de résistance is the (optional) pull-out drawer fridge under the observer's seat - full marks! The observer's position also benefits from two beverage holders with a handy cubbyhole under.

Helm

The helm feels safe and protected by the screen. Its top rail did not obstruct my forward vision when seated. The helm lies to starboard and is integral to the low-glare gelcoated forward bulkhead moulding. The helm layout is clean, functional, informative and minimal, without feeling skimmed or spare. The large (optional) Garmin multifunction display screen is ideally placed, with the twin Yamaha engine multi-purpose gauges immediately to starboard. You don't need more.

1. Twin stylish beverage holders and smoked-acrylic cubbyhole.
2. The throttle control has a helpful padded armrest.
3. Stylish design for the ready-use switches. Note the useful 'Water in Bilge' LED.
4. The seat back can pivot fore and aft. Note drawer fridge under.



You can push this hull very hard and she remains safe and predictable.



Packing so many practical features into a modestly sized cockpit is an art!



Practical wrap-around seating with storage under. Note teak step down.



Flat foredeck has lowish guard rails and Scandi forward boarding arrangements.



Yamaha 200 bracketed by usefully dimensioned bathing platform.

The understated but attractive wheel is quite large, and comfortable to grip. It does not flex when you pull high-g turns. The steering is light. Below, to port, are the usual light and bilge pump switches, and in this case, neatly executed aluminium push buttons. I really appreciated the 'Water in Bilge' warning light. The optional Bennett trim tab switches are to starboard on their own panel, complete with LED repeaters. On test, I briefly used the Yamaha engine trim, but despite the breeze, I did not need the Bennett trim tabs. Below lies the (optional) Fusion stereo head unit, backed by speakers in the cockpit. The sound proved good at high speeds. The

I REVELLED IN THE SPORTS BOAT PERFORMANCE WITH ITS DEEP BANK ANGLES, AND THE AMPLE POWER AVAILABLE TO PULL SMOOTHLY THROUGH TIGHT TURNS WITHOUT FADING, CAVITATING OR NODDING.

pedestal helm seat has deep wings for support, as well as a flip-up bolster for standing at the wheel. The seat was suitably firm and comfortable, and gripped well. My tootsies found a welcome purchase on the useful teak-faced footrest - great to brace yourself against in a hard turn. There was also a very welcome padded rest for my throttle arm. The front bulkhead also houses the highly practical moulded-in steps up to the cuddy. I know from my own boat that it

is important to get used to the position of such steps, so as not to bark your shin on the bottom one. To port of the steps lies the nifty smoked-acrylic slide-away cabin door. This was wide enough for easy access and, although smoked for privacy, let in more light than expected - always useful in a small cuddy to avoid that padded-cave feeling. The deep wrap-around windscreen is sturdy and well supported, and is served with two wipers, one of which is optional. Since the cuddy efficiently uses the full width of the topsides, negating any side decks, the windscreen has an opening section for access to the front deck.

Cuddy

The competent cuddy delivers all two would need for a good night's sleep, but of course, at this LOA, not much more. I have slept in smaller, however. When dayboating, this versatile space would become a handy glory hole for all your gear. There is also space for a porta potti under the berth - a wise option for family crews.



Boarding platform, foredeck, cockpit sole and steps are capped in teak.

Front deck

This flat, short deck with teak walkway is not as steep as some and thus can deliver more sunlounging space. The clear deck hatch is substantial, but I was amused to find it on the options list. I am sure your friendly dealer will haggle! The cleats are fixed and big enough for the job. The navigation lights are nicely faired in and tucked behind the lower front rail, reducing any trip hazard. In Scandi 'commuter boat' fashion, there are dual docking lights. These lie under stainless guard plates. The split Scandi pulpit rails are the highest part of the deck surrounds on this Category C boat. I felt the side rails were a bit low for working the front deck in anything but calm conditions; however, this is not a deal breaker

PERFORMANCE FIGURES

Breezy cold winter's day, two up, full fuel tank. Sea state a bit choppy, commensurate with Beaufort Scale force 2/3.

RPM	Knots	Litres/hour
1000	2	2.7
1500	7	4.3
2000	8	8.5
2500	11	14
3000	18	18.6
3500	25	24.4
4000	29	31.7
4500	34	41.8
5000	39	63.8
5300	42	66.7 (WOT)

The T6 is an agile sports boat that also provides overnight accommodation.



since, as a seasoned cuddy owner, I would anchor and recover from the safety of the rear cockpit in less than ideal conditions. There is a useful anchor locker at the sharp end.

On test

The T6 hull has an 18-degree deadrise at the transom. This delivered a more refined ride than I was expecting in the short, hard chop of our winter test day. Frankly, I expected to hear some slams from the hull at higher speeds, and especially when crossing deep wakes. However, any dull thuds were soft and contained. From this I deduced that the chosen hull entry and the 18-degree deadrise were about right for the length and weight of this hull. When we leapt a deep wake, the landing, although not supernaturally soft, was not unpleasantly firm either. The hull handled the spray very well and delivered a dry ride - important for any compact family boat with not that much freeboard. On test I found that she would cruise all

day at 25 knots for a fuel burn of 25 litres per hour. That's less than 5.5 imperial gallons per hour in old money! A wide open throttle of 5300 revolutions delivered 42 knots at a cost of 66.7 litres per hour.

In truth, this is an exciting little boat to helm. Once you turn the key, you want to chuck her about. I revelled in the sports boat performance with its deep bank angles, and the ample

power available to pull smoothly through tight turns without fading, cavitating or nodding. The punchy fly-by-wire Yamaha 200 outboard power makes all this 'moreish', as they say. [PBR](#)

The T6 has Scandi lines but is much more versatile than a commuter boat.



FINNMASTER

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FJORDSTAR 4.5M WITH SELVA 50HP DORADO

Simon Everett TRIALS THE FJORDSTAR 4.5M AND DISCOVERS THAT GREAT THINGS REALLY CAN COME IN LITTLE PACKAGES ...



People seem to underestimate the capability of a small boat, but as with compact cars, there is a growing realisation that a small boat can provide satisfaction out of proportion to its size. A RIB in the 4-5 m bracket ticks so many boxes for many people: it is affordable, easy to find a home for, can be towed by a small family car on an unbraked trailer, provides

massive versatility in terms of waters accessed because virtually every seaside habitation has a slipway to launch a small boat, and for the adventurous, it can be used for camping trips away, as more and more people are discovering. In a cruel twist of fate, making a big trip by small boat has far more kudos than that same trip in a bigger boat and emphasises your adventurous spirit. Suddenly small

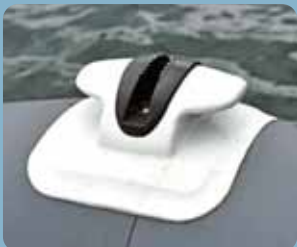
boats are cool again.

RIBs have come on in leaps and bounds over the last 30 years, with massive strides forward in terms of materials and the way they are used in the construction. The designs have been drawn specially as a RIB, rather than merely being a 'sports boat wearing a life jacket', as people understand how the inflatable collar works in harmony with the rigid hull, which makes a



STANDOUT FEATURES

The Fjordstar is built by a family company in Latvia for use in the Baltic area. It comes in a range of offerings from 3.8m through to a highly capable offshore 7.5m.



A mooring bollard with an integral jamming cleat graces the bow.



Note the flange around the chain locker to keep water out.

FOR SUCH A LITTLE BOAT, THE FJORDSTAR IS EXTREMELY WELL SPECIFIED.



Double forward handholds.



25-litre fuel tank fits in the jockey with room for another 12 litre tank and gear on top.

IT IS OBVIOUS FROM THE WAY THE MULTIPLE HANDLES ARE FITTED AND PLACED THAT THESE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND REAL BOATERS' NEEDS ...



big difference.

The Fjordstar is built by a family company in Latvia for use in the Baltic area. It comes in a range of offerings from 3.8m through to a highly capable offshore 7.5m, and there is a very popular 5.8m cuddy RIB that is used by authorities and commercial users. The Fjordstar range is sold in over 30 countries but has only just seen the light of day here in the UK - thanks to the Selva distributor making them available. The link with Selva is no coincidence, as the family that builds them also happens to be the Selva distributor for that country, and has been for many years, so the boats are built to suit the engines down to the ground.

Going through the boat, I

was impressed by the accuracy and polished finish of the hull moulding, with the interiors of the lockers being Flo-coated to cover the gnarly GRP internal finish and make the lockers easy to clean. High-quality Norwegian resin and laminate materials are used in the construction and they are generous with the lay-up - it is a good solid build on that front. The transom is encapsulated hardwood birch marine ply, with Coremat used for the deck reinforcement. The voids are filled with PU closed-cell foam too - a practice that is sometimes omitted to reduce costs. While these boats are very competitively priced, they don't seem to have skimped on the construction. The thickness of the

moulding and the foam below deck certainly makes the boat pleasantly quiet on the water, with little in the way of vibration or hull noise coming through. Even with three burly blokes charging through a 0.5m chop with white caps, I was pleasantly surprised how well she rode. This boat is going to open some eyes, make a few people stop and think,

... THE VALUE THAT THIS CRAFT OFFERS IS A REAL EYE-OPENER, AND ONCE THE INTRODUCTORY PRICE FOR THIS YEAR HAS PASSED, YOU'LL KICK YOURSELF FOR MISSING OUT!

TOP: With room for 4 the Fjordstar is a super compact RIB.

RIGHT: You can really fling the Fjordstar about and she doesn't complain.





1. A great, fun little boat. 2. Simple, neat layout. 3. With the Selva rigged the 4.5m Fjordstar gave us 29 knots. 4. The aft locker is a complete box, so the interior remains dry.

and give owners a great deal of pleasure.

One of the most expensive parts of a RIB is the tube, depending upon the material. Using Hypalon increases the cost dramatically, but by using very high-quality PVC, that part of the cost can be greatly reduced. There are different grades of PVC, though, and the use of low-quality PVC by some makers has given this material a poor reputation in the past. But things move on, and the fact that Zodiac proudly use modern, high-quality PVC should give more people confidence in the material. The Fjordstar is built using heavy-duty Valmex with hand-cut and glued seams, with each model having the inflation collar tailored to suit. The tubes are very cleverly thought

HYPALON

One of the most expensive parts of a RIB is the tube, depending upon the material. Using Hypalon increases the cost dramatically, but by using very high-quality PVC, that part of the cost can be greatly reduced.

out and are made with no radial seams; instead they are made from one piece of material each side with a longitudinal seam on the interior face. There are still five chambers, just fewer jointing seams to worry about, and they are not in critical stress spots either.

It is obvious from the way the multiple handles are fitted and placed that these people

understand real boaters' needs - there are no fewer than 10 rubber handles around the circumference of the boat, in strategic locations, and twin lifelines run along the sides. This is a really good indication of the practical understanding of boating from the builders - they are practical boats built by practical boaters.

Another indication of their commitment to their customers is the textured protection patches on the top of the tube, with two of them covering about 80% of the straight section of the collar, ensuring that people have a good, grippy surface to tread on, alongside the benefit of protecting the inflation collar from sand and shell grit carried aboard from the beach. More standard protection

comes in the form of the thick, stainless steel keel band, to allow beaching without worry. These are thoughtful details. There are also a host of very well-thought-out accessories, such as the tube-mounted side boarding ladder that folds away, and the bimini that also uses tube mountings for the framework. They really have thought things through.

The usual array of seating options are available. We had a twin jockey seat, a pilot seat in the bow over the chain locker and a double stern bench with backrest, which is the top spec as far as seating goes. We still had room with three blokes aboard without falling over ourselves too much. The side decks are wide enough to pass with someone on the helm.

There is no problem with beaching her on a stoney shore, thanks to the stainless steel keelband.



SPECIFICATIONS

Length: 4.50m
Width: 2.00m
Internal deck length (excl. bow locker): 2.61m
Internal width: 0.96m
Weight: 182kg
Tube diameter: 0.49m
CE category: C
Max. engine power: 50hp
Max. persons: 9
Tube chambers: 5
Over-pressure valve: 1pc
Max. load: 950kg
Engine shaft: L (510mm)
Tube pressure: 250mbar
V hull: 20° deadrise

A single jockey with no aft bench makes for a very useful cockpit from which to work for the likes of sailing club rescue duties, or as an angling platform where deck space is given more emphasis than seating. Other combinations can be requested - the basic boat is a blank canvas on which you can create to suit your needs as you see fit.

For such a little boat, the Fjordstar is extremely well specified. For instance, all the fittings are Italian for ease of replacement - and they are not the cheapest from the catalogue either. The stainless steel hasps on each stowage compartment are lockable - there

are good hinges but the lids aren't supported in any way by struts or springs, although the aft seat is restrained by a webbing strap. The stowage capacity is generous in the chain locker, and the ventilated double jockey seat will take a 25-litre tank with a spare 12 litres and still have room for some personal gear. The aft seat locker houses the battery box but still has useful room and is fully enclosed. On a small RIB you aren't

going to be taking a huge amount of stuff, so the stowage provided is more than enough. All the cables and wiring are routed through trunking below deck, which makes for a very neat and tidy interior.

The way this little Fjordstar performs and handles will give families a lot of confidence. There is plenty of internal freeboard for safety, and the bow rides high with a decent rake married to a 20-degree deadrise to smooth

out the ride through short chop. The curved rake of the bow and progressive chine provide a well-engineered ride. The boats are built on the shores of the Black Sea, which doesn't have tidal currents, but like the wind-whipped chop on a big lake, it can be nasty with a peaky sea building quickly before the swells can gather. Big swells are easy to deal with, it is the shorter seas that make life uncomfortable, and here the Fjordstar deals boaters a winning hand. Even with the combined weight of the three of us and two full tanks of fuel, plus our day gear, the 50hp Selva Dorado had no trouble popping us onto the plane in under three seconds, thanks to the lift provided by the extended planing tabs, fitted as standard, which are strong enough to use as boarding steps from the water. The extended planing surface also helps to provide stability, probably at the expense of a little speed - but this isn't a racing boat looking for the last knot. I will take the comfort and ease of driving that those tabs provide every time.

Running into a stiff breeze that came up while we were having a lunch stop, sufficient to whip up white horses and a short-wavelength chop, did nothing to faze this little RIB, even with the weight of three biggish blokes aboard. That bow parts the wave

At rest the Fjordstar sits so well and look at the height of that bow for her size.



top like a cleaving knife, while the progressively greater chine keeps the water under control and out of the boat. There is nothing radical about the boat, she simply uses a tried-and-tested hull formula without trying to reinvent the wheel. The slightly tapered tubes maintain a nice balance to the lines and at the same time do a sterling job of providing stability when it is needed, while acting as an effective spray deflector the rest of the time. Just for good measure, there is a spray deflector built into the rubbing strake full-length too. Those Ruskies don't intend for you to get wet.

The drivability of this little RIB is remarkable - you can really throw her about and she doesn't complain. Even in high-speed full-lock turns the hull manages to keep enough water flowing over the prop to prevent cavitation, and we executed some ridiculously tight turns at speed with no hint of any loss of control. Some of that will be down to the propeller shape, but as a package I was

You wouldn't think she was only 4.5m



really impressed. At speed, she did start to porpoise if one used too much trim, which is to be expected with those extra tabs fighting against the bow lift induced by leg trim. It would be interesting to see how she behaves with a more aggressive propeller that gives extra stern lift - but to be fair, for normal boating she doesn't need it. Just don't dial in so much trim. The high, curved rake of the bow provides so much forward

freeboard on the plane that she can deal with bigger waves than many similar-sized RIBs. I am hopeful of getting another one for a long-distance adventure trip.

For anyone contemplating a small, family RIB or even a safety boat for their sailing club, the value that this craft offers is a real eye-opener, and once the introductory price for this year has passed, you'll kick yourself for missing out! [PBR](#)

PERFORMANCE

RPM	Speed*
700 in gear idle	2.5
1000	3.4
2000 on hump	5.8
3000 planing	12.1
4000	20.8
5000	27.2
5600	29.3

*measured in knots on Garmin GPSMap78s

Useful additional figures carrying 3 men and day gear:

2900 held plane at	10.8 knots
3600	14.2 knots
4200	19.7 knots

PRICES

Introductory pricing for 2019 Boat as tested with double jockey aft seat: £15,524

With roller trailer: £16,500 (inc. VAT)

Boat with Selva 40hp EFi: £14,394 (inc VAT)

CONTACT

www.fjordstar.co.uk



1. Oars stow inboard in rubber clips.

2. Planing tabs provide extra lift for early planing and maintaining trim in the rough.

3. Full height transom and self draining well.

4. Side deck access is sufficient to pass someone at the helm.

5. Well padded stern seat with folding backrest. Inboard lifelines provide security.

A HIGHLAND FLING

Cruising the Inner Hebrides

PBR READER, **CHERYL JENKINS** RECOUNTS THE TALE OF A MEMORABLE PASSAGE WITH HER FAMILY ALONG THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND IN THEIR SMALL OPEN RIB, THE THOUGHT-PROVOKINGLY NAMED MADTUBES ...

'Preparation is the key' ... Such a cliché, but so true when it comes to any successful passage planning, and especially a trip on board a small open RIB. A successful completion of the challenging 2013 PBR Round Ireland trip gave

us a real taste for coastal exploration, and while we didn't come away with too many recognisable photographs of the beautiful west coast of Ireland, it certainly gave us plenty of experience in rough-weather





Looking through the clouds to Loch Lomond, Loch Arklet and Loch Katrine ©iStockphoto



boat handling! We learned so much from other, more experienced boaters, many of whom have become firm friends, and gained a lot of confidence in just what small RIBs can be capable of with a little research and planning.

Living in Northern Ireland, we are totally spoilt with dramatic and unsullied coastlines, and we have spent many a weekend since

then exploring along the beautiful North Antrim coast and parts of the Wild Atlantic Way, as well as short jaunts over the Irish Sea to the Isle of Man or Portpatrick. However, one destination that had been on the bucket list for some time was the west coast of Scotland – an area where I had often sailed when I was younger and that I knew would be an explorer's paradise in a small RIB. The opportunity to combine a family gathering at Loch Lomond and a four-day trip around some of the Inner Hebrides in MadTubes, our Highfield DL540, seemed too good a one to miss, and so the planning began.

One of the biggest logistical challenges we faced was fuelling, as the majority of marinas around the Scottish isles supply only diesel. With a 100L inboard fuel tank and a further 50L carried in cans, we had to find adequate

refuelling locations along the route with a petrol station within easy walking distance (preferably with the availability of trolleys). The other big consideration for a trip of any length is dry storage, which is obviously a limited facility on a 5.4m RIB! All our gear

THE SCOTTISH SCENERY HAD BEEN SIMPLY STUNNING, THE PEOPLE FRIENDLY AND WARM, THE CONDITIONS PERFECT

and belongings had to be packed into dry bags and juggled Tetris-style into the limited available space. Much time was spent on laminating sections of charts, details of marinas and harbours, and information about the many

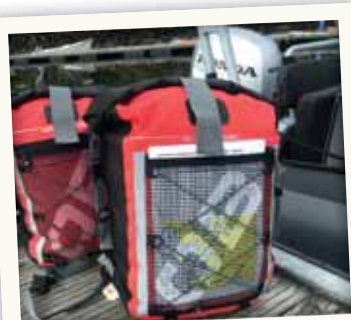
places along the way we wanted to visit. A few extra ropes and fenders, a coastal flare pack, a toolkit and other spares all had to find a place. Of course, there are some elements that cannot be prepared, such as the notorious Scottish weather! Dealing with this one simply entailed having various 'Plan B' routes and potential bolt-holes for each day should the weather, mechanical problems or any other potential obstacle turn against us.

