

Tenders & Toys

TENDER TRENDS

Tenders have diversified beyond the purely functional. Now spanning high-performance RIBs, multi-purpose support vessels and head-turning limousines with luxury inclusions that replicate both the features and finish of the mothership, **Jeni Bone** reports tenders are also continuing to evolve in terms of propulsion, design and purpose.

There's no such thing as one size fits all in the tender market. A plethora of choices is available for owners looking for support vessels, and navigating the mire of information can be daunting. Several distinct trends have emerged in the past year, including a profusion of electric boats, RIBs of all sizes – from roll-up inflatables that pack away into a backpack to 50-foot, high-performance models – and the rise of the crossover dayboat-cum-tender.

Christian Markgraaff, who worked for close to two decades as chief engineer aboard superyachts such as the 88-metre *Maltese Falcon*, has helped yacht owners with all aspects of owning and maintaining their vessels. He says the choice of a tender depends on multiple factors. "Is the tender strictly for boat-to-shore usage, or is it for fishing, water sports or island-hopping? Coastal or inland waterways, or offshore?" he asks. "How many people and what type of gear does it need to transport? Where are you storing it? In a garage, on deck or are you towing it?"

Superyachts typically have generous garages that can carry an array of vessel types, many adapted specifically for the purpose. Increasingly, however, many larger yachts – particularly those in charter – are

accompanied by chase boats, such as 30-foot (9.1-metre) Boston Whalers or similar, for deep-sea and reef fishing and other water adventures. They don't fit on deck or in a garage, and so are usually towed or delivered to locations on their own keels by crew.

But there's an appetite for more, asserts Brock Rodwell, CEO of Ray White Marine. "Tenders have to be all things to all people," he notes. "In the last five years or so, tenders have segmented themselves into workhorses and those with offshore capabilities that offer more performance, more glamour. There's a lot to choose from, and you need to consider how you want to spend your time on the water."

Fuel for thought

There's another aspect that complicates the equation beyond just deciding whether to go small or large, RIB or Riva – fuel and propulsion. "There's the question of inboard or outboard engines, shaft drive or jet drive," says Markgraaff. "Outboards offer the benefits of being easy to maintain and the ability to navigate shallow waters with the trim up. Jet drives are safe, compact for stowage and operate by a water-pump system. But at low speeds, they can be harder to manoeuvre."

For petrol-fuelled tenders, fuel must be stored in a fire-safe locker with fume-



detecting alarms, especially on larger vessels that may be built to survey for charter or other commercial use. "Petrol can be a real problem to store on board," Markgraaff explains, "although it's usually only used for jetskis and stored in a few jerry cans. Most tenders are diesel inboard, shaft-driven. For larger vessels and the superyacht end of the market, great advances are being made in diesel outboards, including Swedish brand OXE Marine, which is leading the charge."

Design dynamics

Boatbuilders have been quick to adapt to the burgeoning tender market. They're designing versatile solutions on board for housing support craft during voyages and while at anchor when the tender is used for practical and pleasure purposes. "Designs are fully resolved before production of a new



yacht commences, and we always involve experienced owners and their feedback in our design team,” says Stephen Milne, Brand and Communications Director at Riviera.

“Riviera owners are active and adventurous, so their tenders are a vital part of equipment,” he notes. “Our yachts are made to go to sea and are designed to maximise the ability to carry an array of water-sports equipment. So, foredecks for instance can carry a jetski, tender or dedicated fishing boat, and tender garages can be rigged to carry fishing equipment, Seabobs, paddleboards and other equipment for having fun on the water.”

Davco Marine Systems is expert in hydraulic swim platforms, davits and cranes, “offering boat owners complete management systems for the launch and retrieval of tenders and personal watercraft,” as George Geros, Managing Director at Davco, explains.

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Above: Superyachts offer a chase-boat tender for transfers and trips, with the 44-metre Aix choosing the new Tesoro T-40.

“It’s all about making life easy – owners can buy a hydraulic crane (from 250 kilograms to 1,500 kilograms), which takes the pain out of launching and retrieving a tender – making it a one-person job.

