



Meet the wolf in sheep's clothing

This small, open boat might be basic, but it's a pocket rocket

YOU DO NOT NEED A LUXURY CAR for much of your day-to-day driving because a basic family compact will perfectly suffice. Likewise, why spend a considerable sum of money to buy a boat for inshore angling when, in many cases, a relatively small, open

and basic boat will be perfectly adequate to get you afloat and among the fish?

If you're looking for such a boat, then check out the smart Sport 4, manufactured by Westport Marine. Described as being an all-purpose sports boat aimed at users who want a rugged all-rounder, she is perfect for anglers.

This is an open boat featuring a console situated aft, in the starboard quarter. Given her relatively small hull size, this internal layout option provides the absolute maximum space forward from which to fish, and is consequently perfect for lure fishing, fly-fishing or various other forms of angling both on the drift or at anchor. ▶



WHAT YOU GET

As with all previous boats I have tried from Westport Marine, the build quality and finish of the Sport 4 is first class. I especially liked the hull colour of the trial boat though, but, of course, various other colour options are available. The beautiful gloss finish of the gel coat is afforded a level of protection from abrasion by heavy-duty rubber fendering fitted fore and aft.

Key fixtures and fittings include a combined locker/seat aft across the transom that holds a standard-size fuel tank and battery, a spacious locker at the bow that, in addition to an anchor, chain and warp, is perfect for storing other bulky items, and a thwart sited just forward of the console that includes a removable mid-section.

Of course, basic deck hardware is provided fitted as standard, along with smart pulpit and side rails and, most importantly, a boarding ladder mounted outboard on the port side of the transom.

Inboard freeboard is good, with the deck featuring a hard-wearing, moulded non-slip finish. Any spray or rain taken aboard drains aft and collects in a small sump, from where it can be quickly expelled while moving forward by first removing a small bung. The Sport 4 is perfect for fishing one or two anglers.

The hull has an overall length of 4.51 metres with a 1.78m beam. Given these dimensions, a key selling point is that she is easily trailerable with an average family car, and can be stored in a typical family garage. She displaces 220kg and has been classified as CE category C.

Extensive buoyancy is provided at strategic places throughout the hull and within the gunnels, ensuring that the hull remains upright and stable even when totally flooded.

The V-hull has been designed to cut through chop with ease and is rated for use with outboard engines up to a maximum of 50hp. The trial boat

The Sport 4 is perfect for one or two anglers



was fitted with a 30hp Honda which, with two persons aboard, planed at 12 knots, and went on to achieve a top speed of 23 knots.

Speeds of more than 32 knots are possible with a 50hp engine.

PUT TO THE TEST

My sea trial aboard the Westport Marine Sport 4 was arranged at Wareham, courtesy of Howard Marine Sales Ltd. Once we had navigated our way through the speed restrictions enforced throughout the inner reaches of the harbour and reached open water, I was able to open up the throttle and get the true feel of this sporty 'pocket rocket.'

She really is a 'wolf in sheep's clothing,' and handled beautifully, cutting through the water

A combined locker/seat holds a standard-size fuel tank and battery

There is also a spacious locker at the bow



The V-hull has been designed to cut through chop with ease



cleanly, while demonstrating impressive lateral stability when driven through a sequence of tight twists and turns.

I am certain that were we able to test her under more demanding conditions I would have come away similarly impressed.

The Westport Marine Sport 4 is undoubtedly a boat I would be happy to own and fish from in a variety of different locations. ■

INFORMATION

Prices for the Westport Sport 4 fitted with a 30hp outboard with power trim on a roller trailer starts from £12,995 including VAT, and fitted with a 40hp would start from £13,995.

All boats are built to order with a lead time of six to eight weeks. For more information, contact Howard Marine Sales Ltd, tel: 07977 466160. Email: sales@howardmarine.com Web: www.westportmarine.co.uk