Loch Lomond

Having trailered MadTubes over to Scotland (plus three kayaks on the roof and the parents in the back), we made our way to Cameron House Marina, a beautiful private 234-berth marina located in a sheltered bay at the southern end of Loch Lomond. My brother's family keeps two boats here – Celtic Dream, a Sealine F43, and Fletch, a circa 1980s Fletcher Arrowsport GTO. Several runs to airports and train stations later and soon there were 21 members of our extended clan in one place at one time – a special time indeed! With three boats, a few kayaks and a large Scottish loch to play in, we certainly made the most of our time together. Loch Lomond is the largest expanse of water in the UK by volume – over 190m deep in places and



Celtic Dream & Fletch Loch Lomond



Overboard Drybags all packed



Heading off
on the Ferry



MadTubes Wake Jumping

surrounded by mountains, and one of Scotland's most beautiful national parks. It's just over 24 miles in length, dotted with tiny islands, and is fully navigable with care all the way from Balloch in the south to Ardlui at the northern tip. A favourite brunch spot is the small village of Luss on the western shore. This quaint village, with its neat sandstone and slate cottages, originally housed workers from the nearby quarries and became the setting for the successful TV soap *Take the High Road*. Fairly constant rain and many midges throughout the weekend didn't dampen our spirits, and we explored, waterskied and kayaked our way around most of this beautiful expanse of water.

West coast of Scotland

With just four days to fill, it was a difficult choice to narrow down

the many options, but we opted for planning our trip around the popular islands of Mull and Skye. As well as charts and Imray pilotage books for the area, we also checked out other websites, forums, blogs and local Facebook groups, and picked the brains of a few friends who are regular visitors. Two particularly helpful websites were www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk, with its clickable map of places of interest, and www.visitmyharbour.com, which provided lots of helpful information and details about harbours and marinas in the area for a small subscription fee.



DAY 01

**Dunstaffnage-
Easdale-Iona-
Staffa-Ulva-
Tobermory**
[approx. 100nm]

We opted to start from Dunstaffnage on the Scottish mainland – known as the 'gateway to the Western Isles'. The large marina and local B&B provided

excellent facilities for launching, eating and sleeping before we left on our adventure. We were able to leave our car and trailer there for a small fee, and there is also a shop and chandlery should any last-minute purchases or repairs be required.

Running down the Sound of Kerrera, we got the first taste of the

A SMALL RIB REALLY IS A PERFECT WAY TO EXPLORE THE SCOTTISH ISLANDS, AND WE WERE ONLY ABLE TO SCRATCH A SMALL PART OF THE SURFACE OF THIS COASTAL PARADISE.



Highland Cattle
grazing above
Loch Lomond
© iStockphoto

FEATURE | A HIGHLAND FLING

perfectly flat calm seas that were to accompany us for the majority of our trip – we certainly were not expecting that! Our first stop was the tiny island of Easdale, once the centre of a thriving Scottish slate mining industry and now probably best known as the location for the World Stone Skimming Championships! We didn't know such a competition existed, but it has been running annually in Easdale since 1983, now attracts over 300 contestants from around the world and requires skills that are definitely worth a YouTube

watch if you get the chance!

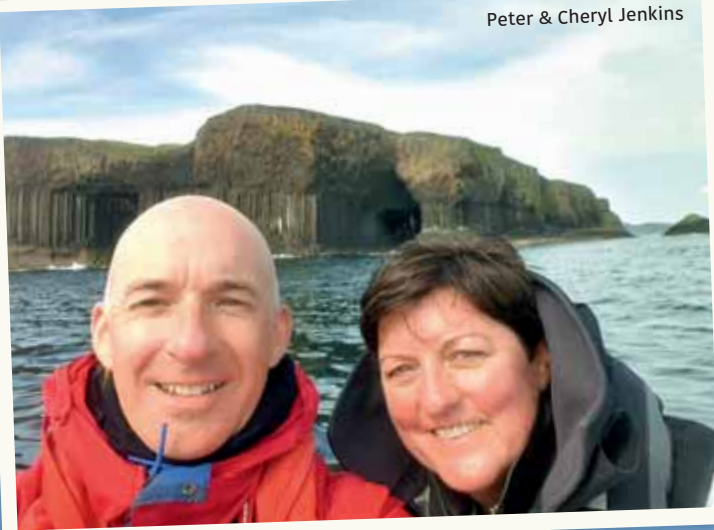
Passing by the natural arch cliff formations and fabulous waterfall at Carsaig, we then rounded the Ross of Mull, picking our way through the notorious Torran Rocks and onto the little Isle of Iona. This quiet, remote island with its famous abbey, considered to be the focal point of the spread of Christianity throughout Scotland, made an idyllic lunch stop and leg stretch for us, and it's easy to understand why thousands make the pilgrimage here each year.

Almost directly north of Iona



Iona Pier

Peter & Cheryl Jenkins



stands Staffa (from the Norse meaning 'Pillar Island') – a unique geological phenomenon recognised as one of the wonders of the natural world. The volcanic island is made entirely from hexagonal basalt columns. This is a sight with which we are already familiar, as with Northern Ireland's famous Giant's Causeway on our doorstep, Staffa is often considered to be the 'other end of the causeway'! One of Staffa's most impressive features is Fingal's Cave, a naturally created 20m-high sea cave, shaped in a cathedral-like structure, which we were able to carefully nose up into. Staffa is also home to many seabirds

and a breeding colony of puffins during the summer months, and we were treated to hundreds of these bright-orange beaks and webbed feet flying all around us!

Our final detour of the day was through the Sound of Ulva, a picturesque rock-hopping route through a myriad of tiny islands. The new pontoon here makes an easy and well-sheltered stop, although we were unfortunately just too late to grab a coffee at the recommended Boathouse on Ulva. We headed onwards to our overnight stop, the bright multicoloured bay of Tobermory, better known to some as the TV-famous Balamory.





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Basalt rock formation inside Fingal's Cave on the island of Staffa.
© iStockphoto.com - SteveAllenPhoto



DAY
02

**Tobermory–
Ardnamurchan
Point–Isle of
Eigg–Sound of
Sleat–Portree, Skye**
[approx. 20km]

We were keen to experience Hebridean island life as much as

possible, as well as the stunning Scottish seascapes that surround them, and one such location that had caught our attention was the community-owned Isle of Eigg. This small island has a fascinating history, superb wildlife and a vibrant community. It is owned by the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust,

who have managed it on behalf of the community since the land reform buyout in 1997, giving them complete control of their island. The islanders meet every Tuesday evening to discuss island matters, and you can immediately feel the sense of pride and community among those that call this place

‘home’. Among other achievements, Eigg has the first completely wind-, water- and sun-powered renewable electricity grid in the world. It’s also known for its unusual geology, with a dramatic pitchstone ridge (the largest of its kind in Europe) dominating its skyline, almost like a dorsal fin. Standing at 393m, it offers spectacular panoramic views of the Small Isles, Skye and the mainland, and on a clear day you can see all the way to the Outer Hebrides. We contacted Eigg Adventures, who could not have



Easdale Signpost, Paris, Sydney and Pub



Sandy beach on the Isle of Eigg.
© iStockphoto.com



THE ISLANDERS MEET EVERY TUESDAY EVENING TO DISCUSS ISLAND MATTERS

been more helpful in advising us where we could secure the boat and how best to use our limited time. Even at low tide, we were able to pull alongside the concrete slip, offload our gear and then pull the RIB up the wall as far as possible to ensure that the doctor who visits the island every Wednesday for a clinic still had space to alight.

The round-trip hike to the summit of An Sgùrr took us around three hours, and other than navigating a few boggy sections in the middle and a slight scramble towards the top, it is very a doable and rewarding challenge. We were slightly disappointed not to spot either of the large native raptors on the island, namely the white-tailed sea eagle and the golden eagle, but the walk itself and the views from the top were simply stunning, and the home-made vegetable soup from the pub was an excellent reward on our return to the bottom.

Back on the boat and heading further northwards, we entered the Sound of Sleat and moved on towards Loch Alsh, a busy stretch of water where the tidal streams



The harbour, Tobermory on the Isle of Mull with its colourful houses.
© iStockphoto.com



Eigg An Sgurr Walk - Cheryl



Eigg An Sgurr
Walk Summit



DAY 3 | A HIGHLAND FLING

can run at up to 8 knots. We stopped long enough to watch Glenachulish, the last manually operated turntable ferry still in operation in Scotland, and to catch a rather grey, misty photograph of the famous Eilean Donan Castle, which apparently appears on more Scottish shortbread tins than any other, before scooting under the impressive Skye Bridge and onwards to our home for the night, Portree, on the Isle of Skye.

DAY
03

Exploring the Isle of Skye

The village of Portree overlooks a sheltered



Eilean Dinan castle
© iStockphoto.com

bay on the east coast and is the capital of the island of Skye. Its name comes from the Gaelic for 'port on the slope', an apt description as we were soon to find out. Numerous tourist companies offer sightseeing bus trips around the island, but feeling somewhat energetic, we opted to explore the island at our own pace under pedal power. Tackling the hills around the 50-mile Trotternish loop of the

north-eastern peninsula certainly wasn't for the faint-hearted, and we soon found that our bodies weren't quite as well oiled or maintained as the excellent Scott road bikes we hired from the Skye Bike Shack! Thankfully the elevation gains created some incredible views as we inched our way around the coastline, and regular opportunities to take a welcome breather and a few obligatory selfies. We passed such



Skye Cycle Bikes

iconic landmarks as the Old Man of Storr, a bizarre pinnacle of rock at the foot of the Storr summit; Lealt Falls, a picturesque waterfall framed by lush greenery; and Kilt



Skye Bridge
© iStockphoto.com

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Tried and tested Personal and safety gear

Over the years we have refined our safety and personal gear on board. Of course, everyone has their own opinion and preferences, but here are a few of our tried and tested favourites.

Garmin EchoMAP CHIRP 55cv: While so many chartplotters on the market are moving towards touch screens, we opted for the more basic button-operated version – experience has shown that touch screens on a console in an open RIB just don't work! We would have loved a bigger screen, but space on our console is limited, so this model was a compromise – but it has served us well. All our route planning and waypoints were completed on Garmin HomePort software on a PC at home, then simply transferred to the chartplotter itself and uploaded to an iPad and iPhone as a backup (we use both Garmin ActiveCaptain and Navionic charts on these devices). We also had a laminated pack prepared for each day made up of printed charts, route waypoints, approximate timings and fuel consumption, tidal information, and details and pictures of marinas, harbours and places of interest along the way.

LifeProof phone covers: We have both used LifeProof FRE fully enclosed covers on our phones for several years now, not just for use on the boat but also for kayaking and cycling. They aren't the cheapest product on the market but they do a fantastic job of keeping our smartphones (currently an iPhone and a Samsung Galaxy) dry from the elements and protected from bumps and knocks. Believe us when we say we have tested these cases to the full – they are indestructible!
www.lifeproof.co.uk

Overboard waterproof backpacks: Pretty much everything has the potential to get wet on an open RIB, so keeping personal clothing and toiletries dry is vital! We love these Overboard 30L waterproof backpacks, which have gone on many an adventure with us. The roll-top sealing system keeps gear bone-dry, and the padded shoulder straps make the trek to the B&B or hostel so much easier after a long day on the water.
www.over-board.co.uk

Musto MPX offshore race smock: While drysuits are recommended for heavy-weather ribbing, this Musto GORE-TEX smock has become my firm favourite piece of waterproof outer clothing. It's lightweight, breathable and easy to wear, feels much less bulky than other jackets, and yet when the weather turns it still boasts all the features that you want, including a high collar and hood. I've had this for a few years now – it has been constantly tested by the typically wet Irish weather and is still going strong, offering outstanding waterproof protection. The matching dungarees are also great, but amazingly didn't come out of the locker on this trip!
www.musto.com

Gecko open-face marine helmets with visor: While we have still failed to find an easy storage solution for these, they are worth the sacrifice of precious storage space 10 times over in stormy weather, particularly in driving rain. We could not have done without them in the PBR Round Ireland 2013, and they have been a regular feature on many of our trips since. They are lightweight and the inflatable liner makes them very comfortable to wear even for long sessions.
www.geckohelmetgear.com

Crewsaver Ergofit 190N life jackets: Great life jackets packed full with important features that are compact and easy to wear at all times without compromising on safety. We both wear McMurdo FastFind 220 PLBs permanently fixed on the life jacket harness at all times, together with a line cutter and handheld Cobra floating VHF.
www.crewsaver.com / www.mcmurdogroup.com



TOP: Portree © iStockphoto.com ABOVE: Uig town, Skye © iStockphoto.com

Rock, a cliff formation of basalt rock columns, while also taking up the excellent recommendation of stopping at the Single Track Art Gallery & Espresso Bar in Kilmaluag, which offered fantastic coffee, wonderful home baking and stunning views. After a long but extremely rewarding day in the saddle, we were relieved to hit the downhill run back into Portree, returning to a well-earned hot shower, a delicious dinner and an early night ready for our return leg the next day.

the Sound of Raasay, across Loch Alsh into the Sound of Sleat and a short stop at the marina in Mallaig to refuel.

Before heading further south, however, we had one last detour on our wish list. The Old Forge in the village of Inverie claims a spot in the Guinness Book of Records as the remotest pub in mainland Britain, with no roads in or out, and accessible only via an 18-mile hike over the munros or a 7-mile sea crossing by boat! Despite the effort required to get there, it is well worth a visit to enjoy its traditional vibe, lively atmosphere and amazing views of Loch Nevis. We managed to carefully coincide our arrival

DAY
04

**Portree-Sound
of Sleat-
Mallaig-Inverie-
Ardnamurchan
Point-Sound of
Mull-Dunstaffnage**

As we slipped ropes early the next morning, it seemed we were again going to be blessed with perfect sea conditions for our return to Dunstaffnage, a planned passage of just over 100nm. With flat calm seas and running with the tide, we made good progress southwards, down



13 Swing at Inverie, Loch Nevis



with the lunchtime menu - fresh Loch Nevis langoustine, hand-dived Arisaig scallops, Loch Nan Uamh rope mussels, Mallaig smoked salmon, Isle of Rum water lobsters, Skye oysters, monkfish, hake and fresh sea bass, to name just a few of the mouth-watering options on offer!

With both boat and crew now well fuelled up for the final few miles, our next key waypoint was Ardnamurchan Point (the most westerly point of mainland Britain). The idyllic conditions gave us panoramic views across the Hebrides, and numerous pods of porpoises joined us as we cruised towards the Sound of Mull. This busy shipping channel is a popular area for visiting yachts, and of course the regular CalMac ferries that transport people and vehicles between all of the islands.

Our final rest stop was at Duart Castle, one of the last privately owned clan castles in Scotland, proudly guarding the sea cliffs of the Isle of Mull. Even with the

WE CONTACTED **EIGG ADVENTURES**, WHO COULD NOT HAVE BEEN **MORE HELPFUL** IN ADVISING US WHERE WE COULD SECURE THE BOAT AND HOW BEST TO USE **OUR TIME**.



scaffolding that currently surrounds its perimeters, it is an impressive sight and instantly recognisable from feature films such as Entrapment and When Eight Bells Toll. From Duart Point it was a quick final run across the Firth of Lorn and back into the familiar waters of

Dunstaffnage.

All too soon our Scottish adventures were over. The Scottish scenery had been simply stunning, the people friendly and warm, the conditions perfect, and we were able to complete all that we had hoped to - and more. A small RIB

really is a perfect way to explore the Scottish islands, and we were only able to scratch a small part of the surface of this coastal paradise. I think we'll be back! [PBR](#)

Total trip: 270nm (310 miles).
Total fuel used: 194L

☺ 'Forging' Ahead.

The waterside 'Old Forge' at Inverie, near Knoydart by Mallaig, is registered in the Guinness Book of Records as "The Remotest Pub and Seas Food Restaurant on Mainland Britain", but it's also been awarded, three years running in fact, Best Independent Pub in Scotland, Best Pub on the World wide ranking by Oonagh Shiel 2014 and been featured in the 5 best Country-life Pubs in UK for the last 5 years, the 10 Best Remote Pubs in the World for the last 7 years, Best Highland Experience on Lonely Planet 2019/2020 and Best Recommended Gastro Pub on "Restaurant GURU" 2020. This unique waterside establishment is famed for its passion for highland food and fresh local

products; including lobster, langoustines, mussels, hand-dived scallops, venison and Scottish beef. The pub also prides itself in its drinks menu too and even offers its own beer, 'Remoteness', as well as a fine single malt selection. When visiting via boat, the jetty and visitors moorings allow for 8 craft to moor free of charge, (when dining), and if you wish to perhaps use The Old Forge as a base from which to explore and cruise, then The Old Byre is the Forge's own deluxe, self-catering accommodation/ hunting lodge. There is also a helipad for those of you considering a flying visit!

www.theoldforge.co.uk
www.theoldbyrelkoydart.com





Shakespeare GALAXY INFL8

The world's first inflatable VHF antenna

A brand well known for manufacturing VHF aerals of performance and durability, Shakespeare Marine's latest product is being hailed as the world's first inflatable emergency VHF antenna. Thanks to its highly creative design and employment of technology, the GALAXY INFL8 benefits from being unlike any other antenna on the market. When stowed away, the inflatable antenna boasts an impressive and compact size at 240x140x40cm and is lightweight at only 500g. Once deployed, the 3dB antenna automatically inflates to 1.6m via an embedded canister or manual tube. Then, once activated, the GALAXY INFL8 is tuned into the Marine Band (156-162 MHz) and matches the performance of any standard 3dB antenna. According to its makers, the aerial offers a range up to three times greater than any existing helical fixed or emergency antenna, ensuring maximum range during day-to-day use or in an emergency at sea.



This innovative product has been designed with multiple features to enhance users' safety while on the water, including contrasting colours to allow it to be seen day and night. There are hook and loop

straps mounted on the antenna, allowing for quick and easy installation in any weather. Due to its inflatable design, the manual valve is reusable, so it can be deflated and stowed away safely until it is needed. Particularly in the case of an emergency involving casualties in the water, the aerial of the GALAXY INFL8 is a beneficial aid to SAR teams as its prominent height amidst the waves can potentially also help increase detection.

The GALAXY INFL8 can be stowed anywhere on board (inside or outside the vessel), and its dedicated dry bag ensures the inflatable antenna stays compact and ready for deployment. (The weatherproof bag is also openable with one hand – an important consideration when multitasking or for use in an emergency.) This technology, patented to Shakespeare Marine, has already won seven prestigious awards for innovation, technology and safety within the industry, including the highly acclaimed DAME Award in the Lifesaving and Safety Equipment category last year, plus the Innovation Award at the inaugural Maritime UK Awards.

The product's RRP is £149.99. See www.shakespeare-marine.com for all further information.

LEFT: The X4 and X8 suspension units have small footprints.



SHOX Shock Mitigation Seat Technology

SHOX are one of several contenders in the rapidly growing field of shock mitigation.

