



A well-founded boat is critical in these waters. This boat is born and bred for demanding conditions.

In the fast-moving waters around the Channel Islands, boating and boat fishing is not far short of a religion. The seas around the various islands are dotted with shipwrecks - some dating back centuries and some considerably more recent. These are a testament to the challenges of navigating waters where currents in many places exceed 5 knots on each tide, coupled with tidal ranges of around 12 metres. Adding to this lively mix are Atlantic swells of several metres and numerous clusters of severe overfalls and rips.

So with this all in mind, those seeking their sport a little further offshore or hoping to regularly transit between the islands must choose a vessel they know has the capability to safely and comfortably handle varying seas and keep the crew comfortable and safe as it does so. Perhaps as a result of the often tricky local waters, and given the islands' close proximity to the French coast, where a day trip always beckons, muscular centre console craft have always been very popular here. My own first powerboat of any significance was a Kelt White Shark 215, and acquiring that allowed me to rove much further offshore more often than assorted old Orkneys had permitted previously. Venturing through overfalls that could promptly double in size once wind went against tide never seemed a price worth paying for an indeterminate amount of bream or mackerel!

So my own personal history with power craft of this type meant that when I travelled to Guernsey's beautiful harbour recently and was greeted in the Little Russell channel by the Atlantis 26CC I was there to test, I felt I would be treading familiar ground indeed. She looked an inviting sight too, the royal blue of the hull and the stainless steel fittings dazzling in the bright sunshine. She rocketed by, helmed by Patrick Wheeler - designer, builder and owner at Atlantis Marine. This Guernsey-based company was established 15 years ago and their craft in different configurations have been a familiar sight to me around Jersey and during my travels to the other islands, but at the time of testing I hadn't yet had the chance of any actual sea time on an Atlantis craft, so I was looking forward to breaking that particular duck.

No time to waste

Time was of the essence in this particular case as the boat I was there to test had already been sold and would soon be on her way over to a new home in France. Patrick told me that the enthusiastic owner was planning to come and get her and make the trip back to St Malo himself that same week, and in fact, since testing this vessel, I have already spotted her while visiting the beautiful French archipelago of Chausey, so I know for certain that she is already being enjoyed!

SPECIFICATION

LOA: 7.90m
Beam: 2.55m
Draught: 0.85m
Minimum recommended power: 175hp
Recommended power: 300hp
Tested with: Mercury Verado V8 300hp
Fuel capacity: 360L (135L bow / 225L stern)
Water capacity: 50L
Displacement full tanks with test engine: 2365kg
RCD category: B (8 persons)
Test engine: Mercury Verado V8 300hp (21 in 4 x Revolution blades)
Hull type: Deep vee (24-degree transom deadrise)

PRICE (EXCLUDING VAT)

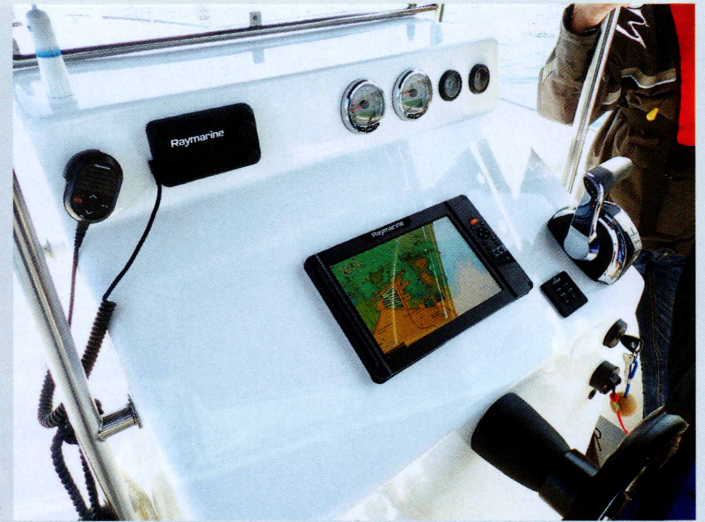
Atlantis 26CC standard boat ready for engine: £25,000
Atlantis 26CC with Mercury V6 225hp: £40,800 (mid-range package)
Atlantis 26CC with Mercury Verado V8 300hp as tested: £45,282

CONTACT

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High gunwales and generous access throughout.



