

So, You Want To Buy A New Boat?

Buying a new boat, whether it's your first or your 10th, is always a fun experience, and it's one we all approach with a mixture of trepidation, excitement, (usually) a healthy dose of cynicism and generally an open mind to new ideas and concepts. In this special report, editor Peter Webster goes behind the pages of the glossy brochures, and specifically, takes a detailed look at a group of boats we've selected from the 82 boat range of models produced by Quintrex, Australia's biggest trailerboat manufacturer.

The writer has always loved buying a boat, working it up to speed, trialling it, settling it in and going through the machinations of understanding the boat's key assets and of course, any liabilities.

Because the perfect boat is yet to be made, all boats are a compromise and this is something beginners have a great deal of trouble understanding.

Making it harder, the boating world is quite unlike the automotive world we are used to in our day to day lives, because there are so many more options, so many more choices, and an extraordinary range of boats to purchase in almost every category.

Who amongst us has not walked out of a Boat Show, dumbfounded by the spectacle, the masses of aluminium boats, the variety of models, and one's head spinning from all the salesmen's chatter and earnest explanations of why *their* brand is better than the one just down the aisle.

Quintrex is Australia's biggest single brand by a country mile – and hard on its heels is its sister range, from Stacer. This has its own

problems of course, not least of which is for the poor dealers trying to display the brands in their showrooms around Australia, with a representative range of products to show consumers in their home turf.

Quintrex has 82 models, Stacer has 79 – so there's no way any one dealer can possibly stock all the different models, and as a result, boat shows, the internet, boating magazines, brochures, all form part of the mechanisms consumers have to help them make an informed decision about which model suits them.

It ain't easy, believe me! The writer has been doing this for nigh on forty years and still finds it difficult to single out specific models that are head and shoulders above the crowd. This is because our needs and wants as consumers are constantly evolving as we go through life with our families.

The garaging space changes, the local council requirements change as we move from place to place, our personal wealth

changes, the kids grow up, the family gets older, Dad's not as strong as he used to be – and many a Mum would just as soon spend the afternoon watching George Clooney in the air conditioned comfort of the local picture theatre, as she would going out with Dad in the boat.

Life moves, people change. These are the realities of the boating world in 2009. It's part of the reason why there are so many boats on the market for sale secondhand – there's not necessarily anything wrong with these craft; more likely, the owners' needs have changed since it was purchased.

F&B can't change life's calling, but we can help consumers make better choices when it comes to buying a boat in the first place.

We spend a great deal of our time talking to readers about their boating needs, and are constantly reminded that there is precious little help available to consumers buying for the first time, or the fifth, and more often than not, having had one or two boats previously makes the choices even more difficult.

It's the classic case of a little knowledge sometimes being dangerous – because boats are so radically different from each other, it's quite hard to sort them out.

In this report, what we're going to do is look at the same size boat in the Quintrex range simply because they have up to seven different models based around exactly the same hull – the 510 series Millennium hull, with the maxi-transom and very similar – but different – people and horsepower ratings.

Whilst this report features Quintrex models, the general comments will apply to other boats of that type, too, even if they're manufactured by competitive brands.

But we're not trying to do a comparison here of Brand A to Quintrex, this is simply trying to sift the advantages and disadvantages of seven different types of boat, which happen, in this case, to be made by Quintrex.

The 510 Series

The Quintrex 510 series is right in the middle of the most popular range of boats produced in Australia today. In this particular case, the models have been rebranded slightly from the 490 series they used to be called, to more accurately reflect their overall length.

All of these craft are 5.33m in hull length but have an overall length of 5.41m from the bowsprit to the transom.

All have a 2.22m beam with a hull depth (only) of 1.17m. All share a length on the trailer of 6.05m long, and although the heights vary, they range from 1.99m in the Topender to 2.5m in the cuddy cabin Spirit.

All use 3.00mm pressed metal on the bottom with 2.00mm topsides, 3.00mm transom material and a long shaft engine.

Interestingly, all – well, nearly all – are rated for both Basic and Level floatation and you'll notice the 'people capacity' is the figure that changes each time.

If you check the tabulation attached to this report, you'll see what I mean.

Similar Prices

The least expensive of the range is listed ex-Coomera in southern Queensland at \$28,445 for the 510 Escape, to \$32,985 for the neat



little Quinny 510 Spirit Cuddy.

Readers are urged to take these prices with a grain of salt because the rules covering Quintrex' ability to recommend prices have changed, and there can be a big difference between the price of a boat at the factory door and its rec. retail in Broome, WA or somewhere in southern Tasmania.

We have to use our commonsense here; obviously, the further you are from the factory in southern Queensland, the more expensive they'll be in your part of the world. We've used the basic retail price ex-Coomera simply to provide a price point for the different models.

Needless to say, if one of these models takes your fancy, we urge you to give your local Quintrex dealer a ring, and get a local price put together for you, with your own specifications, options and fees for your area included.

In a not dissimilar fashion, the weights of the 510 series change too, with the Legend Centre Console being the lightest at 421kg, and the sterndrive powered Freedom Cruiser, the heaviest at 567kg.

Again, take these figures with a grain of salt, because these are for the hull only, and do not include the power unit – an outboard or the much heavier sterndrive – the trailer and a whole host of normal fit-out stuff that we put on the boats ie, canopy, fuel in the tank, covers – let alone personal affects in terms of tackle boxes, ice chests, and the like.

Conclusion

It's been interesting for us to look at these craft and realise what gains Quintrex have made in recent years, in the sense that they can separate no less than seven different models, and they are all quite different.

Which is best?

Lord only knows – each boat buyer will have to sit down and go through the agonistics of working out which of the models ticks off most of the target applications.

In other words, if you're never going to tow wakeboards or tubes, then many models can be eliminated. If the consumer's needs are totally fishing oriented, then the two consoles are head and shoulders above the crowd – but only if you're a dedicated fisherman.

Families will find the bowriders irresistible, as they are just so darn practical, and can be used very effectively in two or three different roles.

But then, a lot of people don't like bowriders . . . *aahhhemmmnnn!*

Ultimately, the final decision rests with the individual, but it does require considerable thought to make the best purchase decision.

Enjoy the next 7 pages – and good luck!

F&B