

Quintrex 5.90 Top Ender

By Andrew Paltridge

On first glance of this brand new model you want to grab the fishing sticks and power out to some productive grounds. That's how I felt anyway when I had the opportunity to jump aboard with Steven Leigh and Jim Runge of Sugar City Marine in Mackay. Sugar City Marine is a major contributor in the Quintrex family and through their Central Queensland Dealership they have collected numerous awards over the years. These include Quintrex Queensland Dealer of the Year and Quintrex National Retail Finance Dealer for three years running. Their commitment to the Quintrex range of boats is supported by Mercury outboards. This relationship has pushed Sugar City Marine to a Platinum Plus Mercury Outboard Dealership for the past eight years. With the effectiveness of the Instant Boating Package and around 50 models in stock it's very easy for head scratching buyers to narrow down a particular package that will ideally suit their needs.

The Top Ender range of boats is purpose built for fishing folk and typifies the style of fishing associated with its namesake. Making the run from the boat ramp to the mouth then heading up or down the coast across shallow, wind chopped bays or out to reef and islands is essentially what a Top Ender is all about. Lure fishing and live baiting throughout these regions has helped refine the Top Ender internal layout. It's a boat that displays good handling characteristics, both underway and at rest, can stow enough gear for a full crew and get home safely if the inshore breeze picks up in the afternoon. However, the requirements for fishos in the North really don't differ too greatly when you consider our southern counterparts. We still require the same kind of stable platform, effective storage, and comfortable ride to and from the fishing grounds to target their species from. For that reason, the Top Ender models display a number of attractive options for fishos no matter what part of the country they are in.

The 5.90 is the latest and largest model of the range and despite the Top Enders configuration and versatility, the sheer dimensions of this particular model will effectively dictate its use. This boat is destined to travel well clear of the local boat ramp and will most likely have the deep blue on its agenda. It's worth mentioning that Top Enders begin with 4.20 tiller steer models, have a number of side and centre console configurations and climax with the 5.90. So basically, there is a model and size applicable to a broad range

of environments. Top Enders also utilize key performance and safety features such as the millennium hull, flared bow and level floatation. This combination provides exceptional handling and stability while providing peace of mind in rough conditions.

The 5.90 is a fantastic boat. Why? Because a large open hull with good all round vision and centre console configuration will most likely be the next step in our family boating experience. If it's all about room and fishing space then the 5.90 has it. I can picture the family sitting comfortably on the back lounge while the camping and fishing gear is strategically stowed around the boat. Probably spend the night on one of the island beaches, do a bit of snorkeling. Anyway, if I seem a little excited or distracted about the 5.90 it's because it joins a small number of potentials on my short list.

The weather we encountered on the morning of the trial run was best described as a "one in a one hundred" day. These are just a handful of special days throughout the year that lend themselves to perfect boating weather. They are often complimented with little more than a 5knot breeze, coincide with busy midweek schedules and are accompanied by test trial wannabe fishing writers armed with camera and note pad instead of a more favourable arsenal of tackle trays and fishing rods. Unfortunately, these idyllic conditions do little to challenge the rough riding abilities of any craft so we settled for pulling up and having a chat about the boats features.

Best described as huge, the underfloor storage beneath the casting deck has the ability to conceal a large number of necessary items for a full day on the water. Tackle, safety gear and spare clothes will start to fill the void but you'll find there will be plenty of room to spare. The anchor well is moulded and no doubt will accommodate the odd knock from hastily stowed ground tackle. The raised casting deck is well proportioned and at an ideal height to cast into feeding schools if this is your thing. Manoeuvring about on the deck provides a very safe feeling although the side deck height is still low enough not to be obtrusive when attempting a cast. I'm yet to feel comfortable in less than perfect conditions on a casting deck that does not have support somewhere up to about the middle of my shins. Low profile split bow rails provide some support should it be required. There would be very little intrusion of the canopy when attempting a cast from the bow. It sits back far enough but still provides enough shade at the helm. There have been several times



Jim and Steve enjoy the 5.90 on the Pioneer River.

in the past when a hurried cast from the bow of other boats has seen the lure accidentally catch the leading edge of the canopy! At the other end of the boat the canopy is far enough back to lean into the rod during a heavy strike without smashing your graphite stick into the aluminium frame.

A big centre console is a great boat to be in if fishing is your passion. You've got so much fishing room although a small compromise is protection from the elements. The optional bimini will do it's best to protect you from the sun and it neatly wraps up in its own envelope when not in use. If it rains, you are simply going to get wet. However, that massive storage up front provides more than enough room to stow several rain jackets.

The centre console is uncluttered and from factory includes electronic additions such as a Lowrance X135 Sounder and GX600 VHF radio. The opportunity is available to upgrade electronics. Hydraulic steering points the 135hp Optimax Direct Fuel Injected outboard in the right direction. This motor is mid ranged for the 5.90 and the boat will perform with as little as 115hp right through to 150hp. Smartcraft gauges mounted in clear view on the console track and display vital statistics to the driver. This information from Mercury motors can also be displayed on selected sounder and GPS units. A 120 litre fuel tank provides good range and options are available for a secondary 63 litre tank. This would be at the expense of the under floor storage behind the helm.

Side pockets are those revolutionary Quintrex moulded panels that accommodate drink holder, speaker mounts, some storage for small items such as sunscreen, pliers, repellent etc. and down turned led cabin lights. The floor of the 5.90 has a handy storage / fish kill area immediately behind the seat sockets to the helm. There are four more seat positions located for strategic weight positioning while underway or at rest. The 5.90 sports the latest transom design from Quintrex called the M3. While avoiding a comparison review with previous models this design clearly provides a high level of comfort for passengers as well as better access into the boat. The padded coaming

extends around the transom bulkhead at thigh height so not only acts as backrest when the rear lounge is installed but also as a support when wrestling fish or bracing yourself in rough water. Quintrex also claim their new 'soft touch' deck grip on the transom boarding platform allows keen fishos to get right out the back of the boat and fight their fish. It would definitely aid swimmers getting back into the boat as will the telescopic stainless boarding ladder. A live bait tank is neatly situated in the transom, however you can elect to have a transom door instead. Obviously the live bait tank will have to go but one option includes fitting a live well into the casting platform. The other alternative from Quintrex and the M3 transom is a live bait

tank, cutting board and ski pole all set up to slide effortlessly into the transom. This innovative design extends the useability of the 5.90 and can be installed / removed within seconds. Overall, the transom set up on the 5.90 is very spacious and uncluttered.

The 5.90 Top Ender is a serious fishing boat and the rear lounge set up adds a touch of comfort that's sure to please buyers wanting to impress the better half or stop the young ones whinging when having a day out on the water. It's size will dominate local rivers however islands and parts of the reef will sit comfortably within range. By design it's a fishing rig but subtle touches will make any on water activity pleasurable with the new 5.90.



Quintrex and Mercury combine for an effective boating package.



Quintrex tandem braked trailer is part of the instant boating package.



Steven Leigh of Sugar City Marine shows there is more than enough room to stow more than just the essentials.