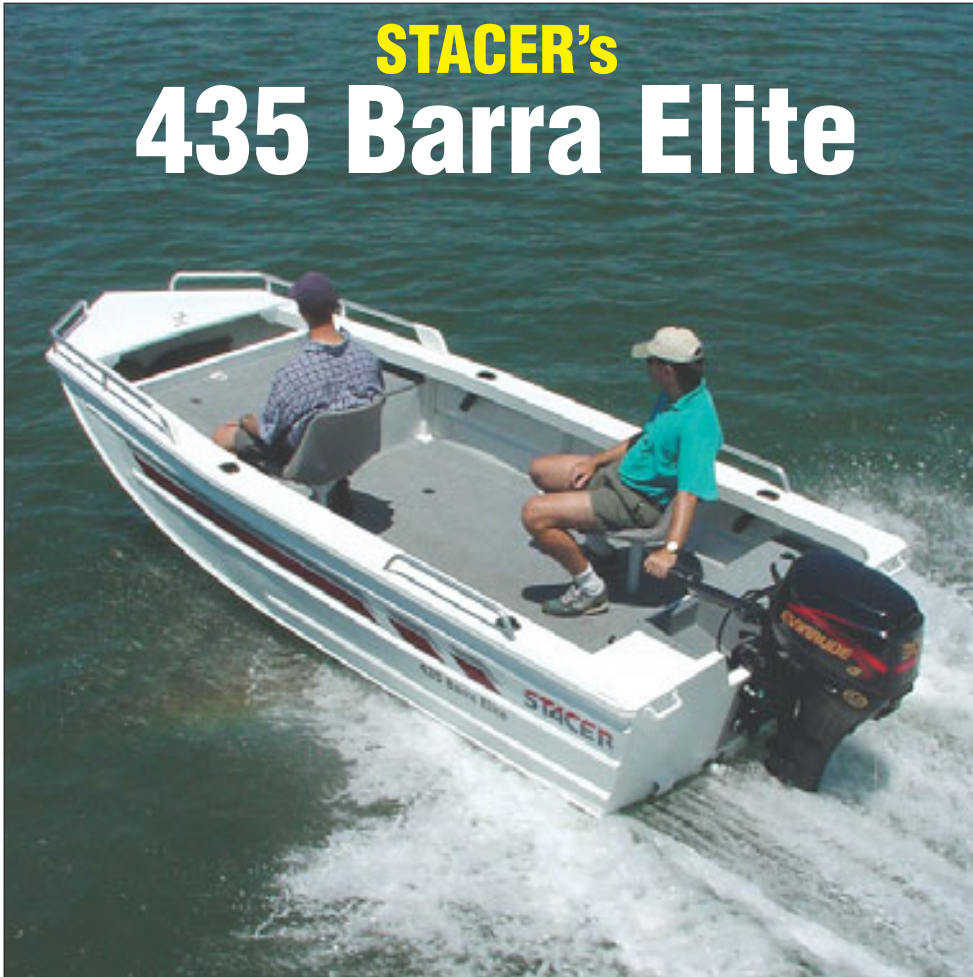


# F&B's Small Craft Section

## STACER's 435 Barra Elite



**A soft ride, easy planing, great stability and a versatile layout - just a few of the features of the great new Stacer 435 Barra Elite**

**Report by Jeff Webster.**

**S**ince the purchase of Stacer last year, Quintrex has set about re-establishing the Stacer brand throughout the country.

Among the first moves was the refining of the existing Stacer product line-up, along with the addition

of a range of new models. As a result, the present Stacer boat range comprises a mix of the best of the older boats with several new craft developed by Quintrex.

For example, in the v-punt Stacer boat range, the best selling Proline series of heavy duty punts has been

retained. Complimenting the Prolines, Quintrex has released several new v-punts, including the 400 SF Bass series and the 435 SF Barra models.

The deluxe version of the Barra model, called the Elite, is the subject of this test report.

**Design** One look at the new Barra Elite, and you can be forgiven for thinking it looks rather familiar. You will probably recall seeing that deeply flared, concave hull shape under Quintrex's best selling Hornet range of v-punts. And you would be right too!

However, the hull under the Barra Elite does differ from the Hornet hulls. With the current Hornets, the flared, concave shape stretches all the way back to the stern. With the Stacer models, the flare shape runs back to amidships, then flattens coming aft. This combination of a flared, deeply vee'd entry and flat bottom at the rear of the boat gives the Stacer a soft ride in choppy water, yet allows the boat to be powered by a smaller outboard.

For example, with just a 30 hp 4-stroke Evinrude on the transom, the Barra Elite achieved a top speed of 23 knots - and that was with two adults onboard! That's pretty impressive for a heavy duty hull weighing 245 kg.

Of course, there are plenty of other v-punts on the market that will yield similar performance figures, but very few will also provide a comfortable (by tinnie standards) ride when running into choppy water.

As you would expect, there is more to the new Stacer Barra Elite than a good hull. It also has a very workable, if traditional layout.

The Barra Elite is designed around a tiller steer outboard set-up - although a side console is available as an option.

Up forward, the Barra Elite has a good sized, elevated casting deck (roughly 690 mm long x 1.53 m wide) with provision for the mounting of a pedestal seat.

