

BOATS IN BRIEF INVADER 245 FISHERMAN



BY THEIR very nature, centre-console (or 'walkaround' as our American cousins call them) boats make ideal, roomy platforms for all manner of watersports, not least fishing. But of course, enthusiasm for angling is hardly obligatory for being interested in this style of craft. Their versatility, in that the whole length of boat can be readily used, makes them ideal all-rounders; invariably, as in the case of this model, an extended console allows room for a cabin area below as well as offering an agreeable bulk of protection for the helmsman and crew.

At the helm of the 245, the skipper and mate are comfortably ensconced in individual, fully adjustable bucket seats, surrounded by a substantial wall of coaming and superstructure topped off with a large, albeit angular screen. The usual engine instruments are supplemented by a log, and there is plenty of flat console space to bracket-mount a fish-finder and VHF.

Around the foredeck gunwale there is a reasonable guardrail, but we were disappointed that there was no provision for handholds or rails to the aft deck area. Instead rod-holders and aerated bait wells are the order of the day, set in the wide coaming top. Further fishing-trip necessities supplied are inset rod storage within the raised gunwales and a bait preparation area incorporated on the enginebox top. A seat cushion can be fitted here, as well as optional removable jump-seats on each side of the box-moulding. Further seating is incorporated towards

the front of the built-up helm area.

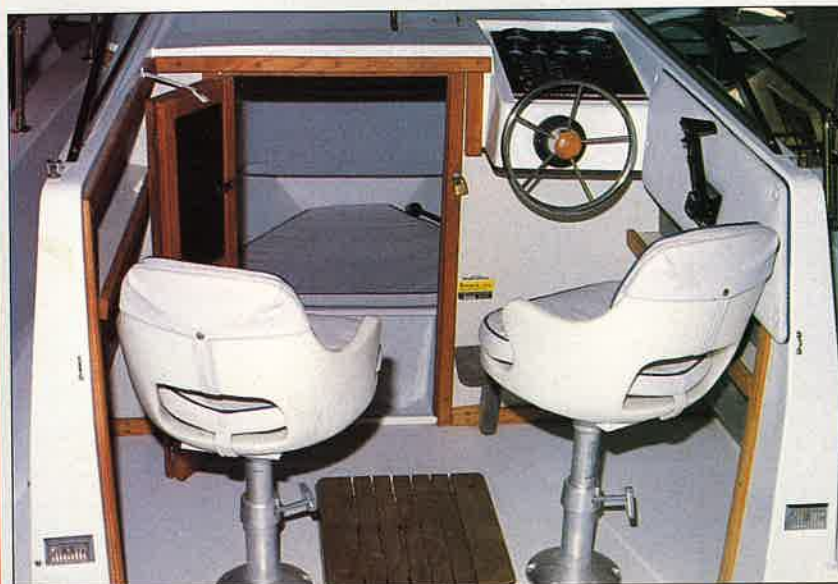
Substantial stowage bins are provided beneath the cockpit sole — some of them geared towards storing those that didn't get away — and there is a forepeak locker for the necessary ground tackle. Unfortunately, there seemed to be little by way of a bow roller or fairlead, deck hardware being limited to less than adequate cleats.

Down below there is sitting headroom in the vee-berth arrangement. The spec includes a chemical toilet, but where it actually finds a home takes some working out.

This model is available in an outboard format, but our test boat was the outdrive version, fitted with a 5.0lt V8 Mercruiser rated to 200hp. We would envisage subsequent boats having the lighter V6 unit as standard, with a slight increase in horsepower to boot. Swinging a 23in pitch prop is not the optimum set-up in terms of responsiveness onto the plane, but this can readily be changed to suit the boat's application.

Once the craft was up all appeared well, and we clocked a top speed of around 35 knots at full throttle; pulling back to a cruising 3800rpm gave just under 30 knots.

As far as fuel consumption is concerned, budget on a good 12gph (55lph) flat-out. An easier hand on the throttle will save a bob or two, the 3800rpm threshold in our experience giving savings of around 25% on full open-throttle consumption while maintaining all the speed you want.



Loa 23ft 2in (7.10m).

Beam 8ft 0in (2.44m).

Draught 2ft 4in (0.71m) with leg raised.

Displacement 1.85 tons.

Fuel 85gal (390lt).

Engine options a full line-up of Volvo and Mercruiser outdrives from 175hp to 270hp in petrol installations, and to 200hp in diesel.

Prices from £15,277 ex VAT with 175hp petrol, £21,702 with Mercruiser 180hp diesel, £15,552 as tested with 200hp V6 petrol.

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