

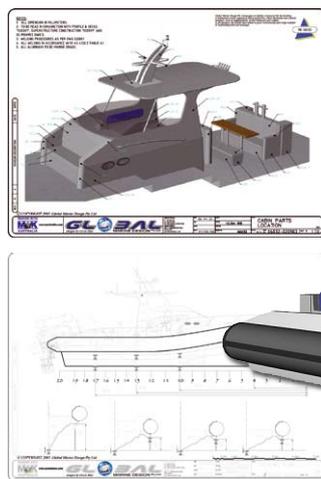
GILPIN'S GRAND SCHEME!

Paul Lemmer looks at the details of an exciting new RIB currently under construction - a Suzuki powered 12 metre all-weather RIB commissioned for adventuring...

For the majority of us, seeking the best RIB for a particular requirement would be a case of looking at existing RIB manufacturers' whose products appeared to tick the right boxes, then short listing those that came closest to our ideals and moving forward from there. However, in the case of one rather discerning Jersey based RIB enthusiast named Richard Gilpin, that was not enough. In fact, his requirement for a spacious seaworthy cabin RIB over 10m lead him to some of the top names in the commercial RIB building industry, but contrary to his expectations, these builders left him wondering if he would ever find the right combination of quality, seaworthiness and layout that suited his design requirements and equally importantly, his budget.

The other crucial issue when considering a new craft, is the type, size and number of motors and whether to go for diesel inboards or petrol outboards. However this decision was made easier by more than one factor. Richard is a resident of Jersey, where marine petrol remains duty free, so when the news came through that the UK was to lose its concession on duty free marine diesel, the balance swung in favour of petrol. The final decision was brought about by the timely unveiling of the powerful, yet relatively economical new Suzuki 300hp four stroke outboard motor, which meant that Richard could benefit from the cheaper cost of petrol in Jersey, whilst benefiting from the better power to weight ratio and relatively inexpensive option of outboards. For good measure it was decided that three of these ultra quiet and smooth units would give the craft a good turn of speed when the need arose, yet provide a distant reassuring subdued note from their 18 cylinders at cruising rpm.

Richard's last RIB was a well appointed Tornado 8.5m and whilst this served him well, he wanted his next craft for extended cruising with some protection from the elements and



PLAN ON MAIN DECK

PLAN BELOW MAIN DECK

permanent sleeping accommodation for two plus occasional berths for an additional two crew under a completely flat foredeck. Having established this criteria over three seasons, it soon became apparent that the craft would have to be at least 11 metres long. Nevertheless, such necessities narrowed down the number of manufacturers able to produce a seaworthy, partially enclosed cabin type RIB. Despite much research, factory visits and meetings with various builders, Richard could not find the right combination and decided to look further a field, in fact as far a field as is possible on this planet - Australia!

Having carried out an extensive search of the marine industry, Richard found www.marinekits.com, a company specifically dealing in quality aluminium kit boats from the design board of renowned Australian boat designer, Gavin Mair, founder and owner of Global Marine Design, based in Henderson, Western Australia. Not only did some of the designs offer ideas that were in tune with Richard's, but the flexibility that comes from building in aluminium meant that he could make adjustments to the layout and even have his own input on the hull shape, provided these changes also enhanced the craft in the designer's eyes. What is more, several boat kits from his design board had already been constructed in the UK by capable aluminium boat builders and when they were approached by Richard, they proved refreshingly enthusiastic and more importantly,

promised to have the craft finished by the spring of this year!

Much negotiating followed and eventually a 12.5m cabin RIB was decided upon, offering the best compromise in terms of the brief. Once the design was finalized, the RIB kit was fabricated into transportable sections and the entire craft, in kit form, shipped inside a 40 foot container to the UK. When the container arrived and was opened, Richard was convinced that most of the boat had been inadvertently left behind, but he need not have worried for despite there being enough empty space in the container for another three or four kits, everything required was present and correct.

The jig for the craft was duly constructed and made ready for the panels to be attached and the first frames were installed into the jig at the beginning of December 2006. Since then a significant amount of progress has been made. With its unusual air entrapment ultra deep 'V' hull now clearly seen for the first time as the hull takes shape, and its near bullet proof construction, this is one RIB that we are really excited about testing - but that's later. We hope to bring the next installment on the building of the Gilpin RIB in issue 76 but meanwhile the project is on course for having the boat finished in time to make its much anticipated public debut in Cowes on the Isle of Wight at this year's RIBEX - 11th-13th May 2007.

Paul Lemmer

