



The Ostrea 600 is light, roomy and has plenty of deck space, Simon Everett finds out what she is like

Power to weight ratio is more important in boating than road transport, so any weight saving is a bonus. The entire Ocqueteau range of boats is built with vacuum infused resin lamination, which saves a significant number of kilograms per boat. This special method of construction is usually reserved for much larger, or more performance orientated craft, because it takes longer to produce a hull than a standard layup and requires skilled labour to set it up. The result though is a hull that is much stiffer and much stronger with the considerable weight saving as it uses as little as 40% less resin. This translates into greater fuel economy for the same performance.

An ideal angling boat

The Ostrea 600 is an ideal angling boat that sits in the popular 20-foot bracket, with the boat itself only weighing 900kgs. Rigged with the Evinrude G2 150hp outboard the all up towing weight is less than 1.5 tonnes, even on a 4-wheel trailer making her ideal for towing around the country to different venues. This easy to live with aspect runs throughout the boat, with all round deck access thanks to the island wheelhouse. And what deck

space there is too, it seems like there are acres to play with and it is all flat, there are no steps or ridges other than the entrance to the wheelhouse.

Offset wheelhouse

For those who want to troll a spread of lures the helm is situated to starboard with a sliding wheelhouse doorway, so you can be on deck and still work the wheel and throttle through the doorway perfectly feasibly. Likewise, for anchoring, working the boat is very convenient single handed, leaving your fishing guests free to sort their tackle while you manage the boat, or they can lend a hand if they are feeling generous.

Spacious deck

The deck is very spacious and free of clutter, there are only locker top seats outside the wheelhouse, a stern bench including on the top of the built-in baitwell, one on the main locker aft of the wheelhouse and the jump seat ahead of the windscreen. The seating in the wheelhouse is a bit cramped except for the helm. The passenger perch is a foldable seat beside the helm. It is enough for what it is needed for, I prefer to stand when underway myself.

WORKMANLIKE WHEELHOUSE



The cockpit is huge for the size of the boat and the entire deck is flat from stem to stern. There is a large hatch cover in the cockpit that provides access to the fuel tank and fuel filter and water separator, plus there is plenty of stowage space below. The all-round access with safe, high gunwales is ideal for fishing, which is what the boat has been purpose designed for. The French are very keen on their boat angling, especially working lures for all manner of species, including fishing for tuna in deep water. This type of fishing requires a fast boat with safe decks and the Ostrea 600 fits the bill very well.

Easily accommodates four anglers

For our fishing in the winter the lack of shelter might not suit some, but there is plenty of good waterproof gear one can get in place of a cuddy. The extra deck space and freedom has plenty of positives, not least it means more rods can fish. The Ostrea 600 will happily accommodate 4 anglers with plenty of room between, especially at anchor. On the drift the stability of the beamy hull with her flared chines means four anglers can easily fish from the same gunwale without creating too much of a list. The Ostrea is a very stable hull, even in the overfalls, where I took her and let her sit beam on. She took it in her stride, as I had hoped because the French fish for bass in some very rough water, the Portland Race would be our equivalent.

THE TRANSOM ACCESS WILL BE USEFUL FOR LANDING BIG FISH, AS WELL AS RECOVERING A MAN OVERBOARD



Wooden gunwale with angled rod holders

The wooden gunwale capping is fitted with two, angled, rod holders each side and there is a fairlead cut into the aft end for mooring lines. Atop the wheelhouse is a stainless-steel rod rack that can accommodate 5 rods to give easy and quick access to an alternatively rigged outfit, or just to stow them when passage making, keeping them clear of the salt spray. I would add a bungie keeper for each holder to prevent them from jumping out, but otherwise it is a great addition.

Handrails

There is a pulpit with guardrail extending aft as far as the wheelhouse door and hand rail on the wheelhouse roof, which takes care of going forward. In the cockpit, the only

hand rails are on the aft end of the wheelhouse, however Ocqueteau have a unique approach to the placing of handrails, in that they leave one spare rail for the customer to decide where they need it most. So often there is conflict as to where to put hand holds, this solution solves the argument.

Tight wheelhouse for all round deck space

The wheelhouse is tight, there is no escaping that fact, but in order to provide all round deck access it has to be so. There is room for two in relative comfort, but three would be a squash. There is a wooden rod rack on the aft bulkhead which could be dispensed with if you use the high-level rod stowage outside, which would make room for a third person to squeeze in out of the weather. The helm is given plenty of room, as you would expect. The dash panel is kept low to provide excellent forward vision but there is still enough space to take the instruments and a VHF set. For a chart display and other electronics, the deckhead is wired to attach them to overhead brackets, maintaining that uninterrupted view. The throttle position is good for both standing at the wheel and when sat. The seat is a bit minimal and could do with more padding, but it serves its purpose.

Good stowage

Stowage within the wheelhouse is below the dash console and includes the battery box. This is unusual because it requires more, heavy cable for the starter circuit, but is a

MAIN SEAT LOCKER



sensible place to put it, well protected and easy to get at. The wheelhouse stowage is also accessible from the foredeck, through the jump seat locker lid, which means you can get at a jacket or tackle without having to go inside.

Evinrude G2

I know it isn't everyone's first choice, but the Evinrude G2 is some engine. The power and pick up are something else, plus for those who like this sort of thing when you put the throttle forward the exhaust note is a wonderful deep rumble, but it isn't noisy. The G2 works on the 2-stroke principle, but being fuel injected it is very frugal indeed. The Ocqueteau factory have trialled it against other motors and it is the most economical in that power rating. With 150hp on tap the Ostrea 600 really picks up and spansk if you want her to, we got over 34 knots with two of us aboard and she is well mannered with it.

Sea trials in tough waters

Taking her out into the rough water of the overfalls at the southern end of the Isle d'Oloron, a notorious stretch of water for the ferocity of the seas it throws up, gave a real indication of how this neat package works. We had 3m swells starting to break over the bars and the boat was able to tackle them and keep the deck dry. It needed usual helm decisions, I wasn't hitting them at 20 knots and launching off the tops, although further in where there were lesser swells I did! The Ostrea has the speed to cover the ground and get out there, coupled with the seakeeping to deal with steep, breaking waves. The throttle response from the G2 helped, having two power strokes for everyone from a 4-stroke engine gave me more latitude in the turbulent water.



The throttle position on the dash was nicely placed to, I was able to brace my hand and work the throttle with finesse and it not get knocked by the action of the waves. I was really pleased with how the boat behaved, and I even put her beam on in that turbulent water and she rode them in such a manner that you could have fished on the drift, if you were worried a drogue deployed from the bow would hold her head to sea and soften the motion even more, but I don't think you would need it. The deck is completely self draining and sits above the waterline, so any water taken is dispersed overboard, including rain on the berth.

The easy planing hull is economical too and the built in 115 litre fuel tank will give a cruising range of just over 100 miles, which should be plenty for coastal fishing. The most economical cruising speed is around the 20 - 22 knot mark, which is both comfortable and covers the ground at a useful rate. For the UK inshore fishing, out to about the 20 mile mark the Ostrea 600 is a useful addition to the range of choices.



SPECIFICATIONS

Length overall	6.20m
Beam	2.45m
Dry weight	900kgs
Power range	90hp-150hp
Range	approx 100nM
CE Cat	C for 7 persons

PRICE

From £33,705.00 with Suzuki DF90 hp

As tested with Evinrude G2 150hp £41,260

Bare boat £24,041

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