

ballistic

Inflatables.com

Words and pictures by Dean Castle.

6.5

The arsenal of the Police service



leisure
boating

SA's leading power boat magazine

The average boater will only go out to sea when it's around 25 degrees and the swell is almost non-existent. But how many days a year do you get such perfect conditions? Not very often, you say? What if you have to go out when the weather is at its foulest and the waves look like something out of the movie 'The Perfect Storm'? Maybe you never have to, but the South African Police Service does, and to make sure they're never caught in a compromising situation, they use a Ballistic RIB built by Cape Town based Boating Dynamix. We review their 6.5 metre RIB to see if she's worthy of protecting the guys who protect us.





Nature excelled Herself when she created Struisbaai, the perfect setting for a review of the Ballistic 6.5.



The lumpy sea and big swell proved no match for the smooth riding RIB.



Conditions for test

For the review of this craft, we travelled to Struisbaai in the Western Cape. Here, the turquoise coloured water made it look as though we were somewhere in the Mediterranean. Gusting winds, big swells, choppy conditions and my respect for the seas, however, made me feel like wanting to stay on terra firma. On days like these, waves come from every angle, which makes finding a flat piece of water for reviewing near impossible. But, after just a couple of minutes onboard the Ballistic 6.5 you realise that you only have to worry about conditions when you sign an agreement, and this isn't one of those times...

General impression

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," they say. That's not the case with the Ballistic, though. She might not be able to have contoured lines like her fibreglass counterparts, but she can look sexy on the water, thanks to her long chines and specially optimised deck layout.

Conventional RIBs have a centre type console, leaving everyone but the skipper to sit on the pontoon. The Ballistic is licensed to carry 10 passengers, and guess what? She can – with ease. If need be, you can take all 10 and still load up to 1 000 kg of gear and be within legal limitations!

Deck layout

Moving around the Ballistic 6.5 is easy due to the great layout. The helm station is based in the middle of the craft, as you'd expect, but the aisles and gaps between chairs leave you enough space to move around without kicking anything or bruising your hips, a problem common with RIBs.

Plush cushioned bench seating at the stern provides space for three adults, but although she has excellent side and rear vision, you can only see as far forward as the skipper's backrest. Two 'height-boosted' style seats with backrests are behind the helm station and are the perfect height for the average pilot and navigator, providing a comfortable position from which to safely skipper in the roughest of water.

Seating for two plus a U-shaped lounge for four is neatly laid out in the bow, while an easily assembled cocktail table can be fitted for the days that you just want to sit back and enjoy the sunshine. Alternatively, a removable cushion can be put in place to provide a large comfortable sun bed.

An anchor locker with latch in the bow, plus space below all of the seating allows you to store your gear neatly and ready for action.

Motors and controls

For the review, this Ballistic 6.5 was fitted with twin 90 HP Yamaha two-strokes. Their 17 pitch propeller allows you a 60 km/h cruising speed at 4 000 rpm. However, for those times that you want to get just a little bit minty, these outboards will get you to a top speed of 85 km/h at 6 000 rpm. Yamaha is one of the best in the business when it comes to fuel efficiency, and these 90 HPs will let you spend more time cruising and less time refuelling.

Two deep cycle batteries and a 150 litre fuel tank are hidden inside the helm. The fuel cap is located on the starboard side of the helm station. Two Raycor water separators at the transom ensure that no water accidentally finds its way into the engines.



A luxurious seat is situated in front of the helm station and doesn't compromise the skipper's forward vision.



Ample aisle space between the seating allows for easy movement and great leg room.



Twin Yamaha 90 HP's pack a sizely punch while providing a whisper quiet ride.

"Instead of slamming dangerously back into the water again, the stern gently and softly enters the water as you continue to speed along"



Handling

Once you've got the Yamaha throttles in your hand, it feels as though you've got about the same amount of power as a NASA space shuttle. Cranking them full forward will get you onto the plane in around 4.6 seconds, but going fast doesn't necessarily mean unsafe.

A couple of tight corners, even in our rough sea conditions, just couldn't seem to make this 6.5 put a foot wrong. Turning in minimal space at around 56km/h just isn't a problem, and coming out with more speed than you had going in is something that you really need to experience. She runs high on the water, and this makes for a smooth and secure ride at any speed.

We managed to get the Ballistic completely airborne a couple of times, but instead of slamming dangerously back into the water again, the stern gently and softly enters the water as you continue to speed along.

Finishing touches

Boating Dynamix pride themselves on having some of the best finishings in the industry. And, after my time onboard the 6.5, I can certainly see why.

To list just a couple of things which caught my eye; a stylish Sony marine front loading CD player is neatly installed at the helm. Two Sony marine speakers provide crystal clear quality sound

for all onboard without drowning out conversation.

At the stern starboard side, an elegant fold-down stainless steel and wooden step ladder allows for easy boarding from the water. If fishing is your thing, then you can look forward to four rod holders and four trawl holders on the portside.

To add a modern touch, the Ballistic has got stainless steel elements to make it look the part of a twenty-first century design.

Subtle white LED lighting ensures that the deck is well lit when the sun starts to set. Good thing this, the perfect combination of a great ride and fuel



A fold down ladder makes for easy boarding after you've been for a dip in the water.

At a glance



| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| L.O.A. | 6.5 m |
| Draft | 0.7 m |
| Passengers | up to 10 |
| Engine power: | Max: 200 HP single |
| | Max twin: 2 x 115 HP |
| | Min twin: 2 x 60 HP |

efficient motors means you'll be on the water a lot longer than you think.

Conclusion

It's perceived that RIBs can be a hassle, as in the past you had to inflate the tubes in the morning, and release air when the day got hotter to prevent the pontoons from bursting due to expansion. But today's technology has changed. Five air release valves installed in the tubes allow air to be automatically released should the pressure get too great, which lets you concentrate on more important matters like whether to race across the water surface at a blistering speed or take it slow and enjoy the surroundings.

For more information and a price tailored for your needs, call Boating Dynamix on (021) 535 3735 or visit www.boatingdynamix.co.za.