

# ISLAND 10 SERIES RIB

HMS steps aboard what has become quite a rare breed of craft these days – a genuine offshore British-designed and British-built RIB. With 650hp on its tail and a host of 21st-century technology to enhance its traditional merits, the new Island 10m packs an impressive punch.

Underway images: © Rick Tomlinson

Once upon time, not so very long ago, there were a number of British RIB builders all proudly manufacturing at the forefront of the marine industry. For the most part, they shared a common heritage that shaped their attributes and even their appearance. It was a concept forged around the seagoing benefits of a deep-vee hull, a self-draining/all-weather deck, and sponsons or tubes to provide additional stability and buoyancy benefits.

Unlike their European counterparts, the latter were such that they functioned without impairing the hull's hydrodynamics. While this divide no longer exists, British RIBs at one time stood apart from their continental cousins as being proper 'sea boats'.

## Heritage

Initially, these rugged working craft were the prerogative of the rescue, dive and light commercial markets. But then, appreciation for the British RIB concept began to widen and grow, so that by the 1990s, their influence was making serious inroads into the traditional sports boat market. When this process gained proper traction, RIB designs became more and more complex – and thus followed the introduction of stepped hulls, cabins and all manner of luxury fit-outs, many of which rivalled the sports boat sector.

Some RIB builders, such as Delta, Carson and Tornado, eventually chose to specialise in becoming out-and-out suppliers to the commercial maritime industry – and even the military (their peers included the likes of Halmatic and Zodiac Hurricane). Others, like Humber and Ribcraft, favoured a more hybrid approach, building RIBs of interest to both the commercial arena and the private enthusiast. Companies such as Scorpion, Ribeye and Cobra all went the way of the high-end leisure market, later building high-speed custom tenders and support craft.

Of course, some of these classic names still exist, but overall, particularly since the 2012 recession, the number of British RIB builders and suppliers is less than it once was, and as a result, the classic British RIB, embodying what many would dub the '4x4 of the sea', became less widely produced and/

or available. Nevertheless, one company that continues to hold true to this great British tradition is the Isle of Wight-based Island RIBs – a company with ancestral links to what used to be Coastline RIBs and the man responsible for designing the company's original hulls, Brian Hallett.

## On deck

Following our filmed overview of Island's new 10 Series at the 2023 Southampton Boat Show, PBR had the opportunity to be the very first UK magazine to test and evaluate this flagship model in Island's range. I confess that I was looking forward to this prospect and the opportunity to confirm whether this vessel really did live up to its versatile, capable and reliable persona.

Of course, when testing a RIB possessing the necessary DNA to take on heavy weather, you're hoping for a sea state that at least places







some demand on the vessel and its systems. But ironically, and out of character with the low-pressure weather systems that had been dominating the UK for weeks, the day of the trial could not have been more clement – flat seas, no wind, blue skies. It may have been perfect for an enjoyable day's boating in the Solent, but alas, it was hardly going to deliver an opportunity to push the boat in the rough!

But first things first ... As is my long-established method, before heading to sea, I start the test process by investigating in detail the boat's hardware and fit-out. This affords a good opportunity to have a good poke around, including the nooks and crannies where, on some craft, one might find less attention to the finishing or use of high-quality parts. The functionality of the design can be established at this stage too, so I'm looking out for problems in the form of potential finger traps, access-way 'pinch points', a lack of well-positioned grab points, ergonomic issues in relation to seats and helm, etc. In addition, with a craft such as the Island 10m, being a RIB built specifically for offshore applications, it's necessary to inspect such things as the size and nature of the deck scuppers, how well the electrics and batteries are protected, and what spray protection the cockpit affords. But what's so commendable about this craft is its practical approach to the rigours of life at sea. This is seen in her dual 600L fuel tanks, each one feeding its own respective outboard motor. Likewise, in terms of the batteries, these are twin cranking, armed with their own remotely operated latching relay isolator switches.

Attention to detail

In the case of this 10m craft, it quickly becomes apparent that the overall design benefits not only from progressive product development and the application of acquired specialist knowledge, but also an almost obsessive attention to detail on the part of its makers. Even before setting

- 1. Ergonomically sound helm.
- 2. Notice joystick control right of wheel and cabin access to left.
- 3. High transom bulkhead.



