

Quintrex 430 Top Ender



The latest addition to Quintrex's popular Top Ender tinnie series has all the ingredients for economical and enjoyable fishing. Test report James Hill, photos Ian Macrae.

With tougher economic times about, it seems fishing enthusiasts are re-focusing back onto the smaller sized boat like never before.

Quintrex has been quick to see the trend last summer and recently came out with a swag of new 'economy' models. The pick of the bunch of these is without a doubt the Quintrex 430 Top Ender. This pretty little rig has all you'd ever want for inshore estuary fishing and has the added attraction in 2009 of a Millennium hull and flared bow.

Quintrex pioneered the Top Ender range back in 1993 and has been selling them like hotcakes ever since. However, this boat designed for tropical northern Australian fishing now appeals to a much broader army than just barra fishos.

The highly practical mix of sturdy vee-bow hull, reasonably high freeboard and flat interior floors makes it great for lure casting to a whole range of species. So whether it's plastics on flathead or metals on sea salmon, this is a top rig for sure.

Apart from slightly more width between bow chines, these are fairly typical boats for coastal, estuary fishing. That means Top Enders are suitable for forays into semi-open waters, or even around the local headland on good days.

The original Top Ender model stemmed from a demand by Darwin fishos for a boat that would have the room and good casting platform of a punt – but with better rough water ability. In short, they needed a hybrid design and that's what Quintrex delivered in 1993.

Like the iconic Volkswagen Beetle, not too much has changed within the Top Ender range. However, that said, the latest 430 Top Ender does sport a few subtle improvements.

The chief improvement is the addition of the more sophisticated Millennium hull that gives you bow hollows, plus topside bow flare to cut through choppy waters more easily and make for a softer, drier ride.

The 430 also features more modern touches like a roto-moulded plastic anchor locker and rear live bait well. It's really quite an impressive little craft and makes you wonder why you would really want anything bigger.

Other great features include composite honeycomb alloy hatches and the latest USA slot-in pedestal seats. It's also an open interior that's



just right for two people to fish creek tributaries because the hull is not too big or heavy to manoeuvre.

The split-level interior with forward casting area is just perfect for the modern style of lure fishing and has plenty of stowage under the deck for your fishing gear.

This particular rig slips in just under the \$20,000 mark so you could say it is pretty affordable boating. The retail price is \$19,872 before you add the dealer delivery and freight charges. I have to mention this because freight cost really does play a significant part in the final cost, and you can't really talk about a 'national' price in a country as large as Australia.

A few months back we caught up with this appealing Top Ender model for a test on Gold Coast waters.

Design: At an overall length of 4.41m and 2m beam, the 430 Top Ender is quite a roomy boat. Best of all, it's virtually 100 per cent fishing space and is easy to tow behind your car or 4WD.

This model is rated to carry four people at most, so Dad, Mum and the kids could have plenty of fun fishing and exploring the waterways.

However, what the Top Ender is really about is cast and retrieve style fishing and in this respect more likely to have only one, or two people aboard. And it does that well with a casting deck up front that can take one of the two slot-in pedestal seats provided.

The hull features a slightly fuller bow than the standard Quintrex, however,

with the addition of the Millennium bow entry it delivers a very sophisticated level of ride in choppy waters.

The painted topsides feature a clinker pattern and are 1.6mm gauge. Meanwhile, you have a 2mm gauge bottom with unpainted pressed strakes.

Sensibly, the hull bottom is protected by both a small external keel and small chine edges. These also help the directional stability of the boat when you on the drift.

Adding further to the hull strength is internal framing as well as welded side decks and extra internal bracing. You also get underfloor foam flotation, however, only to the basic flotation standard with a maximum load of 480kg.

Hull weight is 230kg, while the trail package is around 980kg and comfortably within the tow capacity of a cars like the Mazda 6, Honda Accord or standard Camry 2.4-litre.

It goes without saying 430 Top Ender is the sort of boat that's easy to park at home and wheel onto the lawn if you've ran out of driveway space.

Performance: We had a bit of wave chop around the day of our test, plus some rain threatening from the south. Not the best day to be out on the water in an open tinnie, however, we enjoyed our spin in the new 430 Top Ender.

I was particularly pleased with the way this Quintrex tinnie came onto the plane quite easily and quickly. Keeping in mind we had a four-stroke motor on the transom it was a very impressive performance and suggested fuel consumption will be very, very thrifty.

The story continued to get better as I took the tiller steering arm and found the craft to be lots of fun underway and very responsive.

There's no doubt the combination of a tiller-steered outboard and rear pedestal seat makes the Top Ender superbly suited to buzzing about inshore waters. You not only enjoy a softer ride sitting in the back of the boat, but also better overall view and sharp steering control.

