



42 knot fishing rocket!

Dave Lewis test drives what he considers to be the finest open offshore angling boat he's ever got his hands on - the remarkable Atlantis 26CC, built in the Channel Islands



Top performance
Patrick Wheeler, of Atlantic Marine, at the helm of the superb 26CC.

Here's a boat that can honestly be described as the ultimate fast offshore fishing vessel, just the sort of craft you need for pushing up to 20 miles offshore to those wrecks and reefs.

On the day of the boat test the sea off Guernsey was being lashed by brisk Force 5-6 winds which, coupled with one of the biggest tides of the year, created a mess of foaming white caps.

In those areas where overfalls are created (and there are many off Guernsey) the sea conditions were horrendous, yet the boat took it all in her stride; indeed, to have attempted to assess her offshore capabilities in anything less would have been a crime.

The deep-vee hull is 7.90 metres long with a 2.55m beam. She draws a metre and her offshore capability has been endorsed by a CE Category B rating, which, in case you didn't know, states she is suitable for "offshore voyages in possible wind force of Beaufort Force 8 and significant wave heights of up to four metres."

In terms of fixtures and fittings you don't actually get a lot but you get what you need, which is fine by me. At the bow there is a very large anchor locker and there is a good amount of stowage space provided beneath the twin seat sited astern of the console.

The console contains a huge

compartment, accessed from the front. This is intended for installing a toilet, but is also perfect to safely stow away the mass of equipment that anglers routinely take to sea. Certainly the last thing you want when cruising through a rough sea at upwards of 40 knots is loose items of equipment getting thrown about the deck.

A huge amount of space is included on the console face for the installation of the comprehensive inventory of state-of-the-art electronics owners of such a boat would undoubtedly require.

Safe freeboard

Inboard freeboard is probably the highest I have seen aboard any similar boat. It is over waist height and with gunnels that fall vertically to the deck, accidentally falling overboard would be unlikely unless you did anything incredibly stupid.

Consequently the addition of low stainless gunnel rails all round adds little to onboard safety, but they serve as useful tie-off points for fenders and the like and would be ideal for clamping on rod-rests. They look good, too!

A generous set of deck hardware, again stainless, is provided, and the deck features a very effective non-slip finish.

The high freeboard is continued across the full beam transom, against which a useful bench seat is provided. Twin scuppers amidships will quickly discharge any water shipped. Outboard of the transom the well is huge and includes a couple of steps to help access into the cockpit via the stainless boarding ladder.

High speed test

My sea trial kicked off with an exhilarating blast from St Peter Port across to the island of Herm, a course that took us directly through several particularly ferocious patches of sea.

These were a result of the combination of strong winds and tides, and also the plethora of drying reefs and isolated rock outcrops in the area. Certainly this is not a place to recklessly gun the engines on any boat unless you know the area extremely well.

SPECIFICATION AND PRICE

The Atlantis 26CC completed to standard spec and ready for engine installation retails for £23,000, while a package as tested with a Suzuki DF200 will cost you £37,800, both prices excluding VAT and ex-Guernsey. For more information contact Atlantis Marine, tel: 07781 158514. Web: www.atlantismarine.biz

Despite the testing sea conditions the ride was both comfortable and stable, the vee hull slicing through the waves like a hot knife through butter, with the deep reverse chines very effectively deflecting all spray downwards. Even when running fast with a beam sea just an occasional small speck of spray landed on my sunglasses.

The Atlantis 26CC is rated for engines from 150hp up to a massive 300hp that I was told would provide a substantial top speed of over 42 knots. The test boat was fitted with a 200hp Suzuki DF200 that provided a top speed of over 30 knots. Twin 30-gallon fuel tanks give a generous cruising range of about 200 miles with this engine.

During my sea trial Patrick Wheeler, the main man behind Atlantis Marine, actively sought out the roughest areas of water and was disappointed when we found that conditions in the vicinity of some of the tide races were "not as rough as they should have been".

Amazing experience

Certainly I got to experience this amazing boat in precisely the sort of conditions she has been built to take in her stride, and it wasn't long before I had absolute confidence in her stability and handling.

By way of a demonstration, Patrick pushed her into a series of tight turns while running at full throttle. At all times the hull maintained an incredible level of lateral stability, while at no time did the engine cavitate. Throughout my trial I had to remind myself that actually I was working, as by definition work is not meant to be so much fun.

The Atlantis 26CC is perfect for serious offshore angling, including sharking. Anyone considering investing in a boat for such work should take a look at this model before making a final decision.

If you think a boat featuring a forward cabin would be better for you, then I have even more good news. While I was in Guernsey I got to visit Atlantis Marine's manufacturing facility and the first 26CC featuring a cabin is in the final stages of completion. **SA**

