

Ocean Cylinder's Sensational 4.4 Barra Rig

On a recent trip visiting F&B headquarters down at Runaway Bay on the Gold Coast, I had the opportunity to go for a test run and do a bit of a photo shoot in the prototype Ocean Cylinder 4.4m punt.

I don't really know if "punt" is the correct description for this thing, but it had a nose on it a bit like my punt, so that's what I'll call it!

The reason for the interest in this boat is due to both the editor's and my search for a boat that can both effectively fish up creeks for lure casting and also fish far offshore around the outer edges of the GBR after being towed or shipped to remote destinations by a mothership. Thus we are looking for a boat with a reasonably shallow draft, exceptional stability and also a nice deep vee for some comfort in offshore chop. Now, it seemed that these three features were going to be forever impossible to combine into the one boat - until this Ocean Cylinder 4.4m came along.

The theory, as I see it, behind this design of boat is to allow a deep vee to be put into a smaller, lightweight boat without sacrificing stability. When configured correctly, the idea is that the cylinders on the side will just touch the water at rest, thus providing superb stability. Then,



by Damon Olsen

under way, the deep vee is able to provide a smooth ride while the cylinders lift clear of the water. This all sounds good in theory, but does it actually work, I hear you ask?

Well, the answer in the case of the test boat, was a definite "Yes!". While the test boat was not quite perfect, it was close enough that we could all see its amazing potential once a few minor issues are ironed out.

Critical to the success of this boat is the level at which the cylinders are placed on the side of the boat.

In the case of the test boat, the cylinders were possibly 15-20mm too high, resulting in a degree of initial instability at rest. However, it was obvious to all that as soon as weight was placed towards one side of the boat, the cylinders 'bit' in and provided a huge boost to the inherent stability.

Because the test boat was extremely wide, this seemed to result in increased inherent buoyancy, raising the side cylinders out of the water in the process.

There would be two ways to solve the problem, both depending on the required application of the boat.

One possible solution would be to make the boat slightly narrower, reducing the boat's inherent or natural buoyancy, and letting it settle deeper in the water - ideally, placing the cylinders just in contact with the water when the boat is at rest.

The other option, if the width of the boat is an important feature, is simply to lower the height of the cylinders.

It is worth noting that this boat was pretty much knocked up in a week or so by Queensland Ship's Technical Director and mad keen fisho, Col Svensson, in order to fulfill the needs of a fast approaching camping trip! The boat was designed to be loaded up quite heavily with camping gear and 4-5 people which would mean the boat sits lower in the water at rest and thus giving better stability by putting the cylinders into the water.

For this report, the boat was tested with practically nothing on board except yours truly, which no doubt accounts for the initial tenderness. If we'd put an extra few hundred kilos into the boat, I have no doubt that it would have solved the problem.

Apart from this initial tenderness of the boat at rest, it performed very well in the choppy

Broadwater conditions. I think the deadrise on the boat was about 8 or 10 degrees, which provided a relatively smooth ride in the chop. And compared to the ride in the Horizon flat bottomed punt that I'm used to, the ride in this boat felt as smooth as silk.

The test boat was fairly dry for this style of boat, but like all boats this size, it did throw up a bit of spray on the larger waves. However I don't think that this was a serious problem, or one that couldn't be solved with some further hull development.

All things considered, I think this boat has huge potential for fishing folk. It might not be that pretty to look at, but it has the potential to really change the way people think about small aluminium boats.

The other point just worth making about the test boat was the motor fitted. The 2-stroke Yamaha 40 hp certainly made the test boat absolutely fly, but it also emphasised the huge gap between today's 2-stroke and 4-stroke motors.

My 4-stroke Honda 50 hp compared to the test 2-stroke Yamaha 40 hp is considerably smoother, quieter, doesn't smoke or use any oil. It just shows how far forward these new 4-stroke motors have come, compared to the older technology 2-strokes which seem stuck in their own time warp. And according to Editor PW, the new Yamaha 30/40 hp 4-strokers are even smoother again, so I know which way I'll be heading.

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