

ALL-AROUND PERFORMER

Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RIBs) fill the role of SUVs on the water and can function as yacht tenders, dive boats, ski boats, fishing boats, and plain ole runabouts.

By Doug Thompson



You can spot a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat, or RIB, instantly because of the air-filled collar surrounding its hull. The collar's lighter weight may look different, but it's entirely functional and in some ways, better than fiberglass—the RIB's collar makes low-speed collisions with the dock laughable, not disastrous. Fewer pounds also means enhanced performance with the same horsepower.

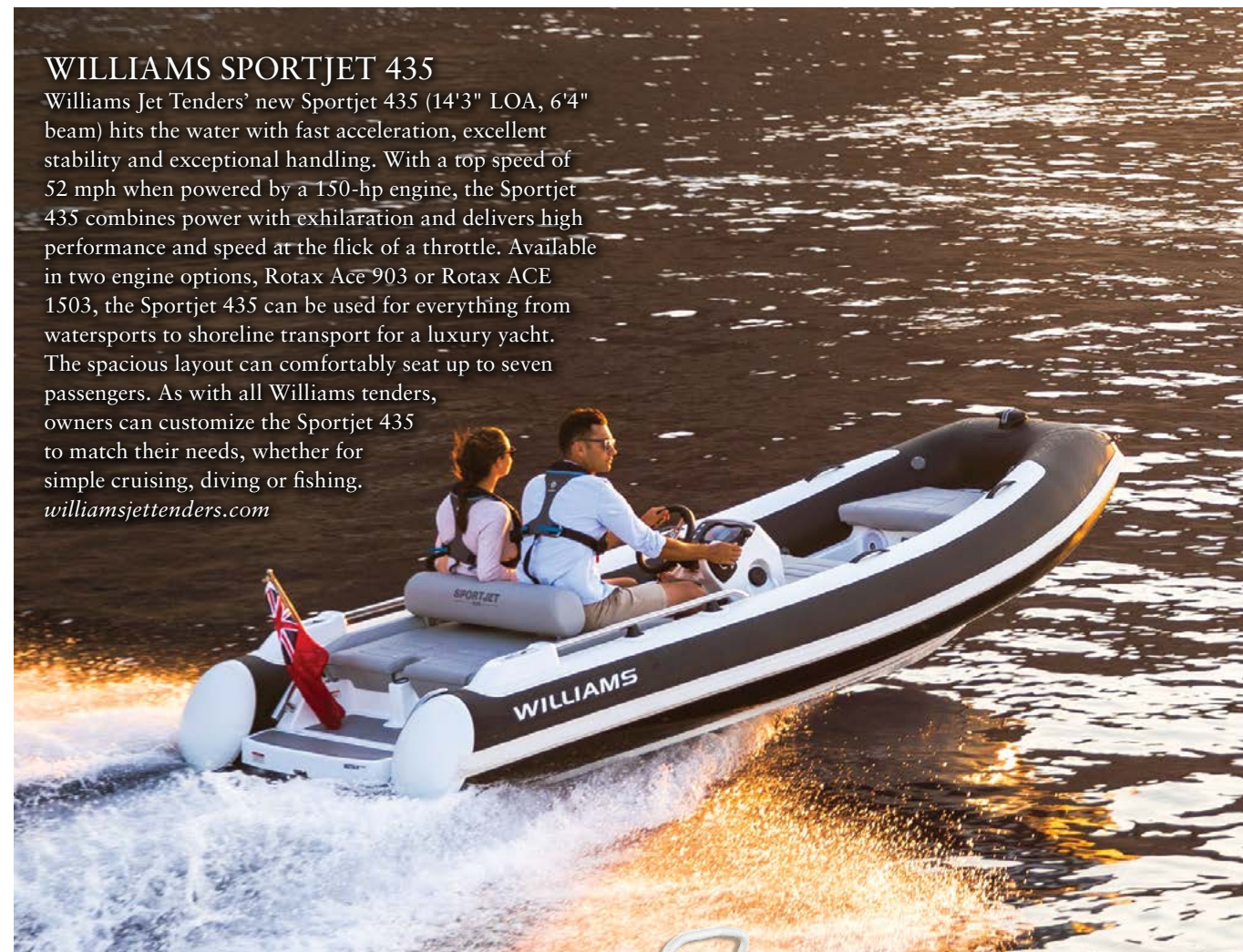
Today's RIBs benefit from outboard motors that are better than ever—cleaner, more powerful and easier to service. Some RIBs are utilitarian and built for durability. Others are loaded with comfort features, such as soft seats, carpet and ski-tow eyes for recreational towing of tubes, skiers and wakeboarders.

