boat report
Motor Boat and Yachting

Above water the freeboard is high and the topsides are given an attractive flare throughout their length. The chine lip and a spray deflection lip parallel to the waterline do a good job of stopping water being thrown right up the hull.

The superstructure is concentrated forward of amidships with the wheelhouse/saloon being topped by the outside steering position. The low after coachroof is unobtrusive and its effective height is broken by the recessed line that takes the stanchions for the deck rails.

There is a pleasing blend of curves and straight lines in hull and superstructure and the overall result is a very attractive and solid looking boat with a seagoing air.

Construction

Orcantic are builders of a range of tough work and fishing boats. They are used to moulding craft for arduous duties and their experience has been carried over to the Highland Admiral.

There are two ways of getting a strong hull; building up the skin thickness or building in a network of stringers and frames. Orcantic have chosen the latter method — as they do for all their fishing craft — and the skin is supported by a number of foam-cored frames and longitudinals at close centres as well as by the structural bulkheads and floors in the bilge. The deck and superstructure have balsa cores in strategic areas and solid backing in fixing areas.

We saw hulls and superstructures being moulded in Orkney where it is clear that the finish is not just skin deep; the craftmanship extends also to the hidden areas.

Interior fitting out can be in timber to choice, with the prototype having teak and teak ply joinery, but the charter boats are finished in laminate covered ply trimmed with iroko. The use of the laminate is not out of place even for a private craft, and the durability and lower price of iroko would be an advantage.

Windows and other proprietary fittings are of good quality and perhaps the only disappointing feature was the interior vinyl lining in the saloon. There were some raw edges and lapped joins that looked out of place. The suspended panels on the deckhead however were well made, but more thought should be put into the stuck-on lining.

Engines

The choice of engines is such as to make the mention of a standard version an impossibility. The prototype boat was fitted with a single 97hp Thornycroft diesel, mounted athwartships right aft and driving a conventional shaft via a hydraulic pump and motor. The boat that we delivered to Caley Cruisers was fitted with two Volva Penta Aquamatic AQD21A/280 diesel outdrive units, each delivering 64hp. Other versions could be fitted with single or twin engines mounted conventionally under the wheelhouse floor, giving speeds up to about 20 knots.

We will concentrate on the outdrive version. The engines look lost in the huge engine space under the after deck. There is good access to all parts, although there is a shelf fitted over the steering gear and engine control changeover gear that makes reaching parts of the port engine a little awkward.

Fuel for the outdrive engines comes from a single tank in the space under the wheelhouse floor, but it was supplied to the engines by a single pipe, teed where it divided to each engine. We recommend that twin engine boats always have twin tanks if possible and at the very least there should be twin feeds, and this was borne out when it was found that the supply to the starboard engine, farthest from the tank, was not sufficient for constant running at cruising revolutions. Fuel starvation caused erratic running, stopping and a constant loss of power, but we understand that all future boats will at least have twin lines and most will have







Top, light refreshments being prepared under way. The charter version of the boat has the galley in the saloon, to the right of the picture, but the luxury boat has her galley forward through the companionway. There is plenty of room in the saloon for lounging and ventilation is adequate with sliding windows as well as Tannoy vents. Centre, the spacious galley on the luxury boat. The cooker is tucked away to the left and could be better positioned somewhere in the acres of worktop, but otherwise the layout is very good. There is some controversy about the position of the galley right in the bows as motion might be severe in any sort of a sea. Above, the well braced pulpit is made from large diameter stainless steel tube, as are the stanchions. Note the special bow roller to keep the chain off the glassfibre. The foredeck is small but adequate. Sidedecks are amply wide and guard rails sufficiently high. Grabrails, however, should be extended further aft past the outside helm position. The boat is seen here at Caley Cruisers, at Inverness.