



Quintrex' *Smokin'* 560 Spirit Millennium

At a time when the cost of a litre of unleaded petrol has gone through the one dollar barrier in Sydney, and is fast spreading at that rate across Australia, more than ever before families are going to be examining their fuel costs as a major component of the boating bill.

It's one of those psychological things, really – in truth there isn't all that much difference in the cost of a family outing on the water with petrol at 93 cents a litre or at 1.04 cents per litre – it's just that when petrol goes up to 1.00 a litre everybody goes into a sort of "ticker" shock for a while as the full ramifications of the cost of fuel sink in.

With this in mind I was disappointed that the Quintrex Spirit Millennium we had arranged with Quintrex for sea trials was

fitted with a conventional 115hp 2-stroke Yamaha. Not that there is anything wrong with this sweet running V-4 – far from it, it's long been one of the nicest engines in the outboard world. But it's a very dated engine now, with fuel consumption considerably in excess of its own 4-stroke brother, the brilliant fuel injected Yamaha 115hp 4-stroke outboard.

Still, we "takes 'em as they come" and when Quintrex marketing man Damien Hoyle arrived with the 560 Quintrex Millennium Spirit with the 115hp V-4 Yamaha 2-stroke, we decided it was, after all, a beautiful Gold Coast day, the water was sparkling – and besides, we'd had it on good authority that the tailor were running in behind the surf down off Palm Beach. We were pretty confident the tailor wouldn't care

whether we had a 2-stroke or a 4-stroke outboard, so we did the only thing that was sensible under the circumstances – we loaded all our gear onboard and headed for the seaway entrance.

To start off with, we always shoot the photographs first (you can test boats in the rain but you can't take very good photographs of 'em!) so with the camera boat alongside, we headed north to Sovereign Island, before turning back south for a couple more runs to mix up the photographs.

Just as we completed the last of the photo runs, the Yamaha oil mixing management system decided to let go, and we started laying down a smoke screen thick enough to remove the suburb of Hollywell off the map. Struth, did we blow some smoke! I've never

seen an outboard pump out so much smoke, and as we were using more than a litre of oil per hundred metres (you did read that correctly – per 100 metres!) we decided discretion was absolutely the better part of valour, and headed back to the marina. That ended our performance trials for the day, the tailor were left to wonder where we'd gone – so we packed up and waited while the Quintrex team rushed the boat back to the factory for an instant rebuild.

The Second Day: This time, Damien Hoyle came down the river just to make quite sure that the boat was running perfectly,

It's a strategy Quintrex will no doubt use in the future given the location of their new factory up the Coomera River in the Gold Coast Marina precinct.



We agreed with Damien's strategy, and arranged to meet him off the fuel wharf at Runaway Bay Marina.

Once again we had the camera boat ready to run escort duties, as we were still reluctant to head offshore in the Quintrex, especially when the Quintrex mechanics advised they could find nothing wrong with the engine! Obviously the smoke screen we laid down over the suburb of Hollywell was some sort of illusion.

Nevertheless, Damien duly turned up with the Spirit, and all was looking fine until yours truly stepped onboard and headed out of the marina. Yep! Once again, the Yamaha voiced its displeasure at yours truly standing at the helm instead of Damien.

So we promptly laid down another oily smoke screen, this time across the marina from the fuel wharf. So effective was the smoke screen, a State of Emergency was being declared by the marina office (they thought the marina was going up in flames) until Ruth got through to the office on the 'bat phone' and explained it was just the F&B team checking the marina's oil spill procedures . . . yeah, right! As Greek TV comedienne character "Effie" would say, "how embarrassment!"

Well, sadly we never did get to use the Quintrex Millennium Spirit.

We have now used the boat twice in calm water and can report that it is very stable, it looks like it's going to ride nicely offshore in the chop, but at this stage it's impossible to say how much better the Millennium hull is over the conventional model we tested back in 1994 (F&B #10).

Nevertheless, we had plenty of time to do the



measurements and data gathering, so the following notes will be of interest to potential buyers.

The Data Sheet: The Quinnie Spirit is a terrific format providing you don't want to sleep onboard the boat. If you view the cuddy as a set-up to provide protection for children, comfortable headroom for adults to keep out of the weather, and storage of all those vital family bits and pieces you've got to take on any day on the water, then the cuddy is immensely practical.

However, with "berths" of only 1460mm long there's no way you can sleep on it as an adult, although there's more than enough room to bunk down a couple of kiddies. Again, this is the general idea.

Out in the cockpit though, the Spirit makes a lot of sense. There's 1800 mm behind the fixed seat positions, and that translated to nearly 6 foot of usable workspace between the seat and the transom. Overall there's 2.73 m from the transom through to the nominal bulkhead position and it's very wide at 2.03 m between the coamings. So there's a lot of space here for mucking around with the family – whether it's fishing, cruising, towing wake boards or whatever.

A seat is provided for the helmsman and passenger

and they are very comfortable jobs with the controversial fold down back rest and hinging arrangement that Quintrex are still using.

That Quintrex are still using this pencil snapping hinging arrangement is surprising, but they've obviously not had a problem with it, or they wouldn't keep using the hinge set-up – but it's certainly one potential buyers with kids in the 3-7 year age group should keep very firmly in mind.

The Quintrex Spirit is otherwise a very safe family boating set-up. It has 605mm internal freeboard at the transom and positive foam buoyancy packed underneath the entire cockpit floor.

This probably makes the boat very close to unsinkable – the bad news is that of course, a lot of valuable storage space is lost because the whole sub floor is filled with foam. As well as the safety issue, this also makes for a quieter ride, so it's not a bad strategy on behalf of either Quintrex or the consumer.

It does make you rethink storage space for such things as wakeboards, skis, snorkling and dive equipment (fins, face masks etc) because the Spirit has no under floor storage space at all.

However it does have 1800 mm long side pockets which will provide a fair bit of storage, but overall, one has to observe that Quintrex really haven't found a solution to the loss of the traditional underfloor storage space, and the use of pedestal seats, instead of the more useful option of seats over aluminium boxes, has been overlooked.

Packaging: These days, the base Quintrex is a very impressive unit. It is

complete with GME 27 meg radio, a Lowrance X75 depth sounder and a 110 litre underfloor fuel tank which is now part of the standard inventory. There are plenty of options worth looking at including the berley bucket, cabin cushions, the typical bimini and clears set-up, a rear ladder (which should be standard) a couple of trailer options – but it starts off with the basic package using the Dunbier 9255 Centreline trailer. In a typical 'on road' situation in southern Queensland, Yamaha dealer Russell Wright's Sundown Marine advises that they go 'out the door' at around \$27,635 on the road, including GST and a 2-stroke 115hp Yamaha outboard.

For the record the upgrade to the 115hp Yamaha 4-stroke is an additional \$2,633, but if you like the 4-stroke and want to save money, Russell recommends that you look at the 100hp 4 cylinder Yamaha 4-stroke which is \$1,052 extra – and let me say that 100hp on the 560 Millennium would be plenty for most situations. Indeed, the Spirit can easily run and work with a 90hp outboard very successfully, so 100 is plenty.

Summary: Obviously we were disappointed the Yamaha let the side down, because we really did want to test the Millennium and make the obvious comparison between this hull and the one we tested before. That's not to say we won't re-examine the boat in the near future – of course we will, but the way these things work out, it will obviously be a couple of months before the editorial schedules, the rig and the magazine space presents itself again.

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