



# 505

When Rondar reworked a classic 50-year-old design, it proved irresistible, as **Jeremy Evans** found out...

## Specification

<b>Design:</b>	John Westell in 1954
<b>Length:</b>	5.05m
<b>Beam:</b>	1.88m
<b>Hull weight:</b>	127.4kg minimum with fittings
<b>Construction:</b>	Foam sandwich with carbon or full carbon
<b>Sail area:</b>	Mainsail: 12.3sq m Jib: 4.94sq m Spinnaker: 27sq m max
<b>PN:</b>	902
<b>Crew weight:</b>	160-190kg
<b>Price:</b>	<b>£15,000</b>

In 1953, the International Yacht Racing Union held trials to select a new high performance Olympic dinghy. John Westell designed the Coronet, which was beaten by the Flying Dutchman, but then subsequently redesigned for the Caneton Association of France as a new smaller boat with 5.05-metre length, lighter hull and smaller rig.

Despite its utilitarian name, the 505 was a huge success. It was lively, fast and fun and easily outsold the Flying Dutchman, which had been given the kiss of death as a popular class, thanks to Olympic selection. The 505 achieved international status in 1955 and became the high performance dinghy of choice around the world.

More than 50 years later, the 505 is still raced in 18 different countries and has big

turnouts for major international events including annual world championships. Last year's world championship in Sicily attracted a fleet of 123 boats raced by 16 different nations. Ian Pinnell and Carl Gibbon from Britain won the regatta, clear ahead of teams from the USA, Germany, Denmark and Australia who filled the top 10 places. This was an important personal victory for Ian, who added to his tally of around 50 world, European and national championships.

### Design and development

The 505 has been steadily updated to keep pace with the times, but is still recognisably the same boat that first appeared in 1954. And it's still beautiful. In my opinion the 505 has the best looking hull lines of any dinghy class and



**VE** The new P&B rig won both the European and world championships in '08.

is a magnificent sight when fully powered, particularly with the new monster spinnaker.

Sail plan and hull have strictly controlled one-design rules, but rigging, spars and foils are open, which allows the 505 to be set up in many different ways. While early

505s were built in moulded plywood, modern boats have epoxy sandwich construction with extensive use of carbon permitted. You can also race with carbon foils, tiller, boom and spinnaker pole, though curiously not with a carbon mast. Some nations fear there will be a 'modulus fibre arms war' if carbon masts are allowed, though to be honest the 505 is already an expensive class which looks like it deserves a carbon spar.

The Rondar 505 is undoubtedly the hull to have as it has won 12 of the last 15 World Championships, eight European Championships and over 50 National Championships since its launch in 1993, and it has been extensively developed since then to keep it bang up to date. High aspect ratio gybing foils, multi adjustable rigs and highly refined layouts have all been brought to the 505 over the years by some of the world's best boat builders, sailmakers and sailors.

### Rig and layout

Apart from much more sophisticated hull and deck construction, the big changes to the new 505 have been control of the rig. The new P&B 505 rig won both the European (Findell and Johannes Tannel from Germany) and world championships in 2008.

At first glance, the cockpit of Ian Pinnell's 505 has as many things to play with as the cockpit of an airliner. A mass of control lines are led to a battery of



**ABOVE** A mass of control lines are led to a battery of cleats on top of the centreboard case, with all the ends led aft for tensioning.





**ABOVE** The rolled decks make the 505 very comfortable to sail.

**LEFT** The apparent complexity actually makes operation simple, with the boat able to be set up for different crew weights.

**BELOW** Carbon is permitted for foils, tiller, boom and spinnaker pole, but not mast. Ian's Swiss built carbon rudder is very deep with a narrow chord and slim neck.

cleats on top of the centreboard case, with all the ends led aft for shock tensioning. The helmsman not only has precise control of the shape of the mainsail, but can also rake the whole rig fore and aft by adjusting shroud and forestay length while racing round the course. No doubt about it, the P&B 505 is a tweakers' delight with jib, spinnaker and Spectra trapeze lines also controlled by blocks, shocks, cleats and lots of string. For sure it would take a bit of getting used to, but apparent complexity creates operational simplicity with the boat set up for different crew weights.

