

MINICAT

inflatable catamaran,
from £2,500 (inc delivery)

PBO TESTED

The MiniCat, already popular in Europe, weighs 40kg in kit form and takes just 30 minutes to assemble and 20 to put away. It lives in a long-ish kit bag (1.3m/4ft 4in long) that is designed to be carried like a rucksack. But MiniCat-UK want you to know: 'It's not a toy...'

'It's got keel fins for directional stability, six battens in the main for maintaining foil shape and the Sports model has a polycarbonate mast to produce greater stiffness in the rig. The materials making up the floats, the trampoline, the sails and rudder are all hard-wearing. After a quick rinse in fresh water and a full dry, there's little to go wrong during years of potential use,' says Rowan Brook, director of MiniCat-UK.

So it's supposed to be a serious boat for pottering about: less maintenance than a moored, or dry-sailed dinghy or dayboat and more trailable than the other main inflatable cat – the 25-year-old Catapult – which is a wider ride but needs a roof-rack.

And in less than 10 knots, on flat, tideless harbour water, it sailed rather well, tacking happily – many cats stall head-to-wind in light airs – and stable enough to snooze on with both sails set (as one of our testers actually did!). MiniCats do have a tendency to turn turtle if you capsize but fitting a righting rope around the mast foot or attaching a flotation device at the masthead should help matters.



PBO tested a pair of MiniCats in Poole Harbour in light airs

And it would only be difficult for small children to right. The boat weighs less than 40kg – easy to carry up the beach.

The price tag reflects its aspiration to be a properly-looked-after little boat that will last a lifetime, but it's also a versatile fun boat for use at the beach or at anchor. MiniCat-UK

has been organising trials all around the country – surfing in Cornwall, running rapids on the Avon (problems with overhead trees) and there's talk of fixing a mount for attaching an outboard engine. MiniCat-UK offers a one-year guarantee and a choice of three models delivered to the door.

www.minicat-uk.com



Next month: Rob tests Mini water SCUBA kit for yachtsmen

THE BOAT

Keen dinghy sailors know the biggest obstacle to sailing is storing the boat and getting it to the water. Thankfully, Neptune's MiniCat is an ultra-portable two-person catamaran with two inflatable hulls – it can even be carried like a backpack. OK, so you won't be using it to host P Diddy style-parties off Monaco, but despite its light weight it's surprisingly robust. From £2,450, firebox.com



MiniCat – UK

One bag weighing less than 40kg contains a unique sailing boat – a catamaran with inflatable hulls! It can be assembled in just 30 minutes and answers all those boat storage problems. With a MiniCat you

can spend your free time sailing without all the usual complications of owning a boat – it fits in your car! www.Minicat-UK.com

Rob Melotti/

BOAT IN A BAG

The Minicat

This two-man, 40kg catamaran collapses into a bag that fits in an average car boot. An hour of erecting later and you'll be sailing stormy waters, home again, across the sea. Ahem. **Clincher: No more mooring fees** £2,500



£2450.00



www.minicat-uk.com
Help Dad be prepared to go sailing whenever he wants with this folding catamaran. Expanding to a three metre multihull, it fits into a car boot and only takes half an hour to assemble.

Minicat folding catamaran

GIRLS AND BUOYS

Surfing champ Sophie 'Hell Yeah' Hellyer hits the waves on four miniature craft



MINICAT
TOP SPEED 10MPH | LENGTH 11FEET | ENGINE 000'S LUNCH
This boat in a bag is your no-fills entry to the elite world of yachts. Weighing only 40kg and stowing into a car boot, the MiniCat assembles much like a flat-pack wardrobe, hopefully with less sweating, but spend 10 minutes of 'slating stick A into slot B', then sail off into the sunset. Lolly cable knit sweater and collapsible captain's hat optional. **SOPHIE'S VERDICT** 'It looks like one of Nicole Richie's handbags, but then you open it, and it's a boat! It's nimble, but very light – we caught the wind and floated off and got an impromptu sight-seeing tour of London via the Thames.'

Minicat, from £2,450.
What it is. A serious two-person catamaran suitable for lakes, rivers or the sea, using inflatable pontoons and lightweight parts that break down and zip into a kitbag you can sling in the boot of your car. Weighs less than 90 pounds, yet can support 38 stone.

How it changes life. If you've always fancied a boat but had neither the money nor the space, this could be the answer.

REGATAS A TODA... MANCHA
He aquí un artículo llamado a democratizar las regatas de verano. Para disfrutar de la vela, ya no hace falta tener plaza en el pantalán ni una economía rumbosa. Sólo un poco de espíritu marinero y 73,60 euros bastan para hacerse con el catamarán hinchable Minicat (www.minicat-uk.com), que pesa 35 kilos y plegado, cabe en el maletero del coche. ¿Se colará alguno de estos intrusos en la Copa del Rey de Palma?