This Canadian company offers a variety of options to suit various levels of use - and budgets. Their basic gas shock option comes in two sizes: the 4in-travel X4 and the 8in-travel X8. Both these are pedestals onto which any seat can be mounted, so boatbuilders can keep with a common theme by using their own seat designs. The taller X8 offers greater versatility as it can cope with heavier occupants than the X4 and harder sea conditions, as well as offering a greater seat height. Both models can have their preload adjusted either via an air compressor or, more realistically, with an optional hand pump, so the skipper has a degree of choice as to how he fine-tunes his seating.

SHOX also build a range of different offshore seating systems, some to military specifications, which can be fitted to the X4 and X8. Probably the most popular are the 3200, the 3400 and the 3700, all of which can be ordered with either pedestal. This range of armchair bucket seats are offered with several optional extras, including footboards for the taller X8 mounted units, and all offer

360-degree rotation. For those that still want an old-school jockey design, there is the X4 mounted 3900, which, with its compact footprint, will be an ideal seating set-up for a RIB. All seat units use an anodised aluminium construction with waterproof marine vinyl upholstery.

Contact www.shoxs.com



Their top-of-the-range military seating can be fitted with a wide range of extras.



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Grant Wyness MUSES ABOUT LIFE ON A FISH PRO ...

For six months now, my Sea-Doo Fish Pro has consistently generated indelible memorable experiences. From the get-go, geographically speaking, I hit the floor running. Boosted by Plymouth Sound's complex tidal/freshwater system, my jet ski savvy fast-tracked to the point where an offshore jaunt has become my preferred pursuit. During my

first few weeks, often in awe, I learned my machine's secrets. The confused sea state common in my home harbour shaped my mind and muscles pronto; the hidden hydrodynamics of seawater on such a small thoroughbred vessel are something to behold. I have felt hyper-alive in these moments - a double eye-opener and a confidence boost for my middle-aged bones. But what about the

bad stuff, the issues, the regrets, the unspoken bits?

Living with your PWC

If you are in the market for a PWC (personal watercraft/jet ski), it's likely you have collected the full pre-purchase set of glossy brochures depicting an idyllic version of ski life. For good reason, they don't show their human models fending off from barnacle-

infested pontoons while pumping litres of flammable hydrocarbons between their legs! Of course not, it's tedious - but it's a regular and serious part of ski life. Fuel barges are all different and built to deal with 'normal' boats. PWCs sit low on the water and are subject to every bit of biological scabrous growth or errant ironwork a marina can offer. The standard wooden planking, tyres or composite pontoon fendering are commonly sited high above jet ski gunwales.

Prior to my very first fuelling attempt, I conducted on foot what I thought was a reasonable reconnaissance of my marina's fuel depot. The Mayflower Marina has a very tidy set-up and it looked straightforward to rope a pair of fenders on the ski and do the business. In reality, my shiny purchase heaved towards gelcoat doom while I fumbled with the fender positioning. A hearty shove and some reverse thrust got me away. It's not until you actually come alongside that you can make an informed decision with these uniquely shaped craft. I had attached fore and aft (size 1) Majoni-style fenders with lovingly spliced blue rope. The forward cleats on the Fish Pro are magnificent lashing points,



Grant's GEAR

By default, you are seated

nasties and the ski doesn't budge a muscle - this is vital, I found, while administering fuel, and it also assists getting on and off with some semblance of style/safety. Two hands are needed to wield the nozzle, as dregs of fuel can be sloshed on you and the ski if you're not paying attention. Please remember to pull the kill cord to disengage any power systems. Although pontoon berthing has now become the norm, if your ski lives on a trailer you can of course

Above: The essential selection for a full Fish Pro experience.



Spearfishing TOP TIPS

A 5mm camouflaged hooded open-cell wetsuit is the minimum thickness for UK waters; 7mm is best for long duration/exposure. The Picasso brand will fit a chunkier body type. Get sound brand advice from spearfishing.co.uk

Open-cell wetsuits don't have inner linings, which makes the neoprene vulnerable to tearing while donning. You need to lubricate the inside first – a strong water-based solution of baby shampoo or a conditioner of your choice will make the suit slide over you like a skate on ice.

Thin surfing or budget supermarket wetsuits (with or without hood) are not recommended – water temperatures drop rapidly only a few feet under, and cramps and head freeze are dangerous.

Never dive alone. Experienced spearfishing folk manage their breathing regime either via a dive watch or strong discipline – repetitive dives can starve you of oxygen and leave you overdosed on residual carbon dioxide.

Carry a diver's knife for cutting fishing line or rope tangles and dispatching your fish.

Buying the best-quality gear will serve you well in the long run – cheap suits and spearguns are a waste of time.

Remember the laws regarding catch quotas – if you spear more than your daily limit the fines are huge. Spear only what you can eat.

Learn your species to avoid spearing inedible or undersized fish.

Not something you would catch the real Greta doing!



A single cleat is better than two!

fill up at a service station. And that is it for the negatives, folks!

Fishing Sea-Doo Style

Fishing on the Sea-Doo Fish Pro is a uniquely potent situation – luxury seating with uncommon stability. It's intriguing to watch other leisure fishing boats heaving nauseously in the swell while I'm barely moving. Everything's to hand – tackle, bait, cold storage, extra clothing, anchor, music, picnic, Cobra portable VHF, phone and charging point, all neatly stowed on my 50+ mph projectile. But there's an element missing. I visualised the ski as a craft to share two-up with others, but in

reality it hasn't happened often. My wife has been out with me several times and once jumped overboard in a 'wild swimming' moment off the Great Mewstone (visible from Wembury Beach in Devon). On returning we moored up at the brilliant Marina Cafe in Millbrook, Torpoint, for burgers to die for. All nice things to do for sure, but nothing since. The odd friend has come out and no doubt they've had memorable experiences, but it's a rare thing. The most notable double-up stemmed from a serendipitous moment during a visit by my teenage cousin Añu. On 14th August 2019, Greta Thunberg

was to set sail from my home marina, and my cousin was a huge fan (I didn't know). Due to a media lockdown, Añu had no idea what Greta's movements were. I literally discovered Greta from a Mayflower Marina Instagram post and I asked Añu if she had heard of her. My now very silent cousin turned on her heels and headed off for a few moments, returning with Greta's book.

Mistaken Identity

We arrived early at the marina and the media scrum was full on. The entire world was represented, it seemed. Añu has a passing Greta

**LURCHING TOWARDS
THE ROCKS OF
PLYMOUTH'S
BREAKWATER WHILE
JIGGING FOR MACKEREL
FILLS ME WITH NO
DREAD AT ALL.**



The Greta media send-off. Her boat came back later to fix the mainsail which wouldn't unfurl.

resemblance inasmuch as she is 16, fair and had tied her hair into pigtails. This caused a major ripple in the media's composure. Añu and I played the game for as long as we could stand it. Watching journalists fawning over Añu, then swiftly retreating realising they had been duped (only when told?), was hilarious sport - I was impressed with their ability to mask embarrassment with faces befitting poker professionals. Sadly, a couple of people were darn right creepy in their approach.

I could see why Greta's parents keep her away from the throng. A smart-looking German TV crew came over and asked Añu if she would do an interview (as herself, not Greta). After a bit of encouragement, Añu made the six o'clock German news that day. We left the pandemonium behind and waited for Greta on my parked ski. I figured she would have to walk right by my pontoon to get to her boat, the Malizia II. On cue, Greta walked by and Añu got her book signed with a brief chat. For the

next hour we cruised out with the media flotilla to the breakwater. I think some older-cousin brownie points were earned that day.

Spearfishing

I was attracted to the Fish Pro by its multi-sport/activity potential and as such saw it as a fine platform for spearfishing. As a young man in Australia, I saw spearfishing as a rite of passage - a concept my distant ancestors would've nodded sagely at. The apple, they say, never falls far from

I CAN SAY
NOW WITHOUT
RESERVATION THAT
THE **FISH PRO** HAS
BEEN **TOTALLY**
DEPENDABLE - A
MANUFACTURING
WONDER IN MY
OPINION, **WORTHY OF**
ITS MONEY.



1. Gulls eating what they're supposed to.
2. Joe accepting wrap No1 - he polished off three...
3. Cooking on the Fish Pro provides much bewilderment to shore-based onlookers - Joe here was beside himself with hunger.





the tree; the pursuit of wild food is now decisively central to my well-being. But spearfishing from a jet ski or a boat has a caveat - you shouldn't do it alone. Lots of bad things can happen if you get into a tangle - or hypoxia. Two people on a ski with all the gear can be done, but it's a bit cosy. I had an idea.

YouTube is my primary source of entertainment and I subscribe to a number of aquatic-loving characters. I follow one channel with great interest: Joe PK. His harpooning ability is outstanding, yet he does it with a strong environmental and educational bent. I knew he was based somewhere between Devon and Cornwall, so I sent him a message. We met up and decided to do a catch and cook to see if our collaboration would work. It was Plymouth International Fireworks competition day. Within 30 minutes of Joe's launch, we had a haul of mackerel. We pulled into the shelter of Mount Edgcumbe Bay and cemented the new friendship over harissa-charged crispy fried mackerel wraps. As it got dark, Joe anchored off the



Needless to say I got very wet this stormy day.

backside of the firework display (Mountbatten Breakwater), and I tethered my ski to his bijou RIB. This firework vantage point isn't for the delicate - the explosion shockwaves over water at this range are chest-shatteringly fantastic. We might have been tiny against all the big spectator yachts anchored around us, but unlike them we weren't suffering the exaggerated pendulum motion from windage. We had to laugh - we observed champagne sloshing and heard cussing all over the place. Never will understand single-hull sailboats, Joe and I

concur. I think the owner of the 50ft cat next to us thought so too!

Docking

A large part of my jet ski enjoyment has been facilitated by being able to rapidly deploy it. The Ez Port Max 2i is the perfect dispatch and retrieval device. Pushing 400 kilos of machinery off the rollers is a doddle, and driving the big Fish Pro back on is something I always look forward to. The unsinkable dock sits quietly all this time without incident, stilled from the strong prevailings by two snubber lines spliced

THE COUNTLESS TIMES I'VE **STOPPED THE ENGINE TO FISH**, THE **MIGHTY ROTAX ENGINE** HAS **INSTANTLY BARKED BACK INTO LIFE** ON DEMAND.



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Sea-Doo Fish Pro GOOD PRACTICE

Flush the jet nozzle unit out after every trip - turn the engine on, wait a few seconds, turn on the hose, check for flow, count 90 seconds, turn off the water, wait a few seconds, turn off the engine.

Buy a cover - the ski will look brand new for years to come.

Buy a lifting kit - many marina cranes can't cope with the small slippery shape of a jet ski.

Purchase the electric bilge pump optional extra - it gets the salt out fast. My engine bay is like new.

Spray the special Sea-Doo inhibitor all over your engine if you find yourself ingressing seawater via 'enthusiastic' activities - the salt will make your engine age rapidly and may cause reliability issues.

Wear a portable submersible VHF - don't bury it under all your gear. If you're thrown into the water, it isn't any good to you 20m away.

Buy a high-quality fishing reel - mine is waterproof and happily copes with the wake spray all day long.

Buy two plastic tub trugs to fit inside the big Sea-Doo cooler - good for separating the fish from your lunch.

As an ice mould, use a large bowl the same shape as the bottom fifth of the trug. Double up and fill two zip-lock bags with water and place the bowl and bags in the freezer - saves a fortune on buying ice, plus it lasts all day.

Buy the Sea-Doo hard case for stowing fishing tackle and suchlike.

Learn how to adjust the cruising speed settings for the throttle - your hand can get very tired maintaining a steady speed otherwise.

Buy and fit the optional extra battery - it just makes sense.

Sea-Doo riding apparel is well made and fit for purpose.



Above: Plymouth Hoe in full carnival spirit ready for the fireworks. Below: A perfect vantage point for enjoying the display.

with care by me. Plymouth's tide flow can get biblical too. The huge bergs of flotsam swirling in deranged patterns are indicators that if you fall in, it won't be good. Launching the ski into that maelstrom is a regular occurrence and I love it. The jet nozzle ignores all and does your bidding as if it were a calm lake. I have challenged myself and gone out when the forecast hinted at 60+ knot winds. The spray and lumps in the Sound become one giant white horse that likes to play.

Living with the Sea-Pro

I can say now without reservation that the Fish Pro has been totally dependable - a manufacturing wonder in my opinion, worthy of its money. The countless times I've stopped the engine to fish,



the mighty Rotax engine has instantly barked back into life on demand. Lurching towards the rocks of Plymouth's breakwater while jiggling for mackerel fills me with no dread at all. The joys of blasting away from peril with a tiny flick of the throttle will never grow old, and nor will the up-close-

and-personal lessons I have gleaned from my intimate and sometimes precarious dance with the temptations that come with unbridled power and calculated risk.

More adventures with Joe PK in PBR coming soon, with a trip to the Eddystone Lighthouse! **PBR**



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Penn HT 100 waterproof fishing reel - will last for many years in the Fish Pro environment.

DAM Steelpower Light Boat fishing rod - perfect for the Fish Pro.

Rob Allen spearguns, Picasso wetsuits, all the best gear - the most comprehensive stock and help any pro or budding spearfishing aficionado ('spearo') can find in the UK: **www.spearfishing.co.uk**.

The wrong gear will disappoint and hold back your potential.

Your one-stop Sea-Doo shop: **Plymouth Marine Centre, Pomphlett Quay, Billacombe Road, Plymouth, Devon PL9 7HP. Tel.: 01752 407070.**

The OLAS Guardian from Exposure OLAS. The new wireless engine kill switch.

Acting as a virtual 'kill cord' it will stop the engine within two seconds of a person going overboard.

An OLAS Guardian works by wirelessly logging up to 15 crew members to your engines kill switch via small, wearable transmitters, the OLAS wrist Tags and OLAS Float-On light.

If the transmitter is submerged overboard, or is separated by distance, it instantly breaks the connection, cuts the engine and triggers an inbuilt 85 decibel alarm as well as an alarm on your mobile



For RIB and powerboat drivers OLAS Guardian means their boat will stop in an instant should the skipper, or a crew member, get separated from the boat reducing the chances of a serious accident especially from an unmanned or uncontrolled powerboat.

phone if connected. The engine can then be restarted after five seconds and a rescue can be performed.

Exposure Lights, Product Manager Tom Harrop explains: 'For RIB and powerboat drivers worldwide, we all know we should attach our kill cord. Yet, despite the campaigns, people can be easily distracted and even the professionals occasionally forget to reattach when they have left the helm. The OLAS Guardian is a practical tool for everyone on board. As well as being free to move around, if you

or any of your passengers wearing a transmitter go overboard the engine will stop in an instant.'

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ON TEST

EXTREME

885 GAME KING

After recently reviewing the 7.5m Extreme 745 Game King for PBR, **Barry Thompson** checks out the larger, 8.85m, 885 Game King, and finds a boat that makes the best use of the extra space.





APOLOGIES

Last issue some of the pictures used for this test were incorrect, and have therefore been replaced with correct images and the article re-run. Our apologies to the manufacturers and suppliers involved.



They say size matters, and when it comes to boats that is so often true. So, is a 7.5m hardtop that much different from an 8.85m hardtop of an almost identical style from the same manufacturer? I had a chance to find out when I went to Whakatane, New Zealand, to run two Game Kings side by side: an Extreme 745 and an Extreme 885. In the recent October issue of the magazine, I reviewed the Extreme 745 Game King, the boat chosen by Extreme Boats EU Limited to introduce the brand to the European market. Released at the Southampton International Boat Show, the 745 exposed a new market to the style and finish of aluminium boat that Kiwis have been experiencing for many years. Extreme are unquestionably one of the leading brands in New Zealand, with more than 300 boats built annually in their Whakatane-based factory.

The 745 Game King is one of eight models included in the

IT IS SIMPLY A **BOAT** THAT PROVES THAT **SIZE DOES MATTER.**

Game King range, starting with the 6.07m (605 Game King) and going through to the 11.85m (1185 Game King). No matter what the size, they all share the same DNA and design philosophy to provide an exceptional deep-water fishing machine that still retains the versatility to be enjoyed as a family boat. Whether as a fishing platform or weekend cruiser, the Game King range ticks all the boxes.

As in all models in the Extreme Boats range, the 885 Game King is based on a fine-entry hull, high chines with full shoulders and a wide beam for excellent sea handling and stability. At 2.82m, the 885 carries 33mm (1.3in) more beam than the 745 and is 1.42m (4.65in) longer overall. With that extra volume, there is a lot more scope for layout innovations and the 885 Game King has plenty.

Extreme build their boats tough so that you can endure severe sea conditions with a feeling of security and safety. The hull plate has been increased to 6mm, with 4mm sides and decks. If that's not enough for you, there is an option for an 8mm hull, but quite frankly you don't need it. Extreme use the highest-grade alloy, and all structures

are welded with an under-deck subframe that stiffens and binds the hull into one very tight structure. All the buoyancy areas and fuel tanks are pressurised and certified, and aluminium sheet certification can be verified.

Such is the external finish that when the hulls are fully painted it is hardly possible to tell whether it



A wheelhouse designed for proper all-weather use.

EXTREME BOATS HAVE WON SO MANY HUTCHWILCO NZ **BOAT SHOW AWARDS** THEY NEED A SEPARATE ROOM AT THEIR WHAKATANE FACTORY TO **HOLD ALL THE TROPHIES.**

SPECIFICATIONS

Boat design name: Extreme 885 Game King
Builder: Extreme Boats
LOA: 8.85m
Beam: 2.82m
Height on trailer: 3.40m
Deadrise: 21 deg
Construction: Alloy 6mm hull
Towing weight: 3250kg (approx.)
Fuel capacity: 450L
Engine range: Outboard 225-400hp
Test power: 2 x Yamaha 200
Max. speed: 39 knots
MFD: Raymarine 16in
Trim tabs: Lectrotab
Trailer make: Extreme
Price: From \$POA

CONTACT

UK Tel: +44 (0) 792 045 3990
www.extremeboats.eu
info@extremeboats.eu

is alloy or fibreglass, and at many a boat show the hulls get the old 'tap test' to prove they are actually built in alloy. As the Extreme website says, 'The finish is that good!' I certainly can't argue with that.

Custom layout

The most apparent difference between the 745 and the 885 is the amount of area available both in the cockpit and the wheelhouse. With the 885 you have the option of a fully enclosed wheelhouse, or you can leave the back completely open. With the enclosed arrangement there are a number of custom options, such as having a separate port-side head, a starboard-side sink, a rear drop-down window and a central door to the wheelhouse. If you value your cockpit space, you can leave all that out and retain the central door with drop-downs either side. I like the separate head



Spacious and uncluttered aft deck with high gunwales.



Functional modern use of materials, and full of light.





The coach roof affords the opportunity of all manner of add-ons.



The driving position allows clear visibility through the toughened glass screen.

as this is a real must, I feel, if you are going to be using the boat for family cruising. Also, having the ability to enclose the wheelhouse gives you a warm, cosy area in the colder climates, which can be boosted with the addition of a small heater. Roof hatches and sliding side and rear windows provide plenty of ventilation.

As this is a boat destined for fishing, it is only natural that the cockpit is set up for the task. Across the transom there is a central bait station with tackle drawers under a large cutting board, a live bait tank and a single (twin option) transom

walk-through. An optional cage around the aft platforms allows you to carry your fishing experience right to the extreme edges of the boat. Rod storage is in wide side trays or overhead, and there is plenty of wet locker space in the sole for dive gear.

