

# Beyond the Horizon: An Equitable Marriage

HMS discusses the benefits of trailer ownership, reviews the Vanclaes Excelleron GYRO 3500 - 13" - 950 3-axle boat trailer and explains its relationship with PBR's Axopar Cabin 28

In this article, I want to discuss the benefits of trailer ownership, to relate our considered opinion of the Vanclaes trailer currently employed by PBR and, as many of you have asked, to discuss the specifics of our Axopar 28 Cabin, MY Horizon, and how these relate to essential trailer law.

Let me begin by saying, in every sense, that for those who own one, your boat trailer is your working partner, a complement to your boating activities that can offer so much more than simply the ability to get from A to B. Indeed, you can rightly view it as the means by which your boating horizons can

literally be transformed. Rather than being limited to voyaging solely from your home port, a trailer can offer a world of opportunities, allowing one to access a limitless number of new coasts, and seas beyond, effectively, efficiently and with relative ease. This, of course, not only includes accessing your native shores, but - especially when current COVID restrictions allow - even further afield, to include the Continent perhaps.

## Things to consider

But to benefit from the full potential your private boat transportation investment offers you, it's critical to give it the same

degree of care you would the boat itself, because, let's face it, being a purely functional item, a boat trailer can sometimes get overlooked at the expense of its more glamorous, shiny-hulled 'marriage mate'. Furthermore, as some of us will have experienced, there is little more frustrating, few things more dangerous even, than a boat trailer that unexpectedly calls time on its owner. At best, it can put paid to a much anticipated precious day of family boating, or at worst

spell disaster - perhaps causing a jackknife right across the multi-lane system of a busy motorway.

The Vanclaes trailer used to transport PBR's MY Horizon performs a key role in our 'Beyond the Horizon' activities. And in just the manner I've described, it transforms our Axopar into a craft that can be deployed anywhere we

wish without the restraints

of every plan being

subject to its

home port of

MDL Torquay. That said, I

should point out that this particular boat

**Your boat trailer is your working partner, a complement to your boating activities**



**Vanclaes reviewed**

But now, let's move on to the chief matter in hand, namely our review of the Vanclaes Excelleron GYRO 3500 boat trailer. This particular model is a 3500kg braked, nanocoated, three-axle trailer, designed to take boat transportation, as well as launch and recovery, to another level of sophistication and reliability. It's a product designed from the ground up for use in the marine

equipment being carried while on the road. At all times it's important to ensure you don't exceed the legal towing weight relevant to your licence and vehicle type. But this, of course, includes calculating how much fuel and water the boat may have in her tanks while being towed too. Keeping a tally of such things is good practice, but if you are in any doubt, you can always check your all-up weight via a public weighbridge.

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**... to benefit from the full potential your private boat transportation investment offers you, it's critical to give it the same degree of care you would the boat itself**

is on the limits of practical towing and in that sense requires a good deal of experience, not only with regard to towing, but also launch and recovery. (In general, craft up to 25ft in length would normally tend to fall into the typical 'trailer boat' category.) However, the latter is made infinitely easier, safer and more stress-free due to the excellent design and functionality of the Vanclaes trailer itself.

Though I cover this in more detail towards the end of the article, I will say at this point that besides the matter of legal lengths and proportions, it is incumbent upon all trailer owners to ensure that their towing weight is within the legal tolerances. This would include calculating/making allowance for those 'extras' to the basic specification one might have added, be they to the boat or the trailer, as well as any additional kit/



*Launch & Recovery at MDL Torquay*



A boat trailer qualifies as carrying an 'indivisible load of exceptional length' as a boat is an indivisible load and therefore can exceed 7m.

environment. All its components have therefore been chosen specifically, not only with saltwater immersion in mind, but with safety as the essential priority. The latter applies to both the business of launch and recovery and the critical matter of safe road travel thereafter. Such is evident in the inclusion of a non-slip walk ramp that allows dry access to the bow of the vessel when on the slip, and the trailer's gyro roller system too, which moderates the angle of the craft when being winched on and off the trailer. The electric winch system, with its super-sturdy high pivot point and switch control, offers a massive pulling strength of up to 3500kg and also affords the operator increased safety by means of its optional remote control. (The

battery powering the electric winch has a battery life of approximately 12 recoveries before needing to be recharged.) Sealed hubs and disc brakes to prevent saltwater ingress and subsequent seizing, LED lighting designed to withstand immersion, a robust fitted storage box, an insurance-rated fixed lock hitch and a rollered cradle system that ensures the boat's hull suffers no disproportionate pressure points - these and others are just some of the standout features that make this non-corrodible, stainless steel-framed boat trailer a true world-class product and leader in its field.

