



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

**I**n 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.

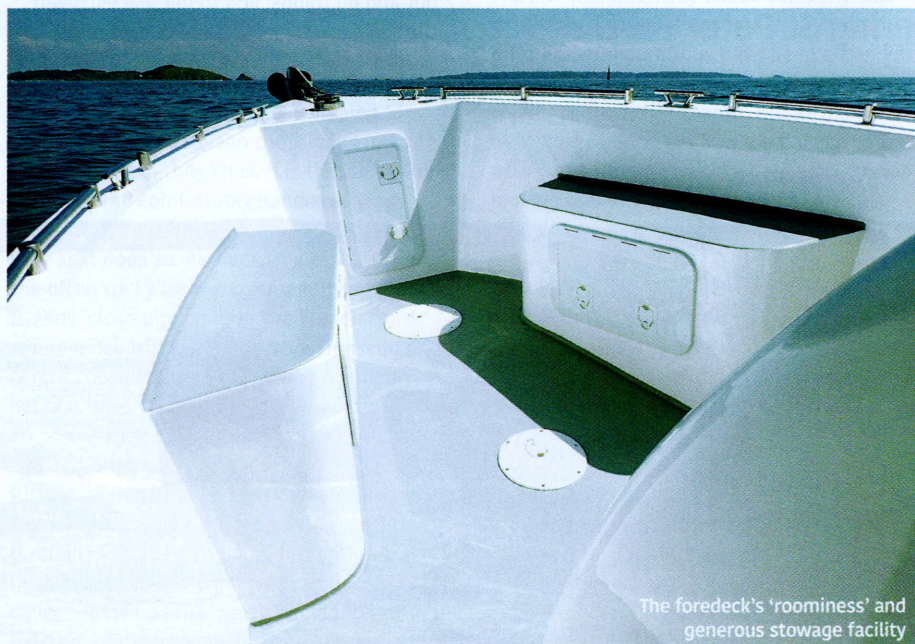
### Power and performance

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

## ... the 26CC struck me as a very capable offshore boat

and she was trimmed correctly, the riding position was comfortable and offered excellent visibility immediately ahead when stood braced against the leaning post. I'm 6ft, but sitting down would not have been an option due to the height of the console. Using only engine trim produced less discernible difference to the ride and bow position, although once we'd eased past 30 knots I was tinkering with it purely to finesse a few extra knots of top speed as the boat closed in on 40 knots WOT. The deep wake caused by a passing Aquastar cabin cruiser offered us the chance to charge at some steeper water, and while my colleague and I assumed brace positions in anticipation, Patrick confidently assured us that that wouldn't be necessary - and indeed it wasn't: the 26CC powered confidently through, and very little impact was transmitted through the hull. In fact, I felt I could have had an open thermos balanced on the console and not suffered even the slightest spillage! This was repeated a number of times with wake from other vessels, and in each instance it was very difficult to detect much in the way of slamming, whatever angle we chose or whatever speed we took.

Delving a bit into Atlantis's construction process with Patrick following these efforts to take her through some steep wake (which I did both directly and in sharp turns to try

and induce some lateral roll), he told me that they have a policy of 'overbuilding' the NPG gelcoat throughout to optimise the ride and comfort for those on board. They buttress this process with the internal construction, which incorporates full-height ribs, stringers and bulkheads. Atlantis are particularly proud of the 4in-high stringers running the full length of the hull, built on top of the outer chines, which was described to me as 'producing a very rigid box section chassis and backbone to the hull'. While this was all very interesting, the proof, as they say, is in the pudding, and I was impressed at the lack of any 'slam factor' each time we cut through wake at speed. The conditions on the day were not challenging, of course, with only the slightest hint of a chop, and I'd be extremely keen to take a 26CC out into some of the seas we'd perhaps more typically expect day to day, but sadly sunshine and smooth conditions aren't to be counted on too regularly by mariners in the Channel Islands.

### In Summary

In summary, the 26CC struck me as a very capable offshore boat that would be ideal for those looking for an uncompromising functional craft. She'd be happy to carry a party of anglers far offshore to target wrecks or deep sandbanks for drift fishing. Once there, she'd offer a very stable and

### FUEL BURN TEST CONDITIONS

FULL TANKS AND WEATHER CHOPPY, F4

RPM	LPH	GPS knots	Range	Reserve
1500	8.4	6.9	296	266
2000	14.3	8.9	224	202
2500	19.9	13	235	212
3000	25.9	14.4	200	180
3500	35	21.2	218	196
<b>4000</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>177</b>
4500	65.6	31.2	171	154
5000	84.4	35.1	150	135
5500	94.6	38.8	148	133
Fuel tank bow			135	
Fuel tank Stern			225	
<b>Total Fuel</b>			<b>360</b>	

tough platform to fish from. She'd also be happy covering some serious distance on an extended day trip - and not leave the skipper wracked with anxiety that the conditions might change for the worse while out. She would certainly not be the choice for a 'lounging' boat - for those content to head to the nearest bay, drop the hook and then get the hamper out, more in the way of creature comforts would be asked for. However, when the brief is to get somewhere quickly and have trust in the boat taking you there regardless of deteriorating conditions, the Atlantis 26CC would be an excellent choice and is sure to continue the brand's devoted following here in the Channel Islands. **PBR**



Suited to angling as well as coastal cruising, the Atlantis is a purposeful yet handsome craft.