

THE INFLATABLE SAILING DINGHY: FROM BAG TO BAY IN 20 MINUTES.

If an inflatable monohull is more to your liking, look no further than the 10-foot, six-inch Tiwal (pronounced *tee-wall*) which starts at \$5400.

The product of a French industrial designer whose father wouldn't let her take his big boat out on her own, the Tiwal has the unique distinction of being the only sailboat ever to be displayed and sold at the prestigious Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City.

Reached at her headquarters in western France, designer Marion Excoffin explains the design challenges she and her team faced when first conceptualizing the Tiwal: "I am not a boat designer," she says in heavily accented English. "That could be an advantage in a project such as this. I approached the challenge from a fresh perspective, and the result is a product that is easy to transport, easy to set up, and easy to sail."

Excoffin opted to utilize a tough PVC with a UV-protective layer for the outer skin of the boat, hiking racks made from lightweight aluminum, and a carbon mast and foils. A lightweight rod, rather than a boom, is used for the foot of the sail, and it won't do too much damage to the heads of the unwary. The key to the sailboat's performance is the V-shaped hull.

"This was the most challenging aspect of the design," the 33-year-old designer says. The name comes from the Old Breton word *divall*, meaning "to protect" and emphasizes the boat's safety.

The whole shebang weighs 110 pounds. Excoffin claims that most people can assemble the boat in around 20 minutes.

Chesapeake area sailor Eric Tsibertzopolus, 47, is a believer. He owns two Tiwals: one that he sails on the Potomac and the Chesapeake; the



■ The Tiwal in action. Photo by Stephanie Cande



other, which he sails in the Aegean Sea. Not bad.

Tsibertzopolus has been sailing out of the Severn Sailing Association since 2002. He saw the Tiwal at the 2014 Annapolis Sailboat Show and bought his the following summer. He likes the simplicity of the design.

“For me, the Tiwal is all about utility. When I cannot find crew or if the wind’s too much to singlehand the Johnson 18, I load the Tiwal into the back of the car and go. I can sail off a floating dock, a ramp, or the beach. Lake, river, the Bay, the Aegean Sea: you name it, I’ve done it all.”

His two sons, ages 9 and 11, are experienced Tiwal skippers as well.

For the past two years, Tsibertzopolus has packed his Tiwal aboard an airplane and taken it to France for the Tiwal Cup, an international gathering of Tiwal owners that is part regatta, part floating party.

Excoffin describes her Tiwal Cup events this way: “It is all about conviviality. We get 40 or 50 owners from all over the world and throw a big bash in a really fun location. That’s what Tiwal



■ Marion Excoffin,
the French founder
of the Tiwal.

is all about: enjoying the water and friends with a minimum of hassle!”

The eye-catching Tiwal comes in one color combination: yellow and black. Excoffin says there are more than 900 Tiwals happily plying the water all over the world. About 15 percent of the boats are sold as toys aboard superyachts. Check it out at tiwal.com. ■

TIWAL 3 SPECS

Length: 10 ft. 6 in.

Weight: 110 lbs.

Sail Area: 75 sq. ft.

Base Price: \$5700

Capacity: 440 lbs.