



Plate style slab sides give the boat a modern look. There is good access for fishing, and it's very stable.

and a 220l fuel tank and a 180l fish/storage compartment under-deck between the helm and passenger seats. Thanks to the foam-filled hull, this is effectively insulated so it can function as an icebox too.

Being a company boat, our test rig was, frankly, a bit over the top. Some \$22,000 worth of extras included a Garmin GPS Map 5012 all-in-one sounder/GPS with a massive screen filling available dash space, plus a pair of integrated Garmin GMI 10 display units monitoring everything imaginable.

The transom workbench is another option, as is the beautifully engineered Bimini top/rocket launcher and clears. Other options include Bennet trim tabs, a GME stereo and VHF radio, recessed cockpit lighting, fluoro lighting in the helm area, a portable toilet, and the titanium two tone colour scheme.

I also must mention an 'Autotether' wireless lanyard system in our test boat which shuts the motor down if anyone wearing one of the transmitter pods racked beside the helm goes overboard. This system deserves way more than this cursory mention. Everyone who crosses a bar in their boat should have one. More information is available from the website www.sheleft.com.au

Boat, motor and trailer packages for the

575RF start around \$65,000. John's boat added up close to \$87,000!

The cockpit is as big a cockpit as can reasonably be expected in a 5.7m boat. In other words, it's plenty spacious enough for two for serious offshore fishing — clearly the 575RF's job description — maybe three at a pinch if all get on well. More importantly, the cockpit sides allow your toes underneath, with excellent support for the legs from high upholstered sides, and the deck has moulded-in anti-slip texture.

Sensibly, the deck has been set low to maintain at-rest stability at the cost to any self-draining ability. A self-draining deck is always desirable in offshore fishing boats, but the facts of life are that a boat this size will be terribly wobbly underfoot if the deck is set high enough to drain water out through open scuppers. The Haines Group followed common sense, but hasn't forgotten the importance of a dry deck by setting it up so it drains off into a small sump fitted with an automatic bilge pump.

Sound thinking is at work here once again. Looking back over this commentary, I've had a bit of a rave, haven't I? That, as regular readers will know, doesn't happen very often in my boat tests. All I can say is that what I've had to say goes no further than telling it as I see it, the same as always! **FL**



Signature's optional transom workbench is a sublime piece of fishing engineering.



An aft lounge appears from the transom bulkhead on demand — and disappears completely when not needed.

SPECS

Length: 5.70m

Beam: 2.38 m

Hull Weight: 1000kg

On trailer weight: 1900kg

Fuel capacity: 220l

Recommended horsepower: 115-175hp

Maximum motor weight: 240kg

www.signatureboats.com.au

A slight notch in the keel line is the most visible evidence of ongoing development of the SVDH hull concept.



The competition for dedicated fishing boats has hotted up over the last decade, as models for specific needs enter an already congested marketplace. Quintrex is as Australian as they get, and have recently given their range a makeover, as John Ford reports.

Quintrex is synonymous with the quintessential Australian tinnie. Amongst anglers, we could easily substitute the car brand in the lyrics of the famous song from the 1970s and sing about football, meat pies, kangaroos and Quintrex boats. They've been around since 1945, when Terry Quantrill directed his engineering skills into building boats in a shed in Sydney's south. These days, Quintrex boats come from a huge factory at Coomera on the Gold Coast, and the brand is now part of the Telwater group that also builds Savage, Stacer and Yellowfin.

Our test boat came from Hunt's Marine in Blakehurst, a short cast from the original Quintrex factory and the county's oldest Quinnie dealer. The Renegade 420 is a new model for the company, and is a big departure from the distinctive form we have come to expect. Known for wide flared hulls that threw spray well away from the boat, the new design has slab sides in a purposeful looking plate style. This new topside look is married to the proven Millennium hull that Quintrex claim delivers the best of both worlds in a modern shape, with proven handling and ride characteristics.

Any concerns that the new design might make for a wet boat were dispelled within a few miles of the boat ramp on the Georges River in Sydney's south. We crossed the wake of an incoming cruiser that seemed intent on swamping us. Not only was the ride over the waves soft, but the spray from our boat was sent wide, with none coming aboard. We put the whole issue to bed when we ventured into washing machine-like conditions offshore from Botany Bay. The boat stayed dry and handled well in an environment it was not really designed for, as it's more about estuary and river fishing than open ocean.

While the plate look is new, the Millennium hull has been around for some time. Formed on a stretch mould press, the shape allows a complicated variable deadrise, with a deep-vee entry to cut through the water. The hull is fabricated from 3mm alloy throughout, with extruded aluminium stringers located along the hull and sides for strength.

Layout is a simple side console with casting decks each end, and a carpet-covered, flat ply floor. To keep things even more basic, there's also a tiller steer option to maximise fishing room and keep costs down. Up front, an alloy anchor roller and a port side plate for an electric motor surround a decent sized plastic anchor locker.

The front casting deck is raised to gunwale level and sits 240mm above the floor, allowing for three deep storage bins below. Three carpet-lined hatches reveal an open space beneath, big enough

for safety and wet weather gear, tackle boxes and a battery for an electric motor. Between the storage spaces, a sturdy metal-lined lid opens to a plumbed live well with a plastic separation plate.

