



# Quintrex unveils 2009 range

Quintrex has put the focus of its popular tinnies firmly back on affordable boating. James Hill reports.

**D**espite all the ups and downs in the boating market, Quintrex remains our number one brand of aluminium boat and our biggest selling trailer boat range.

And the reasons for this are not hard to fathom. Year after year the Gold Coast brand keeps ahead of the game in terms of the latest designs, well presented finish and professional marketing.

And it seems Quintrex has not lost its magic touch. This biggie of the 'tinnie' business is well aware that the present market conditions are tough. In fact, it hardly needs its market research to figure the market has swung heavily to smaller, more affordable and fishing-oriented boats this year.

In contrast to the previous summer when larger, more expensive tinnie

models ruled the roost, it's the small tinnie models that have made a big comeback. This shift in market sentiment has seen Quintrex make a big push into smaller model tinnies this year.

Realising it had to get back to its fishing roots, Quintrex has made some key changes. One is to introduce the famous flared bow to models like the Top Ender 430 and the Escape runabouts from 430 upwards.

Quintrex National Marketing Manager Damien Duncan points out the flared bow really helps the boat power through hard riding, choppy conditions. It throws the spray out wide and helps make for a drier ride.

Previously, Quintrex was pushing hard into the sport cruiser market, especially with the introduction of bow-

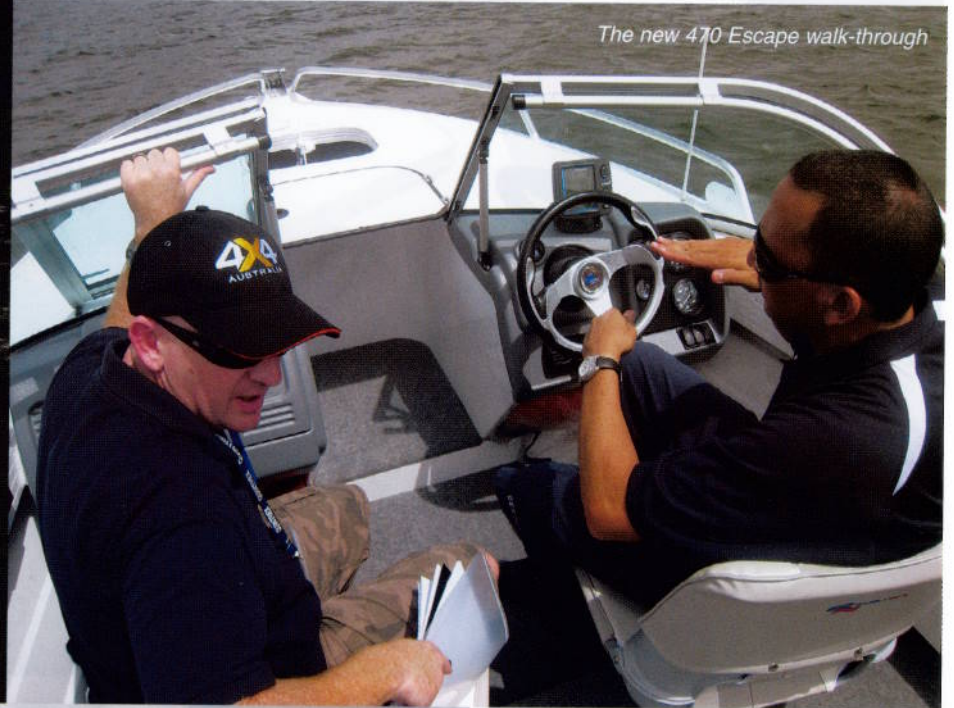
rider models and sports sterndrives that had a distinct speedboat look. However, without dropping these models the emphasis this year is back on fishing – and saving money!

At the 2009 media launch back in March boating journalists were able to see and sample several new Quinnies firsthand courtesy of the big boat builder. The water conditions weren't all that flash thanks to the influence of Cyclone Hamish but we journalists battled on because someone has to do this dirty work!

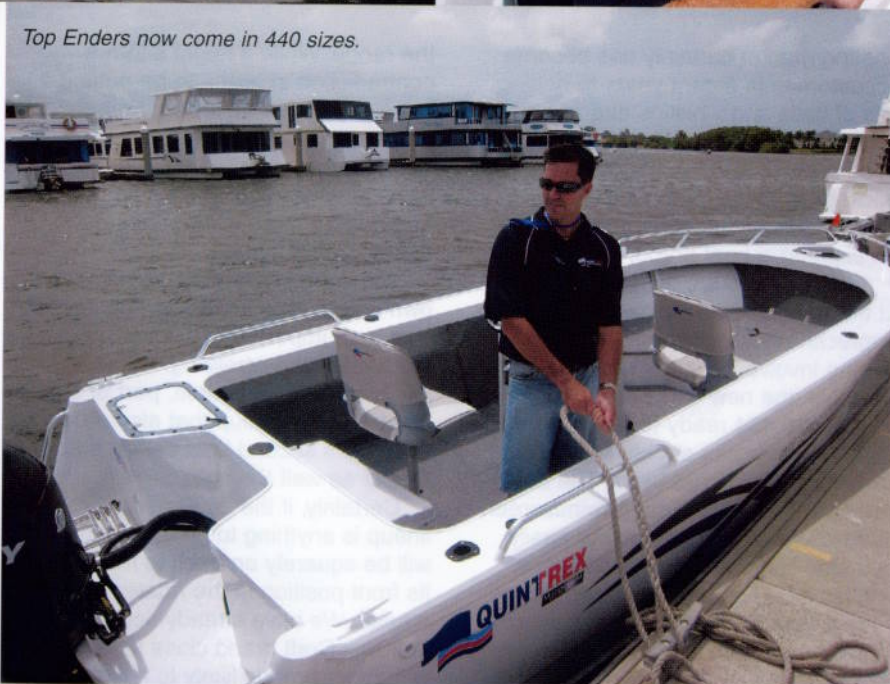
One of the all-round favourites of the media pack was the new Top Ender 610. This large centre console is an impressive craft and seems excellent value for just \$48,522 ready-to-go with 115hp Mercury four-stroke outboard.



