

Stinger in the tale

Words and photographs | Robert Avis

The Italians seem to specialise in bright white RIBs with square noses and solid, structured bows. Hold that imaginary template in mind and the Stinger 606XS will match it to a T.

She's about as classically Italian as a RIB gets, the Stinger 606XS, but you can adapt her looks to suit. You have the option of grey tubes to minimise the impact of grubby feet, while the deck is laid in 'Flexi teek' a teak substitute which I have to say looks remarkably like the real thing and relieves the smart starkness of the white tubes and mouldings.

On the inside

The square bow adds to the internal deck area but this has been filled with a full-width sunbed, leaving virtually no space forward of the helm for anything else. The narrow console allows plenty of space to walk either side but offers the helmsman little in the way of protection as he sits on his perch in front of the full width aft bench seat. A fibreglass A-frame finishes off the stern and provides a safe enclosure for those sitting aft.

This RIB has been very much designed with sun worshippers in mind and the dedicated sun bathing space in the forward part of the RIB is an ideal place to top up your tan. While this restricts access to the bow it does provide cavernous storage underneath.

The bow is probably not the most comfortable place to be on passage, but the deepish V at the transom should make for a reasonably soft ride and the full-width aft seat is a great place to sit. The A-frame, which rises majestically from the side mouldings, provides a real feeling of security and I cannot think of many of my old aunts who wouldn't feel safe sitting there.

Since I last saw this boat it has been fitted with a 'Flexi teek' deck, which adds to the >



The spray will tend to find its way past this screen, but then if you don't like getting wet, no open RIB is going to keep you completely happy



upmarket appeal and somehow the deadrise has increased from 20 to 21. That's not far short of miraculous since it's actually the same boat, but I'll put that down to a previous typo on someone's part.

The A-frame rises majestically from the side mouldings providing a real feeling of security for any one of my old Aunts

The console has a small seat in front of it, which could seat two but there's nothing much to hang on to if the driver decides to demonstrate his helming prowess! If you've still got more people to sit, there's a shallow seat behind the helm perch but again there's not much to grab hold of if things get lively.

On the water

I have yet to try one of these boats on a calm day. I guess the majority of this Italian's production is aimed at Lake Como and the like, so it must be a bit of a culture shock to find itself in 35 knots of wind in Solent. The ride is great though. There's little in the way of slamming and at no stage did I feel that I was about to lose my front teeth.

The helm position is well positioned fore and aft but the console is narrow and small amounts of flying spray always seem to find their way past the screen. I'm always a little



She takes a good five seconds or so to settle back onto the plane



Just under 35 knots is fine, but I'd tend to question the Italian criteria for a CE rating of 'B'



‘With a broad sunpad in the bow and a distinct absence of grab rails you might want to nestle in at the helm if things get lively’



suspicious about CE categorisation – the Italians must view things slightly differently to the Brits.

In the UK this boat would almost certainly be categorised CE 'C', a perfectly respectable result and yet it comes into the UK as a CE 'B'. While this may be a great selling point, I cannot help thinking that the Italian goal posts may be slightly further apart than ours and devised on an entirely different kind of seascape.

The Suzuki DF140 has had a prop change since the last time I was out in this boat and the new Solas four bladed 13" x 21" was slower at some RPM than last time, when it was fitted with the standard Suzuki 14" x 21" three blade. The extra weight of the 'Flexi teek' deck would have made a difference. The acceleration, though still in the fairly standard five-second league, was marginally faster, while the top speed was a knot and a half slower at 34.5 knots from an extra 200 rpm. ➤

Speed tests

Sea state:
wave height 0.5 – 1.0 metre

From forward gear engaged to planing:
5.49 seconds (with two adults on board)

Engine speed	Imperial	Nautical
1,000 rpm	3.6mph	3.1 knots
2,000 rpm	7.0 mph	6.1 knots
3,000 rpm	10.1 mph	8.8 knots
4,000 rpm	26.3 mph	22.8 knots
5,000 rpm	36.3 mph	31.5 knots
5,800 rpm (max)	39.7 mph	34.5 knots



A most fetching Roman nose




Value for money

The 'Flexi teek' deck adds hugely to the luxury appeal and an additional cost of 8.5 per cent is fully justified. I'd like to see the 'Flexi teek' in 12 months time to see how it stands up to a season of grubby boots, but if the marketing men are to be believed, it ought to endure far better and with far less TLC than the authentic version.

