

FLYING FISHERMAN

Simon Everett goes for a wild ride on the Quicksilver 605 Pilothouse

The Quicksilver Pilothouse has come a long way since its first incarnation. I took the latest model of this popular wheelhouse boat out on a blustery day to see if decades of development have built a boat made to last.

The swells building just outside Newhaven breakwater were at two metres and showing the first signs of breaking – ideal conditions to find any quirks in the handling of the new boat. The strong south westerly was acting against the falling tide to create an intimidating build up, sufficient to keep all the commercial boats

tied up alongside and the harbour master questioning our sanity as we requested permission to traverse the entrance.

ROUGH SEAS

The new Pilothouse is heavier and stiffer than the early boats and was perfectly at home in the rollers, even when I turned her beam on and took the engine out of gear. I caught a definite sense of trepidation in test skipper Aaron's eye as a steep crested wave reared up menacingly on our beam; we had to look up to it as it rose to about level with the wheelhouse roof and started to

break alongside. I suppose we boat testers have to be just a little bit crazy. Here we were in an untried boat on initial sea trials, possibly about to capsize – but if you never try, you'll never know! Thankfully, the 605 simply lifted over the wave at a fairly steep angle, but without any violent motion to cause us to lose footing or balance. We were both happily surprised just how well she rode it.

GET MY DRIFT?

Experienced boat anglers will understand why I presented us to the waves in such

a way. Drifting is an oft-used method of covering ground when angling, and knowing the boat is going to be both safe and comfortable in this situation is an important consideration. The stability was proven and she drifts nearly beam on to the wind – the bow blowing downwind a touch, but not enough to produce that unpleasant corkscrew motion. For the rest of the test I continued to use that same rough patch of water, where the rolling swells were starting to break over the top of a bank as the depth reduced with the tide. The seas were well beyond what you would reasonably go

The helm provides a commanding view all round



The Mariner 115hp engine surprised with its willingness and good turn of speed



The position of the chain locker and windlass allows one to stand to one side to coil the warp down in the locker





TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

SPECIFICATIONS:

LOA: 5.75m
Beam: 2.54m
Air draft: 2.70
Dry weight: 1345kg
Fuel tank: 160 litres
CE Cat: C
Max persons: 6
Max power: 150hp
Recommended: 115hp

THUMBS UP:

- Great sea keeping ability
- Ease of handling

THUMBS DOWN:

- Few cabin facilities
- No galley
- Side and foredeck are cramped compared to other models at this price

PRICE:

Basic: £30,298 incl VAT
As tested with 115hp, windlass, coloured hull, canopy, auxiliary bracket and deluxe fishing package: £33,950 incl VAT

CONTACT

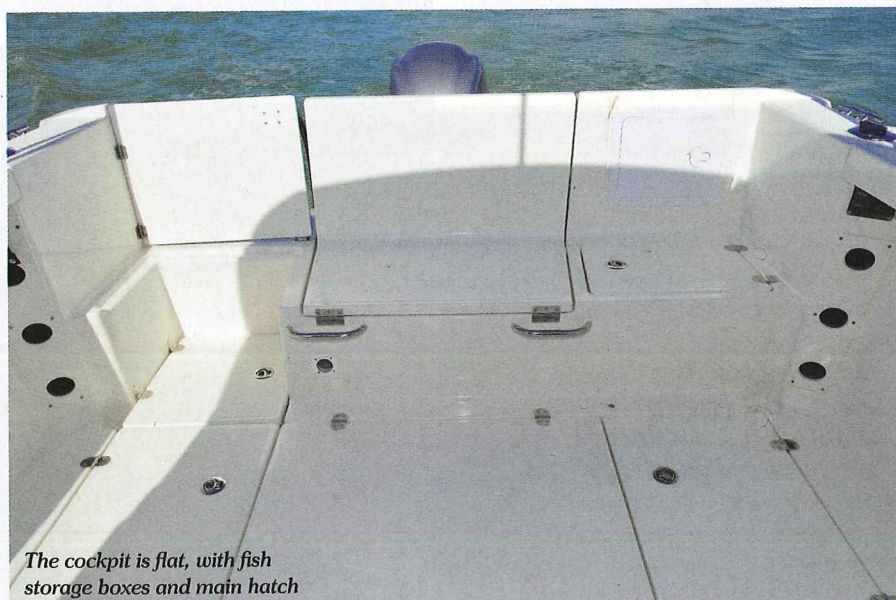
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out in from choice, in fact had it not been a controlled sea trial, like everyone else I wouldn't have been out there at all.

