



It was good to revisit the Dominator 5.0 m twin hull catamaran designed by Mark Hookham out of Port Macquarie in NSW.

Mark Hookham is quite famous for his work with twin hull craft, reaching back to the days when he designed and built the original Markham Whaler family of boats.

After a fairly painful company crash in the late 1980's, Mark re-established himself with the Dominator range. Models now include a 4.0, 4.3, 5.0, 6.3 and a big new 7.0 m cat making its debut later this summer.

The Dominator 5.0 m has been in regular production for nearly six years, during which time, dozens of these craft have been built, and are in service right around Australia. When I first tested this boat for its debut, back in

Offshore, where the white water is booming across the ocean entrance, be glad you're in a Dominator 5.0; this is still one of the best handling, safest bar boats of its length ever made. It's not as good or as safe as the big heavy cats, because in serious bar work, the weight of the boat has a lot to do with the boat's ability to handle being knocked around by big waves. Having said that, however, if you know what you're about, and you have worked up your skill level to handle and understand bar crossings, this is the best 5.0 m boat in Australia in which to do it.

For this quick test, Bill Fankhouser and the team from Runaway Marine had set-up the Dominator with twin 65 hp, 2-stroke Suzukis. Although they had plenty of grunt and staying power offshore, the actual combination of the

Huge 6.3 sq m fishing cockpit, gunwales you can lean against with your toes under the side locker, an excellent live bait tank set-up and in the case of the test boat, a pretty good camping canopy arrangement that allows you to cover the whole cockpit in a waterproof camper set-up, or take it apart in pieces all the way back to just having a bimini. Not a bad job - although some of the struts were too light and wobbly for my taste.

Criticisms: I thought the steering, helm and seat arrangement was a bit ordinary, but fairly easily fixed.

When you've got a boat like this that's going to work hard offshore, it needs to be set-up very carefully so that the skipper can work the helm comfortably, enjoyably - and safely. You should never have to hang on to

Mark Hookham's DOMINATOR 5.0

July, 1992, we noted then it was one of the safest GRP boats available in Australia. Nothing has changed.

Hookham's Dominator 5.0 m cat is still one of the rare production GRP boats in Australia that not only offers full positive foam buoyancy as an option - it's actually standard equipment.

Combined with the terrific stability of this soft riding, asymmetric hull, having the self draining cockpit nearly 300 mm above the water, twin engines and off the floor dual batteries, reminds us that this is still (arguably) the safest production trailerboat manufactured in Australia.

Better than that, it's still the best handling of all the 5.0 m cats, including the Kevlacat 5.2, so well known and beloved by this writer, the Noosacat 5.2 and 5.0, and all the aluminium cats. Hookham's asymmetric hulls still allow the Dominator 5.0 (and the others in the range) to corner noticeably better than all the other non-asymmetric cats which lean outwards in a hard turn - a disarming attitude that many people find quite unsettling. Not so the Hookham 5.0 - you can chuck this round the buoys like a high performance mono, and enjoy the process.

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer	Markham Manufacturing
Model/Designation	Dominator
Type	Power twin hull
Construction	GRP
Topsides Thickness	5 mm plus core
Bottom Thickness	7 mm plus core
Length, on trailer, in garage	6.9 m
Length, Sprit to duckboard	5.10 m
Length, stem head to transom	4.75 m
Maximum Beam	2.29 m
Deadrise	Asymmetric, warped hulls
Hull Draught	0.350 m
Hull (only) dry weight	950-1050 kg (aver)
BMT Weight for highway	1.5-1.7 tonne
Minimum horsepower	2 x 50 hp
Maximum Horsepower	2 x 70 hp
Sterndrive Option	N/A
Fuel Capacity	2 x 90 L
Water Capacity	nil
People Capacity	5
Berths	One
BMT Packages from	\$37,000

65's and the mechanical steering was not as good as some other installations we've tested.

Why anybody would have a boat as good as this with mechanical steering is a bit of a mystery - I'd chuck it out in the first five minutes, and replace it with a decent Hydrive or Seastar hydraulic system so that you could appreciate the sensitivity and precision of this craft.

However, from a fishing viewpoint, it's a ripper of a boat.

the helm for support, so boatbuilders have a duty to think about the ergonomics of the helm station.

However, these are all easily corrected matters. I'm sure if you took a \$36,000 cheque into Bill Fankhouser for the rig, he'd do a deal that would see all of these matters fixed before the ink was dry on the cheque.

Change over to hydraulic steering, instal Reelax seat slides, stiffen the bimini, and install a big grab rail for the skipper and passenger to hang onto - and Bob's your uncle !

Summary: Still the best 5.0 m cat. Ideal for blokes with a crook back or hips, because the ride is so soft (there is no 'thump' to speak of) all wrapped up in one of the driest boats we've tested

for yonks. Terrific walk-through windscreen to the anchor well, first class fishing layout, and a very 'user friendly' cockpit.

This is a first rate fishing boat and easily one of the safest boats (mono, cat or tri) in Australia today.

For further information please call:
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