



**EXCLUSIVE!**

# EASY RIDER

Simon Everett gets to grips with the highly original Piscator 580

**S**ilver Marine have been building well respected rigid-inflatable boats for many years, so when they decided to build a cuddy day boat, the outcome was always going to be interesting. The result of their endeavours is the Piscator 580, which will find favour with anglers and anyone who needs a boat with a bit of shelter that runs happily on a 100hp motor. The package is attractive with its competitive price, helped no end by the low horsepower requirement. I spent a pleasant day exploring the Menai Strait to get a good feel for this totally new boat.

#### DEDICATED HULL DESIGN

The Piscator has an interesting hull shape. It's not an existing hull being used for

another purpose, which would have been an easy cop out; instead it is an all new hull drawn by Silver Marine's naval architect specifically for this model. There is nothing flamboyant or particularly special about the hull. It does the basics well and uses some up-to-date thinking to provide plenty of lift blended into a vee-hull that provides a pleasantly soft ride, especially through short wavelength chop.

The bow is fine and two sharp, fine straight strakes provide plenty of lift forward and grip on the water in turns. The stability in turns and additional lift is provided by the exaggerated reversed chine, which comes into play in a slight curve from the bow aft. If a wave is met, the extra lift from the forward part of the chine comes into its own and I was

surprised at how well she can take on waves. The ever-changing bevel of the hull is similar in style to the proven shape of some well-respected open water boats. To give good load carrying capability and stability on the plane, there is a delta pad running surface, which – though it robs a little speed off the top end – provides benefits in easier planing with loads and greater stability when running on the plane. For general boating it is a combination that works well.

#### GIVEN A WIDE BEAM

Another useful aspect of this boat is her wider than standard beam. At 5.8m one would expect a beam around the two-metre mark, but the Piscator has an additional 30cm over standard and that



*The boat is very stable in the water and feels safe to move around in*

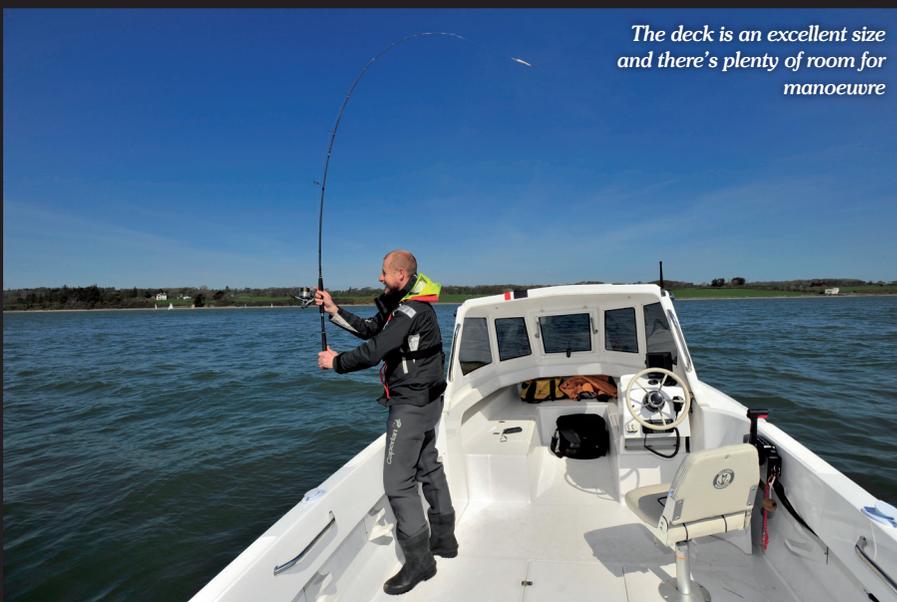


*The boat benefits from a shelter, a competitive price and a low horsepower requirement*

additional 30cm over standard and that helps to make her stable at rest and limit the amount of heel in turns.

Once on the plane, the additional beam doesn't impact on the efficiency through the water but at slower speeds the extra drag is noticeable. However, one has to balance this slight trade-off against the benefits of stability and the extra deck area in the cockpit. The cockpit seems big enough to play tennis in, partially due to the sheer deck area and partially because of the restricted seating layout.

Other seating options are available, including a back-to-back that lays flat to make a sun lounger. On this angling-orientated version there is just the pilot seat and the bench across the stern which



*The deck is an excellent size and there's plenty of room for manoeuvre*

## + BOAT REVIEW | PISCATOR 580



### PICK OF THE FLEET

Here's our selection of boats from the same price point as the Piscator 580...

#### WARRIOR 165



One of the most popular fishing cuddy boats of all time. Roomy and fast, the Warrior is a popular choice.

#### ORKNEY 452



A 14ft cuddy boat that has a proven pedigree and traditional layout for fishing. Requires less horsepower than a larger boat.

#### POLAR KRAFT 1670V



Solid aluminium construction built in Alaska to withstand what the Eskimos and the unrelenting Bering Sea can throw at it. Well specified and roomy.

*The original hull shape provides a pleasantly soft ride, especially through short wavelength chop*

but whilst the base is bolted down it is not firmly fixed down all round, which could be improved.

#### AT THE HELM

The general layout of the cockpit is much like other cuddy craft, but the Piscator has the benefit of additional support to the coachroof by the multiple window supports. There are two sides to this coin: on the one hand it does make the cuddy moulding stiffer, but on the other it cuts down on visibility and I did find myself dodging my head about to make sure I had seen all the water ahead. I like the rigidity of the structure – it is better than

a cuddy that flexes, but I like a clear view too. I suppose you can't have it both ways without increasing the cost significantly. The forward window lifts upwards and is supported on gas struts to give foredeck access. The chain locker is generous and self-draining and fitted with an eye to attach the bitter end, but there is no dedicated anchoring cleat. It's an omission that is easily and cheaply rectified.

