

HSBO 2016

THE BIENNIAL HIGH Speed Boat Operation (HSBO) Forum took place recently in Göteborg, Sweden.

Maritime Journal sent Paul Lemmer, who as a first timer to the event was surprised by the number and variety of dark coloured 'stealth' type craft on show but managed to test drive all but a couple of the (over 30) assembled boats. We asked him to report back on the four most interesting craft.

While the results were varied, the quality of all the assembled craft was excellent and it shows that when significant money is invested in the rescue, commercial and military sectors, the results would appear to reflect those investments.

DAMEN INBOARD RHIB 1050

Dutch ship/boat builder Damen is one of the best known and respected shipyards in Europe and its latest 1050 RIB (Lloyds certified hull) fitted with a pair of Volvo D6 370hp diesels coupled to DPR sterndrives was an impressive package.

Quality, finish and build integrity appear first class, with E-Glass and Corecell sandwich incorporated into the construction to ensure strength and durability. Whilst the origins of the design come from Damen, many of the features, particularly in the hull shape are through collaboration with Dutch Coastguard engineer and professional RIB pilot Paul Hollander. Paul has for many years operated RIBs for the Coastguard, particularly with high-speed RIB to ship personnel transfers and specific hull features are essential for these exercises to ensure the craft can operate safely in the significant wash created by a 45m Coastguard Cutter travelling at over 20 knots!

The craft sits very level at rest, no doubt helped by the engines being mounted amidships rather than right aft and this central weight distribution



Damen Inboard RHIB 1050

● **With seven people aboard the people carrying RIB, we achieved an astonishing 69 knots (70.35 mph) on the GPS and the craft felt rock solid at this speed**

also helps the craft to plane without the usual 'hump' associated with deep V hulls. The unstepped 24 degree deadrise hull looks pretty conventional but the rounded V sections aft that evidently play an important part in stabilising the craft in cross seas and wakes, effectively allowing the helmsman to break free from a ship's side, no matter how much 'suction' is being exerted by the wash of the mother ship.

With 740 horsepower to play with, it was not surprising that this was a very fast boat and in excess of 50 knots accompanied by rapid

acceleration with 6 people aboard was comfortably achieved.

Ergonomically, this has to be one of the best helm positions I have used, with everything spot on in terms of layout for both helmsman and co-pilot. On taking the controls, I immediately felt at ease and despite the robustness of the craft, which must weigh in at over 4000kg, it handled impeccably, even refusing to slip or show any quirkiness when cornering at abnormally high speeds.

Summing up I would say that the Damen 1050 RIB is a craft for the discerning end user that demands the best quality regardless of cost.

RAVEN RIB 9M

In complete contrast to the Damen, the Danish Raven RIB 9m is a much lighter and sportier affair and it is not just fast, it is extraordinarily fast! At rest the open 12 seater version does not give a clue as its potential performance and although it looks quite sleek, with a plethora of seats

across its decks, it hides its potential by suggesting it is just another people carrying safari boat; that would be a mistake, for here is truly one of the fastest and sweetest handling RIBs I have tested.

There were two Raven RIBs at the HSBO, an open twelve seater passenger version fitted with twin Mercury Verado 350hp outboards and a two seat fully enclosed streamlined canopied version sporting the same 24 degree deadrise twin stepped hull but fitted with a pair of 'breathed on' Verado 400hp and weighing... 'not much'!

With seven people aboard the people carrying RIB, we achieved an astonishing 69 knots (70.35 mph) on the GPS and the craft felt rock solid at this speed. There was no feeling of lightness or flightiness and the cornering was of the 'on rails' variety, unlike many stepped hull craft where the steps can be their Achilles heel. We accompanied the enclosed version for a picture shoot and it was interesting to note that whilst looking very



The 100mph Raven RIB 9m



Open 12-seater Raven 9m