

Catch of the day

How the new Pro epithet has given this tough old seadog a new lease of life REPORT BY NICK BURNHAM

The brief...



What at first glance appeared to be a simple new edition of an existing model proved, on further investigation, actually proved to be so much more.

Nick

LOA: 44ft 0in (13.40m)
PRICE: from £414,200 inc VAT
TOP SPEED: 29 knots
BUILDERS: Rodman Polyships S.A.U.
ENQUIRIES: Tel: 01243 512101
www.rbsmarine.com

It's been 10 years since Motor Boats Monthly tested, and raved about, the Rodman 1250. So when we heard that there was a new version on the market, the Fisher Pro, we had to find out more. The big question was, what had Rodman done to the venerable old 1250? To our surprise the answer is nothing, instead the 1250 Fisher Pro is a completely new boat. And to give some weight (literally) to the enormity of just how completely the 1250 has changed, take a look at the total displacement, which has risen from a class-typical 11.5 tonnes to a massive 16.5 tonnes.

It's this weight that really defines the differences between this new model and its predecessor. Step aboard and the Fisher Pro barely flinches, move about that huge aft deck and she

sits in the water solid as a rock. Lift the cockpit hatches and heave out the substantial fish/storage boxes (a two-man job) to access the hull and you'll find massive stringers and probably the best access to sterngear we've ever seen in this size of boat. Or move forward up onto the foot-wide side decks (now at gunwale height rather than recessed and bulwarked on the 1250) and find thicker gauge guardrails under your hand, and the deckhead utterly rigid under your feet. Never was the expression "hewn from solid" more apt, the whole boat feels as though Rodman simply

took a huge chunk of fibreglass and whittled a boat from it.

Of course Rodman are no strangers to industrial spec vessels, their leisure craft division is merely one part of a huge boat building company that specialises in serious specialist commercial craft from high speed military patrol boats to offshore oil rig support ships. It's no surprise that they can screw a boat together so that it feels as if it could survive the apocalypse, the good news is that they've managed to do it without making it look like a commercial tug boat.

With a classic whaleback sheerline, flat deck, aft set deck saloon and standard fit hardtop over the flybridge, the look is pure sportsfisher. Add some outriggers and a fighting chair and she'd pass muster in any Florida Keys marina. The layout inside is equally sportsfisher styled, simple, practical and comfortable. A large L-shaped dinette sits opposite a large sideboard with useful drawers, fiddled shelves and a saloon fridge. The double helm has moved to starboard, from its portside location in the previous 1250. Further forward, the lower deck proffers a Corian topped L-shaped galley, a good sized heads with separate shower, and an

owners cabin forward with twin berth guest cabin to port. Also evident is a gentle lift of quality and ambience, rich teak joinery offset by the teak and holly flooring, and slim teak fillets breaking up the soft cream headlining. It's no Squadron 42, instead the simplicity of the layout has a charm all of its own.

Outside, the spacious low-sided cockpit feels big enough for a volleyball tournament. Seats around the edges fold flat, and a wet-bar and ice chest live under a curved stainless steel ladder that leads to the flybridge where two chunky bucket seats face a helm positioned well aft to allow easy communication between both decks. As an aside, it also makes stern-to mooring an absolute doddle with the transom in plain view of the skipper, and leaves plenty of space in front of the helm for crew to enjoy the view.

Performance & handling

Our boat has the smallest engine option, twin Volvo D6 435hp EVC on shafts. D9 500s are available, as indeed are Yanmar and Cummins alternatives, another nod to the builder's commercial roots. Interestingly IPS is not an option, despite Rodman being an early adopter and champion of the IPS configuration, apparently the cockpit floor is too low to allow an easy fit so the engines are situated further forward under the saloon floor and connected to conventional shaft drive. Deep hull tunnels allow the shafts to run at an efficiently shallow angle with the props sitting high, directing the thrust backwards rather than downwards.

The feeling of total solidity extends completely to the way the boat behaves on the water. Nudging out of the berth the Fisher Pro responds impassively to the Volvo EDC controls,



manoeuvring with complete docility and predictability, those wide set shafts and the damping effect of all that displacement making the skipper feel like a helming god.

