



If a centre-console sport boat is on your menu, you could take away this Verano...

102

**A**LL AROUND THE WORLD, particularly where anglers fish in tropical climates, the centre-console design reigns supreme among those who appreciate the versatility of this configuration, and especially the amount of space it creates aboard small boats.

Increasingly, this is the case in the UK too. If you are an active sort of angler, the type who

likes fishing lots of different marks during a typical day afloat, drifting with lures or bait, for example, then the centre-console design is something you should consider.

One of a new generation of centre-console sport fisher boats is the Excel Verano 530 Sport Fisher, manufactured in China and imported into the UK by Excel Boats.

Designed to be a tough and dependable craft, the vessels in the Verano range have welded

SEA ANGLER ISSUE 579

aluminium hulls manufactured from 4mm plate. Close inspection quickly reveals they are built to a high standard.

I've discussed the relative advantages of choosing an aluminium hull over a GRP one many times before, but to briefly recap, the lighter weight of an aluminium hull delivers incredible performance when fitted with relatively small engines, and they are perfect if you regularly fish shallow, rocky ground.

SEA ANGLER ISSUE 579

## KEY FEATURES

The test boat had all of the features expected aboard a sport fisher, including plenty of stowage lockers, a spacious forward anchor locker, decent inboard freeboard, adequate deck space to be able to move around and fish in comfort, seating options, rod holders, and a non-slip finish on the deck.

The console is well designed, being spacious enough to install all necessary electronics.

When operating small boats, my preference is to hold the steering wheel with my left hand and operate the throttle/gear shift with my right.

There is no right or wrong way to do this, it's simply what I like. This has been the configuration aboard the majority of boats I've operated. The Verano 530 I reviewed was rigged in the opposite way, with the helm to the right of the engine control box. I found this awkward, especially when performing close ▶

103



The review boat had a 70hp Suzuki engine



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quarters manoeuvres. If I were to order one of these boats, I would request that the installation was reconfigured.

I suspect it was rigged this way in order to keep the throttle clear of the walkway to the starboard side of the console, where it is possible, if the helmsman is not paying due diligence, for a person squeezing past to inadvertently push the throttle forward. Whenever the engine is running and in gear, there is absolutely no excuse for the helmsman not having a hand on the throttle at all times.

## FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Elsewhere, the layout and inventory of fixtures and fittings was exactly what I would expect to find aboard a boat of this class. Key features include large steps fitted outboard on either side of the transom, a convenient grab rail to assist climbing aboard.

Inboard, small folding seats are provided in each quarter, a stowage box/seat is located forward of the console, and the twin helmsman seat features a reversible backrest to provide

comfortable seating facing aft for when fishing at anchor.

A pulpit rail provides additional safety if standing and fishing forward of the console. Anglers will appreciate the rod-rack fitted on top of the transom. There are padded rails on either side, providing additional comfort if seated on the quarter seats.

Another installation niggles I noticed was that, for some obscure reason, the folding VHF antennae had been installed on top of the gunnel in the starboard quarter. Not only would this seriously hamper most angling activity, but also in order to get the maximum transmission range it is essential the antennae is mounted as high as possible. For instance, this could be on top of the rail on the console screen.

The overall length of the Verano 530 is 5.30 metres. She has a basic hull length of five metres, a 1.98m beam and draft of just over one metre. With a CE Category C rating, the boat carries a maximum of five persons or 780kg. The hull tips the scales at 460kg. Rated for use with engines up to a maximum of 90hp, the review

boat was fitted with a 70hp Suzuki, supplied via a 90-litre inboard tank.

## ON THE WATER

My review took place within Cardiff Bay on a wet and very windy autumnal day. My initial intention had been to exit the barrage locks and take her for a run in the Bristol Channel, but prevailing conditions outside prohibited this.

Fortunately, the vast expanse of open water within the bay allowed me to get a feel of what the Verano 530 is capable of under a more testing environment.

She is a very nimble performer. The boat responded crisply to the throttle and the hull rose quickly on to the plane. The vee-hull cut cleanly through the chop created by wind and the wake of other boats. It was notable that the reverse chines ensured she provided a smooth ride, while throwing minimal spray.

I would say that she is very suitable for the style of fishing for which she has been designed – ideal for transporting you swiftly and safely to distant marks and back.

A smooth ride with only minimal spray



The deck has a non-slip finish

## NEED TO KNOW

The RRP for an Excel Verano 530 Sport Fisher is £9,999.

For more information, contact Terry Wright at Excel Boats, tel: 01213 232333.

Web: [www.excel-boats.co.uk](http://www.excel-boats.co.uk) or [www.meridian-marine.co.uk](http://www.meridian-marine.co.uk)