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RIBEYE A SERIES 600

On the occasion of the Dartmouth to Salcombe cruise, Hugo Montgomery-Swan reviews what he describes as Ribeye's 'jewel in the crown' – a little RIB with a great deal to offer.

Fifteen years ago we owned a 5.5m Delta Dash. This bright yellow little number was a brave little boat and we covered several thousand miles in her. For her actual waterline length, *Delta Gallant* was a substantial boat in terms of her overall proportions and build. She was sturdy too and put up with a fair amount of 'punishment' during her time with us. I have fond memories of this RIB.

Stepping aboard the Ribeye A Series on the day of our cruise down to Salcombe reminded me of our old friend, *Delta Gallant*. This was not because the two boats resembled each other in terms of their design, the latter having been designed primarily for use in the commercial arena. Rather, it was the fact they could both be described as mini 'big RIBs', boasting pretty much every feature one might expect to find on a considerably larger craft. This was how, although by means of retro-fitting, *Delta Gallant* had been rigged and generally 'expanded' upon during its sojourn

with us. The difference with this modern Ribeye A Series, on the other hand, is the fact that it comes as a fully ready-to-go, 'turn-key' package. No need for retro-fitting here!

Indeed, it seems everything has been thought of in connection with the internal fit-out and spec of this model: seating for eight, including the provision of a lazarette, plenty of stowage and lockering, a ski-tow post, double-arch mast, lights, aerials, anchor locker and a full set of Navman electronics which include a 25-watt fixed VHF and colour GPS plotter.

On the tail of this RIB is a Yamaha 100hp 4-stroke outboard. It's just the right amount of power for this vessel, delivering a healthy 45mph plus (unladen, that is), and affords good fuel economy to boot due to the relatively conservative degree of horsepower concerned.

One of my particular likes about this craft is the fact that everything is well placed from an ergonomic point of view. Sat behind the wheel, all the key items work well in relation to each other. For instance, the helm jockey

seat is the correct distance from the wheel to not require stooping and works well from both a standing and sitting position. Likewise, the view ahead over the screen and its stainless-steel grab rail is good. Very importantly, the throttle position in relation to both seat and wheel is just so, and hence affords a high degree of control without fatiguing the helmsman's arm. The greater the performance of the craft, the more critical such issues become. Additionally, in order to gain maximum control of a boat, not to mention the important matter of deriving pleasure from the whole driving experience, it's vital that the vessel's ergonomics are well thought through, with each component working well in relation to its relevant counterpart.

The console layout is good and, bearing in mind the restrictions of space involved, I think Ribeye have done well with regards to the design of this unit and the manner in which its various systems are configured.

A good view of the 'nav' and 'comms'

systems is afforded the navigator, plus there are several good grab points for him to take advantage of – in front of, beside and right behind this port-side seating position. This latter point is very important as the co-pilot can sometimes get a raw deal in terms of what he's provided with in the way of on-board security. But this aspect scores highly all round the boat, for passengers and crew, with even the front-of-console, 'suicide seat' being fitted with sturdy stainless-steel side grab handles.

Despite the number of seating pods and the addition of a forward anchor locker, there remains an acceptable amount of deck space for moving forward and aft without too much restriction. This is quite an accomplishment in view of the fact that the boat has a pretty standard width of 2.3m and is just 6 metres in length.

To complement the moulded GRP deck shell, a splash-well finishes the vessel's rearward end very nicely indeed and doubles well both

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as a swim platform and a poop deck. Lastly, with regard to the A Series' internal fit-out, I will say it's both aesthetically pleasing and of an impressive quality – especially in light of the fact that this a 'production line' type product and a keenly priced one at that.

The Ribeye blue and grey hypalon livery is conservative and traditional in typically British style. I like it. Also, the vessel's profile, unlike others in the Ribeye range, has a definite sheer to its bow. This once again gives it an offshore styling that is not always present on leisure boats of this type. But we're talking more than looks when it comes to this type of design feature.

Firstly, the 6-metre A Series benefits from a genuine deep-vee hull which not all products of this type possess – even though they may claim to! Coupled to this, the generous sheer in the bow affords the boat good recovery in a following seastate. Plus, it gives that little bit of added psychological reassurance to see the raised bow profile ahead of the console.

Performance wise, the ride is very stable at all speeds with a high degree of lateral stability too. This translates into little or no rock at rest and good directional stability underway. Even at speed when fully trimmed out, the boat retains excellent stability and is not prone to 'chine walking'. In fact, this A Series is one of the best balanced boats of its size and type I have trialled, and it's clear her well-balanced nature underpins her exceptionally good handling characteristics.



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With this amount of seating, as well as the double-arch mast, this 6-metre RIB could be a very stern-heavy boat. On the day of our cruise down to Salcombe, with five people in the boat, the payload didn't affect her in the slightest, however. No doubt the just-ahead-of-amidships positioning of the helm console counteracts this potential tendency which, if the boat's balance was flawed, would certainly affect its handling adversely.

This boat is a lot of fun to drive in a variety of seastates. Responsive, nimble, confidence-giving both in head and following seas; all in all, it's hard to find its 'Achilles heel'. Out of all the boats in Ribeye's range, this is the one that ticks all the right boxes in my view – their 'jewel in the crown'. A very likeable craft indeed, and one to which all the members of the RIB International team who came on the voyage down to Salcombe gave a big 'thumbs up'.

HMS

Ribeye 6m A Series

TECHNICAL DATA METRIC

Overall Length:	6.00m
Internal Length:	5.05m
Overall Width:	2.28m
Internal Width:	1.38m
Tube Diameter:	0.46m
Air Chambers:	5
Number of Persons:	12
Max Payload:	1100kg
Boat Weight Std Spec:	520kg
Max Power:	120hp
Engine Shaft:	L
Design Cat:	B
Boat Weight Inc Eng/Rigging:	890kgs
Max Speed:	40 knots

PRICES (incl VAT)

Price as tested:	£28,830 ex VAT, £28,000 inc VAT
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MANUFACTURER

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