

A prize-winning ride in choppy waters is just one of the reasons why you might consider this latest Hornet Trophy for inshore sport fishing enthusiast. Test report by James Hill, photos Baitbox.



Quintrex 450 Hornet



The Hornet range has been a great success story for the Quintrex brand. From the outset these concave-bottom craft have turned the humble tinnie punt into a super fishing machine. These very special punts can handle the choppy waters of the open estuary right through to the shallow billabong or creek. In short, they really let you get around.

The key secret of the Hornet is the unique, stretch-form alloy technology that

allows Quintrex to create curved bow sections and therefore, a superior ride.

On close inspection you find a tri-bottom with curved hollows that develop aerodynamic lift at speed and hence, a softer ride. The result is the Hornet Trophy combines all the benefits of a punt but with much better ride.

Not surprisingly, Hornet has been a huge hit with recreational fishos and is found in waterways as far afield as Tasmania to the Top End. And not just fishing either – Hornet Trophies have proved pretty popular as fun family boats and commuter craft for those living on the waterfront.

I've always been a fan of the Hornet ever since I tested the first models 12 years ago. Over the past 12 years Quintrex has greatly refined the concept and come up with a much nicer-looking hull with constant-curved bow entry and smart pod transom.

This latest model – the 450 Hornet Trophy is not much bigger than the first model I tested but well ahead in style and interior comfort. This new Hornet features such luxury touches as an attractive side steering console and dual helm/passenger pedestal seats. It has carpeted front and rear casting decks like the early model, however, far

better interior design with sophisticated moulded plastic stowage bins.

To my mind these craft set the benchmark for inshore fishing. They're also a pretty spot-on craft for two people to fish rivers, bays and impoundments.

As the name implies this range is geared to serious tournament fishing, however, that doesn't mean you actually HAVE to do competition fishing. If you wish you can just use your Hornet Trophy to flick a few lures and enjoy a lazy Saturday afternoon. Certainly, it will be a great alternative to bashing offshore and having to figure out where the no-go zones are for marine parks.

Keeping in mind the modest-sized motor the 450 Hornet Trophy requires, it delivers fairly low-cost fishing.

While this model doesn't have quite the room, or rough water reach of its bigger 500 Hornet sibling, it's a nice package for most people's purposes. It's compact and certainly more affordable.

Sounds interesting? Well read on.

Design: This latest Hornet model features the Eclipse V-flare hull with a gull-wing under body with centre Vee bows and hollow sections running to the transom. These hollows are barely perceptible at the stern but

Trophy

nonetheless effective in improving the ride, especially at speed.

The side sponsons also play a very important part in directing the water flow over the hull tunnels and creating aerodynamic lift at speed.

In practice the 450 Hornet Trophy sits a little deeper in the water than a conventional punt, however, not to the extent it makes much of a difference. For most purposes it lets you fish most creeks and tidal shoals.

This latest model features the curved bow entry and pod transom that's a feature of all Hornet models from 4.5m. It measures 4.5m overall in length and has a generous beam of 2.05m.

The topsides feature an attractive clinker pattern and eye-catching decals over a white finish. The interior features front and rear casting decks with plenty of under-deck stowage compartments made from roto-moulded plastic.

There are also four floor slots to place the pedestal seats in different position – including the bow casting deck. There's also the option of a lean post as well for more elevated fishing.

The 450 Hornet Trophy also provides the option of a bow-mounted electric motor – pretty much de-rigueur these days amongst avid lure-flickers.

The boat also comes complete with carpeted floors, comfortable side console steering station and Perspex windscreen. The package also includes an electronic sounder (Lowrance X52) as well as a live bait tank, all standard. Overall, this makes the Hornet Trophy a pretty serious fishing package – one that you can enjoy from the minute you take delivery.

Hornet Trophy boats are reasonably tough, in this case delivering a tight unit that has 3mm bottom panels and 1.6mm topsides plus the added rigidity of a closed-in interior.

The 450 Hornet Trophy also features an under-floor 65-litre fuel tank with deck filler and fuel gauge. There's an optional two-tone colour schemes, but the white hull finish looks pretty good.

I might mention under body has strakes and is kept unpainted because it is more likely to cope scratches than the topsides.

With a trail weight of around 354kg the 450 Hornet Trophy is not a heavy craft to tow, coming in around the 750kg-780kg mark as a ready-to-go road package. That's comfortably with the range of most mid-sized cars like the Mazda 6, Holden Vectra, Toyota Camry and Subaru Forester. In most

cases you won't need trailer brakes unless the package exceeds 750kg.

Performance: It was an uncharacteristic cool, choppy summer day we took the 450 Hornet Trophy for a spin on Gold Coast waters. From the outset we were not looking forward to being on the water but the Hornet's handling was so good it made up for the unfriendly conditions.

Underway, the small craft handled the bumpy stuff pretty well. There's no doubt the side console helps keep crew weight centred and this helps the boat come to plane quickly.

