



BOAT TEST



QUINTREX 580 FREEDOM CRUISER

Warren Steptoe has fun with Quintrex's new all-rounder.

The style and performance theme runs throughout the Freedom Cruiser.



QUINTREX aren't coy about their intention to win over potential buyers of fibreglass boats. The 580 Freedom Cruiser, sporting Quintrex's trademark aluminium hull, is certain to do just that. It's a production boat that goes closer than ever before to the standards of finish found in quality GRP boats and gives nothing away in performance.

Little welding is evident without sticking your head underneath the hull; the whole package runs quietly and smoothly. The 580 Freedom Cruiser's demeanour is almost dignified—it's so fuss free. The only thing pulling it up short is that it's too bloody fast to carry any kind of toffee-nosed body language.

The 580 Freedom Cruiser—with the optional 220 hp fuel-injected engine (a 190 hp carbled V6 is standard)—has ample amounts of sheer grunt and plenty of top speed for social skiing. The top speed of 43.3 knots or close to 50 mph, also makes it perfect for tubing.

The 580 Freedom Cruiser has comfortable seating

QUINTREX 580 FREEDOM CRUISER

Builder: Telwater, Coomera, Qld
Website: www.quintrex.com.au

Configuration: Sterndrive bowrider
Hull materials: Aluminium, 4 mm bottom, 2 mm topsides; ply decks
Length: 6.3 m
Length overall: 6.55 m
Length on trailer: Approx 7.15 m
Height on trailer: Approx 2.17 m
Beam: 2.38 m
Deadrise: Variable
Boat/motor weight: 1,100 kg
Fuel capacity: 95 lt
Fuel tank: Underfloor, side deck fill
Engine rating: 190 or 210 hp MPI 4.3 litre V6 Mercruiser
Max load: 8 adults
Tested power: 220 hp
Propeller: 21-inch pitch aluminium

Standard features: (In Quintrex Instant Boating Package) Quintrex accessory kit; boarding ladder; bowrail, windscreen grab rail and side rails; carpeted deck; cockpit lights; compass; deluxe bow lounge; deluxe stern lounge; GME GX600 VHF marine radio; Lowrance X52 sounder; moulded dash with glove box; outboard stern deck; painted hull and graphics; power steering; premier bucket seats; Quintrex TQ61 trailer; sports steering wheel; stern deck; stowage lockers each side in stern plus 117 lt compartment forward and 60 lt compartment aft (underfloor); transducer bracket; upholstered sun bathing pad; towing hooks; three-piece curved windscreen; 4.3 lt 190 hp Mercruiser; Mercruiser Alpha sterndrive leg

Factory options: Bimini top and ski tube rack; bimini top and clears with full storm covers; convertible bow casting deck; GME GR 968 AM/FM/CD/MP3 sound system and speakers; Lowrance upgrade; Mercury Smart Craft instrumentation; two-tone paintwork; 4.3 lt MPI 220 hp Mercruiser

Notable Features: Best finish I've seen on a production aluminium boat; smoothest, quietest sterndrive aluminium boat I've tested; ample performance for wake toys; comfortable seating; Quintrex variable deadrise Millennium hull, Maxi 2 transom

Negatives: Fishing amenities sacrificed for water sport ones—but some may prefer it this way!

Pricing: Quintrex Instant Boating Package with 190 hp Mercruiser, \$41,775. Our test boat, \$45,000 with 220 hp MPI Mercruiser and GME sound system

PERFORMANCE

RPM	Speed (kt)	Comments
600	2.4	Slowest trolling speed
1800	7.7	Minimum planing speed
2000	10.4	
2500	21.8	Economy cruising range
3000	25.0	"
3500	30.2	"
4000	36.9	Economy cruising range
4800	40.4	Upwind WOT
4800	43.3	Downwind WOT



for three couples and a few kids. Atop a lengthy list of features is a sun bathing lounge, aft swim deck with water access ladder, an under-deck ski locker, as well as a great sound system and 12 volt refrigerator on the options list. This boat has enough looks and sophistication for anyone to proudly park it in their driveway. I bet no one will notice (even if they care) it's an aluminium boat.

Despite the 580 combining the best of both worlds—aluminium and fibreglass—you might be wondering why this boat appears in a specialist fishing magazine. The 580 Freedom Cruiser is suited to fishing because a removable bow casting deck, similar to the one so popular in Quintrex's top selling Freedom Sport range, is optional in the Freedom Cruiser range.

Simply remove the bow lounge seat cushions, drop in the decking and you have a more than usable casting deck—in a boat with all of the preceding attributes!

Lots of people who fish also like towing the kids on tubes, cruising about with friends and simply enjoy boating (whether or not it involves fishing at the time). This could be just the boat for people like that!

On the water

Quintrex's famed variable dead-rise Millennium hulls have been around long enough to need no elaboration—they are the standard setters in choppy water rides among aluminium boats. I've been in a lot of Millennium hulls since their

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A sporty wheel and dash still leave room for the necessary electronics.

Quintrex's new 580 Freedom Cruiser sets new standards of finish, and of quietness on the water for aluminium boats.

Plush bow lounge? The seat cushions come out to be replaced by a removable casting deck.

introduction and this boat sets a new standard again for a lack of water-against-hull noise.

Efficient sound insulation around the low-set inboard motor makes this boat a notably quiet one, regardless of what the hull is made of.

The package

Any rev head will tell you there simply 'ain't no substitute for cubes,' as the old saying goes. The way this boat performs is proof of that. An equivalent outboard may match it against the clock, but with around a litre less displacement, it will need another thousand odd revs to do so.

The 4.3 lt V6 Mercruiser in the 580 Freedom Cruiser sounds almost lazy by comparison. It delivers sublime performance with its hands in its pockets. I've been in a few sterndrive powered aluminium boats of late and none of them hold a candle to this hull/power pairing for quietness, smoothness and lack of vibration and resonance.

You have to experience a ride in this boat yourself to believe how civilized it is. I bet you'll be every bit as impressed as I was!

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