



TEST

Text: Emmanuel van Deth - Photos: By the author, Graham Shaw and Emilien Faurens

Test location: Port des Minimes,
La Rochelle, France

Conditions: 2 to 8 knots of
wind, flat water

The catboat sailplan offers amazing
speed and handling.

Barket 2.8 Sail

A Sailing and Motor Dinghy

The Multihulls World community is well acquainted with naval architect/boat-builder Emilien Faurens, who presented one of his trimarans, the Treasy 4.0, to us a little over a year ago. This time, we're testing one of his dinghies. OK, so the Barket 2.8 really has only one hull, but the recessed transom still highlights two floats at the stern. What is the main advantage of this rigid dinghy? It can be sailed - like the Tender Cat in epoxy plywood that we tested in our Special Issue #22. Welcome aboard the Barket 2.8 Sail!

We met up in La Rochelle's boatyard area in front of the UShip chandlery, where Emilien was presenting his models during the Grand Pavois boat show. After a quick look at the Barket sitting on the floor outside the store, we swiftly loaded the bulky but lightweight hull (made of GRP, it weighs only 110 lbs (50 kg) and the light gray deck is equipped with seven textile handles) into the Fairsail-branded truck. The Barket, securely wedged on its side, showed off its inverted W-shaped hull, which starts with a blunt

bow and a pronounced chine.

And What's More, it's on Wheels!

We headed to the boat ramp, 275 yards (250 m) away. We could have done it "by hand" because the 2.8 Sail is equipped with a pair of fold-down wheels on the transom. An excellent idea that costs only € 108 plus tax, but... I think we'd prefer to pay a little more and enjoy more substantial wheels. Once on the boat ramp, we prepared the dinghy in much the same way as you

The model of wheel that's been chosen does the job... but not for going far.



This aft view shows the inverted W-shaped hull, the rudder, and the retractable wheels – as well as the hatches and handles.

The daggerboard well can be closed off with a mini-plug when using the boat with an outboard.

would an Optimist: we put up the mast on which a sail equipped with two large vertical battens was already furled. One particularly notable feature to mention is that the rig can be stored in the hull thanks to a hatch cut into the transom. The cunningham was then attached, for allowing the luff to be tensioned and the rig to be secured. The boom and the sheet block - attached to a short bridle - were put in place. All that remained was to adjust the leech tension.

Moving on to the hull, the daggerboard was put ready next to its well and the retractable rudder installed on the reinforced section usually used for the outboard.

The deck is well designed: it combines self-draining floors with wide, comfortable seats. There are only three things left

for the sailor to do once he's got enough water: insert the daggerboard, lower the rudder, and raise the wheels.

The liveliness of the Barket was quite surprising – it turns on the spot and accelerates at the slightest breeze. Stability is never compromised, though a slightly larger daggerboard might improve the course-keeping after going through a tack.

When the Barket is to be powered by its motor, the rig, daggerboard, and rudder are stowed away, and all you need do is install the outboard - gasoline or electric - and use the "well plug" to seal the daggerboard slot. With an outboard of only 4 HP, it can reach 13 knots with one person on board and 8 knots with two. However, it wouldn't be possible to row with classic oars and rowlocks due to the

thickness of the benches.

For trouble-free use as a tender, it would be advisable to install a rubbing strake so that contact with the mother ship does not cause chafe between the gelcoat of each boat.

Conclusion

You'd be hard pushed to find such a fun dinghy at such an attractive price! Add to that its excellent robustness and ease of repair, and you have the ideal tender – apart from a few minor details. Note: the manufacturer offers a more modest Barket 2.3. And why not a 3.5?

Technical Specifications

Builder: Fairsail
Material: GRP
Length: 9'2" (2.8 m)
Beam: 4'11" (1.5 m)
Weight: 110 lbs (50 kg)
Maximum engine power: 8 hp
Number of people: 2 to 4

Price without sail and motor: € 1,483 ex-tax
Price ready to sail: € 2,900 ex-tax

www.fairsail.com

Emilien Faurens,
the architect/builder of
the Barket 2.8.



- Very attractive price
- Option to really sail
- Easy to set up
- Could do with a slightly larger daggerboard
- No possibility of rowing
- Lack of gunwale protection