



HOW WE TESTED

Pump, Heft, Yank, and—Finally—Hold On!

Practical Sailor testing was done in two stages. First, the boats were inflated to their specified air pressure and examined closely. *PS* counted and examined grab and carrying handles, oars, lifting rings, seating, storage space, drain-plug design, rub strakes, nonskid, and towing eyes. We also took a look at the transom design and construction as well as the hull designs.

For on-the-water testing on Sarasota Bay, Fla., the test motor was a 9.9-horsepower Mercury four-stroke, which we rated highly in the June 2007 issue. *PS* recorded each vessel's top speed and time

to plane with two passengers with a combined weight of 350 pounds. If performance seemed less than optimal (slow to plane, etc.), the riders' positions were adjusted to achieve the best result, and this shift was noted. *PS* evaluated how each RIB handled at low and high speeds. Testers judged their ability to track while cornering at high speeds. Stability at high speed and the riders' comfort level also played a part in recommendations. How well the boats deflected spray when powering through a 1- to-2-foot wake was also noted. Finally, testers rowed each boat with the engine tilted up.

Matt Herum assisted the old and arthritic testers (his father, Al, among them) in checking the ease of mounting the test engine, a 9.9-horsepower Mercury, one of the lighter models in its class.