

QUINTREX 510 FREEDOM CRUISER
ON THE WATER

Story & Photos: Kevin Smith



KEVIN SMITH DOES A 180 ON STERNDRIVES, THANKS TO THE CLEVER QUINTREX 510 FREEDOM CRUISER

I must admit that I've never really spent much time on trailerboats fitted with inboard-cum-sterndrive motors, let alone had much of an interest in them. This is all thanks to the good old days when inboards were stigmatised for being uneconomical and noisy, and the fact that there always seemed to be a bunch of confused looking heads whenever the hood was lifted up.

Well that was then and this is now, and after climbing aboard the Quintrex 510 Freedom Cruiser fitted with the new MerCruiser 3.0lt MPI sterndrive, my views and perception have definitely taken a 180 degree attitude adjustment!

The alluring part about this test was having Tony Smith onboard. He's the application engineer for Mercury Marine Australia so I was certain to get the full run-down on the MerCruiser. As always, Telwater, which manufactures the Quintrex brand, has kept its designs up to date and has produced the ideal match — the new Quintrex 510 Freedom Cruiser that's not only appealing to the eye but is most definitely a boat suitable for cruising and soaking up a few rays with family and friends out on the water.

LAUNCH AND RETRIEVE

It was interesting to see the new Quintrex trailers manufactured by Telwater. These trailers are aluminium rather than the



standard galvanised. They're not only lighter, but will also last longer if properly cared for.

At the ramp the Quintrex is just the same as any other similarly sized boat, and was simple to launch and retrieve. The only thing that was a bit weird was not being able to see the motor on the transom, and although you have a trim gauge, I still felt a bit nervous as to where the leg of the motor was sitting in relation to the dreaded prop eating ramp. Always visually checking the angle of the motor to avoid any tinkles on the bricks is one of those personal things I do with a standard outboard, regardless of the trim gauge reading.

ON THE PLANE

- ✓ Quiet motor
- ✓ Economical motor for size
- ✓ Smooth ride
- ✓ It's a fun, sit back and relax boat

SANK LIKE A ROCK

- ✗ Trim setting a bit difficult when trailering due to visual obscurement of leg depth
- ✗ Dash moulding could be more heavy-duty and spacious to spread out gauges
- ✗ Could do with recessed drinkholders into the gunwales next to all the seats

BENEATH THE HOOD

The motor really intrigued me on this test, and as previously mentioned I have taken on a new respect for this style of marine engine. Mounted within the first quarter of the stern is the four-cylinder MerCruiser that pumps out 135hp. For those not current with this type of engine, don't be scared off, because these motors are specifically designed for boats. They have been around for some time and there's obviously something right about them.

The controls included power steering with standard cable-throttle and gears, and everything was smooth to operate and was mounted in the appropriate positions for easy running.

The balance of electronics were mounted into the moulded-dash section and since it was this style of motor there were more gauges than usual. This wasn't a problem although a few of the smaller gauges were obstructed by the wheel.

GET UP AND GO

Sporting a 14¾ x 19 prop, the Freedom Cruiser was not a racing machine out of the hole, and while it may not be so suitable for pulling those with a few extra kilos when skiing, it was still sufficient and very smooth. Like any motor, you can generally get the correct prop to suit your desired application, and once on

the plane it only took a few simple taps on the trim to get the 510 riding sweet and cruising ever so quietly at a comfortable 32kts, with the revs hovering at the 3500rpm mark.

Throughout the speed tests I pushed the 510 into a series of tight full-lock turns at high speeds and out of the hole. I found the handling capabilities to be "on the money" and surprisingly better than I was expecting, and with the extra weight from the motor setup combined with the hull design, the 510's ride was soft, stable, and a comfortable rig to drive all round.