*(Cont. Over)*



This forward seat position is one of five locations within the boat where the pedestal seats can be situated. Just two pedestal seats come standard with the boat, but extra seats are available.

Under the casting deck you'll find a large safety gear storage locker. It opens straight on to the ribbed floor of the boat, so items stowed in here could get wet if any water finds its way underfloor.

Also up in the bow area is a full width (open) anchor locker, bollard, bow



coaming rails, and a foredeck that is strong enough to stand on.

In the centre of the boat is the recessed cockpit floor area. This space is 2.11 m x 1.64 m in size - which is large enough for two people to fish side by side, and still have enough room on the flat, carpeted floor for tackle boxes etc.

The freeboard in the middle cockpit area is below knee height at 450 mm - so you do have to be careful when leaning up against the side coamings.

Other features in this cockpit area include a single side storage pocket, foam flotation underfloor, short coaming rails and four pedestal seat positions.

The transom layout in the Stacer Barra Elite comprises a single, short outboard well, flanked by a fuel tank locker to starboard, and a live bait tank on the port side.

As with the current Quintrex models, both the

outboard splash well and bait tank are made from durable, roto-moulded plastic. The good sized live bait tank also comes standard with plumbing piping.

Other standard features at the transom include rear carry handles, a transducer bracket, fuel tank tray, four rod holders, and wide side coaming extrusions.

The latter is an important standard feature as the wide side decks can double as seats, and can accept additional flush mounted rod holders.

### Handling, Ride & Performance

Earlier, I noted that a major benefit of the Barra Elite's flatter transom vee shape is that it can be powered by smaller, lower horsepower outboards. Well, another benefit is increased stability at rest.

At the transom, there is virtually no hull vee, and for this reason, stability at rest

is excellent - especially in the rear transom corners.

Another advantage of this hull shape is that it can comfortably cope with the weight of 4-stroke outboard engines up to the maximum recommended power of 50 hp.

While on the subject of power, the test boat's Evinrude 30 hp was sufficient for light applications with two adults. However, the Stacer is well capable of handling more power and a greater top speed, so I would be inclined to run the boat with a 40 hp engine - either 2-stroke or 4-stroke, depending on your budget and preference.

Having made this observation, I was very impressed with the 4-stroke Evinrude 30 hp. It accelerated from a standing start quite smartly, and it also had a very nice cruise speed of between 15 - 17 knots. The manual start engine was not fitted with a

tacho, so I could not determine the engine rpm at this cruise speed, but I suspect it would have been close to 4,500 rpm.

The water conditions during the boat test were reasonably calm, but there was enough of a wind chop to prove that the Stacer's flared hull entry does soften the ride into the waves. However, to achieve this good head sea ride, the bow of the boat needs to be trimmed down so that the fine vee entry can meet the wave chop. If the boat is trimmed so the boat runs with the bow well out of the water, then the ride becomes little different to most traditional v-nose punts.

The key to getting the most out of the Barra Elite is to find a balance between ride comfort, dryness and economy - keeping in mind that when the bow is pushed further down into the water, there is more resistance so the boat uses more fuel and more spray is blown about.

The ultimate solution is to have a tiller steer outboard which has a gas operated trim system. This way, the outboard's trim angle (and thus the running angle of the boat) can be quickly altered to suit the conditions.

When running into a choppy sea for example, you would then trim the drive leg down so that the sharply

## Specifications

<b>Name</b> .....	Stacer
<b>Model</b> .....	SF Barra Elite
<b>Configuration</b> .....	V-punt
<b>Centreline length</b> .....	4.35 m
<b>Overall length</b> .....	4.35 m
<b>Max beam</b> .....	1.86 m
<b>Depth</b> .....	950 mm
<b>Bottom thickness</b> .....	2.0 mm
<b>Topsides thickness</b> .....	1.6 mm
<b>Number of Std Pedestals</b> .....	Two
<b>Hull weight</b> .....	245 kg
<b>Number of persons</b> .....	Four
<b>Transom size</b> .....	Long shaft
<b>Maximum power</b> .....	50 hp
<b>Power as tested</b> .....	Evinrude 30 hp 4-Stroke
<b>Maximum speed</b> .....	23 knots
<b>Price as tested (ex Brisbane)</b> .....	\$14,785



vee'd forefoot could slice through the waves. At most other running angles however, you would probably be better off trimming the boat so that the bow was further out of the water. This would

improve fuel economy and dryness.

**Conclusion** Buying a v-nose punt at the moment is quite a difficult job because there are plenty of great boats on offer from at least

half a dozen different builders. To this group must be added the new Stacer SF Barra Elite because it ranks right up with the best of the boats available.

The Barra Elite is well priced, well made, and well designed for a mix of bay and estuary fishing, river and impoundment fishing. The hull is very safe and seaworthy, it runs well with smaller engines, and the ride through choppy water is softer than most competitor craft.

If you're in the market for a new v-nose punt, have a close look at the Barra Elite. It deserves serious consideration.

**With the Evinrude 30 hp 4-stroke outboard and Centreline trailer, the Stacer SF 435 Barra Elite is priced at \$14,785 at Wynnum Marine, Qld. Phone (07) 3396 9777. Note: This price excludes interstate freight charges.**

**F&B**