“Plus, there’s the option for a full radio remote control operation, with an around-the-neck pendant for ease of use.”

Davco’s Aqua Stairs are custom-designed extensions to a boat’s hydraulic platform, which can be specced for a yacht in build or retrofit. “They allow you to have full use of the hydraulic swim platform for carrying and launching, as well as easy access to the water and the tender, plus an additional leisure space at the transom.”

This page: The De Antonio E23 (right), the official support vessel for the 37th America's Cup, is 100-percent electric, while the Virtue 10 (below), offered by Carbon Yachts in Australia, features drop-down balconies.

Electric avenues

As the boating world explores options beyond fossil fuels, hybrid, electric and hydrogen-powered boats are testing the waters. The cutting-edge support vessels being developed for the 37th America's Cup are perhaps the most extreme examples at present, with boats such as Spanish brand De Antonio Yachts' E23 model, which will be the official support vessel for the event, showing what's possible. The 7.2-metre, 100-percent electric catamaran has an integrated foil that provides additional lift by reducing drag and increasing speed, thus extending its range.

At the Düsseldorf boat show from 20 to 28 January 2023, the Swedish-built, foiling Candela C-8 will make its much-anticipated debut, drawing power from a bank of batteries developed for the automotive industry.

There's a host of other tenders and toys that are starting to combine the efficiency of flight on foils with the zero-emission ethos of all-electric drives. SilentYachts and eD-TEC are working on a high-performance 28-footer, for example, and there are others such as Enata in the Middle East that are already commercially available.



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Chris Hrones, who represents Candela in Australia under the banner of Carbon Yachts (part of Eyachts), says it's basically no different whether you're considering when to recharge or to refuel. "You simply look at the gauge and see how full it is – just like you do in a regular boat," he offers.

He says demand for electric boating is rising as people seek more sustainable options. "Most electric boats have a range of around 50 miles, which is enough for what most owners use them for – travelling from the main boat to the marina, restaurant or beach. It's ideal."

At 2.5 metres wide and 1,600 kilograms, Candela's C-8 can be towed or stowed on board a bigger boat states Peter Hrones, who with Chris Hrones runs Carbon Yachts. "All owners need is a charger on board. Electric boats are gaining ground and, as the infrastructure grows to support them, they will become the norm in three to five years."

What's more, technology is evolving to not only include fast-charging options on board – an essential consideration when the tender is constantly demanded by guests – but also to allow two-way charging, which means the mothership (or your electric car, in the case of trailer-sailing) can be topped up by energy held in the tender's batteries.

Hydrogen potential

As major builders – among them Lürssen, Sanlorenzo, Feadship and Sunseeker – venture into the hydrogen space and start developing hydrogen fuel cells, engine builders like Toyota, Yamaha and Mercury are investing in hydrogen-powered engines for the smaller end of the market.





Yamaha Motors and the Toyota Motor Corporation have partnered up to develop a hydrogen engine for marine and automotive applications, focusing on a 5-litre V8 engine with 100-percent hydrogen power, with the aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

The Dutch have applied hydrogen technology to a hydrogen-powered RIB, known as the H2C Boat, developed by Dutch start-up H2 Marine Solutions in collaboration with Torqeedo, De Stille Boot and the Delft University of Technology. Using a hydrogen fuel cell as a range extender, the 6-metre vessel can operate on the water for a minimum of five hours and reach a top speed of 45 kilometres per hour (24 knots).

America's Cup defender Emirates Team New Zealand launched their 10-metre hydrogen-powered foiling catamaran *Chase Zero* in April 2022, aiming to show the potential of alternative fuels. "This project is all about proving how we can influence the global marine industry by producing a prototype hydrogen-powered foiling catamaran," says Grant Dalton.

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The practical applications for using hydrogen do face some constraints when it comes to mainstream adoption, however, including not only the infrastructure required to make it widely available, but also the limitations of storing it on board.

It's likely the route forward may involve a variant such as methanol, which can be reformed on board into hydrogen for fuel-cell applications, or will likely be able to be used in methanol-burning engines that most of the main engine manufacturers are currently working on. Methanol takes considerably less

Above: RIBs offer great versatility as tenders, and they work just as well for transferring guests as they do for diving or water sports.

volume to store than hydrogen for a given energy content, although it still requires much more tankage than fossil diesel or HVO renewable diesel.

