



The bright and spacious wheelhouse

*If the 730 had a face, there'd be a broad smile plastered across it*



## Rhéa 730 Timonier

We are heading from Calshot in a westerly direction passing the mouth of the Beaulieu River on our starboard side. A stiff breeze is pouring over the flared bow of the Rhéa 730 Timonier and lashing thick sheets of spray across the triple windscreens whilst a roaring tide beneath is scooping the chop up into jagged, frothy peaks.

Weighing a mere 2.95 tonnes with a length overall of 25ft 9in (7.9m),

it would be easy to assume that the entry-level model in the Timonier range might feel overwhelmed by the challenging conditions, but the feeling from behind the simple upright helm is quite the opposite. If the 730 had a face, there'd be a broad smile plastered across it, like a happy Labrador bounding around in a fountain.

Rhéa's hardy Timonier range, which stretches to a 36 model, is designed to handle seas like this. Being based in La Rochelle, the yard knows a thing or two about designing boats that can tackle hefty seas, so a bit of

Solent chop is unlikely to knock even the smallest Timonier off its stride.

Driving the 730 is a beautifully simple process. There are no unnecessary fripperies (unless you consider a bow thruster one), just a tactile Morse throttle and a steering wheel, not even any trim tabs, though they are an option. Engage the throttle with a satisfying clunk, feed in the revs and let the hull and its substantial keel do the work. We topped out at 26 knots with the largest 230hp Nanni diesel but this boat feels just as comfortable chugging along at single-figure speeds as it does bounding along in the early twenties. It does get a bit raucous in the wheelhouse at high speed, though Rhéa is planning to improve noise insulation.

It's not a cheap boat, especially if you opt for the €93,000 20th-anniversary model like our test boat, but there are some lovely touches that elevate the 730 away from rival pêche-promenade-style craft. The sumptuous wooden detailing, fabulously robust metalwork and general air of solidity go some way to justifying that price tag.

The cramped accommodation and potty toilet make it a compromised weekender but for day excursions, it's a fine option and you – and it – will be smiling through the rough stuff.

**Contact** Marco Marine.

Tel: +44 (0)2380 453245.

Web: [www.rheaboats.co.uk](http://www.rheaboats.co.uk)

### AT A GLANCE

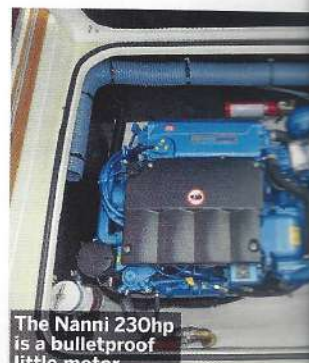
**Length** 25ft 9in (7.9m) **Beam** 9ft 8in (3m) **Engines** Single Nanni 205/230hp **Top speed on trial** 26 knots (230hp) **Price from** €85,500 inc 20% VAT **Price as tested** €123,545 inc 20% VAT



There is no separate loo on board



The cosy cabin is okay for the odd night



The Nanni 230hp is a bulletproof little motor



Bait wells hint at the 730's fishing bent