

Blade Runner

RIB35 X



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By Neil Holmes



The Review

The Blade runner 35 by Ice Marine has a distinctive appearance with sleek styling and a look that perceives high performance. With its unique air entrapment hull (AEM) the boat is radically different to a conventional monohull, with curvaceous twin tunnels that flare out either side of the slender twin stepped hull, and finish with sharp knife like sponsons at the sides. This unique combination gives the Bladerunner impressive aerodynamic lift, improving performance and comfort by compressing the air inside the tunnels adding a cushioning effect and producing a softer ride than most mono hulls. A further advantage is that the centre of lift is located much further aft than a comparative high performance catamaran, providing a safer and more level ride in rough seas.

The sharp keels of the Bladerunner's sponsons carve through the water with little resistance. They also form the outer walls of the tunnels, which is essential for air compression and the resulting aerodynamic lift. The Bladerunner is kept stable

and level in a straight line, and when turning by a combination of the sharp keels and the pressurised air in the tunnels. These same sharp keels also provide superior directional stability to avoid any unforeseen sudden changes in direction (hooking) to the left or right that high-speed monohulls and catamarans are prone to.

WHATBOAT?
The BR35 is like marmite, love it or hate it there is no doubting its ability.

Ice Marine purport that the net result of all this is a quicker, safer and more efficient hull that has superb rough water capabilities with inherent soft riding characteristics.

My experience with AEM or 'three pointer' craft began back in the late 1980s racing a single engine 23ft three pointer in the highly competitive offshore 2 litre class, winning the championships and going on to take the world 4 litre in a 28 foot twin V6 mercury power three pointer. I had a fair idea what to expect and what capability these type of craft have but was looking forward to seeing how modern technology had morphed these race craft into pleasure boats!

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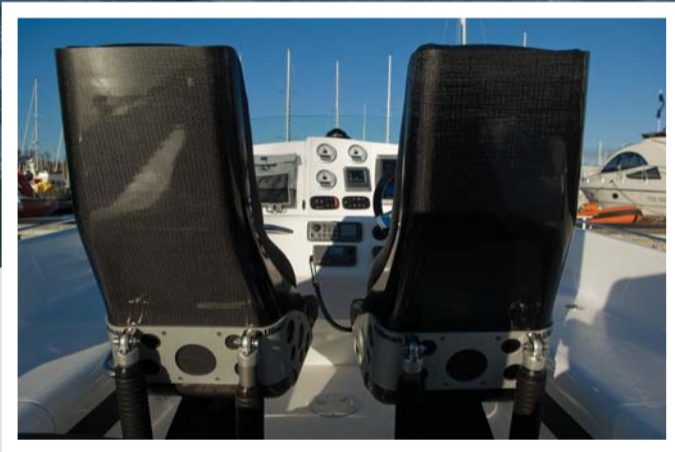
The Review

A freezing cold December day with very little wind and almost flat seas is perhaps not ideal test conditions for this craft, as I know from experience that it chomps through waves effortlessly, however it was going to be a good opportunity to test for high speed comfort and performance and it certainly didn't disappoint. This 10 metre RIB took just 2.9 seconds to get on the plane, definitely the fastest hole shot for any boat I have tested so far and phenomenal for its size. Timings for the mid range 30-60mph test were equally as impressive achieving this in 6.7 seconds. And from a standing start to 60mph was an

astonishing 10.6 seconds. The top end speed of 81mph with a crew of 3 people and a half tank of fuel complete the achievements of this boat. Ullman suspension seats are one of the luxuries of this boat; although they do take a few minutes to get used to as it's a rather strange feeling to 'wobble around' rather giving the impression that the seats are not actually bolted down! But the upside of these stylish seats is that they take any impact rather than your back and are incredibly comfortable, for long distances especially. With 4 individual seats and a large bench seat to the rear,

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this boat may change your idea of boating, all of a sudden you find yourself hoping for rough water

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the boat can comfortably seat 8 people, and a bonus with a boat this size is the quantity of storage space with large forward, side and aft lockers. Helm position is comfortable and well planned with Garmin touch screen GPS and enough gauges to keep all the techies out there happy! The DTS (digital throttle and shift) works effortlessly with immediate response from the twin 300 Verados. A pair of revolution four 25" pitch props completes the set up of this performance package.

The build of this particular blade runner rib is a full carbon fibre construction and this shows

in the handling and rigidity of the boat, giving a reassuring solid feel and reducing the hull flex and twisting that is normally apparent in conventional fibre glass layups. The carbon layup gives a weight saving of approximately 400kg, resulting in a faster boat with extra strength, perhaps the only downside of this structure is the increased cost but weigh that up with the outstanding performance and the extra durability it may be worth considering the extra cost.