Here's a look at some of the top rigid hull inflatable boatbuilders and their models, and how one may perfectly suit your needs.

ADOBE STOCK/HAVESEEN

WILLIAMS SPORTJET 435

Williams Jet Tenders' new Sportjet 435 (14'3" LOA, 6'4" beam) hits the water with fast acceleration, excellent stability and exceptional handling. With a top speed of 52 mph when powered by a 150-hp engine, the Sportjet 435 combines power with exhilaration and delivers high performance and speed at the flick of a throttle. Available in two engine options, Rotax ACE 903 or Rotax ACE 1503, the Sportjet 435 can be used for everything from watersports to shoreline transport for a luxury yacht. The spacious layout can comfortably seat up to seven passengers. As with all Williams tenders, owners can customize the Sportjet 435 to match their needs, whether for simple cruising, diving or fishing. williamsjettenders.com



HIGHFIELD CLDL360

Highfield Boats launched the new CLDL360 (11'10" LOA, 5'8" beam) at the Miami International Boat Show in February. Designed as a yacht tender, the CLDL360 features a lightweight yet durable, powder-coated aluminum hull construction and a smooth, dry ride. She also features a host of new luxuries that include a larger, more comfortable bow seat, integrated side seat with storage and cup holders, wide bow step, and motor well with swim step. The CLDL360 also showcases newly refined styling such as the brushed-foam, teak finish deck. Also new are the 7.5-gallon bow fuel tank and 40-hp engine for a top speed of 34 mph. Standard features include rugged Orca by Pennel & Flipo hypalon tube fabric, self-draining deck, lifting points and towing eyes, tow bridle points, Highfield dry bag, foot pump, oars and repair kit. highfieldboats.com





ZAR 85 SL

The ZAR 85 SL (28' LOA, 10'8" beam) combines dayboat amenities with RIB performance and utility. Passengers benefit from the versatile seating layout. The ZAR 85 SL's lounging and living areas are coupled with much-appreciated features, such as two refrigerated drawers, a gas grill, a U-shaped dinette, and a small cabin for two people with a head and sink. The boat also offers an electric windlass to make anchoring much easier. Off the stern, the large swim platform features an integrated swim ladder. The ZAR 85 SL has room for up to 14 people, so she's ready for entertaining. Regarding performance, the boat can be rigged with single or twin engines with a max of 500 horsepower. When equipped with max power, the ZAR 85 SL runs to more than 55 knots and has a range of more than 200 nautical miles at 36 knots. zar-formenti.net



ARGOS NAUTIC 305 YACHTING

Argos Nautic's 305 Yachting (10' LOA, 7'3" beam) delivers pulse-quicken performance in a comfortable 10-foot package. The RIB's advanced hull helps her carve effortlessly through turns yet provides a dry ride. Powered by a 40-hp outboard, she reaches plane in three seconds and has a top speed of 31 knots. The 305 Yachting is ideal for cruising couples and families on mid-sized yachts, sailboats and sportfishing boats. Compact and lightweight, she fits into most garages and is easily hoisted onto davits or deck. She has space for four adults, and passengers have generous leg and elbow room. Ample storage has also been cleverly designed into the boat. argosnautic.com



ACHILLES HB-315DX

Achilles has completed a makeover of its most popular RIB in 2019—the HB-315DX (10'4" LOA, 5'5" beam). The builder's five-passenger bestseller has been modified with an integral bow locker. The new vented bow locker is large enough to be a comfortable seat and accommodate a three-gallon gas tank. It's also equipped with a dedicated sealed tube running under the deck that allows you to run your fuel line to the drain well at the transom for a quick and easy hookup to your motor. The advantages of this new design include better weight distribution by moving the weight of the gas tank forward and clearing the deck area of the clutter. Powered by a 20-hp motor, she runs to a top speed of 25 knots. All Achilles boats are manufactured with CSM fabric using a four-layer seam construction for durability. achillesboats.com



