

GO BALLISTIC 650m on test

Robert Avis tests a popular selling model, well suited to offshore performance use.

First Impressions

The first time I tried to test a Ballistic RIB, the skies were grey, the sea was rough and everything seemed to be against us. Now a year or two later, the same thing has happened again! One thing that I certainly don't have any apprehension about is getting out in the rough in a Ballistic. You only have to look at the design and layout to know that this has been put together not by just a designer, but by someone who actually goes and understands boating. The hulls are manufactured in South Africa and imported to the UK by JBT Marine. You can have any tube colour as long as it's grey and any hull colour so long as it's white, so says the literature, and if you've any experience in Ribbing, you'll know that grey is without doubt the most practical sponson colour if you are going to make serious use of your boat and not spend all day polishing it! To break up the greyness, it's liberally appended with navy blue patches and pads to add that British nautical appeal. Our test boat was fitted with a Yamaha 150hp HPDI two-stroke engine and I've included the test results on the same boat with a Yamaha 150hp four-stroke which I did previously but you must take into account that the HPDI was fighting a very short sharp Solent chop whilst the four-stroke had no more than a mirror sea to contend with.

Layout

The Ballistic 6.5 RIB comes as standard with a high protective console and four jockey seats. The forward seating can be converted into a sunbed (extra £1,500) and although the console is set relatively far aft, this does leave a good space forward for a variety of carrying uses. You could argue that there is not much room

aft but I found there was plenty of space for my camera bag to remain dry between the aft seats and moving from bow to stern was easy. The front of the console has a bench seat which could seat two but there's nothing in the way of a handgrip to steady yourselves if things start getting wild.

The stainless steel 'A' frame at the stern is of massive construction and will support whatever you require in the way of aerials, antennae, lights etc. and, what a sensible idea - cleats fitted as part of the 'A' frame construction keeping the aft berthing lines well clear of the tubes and avoiding the inevitable rubbing that otherwise takes place - good thinking.

Wherever you look there are lockers for all your clobber. The bow seats open up, under the console front seat there's more, each of the jockey seats will hold a worthwhile amount and inside the console it's a cavern. There's also an anchor locker in the bow. So no storage problems. The deck drains aft to a small well with automatic bilge pump and it was interesting to note that even through the hail and thunder we encountered during the test, the decks drained away quickly and were soon pumped effortlessly overboard.

LIKES

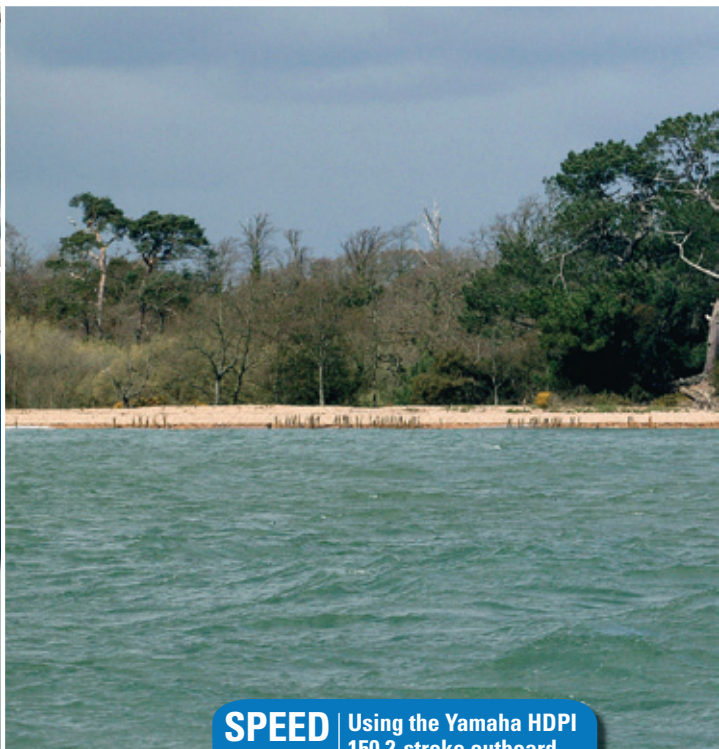
The ride
Loads of storage
Cleats on the 'A' frame
Huge sunbathing option

DISLIKES

The weather!
Having to give it back
I guess it's a bit of a problem if you don't want grey!







