

## Monaro 298 DX

*The updated Monaro 298 DX combines classic performance with cutting-edge convenience*



**LOCAL BOAT BUILDER**  
Monaro began operations in the mid 1970s, when it started producing 21-foot, soft- and hard-topped sterndrive family runabouts. Buyers quickly realized their boats were up to doing some serious cruising, and before long owners began taking their Monaros to many distant corners of the coast, including Alaska.

The fine entry hull and outstanding balance of the boat was soon credited for its superb seagoing qualities, and before long, improving on an already highly successful design, the builder began offering the boat in several ex-

tended versions. The 21 was stretched to 24 and 25.5 feet.

A brand new 27-foot model was introduced in 1992 followed by a stretched version of that a few years later when it became the 298—essentially a 30-foot boat. It came with single or twin gas or diesel options. Most buyers opted for the single diesel and practically all boats built by Monaro came with auxiliary power. Outboard motors were custom fitted on the swim grid, not only in case of engine breakdown but also as an ideal fishing setup.

Soft-top construction gave way to hardtop, with a few changes and modi-

fications to the superstructure over the years, and culminated in their latest model—the Monaro 298 DX. This flagship model now features a “glass cockpit” and more modern navigational and operational electronics than ever before seen in a Monaro, and brings this classic builder up to speed with the most modern powerboat manufacturers in the market.

### DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The fine entry of the bow coupled with the flare and rake of the hull, chines and strakes has proven most efficient and seaworthy in calm or rough conditions.

Hence, there has been no change in the basic hull's proven design since its inception. It has a 19-degree deadrise for a soft ride in bumpy conditions.

On close inspection it was noted that the hull, as in previous Monaro models, is hand laid up with biaxial glassing at stress areas. This is done to controlled specifications under contract with West Bay Sonship's large boat manufacturing company. The engine beds, linked with the main stringers, are solid and totally encased in hand-laid fibreglass. For hull integrity and strength the stringers are embedded and connected from the forward bilges to the transom. The transom is solidly built with robust wood laminates and a heavy fibreglass overlay.

Construction of the superstructure follows a similar rigid procedure as the hull but incorporates end grain balsa core in the cabin and hardtop. The interior, helm and dash, sole, forward storage and seat compartments, head and shower cubicle are comprised of molded fibreglass with teak trim and other quality finishing. Venting overboard and water discharge is controlled through carefully installed plumbing and scuppering that minimizes thru-hull fittings.

The balance or pivotal point of the boat, confirmed during test runs, is right on the mark. Fuel tank location is on the craft's centre line as is the water tank and other weight and balance determining equipment. The 150-gallon fuel tank, 30 gallons larger than standard, is aluminum and the water tank is fibreglass.

**ON DECK** The style, construction and features of the deck are similar to the predecessor. Being that each Monaro is custom built to accommodate the requirements of the buyer, the variations from one vessel to the next usually lies in a personal choice of accessories. Bomar hatches and stainless steel cleats and one-piece welded railing are standard. The anchor, winch and fishing equipment were selected in accordance with the buyer's specifications. The windshield is swept with a pair of robust pantographic wipers, now standard on all 298 hardtop models.

On the forward deck, a newly designed bowsprit was built to accommodate a new model Roca Vulcan anchor. A Lewmar anchor winch has been fitted, with remote controls at the helm.

The equipment added for fishing includes Scotty downriggers, rod hold-

ers above the aft cabin entrance, and a large insulated Engel fish storage container on the extended swim grid.

The auxiliary motor, a 15-horsepower Mercury kicker is used primarily for trolling. The swim grid has been modified on the port side to accommodate the auxiliary outboard motor so that it is close to the transom rather than protruding off the end of the grid, where optional removable stainless steel railings are installed at its very aft end.

The motor is fitted on an IMC hydrau-

lic lifting and lowering bracket and is linked to a separate autopilot for remote operation. Controls for the outboard are located on the side of the cockpit. Noteworthy is the ability to see forward through that window, with a view all the way through the windshield and beyond the bow. The view from the cockpit is 360 degrees. It is similar at the helm.

**INTERIOR** The wheelhouse is spacious with seating for four or five while underway. Two ultrasuede, luxuriously-cov-

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ered swiveling bucket seats on sliders are well positioned at the helm. A folding table separates them from the aft seating that has matching cover material. Large windows all round provide good visibility for all.


An overhead lighting strip runs fore and aft along the deckhead. The dash has been redesigned and built to accommodate a pair of large touch screens. One provides monitoring of radar, GPS and depth. The other shows all the usual functions that were formerly given from analog gauges—digital readouts that include speed, fuel consumption data, leg trim, rpm and all other usual engine data.

The forward cabin is entered by way of a companionway to port of the helm station. Construction now includes a fully molded sole with a teak and holly insert. The steps and sole are also of teak and holly. To port alongside the companionway is the electrical panel with all breakers and switches for the onboard equipment. It also houses the radio and music centre with speakers well located on the forward bulkhead and in the wheelhouse.

Immediately forward of that is the galley, complete with a Novakool fridge with adjacent working countertop, recessed garbage bin, sink, cupboards and shelving. To starboard is the head and forward of the head is a general purpose cabinet with locker, propane stove, microwave oven and shelving, all amply lit by one of the portlights and interior LED lighting.

