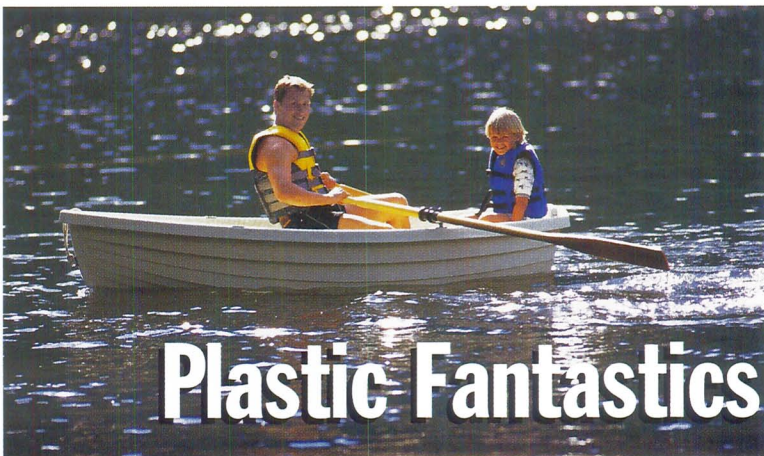


DOCKSIDE

California™

dockside review



Plastic Fantastic

Walker Bay 8

by John Barr

The idea of going to sea in a plastic vessel may at first seem a little ridiculous or at least foolhardy, but consider this:

The majority of pleasure vessels on the water today are constructed of reinforced plastic (fiberglass). This would include 100 ft. plus megayachts. As a matter of comparison, back in the forties there were maybe 10 to 15 plastic parts on the everyday automobile while today on an average vehicle there may be more than 1,500 plastic parts, including of all things, the car's bumpers.

Although plastic has been used in manufacturing for over 100 years, it definitely came into its own in the years following WW2. This is due in part because of its low weight, durability, low cost, and its ability to be chemically engineered for specific applications.

Over the last few years the Dockside Test Team has tested all types and manners of tenders and nearly all the inflatables on the market. This month we wanted to bring you an alternative to the everyday tender and what the test team affectionately call the "Tupperware" tenders. Both of the boats we tested are manufactured of plastic, but that is where the similarity ends. Each uses different types of plastic and a dif-

ferent manufacturing process and hull design. Both are very durable, virtually indestructible, inexpensive, lightweight, versatile, and should bring years of fun and service.

Walker Bay 8

The first boat of interest is the Walker Bay 8. Although it may look like a classic wooden skiff, be assured that it uses state-of-the-art technology in its manufacturing. And as a bonus, being manufactured of recycled plastic, it is environmentally friendly. The Walker Bay 8 uses a high-tech, high-pressure injection robotics molding process that utilizes a 70 ton mold. The mold itself is three-dimensional and took 16,000 hours and two million dollars to produce. The boat is manufactured of impact-modified polypropylene resin. The resin is colored throughout so that the color cannot be scratched off the surface as with gelcoat. Also, the color is protected from fading by UV stabilizers.

The hull is injection molded at extreme highly controlled pressures in a fully automated and controlled manufacturing environment that runs 24 hours a day. As a result, the finished product exhibits a high level of finish and structural integrity. The hull of the vessel we inspected was absolutely flawless, and the fit and finish was exceptional.

This tender was remarkable and extremely versatile. It can be used as a rowboat, a motor boat, or a yacht tender. And with its optional sailing kit, it is an able sailing dinghy for all ages and abilities. All this with a weight of 71 lb. Anyone from Grandpa to the youngsters can wrestle this vessel into the water.

One thing that got my attention was no more dragging the keel along the dock. There's a built-in wheel in the keel at the transom. You just pick up the bow and it easily rolls along. A very thoughtful and innovative idea.

The Walker Bay 8 features a bow eye, bow seat with a mast hole and footing, a midseat with a daggerboard well and locking ringed oarlocks, stern seat, motor mounting plates with gudgeons for rudder attachments. As a rowing skiff, she rows straight and true due to her classic displacement hull and deep keel. She is also rated for a 2 hp. outboard.

The Walker Bay 8 meets U.S. Coast Guard, Canadian Coast Guard, and C.E. safety standards. Buoyancy and flotation is provided by foam-filled seats and the manufacturer states that it will remain afloat when swamped.



A sailing kit option is available for the Walker Bay 8.

I have fond childhood memories of a white lapstraked tender and when I first viewed the Walker Bay 8, the memories came flooding back. This little boat is a sweetheart. She does it all, and best of all, she does it at a suggested retail price of \$399. A true high-tech bargain.

For more information and to find out where you can get the Walker Bay 8, contact: Walker Bay Boats at 1-888-449-2553, info@walkerbay.com or www.walkerbay.com.

WALKER BAY 8

Specifications:

Length	8'3"
Beam	52"
Weight	71 lb.
Capacity	425 lb.
HP Rating	2 HP