Full width windscreen and T-Top

THIS HAND-BUILT BRITISH-DESIGNED AND -MANUFACTURED RIB IS THE GENUINE ARTICLE.

out to sea, this boat begins to fill you with confidence. Its sheer substance is impressive – the height of its gunwales/deep deck, the feeling of security. It's clear that every hatch, every latch and piece of ironmongery is either purpose made or specifically sourced. There's a great synergy too between functionality and the use of modern technology. In this respect, the flight deck's combination of Raymarine, Icom and Suzuki gauges, as well as the associated repeater screens to the underside of the T-top, work in perfect harmony to really elevate the driving experience. This particular

SPECIFICATIONS

- LOA: 10m
- BOA: 3m
- Draught: 0.75m
- Deadrise: 24 degrees
- Max. engine: 700hp
- Fuel capacity: 330/660L
- Max. load: 2600kg
- Max. persons: 14
- RCD category: B

CONTACT

www.island-ribs.co.uk

PRICE

As tested: £277,915 (excluding VAT)



ISLAND RIBS

boat carries an extra special array of Raymarine technology that includes twin Axiom multifunction displays, a Raymarine joystick unit, a Quantum 2 Q24D radar, an AIS700 Class B receiver, and even a FLIR M364C thermal and colour low-light imaging camera.

Ergonomics & components

Sometimes, boats suffer from a poorly devised helm console that gives every impression of either not being adequate to accommodate the electronics in the first place or subjecting them to second-class positioning. Not so with the Island. Everything is well arranged, in line of sight and can be accessed and operated under way at ease. The all-important relationship between wheel and throttles, forward through-screen vision and the height of the seats is spot on. Of course, the Ullman Patrol XLT MK3 suspension seat technology needs no further endorsing. It's entirely proven, and on this boat you have a total of four of these beauties to sit astride. Service hatches and dry locker stowage are well thought through; therefore, access to the fundamentals is immediate and uncomplicated. The rear of the deck has been designed according to the client's own wishes with the intention of being an area that benefits from adaptability. This is

PERFORMANCE

- Engines: 2 x Suzuki DF325s, dual propeller
- Propellers: 3-blade dual prop; 15.5" diameter, 22.5" pitch
- Fuel consumption: @ cruising speed (33-34 knots) 2L/nm
- Fuel consumption: @ max. speed (53 knots) 4.5L/nm
- 660L @ 2L/nm allows for 300nm range with reserve

seen in the watertight stowage box that doubles as a seat, or even a platform from which to cast and fish. The aft deck, therefore, presents a great working area and serves as a spacious fishing deck too – one complemented by the array of Railblaza hardware affixed to the T-Top's superstructure. Carbon non-slip deck surfacing may not be the most attractive deck covering, but for this type of craft it really does the job. And besides, it's been laid to perfection. The transom section is substantial, both in height and in terms of its dual hatches. Its large-diameter through-transom scuppers are exactly what would be needed in the unlikely case of the vessel shipping a big green sea. They represent the next best thing to having a completely



1. The Ullman seats with full T-Top protection. 2. Large scupper port. 3. Aft deck storage box.





ESSENTIALLY, IF YOU'RE WANTING A NO-NONSENSE, DEEP-VEE, OFFSHORE ALL-WEATHER RIB, THEN YOU'LL BE HARD PUSHED TO FIND BETTER.

open transom, such as the type featured on the RNLI's Atlantic 85.

Cabin & foredeck

Access to the RIB's cabin, left of the helm, is a straightforward affair, and upon stepping down into the space, its full head height proportions represent quite a design feat on a boat of this type. The cabin's interior is simple and uncomplicated, but it does possess a full Plastimo compact seaheads and a V-berth bunk-styled bed with plentiful stowage beneath. This

space makes for a great occasional overnighting facility, changing room or super-sized general 'glory hole'. Importantly, the upstand to the cabin's entrance is sufficiently high enough to prevent shipped water from getting down below if the cabin door has inadvertently been left open.

