



SACS REBEL 47 You Tube?

The Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) has progressed significantly from its early days as the rugged, hardy but somewhat spartan craft of yesteryear. Today, companies like Italian shipyard SACS produce craft that retain the ability to go where other boats fear to tread, and yet offer the amenities commensurate with the luxury entertainment platforms they are. So far has SACS pushed the envelope with their latest model however, we hesitate to even call it a RIB, as the solid lateral tubes are not inflated but comprise of a state-of-the-art composition of moldable foams and hi-tech plastics. Read on to discover the benefits this unique system delivers...





SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 46' 3" (14.1m)

EC Cert Length: 41' 6" (12.7m)

Max Beam: 14' 7" (4.48m)

Draft: 2' 3" (0.70m)

Dry Weight (ex-engines): 9.0 t

Weight (standard engines): 10.5 t

Fuel Capacity: 2x 200 US Gal (2x 750 L)

Water Capacity: 58 US Gal (220 L)

Max installable power: 1,100hp (825kW)

CE category: CE – B

Max Pax: 16 persons

Sleeping Accommm: 4 guests

Design: SACS/Christian Grande Design Works

Builder: SACS Marine (Italy)

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Arguably the most provocative pneumatic topic since Tom Brady's highly publicized 'Inflate-gate', the new SACS Rebel 47 is seeking to turn the RIB sector on its head by dispensing with a load of hot air and instead opting for something considerably more solid. But let's back up a little and consider the inherent benefits of a RIB when employed as a superyacht tow tender or chase boat. Firstly, I've always considered RIBs to be 'a boat with a lifejacket', their additional buoyancy extending their comfortable and safe window of operation far beyond traditional craft. Secondly, being wrapped in what is effectively their own fender, RIBs virtually eliminate the potential of damage between themselves and the mothership in the event of contact. Thirdly, with their progressive elevation into the luxury sector, certain RIBs can no longer be considered the hardy but rudimentary 'Land Rover of the sea', but instead the top-end luxury Range Rover; possessing all the robust and enduring fundamentals of their more functional

The new composite 'solid' D-shaped tube construction allows SACS to maximize the available beam, creating a deck configuration not usually achievable on a RIB of this size.

counterparts, but conveying the occupants in a considerably more refined and sophisticated manner. In fact, this new SACS Rebel 47 model has been conceived specifically with the high-end commuter, day cruiser, chase boat or large tender market in mind. One unfavorable issue that standard inflatable tubes create however, is the reduction of useable deck space due to the intrusion of the inboard portion of the air filled cylinders. It is here that SACS Marine's appropriately named Rebel 47 seeks to eschewing the constraints of tradition and conformity, and challenges the very rules that bind the Rigid Inflatable Boat genre. In shunning the very core of the class's name—by discarding the 'inflatable' aspect—SACS have eliminated the issue of beam space limitation, and thus opened up opportunities to create completely new layouts that would not have prior been as effective in the commensurate length. To achieve this revolution, SACS have adopted technology developed in the commercial shipping sector, utilizing a similar system employed to fend vast maritime ves-

sels off docks and on tug boats. The strength and durability of their new system—when compared to a fabricated cylinder of air—is therefore immediately apparent!

The tubes that enclose the Rebel 47 consist of a composite: an inner filling of firm, closed-cell high-density foam, covered by a tough layer of explosive and collision resistant plastic, which is then sheathed in Hypalon to provide the practical benefits and cosmetic appearance of a traditional RIB tube. Offering the same flotation properties as an inflated tube, due to displacement as explained by Archimedes' principle, the solid tubes possess all the positive attributes of conventional tubes—like acting as a highly effective chine to throw spray laterally and produce a very dry ride, plus the improved stability during navigation and at anchor—but with many other advantages in addition to the vastly improved durability.

As the composite system can be shaped and molded into forms traditional Hypalon cylinders cannot, this opens up a whole exciting new field of possibilities for SACS in terms of both aesthetic design and gain-



The automotive inspired helm looks over the forward sunpad and two of the most thrilling bow loungers we've ever experienced.





Carefully considered and well-appointed, the Rebel 47's lower deck offers a double berth in the forepeak and another aft.

ing more space for the upper decks and increased volume below. It also permits them to taper the tubes and distribute buoyancy where it is most required, a highly limiting factor of traditional tubes. Also, as the system is not structurally dependent upon the outer Hypalon coating, there is the opportunity of it being changed easily, and relatively inexpensively, if damaged is sustained, refurbishment is required, or one simply wishes to change the color and appearance of their craft. Such advances do come at a cost of course, the new tubes weigh three times that of comparable inflatable cylinders and cost five times the price to manufacture.

