

Westport Marine Sport 4

Mike Thrusell introduces you to the new Sport 4 – an offset-console design aimed at anglers as well as families seeking a weekend runabout.



FACT FILE

STATISTICS

Length: 4.60m

Beam: 1.68m

Max engine: 50hp

Category: C Five persons

Weight without engine: 330kg

PRICE

The Westport Marine Sport 4 full package with the Honda BF50 outboard and Indespension trailer retails for £12,845.00 including VAT.

CONTACT

Charles Broughton, Westport Marine, 7 Old Stables, Crownhill Fort, Plymouth PL2 3DJ. Tel: 01752 772224. E-mail: sales@westportmarine.co.uk Website: www.westportmarine.co.uk

Also available from West Wales Yamaha, 80 to 81 Honeyborough Industrial Estate, Neyland, Pembrokeshire SA73 1SJ. Tel: 01646 602288. Mob: 07775 504344. E-mail: andy@westwalesyamaha.co.uk Website: www.westwalesyamaha.co.uk

Westport Marine, based in Plymouth, Devon, is fast becoming a major force in the UK's small-boat market. The company combines innovation with practical design but has an eye for spotting gaps in the market, hence the new Sport 4.

DESIGN FEATURES

At first glance you realise that this boat has elegant lines and a sense of purpose about her. She certainly stands out on the water and

will turn heads wherever she goes. At just over 15 feet long with a 5ft 9in beam she's destined for stability. The two longitudinal girders are designed to give maximum strength to the bottom panels, and foam buoyancy is added in the sides for additional flotation.

The boat is fitted with stainless-steel safety rails that run as far back as the front of the console. They rise vertically at the bow to give maximum security when hauling anchor. The navigation light is positioned

right at the middle apex of the bow, which is a concern as this could easily be knocked when retrieving the anchor chain.

The forward-deck area houses a bow seat that hides a large forward locker, plus another seat/locker running along the gunnel on the port side. There's a moulded-in seat where the forward edge of the steering console meets the starboard gunnel. This leaves masses of deck space but maximises seating area. The boat is supplied as standard with upholstered

grey cushions for all the seating.

The steering console is positioned to the starboard side with deck access along the port side. The neatly moulded console incorporates a self-draining bits tray on the right and instruments are housed in

the console behind the wheel with enough room to mount a GPS and fishfinder unit. It has a stainless-steel surround frame handy for holding when working and underway, plus a tinted windshield. The helm seat spans

the full length of the transom with a huge locker underneath. This is split in two, with a separate compartment for the battery at the starboard end and the fuel tank to the port side, with additional storage room that can hold another five-gallon tank.

The transom also carries a stainless-steel safety rail, plus a navigation light/ski pole in the middle. Cushioned buffers are also supplied. These fit to the transom safety rail and are ideal if you have the family aboard.

The deck is white with a stippled finish to limit the chance of slippage. Also the deck rainwater drain has an optional open or closed function. It can be left open with three people on board with no problem, but with five people on board it's best kept closed.

The overall finish of the boat is excellent and the fixtures and fittings look to be top quality as well.

PERFORMANCE

The Sport 4 on test was fitted with a Honda 50hp

four-stroke fuel-injection outboard, although the standard package is supplied with the 40hp outboard.

The gunnels are good and high, plus they have the additional security of the safety rails, so she's safe for fishing and when the family are aboard.

The helm seat is comfortable and its position offers excellent all-round vision without standing upright. With the throttle on the starboard side, it's at exactly the right height.

The Sport 4 feels gentle

on the lift as the power is applied and reaches planning speed rapidly. Throttling back, she is easy on the water – cutting through oncoming waves smoothly, resulting in a pleasurable ride.

Increase the power and the boat jumps forward, accelerating immediately.

I started working her into tighter and tighter turns and the hull gripped the water like glue. Putting her into a very tight turn I did experience some cavitation, but I was taking the boat beyond normal manoeuvring. ☺

On The Inside



The console is comfortable, with everything in the right place for ease of use.



There's loads of storage space under the bow seats.



The boat comes supplied with upholstered cushions for the seats.



There is a dive ladder at the stern.

There was a stiff easterly wind blowing, and when driving the bow directly into it I saw no water splash on board. The hull is designed so that most of the water is pushed out and wide, keeping the occupants pretty much dry.

You can walk about on deck at speed and the boat changes little in stability. On the drift, you can lean at the side of her without the balance changing unduly, so handling big fish would not be a problem.

With the 50hp Honda, the top speed achieved with two people on board was 32.5 knots and she hit the plane at 13.5 knots. She'll cruise

easily at 25 knots but we hammered the boat for about an hour, using around five litres of fuel.

With a 40hp engine attached, the top speed will be around 27 knots and the cruising speed 20 knots; and with a smaller 30hp it will go 24 knots and will cruise at about 18 knots.

The Sport 4 was easy enough to launch and retrieve single-handedly and it can be towed by a medium-sized family car.

THINGS I'D CHANGE

I'd worry about the positioning of the dual nav light fitted centrally on the

apex of the bow; it's not ideal. On an open-console vessel, such as the Sport 4, it would be better positioned on one of the gunnels just to the side, as there is little other choice available.

Although there is no bilge pump, there is ample space for one in the stern locker. However, I would choose to have one fitted when ordering the boat.

It would be interesting, from an angling viewpoint, if one of the rear stern lockers could be converted into a live well. This boat is ideal for bass fishing and the option to carry live eels and mackerel would be a massive advantage. **TSF**

CONCLUSION

It has to be said that this boat, in its price and class, offers a terrific overall package and is great value for a first-time buyer.

She's exceptionally well designed with plenty of working room and loads of storage space. She can comfortably hold two keen anglers and all their gear, but will carry three easily enough; alternatively dad, mum and two kids for a mackerel-bashing session.

Offering a stable, predictable platform to fish from, she is an excellent sea boat for normal inshore fishing and has the stability to support two anglers at the side when lifting big fish such as tope for the camera.

The Sport 4 is quickly up onto the plane and achieves a high overall speed, so she can zip you between marks for short evening sessions to maximise your fishing time. And even with the 40hp motor she can be used for water-skiing. Handling-wise, she is very predictable. She's also economical on fuel.

You can launch and retrieve easily single-handedly, plus you don't need a 4x4 to tow the vehicle as a standard mid-range family car is ample.

This boat is a must-test if you're looking for a 15ft open-console craft for fishing, and for the family.



The helm seat offers good all-round vision without having to stand.