



*Boat Report*

# CHACEWATER **24**

*A classic piece of American design built by a new British company, this boat defies classification but leaves no doubt about performance.*



Above: acres of cockpit, together with jumpseats and rod-holders for the serious sportsfishermen amongst the crew. The highly polished teak console is an option; a GRP version with teak inlays is on offer for those seeking a more practical version. Below: the Volvo Penta KAD42 was a snug fit on our test boat, but Chacewater envisage giving more space to future installations.



Launched at last year's Southampton Boat Show, the purposeful-looking Chacewater 24 appears to have Stateside undertones reigned in by a subtle British conservatism, and it is indeed a product of both camps. It was designed by the highly regarded American Charlie Jannice, to be built to an exacting standard in the UK, on a semi-customised basis.

The large cockpit can be fitted with a wide variety of seating layouts (our test boat was geared with the sports-fisherman in mind), whilst the cabin has all the necessary appointments for overnighting. Engine and drive options cover most eventualities, with a wide range of single and twin outdrive installations offered, plus standard shaft-drive and waterjet possibilities.

We were invited to Plymouth to try the first boat, fitted with one of Volvo Penta's supercharged KAD42 outdrives.

## Design

Our first sight of the well-flared bow sections and reverse sheer of the 24's ivory-coloured hull reminded us of several marques past and present. The designer's credentials quickly reveal why.

Jannice has had a long association with Ray Hunt, the man responsible for the early Fairey boats on this side of the Atlantic, and for the wonderfully dry and stable Boston Whaler range (amongst others) on the American side. This liaison was followed by a direct involvement with the upmarket Blackfin range of fast fisher-cruisers.

The new boat's underwater sections have a variable vee form, with a sharp entry running out to a 23.5° deadrise angle at the transom. The hard vee at the keel softens to more of a U-shape as it runs aft to help soften the ride.

The transom topside is angled out slightly for a less square appearance. The bolt-on moulded GRP and teak bathing platform is an option, as is the bow roller extension which brings the overall length up to 27ft 6in (8.38m).

Reminiscent of the Fairey hulls, the three pairs of sprayrails run right up the bows, with the main chine barely touching the water even at rest. This is almost certainly the reason why this boat (and others with a similar high chine, such as Boston Whalers) provides such a dry ride. Most of the water, it would seem, is turned down by the first inboard sprayrail rather than being left to flick out from the chine, where it can then be picked up by the wind and blown back aboard.

Hull construction is notable, being totally in Airex foam sandwich. Usually, boatbuilders stick with solid GRP panels for the bottom, possibly with balsa or foam used to stiffen the topsides and deck, but Jannice is a great exponent of sandwich



construction, which creates much stiffer panels for a given weight. Interestingly, this is a route the RNLI are also now taking for their lifeboats.

To ensure their production techniques are correct for this type of construction, Chacewater commissioned a composites specialist to oversee manufacture.

## Exterior

Although the boat we inspected was equipped with rod-holders and fold-down jumpseats, don't imagine the Chacewater is simply the sports-fisherman's ideal. There are a number of alternative layouts, giving more seating forward (bench seats rather than the pedestal ones on our test boat) and a sunbed in lieu of the transom bench.

The base of the latter lifts out in three manageable pieces to allow the engine hatch to be raised. It also gives access to large lockers set under the sole, with moulded liners (for keen fishermen to land the ones that don't get away) which remove to allow an inspection of the bilge and give further access to the enginespace, via demountable side panels.

A second pair of deck lockers are set further

forward, while yet another hides the manual bilge pump. A central lift-out panel in the cockpit sole, in this case finished in well-executed optional teak decking, makes the fuel tank serviceable.

Whilst the decking and capped coaming set the boat off handsomely, the sculpted and highly varnished teak helm console (another option) may be a touch too lavish for practical-minded boaters. The standard moulded unit has inset teak trim.

In either case, the helm layout is fine, with engine instrumentation on the angled dash and the throttle, power trim and tab controls offset to the right on a connecting plinth. Chacewater envisage that most owners will be happy locating a VHF set in the adjacent companionway, beside the main breaker panel, but there is enough clear console space to mount a navigator and fish-finder if required.

At present all electrics are wired just to the main panel, but some switches (including that for the windscreen wiper) are to be moved more handily to the helm position.

The two helm seats offer good support and are fully adjustable, while the white anodised screen is thoughtfully provided with handholds running down both sides, and lower opening vent sections. Tucked beneath the side sections of the screen, under the side decks, are fiddled shelf units for lots of odds and ends.

A further optional item of wood finish is the toerail capping bordering the side decks, which have a minimum width of 8in (20cm) and are painted with a good non-slip treatment; between the screen handholds and pulpit guardrail, it is an easy enough passage to the foredeck. Here, there is space aplenty, either for grappling with the ground tackle or fitting a windlass. The anchor chain runs through



Above: the anchor platform belies the Chacewater's origins, but unlike on US-built craft, this extension to overall length is an optional extra. Above left: a cross-section through the hull, which features Airex foam sandwich build, constructed under the supervision of a composites specialist. Below: with room for two to sleep or four to sit, the interior is snug and practical for dayboating and overnighting.



a decent-sized spurling pipe which should not too readily foul.

Cleats are of the 9in (22cm) bar variety. In true American style, the after pair are sited out the way inboard, with fairleads let into the coaming top. The midships ones would be better shifted onto the toerail, making them less of a toe-stubbing liability.

The general finish, including such things as the bolstering of the coaming sides and the sturdiness of hinge-away and removable seats, is excellent, with just a quality edge to the practical robustness which is necessary in a boat built to be used hard.