I was surprised that the seating in the forward section was not used as stowage space and was unable to determine if it was sealed as a buoyancy chamber. It would be little extra work to create a locker within if it is just a void. The side benches are fitted with hatch lids so the usual side lockers are made from the seat boxes. In addition,



*Multiple window supports make the cuddy moulding stiffer, but cut down on visibility*



*There is ample stowage and this boat was clearly aimed at the angling market*

there are useful shelves down each side of the enclosure, my rod fitted on there with plenty of room to spare, both for length and breadth. The seat base lockers are also roomy, but beware condensation if leaving things in there long term, all lockers sweat. The headroom in the cuddy is generous when sitting, with realistic room for three adults to sit and not have to get too cosy, other than with where you put your feet.

For the helm position, the Piscator is provided with an adjustable, pedestal bucket seat that swivels right round. A second pedestal on the other side is an option, but would make access to the cuddy less open. The helm station consists of a moulded pod bonded to the seat box and gunwale lining. There is a bit of stowage within, where

one has access to the back of the dash for installations. Minimal space is devoted to the dash but it is sufficient for the essential items of a fixed station VHF and bracket mounted chartplotter, and a functional steering position with the throttle control mounted on the gunwale. It isn't stylish but does the job.

### ON THE WATER

When you get the Piscator out on the water she comes alive. The hull works better than I expected, with a soft ride even through short chop. Another surprise was making turns in rough water; the angle of the chine reduced the slamming noticeably. Where I was expecting a slap when taking an oncoming wave heeled over, there was none, or at least nothing noticeable. The way the hull interacts with the water is comfortable indeed. She is nimble through the turns, and although the delta pad reduces the stern grip in tight turns, under normal handling conditions she was well behaved. Making hard, fast turns, the stern did let go and the prop lost all bite, but provided you don't try to run the boat like a tunnel cat she will surprise you with the feedback the hull provides. The hydraulic steering makes light work of any helm inputs.

### THE VERDICT

For those who want a smaller boat, the Piscator package with the Mariner 100hp fits the bill nicely. There is enough performance to cover

ground quickly to reach longer-range destinations and the fuel capacity to allow it. The seakeeping was surprisingly good and the soft ride means this new boat will offer some serious competition to the established models in this sector. She is certainly worthy of a place on your shortlist. ▶

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### SPECIFICATIONS:

**LOA:** 5.8m  
**Beam:** 2.3m  
**Draft:** 0.3m  
**Dry weight:** 1100kg  
**Fuel tank:** 50 litres  
**Max power:** 140hp  
**Max payload:** 1100kg  
**Max passengers:** 8  
**CE Cat:** C

### PERFORMANCE FIGURES:

| ENGINE RPM  | SPEED (knots) |
|-------------|---------------|
| 800 idle    | 2.2           |
| 1000        | 2.7           |
| 2500 plane  | 8.5           |
| 3000        | 12.8          |
| 3500 cruise | 17.1          |
| 5500        | 36.9          |
| 5900        | 38.7          |

### THUMBS UP:

- New hull shape provides a smooth ride
- Good speed on low hp

### THUMBS DOWN:

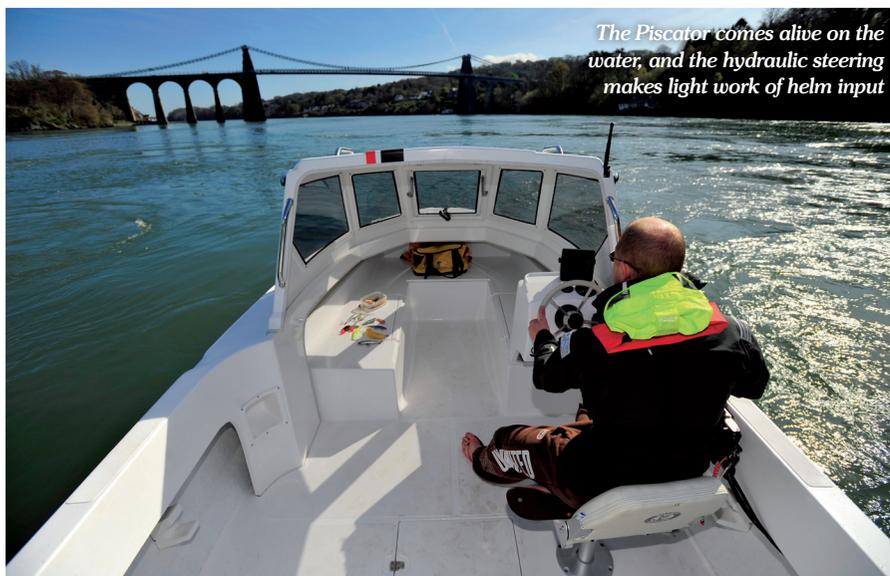
- Restricted view from the helm
- Poor performance in very tight turns

### PRICE:

**Package with Mariner F80 4-stroke:**  
 £17,999 incl VAT  
**As tested with extras and Mariner 4-stroke F100hp, on an Indespension roller trailer:** £18,999 inc VAT

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*The Piscator comes alive on the water, and the hydraulic steering makes light work of helm input*