Inside the wheelhouse there are, once again, a variety of custom modules available. As on our test boat, a dinette and convertible berth to port and galley opposite behind the helm is the most popular. It's a practical layout that works, giving extra accommodation, plenty of storage and a galley

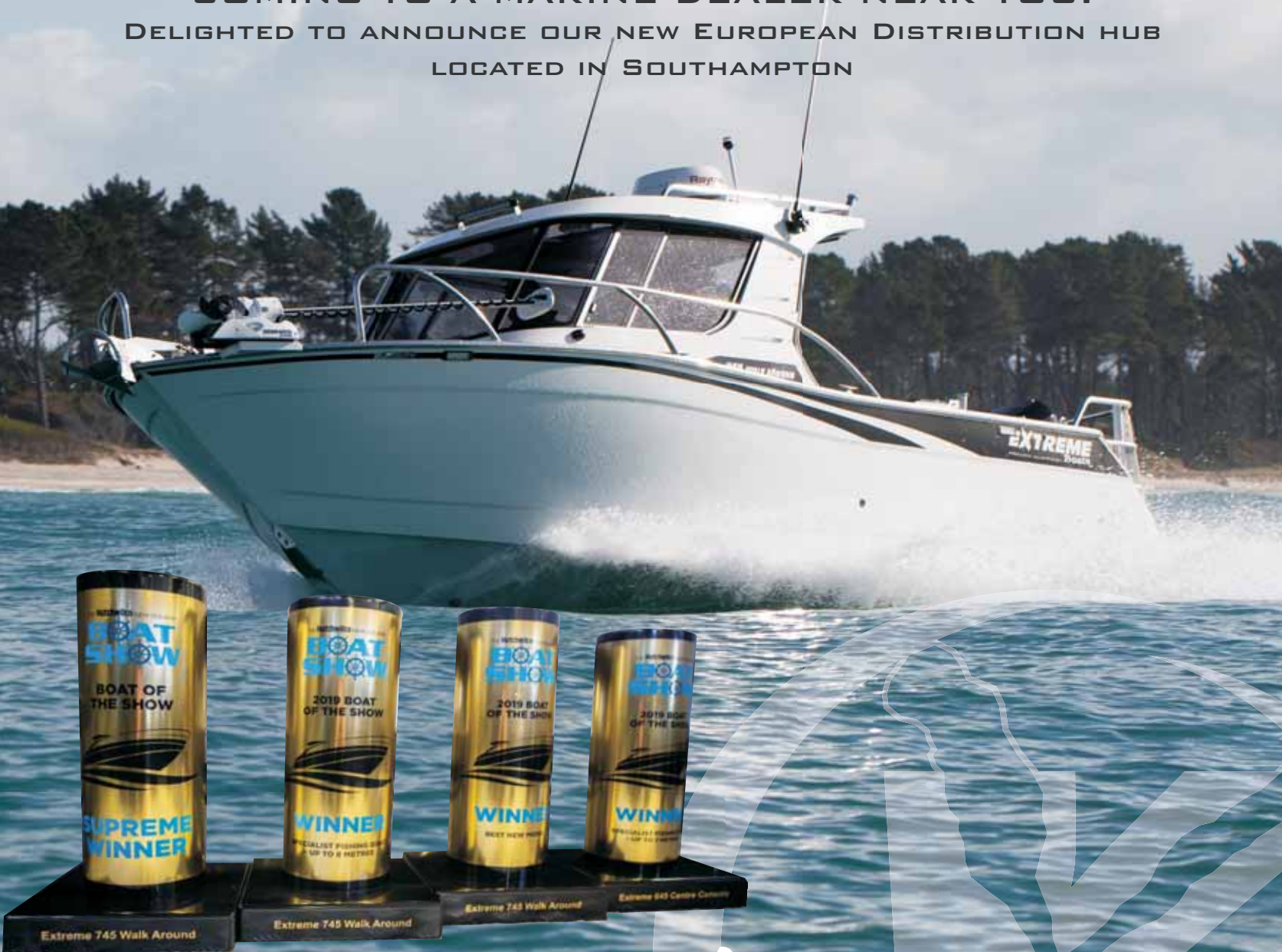
PERFORMANCE DATA

RPM	Knots	L/h	L/nm	Range (nm)
1000	4.6	5.4	1.200	330
1500	6.3	9.9	1.600	250
2000	7.8	16	2.100	190
2500	9.2	23.9	2.600	150
3000	14.6	33.9	2.400	160
3500	20.0	39.4	2.000	200
4000	25.5	53.5	2.100	190
4500	29.3	71.3	2.500	160
5000	32.0	78.4	2.500	160
5500	37.5	144	3.900	100
6000	39.0	150	3.900	100

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CONDITIONS WITH A
FEELING OF SECURITY
AND SAFETY.**

with a fridge/cooker combo. If you choose to have no wheelhouse wall, a popular option is curved seating with the ability to accommodate a cooker, fridge and storage drawers. One area that remains virtually unchanged between the two boats is the dash. It is set at the right angle to easily read the MFD, which in our case was a 16in Raymarine Hybrid Touch. You can fit a couple of 12in screens, and there is still plenty of real estate for all the extras you need, such as gauges, switches, autopilot and VHF. The driving position, both seated and standing, was at the right height for me, with clear visibility through the toughened glass screen. A suspension seat is also available.

Following along the cruising theme, the 885 Game King has an extra-large berth forward, made up of twin side squabs and an infill. If there was no wheelhouse wall and separate toilet, you could fit a head forward under the cabin squabs.

Double racks either side look after a lot of storage, and the full-cabin fabric lining means there is no indication anywhere that this is an alloy boat. There is a pipe berth option, which, when not used as a bunk, is a great gear shelf. You can also have a curtain to add some privacy to the forward cabin.

Awesome performance

You have the option of single or twin outboards or a single diesel sterndrive 200-450 hp, with the majority being sold with a single outboard. For our review we had two 200hp Yamaha V6 outboards, which returned a top speed of close to 40 knots.

Running the boat in the light to moderate sea state off Whakatane didn't do the boat justice, and I would have liked to have gone out wider. The active volcanic White Island is about 26nm offshore, so a run out and back would have been a great test. Maybe next time.

The twin Yamaha 200s pack enough punch for the 3000kg (approx.) 885 Game King to make it a slippery boat through the water. The boat planes easily and without much throttle and has a real sweet cruise around 25.5 knots @ 4000rpm. The fuel consumption recorded was 53.5Lph, and we had a range of 190nm.

The deep-vee hull and wide chines dissipate the water and provided a soft, smooth ride in the chop. Like all big hardtops, when you have wind and tide and wave patterns all mixing together around the boat, trim tabs proved ideal for maintaining a level attitude. The flooding keel does a great job in keeping the boat extremely stable at rest, and the water is expelled just about as quickly as the time it takes to get onto the plane.

Award winner

Extreme Boats have won so many Hutchwilco NZ Boat Show awards they need a separate room at their Whakatane factory to hold all the

trophies. Considering how hard it is not only to be a finalist but to actually win an award, that is a massive credit to owners Glenn and Diane Shaw and the staff of this Kiwi builder. The 885 Game King was released a few years ago and over the years has undergone a number of tweaks and changes internally to make it even better. Externally, the only difference is that the sheer line has been raised since the earlier models.

If the European buyers liked what they saw in the 745 Game King, they are going to be overwhelmed when they get to experience the 885. It is simply a boat that proves that size does matter. [PBR](#)



The Extreme being trailerable is a real plus.



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RING RANGER

25

Greg Copp SETS
OUT TO DISCOVER
WHETHER RING'S
REPUTATION FOR
PRODUCING HIGH-
QUALITY OFFSHORE
POWERBOATS HAS
BEEN MAINTAINED
WITH THEIR
LATEST OFFERING,
THE RANGER 25 ...



If you have a taste for fast offshore boats, you will be familiar with the name Ring. Established by powerboat racer Mike Ring in 1968, Rings would soon be setting records, often in the hands of Mike himself. They became renowned for high-speed rough-weather handling, and durability. Through the evolutionary process of trial and error that the then newly evolving boat industry was grappling with, this brand was soon establishing its range in the leisure and commercial sectors.

Wind forward half a century, and with Mike Ring now involved in the design department of what is now Ring Powercraft, this brand name is still doing what it does best - building bulletproof all-weather fast boats. The Ring Ranger 25 Vengeance, to use its full name, is based on the deep-vee multi-chine hull of the classic and still current Ring 25. It is, however, very different, as it has no long foredeck housing a low two-berth cuddy. Consequently it looks bigger and is hugely practical, with a lot of

attention paid to simple details. Like many modern sports boats, it is designed on a principle that the motor industry learnt years ago: something fast and exciting still has to have a domestic twist. The most obvious slant in this area is the head, and a damn good one it is. Often I have come across open boats with big price tags that have toilet doors that spring open on a rough day. Not so with the Ranger, as the two sturdy recessed door catches stay shut when required, opening to reveal a deep head

compartment with a flushing toilet and a sink that an adult male can comfortably use.

On a sunny day, the forward seating area converts to a sunbed with its infill, or alternatively a hydraulic pedestal raises a table to create a dining area for four. The deep forward anchor on our test boat was empty inasmuch as it lacked the optional windlass, which is a bit of a shame as you would expect such a high-spec 25-footer to have it as standard. Even so, there is plenty of space





SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 8.1m
Beam: 2.43m
Hull: Deep-vee non-stepped multi-chine
Displacement: 2315kg (dry lightship – no engine)
Power options: From single 200hp outboard (any brand) to single 450hp Mercury Verado
Fuel capacity: 270L (opt. 400L tank)
RCD category: C or B if required
Test engines: Single 400hp Mercury Verado outboard

PERFORMANCE

50.4 knots (2-way average), sea conditions moderate, crew 3, fuel 70%
0-40 knots: 8 seconds

PRICE

From: £88,236 (inc. VAT) (225hp Mercury v6)
As tested: £167,082 (inc. VAT)

CONTACT

Ring Powercraft
 Unit 1, Chichester Harbour Marine Park
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www.ringpowercraft.co.uk

THE RANGER IS AN EXTREMELY SOLIDLY BUILT BOAT, COMING FROM A STABLE THAT BUILDS NUMEROUS CRAFT FOR MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL USE.

to house more anchor chain than you are likely to need. The powder-coated black stainless guard rails have absolutely zero flex, which is in keeping with the

overall bulletproof construction of the boat. The T-top is an extra but one that you are unlikely to ignore. Housed within a sturdy frame, the canvas Webasto roof is electronically controlled, though if you wish you can opt for a fixed T-top. All decking is spongy soft synthetic SeaDek, all the way down and around the splash well, so nobody climbing back on board from the bathing platforms will bash their knees on GRP.



For a 25ft boat, the console is an impressive feature. It is large but does not really appear so until you sit behind it. No weather gets past it, though its height slightly restricts your forward view when climbing onto the plane. The side decks suffer slightly for its width, but this is a price worth paying as it enables three 12in Garmin displays to sit abreast, taking care of all your needs. This may seem like overkill, but Garmin have created a custom screen display specifically for the Ranger, which is located on the central screen and controls all systems. The EmpirBus digital switching system controls the sunroof, all lighting and even the engine jack plates. You do need to take a moment to absorb this information overload before casting off, however.

Seating

The Ranger uses SHOCK-WBV C-series seat suspension units, which are designed for commercial use on craft from 20 to 300 ft. Built to deal with moderate sea states up to 50 knots, they have a



SHOCK-WBV C-series seat suspension units.

proven track record. Manufactured from aluminium tooling plate, the strongest form of aluminium with the tightest tolerances, these units are both strong and light. Built to fit on OEM seat bases, they are a lot cheaper than complete aftermarket suspension seats, while enabling continuity in style and upholstery with the aft bench seating. Further details are available at www.shock-wbv.com.

The aft bench seating may look like a luxury triple bucket seat, but it houses a hidden component: SKYDEX shock mitigating seat inserts. SKYDEX are a high-performance technology company that develops and manufactures customised cushioning seating solutions, using polymer structures for cushioning and impact absorption. This technology has been used for purposes ranging

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAIL

The beautifully crafted Carbonautica monocoque carbon-fibre steering wheel is adjustable and so comes easily to hand, as do the Livorsi race controls.

from the construction of running shoes to military blast protection. In simplistic terms, the internals of the Ranger aft seating do not load up and compress fully from the weight of the occupants; there is always some 'impact compression space' left in reserve for a rough sea. Further details can be found at www.shockmitigation.com.

Driving the Ranger

The first thing that strikes you about this boat when you come to drive it is how hard it is to simply get into the helm seat. I was told that the test boat has the non-bolster helm seats, and that you can have flip-up bolster seats if you want. This is a must,

THE STEERING IS SUPERB - PERFECTLY BALANCED, RESPONSIVE AND WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF OVERREACTION.





as apart from there being no room whatsoever to stand, even thin people have to breathe in to squeeze past the wheel. The seats can adjust back, but only slightly. If you were single-crewed and wanted to get out and do your lines in a hurry, you would be pushed. Also, your proximity to the very 'Gucci' Livorsi race throttle is a bit close for my liking, as when I was in the navigator's seat I caught the throttle twice when getting out of the seat.

All this having been said, when you are ensconced in the driving seat the ergonomics are very

good. The beautifully crafted Carbonautica monocoque carbon-fibre steering wheel is adjustable and so comes easily to hand, as do the Livorsi race controls. You can easily get to grips with the touch screen displays or the remote keypad control, which is crucial when using the displays on a rough day with wet weather.

I should point out that as this boat had just been launched there had been no time for prop testing. The end result was that this boat was 'overpropped' and could not reach its maximum engine speed of 7000rpm. It also meant it was slower off the mark than it should have been, and more frugal at the point it starts to produce max torque – around 4000rpm. Nevertheless, it still drives like a missile. It picks up and is off in a brace of shakes, and with the electronically controlled jack plate taking its orders from the touch screen control, you can easily fettle it to squeeze out those last top-end knots. In our case, this was 50 knots, but I am told it should reach just over 60 – which I do not doubt.

We had a flat day, which was exactly what we did not want, as the multi-chine Ring hull is famed for its rough-weather handling. Though I have never had the chance to find out, I am told

THIS BOAT CAN ALSO CUT INCREDIBLY TIGHT TURNS, TIGHTER THAN ANY OTHER 25-FOOTER I CAN RECALL.



Great lateral support from these helm seats mean you feel totally secure.



Luxury triple rear seating complete with SKYDEX shock mitigation inserts.



Black stainless supports.



Mood lighting sits under the T-top

FUEL FIGURES (Mercury fuel flow meter)

RPM	Speed (knots)	LPH	NMPG
2000	7.3	13.7	2.4
2500	7.8	20.5	1.7
3000	11.1	28.5	1.8
3500	20.3	33.7	2.7
4000	29.1	48.1	2.7
4500	35.8	63.1	2.6
5000	41.1	90.0	2.1
5500	46.7	125.0	1.7
6000 (WOT)	50.4	133.5	1.7

... WHEN YOU ARE
**ENSCONCED IN THE
DRIVING SEAT THE
ERGONOMICS ARE
VERY GOOD.**

that the harder you drive them in the rough, the softer they ride, and they are very composed in a big following sea. The odd bit of sharp wake we managed to find did not make itself felt through the SHOCK-WBV seats. What did impress me was its ability to turn. The steering is superb - perfectly balanced, responsive and without the slightest hint of overreaction. This boat can also cut incredibly tight turns, tighter than any other 25-footer I can recall. In doing so, it heels at an incredible angle, no doubt enhanced by the weight of the boat's T-top. Regardless of how hard you nail the throttle, you can't get a hint of hull slide.

Verdict

The Ranger is an extremely solidly built boat, coming from a stable that builds numerous craft for military and commercial use. Consequently it is laid up in a manner, and with the materials needed, to comply with a variety

of standards, not least Lloyd's. This does get reflected in the cost, but a big chunk of this is the 400hp Verado. I will say that I feel that a smaller engine would spoil its character slightly, and while these engines are still available (the more expensive 450hp Verado will soon replace it), buying one sooner rather than later could make sense. **PBR**

WHAT WE THOUGHT**+ FOR**

- + Granite-like build quality
- + Superbly quick and precise steering
- + Attention to detail
- + Crew security
- + Finish and upholstery
- + Quick off the mark - even overpropped
- + Very good weather protection
- + Large head

— AGAINST

- The test boat had non-bolster seats - no room to stand, and hard to get in and out of
- Long extras list to spec to a realistic standard



A table when needed.



The foredeck seating converts to a double sunbed.



The console works well with its wealth of technology and good ergonomics.



The head sits deep in the hull.

A polar bear is walking across a large, white ice floe in a deep blue sea. The bear is white with a black nose and is moving towards the left. The water is a vibrant blue, and there are other ice floes in the background. The scene is set in a polar region, likely the Arctic.

EXCLUSIVE

A Rite of Passage

HMS interviews Tim Soper, co-founder of EYOS, not only on his voyaging and exploration of the Northwest Passage, one of the most challenging stretches of water in the world, but also on what it takes to be a small-boat/RIB boatman taking charge of the all-important support craft that operate at the sharp end of the EYOS ocean-going Damen exploration vessel.



Tell us, Tim, your father Tony was a well-known TV personality famed for his BBC nature programmes - did this family background influence your co-founding of the EYOS expedition operation?

As a child I was fortunate enough to join my father on some shoots, both in the field and at the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol, and I'm sure this opportunity to appreciate the natural world from a

young age had an influence on the direction my life has taken. More importantly perhaps was our family's love of boats and being on the water, and my father's second career as a lecturer and expedition leader on some of the pioneering expedition ships.

Growing up on the South Devon coast, I was off exploring the estuary in sailing dinghies, rowboats and our horribly underpowered little Bonwitco with its 5hp outboard from a young age.



Learning boat handling, sea conditions and how to not get stuck in the mud early certainly made working aboard expedition ships easier! I also learned to dive in the waters off Dartmouth at nine years old, and a few years later was working as a divemaster at Fort Bovisand in Plymouth, before my first job on an expedition ship as a diver and boat driver. We flew out to Bali to start a voyage through the

Indo-Pacific and some of the best tropical diving in the world, so it was a while before I dived in the UK again!

Your recent explorations through the Northwest Passage have been significant. Can you tell us how these came about and what was involved?

I first visited the Northwest Passage in the mid-90s aboard a Russian research vessel carrying tourists - it was an incredible voyage all the way from Dartmouth to Resolute near the middle of the Passage via the west coast of the British Isles, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland - and have returned to the NWP and high Arctic many times over the years.

Thanks to the expertise learned over these many visits, EYOS has helped several superyachts make this epic voyage, ranging from 120m expedition yachts to 50m sailing yachts. These are some of the most high-profile yachts and owners in the world, so keeping them safe and showing them the wonders of the Arctic is a huge responsibility. The crews of these yachts typically enjoy the experience as much as the owner and guests, loving the adventure and being out in tenders in snow and ice, which is a big contrast from their normal cruising grounds of the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

We were asked to manage the 2012

The advantages of having people understand and appreciate the Arctic will ultimately help with its preservation.

