

BOAT REPORT



FAST ONE FROM FARNHAM

From Surrey with style — a fast weekender from one of our longest established sports boat builders. Its well-proven hull gives a safe and seaworthy ride.

PLANCRAFT is a long-serving name in the British sportsboat market. Their range of runabouts and skiboats from 12ft to 17ft have sold well for over 20 years, while five years ago they had a brief flirtation with the racing cruiser market with the highly successful 25ft Revenger, now produced independently by Revenger Boats.

The company returned to the cruiser market last year with the 20ft Seaflite Weekender. Based on a considerably modified version of the Revenger hull, this is a good looking boat, with ample room in the cockpit, plus a small but comfortable cuddy cabin forward. The deep vee hull ensures that this is a craft that can take care of itself out in open waters.

Looking at the boat in more detail, the place to start is the cockpit. This has a secure feel to it, with deep coamings, and room for six people to take the air. Comfortable bucket seats forward have a good wrap around backrest to support the driver and

PLANCRAFT SEAFLITE 21



Above: the Seaflite handled well at speed, with an excellent performance. Top right: the comfortable bucket seats for driver and navigator. Right: inside the cabin, with the galley on the left covered by a hinged lid, and the table to the right.

navigator. These can swivel, adjust fore and aft and alter for height. The rear bench seat will take four people, or can allow a sunbather to stretch out. The driving position is a good one, whether standing or sitting, with the single lever control sited well to hand, and the instruments set out clearly ahead. A small covered chart area is located forward, but there is no compass.

Stowage is limited to shallow trays port and starboard at floor height, with the port one stretching back far enough to take a pair of skis. In addition there is a small gas bottle locker under the aft seat to port, but this had a tendency to collect water.

The boat comes with a tonneau cover, or an all-over cockpit cover that stows behind the rear seat. We were pleased to see the back of this seat is wide and soft, allowing you to climb over onto the bathing platform without bruising your shins.

Access to the engine is gained by lifting out the seat cushion, and hinging a cover forward. This allows a reasonable amount of room for working round the unit and for getting to the regular service points. Engine options on the Seaflite go from 130-290hp. Power on our test boat came from a single 205hp Mercruiser V6. The general standard of installation was fair, though some of the wiring

was a bit straggly. Fuel comes from a 37 gallon aluminium tank mounted under the cockpit. Fuel lines are reinforced rubber, with a large filter/water trap easily accessible, but no fuel shut-off. The single battery is mounted to starboard, with its main switch in the side locker. Close to the battery is the power-trim motor. The only bilge pump fitted is a small Rule 800, almost inaccessible under the cockpit, and discharging through clear polythene hose. Reinforced hose is a must, especially on a petrol boat, where spilt fuel can harden and kink ordinary types. We would also like to see a bigger pump, better sited.

Moving forward to the overnight

BOAT REPORT

accommodation, access to the cuddy cabin is via a double-hinging teak door. The adjacent bulkhead hinges down to provide a serving surface for food. The compact galley is to port. This comprises a twin-burner and grill as cooker, plus a sink, with a small locker beneath. With the hatch above folded forward, it is possible to stand and cook here.

The rest of the cabin includes an all-round settee, with room for four people, or six at a squeeze to sit at the table. Dropping the table provides the nfill for a comfortable double berth. Lockers beneath the seats will take some clothes, though they may already be full with the cockpit cover, the flexible water tank, and a chemical toilet. Most people would probably throw things over onto the shelf forward. An opening hatch overhead provides light and ventilation. The whole cabin is pleasantly finished in grey and red carpet with matching upholstery.

Back outside, the deck layout comprises narrow side decks alongside the cockpit, which widen as

you move forward. A moulded non-slip helps you keep your footing here, but the cabin top is smooth gelcoat. Low inboard rails are of more use for tying on fenders. A locker forward will take anchor, fenders and warps, with a central cleat and bow roller completing the mooring arrangements.

Underway, the 205hp Mercruiser gave immediate response, with the Seaflite accelerating swiftly onto the plane. Top speed we measured was an impressive 40 knots with one crew and half fuel. The power steering gave light and precise control, and the boat turned tight and clean, with moderate heel, but no slip. The hull coped handsomely with all the waves we could find, making it a well-balanced, well-behaved boat.

At the end of our test on the Plancraft, we had grown to like the boat. Safe and predictable in its handling, yet still with a sparkling performance. As its name implies, the accommodation would cope with a weekend but no more, but it still does not feel a cramped boat. Some of the

engineering details could do with tidying up, and some of the finish, particularly around hatch cut-outs is rough, but this is still a boat that will give a lot of fun.

Length overall	21ft 6in (6.50m)
Hull length	20ft 0in (6.10m)
Beam	7ft 4in (2.25m)
Draught	2ft 6in (0.76m)
Weight	Approx 1¼ tons
Power	205 hp Mercruiser V6
Fuel	37gals (170 lt)
Water	12gals (55 lt)

Price
With 130hp — £14,381 ex VAT
With 205hp — £15,942 ex VAT

Builders:
Plancraft Marine,
6, The Street,
Wrecclesham,
Farnham, Hants.
Tel: 0252 727440.

The "traditional guernsey". 100% Oiled Wool.

Dating back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, 'the traditional guernsey' has been an essential part of any seafaring mans wardrobe. Well known for its waterproof qualities, this tightly knitted garment is produced from 100% oiled wool.

Its durability owes much to the fact that it is reversible (back to front) thereby ensuring that the fabric receives equal wear.

We are pleased to offer you this garment, also available in crewneck, at the price of £37.95 + p&p, sizes 36-46.

If you would like to acquire a 'traditional guernsey' please complete the coupon below.

Paul Stevens Mail Order, 36 The Glade, Ilford, Essex IG5 ONF.

If you are in any way dissatisfied return goods, undamaged within 7 days of receipt for a full refund inc p.&p.

To: Paul Stevens Mail Order, 36 The Glade, Ilford, Essex IG5 ONF.
Please send me Guernsey(s) @ £37.95ea. + £1.10 p&p
Please send me Crew Neck(s) @ £37.95ea. + £1.10 p&p

Style	Colour	Quantity	Size
Guernsey			
Crew Neck			

I enclose cheque/P.O. for £ made payable to Paul Stevens Mail Order.

Or debit my Access/Visa No. _____ Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Please allow up to 21 days for delivery MI

