



Sweet Swift

We get accused of featuring boats that are too big, too expensive and off most boat anglers' radar, so **Dave Lewis** tests the Sea Swift 435 Sport open boat package, costing £6,999 and perfect for all inshore angling

Two decades of boat testing and finally I think I may have found a craft that's close to being perfect for towing and ideal for inshore angling. She's practical, affordable and ticks all my boxes.

It was over a year ago that I tested the cuddy version of the Sea Swift 435, and it was while I was talking to builder Dave Swift that the idea of producing an open version was born.

Open cuddy designs are the most popular choice of boat with many sea anglers who tow their own vessels. I've had several, but is this the most practical design for many angling situations? Of course if you routinely push many miles offshore to fish then a cuddy does offer a degree of protection, as it does when fishing at anchor.

When talk swings to boats that are mobile, easy to launch and can sneak in all those places a bigger boat can't, then a sub-17ft open

boat fits the bill best.

Most anglers look at their boat as simply being a tool for getting from the shore to where they want to fish, and once they are there they just want a safe and comfortable fishing platform.

Let's be frank, a 14-17ft hull is not big. Add a cuddy and the amount of practical fishing space is further reduced. Most of us fish within a couple of miles of our departure point, usually in reasonable weather, so providing you are wearing suitable clothing and the boat is safe, doesn't it make sense to own an open boat?

The Sea Swift 435 Sport is precisely the sort of boat I am talking about, but unlike many other open craft that are based on either a traditional displacement or a semi-displacement hull, the gull-wing hull design of this little cracker not only provides lots more open deck space, but is far more stable too.

So regardless of whether you fish at anchor or on the drift, what you get with the 435 Sport is a highly stable, open, no-frills angling boat that is easy to trailer and easy to launch and retrieve.

The boat has lots of deck space from which two or possibly three anglers can fish from and, perhaps most importantly these days, it won't break the bank. Let's take a closer look at this remarkable little boat.

Basic boat and extras

The 435 Sport has an overall length of 4.4 metres and a 1.75m beam. Conforming to CE

Category C, the hull is rated for use with outboard engines up to a maximum of 20hp.

In terms of fixtures and fittings you get what you need - a decent sized anchor locker at the bow along with an additional dry stowage locker, a deep sump amidships beneath the transom, winch eye, cleats and bow roller and built-in foam buoyancy.

Sensible option
Open cuddy designs are popular on smaller, more mobile vessels.



"Handling qualities in a nasty wind againt tide-induced choppy sea were impressive"

The 435 Sport is easy to launch (above) and very manoeuvrable

Optional extras include an auxiliary engine bracket, factory fitted bilge pump, rod-rests, fish-finder, high-grade stainless pulpit rail, weather cover and custom padded seats.

You get a surprisingly generous amount of open deck space along with a decent amount of inboard freeboard. The deck has a standard non-slip finish, seating for the 'tiller man' at the transom, and moulded, foam-filled seating port and starboard at the bow. The test boat was also fitted with a folding canvas dodger at the bow, which is an optional extra. I am on record for saying that I'm not a fan of these, and my opinion hasn't changed.

However, I accept many of you do like the option of a bit of shelter when you are out on the water, and if that's the case then the £575 spent on this well made and functional cover could be worth it.

Quick, stable and handy

Teignmouth in South Devon was wet and windy so we didn't have to push the boat out particularly far before we were facing full test conditions.

Launching was a single-handed formality and with Dave at the tiller of the 20hp Tohatsu outboard I was able to move about to take pictures. That's when I noticed the boat's stability. We even tried to rock

the boat, not when she was underway, of course, and with both of us standing on the same side she barely listed at all. I was very impressed.

