



£ TOP FOR VALUE

Barton DO550

£57.09

Although these clutches are designed for lighter duty than some, they are still capable of holding a half-tonne load, which is perfectly adequate for most cruising yachts up to 10m or so.

They are made from impact-resistant plastic with an anodised aluminium mechanism. It works by pushing a straight, spring-loaded, serrated cam against a serrated base – both of which are fairly sharp-edged. This tends to flatten the line at the point of grip, which can induce excessive wear on braided-line coverings after a while.

However, the principle is well-proven and there's not a lot to go wrong. The entry and exit fairleads are nicely chamfered stainless-steel inserts, allowing an angle of up to 25° offset in the lines if absolutely necessary.

The DO550 is simple to use, lightweight and has a low profile. It is also easily dismantled for servicing, by undoing four crosshead bolts. The handle has a pop-out blank allowing rigid plastic labels to be inserted, instead of sticky labels that can often peel off.

Its simple mechanism allows the line to be released under load and it gives a reassuring click when fully engaged, although I don't really see the point of the halfway position, which still leaves the line free with the handle half-closed.

Verdict: Simple to use and good holding, but not so kind to lines.

- ▶ **Holding:** ★★★★★
- ▶ **Slippage:** ★★★★★
- ▶ **Build:** ★★★★★
- ▶ **Mechanism:** ★★★★★

www.bartonmarine.com

The DO550's marine-grade aluminium is strong, light and impact-resistant



Karver KJ10

£234

This is an unusual and quite innovative design that utilises a completely different principle to most existing rope clutches. The mechanism closely resembles the jaws of a drill chuck, in that it grips the lines from three sides, which means its holding power and lack of any slippage are excellent. It's also likely to inflict much less wear on lines than any of the two-sided devices.

Despite this device receiving a Special Mention in the 2013 DAME awards at METS, the overriding view of the test panel was that it suffers from

'style over substance' syndrome. It will take lines up to exactly 10mm diameter, not a micron more, so burned-off ends are enough to stop the line from being inserted. To lock the jaws open and thread the line you pull on a small bar connected at each end via wire to the clutch. Then to engage the clutch you have to pull on a tiny, T-shaped plastic handle attached to the clutch by two 1mm diameter cords. It's just far too fiddly and difficult to operate, and even more so with cold or gloved fingers.

It also won't release under a load greater than 100kg and we all felt it wouldn't be long before the dangly knob got ripped off, rendering it useless. It looks well made from smart anodised aluminium, is light and easy to install and disassemble. But it's quite wide (50mm) and only available as a single clutch.

Verdict: Clever and nicely made, but impractical and expensive.

- ▶ **Holding:** ★★★★★
- ▶ **Slippage:** ★★★★★
- ▶ **Build:** ★★★★★
- ▶ **Mechanism:** ★★★★★

www.allspars.co.uk

