

JUDGED BY THE COVER

BLACK BEAUTY: NAVISOUL 850 PRO CABIN & HONDA BF350

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New names rarely arrive in the RIB market without raising a few eyebrows, but Navisoul appears determined to make a strong first impression. The new 8.75-metre 850 Pro Cabin enters the European market with plenty of ambition. The boat tested here is the first prototype to reach the Benelux, while its outboard is equally exclusive: Honda's first factory-finished black BF350 V8. The result is a striking all-black package that looks every bit as purposeful as its performance suggests.

Built for Europe

The 850 Pro Cabin is built in Qingdao, China. While Chinese boatbuilding once attracted scepticism, today's manufacturing standards tell a different story. Producing quality is no longer the challenge; understanding the expectations of European boaters is. That's where the close cooperation between Navisoul.eu and its production partner becomes crucial, ensuring the finished product reflects European standards of design, practicality and finish.

Strong foundations

A RIB is only as good as its hull and tubes, and Navisoul has clearly invested in both. The seven chambers are constructed from premium Orca Hypalon in an attractive carbon-effect finish. Besides offering excellent resistance to UV and abrasion, the tubes feature pressure-relief valves to prevent excessive inflation during hot weather. The GRP structure inspires similar confidence. Beneath the deck hatches, substantial structural reinforcements and a neatly finished interior demonstrate that strength has not come at the expense of presentation. The only disappointment is the use of traditional toggle hatch catches, which protrude awkwardly. Fortunately, the importer has already confirmed these will be replaced with flush-mounted fittings on production models.

Efficient hull design

The hull features a modern stepped design with a well-balanced sheerline. By introducing air beneath the hull, the step reduces drag, allowing the boat to climb onto the plane more quickly while improving efficiency across the speed range. Bolted to the transom is Honda's flagship BF350, now available in black for the first time. The naturally aspirated 5.0-litre V8 combines effortless torque with Honda's latest technologies, including VTEC variable valve timing, BLAST for stronger low-speed acceleration and ECommo, which optimises fuel consumption during relaxed cruising.

Refined power

The BF350 impresses not only with outright performance but also with its refinement. Honda's low-friction engineering minimises internal resistance, contributing to remarkably quiet, smooth and economical running. Electrical output is another highlight. The alternator delivers 44 amps even at idle, increasing to 80 amps at cruising speeds, ensuring batteries remain fully charged while powering today's growing list of onboard electronics. The digital throttle and shift system is equally polished, offering smooth gear changes, automatic trim and an integrated trolling mode for precise low-speed handling.



Practical luxury

Equipment levels are generous throughout. Standard specification includes an electric windlass with stainless-steel anchor and chain, an audio system and attractive diamond-pattern upholstery. Forward, the large sunpad creates an inviting relaxation area, while gas struts support every hatch, a small but welcome detail that reflects thoughtful design. Hidden inside the console is a surprisingly spacious cabin. Rather than simply providing storage, it houses a proper marine toilet, washbasin, opening side windows and a generous 90-litre holding tank. For a RIB of this size, it offers genuine day-boating practicality.

Exceptionally rigid

The helm is equally well executed. The twin-seat leaning post, angled steering wheel and well-positioned footrest create a comfortable driving position, while the dashboard provides ample space for large multifunction displays. Behind the helm are a sink, two-burner hob, refrigerator and an outdoor shower supplied by a 100-litre freshwater tank. Above it all sits a substantial stainless-steel T-top constructed from square-section tubing. Exceptionally rigid, it feels capable of handling rough-water punishment without complaint. A spacious U-shaped cockpit seating area and integrated wakeboard tower complete the social layout aft.



Behind the wheel

The Navisoul delivers exactly the sort of driving experience its aggressive appearance promises. The BF350 launches the boat onto the plane with impressive urgency, accompanied by the unmistakable soundtrack of a naturally aspirated V8. The stepped hull settles quickly and requires little trim adjustment before finding its optimum running angle. Steering is deliberately geared towards precision rather than speed, requiring more wheel movement than some competitors but rewarding the driver with excellent control through fast turns. Top speed reaches around 81 km/h (44 knots), but outright pace is only part of the story. In rough water, the hull displays impressive composure, cutting cleanly through chop while remaining reassuringly stable when crossing waves at an angle. Equally impressive is the solidity of the T-top, which remains entirely free from vibration even in demanding conditions.

Verdict

The Navisoul 850 Pro Cabin arrives as an impressive newcomer. Build quality is reassuring, equipment levels are generous and the hull delivers the kind of confident handling expected in the premium RIB sector. Add Honda's superb BF350 V8 and the result is a capable, stylish and distinctive package. With prices starting at around €100,000 excluding VAT, and the fully equipped test boat retailing at approximately €129,900 including VAT, the Navisoul represents compelling value for buyers seeking a well-equipped performance RIB with genuine cruising credentials. ♦

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Model: Navisoul 850 Pro Cabin

LOA: 8.75m

Beam: 2.84m

Tube diameter: 540mm

Air chambers: 7

Engine range: 250–350hp

Displacement: 1,600kg

Price as tested: Approx. €129,900

Information: www.navisoul.eu



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