

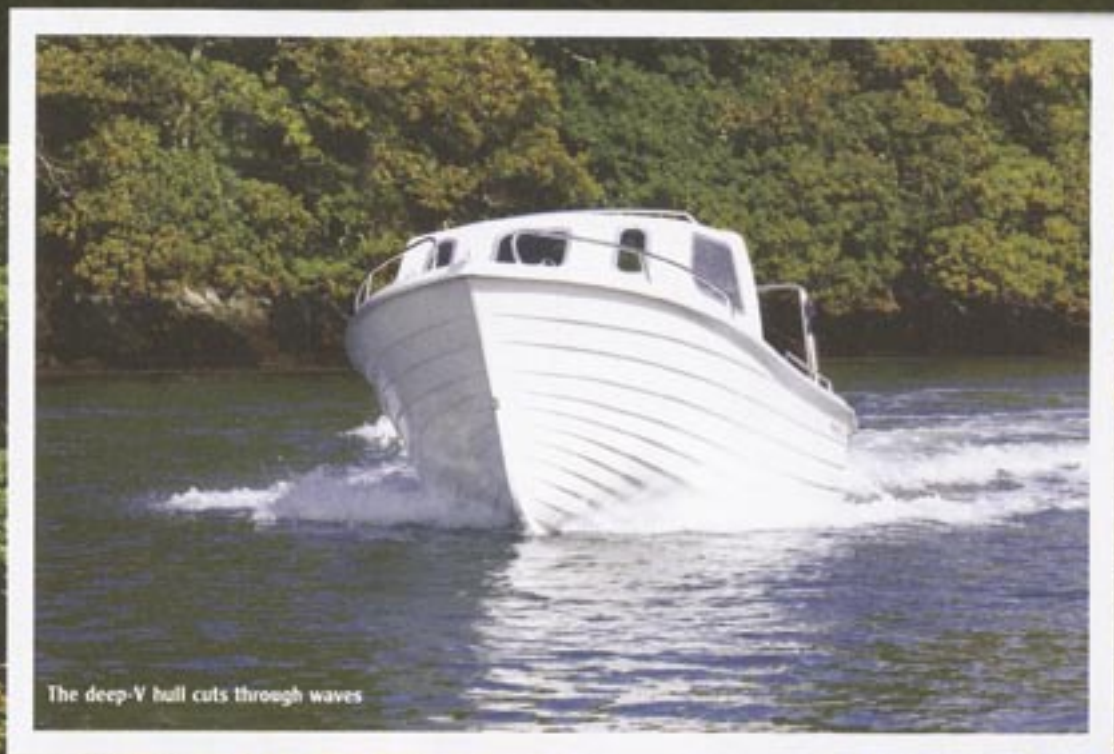
# BOAT TEST

## Atlantic Fisher 550

Built by Fibramar of Portugal and imported into the UK by Maenporth Boats, the Atlantic Fisher range now includes an 18ft 6in model known as the 'Atlantic Fisher 550'. Colin Davies takes one for a test drive...



She handles really well!



The deep-V hull cuts through waves



# BOAT TEST

## Atlantic Fisher 550



She looks the part on the mooring.

### Preconceived Ideas

I tested the 480 model back in the summer of 2006 (BFM August 06) and found it to be an excellent, trail-anywhere small boat.

So when Richard Allen called to tell me the prototype 550 was available to try out I wondered, if like many manufacturers, this would just be more of the same with just a couple of feet added to its length?

### Pleasant Surprise

When I arrived at the Atlantic Fisher 550's berth on Mylor Marina, just around the corner from Falmouth, I saw immediately

that here was an aesthetically pleasing as well as extremely well-built anglers boat, different in many ways to the smaller 480.

As with the other Atlantic Fisher models, the 550 is built along the lines of popular simulated clinker design, though this model has a higher freeboard, increasing from amidships to the bow by one plank height. There also appears to be a slight flare at the sides of and convex shape to the upper front bow. This is a not pure cosmetics, though it does make the boat look good to the eye. With the deep-V bow, chined hull and clinker design, water is pushed wide, particularly

when cutting through a choppy or building sea. Two short midships bilge keels not only allow the 550 to remain upright if you're on a dry mooring, they also help to stabilise the boat when on the drift and avoid slip when turning.

### Size Matters

Measuring 18ft 6in long with a beam of 7ft 4in the 550 makes for a good-size angling boat. Four anglers and all their gear will have plenty of space to move about. The stainless steel rail-topped gunnels are just the right height for safety and fishing, and her wide beam means she's stable even when another aboard

is moving about. There's ample secure storage at the forward and rear bulkheads, console, and beneath the two seat boxes, with extra storage within the two forward bench seats.

The large cuddy of the 550 has the Atlantic Fisher strong metal-framed windows and large hatch window, lockable in any position, and a full width stainless steel grab rail on the roof, ideal when standing at the helm.

On production models, two of the forward-facing windows will be made larger to increase visibility, and side grab handles will be fitted to allow a safe walk around the sides of the cuddy.

The windows will be larger on production models.



You can see how much space there is to fish.

The helm seat is going to be moved back.



The helm controls are well positioned.



The cuddy is cavernous, giving plenty of shelter as well as space, and there is wide access between the helm and crew seats.

The large foredeck has a bow roller, cleat, two fairleads and stainless steel safety rails. The tested prototype did not have an anchor locker, but Richard tells me that all production models will be fitted with a self-draining type.

The 550 has a deep splash well and high transom offering protection from a following sea, and there is a narrow, beam-width bench seat along the rear bulkhead. Battery and fuel tanks are within the two bulkhead secure compartments. The transom is fitted with two stainless rod holders and stainless safety rails. The matt grey painted deck (to minimise glare) is stippled for grip, and is self draining. The area between deck and hull is foam filled for buoyancy and strength.

### At The Helm

The starboard-mounted console has a five-spoke soft-rimmed steering wheel with cable operation, and there is plenty of room for electronics. Both

upholstered helmsman and crew seats turn 360 degrees and visibility forward while seated is good, but will be excellent with the larger production model windows. The engine controls fitted onto the starboard side gunnel, fall easily at hand.

Richard has already arranged for production models to have the two seats moved back three or four inches, as it was discovered that the prototypes arrangement meant that your forehead was virtually resting against the cuddy roof while seated.

The test 550 was fitted with a Mariner 100hp 4-stroke outboard, the maximum for this model, though Richard recommends 80hp for best economy and all-round performance.

As appears to be the norm when it comes to boat test days it was blowing up a storm, or very nearly, on my visit to Mylor! So, we were restricted to the estuary for the most part, with it's 8-knot speed limit, though I'm advised the 550 is capable of 30 knots with the 80hp set up.

The uncomfortable short chop in the open estuary showed me how well the 550 handled, cutting through the waves, throwing water

What a beauty!



wide. When I increased speed into waves she ploughed into them not trying to ride over them - this is a very dry boat!

Turns, even in these conditions, were smooth and tight without any slip. In calmer waters a blip on the throttle during tight turns made the 550 heel over slightly, but the hull dug in with no slip. With an increase in speed and adjustment of the engine's power trim, she easily came up onto the plane - but I had to keep an eye on that 8-knot speed limit!

The Atlantic Fisher will certainly appeal to the boat angler who wants something a little bigger whilst still being very trailable. This boat is well put together and well thought out.

### Price

The Atlantic Fisher 550 is available boat only for £9,000 inc VAT.

Fitted with a Mariner 80hp 4-Stroke Efi for £15,000 inc VAT.

Boat, engine and Multiroller brake-back trailer package for £16,500 inc VAT.

### Contacts

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