Masses of space for a host of electronics of your choice.

Stepping aboard

After I'd moored up at St Peter Port's visitor pontoons, Patrick brought the 26CC alongside so we could be introduced and I could get my first proper look at the boat. Temporarily rafted against the 8.5m XS RIB I had travelled over on, I was immediately struck by the height of the Atlantis's gunwales alongside those of our RIB. As I and a colleague who'd come across with me manoeuvred our (hopefully not too considerable) bulk aboard, the height of the freeboard was something we immediately commented upon. I learned from Patrick that on the 26CC the freeboard is just shy of a metre (and he was only too happy to delve into any detail of the boat's construction, which led to some interesting discussions throughout the sea trial). The height of the freeboard was complemented by a high transom bulkhead, and sizeable

inbuilt port and starboard transom steps providing easy access to the dive platform as well as water access. A functional folding bench offered some seating at the rear of the cockpit.

A strong impression of solidity

As we'd cruised into harbour at around 28 knots abeam of the Atlantis, I'd had a good opportunity to see her in motion, and she'd certainly looked a purposeful vessel knifing through the confused wake of the dozen or so boats leaving and entering St Peter Port. Hull movement appeared to be very limited as she passed at speed through the chop, and that gave a strong impression of solidity - this only being reinforced by walking around the vessel while she was alongside. As a boat angler for over 25 years, I've spent a lot of time picking my way around the decks of

various types of fishing craft - often with a rod in one hand and the other trying to keep myself upright in a rolling sea. So a stable platform and room to move about safely while angling are qualities I prize highly, and not just for fishing applications. In an emergency, or simply if the sea has built and movement around the boat is necessary, stability, particularly in a sharp sea on the beam, is naturally going to be highly prized by any skipper, and I'm confident the 26CC would provide this in spades.

Looking around the boat, there wasn't a lot of concession to comfort. This struck me as a workmanlike, purposeful boat and there wasn't a cushion or padded seat to be found. A simple leaning post offered support at the helm - ideal for facing heavier conditions and for those who prefer to be stood while helming to get the best visibility. The 26CC would not be the choice of a family who want to spend long sunny days at anchor in sheltered coves with a picnic - rather, this struck me as a craft designed to get out and do things, and to get places. Given the terrific amount of room between the

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The 26CC is a boat of considerate stature.



console and the gunwales - which, as noted earlier, are of a height such that one feels very safely ensconced indeed - I would have no trepidation as skipper allowing less sure-footed guests to make their way forward to the bow without close supervision, or letting people move around to fish. This particular model had rod holders as part of the stainless frame of the heavy-duty canvas bimini top, and the angler in me noticed a

number of features I'd welcome in a fishing boat - including the amount of storage space in various lockers around the boat, especially inside the voluminous console.

Power and performance

Leaving the pontoon, the V8 Mercury Verado 300 offered a subdued purr that held the promise of things to come, and the boat moved away nimbly. Needless to say, no

power craft of this size and type should present an enormous challenge when handling at close quarters, but I'm confident that even the least experienced helmsman would find the 26CC an easy enough proposition for single-handed use.

Her solid construction meant that she had no way of being carried very quickly and smoothly - but she could be manoeuvred astern very precisely with the big solid hull not showing the slightest amount of flightiness whatever was asked of it. I use twin 200 Verados day to day on one of our commercial vessels, and having skippered and taught aboard dozens of other vessels sporting Mercury hardware, I'm a passionate fan of the range.

We picked through the fraught harbour, which on the day included ponderous cruise ship tenders generating a quite hilarious volume of wake to liven up the days of the dozens of visiting yachtsmen, power craft, fishing boats, and everything in between coming in and out of this wonderful port. Finally, we slipped beyond the harbour confines and out into the open channel, and it was at last time for the V8 Merc to breathe a little. The boat leapt up onto the plane in a few short seconds. Building up power and heading steadily past 25 knots, I found the bow was riding a touch high, but some fettling with the trim tabs corrected this immediately. Once that had been done



The foredeck's 'roominess' and generous stowage facility