



MAC ATTACK 360

This test of a boat, hosted by Julian Dale of Marine Revolution, proved many things in addition to the fact that this diminutive boat was totally indestructible. It was also a memorable weekend interlude in Dundee. Irving Stewart reports.

A sane person would avoid boating in Dundee when the rain is horizontal, the wind is howling and the Firth of Tay is trying to impersonate the Atlantic. On such an afternoon we ventured to the harbour to discover a gaggle of jet skiers about to launch - and hardened swimmers crossing the very harbour mouth that these fiery little craft were about to use. Sanity was obviously not high on the locals' agenda!

A plan of action evolved despite Julian's wife Nicola suggesting that the best idea would be to adjourn to a local hostelry "for about a week, and let the weather change". The 'plan' was to launch one boat at a time (a camera boat was dismissed as a non starter) and then test them singly. In the depths of Julian's huge van we had an open dinghy, yet to be christened, and on trailers two five metre boats, plus a tiny 360. Julian had also promised to launch and demo a cruiser for a potential buyer!

In theory the plan was sound, in hindsight it proved to be hilarious!

SO MANY BOATS...

With the wind howling up the slipway we backed one trailer at a time into the harbour ignoring the water blowing over the top of the 4x4. Astern Julian fired up the engines and simply drove the little boats into the waves and spray.

As soon as the first launch was completed we retreated to safer ground from where we watched the jet skiers carry out a similar manoeuvre. Unfortunately they didn't have a high ground clearance, 'serious' 4x4 but a very stylish Honda, which they virtually submerged. Remarkably it never missed a beat despite coming back up the slipway with water running out of every orifice! As each boat was launched we took pictures (from the safety of the harbour walls), had a brief test run to get the feel of the craft and then repeated the exercise with another boat.

The Smartwave Open Sports Fisher was designed for such conditions and coped



beautifully as it went from one crest to the next, before carefully avoiding the swimmers on its return to the harbour.

The MR370 dinghy, we decided, had no right to be in the open sea at all. In order to get some pictures we carefully launched it and then both motored and rowed it around in the lee of the harbour wall. You may have seen the results in our September issue. But then Julian, to prove a point, pointed it at open water and with the little 4hp Yamaha on full chat stormed around the Firth simply enjoying himself, while Nicola and I sat in the shelter of the van and ate his lunch – that'll teach him!

MAC ATTACK 360

There remained only the diminutive little 'kiddies' Mac Attack 360, still dry and safely sitting on its trailer. More rain clouds rolled over the Firth. Would Julian, a typically 'sensible' New Zealander, deign to launch his new boat on such a blustery afternoon, or admit defeat and retreat back to base for coffee?

Stupid question, of course he would! "As you've come all this way to see my boats it would be rude not to," he commented. "Anyway I haven't tried it yet."

With some trepidation, and with the little boat positively dwarfed by the 4x4, we again reversed down the slipway to repeat our well practiced launching manoeuvre. A flick of the key and the 20hp Yamaha burst into life and was soon tugging the little boat into the waves. Julian gently circled the harbour getting used to the controls, and the feel of the boat, before aiming it at the harbour mouth. With the swimmers now safely in their clubhouse he hit the 'loud lever' and the boat positively leapt onto the plane as it ran out of the harbour. Almost immediately it disappeared into a trough, only to emerge a second later completely airborne! Returning, with a grin from ear to ear, Julian pulled

alongside the slipway. Jumping out he held the bowline to stop the 360 from blowing away and simply said, "Your turn!"

It would be rude to refuse such an invitation!

THROWING CAUTION TO THE WIND

Sitting astride the little jockey seat, and with a stop watch and GPS optimistically around my neck, I (cautiously) aimed the 360 at open water. With such a shallow Vee hull

this might be a hard ride! Within seconds a decision! Slowly ride up and down the waves or unleash 20 Yamaha horses and see what happens. With the weight of experience (and advancing years) I illogically chose the latter option!

Surprisingly the 360's ride was very good, its response to the helm immediate and the handling excellent – even when airborne! But to get some figures I needed to curtail my sudden flush of youth and find ►►



The MR370 dinghy

FACT FILE

SPECIFICATION

Mac Attack 360

Tiller control version (boat only):

LOA: 3.6m
Beam: 1.64m
Draft: 125mm
Weight: 115kg

VERDICT

Tougher than a small RIB, enormous fun for the price!

FOR A SIMILAR BUDGET

- Linder 335 4hp package (£2,645)
- Avon 310 15hp package (£4,513)

OTHER BOATS TO CONSIDER

- 10ft Walker Bay with RIB kit and 3.5hp (£2,600)

TEST FIGURES

	PLANING	CRUISING	OPTIMUM	MAXIMUM
Speed (2 crew)	15.5mph	-	-	27.5mph
Speed (1 crew)	13.5mph	-	-	29.1mph
RPM	untested			

» some relatively sheltered water. But where? An inland loch? Windermere?

A nearby foreshore sandwiched between a jetty and the harbour wall looked good, only slightly choppy, but very short! A practice run revealed that maximum speed could be reached - with just a few spare yards in which to turn - a second run proved the point. However, whilst trying to read a GPS and trigger a stop watch, the turning margin was dramatically reduced.

The few brave people sitting on the beach were treated to the sight of this little boat screaming up and down with its 'runs' culminating in a cloud of spray as the boat almost performed a 'wall of death' along the harbour wall. At this stage either sadism or revenge took hold and I returned to collect Julian to try some 'two up' times.

The extra space needed to get onto the plane really made the runs quite hairy - I think even Julian was a little concerned at whether we were actually going to test the build integrity by driving into granite at 25mph. Perhaps not the most 'sensible' of tests ever conducted for Boat Mart, but a real hoot!

DEFINITELY FUN!

And so we proved that the little 360, with its 8mm thick indestructible polyethylene hull and 'solid tubes' is indeed great fun for adults. It would be almost impossible to drag kids off this safe and unbreakable boat. With a 20hp two-stroke outboard it's fast and furious, with a 15hp four-stroke it still planes, is more docile, but uses less fuel - the choice is yours. Unless you're going to try and cross the channel simply fit a little 12 litre tank under the seat; you can play all day in this boat for less than a fiver!

As an alternative to a baby RIB, or even an inflatable, the 360 has much to offer. As a cheap to run starter boat it's ideal for a couple looking to explore the odd beach or cove. You can even 'moor' it on rocks without the risk of damage. Like all of Julian's boats you don't even need a slipway. Chuck 'em off the sea wall, drag 'em down the shingle or boot them off the back of a pick-up, you'll not do any damage!

Our thanks to Julian and Nicola Dale for devoting a whole weekend to these tests and to Garmin, Aquapac and Silva for our test gear. ■

