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BOAT MASTER

FIVE OF THE BEST TORCHES

Blackfire Clamplight
Clamp this to a grab rail, table or fixture in the engineer room and just point the head to where you need the light. Alternatively, use as a flashlight or freestanding lantern - it's possibly the world's most useful torch.
Cost £29 See www.blackfiretempel.co.uk

Exposure Marine Verso
A stylish aluminium body and ultra compact design, plus a comfortable headband and a useful mode selector combine to make this your ultimate night-time companion.
Cost £119.95 See www.ultimatesportsengineering.com

Glo-Toob FX 7
A virtually indestructible waterproof torch that, despite being pocket-sized, can throw out some proper light. It has 30 hours battery life, seven modes and clips easily onto your key-ring.
Cost £20.95 See www.heinis.com

Finisterre adventure light
Use it as a hand torch, lantern or a headlamp - this is a seriously multi-functional piece of kit, designed by Exposure Lights. It's also waterproof to 100m.
Cost £65 See www.finisterre.com

Olight S30 R Baton
This highly-tracking LED thrower beam reaches 360 metres - not bad considering the compact size of this gadget. Choose from five brightness levels (so you don’t wake up the whole marina) or the strobe mode.
Cost £90.95 See www.heinis.com

Life's a Drag
I love to sail and there were so many reasons for avoiding a boat, so it was nice to read a clear account of a subject. (W&Y March 2016). In real life though I’m really much more concerned with ways to reduce drag and hence fuel bills. Surely you have some advice beyond your pithy one liner implying us to slow down? Stuart Winchester
You’re right, that ‘slow down’ advice was neither brief and really only applies without fail to displacement boats; semi displacement boats demand a more complex approach, and planning craft even more so, especially if they have pod drives. My advice is to head out on a flat calm day at slack tide with your boat loaded up to its normal cruising trim, and then record the same figures we do: speed, RPM, and real time fuel consumption at as many RPM increments as you wish. Experiment with your trim tabs and your sterndrive’s trim at the same time to find the optimum. Then simply divide the recorded speed by the fuel flow at each RPM increment to find your most fuel efficient RPM cruising speed.

If you don’t want to be tied to a particular speed, nothing beats a smooth bottom. I swear by the Coppercoat I use on my boat that can be sanded to a smooth finish in a jiffy with the old-fashioned glass. Not only will this help with your speed, but the green slime forming if Discovery can be easily removed with a towel. In its heyday, my little boat won its class in the annual Round Island Race on five consecutive occasions, and I genuinely attribute some of its success to its ultra-slippery bottom, as it certainly wasn’t my crews fault. Dave Marsh

Sportcruiser or Tips?
On the basis that my wife’s threat of divorce is not just her arcane sense of humour, I want to progress my plans to buy a Bavaria Virtess 420 Coupé. However, I’ve never been presented with a difficult choice between stand ike or IPS pod drive. IPS is big advantage used by the joystick control, but now stern drive has that as well I don’t know which way to go. What would you choose? Richard Johnson
Although on this boat there are 370hp versions of both, there is a slightly more powerful IPS option at 435hp vs. the biggest 440hp sterndrive. But I’d go for one of the sterndrives simply because they will give you more control over your boat. Being able to trim the legs gives you more trimming options, especially when it comes to handling tricky conditions. Do specify Volvo’s excellent Powertrim Assistant, which you can programme to trim the legs to suit your boat and how it’s loaded, although it can be manually overridden. Unless it’s completely free, I’d pass on the joystick too. Instead, I’d spend the money on Zigpay’s excellent interceptors which are far more advanced and user friendly than the Volvo QL interceptors you’re likely to be offered. Anything extra you spend is likely to recoup in fuel savings because of your optimisation from Dave Marsh

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ABOVE: The secret to a good night’s rest is to sleep soundly.

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