The big 610 Top Ender



The new 470 Escape walk-through



Top Enders now come in 440 sizes.

dollar mansions. Along the way I got the chance to sample the new 430 and 520 Classic Centre console model. For my money the 430 Top Ender is the best value craft around and by far one of the nicest little-rigs I've driven shot-gun on for a while.

As an open, tiller-steered boat package, the 430 Top Ender is exactly what a lot of fishing fellas are looking for today. It's quite a roomy craft and easily copes with its four-person capacity so it's all food for the odd family picnic mission.

With an electric start Mercury 30hp four-stroke on the transom the 430 Top Ender was also a delight to drive, if not a fun craft to travel up a river way at speed – especially with the flared bow feature. For approximately \$19,548 before dealer delivery charges, this seems like a rather nice package.

Yes, I wouldn't mind having one of these new 430 Top Ender models in my driveway, or better still, at the end of my dock of a getaway shack somewhere north of Brisbane.

Joining this model is also the slightly bigger 440 Top Ender that has a five person capacity and runs a 40hp Mercury electric-start four-stroke. This is similarly excellent buying and a great all rounder for a bit of coastal, estuary and

Even if you argue that a boat over \$40,000 isn't peanuts, it's actually within the scope of many average income families these days, especially if they share the boat with another partner.

Interestingly, there was one new addition to the sterndrive bowrider lineup. The 510 Freedom Cruiser is a neat package obviously geared to the

family boatie more into cruising than fishing. Sized nicely for towing and parking at home it has rod holders and converts quickly to a fishing platform when the occasion arises.

As we headed for Hope Harbour the weather turned decided nasty, however, we still managed to enjoy the ride and the views of spectacular multi-million



*The 470 Escape runabout*

up river fishing. Price of this package is just \$16,843 before you add dealer delivery costs.

In the spirit of the times it was interesting to see virtually all the models presented in economical white paintwork. Obviously, the optional two-tone colours are still available but the point is Quintrex wants to present as affordable package as it can without making the craft look too spartan.

Interestingly, virtually none of the new models except the bigger Top Ender 610 just offer basic flotation. The much touted level flotation, which was a big part of Quintrex marketing in previous years, is not being extended into these smaller or lower cost boats.

Obviously, Quintrex has not found level flotation such a big issue with the public and is prepared to spend money elsewhere in the smaller boats. Also as Damien Duncan points out, there is considerably difficulty in trying to achieve level flotation in smaller boats under five metres. One of the big issues is the amount of foam flotation you have to build into side panels to keep the boat floating upright when flooded. This takes away a significant amount of side-pocket stowage.

It will certainly be interesting to see the market reaction to this new economy Quintrex model. The

boating market certainly has become accustomed in recent years to getting lots of bells and whistles and this new approach is different. Yes, Quintrex does present a very well-rounded package in all its craft but it's now obvious it doesn't want to be seen as an expensive boat brand.

When dollars are tight boat buyers at this year's winner show will certainly appreciate boats they can buy without getting involved in added finance. For example, the new 470 Escape runabout is only \$25,434 ready-to-go including 50hp Mercury four-stroke, Millennium series hull and flared bows. The boat comes with a walk-through windscreen that lets you reach the anchor easily and also fish in the bow area safely.

This boat has a folding rear lounge so you have seating for all five people it's rated to carry, which makes it very family-friendly.

In many ways the 470 Escape is a rework of the 475 runabout models that were so hugely popular back in the mid-late 1990s. These were, and are still, great family boats and in many ways recessionary conditions are turning the clock back to these sensible-sized craft with their low power needs.

Another feature of the 2009 Quintrex media launch was the greater use of four-stroke motor technology across

the range. While it might seem a contradiction in terms to be putting a more expensive motor on the transom it actually makes sense. In the long run, four-stroke delivers better fuel savings, lower overall running costs and quieter more environmentally friendly performance.

The company is also producing its own line of alloy trailers to help reduce cost and, importantly, the trail weight on the road of the whole rig.

Quintrex is, of course, part of the giant Telwater group that also produces Australia's second best selling brand, Stacer as well as Savage.

Certainly, if the 2009 new model lineup is anything to go by Quintrex will be squarely on track to maintain its front position in the Aussie tinnie market. We have already seen the large WA Trail Craft brand close its doors and with more brands likely to fall by the way side Quintrex will be hard to assail in its number one position.