OPEN-PLAN RIDING

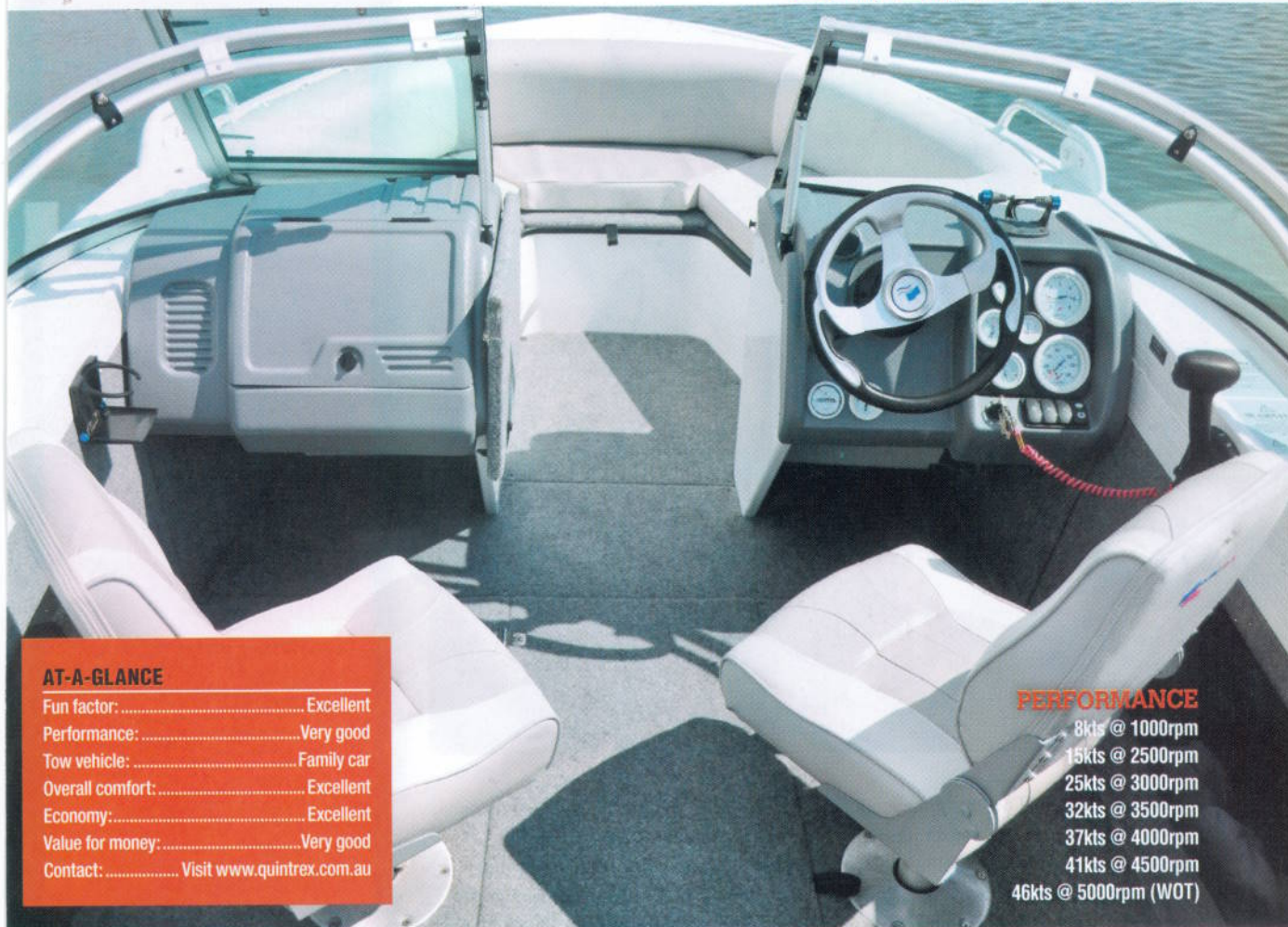
Starting in the transom area there is a full length non-slip, spacious boarding platform. The boat is missing the standard outboard head protrusion so the space factor is noticeable and user-friendly.

The platform also has a small retractable boarding ladder and full length grabrails on either side that make getting on and off that much easier. The "curvy" transom section has been designed into a modernised rear seating and lounging area, and it houses the hidden MerCruiser in the centre, as well as batteries and extra stowage space on either side.

To get to the motor and batteries, the full top-padded section opens up and

Cruising sweet with correct trim.