TOP. Northwest Passage, Arctic Canada

1. Colourful houses. © Matthew Coleman - Archimedes

2. Remembering those that explored before us. © Chris Walsh - Archimedes

3. Archimedes navigating the melting ice. © Matthew Coleman - Archimedes

4. Inquisitive Walrus. © Brandon Harvey

5. Old Shack with Archimedes anchored offshore © Flip Nicklin - Archimedes

BOTTOM RIGHT. Hungry polar bear waiting for seals. © Justin Hofman - Archimedes





4

kayaking trips, helicopter flights and RIB sightseeing tours for up to 1,000 passengers (in small groups) in completely wild areas with no outside support. This was a hugely complex operation involving 17 inflatables, two helicopters, 20 kayaks and a team of 45 split across two ships, but it was a great success. Importantly it was approved by the local Inuit communities and the Canadian Coastguard, who initially had some concerns about a ship of this size making the voyage.

This last summer we took The World through again in the opposite direction, setting yet another record, and had an even better trip with amazing wildlife sightings and Northern Lights displays. I was expedition leader for all three voyages and it was a real privilege to

voyage of The World, a 196m private residential vessel, becoming the largest vessel to make a full ocean-to-ocean transit of the Passage.

A few years later, in 2016, we broke this record with a 250m cruise vessel. This voyage was particularly challenging because the ship was not set up for expedition operations, with no small tender or helicopter capability, so we arranged for a support vessel to carry all this equipment and additional personnel to manage Zodiac landings,



5



Main. Polar bear successfully makes a kill to feed herself. © Colin Tennant - The World

1. All wrapped up. © Mike Moore - Crystal Serenity
2. Taking guests out for exploration.
3. A friendly local shows us how she prepares the fish.
4. The melting Ice at Croker Bay.
5. Cured fish hanging to dry.
6. Thick-billed Murres nesting on the cliff.

work with such professional captains, officers, expedition guides and boat drivers, who all played their part in making these very challenging voyages safe and successful.

The EYOS 'mother ships' you use on such expeditions - I understand these are purpose built? Please tell us a little bit about them and their capabilities.

Relatively few private yachts are built with the capabilities to undertake an expedition to the polar regions, although that is changing, with more expedition yachts being launched each year. When required to operate safely in areas hundreds of miles from outside help, we utilise a support vessel to carry additional tenders, helicopters, submersibles and their operators, and provide backup to the main vessel. These may be vessels of opportunity such as offshore support vessels or icebreakers, or more often purpose-built 'Shadow Boats'. The leader in building these support boats is the Dutch shipbuilder Damen. They also build private yachts through their Amels

brand, and we have worked with Damen to develop a range of expedition yachts that have all the comfort and luxury of a yacht while being able to carry all the tenders, equipment and supplies that are needed for voyages to the most remote places on earth. The SeaXplorer range features the 'Axe Bow', making them

faster and more sea-kindly in rough conditions, along with hangar space for two helicopters, large tender garages and even military-style RIB launching to be able to launch boats quickly while underway so that the guests can be out exploring or swimming with whales at a moment's notice.



1

In the Northwest Passage, the patterns of sea ice are changing as the climate warms, and we see big changes in the terrestrial ice, with glaciers and ice caps shrinking.





What have been some of the most awe-inspiring sea conditions your vessels have encountered?

Rough sea conditions go with the territory when cruising through the 'Roaring 40s, Furious 50s and Screaming 60s', but some might be surprised that once you get further north or south the conditions are typically much calmer thanks to the dominant high pressure over the poles – to the point that they are known as the 'Serene 70s'. Seeing the icebergs and mountains reflected in glassy calm and golden midnight sun is perhaps the most awe-inspiring



thing. But of course, while crossing the Drake Passage a few hundred times we have had some big storms, and 50 knots of wind with waves of 7-8 m is not uncommon, but we try to avoid the big systems and normally our crossings are quite calm and beautiful, with icebergs and albatross all around us.

Having said that, I have been humbled by the ferocity of the conditions a few times, particularly years ago when our weather forecast stopped at 60° N or S, so we had much less warning of

impending bad weather. Being out in a Zodiac in winds of 60 or 70 knots with drifting sea ice and blizzard conditions is pretty wild, but I'm always impressed how well these small boats handle these conditions, and it's a good reminder to never become complacent and always be ready for the worst. I think the strongest wind I experienced in Antarctica was 110 knots – we were out on deck adding extra lashings to the Zodiacs, which were thankfully on board at the time.

Our readers will be particularly interested in the support craft you use. What are these and who is responsible for operating them?

The workhorse of these expeditions is the Zodiac Milpro inflatable. These are soft-bottomed so they can navigate very shallow waters and land on rocky beaches, while having reasonably good seakeeping in choppy conditions. Thanks to their trimaran-style hull with speed tubes below the main tubes, they are incredibly stable, manoeuvrable and plane easily with a heavy load. We tend to use the Mk 4 for smaller groups aboard yachts and the Mk 5 or 6 for larger cruise groups up to 18 passengers. They are generally fitted with Yamaha 4-stroke outboards, which work well even in the cold conditions, although we are now starting to look at electric power for a quieter and more environmentally friendly experience.

<https://zodiacmilpro.com/pt-br/hulls>





We also work with other tenders, such as the Polarcirkel, that have ridged polythene tubes and a variety of big RIBs aboard yachts such as the Zodiac Hurricane, Rupert, Ribeye and Goldfish. There are a lot of Targas in Greenlandic communities and these are excellent for long runs away from the yacht, so we sometimes charter one to follow us for the trip. The Icelandic Rafnar hull is incredible for high-speed work in rough seas and is now being chosen by some expedition yachts.

<https://rafnar.is>

However, for working through ice and challenging landings, the Zodiac Milpro is still the best boat available. We are

working on an interesting project with Iguana Yachts to design an expedition version of their well-proven amphibious tender, which drives out of the water on retractable caterpillar tracks. I was sceptical at first, but the system is amazing, making landings easy and comfortable in conditions that would be almost impossible and certainly very wet for regular tenders. The boats are operated by the crew or expedition team depending on the vessel.

<https://www.iguana-yachts.com>

I imagine that it's these smaller craft that enable you to encounter wildlife in the best/most intimate way ...

We do a lot of wildlife watching and



photography from the tenders, and being out on the water in these amazing environments is incredibly rewarding. A tender cruise is the polar equivalent of a game drive on safari in Africa. Whether watching penguins on icebergs, polar bears stalking a seal on the ice, whales feeding or immense seabird nesting cliffs tower above us, the perspective being close to the water and the action is the best.

We have had penguins jumping into the boat, killer whales swimming below us and the spray of a humpback whale blow misting our lenses. In the tropics, watching fruit bats fly over the limestone islands of Raja Ampat or listening to the sounds of the forest around us in a tiny

TOP: Helicopter trips are a fabulous way to appreciate the true grandeur of this scenery. © Richard Sidey - EYOS

1 & 2. Close up and personal with the wildlife.

3. Walrus basking in the sun. © Morgan - Archimedes

4. Polar bear showing an interest in our RIBs. © Richard Sidey - The World

BOTTOM RIGHT: Gorgeous sunset over the ice. © Justin Hofman

The wildlife and its status

In July 2018, writing for the Pacific Standard, journalist Erica Cirino interviewed Donna Hauser, a marine biologist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, who stated: 'We have the opportunity to apply lessons learned about vessel interactions elsewhere in the Arctic, which is a relatively novel, data-poor, rapidly changing and fragile marine ecosystem where vessel traffic is poised to expand.'

Hauser and her colleagues mapped the September ranges of **bearded seals**, **beluga whales**, **bowhead whales**, **narwhals**, **ringed seals**, **polar bears** and **walruses**, then compared this information to data available for ship transits through the Northwest Passage, which connects the north-west Atlantic Ocean to the north-eastern Pacific Ocean, and the Northern Sea route, and in turn connects the Kara Sea to the Bering Strait. Significantly, they found plenty of overlap with 'geographic bottlenecks' in the Bering Strait and eastern Canadian Arctic. These

same scientists also analysed marine mammals' specific sensitivities to ships to get a sense of which animals would be most vulnerable.

'The most susceptible species, narwhals, tended to have behavioural traits that put them in harm's way. The whales tended to return to the same specific regions every summer, which happen to be distributed throughout portions of the Northwest Passage,' Hauser stated. 'Other particularly vulnerable populations included **walruses** and **bowhead** and **beluga whales**. On the other hand, **polar bears** spend most of their time in September on land, so their populations were generally the least at risk from shipping, at least during the late summer months. Unlike many other marine mammals, polar bears also don't rely on underwater sound to feed or communicate. So while the species is in extreme danger from sea ice decline due to climate change, shipping may not top the list of problems they face.'



4





tributary of the Amazon at dawn or dusk can be fantastic, not to mention turtles and whale sharks along the coasts of the Indian Ocean islands. But also, just driving into a little village to watch local people starting their day, fishing or going for a swim can provide incredible photos. Some of the best Zodiac cruising is also

close to home: for example, the cliffs and sea caves of the Scottish Isles are one of the most exciting places to explore, with puffins and seals all around.

How hostile is the Northwest Passage and to what degree does it challenge these smaller craft in your fleet?

The challenge of navigating the Northwest Passage is the sea ice, which blocks the channels between the islands of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago for the majority of the year, only opening for a short period at the end of most summers. The timing of this opening is uncertain, and drifting pack ice can close and open



channels in a matter of hours. This is more of a challenge for the main vessel, but for the smaller craft the ice can still be a factor, opening or closing small channels, or drifting against the shore to make a landing impossible, or worse still picking up a group from a landing or returning to the mother ship. We always take survival gear, satellite communications and a tracker on any boat trip, even on a nice day in benign conditions. Navigating through pack ice combined with cold temperatures and strong winds can be tough on the boats (and the crew!).

Another big challenge is the lack of good surveys and charts along much of the coast. There are no channel markers and a lot of uncharted rocks, so we

MAIN: NWP, Baffin Island. Unspoilt, breathtaking in its grandeur. © Justin Hofman

1 & 2. Cooking up lunch © Holeman

3. Warm feet. © Holeman

4. RIBs preparing to collect passengers from The World. © Richard Sidey - EYOS

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have to be very cautious, particularly when working close to the coast at high speed. In other parts of the world you become accustomed to spotting shallows from the discolouration of the water, disturbed water above a rock or seaweed floating from it. In the polar regions, rocks are scoured clear of weed by the ice, and we are often working in very calm fjord environments with murky water from glacial run-off, so rocks are impossible to see. Combine this with 'glacial erratics', which are large, isolated boulders dropped by retreating glaciers, and we need to be very cautious when driving the boats, and even so over the years we have lost

countless propellers and even whole lower units!

Glaciers and large icebergs are also something we are very cautious of. It's tempting to go close to a big ice face for the view, but they can calve without warning, throwing huge chunks of ice hundreds of metres and kicking up a big wave, a mini-tsunami that can break heavily in the shallows. Another phenomenon that occurs along big tidewater glaciers is 'shooters', where a big piece of ice breaks off the base of the glacier (which can be hundreds of metres deep) and, being buoyant, shoots to the surface without any warning, sometimes far from the ice face.

We also have to be on the lookout for polar bears in the Arctic and be prepared to deal with a bear that comes to the boat, particularly if we were to break down or get trapped in the ice. So we always have bear deterrents and a rifle in the boat with us as well.

There are a few hazards to watch out for, and the only way to be prepared is to have a lot of experience in these situations so you are aware of potential risks. Obviously, the consequences of having people in the water in such low temperatures would be extremely serious. This is why we hire the most experienced guides and boat drivers and do a lot of additional training.



Can you describe some of the most memorable experiences gained thanks to the use of such boats?

We have had so many remarkable experiences out on the water that it is hard to decide which to mention. This summer in the Northwest Passage we had some boats out in a big fjord when a bear was spotted hunting for a seal. It caught it and dragged it out on the ice, tearing strips of blubber off the animal while it was still alive and devouring it just in front of us. It showed us how harsh and raw the natural world can be. On the same trip we had a swimming bear that was fascinated by our yellow kayaks as we were towing them back to





the ship, and proceeded to swim behind them as we towed them slowly around the ship – it was rather comical and gave everyone on board a great view!

We also use the boats to land on ice floes, which can be great fun, particularly when we set up a bar on the ice or have the guests jump in for a 'polar plunge' in waters that can be as cold as -1.5°C (seawater freezes at -1.8°C). One calm night in the Antarctic the sea froze in a thin layer completely across the channel broken by the icebreaker we were working from. We lowered the Zodiacs and they just sat on the ice with the engine leg poking a small hole through. The ice

was quite thin, though, so we could actually start them and drive with the hull sliding above and the propeller below, the leg breaking a little channel that widened as the day went on!

We have also had penguins jump into the Zodiacs to escape seals or killer whales that were hunting them. It was amazing to have a little penguin standing there in the bottom of the boat while a pod of killer whales circled around us in frustration, and needless to say, we got some great photos.

In terms of the Passage itself, what impressions has it left you and your team with in terms of the environment and the discoveries made there?

It is humbling to visit places that took such sacrifices by the early explorers to be discovered. We visit the sites where Franklin's men camped and see remnants of their expedition, sunken ships and the



The systems are complicated, so it's not completely understood how these changes affect the wildlife, but certainly it will need to adapt as the conditions change more in the coming years.

search parties that went looking for them. It's hard to comprehend the hardships and loneliness that they faced, and we realise how fortunate we are to be aboard an ice-strengthened ship or luxury yacht with a satellite connection to the outside world. It certainly makes you appreciate the progress that has been made in only just over 100 years since they set off in search of the Passage.

But in the same time period, that progress has brought immense changes to the polar regions, and we see the effects of climate change first-hand. The changing patterns of the sea ice and retreating glaciers – it's amazing to compare a photo of a glacier taken 100 or even just 20 years ago with the ice today, which is often far back down the fjord or mountain from where it was then. The Arctic is changing, but it remains an incredible place to visit,



1. Arctic exploration

© Brandon Harvey
Photography -
Asteria

2. NWP from the air. © EYOS
Expeditions

3. Birds eye view.
© Brandon Harvey
Photography -
Asteria

4. Crystal clear waters are perfect conditions for sea birds.

5. More Bears. ©
Victoria Dennis -
Archimedes

6. Native people are so welcoming.



and we hope that by bringing people here to appreciate it, we will help with its conservation and preservation for the future.

How resourceful do your small-boat operators need to be and have they ever had to negotiate potentially dangerous situations?

We need our boat drivers to be very experienced and always maintain a high level of situational awareness, since there are a lot of hazards and conditions can change very quickly. Beyond just being great boat drivers, they need to have the technical skills to solve problems on their own and also understand the environment they are working in so they

can see potential problems before they happen. As well as this, they need to have good guiding skills so they can read the wildlife and conditions to provide a great experience for the guests they are taking out exploring.

What advice might you give any of our readers contemplating a career as a professional support craft operator?

I would say, go for it – it's the best job in the world and a way to see places that are beyond most people's reach. But spending months at sea away from home, living in a small shared cabin, may not be for everyone, so it's important to understand the negatives as well.

Get the best boating qualifications you can and get a huge amount of practice in

7. Helicopter trip over the melting Sea Ice. © Richard Sidey EYOS

8. Home from home. Support vessel, launch and helicopter pad. © Richard Sidey EYOS

Tim Soper biog.

Tim Soper, EYOS founding partner, since joining his first expedition ship in 1994 has spent over two decades immersed in the expedition travel business. Working year-round as expedition leader, diver, boatman and guide, he makes seasonal migrations between the polar regions and the tropics, gaining intimate knowledge of multitudes of cruising destinations.

Tim was raised on the Devon coast of South-West England. Growing up constantly in and around boats, he developed a passion for the sea that led him to study at the University of Wales's marine laboratories on the Isle of Anglesey, where he combined oceanography and marine biology to earn an honours degree in Ocean Sciences.

Due to his remarkable Antarctic experience, Tim is a representative with IAATO, where he has sat on the Field Operations and Membership Committees.

In 2017, and again in 2018, Tim was selected by Condé Nast Traveler as one of their Top Travel Specialists We Trust, a testament to his unsurpassed expertise in expedition geographies and remote logistics.

As well as scores of voyages to the Antarctic Peninsula region, Tim has led helicopter-equipped icebreaker expeditions deep into the Ross Sea and Weddell Sea. He has completely circumnavigated the Antarctic continent, venturing to the far side of East Antarctica, and the seldom-visited Phantom Coast. Always keen to explore, he has pioneered many new landings and discovered a previously unknown emperor penguin rookery.

As well as leading frequent expeditions to Norway's Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, Tim has transited the Northeast Passage, visiting the islands of the Russian High Arctic, Franz Josef Land, Severnaya Zemlya and the New Siberian Islands, and has reached the North Pole by icebreaker.

He has led expeditions to the Canadian Arctic, Labrador and Greenland, as well as sub-Arctic Greenland, Canada, Norway, and islands of the North Atlantic and Russian Far East.

In the tropics, Tim has worked as a dive guide or expedition leader on voyages across the Indian and Pacific Oceans, through South-East Asia, including the Philippines, Indonesia, New Guinea and Vietnam, the Great Barrier Reef of Australia, East Africa, Central America, the Caribbean and the great rivers of South America.





The history of the Northwest Passage

There is a fascinating history associated with the search and ultimate discovery of what became known as the Northwest Passage. From before the late Middle Ages to the 19th century, Norwegian Vikings sailed as far north and west as Ellesmere Island, Skraeling Island and Ruin Island for hunting expeditions and trading with the Inuits and people of the Dorset culture who already inhabited the region. Between the end of the 15th century and the 20th century, colonial powers from Europe dispatched explorers in an attempt to discover a commercial sea route north and west around North America. The Northwest Passage represented a new route to the established trading nations of Asia.

England called the hypothetical northern route the 'Northwest Passage'. The desire to establish such a route motivated much of the European exploration of both coasts of North America. When it became apparent that there was no route through the heart of the continent, attention turned to the possibility of a passage through northern waters. There was a lack of scientific knowledge about conditions: for instance, some people believed that seawater was incapable of freezing (as late as the mid-18th century, Captain James Cook had reported that Antarctic icebergs had yielded fresh water, seemingly confirming the hypothesis). Explorers thought that an open water route close to the North Pole must exist. The belief that a route lay to the far north persisted for several centuries and led to numerous expeditions into the Arctic.

Many ended in disaster, including that by Sir John Franklin in 1845. While searching for Franklin, the McClure Arctic Expedition then discovered the Northwest Passage in 1850.

In 1906, the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen first successfully completed a passage from Greenland to Alaska in the sloop *Gjøa*. Since that date, several fortified ships have made the journey and completed it successfully.

From east to west, the direction of most early exploration attempts, expeditions entered the Passage from the Atlantic Ocean via the Davis Strait and through Baffin Bay. Five to seven routes have been taken through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, via the McClure Strait, the Dease Strait and the Prince of Wales Strait, but not all of them proved suitable for larger ships. From there, ships passed through waterways through the Beaufort Sea, the Chukchi Sea and the Bering Strait (separating Russia and Alaska) into the Pacific Ocean.

In the 21st century, major changes to the ice pack due to climate change have stirred speculation that the Passage may in time become clear of ice, to the extent it could permit safe commercial shipping for at least part of the year. In fact, on 21st August 2007, the Northwest Passage became open to ships without the need for an icebreaker. According to Nalan Koc of the Norwegian Polar Institute, this was the first time the Passage had been clear since they began keeping records in 1972 (the Passage then opened up again on 25th August 2008).

It is usually reported in mainstream media that ocean thawing will open up the Northwest Passage (and the Northern Sea Route) for various kinds of ships, making it possible to sail around the Arctic ice cap, thereby potentially cutting thousands of miles off shipping routes. Warning that NASA satellite images indicated that the Arctic may have entered a 'death spiral' caused by climate change, Professor Mark Serreze, a sea ice specialist at the US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC), said: 'The passages are open. It's a historic event. We are going to see this more and more as the years go by.'

