

F&B's Small Craft Section

Haines Traveler TC 155 & Suzuki 50



The traditional family cuddy cab has long been a favourite with Aussie boat buyers. Tested this month is a great example of the breed, the Haines Traveler TC 155 - packaged with a Suzuki 50 hp 4-stroke.

Report & Pics by Jeff Webster.

The choice of new boats available for boating newcomers is quite remarkable at present. There's a whole raft of budget priced aluminium boats on offer, along with some pretty good fibreglass rigs. Runabouts, cuddies, centre consoles, bow riders - there's hundreds of models and many different configurations to choose from. If you're looking for a general

purpose boat to perform a range of applications, however, the classic cuddy cabin is still pretty hard to beat. The cuddy has plenty of shelter, storage space, and seating. It is suitable for use in lakes and rivers, bays, harbours, and offshore.

There are many new cuddy cabins on the market today. For boating newcomers, one of the best is the Haines Traveler TF 155.

This budget priced boat has a strong pedigree, as it comes from the same stable as the award winning Signature boat range.

Braving the hot Queensland sun (someone has to do it!) I recently managed to sneak away from my computer for a run in the Traveler TF 155. It proved an interesting test because the boat was powered by a new Suzuki 50 hp 4-stroke.

Design

The Haines Traveler range has expanded during the past 12 months. There are now about ten models, comprising a mix of runabouts and cuddy/half cabins.

structure. The cabin windows you can see here are not standard - and were in fact fitted by the dealer. The addition is an improvement as it gives the cabin structure a softer, more attractive appearance.

In specifics, the TF 155 is 4.72 m long and 2.0 m across the beam. The hull weighs 400 kg, while the towing weight is estimated at 950 kg.

Inside, the layout follows the time proven cuddy cabin design. The cabin area is short, but there is sitting room for two adults on two 900 mm long cushioned seats. The headroom above the berths