ZODIAC PRO 6.5

The new Zodiac Pro 6.5 (20'2" LOA, 8'4" beam) was redesigned for more seating capacity, storage and 25 percent more interior space than the previous generation which allows for plenty of room to invite up to 10 guests to join in the excitement. Zodiac didn't forget about critical functional features either. The company increased the size of the fuel tank to 50 gallons for more range, and the transom design can handle either twin 80-hp or a single 175-hp engine installation for optimum performance. The Pro 6.5's deep-V hull and self-bailing deck deliver a safe, comfortable and dry ride. The highlight of the storage space is a new large stern locker able to house all critical tackle. The tubes and deck are available in multiple colors for additional customization. zodiac-nautic.com



RIBCRAFT 5.85

RIBCRAFT, a manufacturer of professional grade RIBs for military agencies, safety professionals and recreational boaters, offers a cutting-edge RIB with its newly redesigned RIBCRAFT 5.85 (19'4" LOA, 8' beam). Built in the U.S. and personalized to the customer's specifications, the RIBCRAFT 5.85 is quick to plane and sure-footed through tight turns and in rough seas. In addition, the 5.85 has an aggressive deep-V hull, high-swept bow and full-length lifting stakes that deliver superior handling. Standard power is a 115-hp engine with a maximum horsepower of 135. This redesigned layout includes comfortable bow seating, an antenna arch with integrated swim ladder, optional T-top, and teak decks. The 5.85 is an all-purpose 19-foot runabout that has a maximum capacity of 10 passengers so your friends can tag along. ribcraftusa.com



MERCURY 320 ALUMINUM

The Mercury 320 Aluminum hull is a durable new inflatable option that is available in a 320 (10'6" LOA, 5'1" beam) and 270 (8'10" LOA, 5'1" beam) model. This boat features a safety-aimed non-slip flat floor and 5052 marine-grade, powder-coated aluminum hull. Powered by a Mercury 20-hp FourStroke outboard engine, the 320 will hit speeds between 15 and 20 mph. Unlike other Mercury rigid hull inflatable boats in this size range, both models with the aluminum hulls are equipped with a front-storage locker as well as two aluminum seats. For extra durability, each have a protective keel guard for beaching. The aluminum hull also includes four well-positioned lifting strakes for use with inflatable davit systems. Standard accessories include a storage bag, patch kit, dual-action hand pump, and oars. mercurymarine.com



AIRSHIP 340

The Airship 340 (34' LOA, 10' beam) replaces the builder's 330 and adds high-quality features. The remodeled transom includes an incorporated engine setback, a step for boarding and extended swim platform for watersports. Construction features remain consistent and utilize varying density foam cores and vinyl ester resins to form a lightweight, yet strong vessel. A fiberglass hard top is also new for 2019 and along with the tapered tubes, give the Airship its unique style. An improved twin-step hull provides added safety and better fuel economy—2.5 miles per gallon at a 50-mph cruise. With the standard tow eye, the craft exhibits excellent towing characteristics when used as a yacht tender. The base 340 comes nicely equipped and offers unlimited options to support any use for this rugged SUV of the water. airshipribs.com

RIBS: ALL-AROUND PERFORMERS //

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SEALEGS ELECTRIC E4

Sealegs, manufacturer of amphibious craft, has gone green with the unveiling of Sealegs Electric E4 (23'11" LOA, 8'10" beam), which uses the latest lithium battery and brushless electric hub motor technology.

Powerful, high-torque electric motors drive the Sealegs Electric E4 out of the water, up beaches and through difficult terrain. The high-density, 7kWh lithium battery delivers up to 20 launch and retrieve journeys on land between charges.

