

450

Words and pictures by Scarlett Steer

These days, far too few things in life are simple. We complicate everything from relationships to recipes to boat design. So, it's refreshing to discover that there are still some things in life that exist for the sake of sheer simplicity and fun. Honda's 4.5 metre RIB Extreme is one such thing. And besides being a whole lot of fun to mess about in, the 450 Extreme is pretty darn useful too.



RIB Extreme



This is the smallest in the RIB Extreme range, made by Swellendam-based Falcon Inflatables exclusively for Honda Marine. Despite her modest size, this RIB is built just as rough-and-ready as her bigger brothers and sisters, using Falcon's trademark high-grade German Valmex in the construction of the pontoons. All seams are thermo-bonded for durability and high tolerance levels – so much so that it is no longer necessary to adjust the air pressure for temperature changes or storage. Hulls are hydro-dynamically efficient

A huge bonus is this engine's fantastic fuel efficiency. Some owners have reportedly got five to seven hours of cruising (no skiing) from a single 25-litre engine.

certified to go up to one nautical mile offshore with only one motor, and up to 40 nautical miles with a twin installation, depending on how you rig it for safety. This means that you and your

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In terms of power, you definitely shouldn't go beyond the 50HP mark, and minimum suggested horsepower is 30. The beauty of this rig is that it is

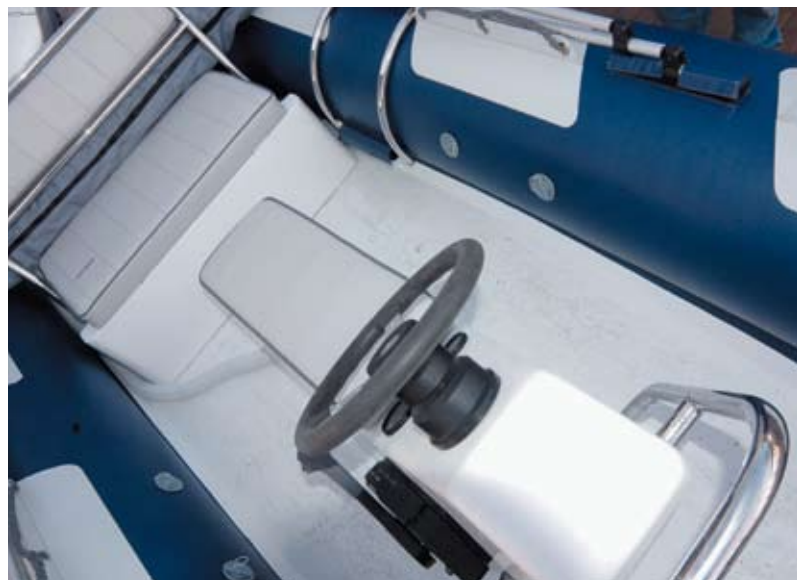
family can enjoy an affordable day of skiing, fishing or kreefing. With a single installation you're obviously not permitted to attempt the Knysna Heads, but for a morning of catching some delectable seafood goodies for the afternoon braai, the craft couldn't be better. Twin installation options include two BF20s or two BF30s.

Depending on how far you're travelling and how much you value your personal space and comfort, you can apparently fit up to seven people on board this boat. I wouldn't recommend it though. I don't like to be squashed on a boat, and would stick to four or five at a time. With seven people on board you'd also struggle for storage space, but by reducing the number of passengers you'll be pleasantly surprised by the amount of packing room ▶



Strong, sturdy and simple, the RIB 450 leaves little room for improvement.

and made from a high-tech modern composite. Although putting too much weight at the back of the craft may make for a bit of a wetter ride, on the whole, the 450 delivers a dry ride. With a Honda BF50 outboard behind her, she's incredibly responsive, turns on a dime and is very fuel efficient. The BF50 itself is worth a mention. According to Dave Hoets of Honda Knysna, these 4-strokes weigh only fractionally more (about one to two kilograms) than their 2-stroke equivalent. I liked the outboard's noticeably quiet running, as well as its environmentally-friendly low emissions.





Pontoons are made of German Valmex and all seams are thermo-bonded.

provided. The skipper gets a centre console and cushioned seat from which to pilot the craft. Steering is standard cable, and gauges include rpm and trim. The 450 also comes with a convenient stainless steel boarding ladder and useful sun canopy. What's more, she couldn't be easier to tow, launch or retrieve. Simply pop her into the water and hit the surf. I'm not sure how much it says for my social life, but it's the most fun I've had in a while!

The 450 RIB Extreme starts at the very fair price of R87 500 including a BF50 4-stroke engine, trailer, canopy and boat cover.

Our review craft was supplied by Honda Knysna, who can be contacted on (044) 382 4090 or hondamarine@knysna.sa.com. If you don't live in the area, don't panic. For more information on your nearest Honda Dealer call Head Office on (011) 847 9400 or visit www.honda.co.za.



At a glance

The boat: 450 RIB Extreme

LOA	4.5 m
Max. HP	1 x 50/2 x 30
Min. HP	1 x 30/2 x 20
Max. persons	5
Fuel capacity	25 l

Pontoon

Construction	Double-overlap thermo-fused
Materials	High-grade German Valmex
Warranty	3 years (South Africa only)

Hull

Design	Hydrodynamic efficient
Construction	Modern composite high-tech design

Materials	Lloyds-approved yacht quality
Warranty	5 years (South Africa only)

Production

Full in-house by Falcon Inflatables

Certification

European ISO 6185

The engine: BF50 4-stroke

Type	SOHC 3 cylinders
Displacement	808 cm ³
Bore and stroke	70 x 70 mm
Valve train	6 valve
Full throttle rpm range	5 500 – 6 000 rpm
Rated power – (kW)	50 – (36.8)
Cooling system	Water-cooled
Carburetion	3 carburetors with accessory pump
Ignition system	Electronic PGM – IG
Exhaust	Propeller boss
Top speed achieved	43 mph / 70 kph

Drive

Gear ratio	2.09:1
Gear shift	F-N-R

Equipment

Alternator	10 amp (126 watt)
Prop size	11 1/4 x 13"
No. of blades	3
Direction	Remote control
Starting system	Electric
Power and trim tilt	Available
Gas-assisted tilt	Available
Shaft length	S or L or X

Dimensions

LOA	685 mm
Overall width	370 mm
Overall height	1 260 (S) – 1 365 (L) mm
Transom height	416 (S) – 521 (L) mm