There is also some superb gear on Ian Pinnell's world championship-winner. The Swiss built carbon rudder is a work of art – very deep with a narrow chord and spectacularly slim neck, which apparently justifies its £535 price tag by keeping the boat tracking true and straight.

### On the water

We met up with Ian Pinnell at Hayling Island SC for a test session on a windy day. How is your boat handling in 30 knots true wind? We had an average of well over 20 knots on the water, gusting towards 30 with a top gust of 31.5 knots recorded by the nearby Cambernet weather station. As Ian commented, 'Some people would have struggled, particularly in waves.' No doubt it helped having a 90kg double world champion hanging on the wire – Ian Mitchell crewed the winning 505 in Denmark in 1997 and at HISC in 2006.



Two crews showed off the boat by tacking it beautifully flat while tacking and into the teeth of a gale, with the loose-footed Technora ODLO4 sail totally depowered, then tacking off downwind and hoisting the square metre monster spinnaker with great nonchalance.

When they were away. The 505 is a glorious planing machine, with the flared hull leaving a minimal area for the boat to sit on as it powers offwind at full blast. In those conditions the 505 is a very quick beast. We were pedal-to-the-metal on a 40hp RIB, as the P&B crew accelerated towards 20 knots and held it there until they had to drop the kite to avoid crashing across East Head.

Whilst I was happy to leave sailing in these wild conditions to a pair of multiple world champions, I can categorically state that the 505 is a superb dinghy to sail. Those rolled decks are very comfortable, the cockpit is just the right size and the crew doesn't need to weigh



90kg to hold the boat down, though it clearly helps in stronger winds.

### The verdict

The 505 is a wonderful 50-year-old design that has been brought up to date with top calibre construction and a

superbly tweakable rig to take on all conditions. It's a high performance sailing machine that appeals to a wide range of ages and is accessible for anyone with reasonable dinghy skills – you don't need to be young or extremely fit, because the boat is essentially forgiving and can be easily depowered.

Racing is available at select events around the world. This year's European Championship will take place at Kiel in Germany during June, followed by the world championship in San Francisco during August. In Britain the 505 attracts a dedicated group of enthusiasts who have raced 40 boats at last year's national championship, which was also won by Pinnell and Gibbon. It's not unlike the International 14 scene, and you do need to travel for the best racing, but could equally race at a home club. ■

**LEFT** The 505 is quite a handful in strong breeze – crew Ian Mitchell is a 90kg double world champion.



Thanks to Hayling Island SC for providing facilities. HISC has a modern clubhouse at the entrance to Chichester Harbour, providing access to protected and open water. The club organises racing for a wide range of classes. [www.hisc.co.uk](http://www.hisc.co.uk)



### INTERNATIONAL 14

The iconic 14ft development class has reinvented itself with twin trapezes, unlimited size spinnaker and 75kg hull. An awe-inspiring chine with a thriving international circuit.

LOA: 4.27m  
Beam: 1.75m  
Sail area: 18.1 sq m  
PN: 850



### OSPREY

Ian Proctor's biggest and fastest dinghy design first appeared in 1953. Hartley Laminates build a superb contemporary version. Limited class racing, but a beautiful boat to sail.

LOA: 5.35m  
Beam: 1.75m  
Sail area: 13.95 sq m  
PN: 940



### RS800

The modern solution to high performance class racing at reasonable cost – twin trapezes, racks and asymmetric spinnaker are part of a one-design package with the added attraction of RS Racing events.

LOA: 4.8m  
Beam: 1.88-2.89m  
Sail area: 16.5 sq m  
PN: 822

## Answer Back

### From Paul Young at Rondar Raceboats

I would like to thank Jeremy and Y&Y for reviewing the boat, and coming to the same conclusion that we have, the 505 is a truly modern, refined, and rewarding dinghy, where the whole is so much more than the sum of the parts. Thanks to both Ians for braving the elements on the day. Ian and Carl's 2008 world title is a great achievement, and they go forwards to join an illustrious list of former winners from around the world.

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