

TESTED - PILOT 4

This is no ordinary fisher - it has an innovative removable cuddy. Have we got you interested yet? Well the £10K price tag should definitely get your attention. Irving Stewart has been finding out more about the Pilot 4.

The little Pilot 4 is an open 4m family fisher, or general purpose runabout, enhanced by a quick release cuddy and pleasing, almost traditional, lines with a slightly upward rising deck. The Pilot 4 has a deep, safe internal freeboard, is self-draining and very attractively moulded with a dark blue hull and white deck moulding. The craft is built using a wood free GRP pre-formed 'chassis' that, when wet bonded between the hull and deck mouldings,

endows the boat with around 300ltr of sealed floatation. Full positive buoyancy for the Pilot 4 is available, to special order, with additional factory floatation - but this adds about eight weeks to delivery times and an additional initial cost.

Charles originally conceived this boat as a modern, stylish alternative to the extremely popular, but rather dated, dory format. Being light and small the Pilot 4 is ideal for single-handed beach launching, performs well on low horsepower engines and the easily removed, very stylish cuddy enables the craft to be housed safely and conveniently in an ordinary domestic garage.

WIDE APPEAL

Whilst the Pilot 4 may not satisfy the demands of serious anglers seeking to fish scores of miles offshore it's sure to appeal to leisure anglers, families with young children and retired users.

The Pilot 4 offers uncluttered cockpit space, transom and cuddy seating, a high degree of safety and good forward visibility through the cuddy although, unlike its larger sibling the Pilot 6, it lacks through windscreen access onto the foredeck - but this is a deliberate ploy to maximise forward vision. However, it does offer a very pleasant ambience and more than adequate performance on as little as 30hp, even with three or four adults on board.

When fitted with contemporary engines such as the Yamaha F30 the Pilot 4 offers a whole afternoon's cruising, and very considerable range. In good sea conditions a range of over 80 miles should be possible on a single tank of fuel - an extremely welcome attribute in these days of high fuel costs. ▶



THE DETAIL



Teak deck is an option for you



The spare tank location



Full width transom seat and locker



Deep bows and a beamy craft



MAKING CHANGES?

When testing this little boat various things became apparent. I felt that attention to these would substantially add to the appeal of the craft. In subsequent lengthy discussions with the boat's designer I was most pleasantly surprised that Charles was so receptive to my comments - even more surprised to learn that

for 2009 some of these are to be addressed. Other items discussed were appreciated, but it was felt that adding to the specification of the standard boat would only increase its very attractive initial cost - a very valid point.

To date sales of this boat indicate that owners are more than satisfied with the current specification, and perfectly happy to add



A simple shallow Vee hull



their own fixtures and fittings depending on their craft's usage. The provision of additional features such as cuddy grab handles, mid mounted cleats to secure bow mooring lines and also optional additional stowage are also under investigation by the designer.

WHY WE LIKE IT

This is a remarkably easy boat to tow and launch from a beach or public slipway, even single-handed, due to its low weight and wide beam with shallow draft. The keel area has been reinforced to resist damage and the relatively gentle Vee hull profile means the boat does not 'fall over' when left on a mooring (or beach) which dries out.

Obviously in such a small boat balancing the craft is very important but with stowage both fore and aft (and with a bow mounted fuel tank location) this is not particularly difficult. We tested the Pilot 4 with a crew of two, test gear, a full tank and just 30hp astern and were very impressed.

Despite the broad beam to length profile of the Pilot 4 the quiet little Yamaha F30 on the transom was more than adequate to get the boat up and running quite quickly, provide a very respectable cruising speed and even achieve a most impressive top end performance. Unfortunately for engine suppliers

unless you intend to frequently load this boat to its maximum of over 600 kilograms the fitting of a larger, and thus more expensive, engine would seem to be pointless for most users. However, the luxury of power trim and tilt makes life so simple that this 'extra' should be considered the norm.

The Pilot 4, in fair conditions, gives a pleasant, firmish ride, handles well and goes precisely where you point her. She is also quite capable of safely riding out seas (well in excess of those in which leisure users will normally venture) without getting those on the boat soaked to the skin.

A GREAT BUY

For those new to boating, or as a replacement boat for experienced boaters, the Pilot 4 is certainly a very welcome alternative to many far less attractive 'budget' craft. Currently on offer at just under £10k as a ready to go turn key package the Pilot 4 is certain to win many new friends. ■



There's plenty of space for 6ft Andy in the cuddy

FACT FILE

VERDICT

Extremely pretty, versatile, plenty fast enough and very cheap to run!

SPECIFICATION

- Length: 4m
- Beam: 1.82m
- Draft: .35m
- Weight: 290kg (bare)
- Max engine: 50hp
- Boat only: £5,495 as tested (with Yamaha F30 & unbraked trailer): £10,318
- Special Spring Offer (for orders paced before Easter 2009) turn key package: £9,995



WHO TO TALK TO

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SIMILAR BOATS



FOR A SIMILAR BUDGET



TEST FIGURES

	POTTERING	CRUISING	OPTIMUM	MAXIMUM*
Speed	7mph	11.5mph	22mph	26mph
RPM	2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000
	PLANING**	OPTIMUM	MAXIMUM	
Speed	0 - 17mph	0 - 22mph	0 - 26mph	
Run1	0 - plane: 6.12s	0 - optimum: 6.42s	0 - max: 10.2s	0 - max: 10.2s
			0 - max: 4.72s	
			stand - max RPM: 11.8s	

*Maximum speed recorded during sea trials was 29.4mph

**Planes at 3,500rpm/17.5mph