

# Buying a small motorboat

What the owners say

Want to know exactly what a motorboat is like to live with? Ask other owners is David Lush's tip

In previous articles we have been trying to find out the best way to choose and own a small- to mid-size motorboat. We've covered boat design, sizes, engines, trailability and looked at safety aspects, but once you've narrowed down your choice there's really only one other way to get the low-down – speak to people who already own the type of boat you're after.

Owning any boat is a learning experience or, in management speak, an 'iterative process', but this really means that the minute you start to use a boat you realise its strengths and weaknesses and that the best teachers are those that have experience of the craft.

We've spoken to three owners of three very different kinds of motorboat: a RIB, a sports boat and a traditional cabin cruiser.

## Owning a RIB



**Ian Hayes is an advanced powerboat instructor, and serious club racer in his Class One**

**sailing yacht, so he is a well informed and enthusiastic boat owner, a fact supported by his extensive use of his RIB, some 3,000 nautical miles in less than three years.**

### WHAT IS THE BOAT AND WAS IT NEW OR SECOND HAND?

The RIB in question is a Ribcraft 585 powered by a Suzuki DF 140 outboard. The boat was bought new, thus allowing Ian to carefully specify the boat to his exact needs. He chose the Ribcraft to replace a Boston Whaler Newport, because he wanted to make longer trips in more open water, and was looking for a safe and sea kindly hull shape.



Ian Hayes and his Ribcraft 585 off the Needles on the Isle of Wight

### WHY A RIBCRAFT?

Ian chose this model Ribcraft on reputation, and he has not been disappointed – it performs really well, he has had excellent aftersales support and technical backup, and the boat holds its value well. Good residual value is important because the more highly specified away from 'standard' a boat is, the higher its initial price will be.

Experienced boat buyers all know that the advertised price is only part of the story, and a highly-specified RIB like this could cost nearer to £30,000, some 30% more than the basic package.

### WOULD YOU CHANGE THIS BOAT FOR ANYTHING ELSE?

The 585 is kept at home and towed by a front-wheel drive car, so anything bigger would pose a launching and storage problem,

and anything smaller might not perform as well. There are other similar RIBS, but when it came to serious consideration the Ribcraft 585 won the day.

'The boat is so capable and confidence-inspiring.'

### WHAT DO YOU USE THE BOAT FOR?

On the day of the photo shoot the RIB was being launched for a 5am dash to watch the Round the Island Race, and the 585 can get from Poole to Yarmouth in 45 minutes, with 40 mile round trips being the norm for this 585.

Ian doesn't tend to use the boat for towing toys or many short trips to the beach, but instead makes lots of longish trips to the Isle of Wight, Weymouth and even the odd Channel crossing in convoy.



The Ribcraft 585 is compact and light enough to be towed behind a front-wheel drive car

The boat also gets year-round use as there are fewer speed limitations in the winter and the wraparound windscreen and large console provide a lot of protection when it gets colder.

### Ian's top tips

- Choose a boat with a good pedigree
- Is your boat as capable as you?
- Learn from others – get trained