On the other hand, some thick sections of ice will remain hard to melt in the shorter term. Such drifting and large chunks of ice, especially in springtime, can be problematic as they can clog entire straits and/or severely damage a ship's hull. Cargo routes may therefore be slower and uncertain, depending on prevailing conditions and the ability to predict them. The uncertainty related to physical damage to ships is also thought to translate into higher insurance premiums, especially because of the technical challenges posed by Arctic navigation. You might also be surprised to learn that it has been stated that as recently as 2014, only 12 per cent of Canada's Arctic waters had been charted to modern standards. With the foregoing in view, even with the sad fact of receding ice being considered, the Northwest Passage remains one of the most intriguing and challenging semi-navigable stretches of sea in the world.



Fancy joining an EYOS expedition - check out www.eyos-expeditions.com



varying conditions, and also learn basic boat and engine repairs. Boat handling and troubleshooting has to be something you can do without really thinking about it so you can focus on the environment around you. Also, remember that many Zodiacs are tiller- rather than wheel-steered, so this is an important skill that some experienced drivers don't have. Learning on a small boat is in some ways better than a big RIB, in my opinion.

Also learn about the places; read up on polar wildlife and history so you have basic interpretation skills. Most of our guides have degrees in marine science, history or geology, or have worked on polar research stations, which gives them a specialist subject to talk about. It's also good to have other skills, such as being a divemaster, kayak guide or mountain leader, as well as emergency first-aid qualifications. And then you will probably

need to have the commercial STCW (International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) certification to work aboard most vessels.

Then you need to get experience in the field. The good news is that the expedition business is growing, with new ships being launched all the time, so people with the right skills can get experience working as part of a larger team aboard commercial expedition ships.

Lastly, from EYOS's perspective and the observations you have made, to what degree are the ecology and the habitat of the Northwest Passage changing?

As I've said, working in these regions over an extended period, we see changes first-hand. In the Northwest Passage, the patterns of sea ice are changing as

1. The 'Ernest Shackleton' working in Pond Inlet. © Tom Sharpe

2. Loading up for months away.

3. Passengers onboard 'Crystal' heading out to see the wildlife.

© Saskia Travert

MAIN LEFT: NWP © Richard Sidey EYOS

the climate warms, and we see big changes in the terrestrial ice, with glaciers and ice caps shrinking. The systems are complicated, so it's not completely understood how these changes affect the wildlife, but certainly it will need to adapt as the conditions change more in the coming years.

Our clients often invite scientists to join the voyage, giving them access to areas that they could otherwise not reach, while also enhancing the experience for the group. Although some can argue that by coming here on a vessel that burns fuel we are adding to the problem, we believe our visits are on balance positive for the environment, and the advantages of having people understand and appreciate the Arctic will ultimately help with its preservation. **PBR**

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THE ALLURE OF THE SEA IS TEMPERED ONLY BY ITS UNPREDICTABILITY. ACCIDENTS HAPPEN, EVEN TO THE MOST EXPERIENCED BOATER, AND WE, OR OUR CREW, CAN END UP IN THE WATER UNEXPECTEDLY. SO WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP MAKE SURE OUR NEXT ADVENTURE IS NOT OUR LAST?

THE RNLI'S **Ross Martin** SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ...

PHOTOS: © RNLI - Nathan Williams

Wearing a life jacket will buy you precious time until help arrives. Correctly fitted and maintained, a suitable life jacket dramatically increases your chances of survival if you fall into the water. It helps you to float even if you're unconscious, and it could save your life.

Will any type of personal flotation device do?

Life jackets aren't the only personal flotation device you can buy, but they are recommended for activities

where you're not expecting to get wet, like powerboating.

Buoyancy aids, although suitable for some other activities, shouldn't be relied upon for powerboating. They aren't designed to turn you the right way up in the water, so

they won't support you if you are unconscious. Flotation suits and vests are also unsuitable because they don't provide sufficient buoyancy on their own, and would need to be worn with a life jacket.

How do you choose?

The best life jacket is one you will want to wear. There is a wide selection of life jackets on the market – some better suited to powerboating than others. Make sure you get one that fits you properly, is comfortable to wear and meets your needs. Consider whether

ROUTINE LIFE
JACKET INSPECTION
INCLUDES CHECKING
THE WEBBING AND
THE STITCHING THAT
HOLDS THE WEBBING
TOGETHER.





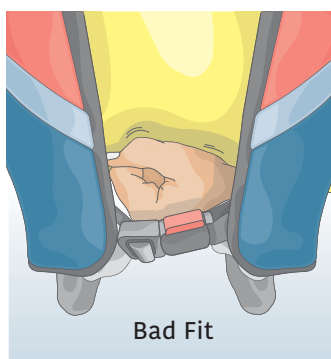
you want pockets or other features. But let's begin with size.

The majority of level 150 and level 275 inflatable life jackets are produced in a single size, and these are suitable for most adults. Level 100 life jackets come in a range of sizes from baby to adult XXXL. The length of the waist or chest belt may vary, depending on the make. Visit a shop, try on a few different options and think about what it'll be like to wear it out on the water. Picking the right one for you may take time, but it will be time and money well spent. If you are buying online, think about finding a way to try on the style of your choice first. Do you have friends or family with the same jacket?

SADLY, LIKE THEIR WEARERS, LIFE JACKETS DON'T LAST FOREVER, SO CHECK YOURS REGULARLY FOR WEAR AND TEAR.



FITTING



Wear it correctly

Once you have a life jacket that suits your needs, it is vital that you fit it correctly.

Life jacket belts that aren't securely fastened will allow the life jacket to float up above the shoulders when in the water. Buckles need to be easy to use and effective to ensure that the belt does not slacken. There are several methods to tighten different life jackets, so take some time to become familiar with the one you are wearing.

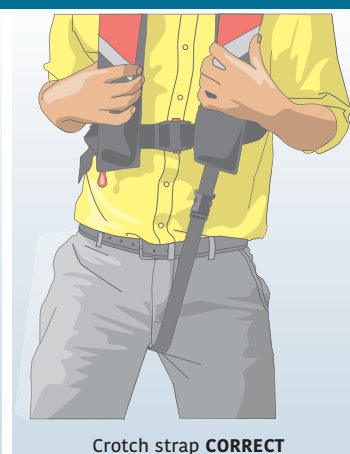
Once your life jacket is tightened, there should be just enough room

THE BEST LIFE JACKET IS ONE YOU WILL WANT TO WEAR.

to place your fist snugly between you and the buckle. Any more and the life jacket will be too loose. Any less and you may wish to loosen the life jacket a little. Newer designs don't require as much room beneath the chest strap. Always check the manufacturer's fitting guidelines. Some makes also allow you to adjust the back strap to reduce chafing to your neck.

To prevent snagging, crotch straps should be done up and not left hanging. Well-adjusted crotch straps will be as short as possible while still allowing comfortable movement. In the water, crotch straps need to be tightened fully to prevent the life jacket from riding up. You should be able to reach your crotch straps easily to be able to tighten them in the water.

CROTCH STRAPS



Look after your life jacket so it can look after you

Sadly, like their wearers, life jackets don't last forever, so check yours regularly for wear and tear. All life jackets need basic maintenance to keep them working properly. The RNLI recommends that you inspect your life jacket according to the manufacturer's instructions, in addition to getting an annual service done.

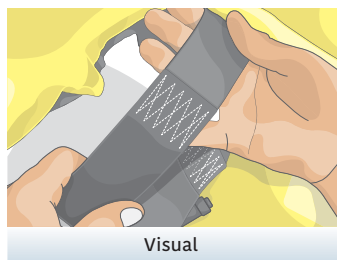
REPACKING



Life jackets can be difficult to repack correctly. If in doubt, take yours to the manufacturer's recommended service agent for checking and repacking.

Simple checks

Routine life jacket inspection includes checking the webbing and the stitching that holds the webbing together. With some life jackets – those with a coloured thread that strongly contrasts with the webbing – it's much easier to spot worn stitching. Also check zips, buckles and other fastenings.



Visual

Screw-in carbon dioxide bottles in life jackets can work themselves loose and you should check these for tightness once a month. Always carry rearming kits for each type of life jacket you have on board. If a life jacket is accidentally inflated, you will be able to get it ready for use again straight away.

Check the carbon dioxide bottles for corrosion. Heavy corrosion, or any corrosion around the thread, and the bottle should be replaced. Also check any areas of material that were in contact with it – the fabric may have been damaged.



Carbon Dioxide Bottles



Foam-Only Lifejackets

Regularly inflate the life jacket orally. Leave it inflated for 24 hours in a dry environment to ensure there are no leaks. The life jacket must be deflated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Then replace the cap over the end of the oral inflation tube. This will prevent dust or particles entering the valve. Using any other method of deflating the life jacket can result in damage

to the oral tube valve. This could prevent the life jacket from holding air, which may not be discovered until the life jacket is next used – in a drill or an emergency. Repack the life jacket according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Annual life jacket servicing

It is highly recommended that you return your life jacket to the manufacturer or a qualified service agent for a full service in line with their recommendations. Wear and contamination from salt spray, sand and dirt will reduce its life.

Maintaining non-inflatable life jackets

Regularly check the foam for visible signs of deterioration. Over time, the foam will become compressed and so lose buoyancy. When this happens, it is time to replace the jacket. Levels of buoyancy can be checked by measuring the life jacket's displacement in water. Refer to the ISO 12402 standard to find the correct weight to test your jacket. Visually check the outer material, webbing, stitching, zips and buckles for signs of damage or wear.

What the law says

In UK waters, the wearing of a personal flotation device is advisory but not mandatory.

In the Republic of Ireland, a flotation device must be worn at all times on boats under 7m long – on the deck of a vessel with accommodation and

on any open vessel. Children under 16 must also wear one on boats 7m or longer. An appropriate personal flotation device must be carried for everyone on board, regardless of the size of the boat. All new life jackets sold in the UK, Republic of Ireland and

elsewhere in Europe are required to meet the International Standards Organisation standard ISO 12402. Older life jackets may carry the CE mark. This is numbered from EN393 to EN399, depending on the amount of buoyancy provided.



Further Information

You can find the full RNLI guide to life jackets and buoyancy aids on the charity's website at rnli.org/safety.

LIFE JACKET EXTRAS

There are some features that will make life easier and others that you absolutely must have if your life jacket is going to do its job properly.

Essential features

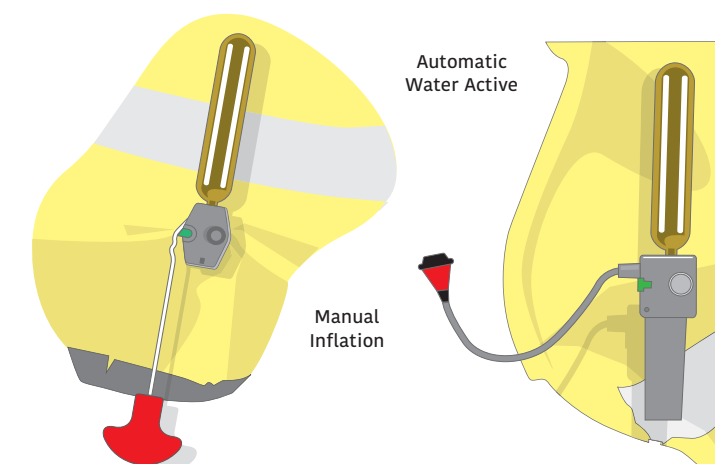
Crotch straps: Crotch or thigh straps are essential life jacket features. They stop the life jacket from rising up in the



Crotch with Straps

water. They also keep your mouth and nose slightly higher, thereby reducing the chances of water inhalation. There may be one or two straps fitted, depending on the life jacket design. It's essential that they can be adjusted and tightened in the water.

Inflation method: There are three inflation methods for gas-only life jackets – one manual and two automatic. Manually inflated life jackets are operated by pulling a cord, which pushes a firing pin into the carbon dioxide bottle. It prevents the possibility of false activation, which can be caused by a damp mechanism or if you're hit by a large wave. They require you to inflate them before you enter the water, as cold-water shock may



prevent you from doing so when you're in the water.

Water-activated (automatic) firing heads have a small pellet or bobbin that holds back a powerful spring. When the pellet comes into contact with water it dissolves very rapidly,

releasing the spring, which pushes the firing pin into the gas bottle.

Pressure-activated (Hammar) life jackets work in the same way as automatic ones. The difference is that the pellet is protected by a case that will only let water in

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CIG81220	6.1 x 3.7 x 2.5M	£349.00	£418.80
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5 EASY WAYS TO BUY...

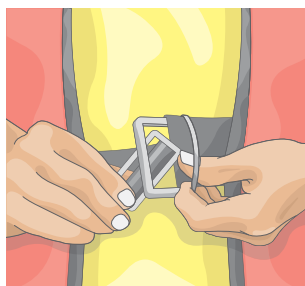
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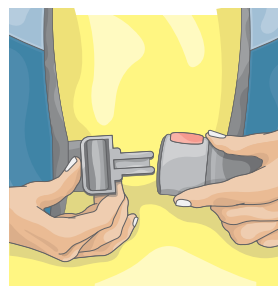
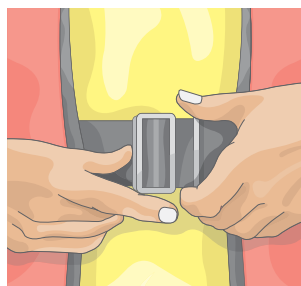
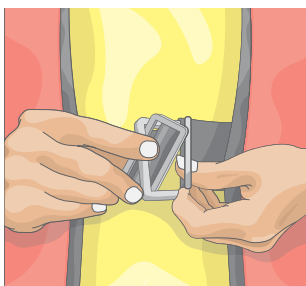
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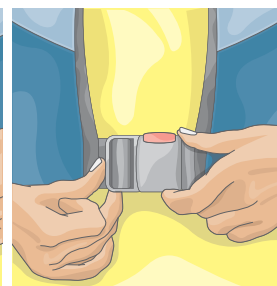
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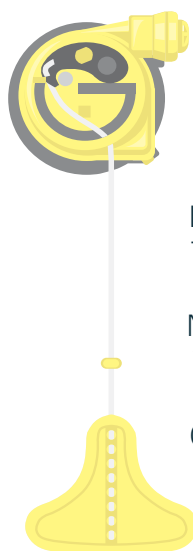
How to correctly connect your buckle on your lifejacket strap



The simple 'Click' buckle, Press red button to release



once it is fully submerged. Choose this type of life jacket if you are regularly soaked by waves or excessive spray. Gas bottles in this type of life jacket are less likely to suffer from corrosion.



Automatic pressure act

ONCE YOU HAVE A LIFE JACKET THAT SUITS YOUR NEEDS, IT IS VITAL THAT YOU FIT IT CORRECTLY.

Some life jackets have indicators to show whether gas bottles are empty or if automatic firing systems have been triggered. Automatic life jackets always have



Whistle

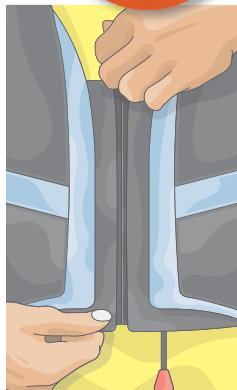
LEVELS OF BUOYANCY CAN BE CHECKED BY MEASURING THE LIFE JACKET'S DISPLACEMENT IN WATER.

a means to manually inflate them as well as a mouthpiece to allow oral inflation.

Whistle: A whistle also comes as a standard feature. By using one, you can increase your chances of being detected while floating on the water's surface.



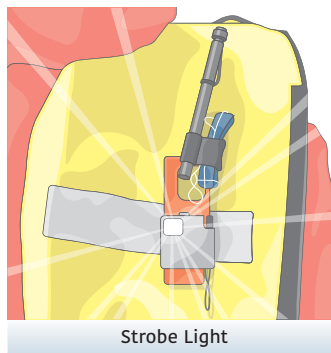
Are you **#LifejacketSafe**



Put on your jacket, level both sides and zip up, holding the bottom

Optional extras

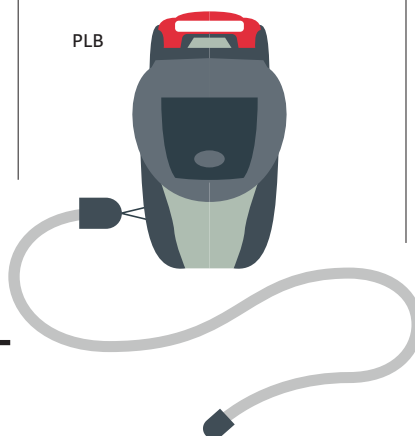
Vented spray hood: Even with a level 150 life jacket you may be subjected to waves in your face. A spray hood will keep wind-blown spray and breaking waves away from your airways, making it easier to breathe and reducing the risk of drowning. The spray hood will also help to reduce heat loss and make you a lot more visible in the water. A good spray hood will have air vents at the side.



Strobe Light

Light: A fixed or flashing light attached to your life jacket makes you much easier to find at night or in poor visibility. Lights can be easily retrofitted if your jacket does not come with one.

Personal locator beacon: Optional but recommended, carrying a personal locator beacon (PLB) or automatic information system man overboard (AIS MOB) device



PLB

on your life jacket will help raise the alarm and tell rescuers where you are. Personal locator beacons are manually operated. They have worldwide coverage and transmit a signal via satellite to the emergency services. Some life jackets have PLB stowage pockets.

AIS MOB devices use a **VHF signal** to alert AIS-receiving vessels. They can be programmed to operate automatically when the life jacket inflates. Always seek guidance before fitting.



MOB DEVICE

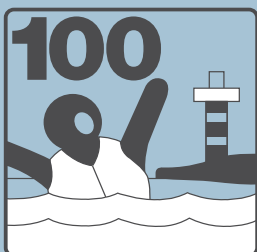
VISUALLY CHECK THE OUTER MATERIAL, WEBBING, STITCHING, ZIPS AND BUCKLES FOR SIGNS OF DAMAGE OR WEAR.



Seababy Seatoddler 450

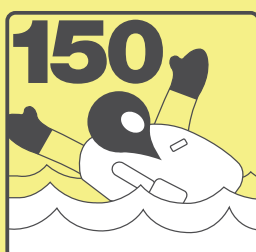
LIFE JACKETS AND THE ARCHIMEDES PRINCIPLE

Archimedes discovered that when we're immersed in water we weigh a lot less than on dry land. In fact, anyone over 40kg has a net weight of just 5kg in water. So we don't need a more buoyant life jacket just because we're big. However, buoyancy levels do come into play if we're unconscious in the water. Here's a quick guide.



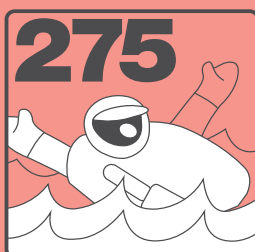
Level 100

The level 100 life jacket is recommended for use in sheltered and calm waters. It may not have sufficient buoyancy to protect you if you're unable to help yourself. And it may not roll you onto your back if you are unconscious.



Level 150

The level 150 life jacket is for general use on coastal and offshore waters where a high standard of performance is required. If you're unconscious it should turn you onto your back and keep your face out of the water. But you may find its performance is affected if you are wearing heavy or waterproof clothing.