Two folding seats for driver and passenger can be moved from their normal travelling position to slots on the front and rear casting decks. Although looking fairly basic, they were surprisingly comfortable. An alloy console is fitted with a smoke-coloured screen and is open at floor level to allow an esky or storage boxes to be stored away. At 109cm in height, the console acts as a good windbreak for the skipper, but passengers are left to the elements. There is a small glove box with a clear lid for wallets and phones to the port side of the dash, and Evinrude instruments with readouts for rev speed and trim

on the other. Switches operate navigation lights, bilge and bait pumps, and there is space on the top of the dash that could easily take a 20cm sounder/GPS.

Storage pockets welded along the sides are raised from the deck to allow toe-below access, while at 160mm the extruded side decks are wide enough to be used for seating. Two plastic rod holders along each side will be insufficient for most anglers and it will be necessary to devise extra storage. Vertical holders around the console come to mind.

The rear casting deck behind the helm has provision beneath for a removable plastic fuel tank and the main battery. To port is a second roto-moulded live well that also incorporates slots for two Plano tackle boxes.



The Evinrude is a good match for the Quintrex, delivering smooth power. It is very quiet and the economy is great.



The driving position is comfortable for long runs, and the folding seat can be moved onto either platform.

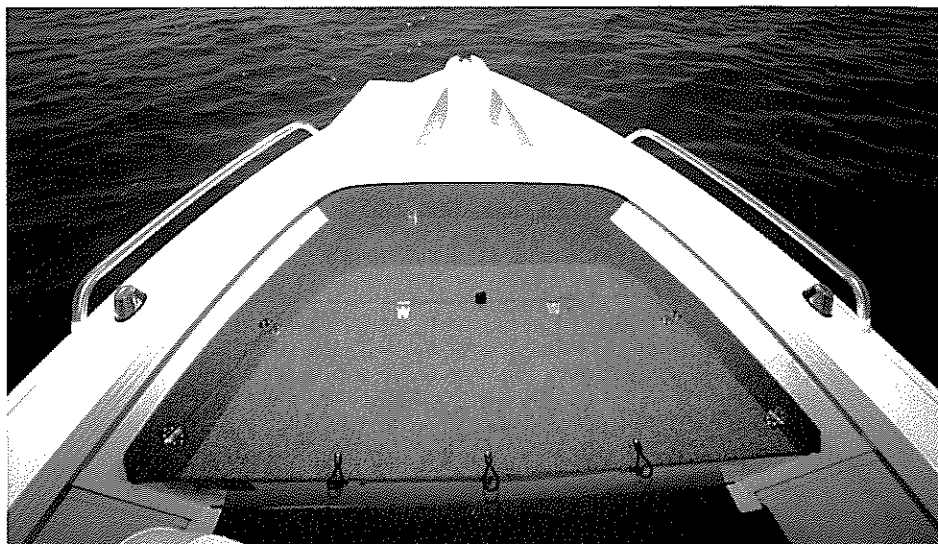
A 40hp Evinrude E-TEC engine is mounted direct to a low transom, which delivered power smoothly and quietly for a top speed of 47km/h, or 25kts in real money. The E-TEC is a good match for the boat and although engines up to 50hp can be fitted, there would probably be only a slight speed gain.

Quintrex have given the Renegade a modern look, with the new design and retro white finish reminiscent of the original boats. There is a good range of colours and some spunky wraps available to bling up the boat, or if you want to go low-tech and simple, there's the option to leave the hull bare-metal silver.

This smallest Renegade impressed me with its ride and handling. With a full time research and development crew on hand at Quintrex, this should really be no surprise. It gets onto the plane at 18km/h, where the Evinrude is making a cheery growl as it starts to wind out. Cruise speed at 4000rpm is around 30km/h and it accelerated smoothly out from there to its maximum. Handling was precise and predictable, even into the sharpest of turns. The ride over the Botany Bay chop was smooth, and even in the 1.5m slop outside the heads the boat impressed me with its safe and soft ride at 25km/h.

Most importantly for a boat destined for fishing, stability was very good. Although we didn't get a chance to wet a line, the boat stayed flat, even in the ocean swell with two of us on one side.

In a range of over 80 models, the Renegades fill a gap for a no-fuss dedicated estuary fishing boat. That said, they can be optioned up and customised to an owner's needs from an impressive list of options. With a starting price of around \$17,000, they represent good value from an iconic Australian brand. **F**



Above and below: Storage bins surround the live well and have space for an electric motor battery. The well has a divider to separate the catch.



PERFORMANCE

4kts (7.4km/h) @ 1500 rpm
 4.7kts (8.3km/h) @ 2000rpm
 5.5kts (10km/h) @ 2500rpm
 7.7kts (14km/h) @ 3000rpm
 10kts (18.5km/h) @ 3100rpm (planing)
 13.4kts (25km/h) @ 3500rpm
 16.9kts (31km/h) @ 4000rpm
 19kts (35km/h) @ 4500rpm
 21.7kts (40km/h) @ 5000 rpm
 25.3kts (46.8km/h) @ 5400rpm (wide open throttle)

SPECS

Price as tested: \$22,603
 Options fitted: painted hull, braked trailer, front live well, bow plate mount, E-TEC engine
 Priced from: \$17,439

GENERAL

Type: Side console estuary fishing boat
 Material: Aluminium

Length: 4.26m
 Beam: 2.06m
 Deadrise: Variable

CAPACITIES

People: 4
 Rec hp: 30-50hp
 Max hp: 50hp
 Fuel: 25l

ENGINE

Make/model: Evinrude E-TEC 40hp
 Type: two cylinder direct-injected two stroke
 Weight: 109kg

SUPPLIED BY

Hunts Marine
 Email: jhunt@huntsmarine.com.au
 Web: huntsmarine.com.au
 Phone: (02) 9546 1324
www.quintrex.com.au