

FAULTLESS FISHING BOAT?

Longliner, Fastliner and Strikeliner are classic boats in angling circles. Now there's a roomy, handsome and speedy new model from Orkney's Sussex boat yard

THE ORKNEY 592 was unveiled at the Southampton Boat Show, and she caused quite a stir. Basically she's a nineteen-footer, 19ft 5in to be exact, and sports a decent 7ft 5in beam. Tipping the scales at 1,520lb, this substantially built boat is certainly no lightweight, but this additional weight is a definite advantage.

A first glance at the Orkney 592 reveals an emphasis on quality and attention to detail. Orkney takes obvious pride in its work, and it is fair to say that no hull gets past the factory gates unless it is perfect.

What I saw when I travelled to Chichester Marina to review the new 592 convinced me that, when talking in terms of build quality and finish, Orkney has raised the bar even higher.

I loved the new lilac blue hull colour, though this is available only as an optional extra, and as I stepped aboard on a bitterly cold December morning I could see that the boat had been built very much with the serious boat angler in mind.

Clearly, Orkney has been listening to its customers, and has incorporated numerous features that make this boat perfect for the offshore or inshore angler alike.

Take the bow arrangement, for example. Anchoring is a day-to-day task for most boat anglers, some of whom might lower and haul the pick as many as half a dozen times a session. Believe me, there is nothing worse than trying to handle an anchor warp in a pitching sea while balancing on one knee, your body compressed in an access hatch the size of a cat flap!

On the 593 you will find that the forward thwart hinges upwards, allowing you to stand right up against the forward bulkhead, feet securely on the main deck, and then stand fully upright through a decent size hatch to work the anchor.

The deck layout at the bow is absolutely perfect, while the size and design of the bow recess into which you retrieve the warp and chain is the best I have ever seen on any boat in its class.

Basically, once everything is retrieved and stowed, there is barely any risk of the warp or chain sliding free while moving between marks, even in choppy seas.

An especially nice touch is the gas-assisted strut attached to the opening hatch, which prevents the hatch slamming upwards if facing into a wind, or into the back of your

“In terms of build quality and finish, Orkney has raised the bar”





The spacious cockpit and perfect console

head as you haul the anchor.

You get a workmanlike opening and locking catch that is certainly fit for the purpose, and I really liked the way all windows have been cut oversize and bonded in situ.

STEP ABOARD

EVERYTHING inside the spacious cockpit is just right. You get plenty of headroom to sit comfortably beneath the cuddy. There is lots of free locker stowage space beneath seats at the bow, within the steering console, incorporated within both the helmsman's and crewman's seat and aft within the transom, as well as two general stowage or bait compartments located to either side of the transom.

There is a large flush-mounted deck hatch sited aft amidships that when opened reveals the fuel tank, while all anglers will appreciate the gunnels that fall vertically to the main deck and give an excellent amount of inboard freeboard.

The hull is rated for outboards up to 80hp and a maximum speed of 27 knots



The gel coat's superb finish is protected by extra-heavy-duty rubber fendering made specifically for the boat

Of course, the main deck is self-draining, and is finished in an effective and obviously hardwearing moulded non-slip finish.

The console/steering arrangement is perfect, too. In recognition that the electronics aboard most private angling boats are getting more technical, with even the smallest boats today being equipped with large chart plotters and a radar, Orkney has designed the console to ensure that there is plenty of flat open space for the comfortable installation of a full and complex inventory of onboard electronics.

The Orkney 592 has been classified as conforming to CE Category C, with the hull rated for use with outboard engines up to a maximum of 80hp and a maximum design speed of 27 knots, though the brochure informs me that when fitted with a 60hp engine you can still expect up to 20 knots, which would probably be more than enough for most anglers.

The hull, deck and ancillary mouldings are constructed in hand lay-up GRP Isothalic resin is used in the hull, which is stiffened below the waterline by an over laminated structural foam girder system. Woven rovings and other high-strength materials are used in the high stress areas to enhance rigidity. The one-piece deck moulding is of sandwich construction, using structural foam to stiffen the walking areas. The deck is bonded to the hull and girder system, and mechanically fastened in the gunnel area.

TEST VERDICT

SO, the boat looks the part and ticks all boxes in terms of design, deck layout, build quality and finish. But what's she like on the water? I could keep this simple by saying the Orkney 592 performs as good as she looks, but I am expected to elaborate.

Within the confines of the marina, the 592 handled superbly, responding predictably and swiftly to the slightest adjustment of

throttle or helm. The no-feed back steering, which is fitted as standard, was lovely to use and in no time at all we were heading out through the marina lock gate into the vast, sheltered expanse of Chichester Harbour.

Initially restricted by an eight-knot speed limit, we cruised sedately towards the lower reaches of the harbour that ultimately open into The Solent. I found the more time I spent on this boat, the more I noticed the little details that make this such a superb finished product.

For example, the wiring for all navigation lights runs behind fitted mouldings that not only conceal it, but help keep it protected from the elements. Outboard, the superb finish to the gel coat is protected by extra-

heavy-duty rubber fendering that was manufactured for this boat. The narrow walkways leading forward to either side of the cuddy are angled slightly inboard, providing additional grip and serving as channels for water.

You get grab handles fitted in strategic places as standard, and those who assume the role of crewman will appreciate the one running across the aft edge of the cuddy. Decent sized ring cleats serve as lashing points

for fenders, while all hardware is of a higher quality than is usually found as standard.

Once we cleared the restricted speed zone I was able to fully open the throttle. She rose quickly and smoothly from displacement to planning mode and achieved a top end speed that I estimated was in the region of 25 knots, and that was with two on board.

I pushed her through tight high-speed turns and other manoeuvres and concluded that this was one hell of an angling boat. Sea conditions were nigh on flat calm, but, from what I experienced and from what Orkney has confirmed, when confronted with more testing conditions such as typically encountered by sea anglers, the 592 provides a dry ride that is seaworthy and comfortable. ➔

INFORMATION

The Orkney 592 retails from £12,408, while a package as tested will cost £23,624.

A selection of optional extras, including the likes of cockpit covers, is available on request. For more information, contact Orkney Boats, tel: 01243 551456. Website: www.orkney-boatsltd.co.uk