It's the same story out at sea. A combined 870hp lifts the boat confidently onto the plane, but what's of particular interest is the way that it does it. Most planing boats display a fair amount of bow lift as the boat accelerates, and then settle onto the plane, the nose dropping as the boat exceeds hump speed. The Fisher Pro simply lifts the bow a few degrees as planing speeds are approached, and then settles at that attitude no matter what. It's possible to slow the boat right down to 14 knots and still maintain the plane and

hull angle, feeling all the while uncannily like a heavy semi-displacement boat. The same is true when cornering. Put the helm down hard and it turns remarkably tightly, but it doesn't

bank at all, instead sweeping around bolt upright like a duchess at a dinner dance.

Where that semi-displacement feel and attitude comes to the fore is when you throw it at some sea. Hit a big wave at any speed and angle and the Rodman shoulders its way through, all that weight and attitude shoving the sea aside with total disdain. It's genuinely impressive, and

puts us in mind of some of the best heavy weather bruisers such as Nelsons and Weymouths, yet because it's actually planing it offers the ability to cruise easily at over 20 knots, and max out at nearly 30, a heady combination of abilities.

"Makes the skipper feel like a helming god"



Scan the QR code right to watch the video



bit.ly/NwC9VL

PHOTOS: WILLIAM PAYNE



MID CABIN



FORECABIN



GUEST CABIN

Interiors

Functional and sleek

Simple, solid and practical has always been the Rodman way, but the Fisher Pro adds an extra dash of style. Warm teak interior suits the boat well, but cherry or oak are available as options. Saloon dinette table sits on a chunky Bezenzoni strut allowing it to drop and create a further berth. Sideboard contains large fridge, purpose-built holders for the standard fit china crockery, good sized drawers and deeply fiddled cupboard shelving. Indeed, most flat surfaces feature practical fiddles. Solid handrails let into the saloon deckhead are another very practical touch.



HEADS



GALLEY



WET-BAR & ENGINE ACCESS



HULL ACCESS



FLYBRIDGE STEPS



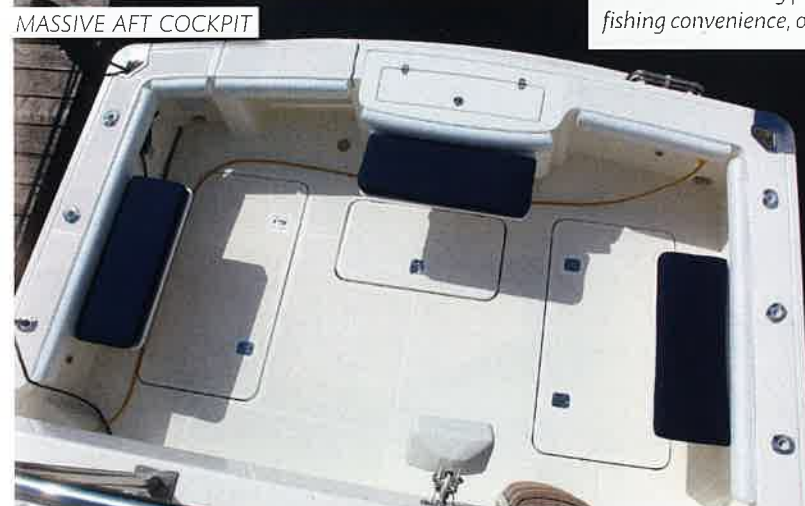
FLYBRIDGE SEATING

Exterior

Easy access to fly and plenty of seating

Large cockpit has low padded coamings in classic sportsfisher style. Stainless steel rails can be added to increase height and security, and the boat can be specified without the bathing platform for maximum fishing convenience, or just to get one up

on the marina. Side decks are easily accessed and wide, although no longer recessed. The ladder from the flybridge has nicely staggered steps at the top that curve into a vertical drop at the bottom, meaning that it's tempting to descend facing forward like a stairway, only to have to turn around for the second half of the descent. Plenty of seating on the flybridge for crew forward of the helm where they're easily observed – great for small children.



MASSIVE AFT COCKPIT



FOREDECK

From the helm

Excellent viz with ample helm space

Lower helm has a ship-like vertical wheel and space for two huge nav screens, but nowhere for paper charts. Visibility is great, although tapering side windows narrow rear three-quarter vision.



The navigator has a solid handrail for grip, but the design of the helm seat actually gives little support. The helmsman's footrest could also do with being extended across to avoid legs from dangling. At the upper helm visibility is superb, particularly for close quarters where the rear set position gives a "four corners" view.





