



## The Territory's Arafura 5.7 CC

**J**im Keane has owned and operated Arafura Marine since the early nineties, doing repairs, modifications and aluminum fabrication work.

He specialises in architect designed craft for virtually any application from a 4.5m dinghy up to 12m landing craft, with the most popular being an exclusive Gavin Mair design ranging from 4.5 up to 6.2m.

These are a very flexible designs, and the layout can be easily customised to suit each different customer's requirements. Depending upon the intended use, the hull can be made shorter or longer. The deadrise can be changed from 12 up to 18 degrees, consoles, casting platforms, transom arrangements and level of fit out from a bare hull all the way to 'turn key' - with any brand of outboard, sterndrive and trailer.

Story & Pics By Geoff Browne, in Darwin



The boats are constructed to survey standards and carry a basic flotation rating as standard, although this can be increased to level flotation if desired.

The one tested is 5.7m long with a beam of 2.4m and is a pretty standard arrangement for tropical sportfishing.

It incorporates the centre rear console and 2.2m long casting platform and no less than 8 seat positions with 2 on the foredeck, 3 on the platform and 3 across the transom. The platform is cavernous underneath and this one holds an extra 120L fuel tank and a recess to fit a 110 litre Waeco fridge, as well as tackle lockers either side.

The main deck is 2.0m long by 2.2m wide by 750mm deep and is fully welded with scuppers and a free flooding kill tank across the fully sealed rear bulkhead. This is a practical



spot for a kill tank as its right under the usual cleaning table and cleans itself every time the boat comes to rest. All too often, these are placed somewhere else in the hull miles away from where you actually make the mess, so this is practical thinking. Inside the aft bulkhead are the 2 batteries, switchgear, deckwash and auto bilge pumps (the latter being fitted as insurance) and there's still plenty of storage space leftover. A 180 litre fuel tank is fitted under the floor amidships (as standard) to give no effect to the boat's trim, whether it's empty or full.

The transom has a folding ladder, short steps and a small recess into the aft bulkhead just big enough to trim the engine into and nest the bimini top to maximize cockpit room.

All boats are built to suit an extra long shaft outboard, and this one is fitted with a hydraulically steered 135hp Honda which produced 23 knots at 4,000 rpm, and WOT of 37kn @ 5900rpm fitted with a 17" Solas alloy prop – speeds as indicated on the Humminbird 787.

Once this one is loaded up for extended trips as the owner wants, the Top End will probably drop a couple of hundred revs but will still be in its correct operating range. The ride at cruise was good, even though we were very light on the test. F&B has done fuel trials on the 150 Honda on a 6.2 Noble and this returned figures of around one litre/nm at



cruise, so this should be similar.

The hull is 5mm thick, with internal bulkheads every 350mm, 5 longitudinals, 16 degree Vee and has no planing strakes but is fitted with 80mm wide downturned chines for lift and stability. It gives a very clean wake with a minimum planing speed of 11kn.

A quick stop on the croc trap (nobody home!) in the Elizabeth River for some photos showed a level attitude whether underway or at rest, and generally clean flowing lines with the sheer at the nose flattened to assist vision, and not a large wake left behind. Out on Darwin Harbour with 15 knots of seabreeze and 0.5m chop, there was no pounding

and little tendency to fall into the wind. Further, when moving from side to side, it didn't fall onto the chines.

Full lock turns were like being on rails, with no spray coming over the sides and no cavitation upon straightening out.

Following seas showed straight tracking, and with quite a bit of out-trim, it skipped across the top nicely. The whole show sits on a heavy duty Voyager trailer for a weight of 1.8t and presents very smartly indeed. This rig, as tested, works out at about \$60K, which is pretty comprehensive and ready to go - although this can vary greatly depending on the level of fit-out.

Arafura Marine also has 4.5m dinghies with 50 Hondas for self drive hire and a 5m with 90 Honda on line late February, all capable of taking 4 people. They also have 2 houseboats at King Ash Bay on the Macarthur River for extended hire with either a hire dinghy or take your own.

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