

# BUYERS' GUIDE Choosing the right RIB

Start motorboating P

## Buying points



### TRANSOM

The transom will have to support a lot of weight and thrust from the engine. It may also have to support an auxiliary engine (pictured above). Check that the builder has used a thick laminate of marine ply and GRP, and that the transom is braced in some way to accept the loadings.

### ENGINE

This boat has a 115hp four-stroke outboard, with power trim and tilt, and a top speed of around 38 knots. When choosing an engine, make sure you have easy access to a reputable dealer for servicing and repairs.

### BILGE-PUMP

A high-capacity unit designed to run dry, so it doesn't matter if it keeps running to clear spray.



### THROTTLE BOX

The throttle should be easy to reach, with smooth operation, and with a kill-switch fitted as standard. This is a life-saver.



Some racing and high-performance RIBs will have a foot throttle for greater control.

### 'A' FRAME

This carries the navigation lights and VHF aerials, and needs to be as high as possible for cruising, otherwise it will be lost behind even relatively small waves. The A-frame can also carry flare boxes and man-overboard gear, helping to keep the decks uncluttered.

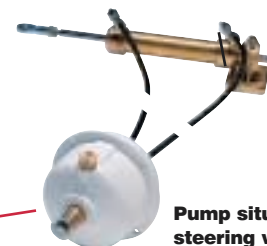


### CONSOLE

Check you will be comfortable for long periods in bouncy seas. Is there anything you may crack your head against? Are there plenty of hand-holds for your passengers?

### STEERING

The steering wheel needs to be strong, as the helmsman will use it as his only handhold in a choppy sea. The steering itself is usually via a cable, but larger boats may well have a hydraulic system.



### HYDRAULIC STEERING SET-UP

At the stern, a ram moves the steering arm to turn the engine(s)

### RUBBING STRIP

Made of Neoprene to act as a permanent fender to protect the main tubes.

### BATTERY

This needs to be a proper engine starting battery, to cope with the high loads of the starter motor. Ordinary leisure batteries won't do. It also needs to be firmly secured.



### TUBE FIT

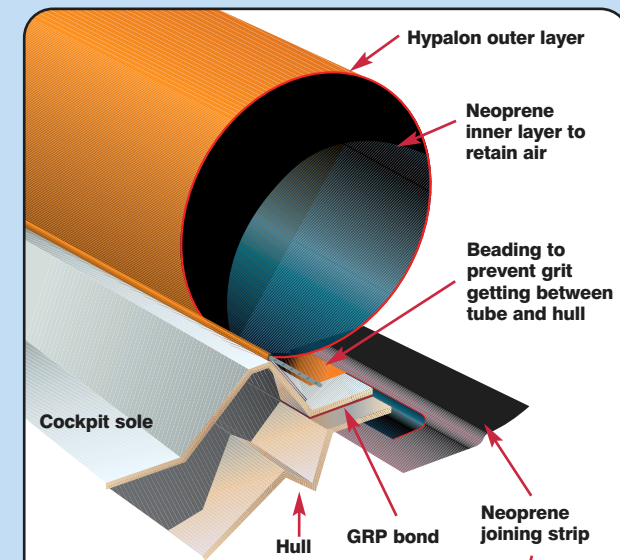
The best fitting tubes are those that have been fashioned from a template to fit the exact curves of the boat in both the horizontal and vertical planes. Beware - not all boats are made this way.

## Tube construction

This boat is fitted with Hypalon tubes with a Neoprene interior, although some manufacturers use PVC or polypropylene. The Hypalon is resistant to UV light, and is made as a sandwich with a woven fabric middle layer. The Neoprene is better at retaining air, so the two materials are compressed together by a roller to make sheets, which are then fabricated into tubes.

When choosing a RIB, you'll need to think about the practicalities of the colour you choose, for example:

- White is attractive when new, but hard to keep clean, and difficult to see in rough weather.
- Orange has high visibility, but you may be mistaken for a rescue boat.
- Dark blue or black will heat up quickly in hot weather.



