

ZAR 65

Simon Everett tests a most innovative design of RIB from the Italian RIB company ZAR. It certainly doesn't follow the field but is it too radical for the UK market?

The Italians build some pretty terrible RIBs, suitable only for transporting goats across the lake from one mountain to another. Happily the ZAR doesn't fall into this category, it is a perfectly acceptable conveyance for members of the human race, even when doing their best to imitate penguins of an evening. There is a style about the Zar which is very individualistic, which is typical of Italian designers prepared to go their own way. The Zar has a quirkiness about her that somehow makes it appealing. There will as many people who hate the lines as those who fall in love with them. Just look at the scalloping on the forward part of the gunwale, most



builders would have just kept that plain. This is a good indication of the attention to detail with the designer and builder having a pride in their creation over and above the resultant balance sheet.

With her high fo'c'sle and raised poop she has the appearance of a twin decked boat and at first glance it isn't immediately apparent that she is a RIB at all. In fact she isn't, she is only half a RIB - the back half. This makes her sound like some kind of pantomime cow, but she is anything but. The forward half is rigid construction, which makes best use of the lack of tubes and the increased inboard space this allows with the flare of the bow. The tubes are scarfed in from half way along her length with the joint masked, aesthetically, by the change in deck angle.

The tubes lie parallel to the water and sit just touching it at rest. On the plane, the boat rises high enough out of the water for the after end of the tubes

to be well clear of the water, allowing the boat to heel into a turn properly and then providing support as the heel increases. The wide flare on the blunt bow throws water well wide and provides the necessary lift when encountering head seas.

The stem only has a very shallow rake which means the waterline length of the boat is long in relation to her overall length. I didn't have the conditions to test her abilities with heavy weather astern, normally the situation that reveals a boats inclination to yaw in a following sea, something a strong rake on the bow helps to avoid. However, running on the wash of the ferries revealed a boat that was very easy to keep control of even at high speed with cresting waves under her keel.

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The layout of the Zar is very stylish and sociable. The forward



The A frame is set well back and doesn't intrude on the cockpit, but is also high enough to not be in the way when climbing over the stern either.

ZAR 65 SPECIFICATION

TECHNICAL DATA	IMPERIAL	METRIC
Length Overall:		6.5 m
External Beam:		2.55 m
Total Weight:		860 kg
Fuel Tank:	88 gallons	250 litres
Carrying Capacity:	12 persons	
CE Category:	'B'	
Maximum HP:	200	
Spinnaker Material:	Hypalon	
Spinnaker Chambers:	6	

STANDARD FITTINGS

Two seater console with hydraulic wheelhouse
Front sun bathing bed convertible into a double bed
3 rows that can seat 8 persons forward running
Contact dealer for full list.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Telescopic Bimini Cover - £297 inc. VAT
Auxiliary Engine Bracket - £141 inc. VAT
Bow Table - £205 inc. VAT
Total Boat Cover - £408 inc. VAT
Console cover - £83 inc. VAT
Anchor windlass - £1293 inc. VAT

All ZAR models are available with a camper option as well to convert the boat into an overnighter. The cost of this on the 65 Suite model is £1,440 inc. VAT.

PRICES (incl VAT)

Price (as tested) £35,213 With Suzuki DF 200 and options
Bare boat price £21,799



end is open for lazing about and topping up the tan. An infill turns the entire bow area into a sunbathing platform. The after cockpit is very innovative. The u-shaped settee of the Suite model also converts into a sun bed using the wooden picnic table as an infill. Because the tubes are housed in tunnels, the seating extends out over the tube area, increasing the internal volume of the cockpit by a significant amount.

Throughout the boat the use of space has been optimised beautifully. The forepeak is very generous and below the forward sun bed is a truly cavernous stowage compartment that can swallow all the mooring paraphernalia of the most fastidious boatman, and the boat cover. The gunwales have removable panels for access to the forward tube valves, but there is plenty of space for stowing small items or warps as well. The

console jump seat hinges forward to provide access into the main part of the console and the water tank. Again there is plenty of stowage space for spare clothes in kit bags.

The after sun bed hinges on gas struts and reveals an afterpeak

that is a match for its forward sister, large enough to stow a small inflatable tender or possibly an inflated ringo! It would serve as a suitable deterrent for naughty children as it could happily be called 'The Black Hole', as everything disappears into it! Her performance with the DF 200 was surprisingly in a fleet of foot. The initial acceleration is sparkling as the generous downforce created by the water flow lifts her almost immediately into

planing mode. From the helm one has a commanding view thanks to the height of eye above sea level and picking a path through the water was easy. The hull carried



the superstructure better than initial thoughts expected and she cut through steep wash with barely a murmur. When we did get airborne, she behaved in a very polite fashion and landed squarely and without any harsh pounding. I was pleasantly surprised at how well mannered she was, even at full throttle, across a series of steep washes.

The Zar is very much a waterborne limousine, rather than a sports car or off road vehicle, and she carries herself with that same air of distinction. The top speed wasn't sparkling, but at a best attained of just over 48 mph,



she is quite fleet enough to cover a respectable distance in a day and is not going to be embarrassing in any company.

The seating is particularly comfortable and has been thought out with inclusion at its heart for family boating. The dual helm seat has a swivelling back rest which doubles as a leaning post. It is a proper, shaped backrest though, not just a bar with a pad. There are two dry lockers in the console, well off the deck and handy for small items of use at the helm. The dash includes an electrical panel for easy rigging of ancillaries and fault finding. Plenty of sheltered console area is available for flush mounting additional instruments. A large screen, multi-function, chart plotter would fit perfectly and still leave space for a VHF.

Over the high transom sill the engine well is flanked by foot plates which lift to reveal the boarding ladder to port and a wet locker to starboard. There is also a fresh water shower and handles to help you maintain your decorum whilst in the vulnerability stakes. The A frame is set well back and doesn't intrude on the cockpit, but is also high enough to not be in the way when climbing over the stern either. Usefully, the frame hinges forward to reduce the air draft to allow garage storage. There are also proper mooring cleats in addition to double rubber handles. Everything about the Zar has been well thought out, the



anchor has provision for an electric windlass already in place. The extensive stowage in various parts of the boat and the sheer versatility of the design is excellent. The rubbing strake is doubled up all the way round the boat and the build quality is very high indeed. On removing the forward gunwale panel I found it to be at least 6mm (1/4") thick, giving an indication of the layup weights used.

This is a boat built for people who intend to use their boat so as to get the most out of it and to provide a long, enduring life. There is an overall camping cover available for adventurous, self contained trips away without having to resort to a

cabin boat. The extra waterline length gives this boat an ability above what her stated length suggests. It is down to clever use of the space between the perpendiculars and not wasting any of it with overhangs. Clearly this is not a boat for the masses, but it is sure to find favour among the cognoscenti, and is more affordable than some of the alternative which might be considered the Zar's rivals.

Simon Everett

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION

To plane	2.1 seconds
To 20 mph	3.8 seconds
To 30 mph	5.2 seconds
To 40 mph	10.1 seconds

SPEED AT SET REVS

1000 rpm	5.3 mph
2000 rpm	9.2 mph
3000 rpm	20.1 mph
4000 rpm	31.6 mph
5000 rpm	40.6 mph
6000 rpm	47.6 mph
Max Speed	48.1 mph

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