## Interior

A double-hinged teak hatch and door lead down the slight drop from the cockpit to the cabin area.

The interior has stooped standing headroom, and is dominated by the comfortably upholstered U (rather than V) shaped dinette. Dropping the table and pulling out the seat back converts this into a 5ft (1.52m) wide by 6ft 2in (1.85m) long berth. Stowage is provided by seat lockers, with ply hatches properly finished on both sides with a lick of varnish, and a hatch in the forward bulkhead gives access to the chain locker.

Immediately adjacent, to port of the companionway, is a galley area, small but adequate for brewing up and for the overnighting usage it will usually be put to. There is a single alcohol burner and a stainless steel sink with manual cold water feed, plus enough room for essential snacks, mugs and a kettle, in a couple of cupboards and an outboard locker.

Opposite is the toilet compartment, with nothing more than the essential pump-out unit and a small storage compartment. An opening hatch provides ventilation.

As in the the cockpit, a GRP liner is used as a base structure for the accommodation, almost totally hidden by finely finished teak trim (with holly and teak strip used for the sole) and upholstered or clad in foam-backed vinyl. Small lights and an opening hatch are set into the deckhead.

## Engine

Outdrive, shaftdrive and jetdrive configurations are available, with inboard-engined craft having their raised enginebox/seats sited towards the helm rather than near the transom.

Although Chacewater will put together any practical package, the price list quotes Volvo Penta installations only. Even so, there is a wide variety of petrol and diesel options, in both single and twin installations. Options run from a single 130hp petrol V6 outdrive (the diesel line-up starts at the same power rating) to twin 210hp petrols. Our test boat had a single KAD42 DP diesel, giving 230hp without the added weight or expense of twin diesels or the thirst of two petrols.

The height of the enginebox is such that it neatly forms part of the cushioned transom seating without needlessly dominating the cockpit. The seating is easily raised, and supported on a hinged stainless steel pole.

At first glance, access looks like a shoehorn job, with servicing a no-no. However, with the KAD42's inspection points brought to the top of the engine, day-to-day checks are not a problem, and sufficient room has been left at the front of the bay to allow you to get at the belts and pumps. The bulkhead

affords a landing for a large Racor filter with stopcock and the battery switches, the power-trim auxiliary is serviceable, though a mite tight, and the removable 'fish bins' to the compartments on either side allow access to the bottom end through side panels. All the same, Chacewater say they envisage subsequent installations being given more room.

All sides of the compartment and box are insulated, with the bilge serviced by a small auto-electric submersible pump as well as the manual unit sited in a cockpit locker.

## Performance and handling

The day of our test brought a freshening southerly blowing straight into Plymouth Sound, causing an increasingly untidy sea-state as waves reflecting off the sea defences interacted with further incoming ones. Walls of water formed swiftly to create unpredictable running conditions.

Although these seas were not big enough to be downright unnerving, for a quiet life they are usually best treated with a measure of caution. Or so we thought. Whilst it proved impossible to really let the boat settle across any angle of encounter, with due consideration to trim, the hull could not be wrongfooted as we ducked and dived around our photoboot.

Off with any tab, leave the Duoprop leg at zero trim and let the full buoyancy of the flared bow sections keep the nose out of trouble, whether popping through into a suddenly forming trough or bowling back downhill. The deep vee chomping across the wave-tops once tuned up with a touch more speed, say 30 knots, and only once during our morning's excursion did the hull (or more accurately its occupants) complain, with a smack straight on the beam.

On the whole, a softer ride would be hard to find. And softness was bettered only by dryness. Despite our nip-and-tuck cornering as we continuously changed direction, barely a spec of spray landed on the protective screen and only the slightest drop blew back to the rear of the cockpit.

Back behind the shelter of the breakwater, we concluded our test with the customary speed trials. Flat out, pulling 3900rpm, our radar gun clocked just under 36 knots, at 3500rpm 31 knots and at 3000rpm 25 knots. At 2500rpm with the leg tucked in, we sat steadily on the plane at 18.5 knots. Acceleration was commendable, 10-20 knots in 10sec with an easy lift straight onto the plane, trimming out without fuss.

Fuel consumption will be in the order of 12gph (55lph) at full throttle, or 6.5gph (30lph) at a cruising 25 knots. Noise levels at this speed were comfortable, especially at the helm, at 80dB(A); we measured 84dB(A) over the enginebox.

## Conclusions

Pigeonholing the Chacewater 24 is tricky. Its size, power and price earmarks it as a serious enthusiast's boat, the brochure describing it as an express-style sportsfisherman for instance, while the attention paid on the accommodation allows you to spend a comfortable night aboard but not a whole lot more.

Rather easier to identify is its overall steadfastness as a sea boat, and the overall quality of build and fit-out. It is not altogether in a class of its own, but you will be hard pressed to find better. □

## Chacewater 24

**Loa** 27ft 6in (8.38m).

**Hull length** 23ft 10in (7.29m).

**Beam** 9ft 0in (2.74m).

**Draught** 3ft 0in (0.91m).

**Displacement** 2.5 tons.

**Fuel** 80gal (370lt).

**Water** 12gal (56lt).

**Engine** single Volvo KAD

42DP 230hp diesel.

**Price** from £34,223 ex VAT

with single 130hp petrol;

£43,702 with standard fit-out

and KAD 42DP; £51,677 as

tested.

**Builders** Chacewater Yacht

Company, PO Box 6,

Plymstock, Plymouth, Devon

PL9 7YA. Tel: 0752 880920.