I'd never buy a RIB in virginal white for myself but I have to admit that it does look really smart. The blue and white cushions add another colour dimension and when you add it all up, £25,000 is not unreasonable money for a useable sun worshipper's RIB.

Summary

The Stinger will guarantee you a great ride. She will also make you look good while you enjoy it, but she could do with a few more handholds on the go. With nothing more than average performance and a gentle ride their absence is not a life or death omission but in a family leisure RIB you want your occupants to feel secure.

The self-draining deck is useful when conditions deteriorate but the Stinger is not a hardy winter battering ram. It is a pleasant day cruiser for family fun when the sun's out. 

For ✓

- Ideal family day boat for sun worshippers
- Lots of walkabout room
- Huge sunbed
- Flexi teak effect deck
- Cavernous storage areas

Against ✗

- Huge sunbed precludes quick access to the bow
- Limited weather protection from the console
- Helm perch rather than helm seat
- Lack of handholds for some passengers

Specification

	Imperial	Metric
Length overall	21' 4"	6.16 m
External Beam	8' 6"	2.67 m
Internal beam	4' 11"	1.53 m
Weight without engine	1213 lb	600 kg
Carrying capacity	10 people	900kg
Fuel Tank	55 gallons	250 litres
Water Tank	7.7 gallons	35 litres
Sponson material	Hypalon®	
Chambers	5	
Transom deadrise	21°	
CE Category	'B'	Offshore use up to and including 4m wave height, up to and including Force 8
Maximum approved power:	178 hp	
Prices from:	£11,628 + VAT = £13,662.90	excl. engine
Boat as tested with Suzuki DF140 four-stroke:	£21,645 + VAT = £25,432.88	

Suzuki DF140T four-stroke

Displacement:	124.7 cu in (2044 cc)
Bore:	3.4 in (86.4 mm)
Stroke:	3.5 in (88.0 mm)
Horsepower:	140
Operating Range:	5600 – 6200 rpm
Ignition:	Solid State Electronic Ignition
Fuel:	Unleaded
Oil Capacity:	5.8 litres
Shaft Length:	20 in
Gear Ratio:	2.38 : 1
Drive Train Protection:	Spline Drive Rubber Hub
Prop Pitch Range:	17" – 25"
Weight:	186.0 kg
Trim:	Power trim and tilt

Standard features

- Deep V hand laid GRP hull
- Hypalon tapered tubes with moulded handles
- Hydraulic steering
- 250 litre Stainless steel built-in under floor fuel tank, installed in compliance with EC standards with blower, solenoid valve, in line filter, boarding pipe, air vent and fuel gauge

- Raised sun deck with bow cushions,
- Burr wood instrument panel with switches
- Electric bilge pump
- Fully moulded engine well with swimming platform
- Stainless steel and hardwood folding bathing ladder
- Multi-purpose helmsman leaning seat with storage compartments
- Four-seater stern seat with under-seat storage
- Deep under deck storage compartments
- Bow anchor locker
- Moulded front anchor guide
- Seven storage lockers
- Moulded steering console with screen and stainless steel hand rails
- Sports steering wheel
- Non-slip self-draining deck

Optional extras

- (included on the test boat)
- 'Flexi teek' laid deck
 - Fresh water electric shower system with 35 litre VTR tank
 - Sun deck extensions with cushions to bow and stern
 - GRP reinforced A-frame with navigation lights

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