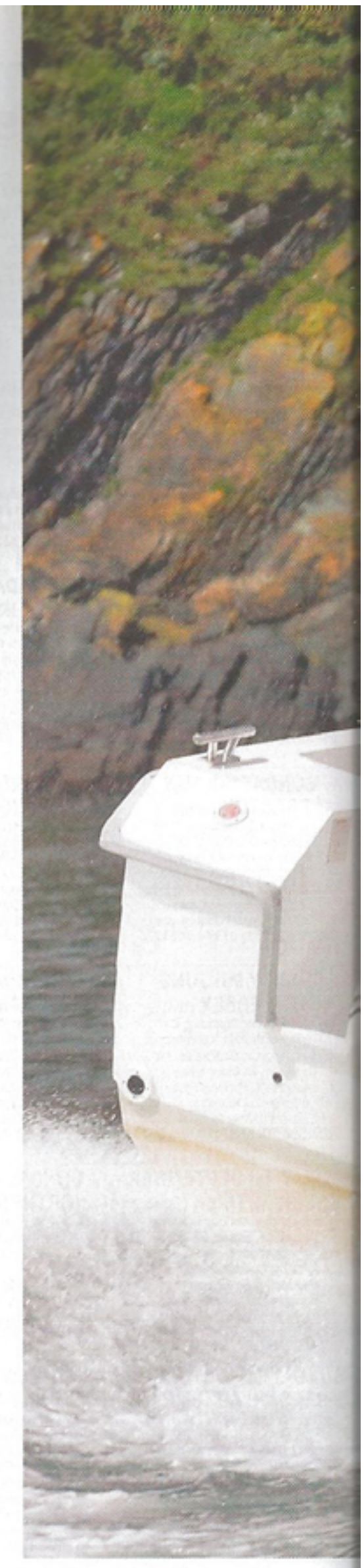
"What a 'swell' boat you are"

Built to withstand Atlantic swells, a trial off Dartmouth is like a cruise on a park boating lake for the Pescador 600. **Dave Lewis** takes full advantage of her Portuguese sea-keeping qualities



If you are looking to buy a high-performance, extremely well built, hugely practical and incredibly seaworthy offshore angling boat, read on - I may have found just what you've been looking for.

Built in Portugal, specifically to meet the needs of commercial fishermen who routinely travel many miles out into the deep and often unpredictable Atlantic Ocean, the Pescador 600 is a classic offshore workboat.

Built around the ever-popular simulated clinker hull, the Pescador 600 features a stylish, beautifully flared bow - just the type of boat to punch cleanly through heavy seas. Obviously regularly working in heavy water subjects the boat's hull to immense stress, and a quick glance at the size and number of vertical stiffeners built into her sides shows that she has been constructed with maximum structural strength in mind.

The hull also features solid bilge keels that add longitudinal strength and are perfect for a boat that you intend to beach now and then.

Spacious deck

The Pescador 600 I recently trialled out of Dartmouth, courtesy of her sole UK importer Fibramar Boats UK, was an open, centre console version - the perfect design for the serious offshore sports fisherman.

Stepping aboard, I found a huge amount of deck space. Certainly this is a boat from which four, possibly more, anglers could fish in comfort. Certificated at CE Category C, she is rated to carry up to six persons.

The bow contains a cavernous locker, with a low stainless pulpit providing a useful grab rail. I found a comfortable seat at the forward edge of the console, which has the usual twin padded seat astern for the helmsman and crew.

The console has heaps of room to install a full inventory of electronics, and a screen protects the helmsman from wind-driven rain or spray when running at high speed.

The trial boat had a smart Bimini top intended to provide shade from the sun, but more likely in this country it will be appreciated for offering protection from torrential downpours. Hydraulic steering and digital instrumentation are provided as standard.

The full beam transom provides seating and twin lockers that give access to a massive stowage space where the battery is mounted. The deck is completely self-draining and features a hardwearing non-slip finish.

I was pleased to see a stainless boarding ladder fitted outboard - these often overlooked items of equipment really can be lifesavers, and all boats should have them. All necessary fixtures and fittings are provided and are of excellent quality.

The Pescador has a simulated clinker hull and flared bow

Trial by water

The overall length of the Pescador 600 is, you've guessed it, six metres. She has a decent 2.30m beam, draws 0.70m and displaces 750kg. The hull comes with a two-year warranty and is rated for use with engines up to a maximum of 135hp - the test boat was fitted with a 130hp Evinrude E-Tech, which has a five-year warranty.

My sea trial took place on an extremely wet midsummer's day at Dartmouth. Remember the news pictures of flooded villages in South Devon? That was the day. Initially the rain was so bad we had to shelter under the town road bridge giving access to the inner harbour. Thankfully, after about half an hour, a short window of opportunity allowed us to venture out and put her through her paces. Hell, for an all-too-brief five minutes the sun came out, then it was back to a relentless downpour of seemingly tropical proportions.

The rain aside, sea conditions just a short run out from the harbour mouth were ideal for assessing the sea-keeping qualities of this offshore fishing boat. It quickly became apparent that not only does the Pescador 600 look the part, but

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The transom lockers give loads of storage space

"The ride and performance were truly stupendous - a real joy to drive"

also when put to the test she has the performance to match. The hull cut cleanly through some of the messiest water I could find, and I was truly impressed by the speed we could maintain without in any way compromising the comfort of our ride. Barely a drop of spray was thrown aboard.

Opening her up

Of course, given the helm of a powerful fishing boat with someone else picking up the fuel tab, I took full advantage. Like a kid in a chocolate factory I ran her through the seas at various speeds, trying her with the waves coming from all angles. I also threw her through a series of tight turns, progressively increasing the speed as my confidence in her sea-keeping qualities grew. The ride and performance were truly stupendous - this boat is a real joy to drive.

Top speed was noted at 36mph, and I was told that at a sensible cruising speed of 18 knots she would burn in the region of 19 litres of fuel per hour. The boat features a 55-litre fuel tank, probably on the small side for most anglers who fish offshore. That said, there is ample space aboard to store spare 25-litre fuel tanks whenever necessary.

A screen protects the helmsman's position from wind-driven spray

The test boat had a 130hp engine

PRICES & CONTACT

At the time of writing the cost of a boat and engine package as tested is £29,600, including VAT.

For more information, tel: 07899 968081 or 01803 835095, email: info@fibramar.co.uk or visit the Web: www.fibramar.co.uk