



New Power

# A sharper Blade

Quintrex hones the hulls of its 2011 model line-up to deliver a better ride.





*the new Millennium Blade hull  
delivers on all of Quintrex's claims*

By Chris Beattie

Not too long ago, most aluminium boats were designed for just a handful of activities. If you were a hardcore fisho – someone who liked chucking lures at mangroves in north Queensland or chasing snapper on Port Phillip Bay – then you were smack-bang in 'tinnie' manufacturers' target market. There were a few options for typical family users, but not too many, as most cruising and day-boat people tended to opt for fibreglass craft. Reasons for this varied from ride to fit-out and finish, but tinnies were arguably the sole domain of the fisho.

Fast forward to recent times and there's hardly an area of trailerboating left unaddressed by aluminium boat manufacturers. Whether you're after a small, entry-level runabout, an offshore fishing platform or a well-appointed bowrider, cuddy cabin or ski boat, there are now plenty of options on offer in aluminium. And there is an increasing trend towards more features and sophistication, as buyers become more demanding about what they want in their boats. This was well and truly emphasised at a special event held on the Gold Coast in mid-April.

Telwater is Australia's largest boat manufacturer, producing around 10,000 boats a year from its large Coomera facility. They go by various names, including Stacer, Yellowfin, Savage and its flagship brand, Quintrex. It was the Quintrex brand we were invited to inspect, as a flotilla of journalists assembled to view its new models and sample them over a day on the Broadwater.

## BLADE UNSHEATHED

The primary focus of the launch was the unveiling of an all-new Millennium Blade stretch-formed hull design, which Quintrex said was intended to deliver a smoother, softer and drier ride to all boats over 6m in the company's line-up.

Quintrex's Research and Development Manager, Craig Madam says the Millennium Blade hull was developed through high-tech computer modelling software.

"The design brief was simple – use whatever means necessary to create a large boat that delivered a ride to rival that of our smaller boats," he said.

*the new Millennium Blade hull is the icing on the cake, providing a surprisingly soft ride for those who like sitting up front*



“Stability, efficiency, hole-shot, top speed and spray-release simulations were tested and retested against a variety of conditions to gauge overall performance – all before a single sheet of aluminium was cut.”

Madam said the computer modelling provided significant savings in terms of resources, testing and time, prior to putting the new hulls into production.

Quintrex says the new Millennium Blade design is a development of the previous Millennium hull first released in 2000, the main changes being to the concave flare of the side sheets and hull undersides. The new Blade variant also sports an increased deadrise and a sharper, more relaxed bow entry, for improved performance.

“At first we were sceptical of the simulation results, but the Blade hull has delivered on them all, including a smoother, drier ride, increased hull efficiency and even improved visibility,” said Madam.

Quintrex says the Blade delivers a smoother ride in offshore conditions, thanks to a sharper entry and narrower ‘shoulder’ at the bow to cut through swell. In addition, the new shape is also claimed to disperse spray further aft thanks to its

‘relaxed’ stem line, which reduces the likelihood of wind forcing spray back into the boat.

Boats equipped with the new hull are also claimed to deliver a flatter attitude under way, the result being improved visibility at slower speeds.

Certainly from a hands-on perspective, the new Millennium Blade hull delivers on all of Quintrex’s claims. During our day on the water we tried out the new design on a variety of different craft, including the 610 Freedom Sport, and can report that the Blade is, indeed, an impressively performing hull, in particular as far as ride goes.

Over the day we were able to sample the new hull in a variety of mostly benign conditions and at various speeds. Initially, with all tinnies, the tendency is to button off the throttle when encountering chop or rough water, but it soon became obvious that the Blade significantly softened the impact when jumping wakes or skimming over light chop. Directional response and sea keeping were also impressive, and, as claimed by Quintrex, the hull tended to ride relatively flat once on the plane.

## 610 FREEDOM SPORT

As with most other models in the 2011 range, the 610 Freedom Sport has been subject to various

tweaks here and there based on feedback from Quintrex's dealer network.

The largest model in the company's Freedom Sport Bowrider range, the 610 features all-new internal touches, including sidepanel mouldings, a new deluxe rear lounge and helm console.

While the new Millennium Blade hull shape provides a sharper point of entry for a smoother ride, it also means a little less beam in the bow area, although there is still plenty of room for a trio of adults to lounge comfortably on the well-upholstered seat cushions.

Powered by a 150hp Mercury Optimax outboard, our test craft boasted a new split rear lounge design, with the seat bases on both sides easily folding up to reveal voluminous storage compartments underneath for things like batteries, oil tanks, lifejackets and fishing gear. A swim platform provides easy access to the water, while a folding ladder assists anyone climbing back on board.

Directly in front of the rear lounge is a good-sized, roto-moulded compartment in the cockpit floor, which is ideal as an ice chest or kill tank.

The hull is foam-filled for level flotation, including the sides and transom, and is particularly stable at rest. Under the deck resides a 120lt fuel tank.

