

Getting the Right Formula

Story by Rick Huckstepp

There are some mighty little battle stations getting around on our waters that ooze WOW factor and we found another recently that we couldn't wait to get a ride in.

This particular rig is the Formula 15 built by Formula Power Boats Australia who has their factory in Victoria. The '15' is totally hand laid and as you will see the manufacturer specialises in custom fibreglass work.

The anchor hatch can be held open by a bungy loop and a split bollard with a locking pin for the chain keeps everything secure when on the run in rough water.



A Minn Kota 55lb electric motor with auto pilot is mounted on the forequarter next to the anchor well. With the foot piece attached this electric may be controlled from anywhere on the boat. The raised foredeck features a removable bum seat and three sturdy rigid hatches. One is for stowage and the other two hold the 90 amp hour deep cycle batteries for the Minn Kota. These are hooked up to a 25 amp C-Tek charger with shore power connection that keeps them topped up when this boat sits in the driveway at home. Once the crank battery is fully charged by the 70hp Suzuki, excess charge flows to top up the electric motor batteries when out on the water.

While the bevelled face of the console holds the instrumentation for the outboard, Furuno electronics are mounted on a plate above them behind a tall wind and spray screen that is hinged at the console for collapsing for towing or stowing under a low roof. The fire extinguisher and battery control station are rebated in the face of the console and being designed around a one man fishing show, is fitted with Raymarine auto pilot. There is a kill switch on the console that immediately de-activates the auto pilot so the skipper can manoeuvre instantly in an emergency with the Sea Star hydraulic steering.



Relax extended rod holders rather than space gobbling outrigger poles are mounted on the gunwales. Rather than having a proper helm seat, this module is one to lean against and the top half hinges forward to reveal dry stowage and in the aft section of that top are twin tackle drawers behind a hatch.

The transom bulkhead has a hinged door that opens into the cockpit to allow full tilt on engines with large cowls. This is handy for various outboards on the market though not required once Suzuki's Trim Limit Switch is utilised. With it secured in position it will stop a lot of water coming over the top of the engine well and into the cockpit.

A sturdy bait rigging table with a pair of rod holders installed may be removed from the transom if so desired.



Taking this boat out through the bar at Mooloolaba it showed to be one of the softest riding small boats we have experienced. Landings after being fully airborne were surprisingly gently and quiet. With the bow sprit so close due to the LOA one felt like it might bury when hitting these waves at speed but it proved to have exceptional buoyancy and no water came over the forequarters. Running along the 1.5m swell with wind on the beam very little spray found its way to the helm. Manoeuvrability was also very direct and effortless.

WOW FACTOR

A 100% work horse and well appointed for multi tasking species wise. Very gentle ride in rough seas, dry and stable to boot

NOT SO WOW

Not many people would regularly fish solo so experimentation with propellers to improve hole shot for bar crossings would be a good thing.

SPECIFICATIONS

Price as tested: \$44,990

Options fitted: Minn Kota, Furuno electronics, auto pilot, VHF radio, duel batteries, C-Tek charger, custom console and seat box, pop up stainless cleats, two plumbed live wells, rod holders and Reelax rod riggers.

Priced from: \$29,990

GENERAL

Material: Fibreglass
 Length overall: 4.6m
 Beam: 2.06m
 Weight: 1050kg BMT dry
 Deadrise: 20-degrees

CAPACITIES

Fuel: 90-litres
 People: 5
 Rec. max hp: 90
 Rec.max transom weight: 170kg

ENGINE

Make and Model: Suzuki DF70
 Type: 4-cylinder, 4-stroke
 Weight: 162kg
 Rated hp: 70
 Displacement: 1298cc
 Gearbox ratio: 2.42:1
 Propeller: 17-inch 3-blade Solas

Supplied by
 Phillip Island Marine
 14 Beach Road
 Rhyll, Vic, 3923
 Telephone (03) 5956 9238
 Email: phillipismarine@phillipismarine.com.au

