

# Pacific Yachting

BOATING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



MAY 2008

NEW MARINA  
IN ENGLISH BAY?

## Hard Dinghy, Soft Dinghy

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While every boater's criteria for the perfect tender is different, one sailor makes a case for the hard dinghy

**M**ost cruising boats need a tender. A tender allows one to haul groceries, set a stern anchor, take the dog to shore, go fishing and get the kids off the boat for a while. Among other things, the tender should be reasonably sized to drag up on the beach, stable enough to allow for the odd un-graceful entry and able to be stowed aboard or towed behind the mothership.

Once upon a time, before the advent of inflatables, cruising boats were seen with pretty much anything from the ubiquitous Sabot and el Toro to beautiful varnished lapstrake pulling boats and boxy, take-apart nesting dinghies all doing service as tenders.

Today, however, there are fewer hard dinghies for sale, and with the proliferation of inflatables, a boater might conclude an inflatable with an outboard is the only choice available. Not so.

Although not as common these days,

a good hard-hulled dinghy still makes for a very viable and, depending on its intended use, superior tender.

**Tradeoffs** An inflatable dinghy has a lot to offer as a yacht tender: They're fast when fitted with the appropriate outboard; they're extremely stable; they tow

well behind adequately powered boats; and many can be deflated and dragged onto the foredeck or stowed on davits. But as with most things in boating, there are always tradeoffs. The drag created by an inflatable can slow a sail or low-powered boat considerably when being towed, plus the purchase price can be high, the surface vulnerable to UV

degradation and puncture, and rigid inflatable boats (RIBs), in particular, can be very heavy.

**The Rowing Advantage** One of the biggest advantages of a hard dinghy as a tender is its ability to row, sail or power. For fooling around an anchorage, rowing

"I have landed my 12-year-old dinghy right in the middle of oyster beds and dragged it over some very rocky shores with little more than cosmetic scratches to the gelcoat."

an inflatable may be fine—but try rowing a mile against even a slight chop and any breeze over 10 knots, and it's a different story. I was once told that the only reason a yachtsman would elect to row an inflatable is that he'd run out of fuel. But, fitted with a properly sized pair of decent oars, a good quality hard dinghy is a joy to row. With an appropriate engine, she can expand ▶

## 10 Tempting Tenders

When considering the purchase of a dinghy, inform your decision with this backgrounder on some locally available options

### 5 Walker Bay

[www.walkerbay.com](http://www.walkerbay.com)

Much has been written about Walker Bay hybrid inflatable RIBs, but they also manufacture rigid 8.5 and 10' model tenders. With its injection-molded process, Walker Bay turns out incredibly durable and practically maintenance-free dinghies. The rigid dinghy has positive flotation, and the clever "wheel in the keel" design helps when moving it on shore. An optional inflatable collar increases its stability by several degrees. A sailing rig is available; it will also handle a small outboard. Walker Bay is widely available and often at discounted prices.