The skipper and first mate rest on new, low-mounted 'front to back' seats, which switch from front to back facing by simply folding the seat back in either direction. It's a clever and simple design touch that adds to the boat's versatility. The low seating positions would normally compromise forward visibility, but the low riding attitude of



the Millennium Blade hull ensured that there was nothing to spoil the view forward.

Ergonomics have been improved for the skipper with a new dash design that allows for larger electronics units, such as sounders and chartplotters. A Lowrance Mk 5X sounder is fitted

*Top: The 610's internal finish is classy with a well-appointed helm console and side panel mouldings.*

*Above: Clever design of the rear lounge seating provides very usable storage space.*

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as standard, as is a GME VHF radio. Instrumentation is from Mercury. There is also a large glovebox in the passenger-side console for storage of wallets and phones etc. Our test craft also boasted an optional Fusion RA200 sound system in the glovebox, which is iPod and iPhone compatible.

The stylish new moulded side panels incorporate drink holders and more storage space, as well as offering padding for anglers. From a safety point of view, I liked the addition of the low-profile gunwale handrails, which are within easy reach from most parts of the boat.

There is plenty of storage space under both consoles, with netting to keep all the bits and pieces in place, while a long locker in the centre of the deck provides storage for skis and rods.

Access forward is via a conventional folding screen, while a deep and spacious anchorwell also has enough space for an (optional) windlass.

Options on the test craft included a bimini and envelope, Fusion stereo system, twin battery box and isolator switch and graphic vinyl hull wrap.

Length overall is 6.61m and the 610 weighs in at around 747kg, so it can be easily towed by typical family sedans.

Overall, the presentation of the 610 Freedom Sport is smart and functional, with the layout providing plenty of room for moving about or simply lounging around. It's one of those great, versatile, all-rounder-type boats that can cater to just about any water enthusiast's tastes, from simply cruising to watersports like skiing and tubing, and it can even handle an outing with

the boys to catch a haul for the evening barbie. The new Millennium Blade hull is the icing on the cake, providing a surprisingly soft ride for those who like sitting up front in style and comfort.

Base on-water price, as supplied by Tweed Coast Marine, including registration and safety kit, is \$51,890, while our optioned test craft will cost around \$55,450.

## BLOKE'S BOAT

It's quite a leap going from the relative comfort of the Freedom Sport to the rugged and sparse layout of the new side-console Renegade 460, a boat referred to in the company's marketing blurb as a craft "built for the bloke in all of us". The Renegade range actually supersedes the now-discontinued Classic line-up, and represents a complete redesign, according to Quintrex.

Quintrex makes no pretence about the fact that the boats in the Renegade range – there is also a 520 – are intended purely and simply as bare-bones fishing platforms, with as much practicality as possible crammed into their compact hulls.

For 2011, the 460 comes with the Millennium (not Blade) hull, offering improved ride and performance over the conventional Classic V-hull design. The revised hull adds nothing to the cost, according to Quintrex.

Again, based on dealer feedback, there are many features incorporated into the new Renegade, such as extra storage space under the forward casting platform. Designers have removed the roto-moulded compartments used



*The 460's passenger seat can be mounted aft, allowing increased fishing room.*



in previous models, creating two large storage spaces accessed by hinged hatches for things like eskies, tackle and safety gear. Sturdy bow rails and a decent-sized anchor locker complete the bow treatment.

The driver's console features a smaller screen and rail, as well as a small glovebox for stashing the mobile phone, keys and wallet. It also incorporates a handy drinkholder and there is room to mount a regular-sized sounder or chartplotter within easy sight of the skipper.

The passenger has the choice of sitting next to the driver or slipping the seat pedestal into an optional locator in the aft port quarter. With the passenger seat mounted in the rearward position, the cockpit is opened up for more fish-fighting room. It also allows for stowage for camping and fishing gear for a weekend away.

Underneath the deck is a built-in 77lt tank. Our boat was powered by a premium 60hp Mercury four-stroke engine, which delivered good power and torque for a boat of its size. The engine is attached to a self-draining motor well, which will help keep the rear of the boat dry in lumpy conditions.

While Quintrex says the Renegade 460 is a dedicated fishing platform, there's absolutely no reason why it couldn't be used for the occasional family day out or a spot of tubing, should the mood take you.

From a pricing point of view, the tag of \$22,690 (as quoted by Tweed Coast Marine)



*Top: The 60hp Mercury four-stroke engine is a good match for the 460.*

*Left: Good-sized forward hatches make for ample stowage space for eskies, tackle and associated gear.*

*Below: The 460 gets the Millennium hull, and is an improvement over the Classic V-hull.*



underlines the 460's appeal for entry-level or price-conscious boaters. And if you're keen to get the price below 20K, you could even look at replacing the four-stroke outboard with a cheaper two-stroke model.

For more information on the 2011 Quintrex range, visit your local dealer or go to: [www.quintrex.com.au](http://www.quintrex.com.au). 