Level 275

The level 275 life jacket is recommended for offshore use, primarily for extreme conditions and if you're wearing heavy protective clothing. As with the level 150, this life jacket is designed to ensure that, conscious or unconscious, you float in the correct position with your mouth and nose clear of the surface of the water.



Shown:
Bluewave pink
girls automatic
150n lifejacket

Life jackets for children

Not all children's life jackets are inflatable. Some rely on foam, or a mixture of air and foam, to provide buoyancy. Carbon dioxide-filled life jackets tend to be smaller, lighter and more comfortable to wear. But this type of life jacket doesn't provide any buoyancy when it's not inflated. If you choose an inflatable life jacket for your child, you must assess whether they would be able to activate it if they fell into the water.

#LIFEJACKETSAFE – WHY?

"Casualty statistics show that a MOB incident is between five and eight times more likely to result in a fatality when the casualty is not wearing a PFD. This is further corroborated by the findings of the MCA-led Casualty Review Panel establishing that 148 lives could have been saved in a 7-year period had the casualties used some form of buoyancy aid" - Marine Accident Investigation Branch (2016) Lifejackets: a review

"The MAIB database on marine accidents held 380 cases of persons

in the water from UK Fishing vessels, between 2000 and 2015. 139 were recorded as fatal drowning accidents" - MAIB (2016) Lifejackets: a review

"Accidents can happen at any time in any weather. Good training and common sense help, but lives could be saved every year if people wore correctly-fitted, well maintained lifejackets or buoyancy aids. The water around the UK is cold all year round. It's surprisingly difficult to get back on board your boat once you're in the water, and the cold water will affect

how your body works. Wearing a lifejacket with crotch straps and spray hood could double your chances of survival, and increase your likelihood of being found." - Maritime & Coastguard Agency, (2014) Lifejackets save lives: safety advice.

Did you know... 30% of lifejackets bought in to be inspected at the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) clinic would not have worked due to poor maintenance.



Are you **#LifeJacketSafe**



A PROUD ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1826, GJW Direct has specialised in marine insurance for over 190 years and is the UK's largest direct boat insurer. Like the RNLI, GJW Direct is proud of its heritage and ties to the water and has become an official supporter of the RNLI's life jacket clinics.

Run by over 400 water safety volunteers, the RNLI's free life jacket clinics offer advice and guidance about how to care for your life jacket. Our volunteers regularly find life jackets that wouldn't have worked in an emergency situation. These clinics are designed to show owners how to carry out their own checks in between annual manufacturer services to keep them reliable and dependable. Through these life jacket clinics, GJW Direct and the RNLI are working together to prevent drowning.



WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT DROWNING

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RYA TENDER OPERATORS COURSE

Mark Rasmussen CONSIDERS WHETHER THE RYA TENDER OPERATORS COURSE IS FOR ALL OR IF 'SUPERYACHT CREWS ONLY NEED APPLY' ...

The RYA Tender Operators course was originally designed as a specialist short course for superyacht crews ferrying their affluent employers and guests from ship to shore, as well as taking them waterskiing or sightseeing. Recently, though, the RYA have chosen to promote the course by emphasising pilotage by day and night and how to manage passengers. So here's the

question: is it a useful course for an intermediate powerboater or should it be 'superyacht crews only need apply'?

Why this course?

Having taken the Intermediate Powerboat course last year and, along the way, picked up some certificates in shore-based navigation, I was, as you might expect, looking ahead to taking the

Advanced course. If you follow the logical Level II – Intermediate – Advanced route, the latter will be the first time you're introduced to cruising at night.

I, like many others, choose to charter various boats rather than owning one, and most charter companies do not cover you for night-time use, therefore my experience of navigation and pilotage in the dark was limited to only a few hours picked up during a boating school's development day. The Tender Operators course would give me the opportunity to log some more night hours and has an interesting-looking syllabus. This, and the recommendation of someone I met who had taken the course, convinced me that this would be a useful stepping stone on my way to Advanced level.

First, find your school

A quick check of search engines and PBR classifieds found a few likely training schools that listed the course. On closer enquiry, however, none had dates booked and they would only consider running the course if two or three of us wanted to book together. Those I spoke to candidly admitted that, unlike the RYA's other specialist short course, Safety Boat, demand for this course wasn't high.

Just as I was about to give up, salvation came when Peter from Portsmouth Marine Training returned my call. Following the, by now familiar, 'very few people enquire about the course' line,



he asked: 'Would you mind doing the course on a weekday?' To my delight, he agreed that if I was prepared to book in advance, they would list the two-day course in July and, even if I were the only applicant, the course would still go ahead. After days of trying, I couldn't get my credit card out quick enough!

Day one

Because of the night exercises required as part of the syllabus and the fact that, being July, it wouldn't get dark until after nine o'clock in the evening, the course didn't start until 11am. Arriving at Portsmouth Marine Training's office at Southsea Marina, I was introduced to my instructor, Ian. He confirmed that I would be the only person on the course. 'Oh well,' I thought, 'nowhere to hide!'

Ian was anxious to get out on the water, so after a coffee and a chat, he asked me to prepare a pilotage plan to bring us into Bembridge



Essential MOB training ©Paul Glatzel

FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME, WITH LIMITED EXPERIENCE, KEEN TO IMPROVE PILOTAGE SKILLS, PARTICULARLY AT NIGHT, I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER COURSE.

Harbour. It was only later I realised he was not only covering the daytime pilotage areas of the syllabus but it gave him a pretty quick idea of where my level of experience stood.

Once the plan was complete, Ian gave me the keys and sent me off to get the boat ready. I found the school boat, a bright-yellow Solent 6.5m RIB with a Suzuki 140hp outboard, and busied myself taking off covers and checking all the lockers to familiarise myself with where all the safety equipment was located. Ian arrived just as I finished, and we sat on the quayside and went through safety briefings and embarking and disembarking passengers safely.

Heading across the Solent, Ian had me practise my man-overboard (MOB) drills, first using the 'drift down' approach I learned at Level II, then an alternative method similar to picking up a buoy. Ian pointed out that with a boat full of passengers, they might be inclined to panic at the sight of a friend or family member in



The school boat 02. © Portsmouth Marine Training

the water, so we discussed how the operator might give passengers on board reassurance by maintaining a running commentary while manoeuvring to pick up the MOB. This consideration of the safety, comfort and reassurance of passengers became an integral part of the two days.

After successfully bringing us into Bembridge, we stopped for a quick sandwich before heading back to Langstone Harbour, this time to practise anchoring and manoeuvres in the, by now, increasingly fast-flowing tide.

Returning to the classroom, the day was far from over. With charts out, we prepared pilotage plans for the night-time exercises, checked our equipment and headed back to the RIB. Leaving Southsea Marina at low tide, the channel is very shallow, and this was a spring tide, so there was little room to spare, even for a RIB. Back in the Solent, we opened the engine up and took advantage of the calm July conditions and headed for Cowes at speed, where, after yet more handling practice on the River Medina, we moored up and had a very nice pub dinner at Cowes waiting for it to get dark.

Swapping seats, with me acting as navigator, I took us into Wootton using a combination of chartplotter and my pilotage plan, then we



Classroom training - Preparing a passage plan © RYA

EVERYTHING FROM DEALING WITH DRUNK GUESTS TO TOWING FOR WATER SPORTS WAS COVERED AND DISCUSSED.

swapped back and crossed the Solent for the fourth time that day and took the RIB into Portsmouth Harbour. This proved quite an experience, with ferries darting about, a cargo ship coming out and a yacht coming in under sail. I was thankful the school had asked me to revise collision regulations and vessel lights before the course!

Motoring back to Southsea for the last time that day, I had one more surprise as we practised an MOB in the dark. With Ian shining his torch, the reflective tape on the dummy gave a good approximation of the similar strips on a life jacket and we recovered it without drama (even though I forgot to do the running commentary).

We finally put the boat to bed at midnight. It had been an exhausting but thoroughly enjoyable day, and it was a shock to remind myself that this had only been day one and I'd be back tomorrow ...

Day two

We'd agreed that given the lateness of the previous night's return, we'd start day two at 10am. After the obligatory coffee, we settled into the classroom to run through the theoretical aspects of the course. With his years of experience, Ian was able to punctuate the lessons with anecdotes and stories, which really made the syllabus come alive.

Everything from dealing with drunk guests to towing for water sports was covered and discussed. Once again, Ian had the knack of finding my level of expertise (if any), then pushing me, sometimes beyond the syllabus. In short, I was learning a lot.



About the author

Mark Rasmussen has been messing around on the water at every opportunity since he was a Sea Scout growing up on the River Blackwater in Essex, where he started his working life as a boatman for a local charity. Turning 50 was the impetus to sign up for some RYA courses and relearn things he felt he'd forgotten. He has been gradually working his way through the RYA Powerboat syllabus ever since and still jumps at every opportunity to get afloat.

HAVING COMPLETED THE COURSE, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT SOME SOLID NAVIGATION BEYOND THAT TAUGHT AT LEVEL II, SUCH AS VIA THE RYA'S ESSENTIAL NAVIGATION AND SEAMANSHIP COURSE, WOULD HELP MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME ON THE WATER.

Then it was back on the water again. Because of the previous day's reliance on the chartplotter and pilotage plans, Ian was keen that more traditional skills such as transits, bearings and three-point fixes were covered as he set a series of tasks for me to accomplish as navigator. Again and again, the practicality of not fiddling with a GPS unit while underway and simply using a transit was brought home in the most practical way - on the water.

In no time at all, it seemed, it was 4.30 and we were back in the marina, brimming the fuel tanks and washing the RIB down before putting her away. The presentation of my certificate and Ian's firm handshake were a fitting end to two busy but enjoyable days.

Verdict

So, was the phrase 'superyacht crews only need apply' applicable to this course? I would argue,

certainly not! For someone like me, with limited experience, keen to improve pilotage skills, particularly at night, I can't think of a better course. While the RYA Intermediate course concentrates on cruising longer distances, the Tender Operators course is aimed at making short trips into unfamiliar places with passengers. I would suggest that doing both is great preparation for the Advanced Powerboat Day and Night course.

The prerequisite knowledge for the Tender Operators course is only Powerboat Level II, although it is strongly suggested, for obvious reasons, that candidates also have valid First Aid and VHF certificates. Having completed the course, I would recommend that some solid navigation beyond that taught at Level II, such as via the RYA's Essential Navigation and Seamanship course (which can be done online in around eight hours), would help make the most of your time on the water.

A big 'thank you' to Peter, Ian and the team at Portsmouth Marine Training for running the course. If, like me, you have difficulty finding a course, Peter informs me that they intend to run it again this year. [PBR](#)

Contact

info@portsmouthmarinettraining.co.uk for more information.





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Sustainability and Power System Trends

Phil Horton, RYA Planning and Environmental Manager, discusses the potential impact of climate change on boating ...

Over the past year, and in particular during the last six months, there has been an increasing focus in the media, and more generally in public discussion, on the state of our environment. As boaters, we are all keen to continue enjoying the natural world, and to ensure that future generations can do the same.

So what is happening according to the science?

What have the responses been at international and national levels? And what is the response from the boating industry to the challenge of zero carbon?

Global challenges

Scientists have been telling us for many years that the earth's ecosystems are under significant pressure from human activities. Two key and related concerns on a global scale are climate change and biodiversity loss, with the former

being the most prominent in public discourse.

Recent news reports have shown increased impacts from climate change, with a key indicator being the expectation that the Arctic will be ice-free in summer by the end of the century. On 18th September 2019, the sea ice extent dropped to 1.60 million square miles, which effectively tied for the second lowest minimum in satellite records. Moving into the winter months, the 2019-2020 season remains well below long-run averages.

When considering the major impacts of recreational boating, it is clear that carbon emissions are of greatest concern, and addressing this aspect through new technology will also have positive effects on biodiversity and other environmental issues, such as underwater noise. It is also clear that climate change will potentially have a significant impact on boating. So what does it mean for boating, now and in the future?

The UK's Committee on Climate Change has produced regular updates on the forecast

impacts of climate change. Of particular interest to boaters is coastal erosion, which will also impact on siltation and the maintenance of navigation.

The Met Office has also produced a recent update to its modelling for the UK (UKCP18) and its forecast for a rise in sea levels to the end of the century. To date, most of the rise in sea levels has been due to thermal expansion. However, increasingly this will be overtaken by glacier melt across the globe. An increase of even 50cm in average sea levels will have a significant impact on marinas and coastal communities, even in the well-resourced UK.

Global, national and sectoral responses

The UN Paris Agreement demands that humanity must reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of this century. This is a big shift, but we have no option other than to succeed if we are to avoid really dangerous climate change. The next Conference of the Parties under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) will take place in Glasgow in November this year.

When considering the major impacts of recreational boating, it is clear that carbon emissions are of greatest concern...

The public are demanding action in response to activists such as Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion. The UK Parliament has declared a climate emergency, and the government has committed to net zero carbon by 2050, supported by the Committee on Climate Change's most recent report.

What action is the boating industry taking?

The UK's commitment to net zero carbon will require all sectors to play their part in significantly reducing and, where possible, eliminating carbon emissions over the next three decades.

Hybrid drive vessels are increasingly common in both the commercial (e.g. Woolwich Ferries and the new Port of London Authority pilot boat) and recreational boating markets. The combination of electric and fossil fuel drive can substantially increase efficiency due to the installation of either a smaller conventional unit (using electric boost to get onto the plane) or a pure electric drive unit with generator. In both cases, running the fossil fuel unit at its most efficient loading throughout the boat's speed range reduces overall emissions.

Hybrid technology does not ultimately achieve net zero carbon. It does, however, have the potential to reduce emissions while maintaining range

The UN Paris Agreement demands that humanity must reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of this century.

Sea-level rise

Increase will generally be greater in the south than in the north

(by 2100 relative to 1981-2000)



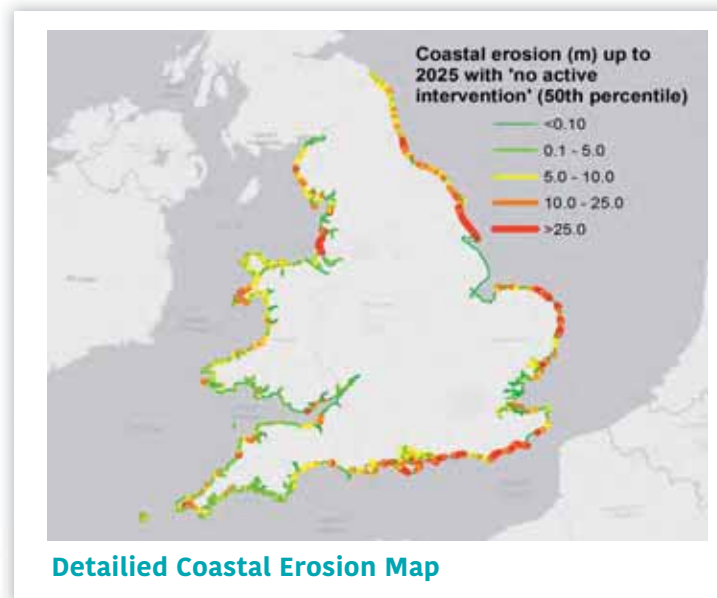
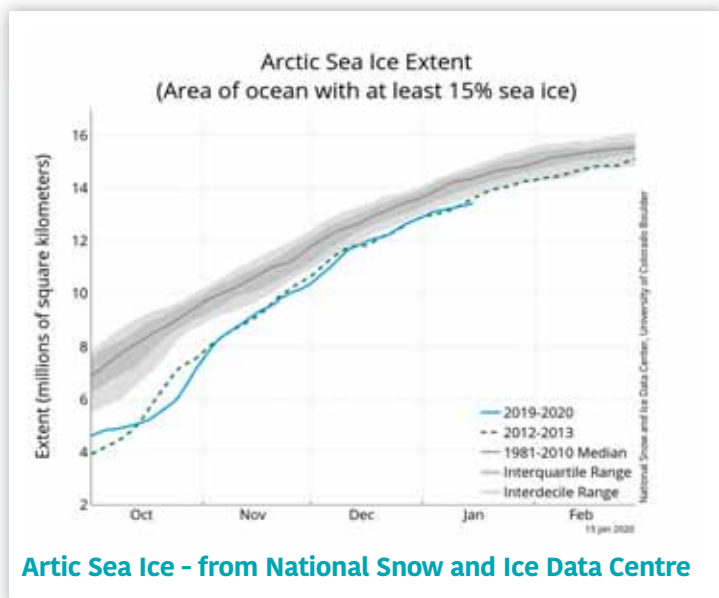
and will help to bridge the transition to zero emission options.

Eventually we will need to move away from fossil fuel as an energy source altogether. All-electric drives are increasingly common, and, combined with a growing proportion of renewables on the UK and other national grids, they have the potential to achieve that net

The public are demanding action in response to activists such as Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion.

zero target. There is a range of new, high-end speedboats that are designed with electric power from the ground up. These craft have a range of 70km and a maximum speed of 25 knots.

RS Electric Boats launched their electric Pulse 58 RIB at boot Düsseldorf this month and already have electric boats in their sailing line-up allied to a commitment to increased recycled content and a concern for the end of life of a boat. The Pulse 58 has been designed from the ground up to be electric drive, with a



new hull design to decrease low-speed drag. The battery bank deep in the hull lowers the centre of gravity and improves stability.

While still relatively expensive, this proven technology will gradually find its way into the more mainstream boat market, in the same way that electric cars are now available at similar prices to conventional vehicles. We are seeing the 'Teslas' of the boating world capturing this new market, and it is inevitable that this technology will feed through into all models over time. Given the rapid pace of development within the car industry, this is likely to be a quick transition.

For smaller craft, electric outboards are available from companies such as Torqeedo and Epropulsion. These are ideal for small runabouts. For larger boats, Torqeedo and other companies such as Oceanvolt offer conversions and equipment for new builds that combine

efficient electric drive with, in the case of sailing yachts, hydrogenation (the sailing equivalent of regenerative braking!). Many of these larger systems use battery modules from the car industry, with a popular choice being the BMW i3 units.

However, 'range anxiety' is no less an issue with powerboats than it is with cars. There



are other exciting developments in the area of hydrogen. One approach for larger powered vessels is a combination of hydrogen storage and battery electric drive. This combines the advantages of high torque and high power for acceleration from the electric motor and long range from a hydrogen-based storage medium that can be sustainably produced. The IET recently reported on an innovative technology using boron hydride salts in water. This removes any explosion risk and means refuelling is possible using relatively standard hoses and nozzles.

It is a really exciting time for the industry as these advanced propulsion systems are introduced, and it is clear that the market in 10 years time will be very different from the one we see now. **PBR**

THE RYA & BRITISH MARINE

The **RYA** and **British Marine** have been funding **The Green Blue**, their joint environmental programme, since 2005. Resources and environmental guidance for boaters, marinas and businesses are freely available at www.thegreenblue.org.uk

USEFUL LINKS

The latest Arctic sea ice news:

<http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews>

UKCP18 Climate Predictions:

<https://tinyurl.com/UKCP18>

Committee on Climate Change - latest

report: <https://www.theccc.org.uk>

Hydrogen fuels: <https://www.electriq.com/technology>

For an unbiased review see the IET report at <https://tinyurl.com/HydrogenWaterFuel>



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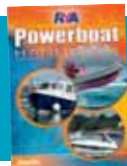
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Paul Glatzel is a RYA Powerboat Trainer and wrote the RYA Powerboat Handbook and the RYA Advanced Powerboat Handbook. He runs Powerboat Training UK in Poole & Lymington www.powerboattraininguk.co.uk



Let's go Boating!

