

**MOTOR
BOATS** **TESTED**

Oceanmaster 760HTs

A walkaround combining
design flair and a great price

from £40,000



Nick says...



Oceanmaster moves up into a new market and takes on the established players with a combination of style and value. We take to the waters off Poole to see if it lives up to the looks.

We first came across Oceanmaster last year when we tested its 570 and 630 models. A Norwegian company, it cleverly fuses Scandinavian design and quality with Polish build costs to create a range with flair and value. After the success of its walkaround range, Oceanmaster has expanded further, with cuddly cabin boats and larger walkarounds. But for 2013 the company has moved into cabin boats with this, its very first Peche Promenade-style craft that features a proper enclosed wheelhouse.

It's a style that is hugely popular

both in the UK and across Europe, especially with the French, whose north coast harbours groan under the weight of them. Indeed, traditionally the French have owned this boatbuilding segment, Bénéteau and Jeanneau turning them out by the thousand via their Antares and Merry Fisher ranges, respectively.

But the Scandinavians, famous for their practical, well thought out boats, are mounting a serious challenge. We tested the brand new Finnmaster Pilot 7.0 last year and concluded that it was a clever boat that was different to the norm. The Oceanmaster 760HTs offers an alternative take on the concept.

The styling is the first thing to catch the eye. Different from traditional 20ft sportsfishers, its angular form manages to be sleek enough to avoid appearing boxy. With a raked back windscreen and sloping wheelhouse roof it's quite a sharp looking boat although low hull sides and a roofline high enough to provide standing headroom means it can't completely disguise a slightly tall look.

It's a pleasing shape nonetheless, and details like the dark blue topsides and standard fit teak laid cockpit and foredeck elevate it above the usual utilitarian appearance of this type of craft.



PHOTOS: Nick Burnham



At the rear the 760HTs offers fishermen rod holders and a handy bait well



The small galley and useful dinette are family friendly features

Cruising credentials

On board the cockpit is more cruiser than fishing orientated, with plenty of seating and some clever features such as a rear seat that will slide forward so that, together with a hinged backrest, it can face rearward, and a demountable cockpit table. For fishermen, rod holders are available, as is a live bait well. There's even a bimini that extends out of the cabin roof to provide a little shade.

The wheelhouse itself is offset to provide a wide deeply bulwarked side deck to starboard, itself quite a common idea but what is unusual is the sliding side access door to the



Should you be boating short-handed the wheelhouse's sliding side door is perfect for getting around the boat swiftly

OCEANMASTER 760HTs



FINALIST



A cramped but essential sea toilet

helm. Fantastic for short-handed boating, it also means that, in conjunction with a solid sunroof and sliding cockpit door, you can really open up the wheelhouse to the elements rather than being gently boiled on hot sunny days.

In fact wheelhouse, while accurate, is slightly disingenuous as this is more than just a place to drive. As well as a small galley behind the helm complete with standard fit gas hob and fridge, Oceanmaster has managed to squeeze a proper dinette in here, and cunningly the forward seat's backrest pivots aft to provide forward facing seating alongside the helm. Compared with the typically rather basic interiors of many boats

of this type it creates a very family friendly layout. Better yet, the dinette will convert to a berth, and because it's raised slightly there's even space for a small pilotberth beneath it. Add the double berth under the foredeck and you've actually got space for a family of four to spend a weekend aboard. There's even a little wardrobe.

The separate heads is a little cramped, but it houses the essential sea toilet which is about as much as you can expect on this size of boat.

The right moves

Out on the water the ride is firm but capable. The boat tracks and corners confidently and generally acquits itself well given its compact dimensions. The helm position is comfortable and visibility through the single piece windscreen is good, although a second wiper to port would be welcome. The only issue is that the sunroof latches aren't strong enough to secure it in place, an odd oversight albeit an easily solvable one. We have been advised that future boats will be improved.

As a first step into cabin boats, the new 760HTs works very well. It takes the popular compact wheelhouse concept, furnishes it with some family friendly features like decent cockpit seating and improved cabin facilities, and wraps it in a smart

attractive form. But as ever with Oceanmaster, the final flourish is the price. With the base (a Mariner 115hp four stroke) engine you can put a 760HT on the water for just over £40,000.

SPECIFICATION

BUILD	GRP
RCD	C
LENGTH OVERALL	25ft 0in (7.60m)
BEAM	9ft 3in (2.85m)
ENGINE	Evinrude 250 H-O 250hp outboard engine
PRICE	from £42,696 incl. VAT. As tested: £58,250 incl. VAT

ENQUIRIES Fine Design Marine Ltd
www.finedesign-marine.co.uk
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CONCLUSION

FOR Family friendly fit out
AGAINST Touch compact in places

VERDICT First move into cruiser market delivers great value



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A double forward is joined by a useful pilotberth, tucked away aft