The rise and rise of RIBs

RIBs are still dominant in the mid-range tender segment, and there's a growing appreciation for RIBs as effective dayboats, according to Peter Pembroke, National Sales and Marketing Manager at Highfield Boats Australia. "From what customers tell us, RIBs are versatile and perform well in all conditions," Pembroke reports.

"The tubes also allow for additional capacity and basically act like an all-round fender. You can have more passengers on a RIB than a traditional runabout, and you also have all the creature comforts of a traditional boat such as tables, seating, showers, ladders, sunpads and more."



Left: The 60-knot Brabus Shadow 900 combines elegance with brutal performance.

In the performance RIB market, demand is for longer length, wider beam and more customisation. “Support vessels are getting larger,” Rodwell asserts. “We have several clients who have moved on from 60- and 70-foot motor yachts to a 47-foot Technohull because there’s less upkeep and maintenance, they can get two or three cabins and all the mod cons, and they don’t need crew.

“Owners love the connection with the water these maxi-RIBs deliver,” he continues. “They may have a 35-metre Ferretti as their main boat but they enjoy the RIB to duck off to a shallow bay or a restaurant on the coast – they tell us they like it more than their main boat. There’s no preparation, just take off!”

Brad Rodgers heads up Sunseeker Australia East Coast and has represented the Italian brand Tecnorib-Pirelli for two years. According to him, “the RIB segment has exploded, finding a following in the dayboat market, as a chase boat for events and towed behind luxury superyachts.

“We have lots of clients on Sydney Harbour, which can be very choppy, and RIBs ride right through,” he continues. “They’re easy to look after, easy to store or tow, and the soft ride is very appealing.”

Dayboats do double-duty

In the upper echelons, premium dayboats are becoming popular as transport and tender vessels, particularly in the commercial and charter sectors, where crews can tap into their luxury features, comfort and reliability.

“The 28- and 37-foot models in the Axopar and RAND ranges are being used as secondary craft to larger vessels in commercial fleets,” says Chris Hrones. “They’re brilliant support boats and people movers. Among our customers, we have owners who may have had a RIB and want to move up to something larger and sturdier with an enclosed area and a cabin.”

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Recently, The Island event vessel – with a 300-guest capacity on Sydney Harbour – invested in an Axopar 37 in survey to transport guests between the venue and shore. “The Axopar 37 is like a large, luxurious water taxi with a cabin that can take 10 guests standing or six seated, which is ideal if the weather is inclement,” Hrones adds.

Another owner in an older age bracket moved up from a large RIB to an Axopar 28 T-Top for its safety and comfort attributes. “It has a built-in fender so it can approach the main boat, and passengers can enter over the gunwale or via the back,” says Hrones. “For the captain, it’s a superb driving experience, and it tows very well behind the mothership, staying on course even at 20 knots.”

Missing links

In the larger segment, owners are looking for versatility in their tenders – for transporting guests in comfort and safety or staying overnight, as well as offshore capabilities and plenty of deck space for socialising and soaking up the sun – and this has led to the rise of the crossover vessel as a support craft.

“Owners aren’t satisfied with just a centre console anymore,” states Rodwell. “They’re looking for boats that double as overnights or have a below-deck area guests can retreat to if the weather turns.

“They want wide beam, lightweight for towing behind a bigger boat, semi-enclosed

to suit all conditions. They want more speed, more refrigeration, and areas that convert from dining to lounging or sunbathing but with shade for sun protection and privacy.

“At the 2023 Monaco show,” he adds, “we used the Wallypower48 to ferry guests to the 73-metre *Coral Ocean* for multiple functions during the week. It was very comfortable; the stabilisers kept the boat steady, and guests arrived dry and with their hair in place!”

