



Basic instinct

Here's a no-frills small vessel for the bass angler regularly launching and retrieving at less than perfect sites, says **Dave Lewis**

Practical, functional, tough, durable, workmanlike, commercial, industrial even – these are some of the adjectives that spring to mind when trying to describe the Smartwave XL490CC.

Consequently, if you are a sea angler who enjoys lovingly polishing the pristine gel coat hull or oiling the teak trim fitted to your fishing boat turn the page now because this one will not be of interest to you.

If, on the other hand, you regard your boat merely as a tool to transport you safely and swiftly to the fishing grounds and then to serve as a spacious, stable platform from which to fish, and especially if you fish shallow, rough, boulder strewn, hull damaging inshore marks, then I suggest you read on.

Imported into the UK from New Zealand by Marine Revolution, based in Tayside, you might remember we looked at some of the smaller models from the same range a few years back. They were the boats whose tough, foam-filled polyethylene hulls could withstand the blast from a 12 bore or a .22 bullet. They really are that tough!

No-frills boat

Conforming to CE Category C, which basically classifies it as being suited to inshore work, the XL490CC incorporates a one-piece

“Most anglers would get enough performance by using smaller engines than the 60hp maximum”

moulding, free from joins or welds for maximum strength, and has an overall length of 4.95 metres – that's just over 16ft. With a decent two-metre beam, the bare hull tips the scales at 350kg (770lb) and comes with a five-year structural warranty. Hull thickness is a substantial 12mm, and being foam filled she is virtually unsinkable.

She is rated for use with outboard engines up to a maximum of 60hp and deemed suitable for carrying up to seven persons though, obviously, from an angling perspective here we are looking at a boat that ideally will be used by two or possibly three anglers. Fishing four really would be pushing things. The boat I reviewed had a battleship grey hull, though a selection of colours is available.

This really is a no-frills angling boat; you get what you need and not what you don't need.

The open centre console design lends itself to drift fishing, and this would be the perfect choice for the inshore bass angler who specialises in fishing lures or baits in shallow water. Of course, it would be equally suitable for work in deeper water either on the drift or at anchor.

Inboard freeboard is good, though I was told future models would feature an even higher amount of freeboard as standard, while onboard safety is further enhanced by the inclusion of gunnel rails in



Ideal for bass sport
The centre console design lends itself to inshore fishing with lures and bait.



The console has a tinted Perspex spray screen



The anchor well is located in the raised foredeck



The seat opens in two sections to reveal twin stowage compartments

both quarters and at the bow. The raised foredeck, an ideal platform for casting a fly or plug from, incorporates a spacious anchor well that is accessed through a basic flush-mounted alloy hatch that features a heavy tread pattern providing excellent grip underfoot while standing and casting.

Much of the main deck is covered in the same durable material, which some might not find attractive, but it is an ideal aboard a working fishing boat. There is a good amount of room to pass freely to either side of the centre console, while any spray or rainwater shipped drains quickly aft to a sump at the transom, from where it can

be expelled via a bilge pump.

The battery is mounted amidships at the transom, and a basic folding seat is provided in each quarter, though in all honesty these are a bit naff. I was told an option on future models would be a full beam moulded transom seat that incorporates a livebait well, which would further endorse this boat as being the perfect choice for the serious bass angler.

The console is basic but functional, with plenty of space to mount the typical inventory of electronics owners of such a boat will require. A tinted Perspex spray screen provides the helmsman with protection while underway, and

I liked the helmsman's seat that opens in two sections to reveal twin stowage compartments.

On the test boat a standard 25-litre fuel tank was fitted in the space beneath the console, maintaining weight distribution along the boat's centre line, and I was told there is an option to have an inbuilt fuel tank if required.

Sea trial

My trial aboard the Smartwave XL490CC took place in Cardiff Bay, where launching the boat on the concrete slipway at the Channel View Leisure Centre was a straightforward affair.

One of the big advantages with

this particular boat is that it can be launched with similar ease over other less hull friendly launch sites, including flat beaches consisting of rock or sand, further endorsing my earlier observations that this is the perfect choice for bass anglers.

The test boat was fitted with a maximum rated 60hp Suzuki outboard, and it soon became obvious that the engine was mounted too low on the transom. I was told that the engine had only been mounted temporarily for this test and that when an engine was mounted permanently then, obviously,

it would be fitted at the correct height. That said, even though getting the boat up on the plane proved to be sluggish, once she was up and running a top speed comfortably in excess of 30 knots was achieved, and this could only be further improved upon with a correctly sited engine.

I am sure most anglers would get more than enough performance by using much smaller engines than a 60hp maximum.

Out in the open expanse of water, the XL490CC performed superbly. At all times she proved to be a fast, responsive and stable boat that cut cleanly through the short, wind-blown chop with little if any spray getting thrown aboard. When thrown into tight, high-speed turns she tracked true, and despite the fact that the engine was far from correctly sited I came away impressed.

In summary I can only further endorse the observations made throughout this review, namely that this boat could have been built with the needs of the British bass angler in mind. She really is the ideal boat for regularly launching and retrieving at less than perfect launch sites and, once afloat, setting off to fish marks either close to those sites or others much further along the coast. Given suitable sea conditions I would not hesitate in venturing offshore in search of sport, too. **SA**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on price and options for all models in the Smartwave range, contact Marine Revolution Ltd
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The test boat came in battleship grey, but other colours are available

