



Sport Fishing

Q. I like to spend time offshore fishing and I am considering an investment in a sport fishing boat. Is there anything specific I should look for?

A. There are really a number of factors to take into account. First, you need to decide on your plan for using the boat. If you are truly dedicated to using it as just an offshore fishing boat, then the design will need to target just fishing. In reality, I do not think you will find many of these “just fishing” boats used by recreational boaters.

If you look at the available sport fishing boats on the market, I think you will find that a large percentage of the offshore fishing boat designs are more than just fishing boats. Most of today’s sport-fishing boats have become weekend and vacation get-aways. A few of the larger ones are even long term live aboard vessels.

If you are serious about using the boat as a fishing boat, you will want to look at the size and layout of the fishing area. You will want a roomy section of the cockpit that has accessible bait wells and storage areas for the catch of the day. In addition, most sport fishing boats need a decent fighting chair. That means you will need a spacious enough area to accommodate the chair, the crew and the cheer squad for that record catch.

The next major question you need to ask yourself is what type of waters you plan to spend most of your time in. If you live and plan to use the boat in the Northern waters (East or West), you will want to shop for a

boat that has the ability to handle rougher waters and colder temperatures. Being cold and wet on a boat with nowhere to warm up will reduce your enthusiasm. A boat that is too small for your water can make the trip uncomfortable to only the hardest of the fishing crowd. Do not buy a boat that you “think” will be big enough. Make sure you test your planned purchase on similar water before you spend the money.

With that in mind, the location and use will also determine a few of the amenities you opt for. To extend the fishing (or any use) in the Northern areas, the cabin should offer heat for that cold weather warm up. If the boat is to be in the southern waters where the temperatures can be warmer, the cabin needs to be air-conditioned. Many of today’s owners move their boat back and forth so they should be equipped for both climates.

While your fishing passengers are warming up (or cooling down) in the cabin, you will also want to give them as comfortable ride as possible. Most fishing aficionados will recommend some type of a deep V hull design to smooth out the ride. If you warm the passengers too much, and then give them the rolling swell experience, the trip will be very unpleasant. An example of a sport fishing boat would be one of Cavileer Boatworks designs (www.cavileer.com). Cavileer offers a deep V hull design that, as they say, “smoothes the roughest waters”.

Cavileer states that their boats offer performance and comfort because of features such as “single-unit cockpit construction, hand-laid molded fiberglass exterior, individually fitted component assembly, and honeycombed flooring” which provide better sound proofing and a smooth ride.



Send your questions or comments to
Scott Sky Smith at sky@skysmith.com

Dock Talk Q & A continued

Of course, Cavaleer is not the only one that can offer these comforts. In today's market, there are many manufacturers to look at.

An alternate design would be from Ocean Tech Yacht (www.oceantechyachts.com). They offer a unique catamaran hull design that is supposed to offer a smooth ride and fast speeds in any type of water condition.

Ocean Tech's hull design is a called "high performance and revolutionary". Ocean Tech uses "Schoell's



Duo-Delta Conic high-speed planning hull". Wow, sounds technical doesn't it. This design is suppose to achieve higher speeds, greater efficiency and stability.

Ocean Tech states their design eliminates the need for trim tabs or wedges because of the balance of the weight and the hull design. Another claim is the shallow draft needed, allowing for use in lower water areas.

Whether it is a deep V hull or a catamaran, you the buyer will make the final choice. That choice will come down to the location it is used, the fishing area of the cockpit, the passenger comfort and finally the personal styling preferences.

Q . Is it true that trim tabs can improve the performance of any boat?

A . As boat owners, we are always looking for ways to improve the handling, speed and efficiency of our favorite watercraft. The industry is full of after-market accessories designed to fulfill the owner's needs (or fantasies).

When it comes to trim tabs there seems to be two schools of thought. Those that feel they (trim tabs) are one of the cheapest and easiest way to improve the boat's performance and those that feel trim tabs are just a quick fix to a problem. In that instance, the problem can be a poor hull design or an incorrectly balanced load. The cure, install trim tabs.

I think it is in between both of those opinions. Sure, there are hull designs that are not as efficient or quick to plane as other designs. However, that does not necessarily mean the boat is bad. I think that trim tabs can be a very beneficial and economical addition to most boats.

Trim tabs can improve a boats performance. But is not a cure for all boats. If you use the trim tabs appropriately you can reduce the time it takes to get the hull up on plane. Used correctly you can increase your cruise speeds and keep the hull on plane at lower speeds. Getting and keeping the hull on plane helps to improve the fuel efficiency by reducing the drag and power settings required keeping it on plane.

And yes, they can cure a few problems. If you are listing for some reason (because of the weight distribution) a set of trim tabs can help improve the situation and keep the boat level.

Companies like Lenco Marine (www.lencomarine.com) are a good example of what's available in the trim tab industry. Lenco produces cockpit adjustable trim tabs for all sizes of boats. They even offer trim tabs with small trolling motors attached to them if you really want to go slow.



Scott Sky Smith is freelance writer, columnist and the author of Ultimate Boat Maintenance Projects published by Motorbooks International, and the owner of an aviation and marine insurance agency.