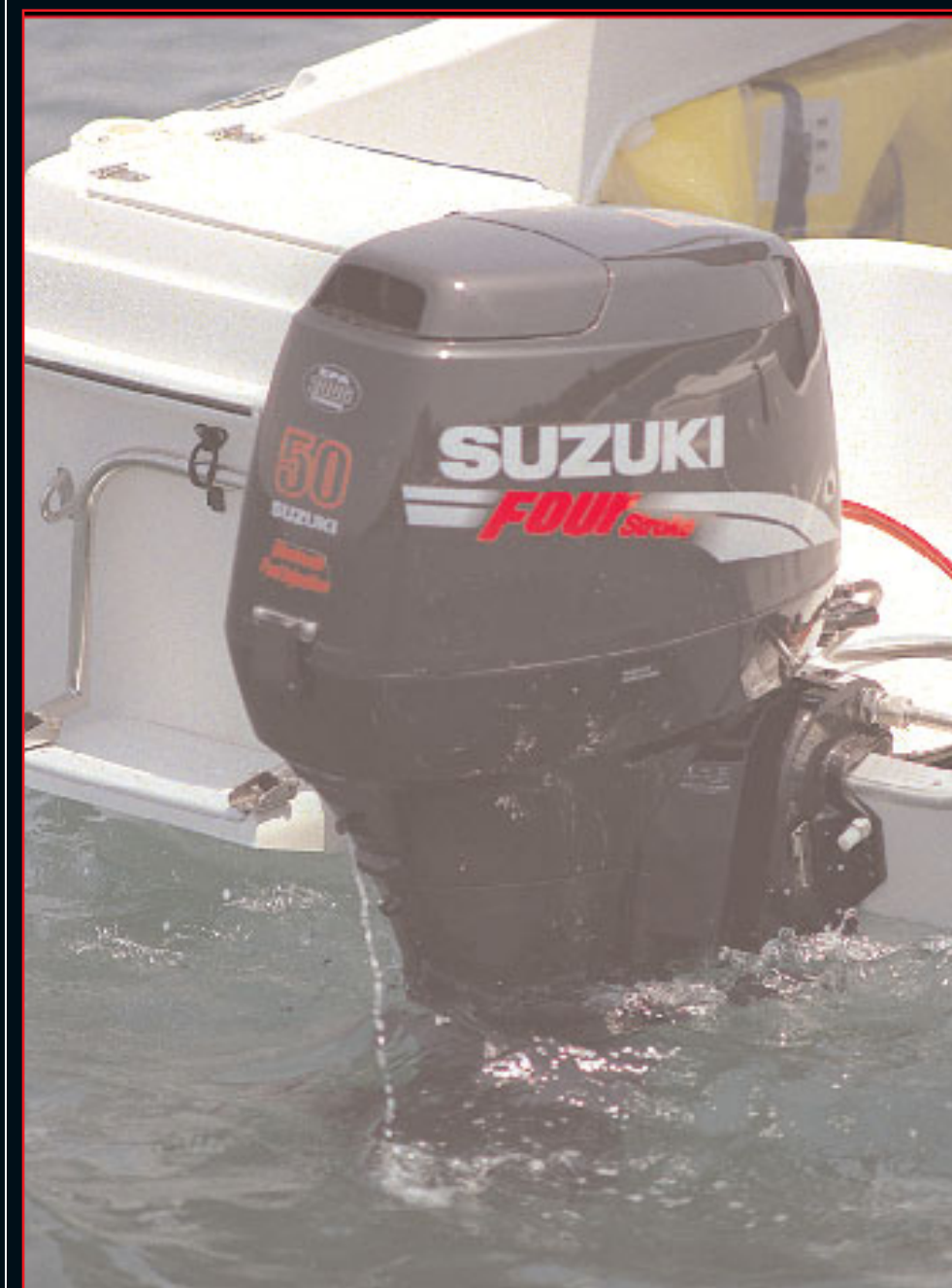
the rear cockpit in the form of two, lift out padded transom corner seats. Removing the cushions gives access into the transom corners, on either side of a traditional "island" style outboard engine well.

Back at the helm, the dash and instrument panel is large, if a little plain in appearance by modern standards. It is topped by a single front pane, perspex windscreen.

A grab rail or handle is located on the port side for the forward passenger, but the skipper has to do without. Having said that, additional rails are available as an option.

The rear cockpit is quite large for a boat that is just a little over 15 foot. The overall cockpit length is 2.27 m, while from the back of the helm chairs to the transom wall, there is 1.7 m to play with. It is almost as wide at 1.62 m across the middle of the cockpit.

Dry storage space in the TF 155 is limited to the cabin side pockets and the side pockets flanking the cockpit. Mind you, the cabin pockets extend back past the helm area, and the cockpit side pockets are full length. Combined, there is ample space for the stowage of safety gear, life jackets, towels, etc.



The boats are not as well equipped in standard form as the Signature models, but they don't cost as much, either. Truth is, the Travelers are great for first time boat buyers and others who have to meet a tight budget, but who do not want to compromise on quality of construction, performance and handling and ride.

Quite apart from that, if the standard Travelers don't have quite enough bells and whistles for you, there are plenty of options and accessories available so each rig can be set up to suit individual requirements.

The TF 155 is a pretty little boat with very clean lines. It has a smooth sided, traditional vee hull and gentle sloping cabin

measures 850 mm - adequate, without being overly spacious.

The cabin berths/seats are split in the middle to provide walkway access to the forepeak cabin hatch. This opens out so you can climb out to reach the anchor well.

The well itself is small, but it has been rigged so that a Danforth style anchor can be slotted in a vertical, upright position. The arrangement looks a little different, but will probably work quite well.

At the helm, the TF 155 has two swivelling, pedestal mounted chairs. These are deluxe, comfortable items - which is good to see given that the boat is designed as a budget, entry level model.

Additional seating is provided in