



## ***Boat Test Report***

Pilothouse 25

Saltwater Boat Angling

*Written by* Simon Everett

# Simon Everett puts the new Orkney Pilothouse 25 through her paces

## TEST OF TIME

Orkney boats have a special place amongst angling boats, their uncompromising build quality and sensible design has stood the test of time, with many Orkney Longliners still in use 40 years after they were built. That is testament to their structural integrity and one of the reasons they are still one of the boats people aspire to. Whilst they are possibly best known for their trailer boat range, Orkney also build bigger boats, like this new Pilothouse 25.

## NOT CHEAP

While the Longliner 2 comes at a price point that anyone can afford, the Pilothouse 25 is not a cheap boat, it doesn't pretend to be. Building a boat of this size to totally uncompromised values results in a price tag just under £100,000, which in today's boating market is on a par with the previous Pilothouse 24, which the new boat derives from. A total of 98 Orkney Pilothouse 24s were built, proving how popular they were and the price was comparable at around £90,000, depending on choice of engine specified. The new Pilothouse 25 is designed to take the Yanmar B4 engine which comes rated at different

horsepower outputs. The test boat had a single 220hp variant running through the silky smooth EXO sterndrive, in this case the ZT-370 which has dual, contra-rotating props. There are various arguments for and against single engines. Personally, whilst I appreciate the additional manoeuvrability available with twin engines, I would go for a single installation on a boat of this size, an auxiliary can always be fitted on a bracket but modern engines are so reliable that I wouldn't be concerned. I would temper this statement with the proviso that they are properly maintained and serviced.

## PROVEN HULL DESIGN

The provenance of the hull goes back to the already proven 24 and is from the drawing board of respected designer Arthur Mursell, who many



will know for the Nelson range of boats. Solid, seaworthy craft that are used not just for cruising, but as hard working Pilot launches and other serious heavy duty use. The Orkney hull is a chip off the old block and is a solid base upon which to build, as it is derived from that highly successful 24-foot hull. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Although all too often in this modern world that sentiment is turned on its head for, if ain't broke, fix it until it is!



## COMFORT AND SPACE

For the new 25, Orkney wanted to provide the ability to have some comfort as well as room for fishing. To that end they have created an open plan layout for the accommodation block. The wheelhouse is open directly, albeit it above, the seating down below and the galley. There is an enclosed heads compartment to starboard, which elevates the boat above mere day use only. The fact there are two berths below, cooking facilities and the ablutions centre, makes weekends away an exciting prospect with all the facilities needed to be self-contained for a couple of days.

## WELL EQUIPPED GALLEY



The seating area and table, which lives against the heads bulkhead when not in use, are in the bow down a three step companionway. The galley is well equipped with a sink and double burner, but it lacks a fridge for completeness, so a good cool box with plenty of ice blocks will



have to suffice and will double for storing your fish too. A well placed, full height pole beside the galley provides a stable hand hold for the companionway or whilst putting the kettle on and is equally useful when stood in the wheelhouse. The fact that the galley and down below is left as open as possible makes the boat seem bigger and you have to remind yourself that she is 'only' a 25 footer.

## LOCKABLE

That airiness of the cabin and wheelhouse is continued out into the cockpit, with a standard, lockable wheelhouse door that is properly protected with a storm cill, rather than the modern adoption of sliding



cockpit access doors. Over the entrance an overhang protects the cockpit to give some weather protection and prevent spray from blowing into the cockpit, which it does exceedingly well. We had the boat on an extended trip over to Alderney and back and she didn't ship

a drop over the entire voyage even though we negotiated some rough patches of water. The cockpit is properly drained down both sides to the deep scuppers in each quarter. The cockpit sole is like a castle surrounded by a moat, so you won't have water swilling around your feet in any event.

## SAFE AND SECURE

The safety aspect of the cockpit is inspired by the Royal Ocean Racing Club regulations and the coaming height matches the guard rail requirements for open ocean racing. It is very comforting to be protected by such a solid and high enclosure with plenty of support to lean against.



There are some nice touches too, like the rod rack on the port side, the bin lockers within the access steps and the generous stowage below the cockpit, with plenty more in the engine bay if the single engine option is chosen, as per the test boat. If you are going to spend any length of time at the wheel, as I had the chance to,

## Orkney Pilothouse 25



then the pilot seat and the helm layout is an important consideration and the dash layout of the Orkney is exemplary, compact yet totally functional. There is space for a flush fitted 10-inch chart plotter together with the usual ancillary dials, and room to spare for any other additions



you may wish to include. The relationship between wheel and other controls was well executed, nothing imposed on anything else although I did find it a little cramped when stood at the helm. The seating is fixed, but with the lift up it was flexible enough to make comfortable, that goes for all three seats in the wheelhouse.

The handling and seakeeping was exactly what you would expect from a craft of such pedigree. Her poise and

stability in the rough water was assured and confident. It will give you some idea of how hard we were driving her when you see a near 5 tonne boat all but airborne. Even so, the landings and retained stability were controlled. Of course, nobody would drive a boat that hard with

passengers or family aboard, not if they wanted them to go out again and we were nowhere near finding the limit of this British designed and built boat. Her old school build values ensured that the rigidity and structural strength is able to withstand the constant pounding without shaking anything loose. It is reassuring to know that there is a massive margin of safety beneath your feet, which will provide many years of faithful service.

### PERFORMANCE & SPECIFICATIONS

#### DIMENSIONS

LOA	24' 8"	7.6 m
Beam	9' 2"	2.8 m
Fuel tank	264 litres	
Hull weight	6834 lbs 3100 kgs	
Max Power	240 hp (single sterndrive)	
Max payload	1350 kgs	
Max persons	10	
RCD Cat	B	

#### DESIGN SPEED

Maximum design speed	27 knots
Optimum cruising speed	17 knots

#### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

170hp	23 knots
240hp	27 knots
TESTED SPEEDS WITH 1X 220HP	
4000rpm	27.4 knots
3500rpm	21.2 knots
3000rpm	10.8 knots
Idle	3.0 knots

Price depends upon final specification, inc V.A.T.

Boat built to standard spec with single Mercruiser 170hp  
£103,092.00

Boat as tested, with Day Angler package and Yanmar 220hp  
£117,852.00

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