



MOTOR BOATS MONTHLY **TESTED**

Sessa Key Largo One

Sessa's super-mini gets its first UK drive. **from £20,500**

There are a few things you know about this boat before you even get close. First off it's clearly Italian. No other country can deliver so much colour, flair and style in such a simple package. Secondly it's a boat you'll love owning. It practically begs you to smile. Wills and Kate have got

nothing on this gem. If the coalition really wanted to cheer us up, all they needed to do was simply give a Key Largo One to every household. It would probably cost less than a Royal Wedding too.

In keeping with its fun, affordable, Fiat 500 take on life, the Key Largo One comes in a range of gelcoat colours but at just under 19ft long

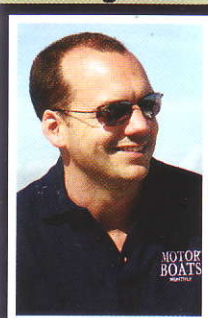
the boat itself has a simple layout. There's no cabin to worry about but as a base for spending fun days afloat it has got the lot.

A comfy spread of seating and lounging space runs fore and aft, with a decent sunpad forward and a table option for the aft seats. The helm seat's backrest also hinges forward to create a dinette set-up and there's

room for an optional fridge tucked inside the centre console.

If you fancy a dip, there's a shower by the swim ladder and for when those long summer days just get too much, simply pull out the Bimini that is hidden under the forward sunpad – lift the main locker lid up and pull the canopy into position for quick and easy shade. Stowage is

Carl says...



This looks like the perfect recessionary antidote. Can the Key Largo One spice up the starterboat market like the Fiat 500 did for super-mini cars?



The eye-catching, bright blue centre console sets this sportster apart from the rest



Wide decks and a hide-away optional fridge



“The Key Largo One practically begs you to smile”



The Key Largo One has a number of through-bilge lockers



This moulded-out locker has a drain hole, so is ideal for wet gear

good across the boat with various through-bilge and lined out lockers to swallow up your gear.

As well as lots of practical touches, the deck area also reflects the kind of detail and sophistication Sessa is known for, with a skeletal, quite animalistic inner moulding that sweeps from the aft cockpit forward. OK so it doesn't actually do anything, other than make the job of building one of these boats a hell of a lot more complicated, but we love Sessa for it anyway.

Centre of attention

The centre-piece of the boat is the centre console, mixing 1950's cool with a more contemporary style accented by whatever colour hull you choose. The helm is pure Chevrolet with a brushed steel dash and a cream and stainless steel steering wheel. There's also a neat tray for handheld kit and space for a fixed VHF radio.

The screen offers good protection on the water, its inset handrail ensuring both the driver and navigator always have a good grip on proceedings.

Sessa has put a lot more effort into its Key Largo hull designs and this example is another humdinger. Grippy and fast it's also very easy to handle, but it will be even easier to manoeuvre with the optional hydraulic steering – a must have for those new to boating.

We hit an easy 36 knots with a 115hp Yamaha, the biggest engine option, and 20 knots in a quick-fire seven seconds. A smaller engine would still deliver plenty of zip though and help keep the price sensible.

The cost of the Key Largo One is its only moot point. Once you've added in a fair few options – £1000 for a hull colour, £1500 for the Bimini, cockpit table and additional cushions – it isn't cheap, but then it doesn't look or feel cheap either. Put simply, it's good value.

If you want more boat for your money then the larger Quicksilver Activ 675 (tested March 11) offers a cabin and more deck space but it can't touch the Key Largo on style or fun and they're two pretty important factors when it comes to this market.



CONCLUSION

FOR Eye-catching helm, quality finish, lots of fun

AGAINST Protection for the aft benchseat

VERDICT The starter and sportsboat market is buzzing right now, and it may now have a new queen bee



SPECIFICATION

LENGTH OVERALL 18ft 8in (5.95m)

BEAM 7ft 7in (2.34m)

ENGINE 40hp to 115hp

PERFORMANCE – 115hp Yamaha

rpm	knots	mpg
3500	17.1	5.5
4000	24.2	6.0
4500	27.5	5.0
5900	36.3	3.5

PRICE boat only £13,900
with 70hp engine £20,500
with 115hp engine £22,500

ENQUIRIES Bates Wharf
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For a bit of sun protection, pull out the Bimini hidden under the forward sunpad