

Steber 36 Express Game Fisherman

Original Story/Pics by Peter Webster

Introducing not one, but two new sportfishermen from the Steber family in Taree. These new craft all have one thing in common; the potential interchange of mouldings from one model to another, enables Steber to tailor their craft to the most exact requirements.

Since the days when the Robinson Brothers built the classic Cresta 32, the Steber family, formerly of Narrabeen (for more years than they care to remember) and since 1976-77, Taree, NSW, have had a long association with south eastern states gamefishermen.

The association began when the Stebers bought the moulds of the old Cresta 32 at auction back in the late 'seventies, and although the Cresta is nowadays just a memory, Steber's association with the gamefishing fraternity has continued to flourish. Today, the Steber

family continue to build most of the gameboats in use in the south eastern states, with some estimates putting their share of this growing market as high as 10 per cent. Even allowing for the odd 10 per cent (!) Stebers are clearly doing something very well, for there is perhaps no more discerning recreational purchaser than

the southern gamefisherman.

On the other hand, there is one group of purchasers who are even harder to please — the commercial fishermen who ply the coastline of Australia, and especially those who work the controversial south east fishery. These men often put their very lives on the line, as they are forced to work further and wider afield in search of their quarry. In a growing number of cases, a Steber fishing boat is all they will consider.

Today, the emphasis in commercial fishing is shifting back to long line fishing in lieu of nets; live bait fishing instead of traps, combined with the use of faster, single engined, more fuel efficient planing vessels than the old displacement fishing craft of yesteryear. And in the very forefront of these new developments is a family company in Taree, who once built clinker speedboats in a garage behind the family house.

Not any more. The 1987 Steber 36 Express Gamefisherman is as good an example of the GRP builder's art you'll find in this land, and it fairly reeks of the experience and collective wisdom of who knows how many recreational and commercial fishermen. If the

Stebers have done one thing very well it is this: they are one of two boatbuilding companies (the other is Precision, in WA) to recognise that the needs of the big game fishermen and the majority of commercial fishermen are in fact one and the same. Apart from deck layout and equipment, the hull design parameters, the seaworthiness, the seakindliness - the philosophy of the craft, is virtually identical.

So much so, the Stebers have gone one step further — they laminate them the same way. Fibreglass construction, including watertight and collision bulkheads of every Steber is to Survey requirements of the NSW Maritime Services Board, whether it is used for pleasure or commercial purposes. The only difference between the two is the engineering and mandatory safety gear involved, according to the classification of the vessel and its offshore rating.

Last month, we had the opportunity of testing not just the (new) Steber 36, but also to run the Steber 33, as well as touch base again with the imposing Steber 41. To complete the picture, we were also able to inspect the traditional Steber 36 express cruiser.



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RETRO
BOAT TEST:
Unchanged, as
first published,
written and
photographed
by Peter
Webster in
MARCH
1987**