



The Phantom spirit lives on...

By Neil Holmes



The Review

My history with Phantom dates back over 20 years, I have been a phantom dealer in the past selling and rigging many phantoms for the pleasure boat market and specialised in building and setting up some of the fastest phantom 21s around. Cobra bought the moulds for the Phantom 21 in June 2007 and the first boat was produced just one month later. Although Cobra specialise in RIBS when the opportunity came along to purchase the moulds of an iconic boat such as this it seemed too good an opportunity to miss, after all many of today's performance boaters cut their teeth on boats of this type.

The boat we tested was built as the standard pleasure boat option fitted with a 225 Mercury Opti max outboard engine. The boats are still produced out of the original mouldings made by Steve Baker and looking at this particular model none of the beautiful shine and flowing lines have been lost as sometimes happens if moulds aren't stored or preserved correctly Cobra have kept very close to the original

layout and build specifications just making a few changes to incorporate newer and more modern techniques and materials. Certain changes also had to be made to comply with current CE marking, something the original designer didn't have to worry about as the regulations were nonexistent back then!

The boats are now a little heavier than they used to be with the centre of gravity moving slightly towards the bow, this is perhaps not such a bad thing if you consider the weight of modern day outboards compared with yesteryears counterparts, for example a 200HP engine in the 1980s would typically weigh around 175kgs today a similar engine will weigh approximately 234kgs making a weight difference of 59kgs hanging over the transom! And if your engine choice was to be a 4 stroke outboard the weight would be even greater. The boat had a good solid feel and as I put it through its paces it felt every bit as exciting as the ones I used to test many years ago. The hydraulic steering gives the craft the ability to carve turns effortlessly, in the early days

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boats like this were often fitted with 'twin rack and pinion steering' meaning sheer brute force was the only way to get the steering wheel to turn the engine in the direction you wanted to go.

In fairly calm sea conditions the boat ran at a respectable 66.3 MPH average speed, with a 0-60 time of 14.7 seconds. Driven at a more leisurely pace the boat reacts to the helm and foot throttle in a responsive fashion, with an almost instantaneous reaction as if it already knew what you wanted it to do. The conveniently placed 'trim stalk' placed just next to the steering wheel enables the driver to adjust the trim without taking his hands off the



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wheel. Running the boat over some fairly large wakes presented no problems, the craft landed with a nice attitude the balance of the craft was good and there were no signs of 'porpoising' from the hulls 'pad keel'.

Although there was no bow tank on this particular model the boat jumps and flies as you would expect from a thoroughbred. I have to admit that on a personal note I would always choose to have a bow tank fitted whenever possible as this will enable the driver to push the craft to its extremes in choppy conditions Performance orientated boats need to be able to achieve more than just high speeds in a straight line, for instance it's no good travelling along at a fast pace if you can't steer clear of the lobsterpot you spotted at the last minute without your boat high siding, spinning out or sliding into the very thing you are trying to avoid, this Phantom 21 didn't show any adverse behaviour when put into sudden changes of direction gripping well and coming about without any of the possible pitfalls of high speed manoeuvring.

The low seating position gives the feel of sitting in the boat and not that you're sitting on top of it. The driver and passenger have the comfort of high backed bucket seats which hold you securely in place, the bench seat in the back is comfortable and there is plenty of leg room, one thing I did notice was the lack of grab handles in the back, this seems to be a common failing with many manufactures as this is certainly not the only boat I have tested to have this issue! Storage for fenders and other paraphernalia was limited to under the

back bench seat and two pockets in the sides, although there is more than enough space in the back should you wish to strap in bags or boxes.

Specifications:

Length: 21ft
 Weight: 480kg
 Beam: 5ft 9in
 Maximum HP: 300 HP
 Fuel capacity: 150 ltrs
 Seating: 5
 Price: £10995 + VAT

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Conclusion:

This boat is as much fun as it always was; even with the heavier modern day engines the razor like handling has not been compromised. The boat is ideal for 'sporty families' who want to teach their youngsters to water ski or 'performance enthusiasts' who want to tear about at full pelt, and with the reasonable price tag as well as economical fuel consumption it shouldn't break the bank.