The flush-mounted console dash incorporates buttons conveniently located within the steering wheel to control the deployment of the amphibious wheels. A high-contrast, 24-inch touchscreen with Sealegs AmpTracs provides operator info, and an innovative seating layout for eight with a picnic/workstation table and a daybed sun-lounger is at the bow. The Sealegs Electric E4 runs 40 knots in the water and 6 mph on land. sealegs.com



HYFOIL FOILING RIB 28

The HYFOIL Foiling RIB 28 (27'8" LOA, 9'5" beam) evolved from more than 25 years of hydrofoil system development by the original designers of Hydrofoil Supported Catamarans (HYSUCAT) in South Africa. The fixed foils are flush with the hulls and automatically produce a "floating" ride over rough seas while nearly doubling efficiency. Operational benefits include high-speed stability, a dry ride, small wake, shallow-water operability, reduced fuel consumption, and low maintenance. The spacious deck area fits a large console and can accommodate a variety of layouts for up to 14 passengers. With fuel capacity of 70 gallons and standard power of a single 250-hp or twin 115-hp engines, the HYFOIL Foiling Rib 28 runs past 50 mph with a range of more than 250 miles. She is easily towed and launched with a trailer behind an automobile. She is now available with a carbon fiber hull and foils as well as UV-resistant polyurethane six-chamber tubes. foilingribs.com



WALKER BAY VENTURE 14

New from Walker Bay, the Venture 14 (14' LOA, 6'5" beam) is packed with features and options for exploring, fishing, diving, and entertaining. The stand-up center console with a comfortable, sturdy bolster gives the driver three driving positions for the ultimate in safety and performance while underway. The console dash will accommodate an extra-large, nine-inch chartplotter, a variety of gauges, stereo head, and VHF radio. The V14 has boarding steps aft, port and starboard, and in the bow to make embarking and debarking a snap. The RIB is rated for eight passengers and is built with four different seating and reclining configurations. A modified V-hull gives the Venture 14 a smooth, dry ride. Powered by a 70-hp outboard engine, she runs to an estimated 40 mph at top speed and has a range of 150 miles utilizing the 17-gallon fuel tank. Additional features and options include four flush-mount rod holders that double as a board rack, a flush-mount ski pole, ladder, and shower. walkerbay.com



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TECHNOHULL OMEGA 45

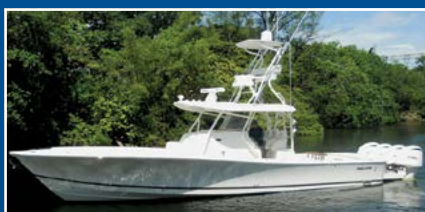
The Technohull Omega 45 (45'3" LOA, 11'6" beam) is a performance-minded RIB that also delivers a lot of luxury for her driver and 11 passengers. The Omega 45's patented hull technology was created using state-of-the-art computer programs and hull structure algorithms. Every boat is designed from scratch and is based on a different hull design to best fit the length and characteristics required by her owner. Cutting-edge technology is used in every stage of construction, including CNC prototyping, ceramic-coated molds and foam-cored layers. The focus of the Omega 45 design is the modern center console, sheltered by a T-top that protects the four wraparound shockproof seats. Owners can choose engine configurations that include triple 300-, 350- and 400-hp options. The shipyard even offers speed enthusiasts the radical choice of adding quad Mercury Racing 400-hp outboards for a top speed of more than 90 mph. technohull.com



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REGULATOR 31', TWIN 300HP YAMAHAS, W/HELMMASTER & SETPOINT, T-TOP, SIDE DOOR, GARMIN ELECTRONICS, ASKING 309K



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2019 MARLAGO 37SS, TWIN 350HP MERCURY, T-TOP, CABIN, A/C, SUPER STEREO, TWO-TONE INTERIOR, ASKING 289K

★★★★ **BROKERAGE** ★★★★★

- 2009 31' INTREPID, Twin 300hp Mercury, Hard Top, Garmin - Asking 149K
- 2010 29' JUPITER, Twin 250hp Yamahas, T-Top, Garmin, Mint - Asking 159K
- 2016 28' REGULATOR, Twin 300hp Yamahas, T-Top, Flag Blue, Garmin, Mint - Asking 199K
- 2017 34' REGULATOR, Triple 300hp Yamahas, Loaded - Asking 349K

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