

OceanMaster 605 S

By Alex Smith

BOAT TEST

Length (LOA): 5.99m / 19ft 7in

Beam: 2.37m / 7ft 9in

Weight: 800kg

Fuel capacity: 150 litres

RCD category: C6

Engine as tested: Mercury 100hp

Other engine options: Mercury 75hp, 115 or 150hp

Price from **£33,349**

Price as tested **£37,424**





While the sheltered serenity of Norway's fjords and coastal archipelagos makes it a world-class venue for recreational boating, the nation's boat building reputation has often been more keenly defined by sporting pedigree and seakeeping prowess than soft-water recreation.

Even if you dispel the various narrow-beamed, sea-cleaving thoroughbreds from the likes of Goldfish, Arctic Blue and Hydrolift, Norway still seems blessed with its unfair share of agile, powerfully built rough-water cruisers. Of course, those who have enjoyed boating for a few years will know that Norway's better-known marques have tended to attract premium prices, but when OceanMaster entered the market in 2004, it was never required

to validate the lofty mystique of the Norwegian industry by building boats like tanks, powering them like racers or fitting them out like boutique apartments.

On the contrary, while most of its established peers continued to pay a premium for longstanding domestic workforces, OceanMaster took a different tack. Right from the start, it aimed to maximise the efficiency of its operations by building its boats in Poland. It was one of the country's first builders to do so, but by anchoring the brand firmly in Norwegian-inspired designs, while carefully monitoring quality control at its overseas manufacturing plant, its very first boat, the OceanMaster 605, achieved rapid success and went on to become one of Norway's best-selling boats of all time.

A development on a bestseller, in line with previous models, the latest incarnation of OceanMasters 605 is clearly designed to do the simple things well. As an open outboard-powered sports boat, it majors on unobstructed deck space, courtesy of a central helm console, a five-man aft cockpit, a long bow and a pleasantly symmetrical arrangement of deck furniture. With its matt grey upholstery, its turquoise screen tint, its deep-cut hull step and the long, arcing downward curve of its gunwale, it also looks great in a classically understated Nordic fashion, which is precisely what most of us would want.

In terms of the onboard practicalities, things are again, for the most part, classical Nordic fare. At the back end, the

The 605 has been a radical success for OceanMaster. At less than £40,000, it's an appealing option

aft bench, which conceals the bimini, is bookended by a couple of stepping points that take you over the transom to the swim platforms. In the absence of any platform extensions, there's not much space to play with back here, but there's room enough for a ladder and, should you want it, a stern anchor. And to help make up for the compact dimensions, the rigging of the aft sunpad involves folding the backrest ahead of the seat base into



the main cockpit rather than aft into the zone above the engine well. That does of course swallow up most of the habitable space aft of the console but it works well enough and it still succeeds in keeping the walkways clear for heading fore and aft.

The console itself is a relatively compact but usefully upright unit, which perches at the heart of the deck with a central throttle, well out of the way of accidental knocks from people passing along the walkways on either side. There are two very attractive bolster-equipped helm seats tucked neatly in the lee of the screen, with easy wash-down fabrics and useful wings for lateral support. The screen is also mounted on the front edge of a wraparound rail, which leaves sufficient

separation to create a useful grabbing point, enabling you to stand up and make your way forward with great ease, and as you do so, it becomes plain that, despite its position as the third smallest of OceanMasters eight hulls, the bow on the 605 is also a very valuable space.

It uses V-shaped bench seating with open compartments underneath, making

Its long bow space is expertly arranged and the console seat is much better than most

it very easy to pop your lines or cushions out of the way without any fuss, while also helping minimise the cost, weight and complication involved in lids, hinges, catches and rams. There are no drainage channels evident on the test boat so you would want to incorporate these in order to prevent your stowed gear from getting soggy but in concept, if not in execution, its a very sound feature.

The seat built into the front of the console moulding is another impressive piece of design. Traditionally this would be quite a redundant and one-dimensional space, particularly for those who view it (with some justification) as the least attractive seating position on the boat. But in this instance, you get a handy storage

hatch beneath the screen, some very useable storage inside the seat and a set of infills hinged together in concertina fashion beneath the cushion, making it a very simple job to rig the bows sun lounger.