Stepping aboard the Rebel 47, the additional useable beam created by the 'D' shaped tubes as opposed to the regular 'O' cylinders is immediately evident. From the bathing platform one enjoys unrestricted access past the triple aft sunpad and into the cockpit. It is worth noting here that the option is offered to install a hydraulic section in the bathing platform to facilitate the carrying of a watercraft or smaller tender, while beneath the sunpad is a voluminous storage area that can accommodate a couple of SeaBobs or a roll-up inflatable tender. These wide lateral passageways

extend all the way to the bow, with high gunnels reducing the sense of exposure and promoting confidence to move around the boat even when travelling at speed. In the bow area the large elevated sunpad, which sits atop a low coachroof, provides a fine vantage point upon which to recline, but forward of this lies, for me, the Rebel 47's piece de resistance.

Facing forward, side-by-side, two chaise lounges provide the most comfortable and exhilarating position from which to experience boating I believe I've ever encountered. I'll admit to being somewhat perturbed at first when our pilot suggested we take a position in the very bow and he'd run at full speed, but, once we assumed our positions, we fully appreciated acquiescing to his quiet insistence. Contoured so that one sinks into the welcoming upholstery, the loungers hug one's body with all the comforting reassurance of a maternal nursemaid. As the Rebel flattens onto the plane and its rapid acceleration gently nestles one further into the padding, you are struck with the thrilling sensation of flying over the water, with all the enchanting grace of a magic carpet. As the boat's raised forefoot gently slices through the chop, with zero alarming slamming or violence, one simply

lies back and thrills in the delightful juxtaposition of an experience that lies somewhere between a thrilling fairground ride and the soporific relaxation of a gently rocking recliner. It truly is a unique, exciting and spectacular way to travel.

Heading back to the well-protected inner cockpit with a wide grin, we joined Andrea Loro, SACS Marine's Sales Director, at the helm. He explains how the additional available beam allows for a highly versatile deck layout of the Rebel 47; "We've worked up several different layouts with the arrangements of furniture, wet bar, jockey seats and benches, but in reality as each unit is custom built to order then we'll work with the client to create a craft that best addresses their needs—both above and below decks." The platform has also been designed to permit several different configurations: the convertible model we feature here with an open cockpit that can be entirely shaded with the erection of a bimini if so required; a more protected hard top version that will cover from the windshield to the aft seating and incorporate an electronically actuated sunroof, while another hardtop version extends over the helm but dispenses with the side protection to create a center-console feel.

Full standing height is offered in the shower cubicle and being fully customizable, the Rebel 47 is aimed squarely at the luxury day cruiser, tow and megayacht tender markets.

Taking a position at the helm we quickly familiarize ourselves with the intuitive layout that incorporates a row of sporty automotive-style gauges below the twin Raymarine touchscreen displays that fully interface with the onboard domotic system. There is also a joystick control that integrates the bow thruster, which will no doubt assist owner-drivers in close quarter maneuvers. The throttles for the twin Volvo DC-400 engines coupled to stern-drives fall easily to hand, and nudging them forward the Rebel 47 responds by almost immediately surging onto the plane. Hull #0, being a prototype has been over-engineered and weighs several hundred pounds heavier than subsequent units, but still achieved 38.5-knots at the top end. Future production is expected to top 40-knots. Throttling back to 25-knots produced a total consumption of just 23 US Gal an hour (90 L/h) for both engines, while at economical cruise a range of 500-miles can be extracted from the two 200 Gallon diesel tanks. Burning the same fuel as the mothership when employed as a tender is yet another advantage of this craft.

Accessed via a companionway to the portside of the helm, one descends cleverly offset steps to discover a surprisingly voluminous accommodation deck. Without the intrusion of tubes, great use has been made of the internal volumes that offer a banquette to port, opposite a spacious head and shower space. A V-shaped sofa occupies the forepeak, while infill cushions convert it into a double berth from which the occupants can stargaze through the skylight above. A second double cabin is located aft that, though comfortable to lie back in, features significantly restricted headroom.

In producing a craft pointedly designed and aimed at the high-end market, and in doing so have innovated with technology in order that even the most discerning of clients are well-served, SACS Marine have once again pushed the RIB sector forward a considerable difference. The company's exacting build quality will no doubt satisfy the most demanding owners, while the combination of hardiness, luxury, safety and sea-keeping ability make it a 'must consider' when searching for a chase boat, tow tender, commuter or weekend cruiser. And let's not forget those front loungers! This is one delightful Rebel with a serious cause.

