

The Bertram 28 Flybridge

Bertram's revamped 28, with after-cooled, turbo-charged Volvos is, to quote Editor Peter Webster, "one helluva craft" to explore the Norah Canyons for the elusive broadbill swordfish.

Original Story/Pics by Peter Webster



First introduced to Australia in the early '70's by International Marine of Scoresby, Victoria, this droopy nosed Bertram has shared a love-hate relationship with local skippers — you either love it, or you hate it!

The controversy mainly stems from the Bertram 28's heavily reversed sheer off the foredeck, making it look nose-heavy off plane, or when lying to anchor. And there have been plenty of stories about game fishermen copping a soaking when they raised the anchor in lumpy conditions offshore.

Last month, we were invited to look at the very latest version of this cruiser - with twin Volvo AQAD40 inboard diesels, revised saloon layout - and a considerably improved cockpit.

The Bertram 28 is above all else a game fishing cruiser. The manufacturers in Australia - and their agents - may not entirely agree with me here, but nevertheless, after studying the Bertram 28 anew, I am more than ever convinced the craft has quite outstanding application to the world of sports and big game fishing.

Let's look at the basic specifications. The Bertram 28 has an overall length of 8.54 metres with a waterline length of 7.11 metres, a maximum beam of 3.36 metres on the shoulders, and a maximum inboard draft of 0.79 metres. For waterfront home owners in canal estates the height above the waterline aft is 0.92 metres, forward 1.14 metres and to the tip of the flybridge windshield 2.77 metres.

Water capacity of 180 litres (40 gallons) is provided, alongside a fuel capacity of some 600 litres — that's 137 gallons in imperial measure. The manufacturers quote a displacement of 4,000kg, but there is some doubt as to what exactly that entails. I suspect that with the twin Volvo AQAD-40's fitted, the displacement is somewhat more than this, and would approach a good 5 tonnes dry.

In the simplest possible terms, the Bertram 28 consists of a cockpit surrounded by a fibreglass cruiser. It has two forward vee berths in a small cabin, a saloon consisting of a dinette to port with a fully enclosed head (with standing headroom) abaft



the dinette, a lower station helm to starboard and behind this, a comprehensive galley arrangement. The rest of the boat consists of a cockpit with a total area of 8.13 square metres including the engine covers. Even subtracting the engine boxes (1.06m x 1.32m) the net cockpit area in the Bertie 28 is an amazing 6.73 square metres.

The cockpit is naturally self-draining, although the scuppers seemed a bit skimpy for my taste, and there are five non-water tight hatches giving access to either fuel tanks, rudder stocks, or the under cockpit area. None of the five hatches could be shut down permanently, being fitted only with those silly ring-pull devices which do absolutely nothing to prevent the hatches coming adrift and permitting water to enter the hull in substantial quantities. A disappointing touch that could be resolved by the addition of about \$25.00 worth of better quality hardware, and an additional hour or so of the boat builder's time. This was mandatory in a game fishing craft and highly desirable in bayside pleasure boats.

The Bertram 28 is a flybridge cruiser, and features a rather well designed flybridge arrangement consisting of a transverse squab and backrest that is quite comfortable for 3 people, locating the helmsman amidships in front of the upper station controls.

In a broad sense, the big change for the Bertram 28 is the removal of the old bridgedeck arrangement, and the swapping of the dinette from starboard to port side. They don't sound like very big changes but the difference they have made to the

Bertie 28 is quite astonishing.

International Marine in Victoria very wisely opted for two separate engine boxes with a walk-way between. Although they did raise the rear cockpit approximately 50mm, they didn't do as the Americans have done and carry the new diesel engine boxes right across the width of the cockpit. Instead, they kept the engine boxes separate, albeit without an upstand around each engine bay to (also) prevent the entry of rain or green water.

You now walk through from the transom to the companionway on one level, go down two steps into the saloon, where you will now find the galley on the starboard side and the dinette to port. It is one of the most functional layouts we've encountered, and by virtue of the 1.066 metre passageway between the galley and the head, it now has a feeling of spaciousness quite unusual in a craft of this length. The passageway tightens up near the lower helm to 838mm but in the area where the cook is likely to be preparing morning tea, there is an additional amount of space which will prove invaluable to the general flow of traffic through the saloon.

Accommodation is provided for two in the forward cabin, and by folding down the dinette, another berth is located in the saloon. At just 1.75m x 0.91m, it's strictly a single for adults, but it would cope with a couple of children.

Construction

The Bertram 28 Flybridge is today a little dated in some ways, particularly in matters such as bulkheads and finish items. This is by no means a criticism; in fact, we greeted the Bertram 28 with a sense of relief that it was not all white fibreglass! There is still plenty of hand rubbed teak, and although it may not be quite as sophisticated as some of the more recently developed cruisers with their fibreglass liners, the Bertram 28

**TBM
RETRO
BOAT TEST:**
Unchanged, as first published, written and photographed by Peter Webster in July 1981