The main storage space here is also worth a mention. Like the main aft space, it comes



Sage storage, compartment liners are a neat touch



Performance						
As tested 50% fuel 2 crew Force 2						
The fuel figures below are taken from generic data and may not accurately represent the fuel usage in this combination						
RPM	Knots	LPH	GPH	MPG	Range (nm)	Sound (dB)
700 (idle)	2.0	0.9	0.20	10.0	329	53.2
1000	3.1	1.8	0.40	7.75	255	55.7
1500	5.4	3.3	0.73	7.40	244	64.5
2000	6.9	4.4	0.97	7.11	234	70.4
2500	8.8	7.8	1.72	5.11	168	73.4
3000	13.6	11.4	2.51	5.41	178	76.0
3500	21.0	12.0	2.64	7.95	262	81.8
4000	24.5	15.0	3.30	7.42	244	82.3
4500	27.8	18.4	4.05	6.86	226	84.1
5000	31.0	24.4	5.37	5.77	190	85.1
5250	34.1	35.6	7.83	4.35	143	87.3



Its helm is close to perfect and the gentle slide of the stepped hull is very attractive. Our test boat was fitted with a Mercury 100hp delivering 34 knots, but the transom is good for 150hp



Its stepped hull feels slick and efficient, while the driving experience is as novice-friendly as they come

with a handy fabric liner, fastened in place with poppers, to help contain and square away your baggage. Its lightweight, its affordable and, though we cant vouch for its long-term durability when weighed down with baggage on a lumpy seascape, it is certainly preferable to wide open storage spaces where the absence of compartmentalisation leaves your pipes, cables and connections exposed to untethered gear.

There are some neat little touches elsewhere too, not least in the cleverly considered fender storage. While its quite commonplace to see fender baskets semi-recessed into the cockpit mouldings to reduce encroachment on internal capacity, here, there are four full-sized

slots precisely where they are of greatest practical use, two aft, beneath the steps on either side of the stern bench and two forward, set into the bows seat moulding where the walkway curves around the leading edge of the helm console.

As for the negatives, there are really only a couple. In the first instance, the storage inside the forward bench seats runs a

little further aft than the aperture enables you to reach, so it can be awkward to retrieve stuff if you dont stow it carefully. And in the second instance, while its very satisfying that the aft bench opens without the removal of any cushions, the ram needs upgrading to cope with the extra weight, as its prone to dropping back down uninvited.

Grown up boating

As you would expect of OceanMaster, the helm is very well conceived. It comes with an armrest to avoid fatigue in your throttle hand, plus seat bolsters, an integrated foot brace and some generous adjustment to help optimise your helming position. Theres great visibility here too, alongside a wheel and throttle that are as

perfectly placed as they are weighted. The big dash uses a glare-free matt finish on an intelligently angled backing and the distortion-free screen generates excellent shelter for two people, even when youre perched up on your seat bolsters and running at wide-open throttle.

Its a helm that enables you to relax and enjoy the boats measured and compliant performance to the utmost, because while the 605 exhibits a modest weight of around 800kg, allied to a slippery stepped hull, the use of a 100hp outboard on the transom means its in no way a handful. On the contrary, having hit the plane in a slightly pedestrian 4.5 seconds, we push past 30 knots in ten seconds before topping out at 34-35 knots in 26 seconds. The planing attitude throughout that

range is commendably flat and, however aggressive you choose to be with the wheel and throttle, the 605 feels resolutely mature.

In short, while the 100 does a very sound job for budget-conscious novices and relaxed family boaters, those who enjoy a vigorous drive would do well to look at the 115 or even the 150. Mercurys 115 shares the same 2.1-litre block as the test engine and comes with no weight penalty but if you fancied upping that to the three-litre 150, the nature of the performance here suggests that the 605 would be well able to cope. In fact, with the extra power as well as an extra 40kg on the transom, the top-rated 150 might well dial in some of the helming edge the test boat so stoically refuses to indulge.

That said, there's no doubt that, even on very modest power, the 605 is dexterous as well as compliant. You can drop the speed by three or four knots on the trim switch alone, but if you have the confidence to elevate the leg, a fast plane, with the waterline well back and the vast majority of the hull out of the water feels very slick and efficient, without revealing even the



Fenders stow precisely where you need them

slightest vice to catch out the unwary novice. In terms of running efficiency, there was no fuel flow data available on the test platform but the 605 certainly runs high, flat and quiet, with impressive

balance, so I would postulate that its fuel efficiency, as well as its sheer user-friendliness, ought to be a major strength.

Conclusion

If you spec the 605 up with a few well chosen options - the transom shower, the bimini top, the fridge, the picnic table, the toilet and the ski pole - it offers a very classy little powerboat, well suited to the mixed recreation so often demanded by family boaters and do-it-all millennials. It's pretty, it's cultured, it's practical and, notwithstanding the need to supplement the basic package with additional extras, it's relatively affordable. Yes, in the test boats guise, it feels as though it's a bit shy on power for experienced skippers and keen



Balance is first-rate. OceanMaster boats have been built in Poland since the outset

watersports fans, but even with the top-rated 150hp on the transom, you'd still be looking at prices from around the £40,000 mark. Given its design clarity, its quality of construction, the enduring appeal of its Norwegian heritage and the likelihood of solid residuals, that represents very decent value for money.

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