

The Steber 530 Fisherman

Big enough to fish the Continental Shelf, it is small enough to trailer and power with sensible, economical motor(s). For around \$4,700 this new Steber makes good sense for today's fishermen.

It is nearly 12 months since Bruce Steber and the team from Taree, New South Wales, released the extraordinary Steber 525.

At Boat Shows right around Australia last year, both the industry and the public unashamedly stared in amazement at this very special fishing machine. For years and years, fishermen and dealers around Australia had been saying, "If only we had a real fishing boat ... It is about time somebody put some effort into the fisherman ..." and there it was.

From the tip of the bow roller to the scuppers on the transom, the 525 was the most sophisticated sportfishing vessel ever designed or built in this country. And it was expensive — at least, in a market where 17 footers are measured firstly by length and secondly by the amount of discount one is able to squeeze out of the manufacturer, it was really expensive.

For around \$7,000 the Steber 525 was up in the Shark Cat class of boating, but

nevertheless, boating journalists around Australia were unanimous in their praise for both the concept and execution of the Steber 525.

We liked:

- Soft ride
- Beautiful finish
- Design concept
- Self draining cockpit
- Forward hatch set up
- Excellent grab rails

We didn't like:

- Ineffective windscreen
- Banking in turns
- Fine forward sections

With more than 30 boats sold and the sales snowball steadily generating business, tragedy struck the Taree plant when one of the original 525's split the hull along the waterline during a

sportfishing tournament off Bermagui, N.S.W, and sank.

As Bruce Steber ruefully commented later, "In more than 25 years boat building, and thousands and thousands of boats, this was the first boat I had ever had sink on me — and of all places — at Bermagui during a sportfishing competition!"

The effect on sales can be imagined. Word spread like wild-fire, and within two weeks of the incident, every Stebercraft dealer rang in consternation, seeking an explanation and reassurance of the structural integrity of the Steber 525's on their showroom floor. Meantime, the Steber factory worked around the clock to

**TBM
RETRO
BOAT TEST:**
Unchanged,
as first
published,
written and
photographed
by Peter
Webster in
1977

