



FOCUSED FOR TRAINING

TOBY HEPPELL takes to the water on a brand-new sporty trainer from Hartley Boats



Left The helm remains light despite significant heeling
Below The Hartley 15 performs well to the market it is aimed at

stiffness it has managed to achieve in a rotomoulded boat, meaning more energy transfer from sails to boat speed and thus preventing the boat feeling stodgy – always a concern in a stable trainer. With this in mind my only issue was probably the lack of lowers on the mast. I understand for a sailing school this is just another wire to get in the way, but for me offering them as an option should not add to much complexity. There are a number of neat features in the design, from the volume running well aft to the prominent spray rails making her a very dry boat to sail. Stability extends to capsizing too. With the optional built in float on the mast, I was able to walk beyond the spreaders with the boat on its side and one person standing neutrally on the centreboard without the mast even looking like inverting, a definite bonus. ▣

The latest boat to come from the ever expanding Hartley Boats stable is the Hartley 15, a modern rotomoulded training boat which clearly demonstrated both stability and performance. The 15 came about as a direct response to the demand from sailing schools to produce something akin to the Wayfarer, also from the Hartley Boats range, only this time with more of the robust characteristics of the rotomould polyethylene craft. We have been informed their brief from the training schools was to develop a boat as comfortable and stable as a Wayfarer but as strong and durable as a plastic boat and in this, it seems, the H15 has hit the mark.

DECK AND COCKPIT 9/10

The H15 has a large number of positive learner centred features but at first glance perhaps the most striking feature is the mainsheet hoop and thwart which sit significantly further aft than most. The H15 was collaboratively designed by both Dan Holman and Glen Truswell. Truswell explained to me that they designed the cockpit layout with training and development in mind, thus

positioning the thwart further aft to allow more room for a pair of crew in the front and for better balance overall.

The large crew space, centre main, high boom, and deeper cockpit were all designed to improve the comfort and feeling of security for adult learners in particular, so that they can sit comfortably and don't have to crouch and duck to avoid the boom when tacking and gybing. With plenty of space for two crew, the forward space also sports a large under deck dry locker for storing extra gear and lunches.

To aid the transfer of power from the sails to the hull, two transverse metal stiffening bars have been neatly incorporated and moulded within the foredeck, for which Truswell is justifiably proud as this is a clever innovation, which helps to keep the hull stiffer but also supports the mast, forestay and jib. Hiding the beams gives the foredeck a fuller and more secure feel which is akin to the H15 sister ship the Wayfarer in many respects.

Controls and ropes have been kept relatively simple with the jib furler neatly enclosed within the bow stiffening bar to reduce spinnaker snagging and entanglement. There is a clever one pull reefing system meaning that

SPECIFICATIONS

- Length: 4.70m
- Beam: 1.80m
- Weight: 139kg
- Mainsail: 8.90m²
- Jib: 3.40m²
- Performance main: 11.6m²
- Asymmetric spinnaker: 14.0 m²

reefing is simple even on the water, a definite boon for sail training and family cruising. We found there was a generous sail plan that provided a lively yet manageable performance, the rig was simple and a reasonable tug on the kicker provided sufficient mast bend to take the depth out of the main to keep the boat in control in most circumstances before we felt any need to reef.

UNDER SAIL 8/10

As ashore one of the most striking features of the H15 on the water was the low thwart and centre mainsheet located so far back, this allowed us to get a real big dinghy

1. The H15 is available with asymmetric or symmetric spinnaker options
2. Pronounced spray rails keep you dry
3. The full width beam under the mast adds rigidity
4. Cavernous hatch underneath the foredeck gives plenty of storage
5. The biggest-in-class spinnaker chute makes for easy launch and retrieval

feel but took some getting used to. In designing a training boat getting the balance and feel right is a difficult job, however my immediate feeling was that the H15 designers had managed to get this equation spot on. When we purposely allowed the boat to heel excessively the boat provided plenty of weather helm and feedback – a gentle tug bringing us back into control nicely – certainly a long way from the arm-ache experienced in some other classes. Equally when keeping the boat flat, both up and downwind she sailed along happily and easily in a straight line. The H15 was responsive enough to give us good feedback and sufficient challenge. As with any boat, there

is always a compromise between performance and stability so the H15 may not be as responsive as other boats that have originated from the racing fraternity, but she is lively enough and reassuringly stable for novices. In the conditions we sailed, the balance was clearly correct, however I should stress our test conditions were moderate and we seldom saw winds over 12 knots, conditions which would understandably slow the response of any boat. Our test boat was rigged with an asymmetric spinnaker but we were told that a symmetric spinnaker is also available. Hoisting the spinnaker was simple enough using a continuous line system. Hoists and drops should be easy thanks →



Neat features include prominent spray rails which make it a very dry boat to sail

ANSWER BACK
From: Richard Hartley of Hartley Boats
We are delighted with our new H15 training boat and with the test review. We were tasked with developing a robust boat that would better suit the needs of older youth and adult learners. A stable platform that would introduce the thrills and skills in a more comfortable and reassuring boat. Training schools love the size and versatility of the Wayfarer but not all enjoy the care and maintenance of GRP, problem was, the more robust rotomould boats were all either designed for kids or built so heavy and clunky so as not to be sufficiently responsive or attractive. Our brief therefore was pretty straightforward; design a boat with the Wayfarer training attributes that also has the robustness and ease of maintenance of polyethylene. Given the really positive H15 feedback from trainers and trainees, we believe we have not just succeeded in fulfilling that brief we have perhaps exceeded it!

to an oversized chute, however on the day we tested we found it took a fairly firm tug to get the final part of the spinnaker stowed away. We spoke designer Truswell about the friction caused by the bunching of twin patch spinnaker systems and he confirmed that this problem had been identified and would be addressed by adding a strop between the twin patches to eliminate the problem in future production boats.

VERDICT 9/10

I can't find much fault with the Hartley 15 in terms of the market it is aimed at. I was particularly impressed by the

Right Another bonus is the boat's stability in a capsize situation

