

Kevlacad 8.2/Yanmar Diesel Flybridge

Fisherman & Boatowner FIELD TEST

En route to its home base in Port Stephens, NSW, this new twin shaft drive diesel Kevlacad flybridge stopped over in Runaway Bay, Qld, for some last minute fitting out before heading south to line fish from Port Stephens. It was a rare opportunity not only to test the latest from Kevlacad, but also to put the new 230 hp Yanmar turbo diesels under the microscope.

This Kevlacad hull has been around for quite sometime in various guises, a situation that has emerged because the factory has now so many different parts or moulds to suit this hull, it can easily be made into a ferry, a luxury cruiser, a professional trap boat, or (as in this case), a private fishing boat for "bottom bashing" out off Port Stephens and the Broughton Islands.

It's important to view this boat in that perspective - and accordingly, it's hard to imagine a better boat for the purpose.

This version of the Kevlacad 8.2 puts the emphasis into the vast rear cockpit, and treats the cabin area as a day boat situation instead of (say) a long range,

liveaboard cruiser.

By this I mean the cabin and accommodations are minimal, whereas the cockpit is vast, and that's exactly how the owners wanted it.

Design: Up front the Kevlacad has two, 3/4 berths on either side of the hull. There's nothing like full headroom here, indeed, sitting headroom is at a premium. But the berths themselves are quite comfortable and a good place to snore off when the fishing gets a little boring, or the crew is not feeling a hundred percent.

On the starboard side, the berth allows access to the instrumentation behind the dash, but there's still plenty of room for big blokes to lie down for a bit of shut-eye.

Moving out of the forward "cabin" area, and back into the main saloon, the layout is very simple. There's a genuine four place dinette to port between the forward cabin bulkhead and the external toilet. To starboard, the helm takes up most of the space, leaving just enough for a compact galley, hard up against the cabin cockpit bulkhead. Stepping out of the 'saloon' there is an external shower and toilet, accessed from the cockpit, but not inside the cabin.

It's a very "blokey" sort of set-up, and as noted, just about perfect for it's intended role.

There's room for a couple of blokes to sleep overnight, the galley is big enough to knock up a light meal very easily (let alone coffee and toasted sandwiches) and the full size toilet and shower situation is absolutely first class. Not only is there 'normal' standing headroom, there's room to swing around and shower comfortably if you so desire. The toilet can be used in exactly the same way as you'd use it at home or in an apartment block. I wish all toilet and shower rooms were

this good, and this accessible.

Upstairs, the flybridge moulding tapers towards the centre quite markedly, restricting the upstairs area to three adults on fixed seats, which is a fairly clever way to make sure you don't get too much weight aloft, despite this boat's wide 3.15 beam.

The flybridge was set-up very well for casual use, the owner opting for the lower station as his principle helm station.

He's chosen a stunning range of Raytheon electronics for this boat too, with a really well researched choice of equipment.

Complete with Morse electronic gearshift and throttle controls, the lower station equipment is truly state-of-the-art at the moment.

The decision to make the lower station the principle helm area, will no doubt mystify some monohull owners who are used to very poor visibility from the lower station. They always prefer the upstairs or flybridge helm to be the principle working station.

However, in a powerful cat like this, such is the seaworthiness and the flat running angle of this boat at speed, the lower station is the helm of choice.

Having come through the often extremely confused and choppy waters off the Port Stephens light, and across the fetch to Yaccaba Headland, I totally concur with the owners' decision to make the lower helm the principal work station.

It's far safer, more comfortable and the skipper is in much greater control working from the lower station especially in the confused, heavy seas and overfalls frequently found off Port Stephens Light when the sou'easterlies are rife. And make no mistake, this Kevlacad 8.2 twin diesel is capable of handling anything up to and including, a full blown gale.

The cockpit is the piece de resistance of the boat. It's huge, measuring 3.160