### EXTERIOR OF HULL



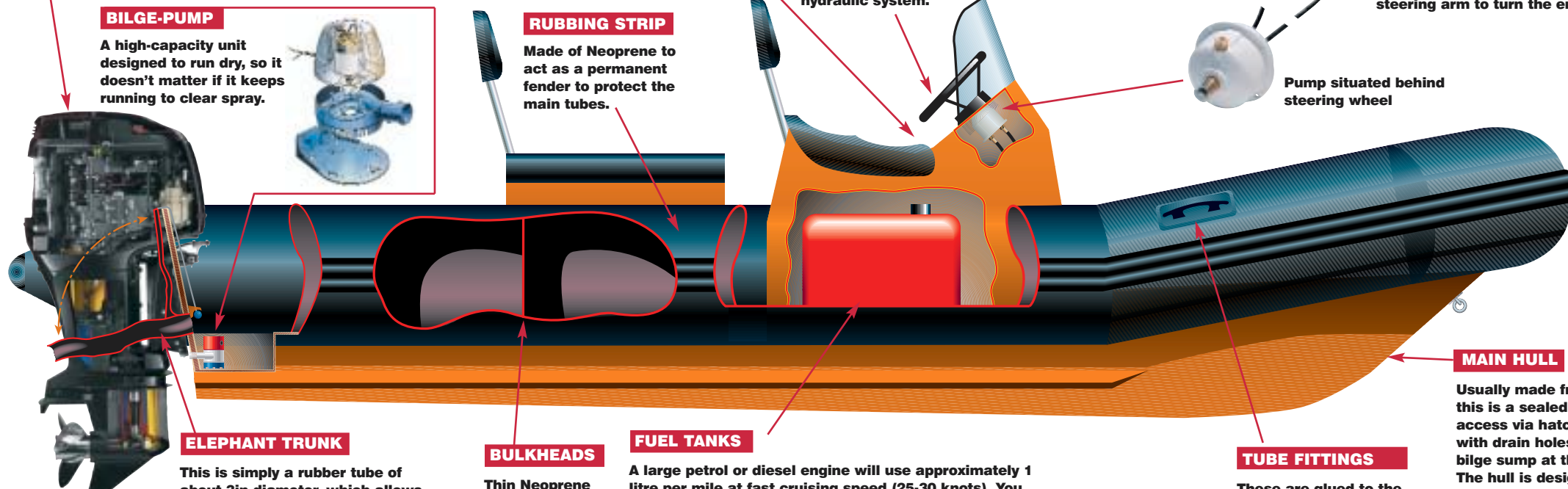
### Valves

Each chamber has its own valve for charging and emptying the air inside. Pressures in the tubes are quite low, between 1 to 1.5 psi, and if the tubes are inflated to be slightly soft, this increases their impact-absorbing

properties at sea. It also allows for the air to expand on hot days. Many manufacturers now fit pressure-relief valves.

### Tube types

- **HYPALON** The most widely used fabric. Weathers to a matt surface, and is easy to repair. Tough.
- **PVC** Used for lighter boats, and less expensive models. Often used in beach toys. Keeps a bright and shiny finish, and smells slightly plastic. Cannot be as easily repaired as Hypalon.
- **POLYURETHANE** Quite rare. Tough, and resists abrasion well, but very hard to repair. Often specified by the military.



### ELEPHANT TRUNK

This is simply a rubber tube of about 3in diameter, which allows water to drain rapidly through the transom, like a dinghy self bailer. It only works when under way, and needs to be pulled up when at rest.

### BULKHEADS

Thin Neoprene bulkheads are added to divide the tube into chambers.

### FUEL TANKS

A large petrol or diesel engine will use approximately 1 litre per mile at fast cruising speed (25-30 knots). You need to be able to carry sufficient tank capacity to cover your intended trip, with at least a 20% reserve. In many boats, it is possible to fit an additional fixed fuel tank under the passenger seats.

### TUBE FITTINGS

These are glued to the fabric, and are usually made from Neoprene. There is a wide choice for a custom build.

### MAIN HULL

Usually made from GRP, this is a sealed unit, with access via hatches, and with drain holes to the bilge sump at the transom. The hull is designed to float with all tubes deflated. Some internal space can be used for tanks and storage on larger boats.