The dinette, forward of the galley area, has a six-place table that lowers to convert to a double berth. Beneath the seating are lockers as well as the fibreglass holding tank, which is immediately aft of the robust bulkhead dividing it from the chain locker. Behind the seats, against the hull, are spacious shelves for storing the seat cushions and other items. The usual sliding windows on the cabin sides have been replaced with a pair of elliptical portholes and these combined with those on either side of the hull ▶

- ❶ The dual helm seats offer 360 degree views.
- ❷ The engine compartment housing the Volvo Penta D6 400 is spacious with good maintenance access.
- ❸ The living space is comfortable for a boat this length.
- ❹ The swim platform is cut away to make space for the outboard.
- ❺ Modern electronics is a main feature for this new Monaro.




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Designed for ease of use, the 298 DX should appeal to new cruising couples and old-salts alike.

provide ambient lighting to the forward cabin, the head and the aft cabin.

The aft cabin, located directly beneath the helm, is wide, bright and spacious.

**ENGINE AND SYSTEMS** The new Volvo D6 400 diesel engine is located in the spacious engine compartment beneath a large hydraulically-lifted fiberglass hatch. The hatch's underside is finished with substantial soundproofing and can be raised and lowered from the helm position. Inside the engine room copious amounts of space allow access onto the sole and to the surrounding plumbing, wiring, storage and battery banks. The aluminum fuel

tank and the fiberglass water tank are accessible forward of the engine.

The batteries include a Group 31 starting battery and a Lithium Ion house battery, plus a 2,000-watt inverter/charger. This long life, sealed lightweight battery is long lasting and fast charging. A special switch has been added that will facilitate jump-starting within the system in the event of a dead battery.

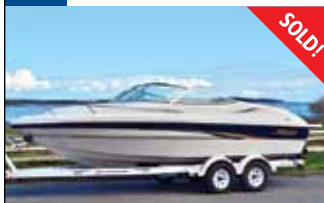
In addition to the sophisticated navigational and systems electronics on board, other equipment includes satellite phone and a pair of GPS operated autopilots, one for the main engine and another for the auxiliary outboard.

Appropriately sized trim tabs con-

trol the trimming of the level of the boat underway. The Bennett trim tabs on this new model are operated using 12-volt battery power. No longer are they hydraulic, saving space and increasing efficiency and obviating the possibility of fluid leaks.

**UNDERWAY** Docking and heading out are made easier with the use of the installed bow thruster. Underway, at trolling speeds the boat was well balanced, slipping easily through the water on a very even keel. Getting onto the plane is practically instantaneous with the opening of the throttle. Accelerating to cruising speed was equally fast and at a modest 30 knots the engine was an easy 3,100 rpm. Top speed after engine breaking in is 40 knots at up to 3,500 rpm, with up to 38 knots at 3,400 rpm during sea trials.

The 298 handled well, responding quickly and positively to the helm. Reading the data on the screens was easy with their well-designed placement. As mentioned earlier, visibility



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all round was excellent. The sound-proofing in the engine room allowed conversation in the wheelhouse at near normal levels of volume.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS** The 298 is fast and functional. Carla and I ran an earlier version of this boat from Campbell River to the Fraser River last summer. It was a calm day with just one patch of approximately 10 miles of choppy water in the middle of the Strait of Georgia. We followed a direct compass course on a line between Lasqueti and Texada islands and at a sustained speed of nearly 32 knots it took us three hours to do the trip. There's no fun in that, some might say, but we feel there is a time and place for everything, and on that occasion we needed to reach our destination with minimal delay. At speed on the water, in the right conditions, there is an exhilaration that is difficult to describe. It has to be the right boat, and the 298 Monaro fits the bill.

The new Monaro has a hull that can take some otherwise uncomfortably rough conditions better than most boats in the same category. We travelled to Alaska once in our Monaro 27 and went through a variety of sea conditions, some of which I would not have attempted in another vessel of the same dimensions. Combine this classic performance with a new standard of digital electronics, and this new Monaro 298 DX should be a solid contender in the under-30-foot powerboat market. ☺

## THE SPECS

<b>LOA</b>	10.13 m	33'2"
<b>LWL</b>	7.73 m	25'4"
<b>Beam</b>	2.88 m	9'5"
<b>Draft</b>	0.61 m	24"
<b>Deadrise</b>	19 degrees	
<b>Weight</b>	4,400 kg	9,800 lbs
<b>Fuel</b>	568.50 L	150 USG
<b>Water</b>	181.92 L	48 USG
<b>Holding</b>	68.22 L	18 USG

Power Single Volvo D6 400 diesel  
Outboard Mercury 15 hp four stroke.

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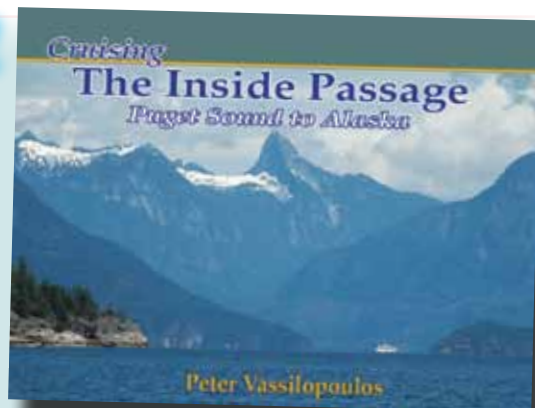
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