

Fisherman & Boatowner QUICK TEST

Ross & Chris Wilson's

Cyclone 680

Centre Console



Every once in a while, a boat comes along that just knocks your socks right off - and this is one of them.

The reasons are obvious in that it is seriously quick, with brilliant handling and ride. But that's not the whole story.

This particular Cyclone blew in with a very timely reminder that boats, even fishing boats, first and last, are all about having . . . fun !

Fishermen around Australia may not have heard of Ross or Chris Wilson's Cyclone Boats before this, but if you've been in the world of water-skiing and ski-boat racing, you'll know they're regarded as one of the best manufacturers in the world. In fact, they manufacture what is currently ranked as the number one ski-racing boat in the world.

But like a lot of things in today's life, the ski racing world is being hit hard by out of control insurance premiums, resistance by the "proper authorities" to issue permits for races to be held on popular waterways, and so on. After a decade or more of exciting international activity, Ross and Chris found themselves staring down the barrel of a diminishing market which was really completely out of their control.

Facing a fairly bleak future in the ski-racing world, Ross decided to yield to local pressure and started to become more involved in the local fishing scene in north Queensland. Based in Gordonvale (just outside of Cairns) the Wilson's had built fishing boats for some of the locals from time to

time, but they really never had the opportunity of concentrating their skills and experience in the development of full-on fishing boats.

As you can see here, they now have – and struth, this is one mother of a fishing machine, I have to tell you. Powered by the big block 200hp Mercury Optimax, this is the definitive chop eater with a ride and performance that defies description.

This boat is so fast, and so quick across the chop, more likely than not, most fishos will stop fishing and go out to punch into the choppy channel or bay just for the sheer hell of it; of driving such a superb handling semi-race boat.

And let's not beat around the bush – this thing is long, skinny and mean – and it goes like a blur.

For readers who have trouble with seriously choppy bumpy water, and I'm thinking here specifically of the Adelaide Gulfs, Port Phillip Bay or coming back across Moreton Bay on a summer's afternoon, I don't think I've ever driven a softer riding boat – let alone one that's capable of the terminal velocity of this

beast!

Quite seriously, this Cyclone will run 3' chop at around 40 mph as if it wasn't there – way to go in Port Phillip Bay!

Dimensions The Cyclone measures 6.85m LOA with the maximum beam a narrowish 2.19m, and a deadrise, of 21 degrees.

It's rated for horsepower to 200 hp and as you can see, was fitted with one of the extraordinary Mercury 200 Optimax engines. I'm still getting used to the sound of this Optimax, especially at low speed when it sounds almost exactly the same as a Lycoming engine in a Cessna aircraft.

The big Opty was a stunning mix with this boat, and although you don't need 200hp to make the boat go, it sure as hell adds another dimension to your boating – especially if the fishing is a bit boring!

Okay, so I'm a revhead – but gosh, some of the boats we get to test are so BORING! This boat challenges the senses, lights up the fires and gives you such a buzz it's worth running just

because it goes like the clappers and it stimulates the senses. Oh, and yes, you can use it to catch fish, too!

Fishing Department As you can see in the opening spread, there's bags of space for three or four people to fish this boat very earnestly.

The centre console isn't a bad design, there's not a lot of provision for sounders or GPS, that can all be adapted in time, and I'm sure Ross would change whatever was needed on the boat to make you a happy customer.

The Wilsons are nice people, and they're keen as mustard to take their consummate fibreglass boat building skills and apply it to the fishing market.

Nothing wrong with that either. I think we're going to hear a lot more from these people in the future.

For further information please phone Ross and Chris Wilson at Cyclone Boats (07) 4056 5761 Fax (07) 4056 1109

