



The Atlantis stable

As a builder of what the company calls 'performance offshore craft', Atlantis has a lot to achieve with its boats. And with aggressive open waters and a huge tidal range the norm in this part of the world, the need for these craft to fulfil that brief is more than just a matter of marketing integrity. To that end, the range is not big but it is phenomenally capable. There are just two hull sizes (20 and 26-feet) and three models. There is a Centre Console (CC) at each of these lengths, again with lots of open deck space and deep, safe freeboards. And there is the boat you see here - the new and apparently improved Cabin version (C) of the Atlantis 26.





Atlantis 26C

Simon Everett braves a Force 5 off Guernsey in the latest cabin boat from Atlantis

Those who have boated around the Channel Islands, particularly Guernsey, know all too well it is rarely smooth sailing. With a huge tidal range and a tendency toward a sharp chop, these waters like to keep a skipper on his feet - or even knocked off them for that matter.

However, 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. The result of his endeavours was the eminently capable



Atlantis 26 - an open boat of great potency, space and versatility. And that formidable 26 has now been joined by the inevitable cuddy version - a boat which Patrick claims has even greater seakeeping abilities than the original. Now that sounds like a claim that needs looking into . . .

Built for the chop

Heading out for the test, the swell of about 1.5 metres came to meet us as we left the harbour. The flood tide was against the stiff breeze as we made the run across to Brecqhuo and under the Barclay brothers' new castle. Already, the boat was running with a bow-up attitude that helped her deal with the big holes that appeared every

now and again - and stopped her digging her nose into a trough. The ride was also softened by the steep deadrise and the acute angle of the heavily raked stem. In fact, even in these conditions (and still unaccustomed to the wave patterns and the boat), I was able to maintain an average of almost 24 knots, without even a hint of banging or slamming.

Before the run across the more open channel, we performed the speed trials in a sheltered section of water in the lee of Herm. Here, out of the weather, we got her up to a maximum speed of 41.3 knots, which for a boat that weighs 2.2 tonnes, plus fuel and water, is very respectable. 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. At a more relaxed pace of around 25 knots, the generous integral 400-litre fuel tank should deliver a range of nearly 400 miles with the lean burn Suzuki DF300 running at around 4,000 to 4,500 rpm. It's a handy asset for the serious boater.

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 fitting. The laminated glass is also 6mm throughout and is set in clamp-style frames for huge strength and rigidity.

While this leaning post layout was specified by the owner, who is a keen diver and angler, any seating requirement can be accommodated and a galley could be incorporated too. There is certainly 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 V-berth - so it is simple to spec it as a more generously equipped family leisure boat.

Heavyweight helms

The helm on this Atlantis has been cleverly kitted out by the owner. He 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 relay to a solid state PC with a 19-inch screen in front of the wheel, enabling you to have multiple large windows open and to record everything to memory and then download the information for archiving and later analysis. Comms are also well covered with a Lowrance LVR fixed station VHF.

The helm station itself suits my height



and reach however I choose to drive. I can perch on the leaning post or press my backside into the vertical cushion face and still, I am entirely comfortable. The hydraulic helm and fly-by-wire engine control are easily changed between main and remote steering stations by putting the engine into neutral and pressing the activation switch. Once locked in, the other control is neutralised and cannot be used until the changeover procedure has been made. It's a good means of preventing inadvertent override or accidental transfer of control.



On the inside

The Atlantis has a very generous freeboard all round, with an especially high prow. The internal freeboard around the cockpit is 95cm, very nearly coding height before a guard rail is added. This makes the cockpit extremely safe, and with the angled bulwarks kept free of protrusions, it is very comfortable to lean against.

The transom wave dam is equally massive and prevents waves breaking over the stern and flooding the cockpit. Any water that does make it into the boat is drained through large





scuppers into the bilge and will require pumping as opposed to being drained directly overboard. This is a slight flaw that is currently being rectified for a commercial craft that has been ordered - and it's a good thing too, as reliance on the bilge pumps alone is far from ideal, particularly in rain-soaked Britain.

The strength of the Atlantis layup, however, 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 is built to stand on, as has the wheelhouse roof so it is also extremely strong and rigid. In short, this thing is as stiff as a raceboat and it shows when you

get underway. You can feel her girder-like strength as she carves her way through the rough and tumble of these seas. The fine entry cuts cleanly, while the strakes and chine direct the water flow to trim the boat at cruising speed. As the 23-knot mark is reached, this sees the boat flattens off and I have to say - ride and handling throughout are excellent.

Put her into a turn and the deep-V sees her heel over onto her double-chined hull side. The ability to spin the wheel at speed and feel her heel in and come round tight is useful when picking your way through the skerries and sandbanks on the north and western side of Herm. And her directional control was particularly welcome as I took her through

the Gouilet Passage, a narrow gap in the rocks barely 50 yards wide, between Brecqhou and Sark with the tide creating a 'poppling' water surface on top of the surge. In all, we clocked up 28 miles in open swells and breaking seas with the sea at every angle - and to say she handled it well is a brazen understatement. ●

Specifications

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| LOA | 7.90 m |
| Beam | 2.55 m |
| Draft | 1.00m |
| Payload | 898 kg |
| Max power | 300hp |
| Power range | 150 to 300 hp |
| RCD | B for six / C for eight |

Pricing (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 |
| Volvo D3 170 Duo prop | £46,300 |
| Volvo D3 200 Duo prop | £49,000 |

Performance

| Engine RPM | Speed (knots) |
|--------------|---------------|
| 600 | 3.0 |
| 1,000 | 4.9 |
| 2,000 | 8.6 |
| 3,000 | 13.5 |
| 4,000 | 23.3 |
| 4,500 | 28.1 |
| 5,000 | 35.2 |
| 6,000 | 41.3 |

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The verdict

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 such rough water performance. The Atlantis 26C is an enormously hardy boat - and with a price tag of less than £50,000, it is worth every penny.

