

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

The Foldable RIB F-RIB 360 is a very affordable and truly amazing little boat

The RIB is based on a design used by the Russian military



I was introduced to the Foldable RIB range by Steve Bruce, who is the UK importer and distributor. The original idea is based on a design used by the Russian military, and today the boats are still manufactured there. Since Steve started to import the boats just a couple of years ago, interest and sales have vastly exceeded prior expectations, and if you get the opportunity to witness just how practical these amazing little boats are, you will soon see why.

Packed and stowed within its carrying bag, the F-RIB360 weighs just 48kg,

that's just over 105lb, which, as Steve demonstrated, is manageable by one person. Unpacked, you find that the rigid GRP v-hull of the boat is in three parts that slot neatly and perfectly together. Once the sponsons are inflated, these remain secure under pressure, but two stainless steel bolts are used to make sure the hull is completely secure.

The sponsons are manufactured with high-density PVC, and feature three separate chambers, each with its own inflation valve. These can be inflated using either a foot pump or an electric air pump. Prior to inflation, a couple

of thwarts are slid into place, on to which you can attach cushions and a really useful storage bag, and these are available as optional extras costing £40 and £30 respectively.

A pair of oars lock securely in place, and the test boat was also fitted with a neat little bow canopy, another optional extra costing £185.

Finally, a pair of stainless steel launch wheels (£160) were fitted to the transom, and the boat was ready to be launched. ▶