

Noosacat 3100 Sportsman / Verado Combo

It's very fast, soft riding, capable of handling just about anything - and with today's high tech, high power to weight ratio outboards, has returned to the sparkle that make these big cats an absolute joy to drive . . . Peter Webster, complete with valium and an appointment with his shrink, joins Wayne Hennig for this special report . . .



Testing" boats with Noosa Cat CEO Wayne Hennig is always something of a challenge. To begin with, getting Wayne out of the driver's seat is incredibly hard because the guy is the original 'rev head' - and he just loves nothing more than getting out of his factory for a couple of hours and letting loose on the Noosa Bar in one of his powerful Noosa Cats.

So the challenge for any "gunna do" boating journalist is twofold - firstly you have to get Wayne out of the helm seat

and/or secondly you've got to learn to hang on - tight.

Real tight!

In his other life, when Wayne puts on his civvies and knocks off from the factory, he's one of Australia's top competitors in the brutally fast and dynamic Porsche racing car series, so more than most, we're entitled to describe him as a genuine rev head and get away with it. However, that brings us back to the boat test situation - and us trying to figure out how to lever Wayne out of his driver's seat without actually pressing the

eject button.

I was contemplating these issues as we swooped down the controlled speed zone along the Noosa River before going through the 'chicane' that leads to the little Noosa Bar.

Wayne was in the driver's chair (*funny that!*) Ruth Cunningham was sitting in the passenger seat grimly hanging on, and yours truly was swinging from the centre hand rail, camera in one hand looking for all the world like a chimp that's lost its cage. But we were having fun - with Wayne at the helm there's nothing else

you can do but hang on and enjoy the ride.

Wayne's idea of heaven is to have 40 knots of sou-easterly blowing across the bay on a run out tide with waves standing up about 4.0m tall and wet sand at their base. Thankfully on this day the bar was piddling and small, the tide was still coming in and it was safe for most craft, let alone something as powerful and as effective as a 3100 Noosa Cat. But did that stop Wayne Hennig? Did that slow him down in any way? No way - spying the nearly perfect conditions offshore on

this beautiful morning off Noosa, complete with blue skies, sparkling seas and about a one metre chop on the bar, we'd hardly straightened up out of the river run before 450hp screamed in the background as the throttles were opened up in manic fashion; it's the only way the man knows how to drive.

With the Verados digging deep, and the superchargers going off, I don't think that we actually touched the water from the first wave to the last wave across the bar, but judging by the amazed looks from the local

surfing fraternity, I think we were in the air more than we were in the water. Not that it mattered, Noosa Cats are literally born and bred for these conditions, and they handle them like no other.

I've made this comment before and I know it's raised a few eyebrows around the traps, but ownership of something like this Noosa Cat 3100, with the power:weight ratio of the 2 x 225hp Mercury Verado outboards makes it such a buzz to drive, it is fair to use the parallel of describing the