

BOAT REPORT

Rodman 800

Although it comes from sunny Spain, this looks like a practical all-weather boat. What type of British buyer will it attract?

The market is currently well endowed with 26ft to 28ft wheelhouse-style craft which are of sports-fishing origin but with a sportscruiser specification.

They appeal to owners for whom the priority is getting afloat without being limited by the weather, with sunbathing and performance considered lesser requirements—perhaps those who have owned larger craft but still want to keep a presence on the water.

Inboard diesel power is generally favoured, as are comfortable interiors, with practicality coming above styling.

A new contender in this niche market is the Rodman 800 from Spain, which made its UK debut at last year's Southampton Boat Show. We took the opportunity of a test in ideal, choppy conditions.

Design & layout

The 800's purposeful styling is dominated by the wheelhouse. Headroom inside is good, but the compromise is a top-heavy look, even if you don't consider the flybridge version.

Another major influence on the layout is the walkaround decks. These are popular among sports-fishermen who require quick access to any point of the boat without having to clamber over windscreens or down narrow side decks, and will be appreciated by experienced owners who are not as sprightly as they used to be.

For safety, stainless steel guardrails run from the bow almost back to the cockpit, augmented by raised gunwales; in fact, the latter rise as they make their way from stern to bow, which adds to the boat's heavy-set forward styling.

The presentation is simple and



Wheelhouse/saloon

Accessed from the aft deck through generous sliding doors, the wheelhouse has a light and airy aspect, helped by plenty of headroom, and a quality feel, thanks to the cherry wood interior and good

quality fabrics used.

Opposite the helm there is a tidy dinette which will seat four. The table has a fold-down leaf to enlarge the passageway through to the galley and cabin, and can be dropped down completely to convert the area into a double berth if required.

Stowage has been very well

thought-out, and all the seating has good-sized lockers underneath. You do not have to lift cushions and hatches, as these have doors which open laterally from the passageway; the forward one is fitted with a pull-out drinks cabinet.

There is a cabinet aft to port, with a fiddled top surface to retain loose items. And the two teak steps leading down to the galley, WC and forward cabin both have hinged lids revealing lockers, the upper one containing the battery master switches.



Forward cabin

The forward cabin, entered through a cherry wood door, is a moulding that incorporates the double berth, a wardrobe, a



seat and small recessed tray.

Although the berth is a good size, its diagonal arrangement means that it is slightly shorter on its inboard side. Set in the base are three lockers, all lined and separated from each other, accessed through hatches under the mattress.

There is also a locker under the cushion of the small seat to starboard. The hanging locker is of a good height and also offers open stowage on top, and a shelf runs down each side for oddments stowage.

A deck hatch lets in daylight, which the mirror in the bow makes best use of, as do the light-coloured lining and bright fabrics.



Helm

Integrating a helm position into a wheelhouse that doubles as a saloon can call for compromises, but not here.

The upright steering wheel, typical of this type of craft, is well placed and not too low, offering a good driving position whether you are seated or standing. The non-adjustable helm seat offers minimal lateral

support, so you stand or lean back when at speed or testing the boat's handling limits.

The throttle falls easily to hand and offers good control. Visibility is good all-round, and when the going gets rough the wipers work well, although they do not self-park.

Engine instrumentation, set to starboard of the angled dashboard, is easily read, as is the compass which sits just below your eyeline as you look

forward. The rest of the console is left clear for electronic aids, and the main bank of lit rocker switches set just below, with space for a compact GPS or log.

Lower still is a handy shelf that would take a telephone or portable GPS, while the main ancillary switches and circuit-breakers are mounted to the left of the steering wheel. A VHF radio and stereo radio/cassette-player are mounted in the headlining.

Galley

The L-shaped galley to starboard has a stainless steel sink and multi-fuel stove, set into a worktop which still has plenty of area for food preparation.

There are cupboards above and behind these, and a further cupboard and a drawer set under the stove and the lower-level fridge.

The whole area is well lit and has plenty of headroom.



Toilet

The WC, opposite the galley, is a moulding that incorporates the flooring and basin. It is drained, with a tap head on a wander lead doubling as a shower.

A manual toilet is fitted, and headroom and space are adequate. There is a locker under the basin, the door has a toilet roll holder on the back, and an opening porthole provides ventilation.



Decks

There are steps up from the cockpit to both side decks, which are of a good width for a

craft of this size, and non-slip for easy access all the way forward. Extra handholds on the wheelhouse roof would help, however, as the outboard guardrails are low at



their after end.

