

Kevlacat

Damon Olsen takes a hard-nosed, professional look at a new fly casting platform by Kevlacat for the growing flycasting movement. Weary of pressed tinnies breaking up and splitting when they're used in the ocean, the top guides are turning back to GRP for the strength and rough water handling they need in these versatile barra, bass and bream boats.

The Flycaster is the latest offering from Kevlacat in the fiercely competitive bass and barra boat market. When we talk about this style of vessel, we're looking at anything from 14-19ft which is a low profile vessel designed for 2-3 anglers to be able to cast lures/flyes/soft plastics at a variety of species while essentially under electric motor power, and often in shallow water. Many of these type of vessels do get used for other purposes, but this is the essence of their design.

The Flycaster hull has been around for a number of years, and has previously been sold as an offshore and bay capable centre console. But Kevlacat's John Postle saw some potential in the hull and pulled it out of storage at the Kevlacat factory to design the new layout.

Application

Designed as an all out bass and barra boat, to compete head on with the likes of Quintrex's Hornet series, the Flycaster appears at a glance to be quite capable in this area. However, it's not until you've spent a day fishing in this boat that the truly stunning characteristics shine through. As a lure and flycasting platform, this vessel has few equals. The combination of an extremely stable and seaworthy hull, dry ride and the internal setup, sees this boat in nearly a class of its own. The Flycaster is probably the closest thing we have in Australia to one of the US style flats boats and skiffs.

The skiff design is unique because the vessels need to traverse large bodies of choppy water but retain a very shallow draft. The Flycaster has this ability, but I would dare say is even more stable than most of the US flats skiffs.

As mentioned, the hull lends itself to close offshore and

5.2 'Flyfisher' Tri



bay work, which is unusual in this style of boat. The vessel is very capable in any sort of chop or moderate weather condition, which means that short trips up the coast to fish that favourite little creek are not an issue.

I would suspect that this boat's ideal application is in some of our more remote northern areas, where those short trips up and down the coast are mandatory to fish certain areas. But even in an area like the Hinchinbrook Channel, this boat would be absolutely perfect. Having the hull to handle most types of bay chop with safety, even if not always with comfort (in 25kn of SE nothing is comfortable!), and the shallow draft to access the small creeks makes this vessel very versatile.

Mind you, this vessel has just as much application to anglers wanting to chase tuna on fly around a bay, or do some close offshore lurecasting around the rocks.

The Flycaster is probably one of the most truly versatile of the bass and barra boats on the market.

Hull Design

The hull design of this vessel is something unusual, but not new, in the Australian boating market. Being a tri hull, it could be seen as being no different from many other tri

hull vessels produced over the years. But this is the first real tri hull vessel to have its application tested in the bass and barra market.

Whereas many others so called tri hulls simply have large down turned chines, which disappear towards the front third of the vessel, the Flycaster is not designed in this way, and can claim to be a true tri hull. There are also some major static and moving stability bonuses that go with being a true tri hull vessel.

The most important bonus for this boat being its inherently stable bow casting area, resulting from the full length tri hull. In fact, it's fair to say that the side hulls on this vessel behave in quite the opposite way to many so-called tri hulls currently on the market. The side sponsons are more pronounced and 'veed' at the front of the vessel than at the back, and are actually non-existent at the transom, with the rear view looking quite similar to that of a standard monohull. The more pronounced forward vee of the sponsons is one of the contributing factors to this vessel's dry ride.

As we can see in the accompanying photos, the central hull takes on quite a pronounced vee towards the bow of the vessel, while the side sponsons behave similarly. The

vee in the front part of the central section is approaching 40 degrees, which creates a very soft ride through chop.

The other interesting feature of this hull is the 'flare' in the forward section of the bow. One would not normally equate a 'flared' bow with a tri hull, not in the classic sense of the word anyway, but this is probably the best way to describe it. The side sponsons actually do give way to quite a sideward flare in the hull towards the forward part of the bow, or in other words, the centre line of the vee in the side sponsons is quite a way inboard of the side of the vessel. And it seems that this little feature is the real key to the dryness of ride in this vessel. It is uncannily dry, to the point that the first wave encountered will have you ducking expected spray, which does not eventuate.

Internal layout and Fit out

The bow of the standard Flycaster features a moulded mounting pad for an electric motor, which is perfectly situated to allow the electric motor to drop down to be driving from very near the centre line of the boat. This makes it much easier to manoeuvre the boat, as well as having the electric stored out of the way, when in the up