Sea keeping, handling and performance

If you've ever taken the trouble to look under a RIB, you'll know that there are generally a number of spray rails on each side which cynical wives would say create all the spray that lands on them but somehow always manages to miss the driver, but that's another thing! On a Ballistic the rails appear to curve outwards from the bow and continue throughout the boat's length. But they're not spray rails as such. The whole of the bottom is a series of longitudinal reverse scallops. From a photographic perspective they're great for adding interest but what do they do for performance? The theory is that they give added lift when the boat is planing which should in turn leave less of the hull in contact with the surface and equate to additional knots per horsepower. The question is of course does this marketing hype have any credence in a short sharp Solent chop? Those of you who know me will know that I'm not, well, in the first flush of youth, in fact I sat in my first RIB more than forty years ago and I'm not easily impressed but I have to say, the ride you get in a Ballistic is different to RIBs with a more conventional undercarriage layout.

The deep vee certainly gave a soft ride, the boat got on the plane very fast without creating a huge hump, and when she took off she went like the wind. There is no doubt that there is plenty of lift but the weight of the boat kept her on an even keel and even when we got airborne on odd occasions, there was no sign whatsoever of losing the bow to the wind. The real difference is that the chines keep the boat running in a very straight line almost like being on railway tracks. This is particularly noticeable on landing awkwardly on a wave when the chines soon straighten any sideways drift with a positive jerk into a straight fore and aft line which needs to be prepared for. I have to say that the overall performance was impressive and when comparing the speed and acceleration results with this two-stroke engine and comparing it with Yamaha's four-stroke equivalent, there's not a great deal to choose between them other than the two-stroke is initially much quicker off the mark and in similar conditions will go that bit faster. Unfortunately my fervent desire to retain a complete set of teeth and unperforated tongue precluded full speed being attained!

"The deep vee certainly gave a soft ride, the boat got on the plane very fast without creating a huge hump, and when she took off she went like the wind."

SPEED TESTS Using the Yamaha HDPI 150 2-stroke outboard

Sea State: Wave height 0.5-1.0m

From forward gear engaged to planing: 4.32 secs (with two adults on board)

ENGINE SPEED	IMPERIAL	NAUTICAL
1,000rpm	4.7mph	4.1knots
2,000rpm	8.4mph	7.3knots
3,000rpm	25.8mph	22.4knots
4,000rpm	36.0mph	31.33knots
4,900rpm	46.6mph	40.5knots

The sea state precluded reaching an estimated top speed at around 5,200 rpm

SPEED TESTS Using the Yamaha F150 4-stroke outboard

Sea State: Flat calm

From forward gear engaged to planing: 5.45 secs (with two adults on board)

ENGINE SPEED	IMPERIAL	NAUTICAL
1,000rpm	4.6mph	4.0knots
2,000rpm	7.8mph	6.8knots
3,000rpm	23.1mph	20.1knots
4,000rpm	35.2mph	30.6knots
5,000rpm	46.4mph	40.3knots
5,200rpm (Max)	48.6mph	42.2knots

These speeds were taken using a Garmin 12 channel GPS measuring two (or more) equal and opposite runs

COMPARING THEIR SPECIFICATIONS:

	F150 FOUR-STROKE	HDPI 150 TWO-STROKE
Displacement:	2670cm ³	2596cm ³
Performance (Mid):	110.3kW / 5500 rpm	110.3kW / 5000 rpm
Starter System:	TCI/Computer	Electric
Trim:	Power Trim & Tilt	Power Trim & Tilt
Gear Ratio:	14:28	14:26
Lighting Coil /Alternator:	12V 35A	12V 45A
Engine Type:	4-Stroke / 4 cylinders in-line	2-Stroke / 6 cylinders 76°-V6
Full throttle operating range:	5000 - 6000rpm	4500 - 5500rpm
Carburation:	Electronic Fuel Injection	High Pressure Direct Injection
Lubrication System:	Wet-sump	Oil injection
Weight (standard model):	216 kg	216 kg