Specification and value

The new Fisher Pro is bigger than the standard 1250, heavier, better built, better finished, and better equipped (GRP flybridge bimini, bow thruster, 4Kva Generator, vacuum flush toilet, holding tank, and even a commercial grade firefighting system are all standard). Inevitably therefore, it's also dearer. Where the original wowed with its hull and buy-in figure of under £350,000, the new Fisher Pro will set you back over £400,000 for the basic boat, placing it into Princess 42 territory. Park the two side by side and the latter is going to win on marina appeal with its two en suites and attention to detail. Out to sea in anything over a Force 5 however, and while the Princess is a perfectly capable sea boat, the Rodman's near industrial-grade solidity, greater weight, and almost semi-displacement style seakeeping allow it to fight a very different battle.

Technical data

KEY DIMENSIONS

BUILD	GRP
RCD	B
LOA	44ft 0in (13.40m)
BEAM	13ft 10ins (4.20m)
DRAUGHT	3ft 1in (0.95m)
DISPLACEMENT	16.5 tonnes
FUEL CAPACITY	382 gal (1735 ltr)
WATER CAPACITY	93 gal (425lt)
WIDTH OF SIDE DECKS	12in (0.30m)
HEADROOM IN SALOON	6ft 5in (1.96m)
FORECABIN BERTH	6ft 6in x 4ft 6in (1.98m x 1.37m)
MID CABIN BERTH	6ft 0in x 2ft 4in (1.83m x 0.71m) & 6ft 0in x 1ft 10in (1.83m x 0.58m)

PERFORMANCE

Engines	2x Volvo D6-435 shaftdrive
Configuration	6 cylinder 5.5 litre, 435hp@3500rpm
Conditions	S' easterly Force 3-4, sea slight to moderate
Load	fuel 25%, water 50%, crew 2

RPM	KNOTS	GPH	LPH	MPG	RANGE	NOISE
1000	6	1.3	6	4.6	1406	65
1500	9	4.4	20	2.0	611	68
2000	12	9.5	43	1.3	397	72
2500	18	16.5	75	1.1	336	75
3000	25	22.9	104	1.1	336	79
3500	28	30.8	140	0.9	275	83

Range figures quoted above are in miles based on standard fuel tanks and include a 20% margin. GPH & MPG refer to Imperial gallons. These figures may vary due to weather conditions, air, water, engine temperature, crew numbers, hull fouling, fuel quality and other issues. Noise readings in dB(A) were taken in the saloon.

PRICES

STANDARD BOAT	Inc VAT
with Volvo D6-435 EVC	£414,200
ANTI FOULING IN BLACK (FIVE COATS)	£1675
WEBASTO HEATING	£3724
BLUE HULL	£7728
20" FLAT SCREEN TV/DVD IN SALOON	£2095
TV AERIAL	£540
DUAL STATION 'E' RAYMARINE ELECTRONICS	£23,006

BOAT AS TESTED £473,146*

*Boat as tested price may include alternative options

Enginebay

Large opening section in the wet-bar area makes the engine room almost walk-in accessible, and another access point exists in the saloon floor. Excellent soundproofing and rock-solid build-quality



mean very little vibration through the boat. At speed you can hear the engines, but you can hardly feel them even when stood directly over them. At 25 knots on the flybridge the sound of the water sluicing past the hull is actually louder than the engines (although in fairness, 16 tonnes does displace a fair bit of water at 25 knots!)

The verdict

We've always been a huge fan of the original Rodman 1250 for its no-nonsense sportsfisher concept and epic seakeeping. The new 1250 Fisher Pro moves the game on significantly, building on the strengths of the original with more space, better finish, greater strength and solidity. The corresponding price increase pushes it into the major league of the established luxury builders, but rather than try and fight them on their own terms, a battle the Rodman could only lose, it offers instead simplicity, substance, and colossal capability. It may not be as sexy as a Sunseeker or flash as a Fairline, but it has a solid wholesome charm, appealing to a very different clientele who will buy it for its own strengths.

Meet the family



SMALLER

Rodman 1250 from £333,000

(2x Volvo IPS 500 370hp diesel engines)

LOA: 41ft 4in (12.6m)

The original 1250 and still in production, as the new Fisher Pro is a very different boat.



SMALLER

Rodman 1170 from £258,360

(2x Cummins QSB 5.9 330hp diesel engines)

LOA: 37ft 9in (11.50m)

Scaled down 1250 in style and concept, smaller everywhere, with a bunked second cabin.

The rivals



Bertram 410 from £520,851

A classic name to go with this classically styled sportsfisher from the very heart of the genre. Authentic but expensive.



Tiara 3900 Convertible from £670,677

Another red blooded American sportsfisher. Lack of lower helm limits appeal in the UK, but makes maximum use of the accommodation.