### In summary

In terms of its functionality, the Vanclaes Excelleron GYRO 3500 scores supremely and shows itself

in every detail to be the work of a company that not only understands the peculiar and specific needs of boat transportation but has made it its entire business to address the long-held shortcomings seen in so many other designs sold today. Offering such a high-quality solution, mind you, doesn't come without cost. If purchasing Vanclaes' top-of-the-range model with all the extras available is something you're considering putting on your shopping list, then be prepared for an outlay in the region of 19K. This spec is not necessarily competitively priced, I admit, but neither is it designed to be in its all-singing, all-dancing guise. However, to be fair, if ordered in a more basic form, this particular trailer model can be priced at £9,500, and in addition, Vanclaes even produce a basic-spec trailer for a craft of this length for as

**Photos right:** Top to bottom:  
1. Unique GYRO roller system 2. Powerful electric winch 3. Central non-slip walk ramp  
4. Handy fixed storage box  
**Above:** Preparing the Axopar for towing, with end caps removed (see Towing Widths box)

little as £6,900.

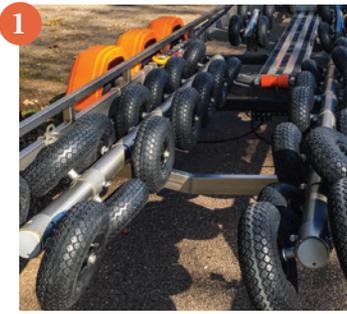
In our view, the Vanclaes is in a class of its own and is also quite probably the only boat trailer you'll come across that actually has the ability to turn heads when rolling into view.

### Towing the Axopar

In this final section, we'll address the question many of you have asked: 'Why and how can PBR legally tow the Axopar 28 Cabin?' This information is not meant to provide an overview of all trailer and towing legislation, but rather to simply pinpoint why we are able to tow the Axopar 28.

### Towing lengths

A boat trailer qualifies as carrying an 'indivisible load of exceptional length' as a boat is an indivisible load. A table in Regulation 7 of the



boat to be towed by a car or other vehicle that is not a goods vehicle over 3500kg GVW. Note, however, that Regulation 7 (5) (b) still limits the length of (i) the towing vehicle to a maximum of 9.2m, and (ii) the length of the towing vehicle and trailer combination to a maximum of 25.9m.

Our Discovery (4.956m), plus Vanclaes trailer, plus Axopar 28 overhang totals around 16m total train length and therefore is well within the 25.9m maximum length.

### TOWING WEIGHTS

- A) Drivers must have suitable car licences to tow.
- B) The laden weight of a braked trailer must not exceed 3500kg.
- C) The maximum towing weight of the Discovery is 3500kg.
- D) The trailer must not exceed the unladen weight of the towing vehicle.
- E) The gross train weight for the Discovery is 6760kg.

## The electric winch offers a massive pulling strength of up to 3500kg ...

PBR drivers have the correct driving licences for towing. (A)

The laden weight of the trailer is around 3300kg (Axopar 1940kg, engine 272kg, trailer 950kg, plus allowance for extras), which means we are very close and therefore have to limit our fuel and gear on board when towing. (For an accurate weight of your laden trailer we would recommend checking on a weighbridge.) (B&C)

The trailer weight is around 950kg, the unladen weight of the Discovery is 2437kg, so the trailer is well within the limit. (D)

The gross train weight (GTW) adds the 3300kg + 2437kg = 5737kg, which allows just over 1000kg for kit and people within the 6760kg allowance. The GTW will fluctuate with the fuel, kit and personnel travelling, so a close watch is necessary to stay within the limits. (E)



### TOWING WIDTHS

- A) The trailer must not exceed 2.55m wide.
- B) The load must not exceed 2.90m wide.

The Vanclaes trailer is 2.30m wide, so within the limit. (A)

The Axopar's specification width is 2.957m, which would be over the limit. But by removing the end caps (by means of two screws each side) to the bathing platform rubbing strake each side, this reduces the width to 2.894m, just within the limit. (B)

## Suitability for towing

For the work that PBR has planned for the Axopar 28, towing will be necessary at times, and therefore it is possible with the above measures to tow with a Land Rover Discovery. However, for ease of towing and the reassurance of being well within the limits, we would suggest that a craft of up to 7.5m would be more suited to frequent towing.

## Personal responsibility

Each individual vehicle, boat and trailer combination will be different, along with the driving licences held. We at PBR are not experts on traffic law and we therefore recommend that all readers check the regulations affecting their particular set-up. **The RYA has published an excellent guide on its website at [rya.org.uk](http://rya.org.uk) – go to Knowledge & Advice, then Regulations, and select Towing and 'Roof Racking Boats in the UK & Abroad.'** This downloadable PDF gives a broad overview of the regulations on towing boats and is a useful reference tool. ■

Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, as amended, contains the details of the maximum length permitted for various sorts of vehicle and trailer combinations. Item 9 of that table does normally restrict a trailer towed by a vehicle that is not a goods vehicle over 3500kg gross vehicle weight (GVW) to a maximum length of 7m, not including the towing hitch arrangements. However, regulation 7 (3A) (a) disapplies the requirements of that table in a number of areas, including where a trailer is constructed and normally used for the conveyance of 'indivisible loads of exceptional length'. In this context, 'exceptional length' means longer than the regulations would normally permit. This exception would permit a trailer longer than 7m in length specially constructed to carry indivisible loads such as a

*The Vanclaes unique GYRO roller system keeping the boat level on recovery*



**RYA** Scan to read RYA Guide to Towing Boats