



PHOTO: The test boat featured the usual attractive Ballistic colour scheme, white GRP, light grey tubes with dark blue patches and all three colours on the seats.

BALLISTIC 6 METRE

If you thought you knew the Ballistic hulls, think again, as Paul Lemmer finds out what progress has been made by one of Britain's best-selling RIB brands. **Words: Paul Lemmer**

i **PRICE £39,995** (As tested demo boat for sale £34,995) **CONTACT: JBT Marine, Trafalgar Wharf, Hamilton Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 4PX. Tel: 0870 908 9336 Email: info@ribsforsale.com**

Ballistic RIBs have etched themselves a good customer base, not only in the UK but worldwide, and they have stuck doggedly to the same look, seating arrangement and, until recently, hull design; but behind the scenes things have changed ... and for the better.

Initially all the Ballistics had the same design, the original designs well known for their high speeds and good handling, but one feature which affected those running at high speed in rougher seas was the impact caused by the wide downturned spray rails. While perfectly safe, the ride could be very harsh, particularly on one's back; however, all that has changed with the new 6m and

we are pleased to report that it is now one of the sweetest-handling and driest-riding RIBs on the market. During the test this came as something of a surprise, for no one from Ballistic mentioned that the hull had been improved. As the test boat was already afloat, we could not see the new hull, and only became aware of the

transformation when we drove her through the usual wind-over-tide chop off Gilkicker Point adjacent to Portsmouth.

Our test boat followed the same attractive colour scheme as all Ballistics: white GRP, light-grey buoyancy tubes with dark-blue patches and a combination of all three colours on the seats. This gives a clean traditional

appearance and certainly makes the craft stand out, yet there is nothing 'showy' about her – she just looks attractive, purposeful and typically British!

The interior layout is also conventional and typically 'Rule Britannia', having an upright steering console with a low-profile windscreen/surround and forward 'suicide' seat, a small anchor locker in the bow with a cushion, four one-man jockey seats and a two-man rear bench seat. In reality, the seating arrangement provides offshore seating for six, with another two seats in the bow area for sheltered-water use, and this all works well for the UK market where sunbeds are just for looking at rather than being of any real practical use. Curiously shaped seat cushions open to reveal useful stowage



WHAT WE THOUGHT **i**

LIKES

- Handling
- Value
- Dry ride
- Ergonomics

DISLIKES

- Jockey seat grab handles
- lack of non-electrical bailing system
- Hard seats



PHOTO: The Ballistic's new hull produces sweet handling and a dry ride.

under each seat pod, and there is additional storage in the steering console and beneath the rear bench seat, plus a 'wet' locker under the deck in the bow accessed through a plastic hatch. All the stainless steel looked properly finished, and the double A-frame, which featured useful mooring cleats, certainly gave the craft a purposeful appearance.

Two bilge pumps are standard equipment in the transom splash well, as are a couple of batteries, neatly tucked away under the suicide seat and, being forward, providing a bit of nose weight to keep the craft nicely balanced. Obviously it is prudent to have two and not one bilge pump, but conversely it is curious that no form of automatic self-bailing (elephant's trunk or one-way

flap valve/ping-pong ball) is provided to shift heavy water off the deck should the boat 'stuff' in a following sea!

The console is neatly and correctly laid out, with centrally mounted engine controls and all the instruments easily readable, as well as a couple of cupholders and a passenger grab handle. As a tester, when first getting behind the controls of a boat one instantly and intuitively knows when things are correctly positioned, yet it is surprising how many boatbuilders still get things badly wrong. It was therefore good to see that the Ballistic boys had used common sense and put everything where it was readily accessible and fell naturally to hand. The quirky-looking jockey seats felt very hard and lacking in any

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PHOTO: The Ballistic is attractive, purposeful and typically British.

SNAPSHOT *A quick look onboard the Ballistic 6m*



ABOVE: The console is neatly and correctly laid out.



ABOVE: Well finished stainless steel grab rail to steering console.



ABOVE: Featuring 4 one-man jockey seats, 2-man bench seat and suicide seat.



ABOVE: Two bilge pumps are standard equipment in the transom splash well.



PHOTO: This Ballistic offers a good all-round package at a very sensible price.

VITAL STATISTICS



Ballistic 6m

LOA: 6.00m
BEAM: 2.30m
WEIGHT: 1000kg
PERSONS: 10
BEAM: 2.30m
MAX PAYLOAD: 800kg
CE CERTIFICATION: C
MAX POWER: 150hp
DEADRISE: 20 degrees
TUBE DIAMETER: 560mm
NO. OF CHAMBERS: 5
TUBE MATERIAL: PVC Valmex 7318

PRICE £39,995 (INC VAT)

£34,995 demo boat as tested for sale.

CONTACT

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PERFORMANCE

Knots	Seconds	RPM
0 to 20	6.5	3400
0 to 30	11.1	4000
0 to 40	20.0	5800

Top speed 42 5900

NB: No fuel consumption figures were able to be taken. Refer to manufacturers.

significant padding, although they never became noticeably uncomfortable during the test; however, the jockey seat backrest grab handles are in need of a rethink – the grab area is too small to get two hands onto and this was a surprising oversight which could easily be redressed by the manufacturers. In contrast to the jockey seat handles, the rear bench seat had very good grab handles on either side, and in addition there are six rubber ‘cleat’ handles on the tops of the buoyancy tubes to assist those who still prefer sitting on the inflated sides.

While we were pleased with the overall finish and presentation of the new 6m, it was the on-water experience that showed the biggest improvement over previous models we have tested. With an Evinrude 130hp E-Tec pushing us at 40 knots, we headed directly into the steep chop, the craft running straight and true and feeling very solid and reassuring as we powered over some pretty unpleasant waves. At cruising RPM or at high speed we never once felt intimidated or in need of a sudden correction of the wheel, but perhaps the most impressive thing was how extraordinarily dry the interior remains, whether heading into,



PHOTO: The smaller spray rails appear to throw the water downwards and away.

... perhaps the most impressive thing was how extraordinarily dry the interior remains, whether heading into, away from or across the waves.

away from or across the waves. The shape of the new hull is almost ‘gull wing’ on the outside chine, and in conjunction with the new smaller spray rails this clever feature appears to throw any water downwards where it cannot be caught by side winds and thrown back over the boat.

Our test RIB also had a small portable table that mounts into a fitting on the foredeck and neatly stows inside the console locker when not in use, navigation lights, a VHF radio, GPS, compass, fenders, a music system and an A-frame spotlight – all of which provide the basic essentials for a new owner

and are apparently included in Ballistic’s very reasonable package price.

To sum up, this typically British RIB looks smart and attractive, without sending one’s pulse racing. It offers safe and predictable handling and a surprisingly good, dry ride. There is nothing unique or quirky about the new Ballistic 6m; she could be best described as an ‘honest’ boat, offering a good all-round package at a very sensible price, and a sound investment for both families and more adventurous ribsters.

Paul Lemmer