



The *D*asher Dances

HINCKLEY'S NEW ELECTRIC DAYBOAT COULD REDEFINE THE YACHTING EXPERIENCE.

By Kenny Wooton



CLOCKWISE: Performance powerboat specialist Michael Peters drew the Dasher's hull for maximum efficiency and seakeeping; Hinckley's 'artisanal teak' comprises carbon-epoxy shapes hand-painted to resemble the real thing; The cockpit is arranged for easy interaction and communication between guests; The simple helm is built around a multifunction, touch-screen display. The windscreen retracts to remove a barrier between helmsman and guests.

For many of us, the words *electric boat* evoke images of diminutive, wooden launches with festive canvas canopies over their cockpits and guests wearing boater hats, pattering around harbors at walking speeds.

It's probably safe to say, with the introduction of The Hinckley Company's innovative, all-electric Dasher model, that those days are a thing of the past. This 28-foot, 6-inch dayboat, which is making the rounds of the fall boat shows, could herald the next wave of small-boat design.

Hinckley reset the bar for smaller powerboats in 1994 with the release of the now-iconic 36-foot Picnic Boat. That model not only brought Down East-inspired styling and water-jet propulsion to a market dominated by white fiberglass and European-influenced designs, but it also shifted Hinckley from being primarily a sailboat builder to becoming a player in the powerboat space, too. The builder has such high hopes that its new electric boat will be just as game-changing that it named the Dasher model after Hull No. 1 of the Picnic Boat, which was christened *Dasher*.

"We're innovators," says Scott Bryant, Hinckley's director of product development. "It's important for us to think about what the next technology will be."

The Dasher concept is about more than simply advancing technology for its own sake. The builder created it around what it calls "the Hinckley experience"—that is, people connecting with friends and family during short outings on the water.

That connection starts with the boat's silent, electric power, which enables easy conversation. The connection between helmsman and guests is further enhanced through an open layout and a center helm station with retractable windscreen.

For propulsion, Hinckley paired two 80-horsepower Torqeedo electric motors with dual BMW i3 lithium-ion batteries. The Dasher has

40 miles of range at a cruising speed of 10 mph. That range drops to 20 or 25 miles at fast cruising speeds of 18 to 27 mph. The batteries can be fully refreshed in four hours with a pair of 50-amp charging cables.

Hinckley attributes the yacht's sprightly performance to an efficient, seakindly hull optimized for electric power. Highly regarded powerboat designer Michael Peters drew the shape and focused on weight reduction.

The hull and other structures are built of lightweight, infused carbon-epoxy composite. Much of the hardware—chocks, toe rail caps, throttle handles, joystick—is 3-D-printed titanium. The cockpit sole is synthetic teak. Other wood-style flourishes are what Hinckley calls "artisanal teak," a carbon composite that is hand-painted to look like the real thing.

The result is that the Dasher weighs 6,500 pounds. By comparison, the builder's similar-length Runabout 29 weighs in at 8,200.

Another experience-enhancing feature on the Dasher is its touch-screen control panel. All elements of engine and power monitoring, entertainment system control and navigation are displayed in one digital unit, including a picture of the remaining propulsion charge, for those who may suffer range anxiety.

"It should be as easy to operate as the computers we carry around in our pockets every day," Bryant says.

Beyond the Dasher's technical innovations, her aesthetics are a long way removed from the Picnic Boat. Her lines are more akin to some of the design-forward smaller boats that have begun to come on the market, or the custom superyacht limo tenders that have appeared in recent years. Bryant sees the Dasher's light weight, retractable

windscreen and electric power as perfect for the latter application.

According to Pete Saladino, Hinckley's chief marketing officer, some of the Dasher's innovations and technology eventually will make their way into other boats in the Hinckley stable. The Dasher's price is expected to be in line with other boats of similar size such as the 29, "north of \$500,000," Saladino says. The first round of deliveries should be available next summer.

There will always be those who fancy the old-school electric launches with their dowdy appointments and timorous temperaments, or the roar of internal combustion engines, but for early adopters who love classic styling, the Dasher feels a bit like tomorrow today. **M**

For more information: hinckleyyachts.com

