

Haines Signature 630 F

- Hardtop with V-6 Sterndrive



F&B Editor Peter Webster grins as Greg Haines points out that the 4.3 L EFI V-6 isn't started with a leather strap - these days, inboards have all-electric key starting . . . (s'okay, Greg, you'll keep!)

Seriously, check out the superb access for service and maintenance. The fully insulated engine bay is extremely user friendly and all regular service points - dipstick, filter, cooling, etc, can be accessed in seconds.

They are Australia's most successful fibreglass trailerboat builders, but the Haines Signature team is not about to rest on its laurels. The gelcoat was hardly dry on the new 630F when the factory released the 630F Hardtop and sterndrive combination.

This is a particularly interesting craft, because it is another of these "cross-over" boats that can be used in a wide variety of roles - although the factory still pushes the 630F series forward as a dedicated blue water fisherman.

And it is too, with a number of vital features for the bluewater brigade. These include a fully moulded GRP self draining cockpit, that superb variable deadrise hull for a soft ride coming back in from the 'Shelf flat-chat, and an overall standard



of finish that will impress the toughest bank manager - or wife!

New Design Except for transom and hardtop, this 630F is exactly the same as the boat we covered in F&B issue #52, when we did the full report on the boat with a single Yamaha 200 hp direct injection outboard. A beautiful boat, the Yammy powered 630 pulled an easy 40.7 knots through the traps, yet turned in a remarkably economical performance,

using just 21.9 L/ph from the powerful Yamaha outboard whilst the boat was cruising easily around 20 knots. That's a hard combination to beat, and the economical MerCruiser 210 hp EFI sterndrive fitted to this boat was struggling to offer the same or better performance.

Doesn't that say a lot about the state of play in marine engines? Here is a big, powerful 3.0 litre 2-stroke direct injected outboard offering nearly

identical performance as a much heavier, but (traditionally) more economical 4-stroke MerCruiser 210 hp V-6 EFI sterndrive.

Given that the MerCruiser EFI V-6 is considered one of the best engines of its type in the world, it certainly shows how much Japanese outboard engines have improved in the last two or three years.

You need to stop and think about this - it is certainly something of a revolution to discover a high tech Yamaha 2-stroke outboard that's just as fuel efficient as a 4-stroke inboard or sterndrive.

Cost Issues But there is more to this debate than just the running costs of the outboard. In this case, the MerCruiser 210 V-6 EFI sterndrive could be as much as \$7,000-\$10,000 cheaper than the comparable 200 hp HDPI Yamaha outboard. That's more than enough to sway many boat owners in favour of the cheaper and no



less viable MerCruiser sterndrive.

Other issues to consider concern matters of balance and seaworthiness of the craft. I don't think there's any doubt that the sterndrive equipped Haines Signature 630 is a better balanced, smoother riding rig than the same model with an outboard from anybody.

Putting the sterndrive's 410 kg down forward and low on the transom (as distinct from up and out for an outboard) makes a very easily felt difference in the handling department.

For this report, the writer and Greg Haines took the boat out in very frisky conditions off Southport Seaway. The boat was simply a joy to handle. Beautifully balanced, with superb prop matching and power to weight ratio, it could be picked up and played with through the entrance to the Bar and offshore settled down to cruise very nicely at around 16-17 knots in conditions that had sent most fishermen packing.

Although the weather was unfishable, it was certainly good for testing. So we gave the boat a big



workout offshore, not so much to test the boat, but just to revel in the conditions, the excellence of its handling, and the sheer delight of working with such a fine craft on a top day outside.

The Hard "Lid" No doubt the enjoyment of the day was enhanced by the advent of the double lined GRP hardtop together with another set of Phil Baker's magnificent Craft covers, clears and side screens.

This guy is a dead set genius for this stuff, and once again the 630F was immeasurably improved by Craft Covers' involvement.

If you study the pictures carefully you'll see what a beautiful job they've done.

Craft's unique "bolt-rope" track travels right around the hardtop, providing a completely water proof seam between the clears and the GRP. As well, it offers the flexibility of being able to open four different roll-ups (two forward, one on each side) not to mention the full rear curtain "wall". This could be completely rolled



up and out of the way, or left in three parts with the centre “doorway” rolled up and opened or closed at will. Love this set-up.

The hardtop itself is skillfully designed and manufactured. Haines Signature tooling is always first class, and this GRP “lid” is no exception. They’ve made provision for radio speakers, VHF and 27 Meg radios to be installed in the top console over the driver’s head (that’s a good idea!) and they’ve even thought of adding moulded stumps for four rod holders in the hardtop itself. Accessed from the cockpit I’m not sure I’d be game to leave expensive outfits up there in the seaway - but it’s certainly a terrific idea and a marvellous storage space to get the gear and equipment - the clutter - out of the cockpit when the fishing goes berserk.



Summary: This is another very fine boat from the Haines Signature factory. With a towing weight of around 2.46 tonnes, it’s getting up near the upper limits of sensible towing with normal (big) 4WD’s. Having said that, on a Mackay PU 6000T trailer it’s an absolute breeze to handle on the launch ramp, and can be driven on and driven off with just one

person handling the whole operation.

I really like this boat. It’s a very “together” piece of equipment that’s been thoroughly worked out and superbly appointed.

Yes, I acknowledge that Greg Haines always has his test boats set-up to perfection, and I respect him for that. But looking beyond his professionalism at the more basic product (without

the electronic ‘toys’) this is still a fine craft that has evolved over the last seven or eight years since the original Haines Signature 650 F was created.

Few other boats in Australia have this intensity of fit-out, or quality of construction.

This is a boat I would be very proud to have in my driveway. And if I were still able to run down to Bermagui and fish the Kink east of Montague, boy, wouldn’t this be a magnificent boat for the job! But don’t worry about Bermagui - I can see this boat being a real hit with the Top End fishing communities as well.

Greg Haines supplied the test boat from the Haines Signature factory. For further information please Phone (07) 3271 4400 or Fax: (07) 3271 4054.

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