I've long believed that tiller steering is the way to go in smaller boats, especially if you want to maximise fishing space.

Our test boat had the manual start Mercury EFI 30hp four-stroke. However, you can also get an electric tiller start that makes it even more user-friendly, especially when operating the boat on your own.

I had no trouble with the left-hand steering arrangement since I'm a south-paw myself. However, none of the right-handers complained so I assume everyone finds this setup easy to take.

Given the size I thought the 430 Top Ender might be a touch tippy with both crew to one side – but it handled it well. Certainly, this model is stable enough for stand up casting - even on the for'ard casting deck. And that's probably all you'd ever expect of a boat this small.

Power: The Quintrex range offers complete boat/motor/trailer packages with the Mercury or Mariner range of motors. It's still possible to also get them with other motors brands, but that depends on the dealer you're going through.

I was certainly impressed with the performance of the Mercury 30hp EFI four-stroke and I found it started first go without a murmur and ran quietly and smoothly right through the rev range.



Performance figures with the electronic fuel-injected motors were as follows:

- Low speed plane 13 knots
- Mid range speed 18 knots
- Top range speed 24 knots

The Top Ender comes standard with a portable 25-litre fuel tank, however, there is the option of an in-floor 50-litre tank as well. You also get a plastic battery locker in the rear seat, side switch panel and navigation lights.

Interior: It's the attention to detail that helps Quintrex retain their market leadership in tinnies. And this new Top Ender doesn't disappoint with features like a welded bow anchor roller and split bow rails designed to help feed the anchor line to the correct spot.

The craft also has its own self-draining anchor well, roto-moulded in plastic to stop chain rattle and give you an easier to clean surface. Behind this you find the large cockpit with flat floor raised into a casting deck up front.

The latter is no more than step-height so it's very easy to move around the boat, especially when you have a hookup and are trying to concentrate on keeping the fish.

There is an extruded curved coaming right around the inner cockpit edge and carpeted locker under the fore casting deck with web tabs to open.

The latter is large enough to support quite a lot of personal fishing gear.

Moving further back we find raised side pocket for fishing gear on the port-hand side of cockpit. There's also low hand rails towards the stern, which give you some added support when steering the boat, or perhaps getting aboard.

The side rails are also good for attaching keeper-nets and can take extra clam-on rod holders for trolling. However, the boat is not short on fishing gear and comes with four rod holders (two aside).

There are four seat slot positions in all, plus two skipper fold-down pedestal seats that are easy to re-position. Besides this you have the built-in rear thwart, which could be used as a rear casting deck. The latter compartment incorporates the portable fuel tank rack, live-bait well and battery locker.



The interior space, front and rear casting decks, is 2.1m by 1.5m width.

Summary: Quintrex is onto a winner again with the latest 430 Top Ender. It's an attractively presented craft that gives you true sport-fishing capacity up to estuary level.

The ability to handle more open water wave chop gives it a lot of versatility and as such makes it ideal for many coastal dwelling Aussies.

These boats are quite well finished and feature a very comprehensive range of accessories to further

enhance the owner's enjoyment. You can order from the factory an under-floor fuel tank, electric bow thruster motor, transom step and a Lowrance X52 sounder.

You can even order the option of a side steering console with electric start motor but I reckon that defeats the real appeal of this boat. If you want to spend the money, go for the extra live tank in the front casting deck and a decent side-scan sounder. Then you'll really be ready to rock and roll on your next fishing trip.

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BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

Supplied with Mercury 30hp EFI 4-stroke, Quintrex trailer, tie-downs, painted hull, carpeted floor, two pedestal seats, live bait tank, motor well, anchor well, four rod holders, electric accessory kit and basic inshore safety kit \$19,872 excluding dealer and freight costs. Further information Quintrex ph 07 5585 9898.

SPECIFICATION CHART

Brand	Quintrex	Stacer	Brooker	Allycraft	Bermuda
Model	430 Topender	429 Nomad	410 Safari	410 Kakadu	430 Discovery
Material	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy
Style	open	open	open	open	open
Length	4.4m	4.3m	4.2m	4.1m	4.3m
Beam	2m	1.9m	1.8m	1.9m	1.8m
Power as tested	Mercury30	Mercury30	Mercury30	Mercury30	Mercury40
Hull weight	230kg	260kg	210kg	260kg	300kg
Fuel capacity	portable	50L	portable	portable	portable

STAR RATING

Finish	★★★★	Helm Set-up	★★★★
Fitout	★★★★	Fishability	★★★★★
Ride	★★★★	Safety Features	★★★★
Dryness	★★★★	Value for Money	★★★★★

*Data ESTIMATED by the TBF team when accurate information is unavailable. Maximum star rating 5 stars.