

First-class 'liner'

A new range of three fishing boats – a 17ft, 19ft and 21-footer – is being imported into the UK from China by ABC Marine, of Hayling Island. Here **Dave Lewis** looks at the Smartliner 17...

If you want an angling boat offering a combination of speed with a wave cutting forward section and decent lateral stability, then look no further than the Smartliner 17.

This, the smallest of a three-model range, is based on the popular open cuddy design with well-defined forward vee-section hull, flattening

off to a shallow angle of dead rise at the stern. The hull features reverse chines intended to deflect water downwards.

Hull colour is cream, which would not be my first choice, but other colours will be available soon.

Large windows provide excellent visibility and these are flush bonded into the cuddy, are watertight, very neat and very strong. Access to the bow is via a large, top-hinged hatch fitted in the forward edge of

the cuddy, providing access to the anchor that is stowed in the usual self-draining bow locker.

Beneath the cuddy there is sufficient headroom to sit upright, while steering is from a console located to starboard with plenty of space to install electronics. Steering is the no-feed back type, with helmsman's and co-pilot's pedestal seats included in the standard package. I was told that future models would probably have

these seats mounted on top of solid fibreglass boxes that incorporate additional stowage.

The self-draining fishing cockpit is large enough for a couple of anglers to fish in comfort; indeed it is claimed the Smartliner 17 has "the largest ergonomically designed cockpit and storage in her category".

The gunnels fall vertically to the main deck and the amount of inboard freeboard is perfect. Stainless grab rails are included, fitted at strategic

The boat is 5.06 metres long and has a 2.25m beam



locations as standard, along with all necessary deck hardware, including rod-holders and a rod stowage rack.

The Smartliner 17 also features the rod stowage locker incorporated within the port seat beneath the cuddy; a feature many anglers will undoubtedly appreciate.

Stowed beneath the transom there is a clear plastic 75-litre fuel tank, which makes it easy to monitor remaining fuel without having to rely on temperamental gauges. The battery box is also located here.

You get a nylon bait board that serves as a shutter to board off the space beneath the transom while running, but can be easily lifted out and slotted atop the transom to become a large bait board. You also get a large aerated livebait well with clear vision panel incorporated with the starboard quarter, plus a folding stainless boarding ladder is fitted outboard to port. A chemical toilet is another standard feature.

The Smartliner 17hp has been rated for use with outboard engines up to a maximum of 60hp; the test boat was fitted with a 60p Mercury EFI, which at top speed produced in excess of 25 knots. Overall length is 5.06 metres, she has a 2.25m beam and draws 0.40m. The hull comes with a five-year warranty, and she has been rated at CE Category C for carrying a maximum of five

passengers, though essentially this is a perfect boat for fishing two anglers, possibly three if everyone was organised.

On the water

I tested the Smartliner 17 off Hayling Island and the swift flowing waters of the eastern Solent, where a Force 4-5 westerly wind was creating conditions that were absolutely perfect for discovering the handling qualities of and getting to grips with a new fishing boat.

The Smartliner 17 handled extremely well. I got to run her at slow speed while close quarters manoeuvring within the harbour itself, and then had the chance to really see what she was capable of out in the turbulent waters encountered at the harbour mouth.

There an ebbing tide was opposed by that strong, gusting, westerly wind, but at all times she ran smoothly and you really had to try to make her slam. Given the gusty conditions I was very appreciative of those deep reverse chines, which very effectively deflected almost all of the wind-blown spray away from the cockpit. Lateral stability was once again excellent.

The Smartliner 17 is a first-class trailerable angling boat that would easily meet all my requirements as a serious small-boat angler. See it at the Southampton Boat Show. **SA**



Clockwise:
Access to the bow locker, helm position, inside the cuddy and the 60hp engine



Cost and info

Get a Smartliner 17 with Mariner F50 ELPT EFI at a ready to go price of £15,720 saving £1,179. With a Mariner F60 ELPT EFI, it costs £15,957 saving £1,197.

Contact ABC Marine, tel: 023 9246 1968.

Email: matt@pepeboatyard.co.uk, Web: www.ifitfloats.co.uk

Visit the ABC Marine stand E068 at the Southampton Boat Show. The boats are berthed on M302-M305.

The Smartliner 17 handled very well at slow and fast speeds