On the foredeck, the windlass has a remote control, and a hatch gives access to a generous anchor locker.

Cockpit

On a craft where the emphasis is on the wheelhouse, there is nevertheless very good aft cockpit space, enough to sit out on some fold-up chairs or to rig fishing lines.

The sole has two large hatches, both rising on gas struts and boasting inner lips and rubber seals to ensure they

remain dry. The forward one gives access to the engineroom, and the aft one to a large lazaret.

The latter is big enough to climb into for access to the rudder if needed. There is a temporary tiller mounted on the forward bulkhead, but there is no protection given to the rudder assembly so anything loose could become entangled.

There is also a locker in the transom door, and fishing rod-holders are set into the teak-capped coamings.

Aft mooring cleats are mounted inboard, with the warps running through a stainless steel eye set into the teak on each side; this neat design touch keeps the boat's lines smooth, and saves clothing or fishing lines from becoming snagged.



BOAT REPORT

the lines are clean. Subtle styling touches are the wheelhouse roof extending forwards of the windscreen, a mini radar arch mounted at its aft end, teak gunwales aft and the transom angled aft and integrating a bathing platform.

There is an excellent allocation of space within the layout, which offers a galley, toilet compartment and bow cabin forward of a wheelhouse which doubles as a saloon. This is one of the few left-hand-drive boats on the market, although the throttle is still placed to the right of the steering wheel.

The boat we tested had the base inboard engine, a 230hp Volvo Penta KAMD43P diesel driving a conventional shaft through a stub keel. Other single-engine options are the 260hp KAMD44 and the 280hp Yanmar 6LP DTZE. There are also three twin options: 150hp Volvo TAMD31Ps, 180hp Yanmar 4LH-HTEs and 200hp Yanmar 4LHA-DTEs.

Performance & handling

The 230hp unit offered a fairly good response to get the 800 underway, and went on push the hull on to a top speed of 24.9 knots at 3900rpm. That was in some fairly choppy conditions, and we would expect this figure to be beaten in calm water.

A fast cruising setting of 3500rpm saw 21.5 knots on the GPS, and when we eased back in 500rpm steps the readings were 14.9 knots and 11 knots respectively.

Even at top speed we saw only 82dB(A) registered on the sound meter in the cabin, and at the fast cruising speed 81dB(A), so crew fatigue should be minimal on long passages.

The same can be said for the ride,



Engine room

Lifting the forward hatch in the cockpit sole is easy, as it is supported by a gas-strut. The engine itself is very tidily installed, with neat wiring and piping runs and good access to all the essential services.

The fuel separator and water filter are both mounted on the aft bulkhead and can be

reached without climbing down into the enginebay, but if you do so there is plenty of room both aft and alongside the single diesel.



Bathing platform

The bathing platform is a tidy affair, extending the full width of the craft and easy to board from alongside. A swing-down boarding ladder provides the access point from the water.

A starboard door in the transom gives access to the cockpit, where there is a shower unit.



Rodman 800

BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

RECREATIONAL CRAFT DIRECTIVE

Design Category B: Offshore (offshore voyages in wind up to Force 8)

DIMENSIONS

LOA

27ft 6in (8.40m)

BEAM

10ft 0in (3.05m)

DRAUGHT

2ft 5in (0.74m)

DISPLACEMENT

3.4 tonnes

FUEL CAPACITY

110gal (500lt)

ENGINES

single 230hp Volvo Penta KAMD43P diesel

PRICE

from £63,072 inc VAT

SUPPLIERS

Seasport Marine, Birdham Pool, Birdham, West Sussex PO20 7BG. Tel: 01243 512454.

BUILDERS

Rodman Polyships, Rios-Teis s/n, Aptdo Posta (BP) 501, 36200 Vigo, Spain. Tel: +34 986 811 818.

as the Rodman pushes on through the waves with little fuss. Quite a bit of spray is picked up and the wipers are needed, but there is little slamming from the hull.

The shaft-drive configuration means good response from a rudder, although some more mid-range power would help the helmsman enjoy this better.

When we powering up and through the large wake of our photo boat and then down the outer side, the response to the helm remained good. Tracking is consistent at both slow and high speeds.

Conclusions

Well designed, built and specified, the Rodman 800 joins the growing number of craft offering wheelhouse shelter and full walkaround decks, a combination that should appeal to anyone looking for year-round UK boating in comfort.

The interior design and layout is hard to fault, offering excellent eating and sleeping accommodation.