

WILLIAMS JET 285

If you are looking for a fun ride, then this has to be it. Introducing the Williams Jet 285 – but don't call it cute! This little Tasmanian Devil is an absolute whirlwind of performance and exhilaration and is the closest thing you'll get to a go-kart on the water.

Words and pictures Dean Castle





Designed and constructed in the United Kingdom by brothers Mathew and John Hornsby and their staff complement of 38, the Williams Jet 285 could make for an interesting representation of what you could want. At 2.9 metres overall and 300 kg when dry, this light-weight RIB packs one hell of a punch with its jet propulsion. The base model comes with 80 HP while an S upgrade gives you a total of 100 HP which must be absolutely bonkers!

You may wonder why this craft is so small and whether it could possibly have a purpose, but there's a really good reason for its existence. The Williams Jet was created and constructed to be a tender for your much larger motoryacht, typically added to boats from 12-16 metres or 39 – 52 foot. This Williams Jet, for example, is safely transported around inside the garage of a Fairline Targa 48. But don't be quick to dismiss this craft as a toy for the rich and famous because really, it's still a boat and it's got box loads of fun as standard fare.

DECK LAYOUT

You'd be forgiven for thinking that there's not a whole lot you can do with just 2.9 metres, but trust me, there's actually quite a bit on offer. You can easily have three passengers onboard in supreme seating comfort – and since there is a hook at the transom, you can connect ski rope and take your friend for some skiing which should actually prove to be pretty good since there is extremely little to no wake left by the Williams Jet.

The skipper is seated at the stern and is afforded a very commanding, safe and dry position. At the helm, you're met with a pretty impressive-looking dash with engine gauges and switch panels as standard, or you can opt for a depth sounder, VHF radio and chartplotter. You also have the option to remove the steering wheel like Formula 1 racing cars which serves three purposes: it lowers the profile of the craft for storage; it reduces the risk of the Williams Jet being stolen; and it'll make you look pretty badass walking away with your steering wheel in hand!



PERFORMANCE

Boating World's Derrick Levy fired up the engine and confidently drove it off the Targa's immersed platform, then proceeded to show me what this gutsy craft is capable of, before handing over the reins for me to try for myself. I fit into the 'solid' category, and I found that with my weight up in the bow (with Derrick skippering) on the extremely choppy and windy day we had, some spray was caught in the wind and thrown back onto me – however, I can forgive this since really the only time you'd need to be out in conditions like that would be if you needed to be – such as having your boat moored in a cove

and you need to get to or from land. In all other circumstances, be it exploring the coastline from your motoryacht or even just having the Williams Jet as a runabout for the kids, you probably wouldn't be out on the water anyway – but it is good to know the little girl can handle it should the weather suddenly turn. Otherwise, the solution is simple – throttling back to slow speed seemed to solve the issue of a very light shower.

The 80 HP Weber motor will get you to a top speed of around 66 km/h (35 knots) while the bigger 100 horses will be good for up to 77 km/h (42 knots) – if you can hold on tight enough, anyway.

Acceleration on the Williams Jet 285 is extremely good. The propulsion relies on a high torque jet to really squeeze the water in the pump and push it out fast. This is essentially a lightweight PWC, so expect around the same level of performance. I wouldn't be surprised if this tender could outrun most modern sports cars in a full throttle sprint off the line.

This 285 has to be the most nimble boat I've ever driven – even in comparison to PWCs. It is just so light on the wheel and super responsive that you will need to apply some caution on your first time behind the steering. You simply can't go flat out from the get go, as you shouldn't

in any boat, really, since the faster you go, the firmer you'll grip the wheel – and the less able you are to take your hand off to throttle back. I think that, perhaps, this may be the true reason for the safety kill switch attached to your wrist. This boat is pretty stable and unlikely to flip over, but as is the case with all boats and PWCs, you'll find that it is in fact very safe – in the hands of a good skipper.

I had immense fun jumping over some surface chop and turning and weaving hard through the swell rolling into the bay. A simple 'going to get groceries from shore' tender this is not. This jetboat is more akin to a water-lover's go-karting dream!

CONCLUSION

I really wish you could see and appreciate, as I do, the level of quality and attention to detail in this boat. In my time, I've seen much bigger and far pricier boats which couldn't compare to the manufacturing quality in the Williams Jet. It's evident that the builders take pride in their work to produce a craft which not only looks good, but pleases the most discerning of eyes.

Pricing of a Williams Jet 285 with the 80 HP motor starts at £17 640 (ex. factory).

For more information contact the exclusive importers, Boating World, on (021) 418 0840 or email info@boatingworld.co.za 