Going forward can be done either side of the cabin structure with good handholds all the way. The foredeck features the raised forward section of the cabin structure with its toughened, watertight Lewmar

safety hatch. The substantial size of the moulded console windscreen is even more apparent from this angle, and it's clear why it affords so much protection at the wheel. But one of the details I particularly like in this area is the anchor locker with its associated windlass and through-hull fairlead. It's one of the best-engineered systems I've seen on a craft of this type. Another feature of note is the high-quality tailoring of the tubes. The bow can often be the telltale section in terms of the quality of the shaping/fashioning

of the RIB's tubes, but as can be seen in the accompanying pictures, the construction of the Island's multi-chamber tubes is flawless.

Performance & driveability

On to the matter of how the boat performs. Though the photo shoot you see here was undertaken on a previous day, on the actual day of the test, as I said, there was no sea running at all. The Solent shimmered in the cold winter sun, and we sped along with barely a ruffle beneath our hull. Some may question how it's possible to evaluate the sea-kindliness of a hull without subjecting it to waves. The simple answer is that experience gives you a sixth sense for what's happening beneath your feet. The trueness of the boat's tracking, the cut of its wake, even the sound of the water flow – these are all strong indicators. And that's even before you start experimenting with the trim, putting the boat into a hard lock at speed or searching for the wake of another vessel to jump!

Throughout all I subjected the Island 10m to, she handled like a dream. The hydrodynamic interaction between the tubes and the deep-vee hull is near perfect, providing just the right amount of stability without interfering with the RIB's overall performance. The

hull grips to the water like a leech, and even when put into a hard turn with a less-than-ideal application of trim, it shows itself to be super-safe and predictable – and dry too. In terms of the latter, the water peels away beautifully from the hull, with the lateral spray rails working to great effect.

At 2600kg, you wouldn't expect her to behave like a ski boat, but the twin Suzuki DF325ATX Lean Burn engines on her tail ensure that this 10m is no slouch, and it's very noticeable that these motors keep on delivering right up through the entire rev range. Suzuki's fly-by-wire throttle and steering technology is superb and affords seamless and exacting control at the helm. But another noticeable quality about this Suzuki rig is the degree to which the driving experience is aided by its counterrotating propellers. This means the boat is devoid of any tendency to heel and ensures that the boat runs absolutely level. We topped out at a little over 40 knots in the near-perfect conditions over a tide approaching slack water. As you would expect, she was as steady as a rock.

A final word

In summary, I would confirm that the Island 10m is an outstanding craft, one designed wholly for purpose. It is neither overengineered nor lacking in any aspect of its design. Essentially, if you're wanting a no-nonsense, deep-vee, offshore all-weather RIB, then you'll be hard pushed to find better. This hand-built British-designed and -manufactured RIB is the genuine article. Admittedly, the boat tested carries a hefty price tag because the client custom-spec'd the boat according to his

EVEN BEFORE SETTING OUT TO SEA, THIS BOAT BEGINS TO FILL YOU WITH CONFIDENCE.

own particular preferences, but simplifying the electronics inventory and going for the single 350hp engine option, etc. could potentially reduce the final price by as much as 80K. **PBR**

Fresh talent

Island RIBs' young development engineer Blake Lucas is a rising star of the industry and has sat on the board of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects as an early-career representative. Blake took the lead in the rigorous compliance process that saw every aspect of the design and build of the Island 10m externally verified for compliance with the Recreational Craft Directive. Alex Cottle, Island RIBs' CEO and the man at the helm of the company's development programme, informed PBR that Island are proud to be proactive in giving young dynamic people, such as Blake, opportunities to work within the boatbuilding industry: 'Our industry needs fresh young talent and to give those wishing to make a career in boatbuilding or design every encouragement possible. Forward-thinking companies such as Island, therefore, are keen to help those leaving university or college to gain first-hand experience and long-term employment.'

Coding

'All of Island's production vessels are independently verified by an external body to Category B under a Module B certification; this allows for every production vessel to be commercially "coded" without in-build inspections and surveys, and in-water stability testing. Having this certification in a production vessel, whether leisure or commercial, helps to future-proof the product for the customer.' (Blake Lucas, Development Engineer)

WHAT WE THOUGHT FOR

- Solid, well thought through construction
- Outstanding sea-keeping
- Genuine offshore attributes

AGAINST

- Spartan interior to cabin
- High price



1: Looking forward to bunk and heads. 2. Cabin access showing deep sole. 3. Sturdy ironwork. 4. Raymarine Flir night vision camera.