



*Fisherman & Boatowner FIELD TEST*

# Horizon 490 Family Cuddy Cabin

Test report and pics by Peter Webster. Our first report was headed **Boats, Babies And Budgets**, and we introduced readers to our latest thoughts in family boating. Now, several months later, the evaluation begins.

**T**here is nothing madly original about this new Horizon 490 Family quarter cab developed by Horizon Boats for F&B magazine.

It was never that sort of boat project. What started the whole exercise 6 months ago was our desire to explore alternatives to buying something second hand, when we believe it is often possible to buy a brand new rig for the same, or just a few dollars more.

From that stand point, the packaged price of this Horizon 490 with a 60hp 2-stroke outboard and a single axle, unbraked Ruhle trailer achieves the mission statement. Available from a number of Horizon dealers for around \$26,500 the 2-stroke package around this Horizon 490 is extremely competitive, and frankly, a mile better

*Ye gods, another Webster on the water - this is l'il Ashley Webster from Sydney, our official baby seat "tester".*



alternative than somebody else's second hand problems.

What we have here though, is the next 'step through' in packaging.

We upgraded the base concept to include the 4-stroke 60hp Yamaha outboard largely as a result of us all falling madly in love with this outboard over the last 6 months or so. We've used it now in various boats and still can't get over how quiet and smooth it is, let alone its economy and smoke free performance. Best of all it has a power to weight ratio very similar to a 2-stroke outboard, so its overall performance has been exceptional, too.

Then, we also upgraded the Peter Ruhle trailer to include his very clever drawbar extension kit, knowing that the boat was invariably going to be

**Left:** She's a trim little ship this Horizon 490, with a nice running 'attitude'.

**Right:** Very happy about this - a ladder and hand rails that are a real boon for Mum and kids to get in and out of the water easily and safely. Check the transom shot on Page 33 for more details.

**Inset Below:** It's a bit hard to keep our newest F&B team member focused - but she sure likes this boat seat we've developed!

(See F&B #72 for more details)



towed by a 2-wheel drive car of the Commodore or Falcon kind.

Nothing wrong with that either. The only time they ever have a problem these days, is when you hit that situation at the bottom of the tide, when you come back from boating, and the lower section of the launch ramp is really slippery.

That used to be a problem – not anymore. With the Ruhle drawbar extension kit (and incidentally, please note that one is now available as a retro fit kit for most trailers from Dunbier trailers, too) this type of problem can be eliminated. The wheels of the car can (now) be kept away from the slippery bits, and the boat pulled out quite easily. And obviously, for the 4WD off-the-beach brigade, the extension kit is a godsend.

Then we installed a Garmin 160 depth sounder, 27 MHz radio, Evakool 65 L ice chest and various other bits and pieces (the live bait tank and plumbing, for instance) all of which brought the packaged price of our boat up to approx \$27,500 - \$28,000.

Now, I don't know how you feel about that, but we think that is pretty darn good value.

Last month, we had a chance to use the boat ourselves (!!) back here on the Gold Coast, after it had done a two month stint down in Sydney.

As things worked out, we'd scarcely

driven the boat before it was shipped out via Trewin Transport to Port Stephens, then it went up to Port Macquarie for a week and back down to the Hawkesbury for the rest of the period. Trewin Transport then brought the rig back here to the Gold Coast where we were finally able to conduct a formal boat test.

My son Jamie Webster had reported from Sydney that the boat's motor was a pin too high and this was causing some prop ventilation at the top end of the performance scale, but it hadn't bothered his young family. They were content to puddle around at the 4,000-4,500 cruising speed of around 21-22 knots, and loved every minute of it.

So with all the foregoing in mind, what's it like? Come along with us now as we step aboard a very interesting family boat.

**Design** Just about all the pressed aluminium boat builders have a quarter cab around about this size. The list includes Quintrex, Savage, Ally Craft, Stessco, Stessl, Sea Jay (etc!).

There's a very good reason for this too. It's a fabulous area for family boat packages. You only need a 50-60hp engine, a single axle (usually unbraked) trailer, and the boat is very quickly built in pressed aluminium by the manufacturer once he has the jig set-up.

### Specifications

Name	Horizon
Model	490 Family
Configuration	Cuddy
Centreline length	4.90 m
Max Beam	2.25m
Deadrise	8 degrees
Hull weight	390 kg
Towing weight	900 kg
Transom size	Long shaft
Maximum power	.90 hp
Maximum engine weight	.175 kg
Power as tested	
	.....Yamaha 60 hp 4-stroke
Fuel capacity	65 litres
Price (std. boat/2-stroke outboard)	
	..... approx \$26,500
Price (as tested with Yamaha 60 hp 4-stroke & accesories)	.. \$27,500