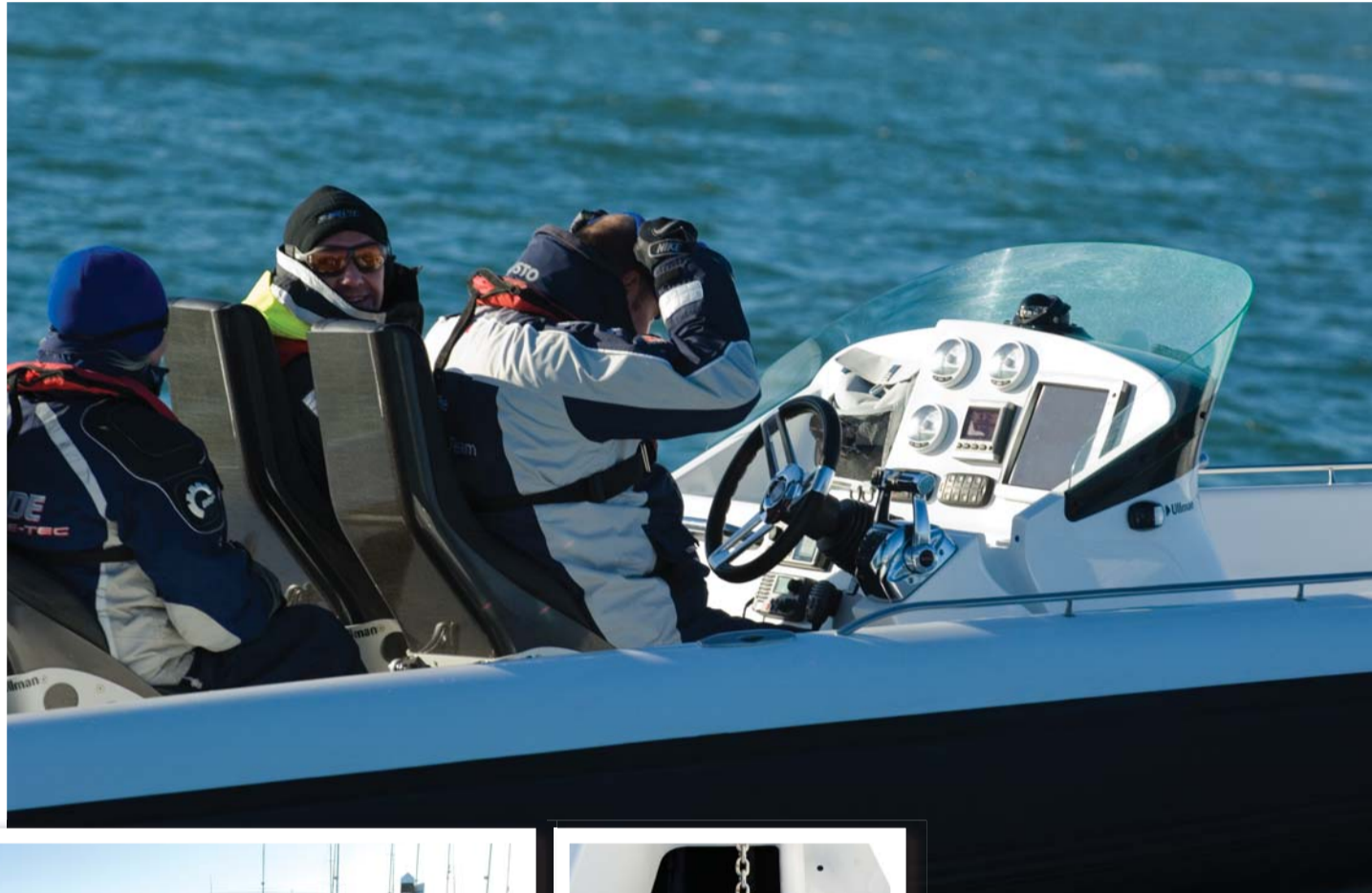
Cruising speed is comfortably achieved at around 60mph although if the devil in you wants to push the boat more, hit the trim button, open

the throttle fully so you are balancing on the steps of the centre hull and you will feel the hull lift out from the water and hurtle towards the 80mph mark. At this point your driving technique would be the same as a conventional performance stepped mono hull.

Although there was very little in the way of waves during the test, the boat coped effortlessly with the large washes produced from the tug and ferry boats chugging up and down, landing in a soft and stable fashion.

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Specifications:

LOA (inc cowling):..... 10.60m
Beam (max):3.20m
Draft to keel (ex props):0.53m
Draft to keel (inc props):0.75m
Dry weight (approx):2000kg
Fuel capacity: 450 litres

Engine options: (Petrol outboard)

1) BR Rib 35 XC: Twin Mercury Verado 300hp
Supercharged 4 stroke, max speed: 72knots

2) BR Rib 35 XCS: Twin Mercury Verado 350hp
Supercharged 4 stroke, max speed: 77knots

Range: 200 nautical miles

Conclusion:

If you are looking for something a little out of the ordinary then the Blade Runner 35 Rib may be the boat for you. Large and safe enough to take the family but also with enough power and endurance to take longer trips, this boat has been known to cross the channel to collect a bottle of red wine. And if the weather blows up then you need hold no fear as from experience i know this style of craft is more than capable of handling the large seas that may intimidate many other boats.

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