

MARKETPLACE: A HARD-BOTTOM INFLATABLE FROM WALKER BAY



I RECENTLY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET a good look at Walker Bay Boats' new Generation 430, a 14-foot-long, deep-V, rigid inflatable that comes with midship console steering and is priced at \$17,500. While a little big to use as the tender on boats measuring less than about 50 feet, many cruisers who want to water-ski or explore large areas in comfort will have no problem justifying owning this boat.

I was impressed with the fit and finish of the 430; the gelcoat gleams without a visible flaw, and inside the hatches, I noticed that the same care has been taken with the laminate. The white Hypalon tube is smooth enough to be easily cleaned—as I saw when I got my muddy hoofprints all over it—and seems to be constructed very strongly, with handles fore and aft, and stainless-steel grabrails and teak decking built in where they're most needed. A gas-assisted hatch cover that features a cutout to lift over the engine opens to reveal a pair of self-draining coolers in the stern. There are substantial towing eyes on the stem and transom, and pop-up stainless-steel cleats facilitate tying up the boat.

Overall, the feeling I had was that this is a very high-quality craft. Walker Bay (888-449-2553, www.walkerbay.com) must feel the same because it offers a 10-year warranty on the tube and five years on the hull.

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