

ATLANTIS

26C

Simon Everett braves a force five to put the latest Atlantis to the ultimate test



Those who have boated around the Channel Islands, particularly Guernsey, know all too well it is rarely smooth sailing. With a fast tidal movement and a tendency for a sharp chop, these waters like to keep a skipper on their feet – or knocked off them

for that matter. But it is these very conditions that drove Patrick Wheeler of Atlantis Marine to design a hull capable of maintaining a decent cruising speed in sea states most people wouldn't go out in. This new 26' cuddy is the hardcore encore from the 26' open model, which is also a formidable craft. But Patrick claims this new cuddy has even greater sea beating abilities, and I'm here to put that claim to the test.

Choppy cruising

Heading out of the harbour, the swell of about 1.5m came to meet us as we left sheltered waters. The boat ran with a bow up attitude that helped her deal with the big holes that appeared every now and again, and importantly, stopped her from digging her nose into a trough. The ride was softened by the very steep deadrise and angle of the heavily raked stem. Even in these rough conditions, and unused to both the

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wave patterns and the boat, I was able to maintain an average of 22 – 24 knots without banging or slamming.

Before the run across the more open channel, we performed the speed trials in a sheltered section of water. Here, out of the weather we got her up to a speed of 41.3 knots, which for a boat that weighs 2.2 tonnes, plus fuel and water, is on par. We may have squeezed a little more had we had a longer stretch to play on, but it was sufficient to gain a good insight into her pace. The 400 litre fuel tank will give, at a more relaxed speed, a potential range of nearly 400 miles, thanks to the lean burn Suzuki 300 running at around 4000 rpm – 4500 rpm.

Durable design

The fully enclosed cuddy wheelhouse provides total protection from the weather with full standing headroom. The visibility is good with large windows and screens kept clear by pantograph wipers, which are a standard fitment. The laminated glass is 6mm throughout and is set in clamp style frames for ultimate strength and rigidity. The layout was designated by the owner who is a keen diver and angler. The well padded leaning posts double as



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“**THE ENTIRE BOAT IS AS STIFF AS A RACEBOAT AND YOU CAN FEEL HER GIRDER-LIKE STRENGTH AS SHE CARVES HER WAY THROUGH THE ROUGH AND TUMBLE OF THE CHANNEL ISLAND WATERS**”

seating perches, but any seating requirement can be accommodated and a galley could be incorporated too, if wanted, there is more than enough room. Likewise, in the cuddy where the owner intends to use the space purely for stowage of his gear, the space has been designed around full standing height and a head on the centreline with a raised Vee berth. The test boat had a flat deck throughout.

The helm on this Atlantis has been cleverly kitted out by the owner who has used a small screen Lowrance HDS5M at the remote helm combined with a Lowrance M260 structure scanning sonar, a larger main combined chartplotter and sonar unit in the Lowrance HDS8 both relaying to a solid state PC with

a 19 inch screen in front of the wheel, thus providing the ability to have multiple large windows open and to record everything to memory and then download the information for archiving and later analysis, or of course prior planning can be uploaded. Entertainment is provided by the Lowrance Sonic Hub with a digital stereo radio and iPod dock. Communications are by Lowrance LVR fixed station VHF.

The helm suited my height and reach whether I was sat, perched on the leaning post or stood pressing into it. The hydraulic helm and fly-by-wire engine control is easily changed between main or remote steering stations by simply putting the engine into neutral and then pressing the activation switch at

Above: The deep vee holds well in abrasive waters

ATLANTIS 26 C | ON THE WATER



ATLANTIS 26 C

Performance figures

ENGINE REVS RPM	SPEED (knots)
(registered on my Garmin GPSMap 76CSX)	
600 idle	3.0
1000.....	4.9
2000.....	8.6
3000.....	13.5
4000.....	23.3
4500.....	28.1
5000.....	35.2
6000.....	41.3

Specifications

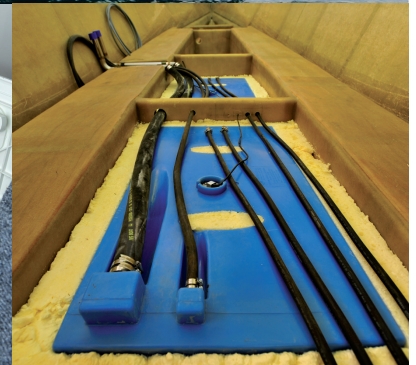
L.O.A.	7.90m
BEAM.....	2.55m
DRAFT	1.00m
PAYLOAD.....	898kgs
MAX POWER	300hp
POWER RANGE.....	150hp – 300hp
RCD.....	B for 6 persons. C for 8 persons.

ATLANTIS 26 CABIN PRICES (ex VAT)

Boat only, ready for engine.....	£27,000
With Optimax 200.....	£37,900
With Suzuki DF300 lean burn.....	£46,200
Volvo GXIE 270 Duo prop.....	£39,500 (petrol stern drive)
Volvo D3 170 Duo prop.....	£46,300 (diesel stern drive)
Volvo D3 200 Duo prop.....	£49,000 (diesel stern drive)

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the control station. Once locked in the other control is neutralised and cannot be used until the changeover procedure has been completed.

High prow

The Atlantis has a very generous freeboard all round with an especially high prow. The internal freeboard around the cockpit is 95cm. This makes the cockpit extremely safe, and with the angled bulwarks are kept free of protrusions, it is comfortable to lean against. The transom wave dam is massive and prevents waves breaking over the stern and flooding the cockpit. Any water that does make it will be drained through large scuppers into the bilge and will require pumping as opposed to being emptied overboard. This is a slight flaw that is currently being rectified for a commercial craft that has been ordered. I think drainage overboard is essential so there is no reliance on the bilge pumps to take out rainwater.

The strength of the Atlantis layup is enormous. The entire boat is honeycomb cored with the engine mounted on a 50mm thick transom, the deck and hull sides are 20mm thick, as is the wheelhouse after bulkhead. The coachroof has been built to stand on, as has the wheelhouse roof so it is both strong and rigid. The entire boat is as stiff

as a raceboat and you can feel her girder-like strength as she carves her way through the rough and tumble of the Channel island waters. The very fine entry cuts the water cleanly while the specially developed strakes and chine direct the water flow to trim the boat at cruising speed. As the 23 knot mark is reached the boat flattens off due to this water flow along the hull.

Putting the Atlantis into turns reveals her very deep vee hull as she heels over onto her double chined hull side, which is barely noticeable except in some light. The ability to spin the wheel at speed and feel her heel in and come round tight is great, and her directional control was welcome as I took her through a narrow gap in the rocks, barely 50 yards wide. Overall we clocked up 28 miles mostly in open water with swell and some breaking seas with the sea at all angles.

Conclusion

The test boat might seem a little sparse, but that is because she is destined for angling and diving use around the islands. If you can see beyond the open space to a boat fitted out for cruising and comfort, you would have to go a long way to find another craft of this size capable of the rough water passage. The Atlantis 26c is an incredibly hardy boat, and coming in at the £50,000 price bracket, is money well spent. ■