

SMARTWAVE 490

Simon Everett puts this rather unique 16ft roto-moulded boat through her paces.

Roto-moulded boats have been about for years, the Triumph boats were roto-moulded as are several tenders and dinghies. The Smartwave series of boats hail from New Zealand and are used in their rocky rivers and along the coast. They have been imported to the UK for a few years now and have started to gain wider acceptance. We took the new 490 model with a Yamaha F60 fitted out for a spin to see how she shapes up.

At first mention of roto-moulded boats many people think of bright orange utility boats. The Smartwave is a far cry from that, in her white and stone finished grey she looks very smart. From a distance she looks like a GRP boat. The layout is friendly too, with a spacious cockpit and the removable cuddy providing useful shelter from the elements. The fact that it can be removed and the boat be used in the fine months as an open boat, or indeed for reasons of storage where the cuddy can be taken off to allow the boat to be put in a garage, is an added bonus.

Virtually Indestructible!

The New Zealanders are used to roto-moulded boats, they use them to run rocky rivers, where the boat can be allowed to just bump off the rocks. The boat is less rigid than a GRP boat of similar size and this is noticeable when running through some chop, you can

feel the flex in the hull under your feet, but it isn't enough to detract from the usability of the boat. In fact, it might be a benefit for those who want to fish the gullies between rocks, such as on reefs like the Manacles or the Eddystone, where getting in up close and dangerous will hardly matter as the boat will just bounce off. That is one of the benefits of the roto-moulded construction, it is a knockabout boat that can take the rough handling dished out by many anglers.

The Smartwave 490 is a cut above other polythene boats due to her double skinned hull, moulded in one piece with no joins or welds, and then foam filled to provide fixed buoyancy to make the craft, in their words, 'virtually unsinkable'. The injected foam also makes the boat very quiet on the water, insulating the interior from the noise of the water below.

Superb Layout

The layout of the boat is much the same as any other cuddy angling type boat, forward cuddy cabin, helm console on the starboard gunwale and clear cockpit aft to the transom well for the outboard motor. The boat is



Woosh! We hit 26-knots in this little baby.

very much a component built craft, in that there are elements that can be incorporated or left out at will. The aft seating and locker box for instance is one complete unit that is available to fit in either the cuddy or open boat versions. The same goes for the anchor locker, it is easily fitted or left out.

The controls are fitted to the cuddy part of the build, with the console hanging down from the main structure of the cuddy cover. The gear and throttle lever is mounted on the gunwale and lower edge of the cuddy moulding, neatly tucked in under the overhang. The dash and steering

are mounted on the cuddy with a chartplotter space thoughtfully located right in line of sight and above the wheel. On the test boat this was a Garmin unit. The other electrical components were fitted around the wheel area, including a fixed station VHF. There is everything you need in a small boat.

The screen provides total protection from the wind underway and the cockpit can be enclosed under the camping cover if it rains. Like the convertible roof on a car, it is a matter of moments to get the hood up, with seated headroom under cover. The seats are fitted on to polythene pillars with stowage space below, accessed through an aperture, a piece of cargo net over the aperture would be a useful



Compact but well thought out – the helm position is uncluttered.

home modification to keep things in place where they were put. These seat base lockers would be ideal for an emergency kit bag and to stow your ropes, ready for use.

Some Great Features

The Smartwave is a simple boat with a few features from larger or more expensive boats, just carried out in roto-moulded polythene rather

“The Smartwave 490 is a cut above other polythene boats due to her double skinned hull, moulded in one piece with no joins or welds, and then foam filled to provide fixed buoyancy to make the craft, in their words, ‘virtually unsinkable’.”

than GRP. I would have liked to have seen something more substantial to make fast an anchor rope to, but on a budget something has to give and you'll simply have to make do with the forward rail. Access to the foredeck is through a small hatch that meant I was at an awkward angle, not ideal for hauling a stuck anchor from, or one that has happened to hitch itself under a line of crab pots. So be careful when



There's plenty of room on deck, and a built-in 30-litre fuel tank too!



Even more storage in the aft deck.



Access to the anchor hatch is via the open window.

SPECIFICATIONS

LOA	4.9m
BEAM (external)	2.0m
BEAM (Internal)	1.65m
HULL WEIGHT	390kg
DEADRISE	18 degrees
MAX POWER	60hp
CE CAT	C for 7 persons

anchoring this boat not to get your anchor foul.

The stern seating drops in and is fastened in place by two knobs screws either side that go into brass inserts moulded into the bulwark. Under the seat was a loose fuel tank because on the test boat the built in tank was not yet rigged. The loose 25-litre fuel tank fouled the deck hatch, which opens sideways over a shallow hold that we used to stow the fenders in. With the main 30-litre fuel tank rigged, a single 20-litre reserve would fit better under the seat and leave the hatch cover free to open.

Either side of the tank space there is a sealed locker, one side holds the battery, the other would easily convert into a baitwell or fishbox, further extending the fishing abilities of this particular boat.

Smaller Engines

Being light the Smartwave doesn't need huge horsepower, the Yamaha F60 was plenty and to be honest an F50 would be fine. We had a flat calm

day and went in search of some water movement, eventually finding a bit of 'pottle' and even some swells building off the end of a headland when the tide turned. The boat is quite lively, as to be expected from a lightweight boat, lifting easily over the waves. Hitting waves at speed I could feel the flex in the hull, it isn't excessive, but it is there nonetheless. At more genteel speeds you wouldn't feel it at all and that is the crux of testing, we tend to drive the boats harder than in real life. The Smartwave is fairly flat bottomed and so planes easily and runs fairly flat once on the go.

Turning was a piece of cake and she came round easily without too much use of the wheel. The mild rake on the bow is enough to soften the ride but watch your turns so they don't become harsh by hitting waves whilst heeled over and the ride remains comfortable. One of the joys of the Smartwave XL490 is the ease of use, but it isn't cheap, at £19,500 fully rigged as tested it has some serious competition out there.

PERFORMANCE FIGURES (Full water tank, 34 fuel and six adults aboard)

ENGINE (RPM)	SPEED (Knots)	FUEL (Litres/hour)
700	2.1	0.9
1000	2.9	1.3
2000	5.2	3.8
3000	6.8	6.9
3500	11.4	8.0
4000	15.0	9.5
4500	18.2	11.5
5000	21.6	14.2
6000	26.1	21.6

INFO

Prices and Availability

As tested with Yamaha F60, canopy pack, fendering, electronics package, submersible trailer, under deck fuel tank, fish finder: £19,500 incl VAT @ 20%.

Base model available with seating, screen, steering, Yamaha F30, alloy trailer with standard lighting, battery pack: £14,700 incl VAT @ 20%.

Contact

Marine Revolution Ltd., Unit 8 Mill Court, Mill Lane, Tayport, DD6 9EL

See Advert on page 63
Tel: 01382 552555
E-mail: julian@marinerevolution.com
www.marinerevolution.com