

# New boat that rhymes with Riva



The prototype Hawksley Classic goes through her paces with boat-builder Simon Hawksley and partner Laure Mora at sea off Lyme Regis

PICTURE: NICK BURRYMAN

BY MARTIN HESP

[@martinhesp](#)

Certain man-made machines exude pure style.

A Ferrari or Aston Martin can do it on the road – and long sleek mahogany Italian speedboats certainly do it on water.

Now a young Westcountry couple are hoping their dream-boat will purr its way into the must-have catalogues of those who don't mind paying a penny or three for elegance.

A couple of years ago Simon Hawksley and his partner Laure Mora were wearing grimy overalls as they went about their work as engineers in the Scottish oilfields out of Aberdeen – now they are preparing to take the beautiful powerboat which Simon has made to one of the glitziest boat shows on the planet, at Cannes.

The couple are so serious about their new business they've set up a workshop in Bridport specially to make further examples of the new 18-foot Hawksley Classic.

The boat was only a twinkle in Simon's eye back in the oilfield days. Eventually he decided to follow his dream and attend one of the internationally acclaimed courses at the Lyme Regis Boatbuilding Academy.

"I built the first example of our powerboat at the academy last year as part of the nine month training course – and now we've set up the business here in Bridport and are starting to work on a new one of the same design, which will be for sale," Simon told the WMN.

So what is the estimated price of such maritime elegance?

"We've worked out it will be around £112,000 for a model

using the basic spec'," Simon replied. Which might sound like a lot of money, but when you look at the price of a secondhand Riva you could pay anything from £300,000 to well over £1 million.

For those who don't know about the stars of the classic powerboat world, the Italian made mahogany Riva speedboats are regarded as the marine equivalent of a Rolls Royce.

But it is said that the legendary Carlo Riva, who created the famous range of wooden-hulled speedboats that were to become the epitome of the jet-set era of the 1950s and 1960s, was inspired by products of the American yacht builder Chris-Craft.

It was a Chris-Craft plan that Simon first bought – and then adapted – when he moved to Lyme Regis to attend the boat-building academy.

"I kind of built my dream boat, I suppose – but I stretched the original designed by a couple of feet to make it 18-feet long," Simon explained. "You could use it on a Westcountry estuary or river, but it's got a deep a sea keel so she is also very solid out at sea.

"And she's got a V8 engine, which sounds fantastic – like a nice guitar or something like that – because the wood gives it a better sound than any kind of boat built in fibre glass."

The prototype vessel has already appeared at the Southampton Boat Show where she caused a stir – and now Simon has been told she has been nominated in the prestigious Classic Boat Magazine Awards. So both he and Laure, who will be boat-building when she's not making her own design of furniture, could be very busy in the elegant times to come.



Simon and Laure at work in their new boat-building workshop in Bridport

3 Nights fr  
4 Nights f

Bou

Staying c

Located on the  
the prestigious Es  
hotel Boumerac  
sandy beach. A  
comfortab

+1

+2 h

\*Hotel L

3 Nights fr

Arriving fr

February 2, 3

March 2, 3,

MAJE

Self Drive

To Book,