

F&B's
Small Craft
Section

Brooker's Tough 410 Fisherman





Brooker 410 Fisherman

There is something reassuring about starting off our new innings of F&B, (having completed our first century - 100 magazines - last issue), with a classic Brooker tinnie. Although it wasn't planned this way at all, it's good to think back to the very first issue we ever published of F&B which featured another Brooker – the 5.0m cuddy (now 5.25) that's remained in production to this very day.

It's also important that on this significant "first" issue of the new century of magazines, that we start off with what can only be described as the fundamental, basic Australia tinnie.

Hundreds of thousands of these boats, of one sort or another, have seen service on every creek, river, estuary, ocean and dam throughout Australia. The name "Brooker" is synonymous with tinnies. Alongside the De Haviland brand, Norm Brooker and his famous tinnies forged a unique alliance with the Australian boating public. Although challenged by fibreglass at different times over the years, the ubiquitous aluminium "tinnie" has never really been threatened for supremacy. It's interesting too, when you think that the Australian tinnie is as 'ocker' as Holdens, Hills Hoists and Victor Mowers – no other country in the world has had such an entrenched love affair with welded aluminium tinnies as the Australian boating public.

This is probably because boating facilities in Australia in the 1950s through to the late 1970s were pretty dreadful – and in thousands of miles of regional Australia, they still are. Tinnies like this can be dropped, banged and thumped with gay abandon across the riverbeds, down the banks, over the logs and are light enough for a couple of blokes to pick up and literally manhandle across a weir or over to the next billabong.

Jumping into this 2004 model Brooker 410 Fisherman brought back a flood of memories and almost a sense of relief to rediscover that the joys of basic boating have not
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changed one jot over the last 30 years or more since tinnies like this were first invented.

Design

Okay here are the stats. The Brooker measures 4.10m long although its overall length from the sprit to the handles of the transom is actually 4.20. It's 1.85m wide, has a hull depth of 0.550 (measured from whence we know not where) and weighs 150kg wringing wet. It's rated for a maximum of 40hp, carries a recommendation of 30 (as tested) and Brooker allow a transom weight of 120kg. It's rated for 4 adults, at 75kg each, and has a longshaft transom (20"), two seats athwartship packed with foam and side pockets between them. In fact the flat floor between the two seats measures 1.410m x 1.280m between the shelves, so there's a nice amount of space to stand up and stretch your legs or cast a lure or two.

Rowlocks (remember them?) are still fitted, and there's a pleasing level of essential if simple deck hardware as you can see in the photographs.

Taken out of the forward quarter of *Whim-Away* (our new camera cat) the shot is quite revealing and fascinating to study; this is a fine example of one picture being worth at least a thousand words.

Performance

The Yammy 30hp 2-stroker was a good fit for the Brooker. A three cylinder 496cc engine with a wonderful record of long service and reliability, it only weighs 66kg, which no doubt accounts for the very sprightly performance it provided. By

comparison, the 4-stroke 30hp Yammy weighs 90.4kg, so in terms of the power:weight ratio the 2-stroke wins hands down.

It also wins handsomely on the cash required to buy it factor, too – with this package of boat/motor/trailer commonly sitting between only \$6,000-\$7,000 at Brooker /Yamaha dealers around Australia.

For the record too, it turned in a very pleasing 26.5 knots top speed with two good-sized blokes onboard, and cruised very sweetly around 20 knots. You wouldn't need any more horsepower – and you wouldn't need much less – it's about spot on.

Handling & Ride

The Brooker 410 Fisherman zinged down the bay like all the other tinnies, with the usual codicil that if you want a soft ride you slow down, and you'll bang if you go too fast. Finding the happy medium was easy and with two of us sitting on the back thwart, swinging along at about 20 knots was comfortably dry and altogether a very pleasant experience.

The handrails are set-up nicely, and are needed for tiller steering. I'm not a big fan of tiller steering in this day and age of simple remotes and excellent mechanical steering that's available for very little extra cost. However, I do understand that for many families, every cent helps get them into a boat quicker, and on that basis the tiller set-up here was excellent.

Tiller steering is terrific for experienced blokes who either fish on their own or with a good mate,

because it does require a higher level of seamanship and experience than a traditional set-up with a little side console, for example, and a normal steering wheel attached to the outboard with cables.

For people who want that style of boating a Brooker can provide it - they have quite a range of tinnies actually, all the way up to 5.25m in length and in cuddy, console, runabout (etc), configurations.

Conclusion

It's good to get back to basic boating. Fishoes will love this boat – as will young family blokes who are forced to watch their budgets because of rising fuel costs, the expense of children and all the usual problems that young families have to deal with.

The Brooker 410 Fisherman is safe, practical - a terrific fishing boat, and just about the perfect low cost family getaway machine to blow away those mortgage blues and get out and do a bit of island hopping and discovery around the bay with Mum and the kids.

And as for all you granddads out there – don't forget it's your duty to take out the young tackers and show them how to catch their first crab, catch their first bream and discover the wonderful world of fishing that awaits them – and this is just about the perfect boat for granddad and the boy to make that discovery together.

The test boat was made available by Marine Tune 64 Cortum Drive, Burleigh Heads, Gold Coast, Qld, 4220. Email: sales@marinetune.com Phone: (07) 5576 7388.