

These outboards are made to such close tolerances that parts are interchangeable with the older Yamaha engine that they were modelled on.

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Vector

15hp

This month TSF looks at the Vector 15hp outboard.

Vector Outboards is a little-known brand in the UK, but the company's outboard motors do have a wider following in other parts of the world and are catching the eye of budget-conscious boaters here too.

These outboards are made in China to an older Yamaha design that was licensed to the company and they are made to such close tolerances that parts are interchangeable with the older Yamaha engine that they were modelled on.

During the Olympic sailing events, Vector engines proved their worth by running the virtually 24/7 on patrol boats. During the training sessions and the games themselves the Vector engines clocked up nearly 600 hours of use driving the health-and-safety craft around the Olympic park.

The Vector 15hp is the largest in the company's current range and uses simple, solid engineering technology developed by the Japanese about 15 years ago and complies with EU emission standards.

The two-cylinder, 323cc motor uses a single carburettor to deliver the fuel, so maintenance is easy and simple for the home mechanic, without the need for a laptop and diagnostic equipment.

This aspect will be very attractive to a high proportion of users.

The ignition system is electronic, using a CDI unit to generate the high-voltage discharge to initiate the spark, in a very similar way to the way that a small motorcycle engine does, with ignition timing achieved via a magnetic pick-up on the crank flywheel. The parallel twin engine uses a belt-driven cam to operate the two valves per cylinder. There is a manual choke on the tiller-steered, manual-starting version and electric choke on the remote-control, electric-starting model. For safety, on all model variants there is start-in-gear protection, preventing the engine from being started unless it is in neutral.

The steering and throttle on the tiller arm both have friction adjustment to take the strain off the helm. The throttle can be set for trolling speed, to allow tending lines without losing engine speed or steering. The cowling is waterproof, with a rubber seal around the joint, and an easy-off, easy-on single-lever catch. Equally of interest is the front-mounted gear-shift lever,



SPECIFICATIONS

Engine type: Two-cylinder, four-stroke
Bore x stroke ratio: 59mm x 59mm
Cubic capacity: 323cc
Maximum power: 11kw @ 5,000rpm
Wide-open-throttle range: 4,500rpm to 5,500rpm
Weight: 45kg
Induction: Single carburettor
Fuel tank: 12 litres
Oil capacity: 1 litre
Ignition system: Electronic - CDI
Gear ratio: 2.08:1
Starting method: Manual/electric
Steering: Tiller/remote
Gear selection: F-N-R
Lift and trim: Manual
Shaft lengths: Short (S) Long (L)

which avoids the need to reach around the side of the motor to change gear.

On the front of the engine there is a low-oil-pressure warning light to provide a visual indication of the lubrication status. If the light comes on you can stop the engine before serious damage is done, although it will allow low-speed operation as a limp-home mode should the oil pressure drop to critical levels. Similarly, if the engine overheats, the limp-home mode is enabled and only low-speed operation is possible.

The motor is supplied with a 15-litre fuel tank as standard, although there is an optional 24-litre tank available, which comes complete with the required fuel line and primer bulb. As

an extra touch, and not often found on engines in this day and age, the Vector outboard comes complete with a spares kit, which includes a water-pump impeller, an emergency-starter cord, gaskets, seals, a set of spark plugs and a comprehensive tool kit to allow daily maintenance and winterisation to be carried out.

To enable the engine to be fitted to a wide range of suitable boats it comes in two shaft lengths, short and long, with both tiller-arm or remote control with electric start. To match the use that the engine will be put to there is a range of propellers, from 9in through to 12in pitch in 1in increments, each in the standard 9/16in-diameter and protected from electrolytic corrosion by an anode fitted to the anti-ventilation plate.

The smart, silver livery throughout provides corrosion protection through the use of a five-layer paint system. The Vector logo harks back to the Yamaha ancestry by using three interlocking Vs, in a similar layout to the well-known tuning-fork interlocking Ys logo. The engine is backed by a three-year factory warranty and is supplied by Vector Outboards UK. **tbf**

PRICE

Price including VAT @ 20%
 £1,589 (S) to £1,949 (LE)
 Vector Outboards UK, Pole Position, London Road, Sutton Coldfield B75 5SA
Telephone: 0121 323 2333
Website: www.vector-outboards.co.uk

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