

Test report and pictures by Dave Lewis



The Pilot 6CC skims across the water with barely a hint of slamming

Lure anglers will love it

Centre console boats, like the Pilot 6CC, are perfect fishing platforms because you can work right round the boat without the cuddy getting in the way, says **Dave Lewis**

When I tested the Pilot 6 in a previous issue I said: "If I'd had been given a blank sheet of paper and been asked to design the perfect angling boat, then it would have looked much like the Pilot 6."

It was a bold statement, but having recently tested the new centre console model of this boat, I can only endorse my earlier observations.

The expanding range of Pilot boats was introduced in 2006 with the launch of the Pilot 4. Built in Plymouth by Westport Marine Ltd, they are the brainchild of Charles Broughton. I met him at the Queen Anne's Battery marina on the Plymouth waterfront, where he showed me the latest Pilot 6CC. Centre console boats are very

practical for a wide range of angling applications, notably fishing on the drift. They are particularly suited to those who cast plugs or flies, such as bass anglers. The fact the Pilot 6CC has already attracted a huge amount of interest in France, where the current cult in high-tech lure fishing for bass has its roots, is no surprise.

Fixtures and fittings

With an overall length of 5.2 metres and a 2.2m beam, the Pilot 6CC is exactly as it says on the tin, an open

fishing boat featuring a centre console mounted amidships.

A few people who have already viewed the boat have commented that the console was not wide enough to afford full protection to the helmsman and crew sat astern of it while underway. I'd counter that statement by saying that, in my opinion, having a narrow console was more of an advantage, as it provided a broad walkway on either side that allowed maximum gunnel space for fishing. After all, it is a fishing boat.

You get a decent anchor locker at the bow, with access forward to manage the anchor assisted by a hinged section at the forward edge of the cockpit seating. Seating either

side of this incorporates large lockers offering additional stowage, with even more stowage available within the forward section of the console.

A smart stainless pulpit rail extends from the bow aft to the rear edge of the console, from where the gunnels are capped in teak, and this gives the boat a traditional feel. Stainless steel quarter rails are perfect for attaching decent rod-rests.

The deck is self-draining and features an effective moulded non-slip finish. There is plenty of deck space forward of the cuddy and to either side, though space is restricted aft of the console.

The two fixed pedestal seats are not a standard fitting, but are available as an optional extra that

will hit you for around £500. This is fine by me, as I am well known for my dislike of fixed seating aboard small fishing boats. Not only do I prefer to stand and steer, especially at high speed, but also I'd rather have more available deck space from which to fish than have comfortable seats.

The problem I found regarding this limited deck space aft of the console is that the transom incorporates three large lockers, which are designed to stow fuel tanks, battery, fenders and the like.

This arrangement is fine, but the forward edge of the transom lockers encroaches into the cockpit. If you fish primarily while underway or on the drift, which is likely if you favour a centre console design, then this should not be an issue. If, however you intend fishing at anchor and especially in strong tides, then you will find that such is the space absorbed by these transom lockers that landing fish that invariably will be hanging downtide of the boat would be problematic unless you wanted to climb atop the lockers.

Build quality and finish of the Pilot 6CC are excellent. The hull beneath the deck is foam-filled to provide maximum buoyancy, while the cockpit is self-draining via scuppers located on both the port and starboard side, with the outboard well also featuring a drain.

All necessary deck hardware is fitted as standard, including that all-important stainless boarding ladder bolted outboard on the transom.

On test

Conditions within Plymouth Sound on the day I had my trial aboard the Pilot 6CC were generally calm. Once we ventured outside of the protection afforded by Plymouth's famous breakwater we encountered conditions that were far more suited to assessing the sea keeping qualities of a boat that has true offshore potential.

The boat I reviewed was fitted with a 75hp Honda, which, with two of us aboard, produced a top speed of 32 knots. I was told that even if the boat was fitted with the maximum rated 90hp engine the top speed would be pretty much the same, due to the additional weight of the larger engine. That said, if you routinely fish with three or four anglers and associated mountains of tackle, then the larger engine might well be more suited to you. Conversely, you might find a smaller 60hp engine provides all of the performance you need.

The no-feedback steering is fitted as standard and this ensures she is comfortable and responsive. She handled well at slow speeds within the restricted zones enforced in



Top left: The instrument arrangement on the console
Left: The test boat had a 75hp Honda outboard
Above: Our tester liked the narrow centre console

the inner harbour, and once in open water I found her performance was nothing short of breathtaking.

She really did handle like a dream, skimming across the water at virtually full tilt with barely a hint of slamming, and hardly a drop of spray hitting the tinted screen of the centre console.

I threw her into the tightest of

turns and soon discovered her top end performance was backed by an incredible amount of lateral stability.

Needless to say I came away very impressed, and can conclude that the new Pilot 6CC would make an excellent fishing boat. She is absolutely perfect for any angler who requires a fast, stable and highly practical vessel. **SA**

"There is plenty of deck space forward of the cuddy and to either side"

The cost

The cost of a Pilot 6CC as tested and fitted with a Honda BF75 LRTU engine, including an Indespension Roller Coaster 3.5 braked trailer complete with hitch lock and hub wash, is £22,044.

Where to buy

For more information, contact Charles Broughton at Westport Marine.

Tel: 01752 772224
Email: sales@westportmarine.co.uk
Web: www.westportmarine.co.uk

The Pilot 6CC is 5.2m long with a 2.2m beam

