

## Field Test

# MARINE REVOLUTION

## Smart Wave XL490

This new boat came straight from the Southampton Boat Show to Lough Neagh, where **Mike Shanks** put it through its paces.



The manufacturer's claims for this boat are quite extensive. They say it is suitable for a wide range of uses from workboat to pleasure, which, of course includes angling. They also say it is, "virtually indestructible, unsinkable and maintenance free ... impervious to osmosis, corrosion, rot and rust and has no gel coat or paint to maintain."

Well, we didn't try to sink or break it, but Ivan Bell of Portrush based RLS Boats will happily show you a section of the hull material which has survived a shotgun blast intact. The hull is made of 12mm thick polyethylene and certainly looks and feels very solid and robust. Even so it is light enough to be comfortable when towed by the average family car, which is how Ivan delivered it to Lough Neagh for the test.

As he launched it, I wondered if the 60HP Suzuki would be a bit over powered for a 16ft boat. We left the harbour at walking pace I had time to check out the features of the XL490 to see how well anglers had been catered for in the design.

The boat is licensed to carry five. There are two collapse-able seats either side of the stern and a pair of removable seats bolted to the raised deck in the bow. The 'driver' sits on an imaginatively designed multi-compartment box. All seats are upholstered. I have no doubt it can carry that number, but I think that three actually fishing

would be plenty for this size of boat, regardless of the style of fishing.

The controls and petrol tank fit on a central console which allows for playing a fish all around the boat if necessary. As I walked around the console I was reassured to find how stable the boat was when the weight was unevenly distributed.

The deck is channelled for water to run off and non-slip. It also has under floor storage and an anchor locker in the bow. Rods can be stored in the sides of the hull or in rod holders when in use. The rails around the boat would be handy for support in rough weather, but I found no

the 60HP engine. I had expected the bow to rise, but even at full speed the boat planed beautifully. It cornered nicely too, even at speed. There was no feeling of swaying violently.

Altogether the XL490 came over as a very well designed fishing boat. Easy to operate, comfortable, a very stable platform from which to fish and with no maintenance need it was very difficult to find fault with it at all. It comes with a five-year warranty and at less than £5000, a very competitive price tag. If you're looking for a small freshwater or inshore boat, this one is certainly worth a look.

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need for them on the day we were out. It was that stable, and when there are several standing anglers all into fish at once that is important.

Once we reached open water Ivan powered up

### DETAILS AT A GLANCE

Price: £5000

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