BALLISTIC 650



Value for money

No one ever said RIBs were cheap and I guess when you compare them with many American sports boat imports, they're a relatively expensive way to get on the water, however they are also an extremely safe way to go boating, they're very forgiving if you get it wrong and, let's face it, nothing quite comes close to the exhilaration you can get from a good RIB ride. So where does this Ballistic fit in? Well the demo boat tested is offered at £26,999 including sunbed and trailer so it's already £3,601 less than list price which must really go against 'the Mole's' natural instinct. When you look at other boats of a similar size, it's towards the top of the price league, but actually that's exactly where I'd expect it to be and where it deserves to be.

Summary

When you test RIBs on a regular basis, there sometimes comes a point where it is difficult to find something to say that hasn't been said before, but the longitudinal reverse scallop chines have changed all that! They were fascinating to look at, they make a great photo, they really did seem to do their stuff and if you think 6.5m isn't large enough, why not take a look at the 7.8m model - it's bigger, better and wow!

Robert **Avis**



FINANCE EXAMPLE SUPPLIED BY THE BANK OF SCOTLAND

Cash Price:	£26,999
Deposit (say 20%)	£5,400
No. of monthly payments (e.g. 5 years is equivalent to 60 months)	60
Amount to be borrowed	£21,599 (Marine Loan)
	9.5 % APR typical
Monthly Payment	£448.36

Subject to offer and acceptance

Ballistic UK Distributor	Ballistic Dealer
JBT Marine, Thornham Marina, Thornham Lane, Prinsted, Nr Emsworth, Hampshire, PO10 8DD T: 0870 908 9336 F: 0870 908 9337 E: enquiries@ribsforsale.com www.ribsforsale.com	Kevin Mole Outboards Unit 10, Medina Court, Arctic Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 7XD T: 01983 289699 F: 01983 289699 E: kevinmole@outboards.uk.com www.outboards.uk.com

Bank of Scotland Marine Finance T: 02380 333 467 www.bankofscotland.com/marine

BALLISTIC 650

TECHNICAL DATA

	IMPERIAL	METRIC
Length Overall:	21'4"	6.50m
External Beam:	8'6"	2.60m
Internal Beam:	4'11"	1.50m
Weight without engine:	1213lb	550kg
Carrying capacity:	10 People	1500kg
Fuel Tank:	33 gallons	150 litres
Sponson material:	Hypalon	
No. of chambers:	5	
CE category:	'C'	

STANDARD FEATURES

Full width console	Double 'A' frame
150 litre fuel tank	Navigation lights
Compass	Icom DSC VHF
Hydraulic steering	Lowrance GPS/Plotter
Seating for six	Lowrance Echosounder

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Sunbed	£1500.00
CD player	£325.00
Yamaha depth gauge	£164.99
Roller trailer	£1650.00

PRICES (INCLUDING VAT)

Yamaha 115 CETOL	2 stroke	£25,050.00
Yamaha 130 BETOL	2 stroke	£25,350.00
Yamaha Z150 PETOX	2 stroke	£27,450.00 (HPDI)
Yamaha Z175 GETOX	2 stroke	£28,250.00 (HPDI)
Yamaha F115 AETX	4 stroke	£26,350.00
Yamaha F150 AETX	4 stroke	£27,750.00

Boat as tested with Yamaha Z150 PETOX £26,999.00
(special demonstrator price to include sunbed option and road trailer)

CLASSIFICATION *Detail Information supplied by manufacturer/dealer

OFFSHORE	●	RACING	●
LEISURE	●	PATROL	●
COMMERCIAL	●	EXPEDITIONARY	●
INSHORE	●	CRUISING	●
DIVING	●	MILITARY	●
RESCUE	●	SPORTS	●
COASTAL	●	ALL WEATHER	●