POWER UNIT

The choice of power suited the boat very well; you wouldn't require a bigger motor unless your crew are all giants and you take a mountain of gear with you. What really struck me was how well the boat

responded to the throttle. The Mariner 115hp FourStroke picked up quickly to the demand from the control lever and was more than capable of powering the 1.5 tonnes of boat up the face of those oncoming waves. When I spotted a gap in the waves and went for it, the engine accelerated cleanly from 4000rpm (just under planing speed) to nip through cleanly.



The cockpit is flat, with fish storage boxes and main hatch



The guard and hand rails are well placed and provide a measure of security

The 605 has a very straight stem, maximising the waterline length, but this means following seas have to be treated with caution to prevent the bow bogging down and a broach being induced, especially on waves the size of those we were out in.

RIDING HIGH

There were no dramas when using the old fashioned helming technique of riding the back of the crest, but I know that had I powered over the top there very well might have been. If the bow buried itself in the trough, we would probably have lost the ability to steer and a broach would have been inevitable. Instead, the reactive throttle response was used to keep her on the top of the wave by backing the throttle off and letting the wave do the work.

Her wider-than-average beam provides great stability and wave-beating lift to help the coxswain negotiate difficult patches of water. To get the bow to steer through the wind when going astern, I had to apply considerable power. Be careful in close quarters to avoid the superstructure causing her to get blown off course when coming alongside or manoeuvring.

FULL VISION

Standing at the wheel, there is a

commanding view of the water ahead, whilst the panoramic glazing allows a good view all round, even when cornering hard. Her broad beam limits the angle of list and ensures that the wheelhouse roof dipping into line of sight doesn't blind the helm. Ventilation is provided by the sliding windows on each side and there is the option to fit a sliding sunroof. The wiper did a great job of clearing the water blown onto the windscreen too.

ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE

I found the relationship between wheel and throttle mounting comfortable and not fatiguing. The side mounted throttle still leaves plenty of elbowroom and space to swing the wheel. I could stand at the roomy helm, with the fold up bolster of the single helm seat to lean against, for hours on end quite happily. The second pilot seat beside the helm is similar in this respect, but when seated one has to brace against the back of the bunk moulding as there is no footplate provided.

There is plenty of space to mount electronics, either ahead of the engine instruments mounted on the curved dash facia, or off to the side and by utilising the deckhead over the wheel.

LEAN

To keep the initial purchase price down, the luxuries of cruising that used to be standard fare have been omitted, but can be included at extra cost. There is a double berth but no galley or head; they are optional extras. By keeping fixtures – and therefore weight – down, fuel consumption is minimised. All those unwanted extras are expensive, not just on purchase, but in the extra fuel costs you'll pay to carry them.

SPEEDY

We got speed readings in the lee of the breakwater where I managed to coax a creditable 27.8 knots out of her. I feel she could easily carry a slightly higher pitch prop, as the one fitted for the test spun very willingly to maximum revs. Taking this into account, you can expect to see 17 knots at 4500rpm, which gives a range of around 150 miles from the 160-litre tank.

CONCLUSION

The new 605 Pilothouse is reminiscent of the early version in name alone. This is

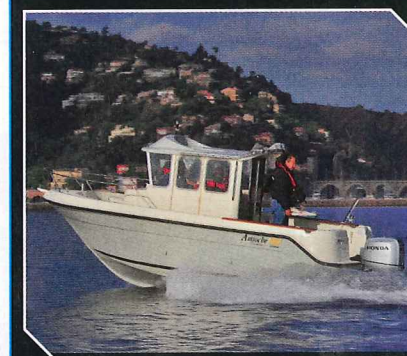
PRICE POINT PICKS:



ROBUST 17CC WITH MERCURY FOUR STROKE 80

Rock solid aluminium construction with spacious deck but no sleeping accommodation.

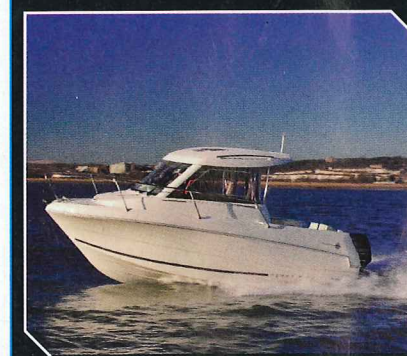
Price: £29,995 incl VAT



GUY MARINE ANTIOCHE 600 WITH HONDA BF90

Pilothouse boat with tiller steering backup and good all round deck access.

Price: £29,950 incl VAT



JEANNEAU MERRY FISHER 595 WITH YAMAHA F100

Typical French pilothouse fishing boat.

Price: £31,250 incl VAT

a boat that handles bigger seas than you would normally put out in and provides a spacious, stable platform from which to fish at a realistic price. ➔