

— Boat Report —
ARVOR
18

This diesel-powered boat from the Dell Quay stable looks like an appealing way to spend a weekend fishing. But do dedicated fishermen know what's good for them?

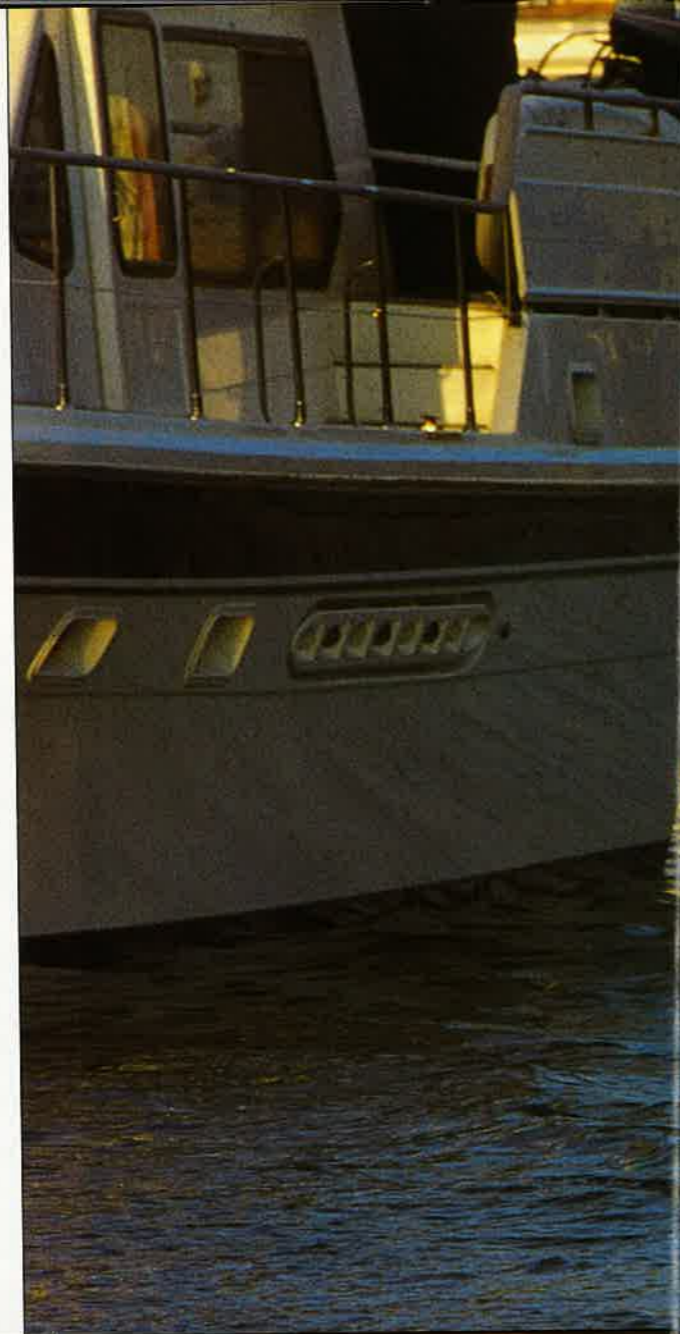
Many fishermen go boating on a budget. They have a 16ft-20ft craft with fading, off-yellow gelcoat, an outboard that looks as if it will give forward motion only with tidal assistance, a complete lack of creature comforts, and rods sticking out in all directions come rain or shine.

It looks like the least pleasurable of boating experiences, but then the vessel itself is nothing more than a means of transport. More love is lavished on rod and reel

than on hull and engine.

It is a shame these fanatics would never dream of spending close to £20,000 on their boat, because the Arvor 18 would be a far safer, more comfortable and surely more enjoyable way of spending a day or two fishing.

Built by Fletcher International as part of the Dell Quay model range they now own, this weekender is not for those who like to mix their fishing with watersports or fast cruising — its 50hp Nanni diesel and semi-displacement hull see to that. No, it is an honest



Cabin & helm

Given the intrusion of the walkaround decks, the cabin space is surprisingly generous. The vee-berths use the space under the walkway, and are completed to starboard by a cushion which infills the space where, when underway, the driver's feet are placed.

Under the berth are three deep lockers, and there is a further one near the entranceway. A portable toilet comes as standard.

The whole area has a fairly spacious feel, with the overhead hatch, vee-shaped screen and side windows allowing plenty of daylight in; there is a fluorescent light for after dark. The finish is basic but

practical, with vinyl cushions which can easily be wiped down.

The helm position, with its stainless steel steering wheel, has a raised position which offers no adjustment but is comfortable nonetheless. The screen's single wiper is not very effective in clearing spray.