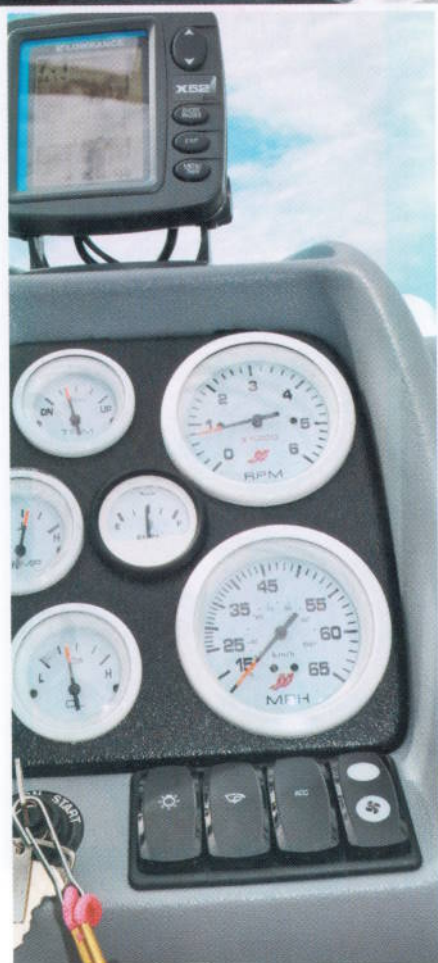


AT-A-GLANCE

Fun factor: Excellent
 Performance: Very good
 Tow vehicle: Family car
 Overall comfort: Excellent
 Economy: Excellent
 Value for money: Very good
 Contact: Visit www.quintrex.com.au

PERFORMANCE

8kts @ 1000rpm
 15kts @ 2500rpm
 25kts @ 3000rpm
 32kts @ 3500rpm
 37kts @ 4000rpm
 41kts @ 4500rpm
 46kts @ 5000rpm (WOT)



Left: All the gauges and electronics you need to keep you on the move. Above: And a full duckboard platform as well. Top: Protected dash area with open access to the bow lounge.



The MerCruiser Alpha sterndrive hides below the waterline.

is easily accessible. The lounging section consists of port and starboard recessed seats that wrap around to join up, and could comfortably seat two adults and two kids. On the top section this is also padded and is probably quite a comfy spot for the ladies to tan and relax on.

Running forward, the balance of the deck consists of one fair-sized flush-mounted deckhatch amidships, dual-meshbags on the gunwales, and plenty of carpeting throughout for extra comfort.

The console section is then split by a small swing door and a hinged screen that creates the walkthrough access into the bow area. Dual adjustable seats are situated behind the dash console areas, with the passenger side consisting of the moulded-dash and glovebox, while the skipper's side has the controls.

Incidentally, why the heck do they call it a glovebox? The only gloves I own are gardening and fish ones, and they definitely wouldn't fit in there.

Moving into the bow takes you to yet another spot to relax in, with its full wraparound padded seating with stowage space below, and the necessary grabrails on the gunwales. Another handy feature on the bow is a clip-on cover that encloses the bow and adds to the protection


behind the console. In rough conditions, closing this section would be a win.

There is still more on offer in the standard layout and many optional fittings are available, so your best bet is to check out the website for the full details.

FISH OR NOT FISH?

Are these boats fishable? Well in my opinion if it floats you can fish off it, and it would be entirely up to you on how you would want to rig it to suit your fishing style. The 510 is a stable craft that is quite economical, so in all fairness, yes, with a few extra fishing accessories fitted you could easily sit out on the bay on anchor, or even pull a lure on a slow troll.

THE RAP

At 5.1m it's not the heaviest of boats and should be fairly easy to tow even on long distances. I would primarily rate the Quintrex 510 Freedom Cruiser as an ideal craft for those weekend outings to the dam, skiing with the kids, or as one where you'd be happy to just sit back and cruise along. You can use these boats on any piece of water, and if good looks and personality are what you're looking for then that's what you're going to get. 

QUINTREX 510 FREEDOM CRUISER

HOW MUCH?

Price as tested: .. Not specified (speak to your local Quintrex dealer)

GENERAL

Type: Monohull
Material: ..Aluminium 3mm bottomsides; 2.5mm topsides; 4mm transom
LOA: 5.41m
Beam: 2.22m
Weight (boat only): 567kg

CAPACITIES

Rec. HP: 135
Max. HP: 135
Max. engine weight: 315kg
People: Six
Fuel: 95lt

ENGINE

Make/model: MerCruiser
Type: 3lit MPI sterndrive
Rated HP: 135
Fuel: Unleaded
Weight: 315kg including leg
Displacement (CID/L): 181/3.0
Cylinders: Four
Charging sys.: ...65amp / 917W alternator

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