

Infanta 520 SRI

Words and pictures Derek Lawley





Infanta Inflatables have once again set the market alight following the launch of their all-new Infanta 520 SRI rubber duck, a totally new model and a craft that looks set to capture a large slice of this sector of the market.

Infanta Inflatables is a name that over the years has become synonymous with rubber ducks and in particular rubber duck racing in South Africa. Founded by one of the pioneers of rubber duck racing in this country back in 1985, in a garage, this brand has down the years evolved into a large, well-respected manufacturer who today exports right around the globe. Today, the Swellendam-based factory currently employs around 30 people who produce more than 400 craft per year using all the latest state-of-the-art techniques. These techniques, together with the high quality workmanship that they are known for, has ensured that all boats coming out of their factory are SAMSA (South African Maritime Safety Authority) approved.

So it was without any sign of hesitation that we accepted an offer from their Gauteng dealer, Boating International,

to put the impressive looking Infanta 520 SRI to the test shortly after its official launch.

Onto the water

Germiston Lake, which incidentally is also home to the NSRI's Station 27, was where we were to get to grips with this newcomer. On the day of the test the weather was rather cool and extremely overcast, but fortunately there was little wind to contend with.

Even on the trailer the Infanta 520 SRI looks impressive – and a lot bigger than the tale of the tape indicates. And as with all RIBs their light weight, compared to hard hulled boats, makes them a pleasure to tow and launch. Regarding the size of the Infanta 520 SRI, the factory in Swellendam assured us that this craft fits into a standard garage – a factor that will be welcomed by the large RIB fraternity in this



At 5.2 m, she looks a lot bigger than what the tape measurer suggests, but her light weight makes her a pleasure to tow and launch.



Despite the demo unit's 75HP Mercury motor, manufacturers recommend a 130HP motor that's better suited for the RIB.

country. This is mainly due to the fact that unlike fibreglass boats rubber ducks tend to take more strain on their construction when left out in the sun for long periods of time.

Here we should mention that Infanta only use the latest material for their

pontoons. According to a company spokesman, they use a product called Valmex, which is imported from Germany, and which has numerous benefits over other products currently being used locally.

Boating International have fitted out

their demo unit with a Mercury 75HP, although the manufacturers state that a powerplant of up to 130HP is perfectly acceptable for this craft.

Once on board we were impressed with the layout of the deck, which is in a non slip finish to ensure safe footing, boasting a centre console set slightly forward towards the bow section to correct the weight distribution and contributing greatly to the boat's overall balance.

Ample comfortable seating

Seating in the Infanta consists of a triangular seat in the bow, a well padded skipper's bench with bolstered tubular back rest and a large comfortable bench seat across the stern section. An integrally designed nose anchor box is built under the bow seat for easy access. In addition there's a well-padded seat situated on the front section of the centre console. This seating effectively provides comfortable relaxation for up to six adults.



The Infanta 520 SRI is well finished off with stainless steel fitting like a large bow rail, ski wing and a boarding ladder.

Stainless steel fittings are plentiful and include a large bow rail, boarding ladder and a ski wing in the rear. Additional grab points come in the form of nylon rope handles in the bow, running down the length of the pontoons towards the stern section.

The driver's console features a minimum of electronic gadgets but does include a speedometer, rev counter, trim and volt meters – all well positioned. The driver's seat is also detachable should you prefer the standing helm position. A small spray screen is an added feature – as is a stainless steel

grab rail. A double-door locker is built into the console in front of the driver's footwell. A separate fish hatch has been designed for those keen on feeding themselves, something that this writer would never be able to survive on!

Once out of the water the Mercury 75 quickly brings the Infanta 520 SRI onto the plane is around four seconds. Putting her through the Germiston Lake salmon ski course also proved to be a lot of fun with the deep-V hull digging into the water to provide stability making sharp but controlled cornering at speed a pleasure. At the same time cruising



A triangular seat in the bow seats one person (with extremely long legs!) comfortably.

along at around 40 km/h delivered an exceptionally smooth ride – the response feedback to the steering wheel being extremely positive.

Simulating choppy conditions

Using the wake from our photographer's chase boats also allowed us an opportunity to simulate more choppy conditions that the Infanta 520 SRI easily took in her stride. Although the performance was quite acceptable with three adults on board we wondered whether fitting the large capacity engine at the time of purchase ➤



The Infanta 520 SRI's steering makes for responsive and controlled cornering while driving at high speeds.





Renowned for its rigid construction and capabilities, the Infanta 520 SRI will have a wide appeal among general *leisure boaters*.

would not be a better option – especially if you will be towing skiers or kids on the large variety of water toys currently available.

In summary we found the multipurpose Infanta 520 SRI to be a very capable all-round craft. She is really well finished off and well put together, and the overall feel that we got from her after a couple of hours on Germiston Lake was that she is going to have a wide appeal among general *leisure boaters*.

At the same time special interest should also come from the fast growing dive community who always need a boat that's easy to board from the water, with plenty of packing space on deck to accommodate the vast amount of gear that divers tend to lug around.

The various engine options that are available will also obviously play a major role in deciding the final financial package ticket price, but if you can afford to go the extra (nautical) mile we would suggest upgrading from the

75 Mercury to perhaps their 115HP option.

For further details on the Infanta 520 SRI or for a demo ride, contact Boating International on (011) 452 8280. ■

At a glance

Length	5 200 mm
Inside length	4 500 mm
Beam	2 300 mm
Inside width	1 385 mm
Deadrise	17 degrees
Weight	240kg
Maximum power	130HP
Hull type	Semi rigid mono hull
Air chambers	6