These stylish, high-performance dayboats aren’t the only ones making waves as alternative tenders and guest transports. Filling the niche for multi-purpose vessels for waterfront homes, New Zealand brand Sealegs is a pioneer in the amphibious segment. Michael Rigby, Australian Sales Manager at Sealegs Australia, says the brand is constantly evolving and expanding its range, catering to a demand for larger vessels with more customisation.

Sealegs recently launched the long-awaited 3.8-metre compact tender, designed to bring amphibious boating to the yacht tender market. Featuring a 3-kWh electric drive and 40-hp outboard, the Sealegs 3.8M Tender has a five-person capacity and a drive time of 45 minutes, fully recharging in three hours. Once the wheels are down, the 3.8 can travel across land at up to 7.5 kilometres per hour. Weighing 450 kilograms, it has four davit points for lifting onto the deck.

The latest Düsseldorf boat show will be the launchpad for dozens of new tenders and multi-purpose support craft. Among them is what Chris Hrones describes as a dinghy that will last forever – the exciting new carbon-fibre tender from the German composite company AST.

The company’s new 4-metre model features a rigid carbon construction with an epoxy infusion and foam sandwich, and is lighter than any RIB on the market. What’s more, it won’t deflate or degrade in the sun.

“The AST 340 Revolve has a range of up to 120 nautical miles and 10-kWh battery capacity,” says Hrones. “It’s currently undergoing fine-tuning and on its way to achieving a speed of 25 knots.”

Offered with the option of an electric pod drive, it’s just another example of the ever-moving and ever-diversifying tender market.

So, whether you’re in the market for a compact tender for your yacht’s garage, a RIB for activity days away from the mothership, a production vessel to be used as a chase boat for your superyacht, or a full-custom limo tender for those most exclusive of guest transfers, there’s something for everyone. **O**



Virtue V10 T-Top

A vessel that represents a harmonious blend of style, luxury and innovation, positioning itself as a unique offering in the ever-competitive tender segment.

The V10's hull, a key feature of its design, is engineered with the renowned Swedish patented PeteStep technology, known for its increased efficiency and performance.

The design ensures a cushioned and stable ride, particularly noticeable during wave re-entry. In addition, Virtue utilised vacuum infusion in the boat's construction, which not only enhances the V10's distinctive design but also plays a pivotal role in achieving up to 30 percent lower fuel consumption than similar-sized tenders.

The V10 offers a range of engine options, from a standard 300-hp single outboard to a more powerful twin set-up of 250- or 300-hp outboards. Additionally, an environmentally conscious option with fully electric outboards from Evoy of Norway is offered.

SPECIFICATIONS

Length (inc. outboards)	9.95 metres
Beam (BOA)	2.9 metres
Displacement (single engine)	2,765 kg
Maximum horsepower	600 hp
Engine	Honda, Mercury or Envoy
Top speed	50 knots (twin 300 hp)
Price	AU\$449,800

Virtue Yachts has focused on innovation in its design approach, making the V10's layout both functional and adaptable. The central cockpit is spacious, featuring unique drop-down balconies on each side to expand leisure space. The boat's rigid T-Top, fitted with solar panels, offers substantial protection from the elements, with additional options for sun awnings supported by carbon poles at the aft and bow.

The V10's amenities include a large wet bar equipped with a sink and two fridges, with options for a gas or electric barbecue. The aft area of the boat is multi-functional, easily convertible between a lounge and a dining space that can comfortably accommodate up to eight people. The bow area includes an extendable sunbed, enhancing the sunbathing experience. The helm station, with its carbon-fibre details and race car-like suspension bucket seats, radiates a high-performance ambience.

In a remarkably short time span, Virtue Yachts has demonstrated impressive growth, reaching the production of its 30th hull in less than a year. This rapid advancement is highlighted by the delivery of several V10 models to Australia, illustrating the model's international appeal. Looking forward, Virtue Yachts is expanding its portfolio with a larger-scale boat set to be revealed at boot Düsseldorf 2024, demonstrating the young company's growing ambition.



The Virtue V10 heralds a new era of innovation within this category. As we venture into a tender market where flexibility and practicality are paramount, the Virtue V10 leads with its distinctive design and advanced technological features, firmly establishing itself as a formidable force in the luxury tender sector.
carbonyachts.com.au