The dashboard has just rpm and fuel gauges, with the other engine functions supported by warning lights, and a panel of switches to the right of the wheel controls the electrical functions.

The specification runs to a VHF and a fish-finder/depth-sounder, as well as a compass; it is good to see a builder fitting the sensible basics rather than loading the specification list with less essential items.



workhorse dedicated to a single task.

Not that it lacks good looks. The pulpit, the cabin roof extension, the rake of the screen and the way the rubbing strake drops on its way to the transom all add some style.

But functionality rules. The more you delve around the boat, the greater you appreciate the attention to detail that has gone into it. And the specification is good, centring on its prime function but keeping to the sensible basics rather than getting carried away with frivolities, as is the case on many sportsboats.

The Arvor simply offers a wheelhouse/cabin with vee-berths, surrounded by walkaround decks and with an open cockpit area aft. The allocation of space between these areas is well balanced, but with one strange omission: given the nature of the sport and the time spent indulging in it, surely most owners will be crying out for

Decks

The walkaround layout allows easy access from the cockpit to the bow, with stainless steel handholds at the back of the wheelshelter and on the coachroof to help, as well as the pulpit rails. These features make the Arvor a fairly secure craft if you have youngsters on board.

At the bow there is an anchor locker and a bow roller, plus a single central bollard for mooring lines. The aft quarters are equipped with cleats.

Cockpit

As you would expect, the cockpit has a non-slip floor and is self-draining.

The after section has a bench seat and a tiller steering arrangement. The former takes up quite a bit of room but slides back out of the way if you opt to use the tiller for trolling; the latter can be removed altogether if not required.

There is plenty of room to wield a rod or two, and coaming stowage provided for them when not in use. Other fishing features include a fish box to starboard with an inlet and outlet for salt water, two net rollers recessed into the gunwale, and two cutting boards set in the transom for preparing bait.

The bathing platform sensibly integrates a bracket for an auxiliary outboard, as well as a boarding ladder and step with a grabrail.

Engineroom

A panel in the sole hinges up to reveal a competent installation of the 50hp Nanni diesel, with the main service points all easy to get at. The battery is mounted to starboard, with the water filter above and forward of it, whilst the stainless steel fuel tank is to port, just aft of the fuel filter. Wiring and pipes are neatly run and clipped. An electric bilge pump is fitted as standard, but you cannot get at it easily as it is mounted underneath the propeller shaft.



some basic galley facilities, at least for brewing a mug of tea?

Performance & handling

The semi-displacement hull offers a stable platform on which to move around, when stationary or underway, which is of course an essential feature for fishing use.

Our radar gun recorded a top speed of 13 knots at 3000rpm, but the speed you cruise at is more likely to be governed by your tolerance of the noise level. The Nanni diesel is not the quietest, and there is not much insulation, so the drone and resonance soon get to you.

Flat-out, we recorded 91dB(A) in the cockpit, and a fast cruising speed of 10 knots at 2800rpm saw a reading of 88dB(A). Proceeding gently at 5 knots obviously makes things a bit quieter, down to 79dB(A), but a comfortable compromise is 2400rpm, which gives 7 knots with 82dB(A).

We found some wash and a few waves to push through, and the Arvor took these without any problems. It shakes a little when you hit a larger wave, but is assured in its progress.

Steering is a little on the heavy side, but tracking is acceptable and at low speeds the boat can be turned in its own length.

Reversing is in one direction only (to starboard), as is often the case with single shaft-driven craft, so you need to plan your actions in the marina, but this can be mastered with practice.

Conclusions

The Arvor 18 is a well thought-out craft with a sensible specification, and it should certainly have serious fisherman itching to get afloat.

An important factor in their decision to buy this boat could be their commitment to diesel, whether for reasons of availability or economy. This boat's sister craft, marketed as the Dell Quay 560 Fisherman, is powered by a four-stroke petrol outboard, which makes it cheaper at £11,266 ex VAT, and quieter-running.

But it does not come with all the fishing features offered on the Arvor. □



BUILD

glass-reinforced plastic

DIMENSIONS

LOA

18ft 4in (5.6m)

BEAM

8ft 1in (2.48m)

DRAUGHT

2ft 1in (0.65m)

DISPLACEMENT

1.3 tonnes

FUEL CAPACITY

18gal (82lt)

ENGINE

single Nanni diesel

50hp at 3000rpm

PRICE

£17,017 ex VAT

BUILDERS

Fletcher International
Sportsboats,
Cannock Chase Terrace,
Burntwood, Staffordshire
WS7 8GB.
Tel: 01543 279999.