The shallow draft of the Hornet also enabled us to take a short-cut over a shoal to calmer waters up past Sovereign Island. Once in calmer waters we were able to enjoy the boat in more pleasant conditions.

Stability of the 450 Hornet seems just as good as its two bigger sisters – 480 and 500 Hornet Trophies. That's quite impressive because it is a smaller size craft and crew weight comparatively greater.

I particularly like the way the boat sits quite flat at speed, even in turns. There was no noticeable leaning towards the driver side, even when there are no passengers aboard.

The Hornet Trophy certainly feels at home in these kind of coastal enclosed waters like the Broadwater and in this regard it's a pretty good choice for most Aussie fishos. It gives you peace-of-mind because you're not going to be too nervous about weather changes.

At times you will get spray aboard, but overall it's a fairly dry ride for a low-slung craft.

It goes almost without saying the console provides excellent helm vision and a comfortable driving position. The access aboard is also really excellent thanks to the natural landing step at

the stern and the optional Maxi-bracket with folding boarding ladder. The latter is designed to support a berley bucket as well.

Power: The 450 Hornet Trophy is rated for single motors between 40hp and 70hp. However, judging from our test session I'd reckon the ideal motor is around the 60hp-70hp mark taking into account a passenger total load of about 200kg including personal gear.

Our test boat was fitted with a 60hp Mercury EFI four-stroke that gave us a smooth, very economical performance and seemed to match the boat very well.

The four-stroke seems to be a logical choice for a boat operating in quiet water-ways and gave us the following speed figures:

3500rpm	14 knots
4500rpm	21 knots
5500rpm	28 knots



These results indicate the Hornet isn't over-powered and we could have handled a 70hp motor pretty easily. Having said that, the above speeds are more than adequate for inshore fishing trips.

Deck layout: The 450 Hornet Trophy delivers a pretty nice deck package that includes a bow anchor cleat,



roto-moulded anchor well and two handrails up front.

There no anchor roller but you really don't need it when you are principally drifting, or troll fishing. However, you will want to consider adding the bow-mount thruster plate to carry an electric motor.

In the bow Hornet Trophy gives you a lovely raised carpeted casting deck with four under-deck lockers. One of the latter is plumbed live-catch tank.

Meanwhile, the central cockpit area provides a nice-looking console with drink holders in the front, low windscreen and moulded plastic dash with space for the sounder.

The console gives you room for motor gauges, a three-ganger switch plus space for an optional Lowrance VHF radio. We also give full marks for the standard electric bilge pump, drink holders and two fold-back pedestal seats. You also get navigation lights as standard.

Right aft you get a rear casting deck that also includes a plumbed live well. There's also two rod holders in the gunwale and transducer bracket on the transom. All this makes for a pretty well-equipped fishing platform. You have clip-in rod stowage but otherwise you'd carry your fishing gear on the floor.



Optional extras worth considering are the VHF radio, compass, cockpit lights and possibly a bimini with envelope for sun protection. You can also order the boat with optional hydraulic steering, however, the mechanical steering seems quite adequate.

Verdict: The Hornet Trophy is a well refined package, quite well-priced as well at around \$28,500 as tested ex-Gold Coast. It's an ideal boat for a two-person crew and I imagine would be a brilliant choice for a Dad taking one his kids fishing. It's also a good size boat for kids to handle on their own develop their boat skills.

Admittedly, the Hornet doesn't give you quite the personal protection of a conventional dinghy, or runabout but hey, it's still a pretty good craft for general boating fun. Particularly in respect of tube-towing, diving, swimming etc its high stability and low sides are a benefit. Getting swimmers aboard is made easier by the low, M3 Pod transom.

In typical Quintrex fashion the finish on the Hornet Trophy is very slick and the craft is backed by one of the biggest dealer networks in Australia.

BOAT TEST ANALYSIS

Boat supplied with 60hp EFI Mercury four-stroke, console steering, V-loader trailer, carpeted floor casting deck, folding skipper seat, nav lights, plumbed live well, rear rails, 2 rod holders, drink holders, Lowrance sounder X52, painted with strips and safety gear. Price 28,500 Springwood Marine ph 07 3884 7250.

SPECIFICATION CHART

Brand	Quintrex	Stacer	TABS	Savage	Stacer
Model	450 Hornet	439 Barra Elite	460 Territory	435 Jabiru	469 Nomad
Material	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy	alloy
Style	console	console	console	console	console
Length	4.5m	4.4m	4.8m	4.35m	4.8m
Beam	2.05m	2m	2.2m	1.85m	2.2m
Rated power	70hp	60hp	75hp	40hp	60hp
Power as tested	Mercury60	Yamaha60	Yamaha60	Mercury40	Mercury50
Hull weight	354kg	282kg	450kg	120kg	413kg
Fuel capacity	65L	65L	70L	portable	75L

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.