The first signs of spring are an excuse to remove the winter cover, get the bucket of soapy water out and prepare for the new season.

Paul Glatzel discusses some of the tasks that should be on your to-do list at the start of a new season's powerboating ...

Do you sit there over the winter months wishing the first signs of spring and the new boating season would turn up? You're certainly not alone if you do, and as we head towards Easter, across the country driveways and marinas are stirring as hibernating RIBs, speedboats and family sports cruisers dust off the cobwebs and get ready to enjoy what the summer has to offer.

The onset of a new season always provokes the question of what

you should be doing, what checks need making and what can you do to ensure a great season afloat. Logically, you should start off with a really good clean. It always amazes me how much dirt gets into the nooks and crannies around covers, under seats and particularly around or under the engine. It's really worth keeping the area around the engine clean as whether it's an outboard or an inboard, the ability to detect water or oil leaks or to see new belt dust depends on being able to distinguish it from what was there



Carry spares and suitable tools

before. The adage 'Look after the boat/engine and it will look after you' is well worth remembering and following as it's very true, and experienced skippers swear by it. On the cleaning front, it's advisable to acquire a polisher and apply some polish and wax to the hull. Even the most tired-looking hulls can be made to look amazing with a bit of elbow grease and the right materials. Pop into a chandler and get their advice as to what to purchase and how best to use it.

WD-40 is always a good starting point, so apply it to areas where there are electrical connections,

then grease up moving parts, check the battery charge and, if needs be, charge or replace it. Going round the boat with spanners and screwdrivers, tightening up nuts and screws, is always time well spent and inevitably will highlight some other little issues you hadn't noticed. An often overlooked area is the kill cord. Fire the engine up and check that it works as there's nothing more frustrating than getting ready to head afloat and finding something as simple and cheap as a failed kill cord switch is going to stop you going boating. Consider buying a couple of new kill cords as UV degradation and being



Create a checklist for daily tasks



Get lifejackets serviced

overly stretched can render them prone to breaking and thus worthy of a change.

Go through your toolkit and ensure it's got all the items you need to fix basic issues afloat. Cable ties, gaffer tape and electrical tape are really handy, along with the usual assortment of screwdrivers, spanners and sockets. Have a few of the fuses the boat uses, and also ensure that you have spare bulbs for the nav lights as you can never find them when you need to buy new ones.

Of course, there are a few things that will probably need a professional touch. Arrange a service for the engine and check with the engineer what spares you should carry. If you have an inboard engine with belts, it's worth carrying a set

and then ensuring each year you use that set for the service and replace the spare set. It might be worth carrying fuel filters too, but this really depends on the sort of boating that you will be doing. After a service it's well worth giving the boat a run in the company of another friendly boater to ensure that you don't have any issues. It's far better doing it alongside someone else that can assist you than alone with the family a couple of months later. If you don't have an obvious mate to go afloat with, check out some of the Facebook groups as there are always other boaters looking for a run-out with someone else.

Get your life jackets serviced too. Every year when we train on boats approximately 65% of the life jackets we look at have issues. These range from slightly out-of-date auto inflation head units to having no gas cylinder at all. Get your life jacket serviced and learn how to perform regular basic checks – your local RNLI Community Safety Team will be delighted to meet up with you



Hydraulic fluids may need topping up



Check safety kit and renew out of date items

to give you some guidance. Check the dates on your flares and ensure your VHF is working, and if it has the red button distress unit, make sure the 'MMSI' number has been input – check the manual online to find out how to do so. Make sure the boat's position displays on the LCD screen on the radio.

Whether or not you've had any training before, the start of the season is either a great time to do your first course or to move on to the next level. The RYA website (www.rya.org.uk) has a search feature for finding schools in the area that may interest you. If you are starting out, then generally Powerboat Level 2 and VHF Radio will suffice; however, if you have these already, either a day spent one to one with an instructor or the RYA Intermediate Powerboat course is a really good way to develop your skill set. Always make sure that the instructor is competent on your type of boat – especially if it's something like a four-berth family cruiser, which can be a bit of a handful in

any wind. One of the best ways to start any season is with a bit of planning. It's a good idea to buy something like the Navionics chart app for the area you are going to boat in, as the chart is the same that is used in Raymarine and Garmin chartplotters and allows you to look closely at the areas you plan on going boating in on your tablet or smartphone from the comfort of your sofa. There's the added benefit with this app that, depending on the chartplotter you have, the planning you do will transfer directly across to the chartplotter when you switch it on.

It's worth producing a checklist that you update each year with the full list of things you should check. Also do one for each day you go afloat. It's good practice and will ensure you don't miss any key checks. [PBR](#)

Good luck with the boating season and let's hope we get some amazing days over the next few months. Have fun!



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Fig 1: At high speeds, constant and precise driver input is required to maintain stability [photo courtesy of G. Terzian]

Walking on Water

Jim Russell, of AeroMarine Research, discusses why chine walking occurs and how to fix it ...

Performance boats can display unstable characteristics that are speed dependent. These dynamic instabilities include chine walking, porpoising, blowout, bow steering, bow diving, chine tripping and even blow-over. In a previous article, 'Powerboat Instabilities and Bad Behaviour' (PBR Issue 157, October 2019), we outlined many of these common instabilities. Here is a more detailed look at the causes of, and cures for, one of the more prominent and annoying instabilities, 'chine walking'.

Chine walking is an aggressive, often rapid, side-to-side oscillation of the hull. Acute cases of chine walking grow more severe by themselves. Really severe cases can see the boat bouncing from one chine to the other chine – and some hulls can chine-walk in the middle of a turn! It can be a scary ride even for the experienced pilot.

Any vee hull, and particularly vee-pad hulls, can experience chine walk. Hull inconsistencies or design issues, incorrect hull set-up, water/wake conditions, even wind conditions or driver inexperience can initiate chine walking. Veteran

performance boat drivers have all experienced chine walking in their boats at one time and have learned how (hopefully not the hard way) to deal with it for their hull.

Here's how it works

As a performance hull accelerates, lift increases and the wetted running surfaces that are needed to support the hull are reduced in surface area (more speed = more lift = less surface required). As speed increases and wetted surface decreases, the hull often gets to a point where the areas of the lifting surfaces become very much reduced and the hull forces are now 'balanced' on a small region of the vee or vee pad. The amount of lift must equal exactly the weight of the hull. When that reduced lifting surface becomes sufficiently small, the hull can be 'just barely' balancing solely on that vee or vee-pad surface area, and it becomes tricky to maintain the equilibrium of the hull. The result is a rolling of the hull from side to side, from port chine to starboard chine, and back again. This rocking cycle can tend to get a little more extreme with each motion, and so 'balancing' must then be provided by driver (steering/throttle/trim)

faster motion. This is called 'chine walk'. With some driver input, the condition can be stabilised. With changes to the hull set-up and/or changes to the driving technique, the condition can be alleviated. (Fig 2)

Don't be a hero!

Note that the notion that you can 'drive through' chine walk without making adjustments is a dangerous approach. Do not try to merely drive a boat through a chine walk. Some drivers hope that if they keep trimming or adding power, the boat will somehow stabilise itself. This kind of thinking will almost always get you into more severe trouble. Make the proper set-up changes first. With experience, you can learn to make the subtle steering, trim or throttle adjustments that can control the condition – but don't try to just blast through the onset of chine walking, as this usually ends up with a very wet conclusion!

When chine walking is common

Chine walking is usually observed more often in vee hulls with high-lift running pads, or narrow running pads, high-deadrise hulls (deep vees) and vee hulls with no pad. Deeper-vee (higher-deadrise) designs are more susceptible to chine walk than shallower vees. Tunnel boats can experience a similar condition called 'sponson walking'. All of these bottom designs are naturally harder to balance at high speed. Step notches that are too wide can permit chine walking at high speed. Hull designs with reverse-chine configurations can experience 'lifting' or 'falling' (chine walking) through a turn.

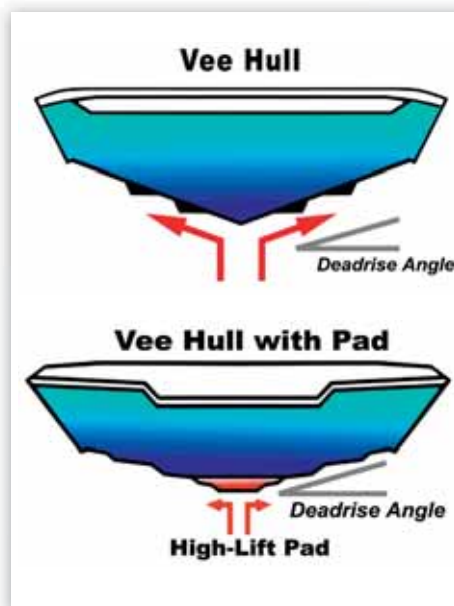


Fig 2: Chine walk is usually observed more often in vee hulls with high-lift running pads, or narrow running pads, high-deadrise hulls (deep vees) and straight vee hulls with no pad.

In order to drive fast, you also need to drive safely.

Another contribution to chine walk can be seen at higher speeds from 'propeller slap' (usually with propellers that have fewer blades). As a prop turns, each blade enters the water and another exits the water. This irregular in/out of every blade can create an imbalance to a hull that is already trying desperately to balance on its vee or vee pad, ultimately initiating chine walk.

What to do

Cleaning up and setting up your hull and driver 'seat time' are the best solutions to the problem. Hull design changes can also be made to alleviate chine-walking symptoms.

Here are some established steps toward minimising chine walk:

1 Check and adjust steering:

There should be no play in the steering mechanism.

A dual-cable or dual-hydraulic set-up should be used for high-performance hull set-ups. For cable set-ups, be sure that you adjust the cable system to remove all slack. Reducing backlash helps minimise engine flutter and the resulting handling instability, such as chine walk. This is a must to provide good control and reduce boat instability - especially on vee-bottom hulls. It's the same story for hydraulic steering: ensure the system is adjusted so that there is no play in the wheel. Bleed the lines to remove any air from all parts of the system.

2 Use solid mounts:

OEM motor mounts are also somewhat 'soft' in order to reduce vibration

for a more comfortable ride.

Stock rubber motor mounts can allow too much slack movement between the steering wheel and the engine, and can reduce control at high speed. Fixed/solid mounts can have the rigidity needed to ensure precise steering at high speeds and can reduce 'propeller fishtailing', chine walking and sponson walking. Replacing the OEM mounts with solid motor mounts adds boat control and driving ease, especially with jacked-up engines in rough water. Solid (fixed) mounts can usually be purchased in steel, aluminium or composite materials.



Fig 4: Fixed/solid mounts have the rigidity to reduce chine walking and sponson walking.

3 Clean hull lines:

Make sure that any non-designed irregularities, such as hooks, rockers,

bumps or other notches in the running surfaces, are faired away. Use a long metal straight edge to look for surface variations, check for structural damage inside the hull, and fill until the surfaces are completely smooth and true. Every 'dip', 'hump' and 'valley' should be faired out - until you have a perfectly straight and flat running surface. A hook section of the running surface curves down towards the water instead of running straight aft - this will produce an aft-lift/bow-down force on the boat. A rocker section of the running surface curves up away from the water instead of running straight aft - this will produce a bow lift force on the boat. Both of these conditions can be the cause of the onset of chine walk at higher speeds.

Be aware that some boats are manufactured with a hook or rocker. Contact the dealer or manufacturer to see if there are any design features that you shouldn't disturb. Otherwise, rework your bottom running surfaces until they are very straight and very smooth. Although this can be a tedious operation, it can make a world of difference to the way your boat handles.

If you are driving your boat fast enough to experience an annoying chine walk, then you should also ensure that you have your boat rigged as safely as possible.

4 Weight balance of hull:

Improper weight balance is often a contributor to a dynamically unstable hull set-up and the onset of chine walking. This can, however, be a tricky thing to optimise for all speeds - since the dynamic

balance of a hull shifts significantly throughout the operating velocity range of the boat.

Here is a tip for 'homing in' on the best balance for your boat. The onset of the chine-walking phenomenon usually occurs at a particular speed for each hull - so you can focus on correcting balance at that troublesome speed. The dynamic balance of a hull comes from the combination of: 1) the deadweight of the hull, engine, payloads, etc.; 2) hydrodynamic lift and drag forces generated by the hull shape at speed on the water; and 3) aerodynamic forces (at higher speeds). Try to situate the movable payloads close to the static centre of gravity (CofG) - both longitudinally and laterally. This can often be a trial-and-error experience, but you'll see the results of weight balance changes immediately in the handling of the boat. Optimise portable equipment, battery, oil tank and fuel tank positions. Also, situate passengers for the best weight balance. An evenly balanced passenger/driver load is best for stability, so if one (driver) seat is located more to one side than the other, you can add weight to the opposite (passenger) seat to equalise the load distribution. Or if you're really serious, you can

relocate the driver's seat to the middle of the boat. A balanced boat set-up will make your boat much easier to drive.

5 Adjust motor height:

First, you should check to ensure that the engine is properly mounted in the centre and perfectly straight. You can adjust the engine height to minimise instability. A manual or hydraulic jack plate will make these engine adjustments much easier. A hydraulic jack allows you to adjust the engine height while in full flight - the best of all worlds! (Remember that as you raise the engine height, a low-water pickup may become necessary to ensure that the engine gets enough water pressure.) (See Fig 5.)

Test your rig at different speeds and in varying water conditions to find the best height for each engine. You may find that different operating conditions will benefit from different engine heights, which is another good reason for using a hydraulic jack plate. Often, as the engine is raised on the transom, the reduced lower-unit drag can have an improved effect on handling instabilities such as chine walking. Engine setback can also affect stability, although it is more difficult to test using the 'trial and error' method.

6 Engine setback:

This is the distance that the engine is mounted aft of the transom. While setback can have less influence on resolving chine walk than engine height, it can often help the situation - it is still an important determinant.



Fig 5: Engine height can play a key role in mitigating chine walking.

Photo: G. Terzian

The optimum setback is often elusive and specific to each hull shape, length and weight, engine weight and intended operating conditions. It is a time-consuming experimentation, as the optimum setback is usually determined by starting with zero setback and testing performance in a variety of loads and conditions, with more setback in 1- to 2-inch increments until the best result is established.

7 Propeller selection:

The right propeller design can change the balance of a hull and make or break its performance. Rake, diameter, pitch, cup and blade number can all influence the lift and drag forces that are generated at the aft end of the hull. Lower-pitched (although higher-RPM) propellers can make the boat easier to drive and can ultimately contribute to a higher achieved top speed simply because you have less difficulty driving them with confidence. Similarly, larger-diameter props with less rake can improve handling situations like chine walk. Propellers with fewer blades can degrade handling (more prop slap), so you might try a prop with more blades, i.e. less vibration and less prop slap, as the smoother rotation is less likely to disturb the delicate balance of the hull at the speed of potential instability (chine walk). Propeller testing is time-consuming but can really pay off in terms of overall performance and stability.

8 Seat time (experience):

Chine walk on a vee hull can often be controlled by the driver as they gain more experience and skill with their set-up. Unfortunately, there is just no substitute for experience!

'Timing is everything.' When you sense the onset of chine walk, reduce the engine trim and/or throttle. When the motion stops, increase the trim and throttle smoothly as the hull drives through the previous chine-walking speed barrier. Steering adjustments need only be small but should be made in a timely manner in the opposite direction of the hull bow movement. The key here is not to overcorrect with your steering input. When the left bow drops or the bow moves left, steer slightly right. When the right bow drops or the bow moves right, steer left. This steering input is done swiftly and in short motions. With practice you will be able to make these small steering

inputs before the motion actually occurs. Turning the steering wheel slightly into (opposite to) the rotation of the propeller as soon as you sense the onset of lateral imbalance (side-to-side rocking) will tend to interrupt the onset of chine walk before the rocking motion starts up.

Drive your hull in different conditions at lower speeds until you are comfortable with your ability to sense and correct for motions of the hull to conditions and speed changes. Then gain more experience at a slightly faster speed. Work up to higher velocities slowly, under good control. With familiarity, you will develop an ability to predict your hull's motion and you'll soon be able to react with inputs to correct it before the condition gets severe.

9 Minimise trim angle:

Use as little positive trim as possible. More trim (higher running angle of attack) causes the onset of dynamic instability to occur earlier and with more drama (more surprises). A high-flying attitude is also harder to balance. When chine walking starts, it is not likely that you can simply 'drive through it' safely, so you'll need to reduce trim slightly first. The best approach is to minimise the extravagant use of 'positive trim' in the velocity region that you know leads to the onset of chine walking.

The bottom line

There are, indeed, some things that can change the behaviour of your performance boat, and even mitigate the onset of instabilities like chine walking. While cleaning up and setting up your hull are usually the best solutions, hull design changes can also be made to alleviate chine-walking symptoms.

In order to drive fast, and do it more than once, you also need to drive safely. If you are driving your boat fast enough to experience an annoying chine walk, you should also ensure that you have your boat rigged as safely as possible. Consider investing in a performance life jacket and helmet, an engine kill cord (always connected), solid engine mounts, a foot throttle and wheel-mounted trim switches. Installing key safety features will add reliability and stability to your hull set-up, which will allow you to drive faster, more reliably and with confidence - and do it with safety. 

LINKS FOR REFERENCE:

The fully illustrated, 13th edition of the book *Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design*, with over 200 pages of design practices and formulae and over 160 photographs, is now available.

The books *Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design* (ISBN# 1-894933-30-3) and *Secrets of Propeller Design* (ISBN# 0-9780586-0-7), and the software programs 'Tunnel Boat Design Program', 'Vee Boat Design Program' and 'PropWorks2', for speed prediction and propeller selection, are available from the AeroMarine Research website: <https://aeromarineresearch.com>

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ABOUT AEROMARINE RESEARCH

Jim Russell is a professional engineer with a mechanical and aeronautics background. Currently living in Canada, he has done extensive aerodynamic research at the University of Michigan, OH, and the University of Toronto, Canada, and marine research

This article includes excerpts from the books *Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design* and *Secrets of Propeller Design*

at the NRC water channel laboratory in Ottawa, Canada. His published works and papers are highly acclaimed and are specifically related to the aerodynamics and hydrodynamics of high-performance catamarans and tunnel boats, as well as vee and vee-pad hulls.

Russell has designed and built many tunnel and performance boats. As a professional race driver, he piloted tunnel boats to Canadian and North American championships. He has written powerboating articles for many worldwide performance magazines and has covered UIM and APBA powerboat races. He has appeared on SpeedVision's Powerboat Television as a guest expert on 'tunnel hulls', and was performance/design technical consultant on National Geographic's Thrill Zone TV show and editorial consultant on the Discovery Channel's What Happened Next?

Russell is the author of the books *Secrets of Tunnel Boat Design* and *Secrets of Propeller Design*. His company designed and published the well-known powerboat design software 'Tunnel Boat Design Program' and 'Vee Boat Design Program' specifically for the design and performance analysis of tunnel boats, powered catamarans, and performance vee and vee-pad hulls. 'Jimboat' is recognised for his advanced aerodynamic and hydrodynamic research and consulting on powerboat design, performance analysis, safety analysis, accident investigation, expert witness and education/training.



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