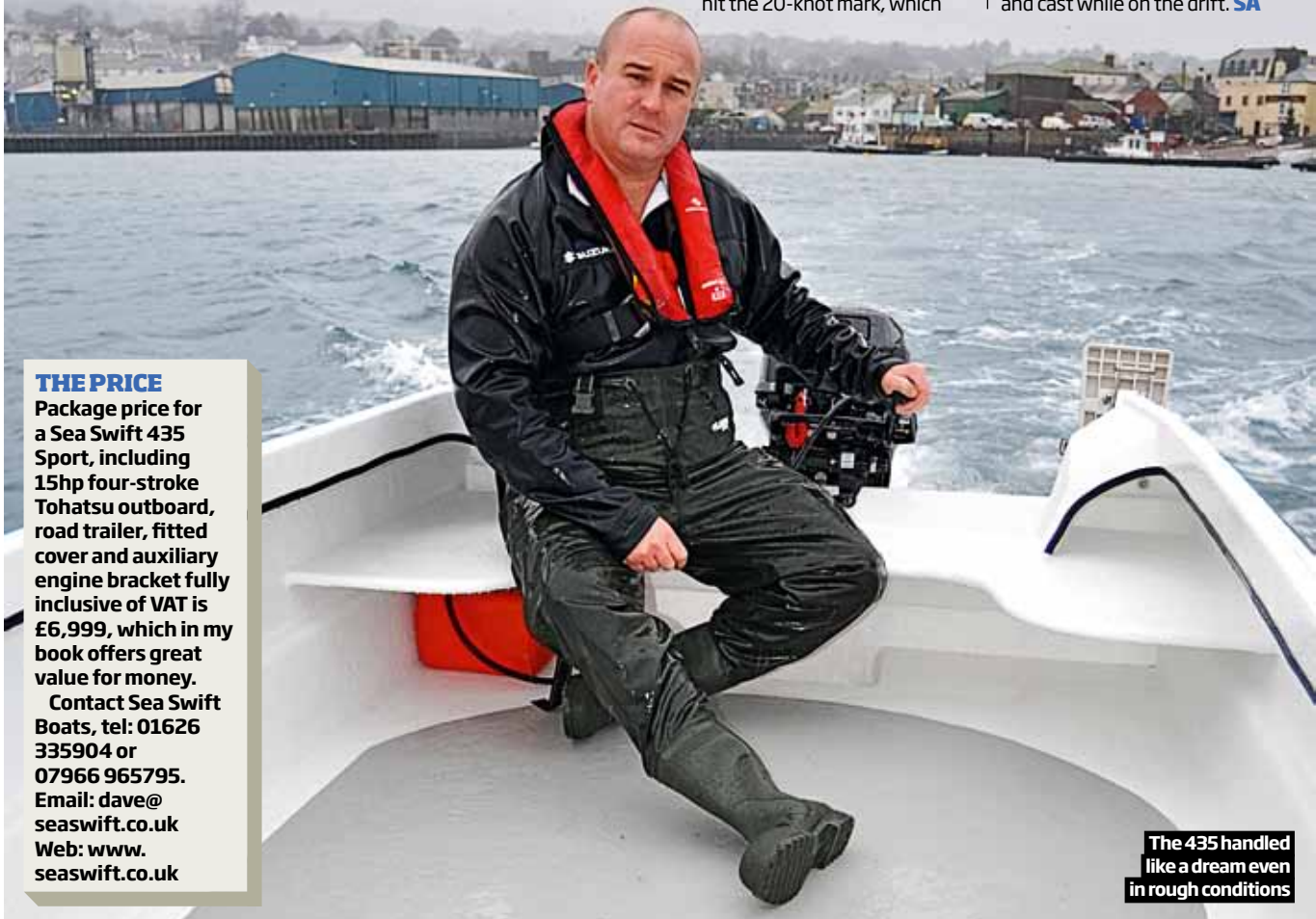
Within the estuary, subject to a strictly enforced speed limit, I quickly established that the 435 Sport is easily manoeuvrable, but what would she be like under more testing conditions? In order to answer this we headed out into Lyme Bay, where conditions were bordering at the top end of which I'd want to experience aboard any boat under five metres.

Once past the harbour entrance we had a brief window of opportunity to assess her top-end performance, and swiftly hit the 20-knot mark, which

is more than enough for such a small, tiller-operated boat. I'd suggest a 15hp engine would be more than ample for most anglers' requirements.

As the sea conditions deteriorated we had to ease back on the throttle, and that was when I discovered how stable and seaworthy she really is. Her handling qualities in a nasty wind against tide-induced choppy sea were impressive, confirming that this is all the inshore boat angler would ever need.

This boat is perfect for both fishing at anchor and on the drift, and she would be the perfect choice for the growing number of lure anglers too, especially fly-fishermen who often stand and cast while on the drift. **SA**



The 435 handled like a dream even in rough conditions

THE PRICE

Package price for a Sea Swift 435 Sport, including 15hp four-stroke Tohatsu outboard, road trailer, fitted cover and auxiliary engine bracket fully inclusive of VAT is £6,999, which in my book offers great value for money.

Contact Sea Swift Boats, tel: 01626 335904 or 07966 965795. Email: dave@seaswift.co.uk Web: www.seaswift.co.uk



Our test boat was fitted with a 20hp Tohatsu



Sleek lines are enhanced by the stainless pulpit rail



The boat has a very stable gull wing construction



Optional extra include a folding canvas dodger