

F&B's Small Craft Section



Stessl's Edge Tracker 475 Tournament

Alf Stessl has followed his award winning 435 Edge Tracker Tournament with a bigger, better equipped model for the enthusiast and semi pro angler. The new 475 Tournament is certain to attract buyers in the booming bream and bass fishing markets. Report by Jeff Webster.

Hard on the heels of the launch of the successful new 435 Edge Tracker Tournament series, the Stessl family has followed up with the flagship model, the 475 Tournament. It is aimed squarely at competition bream, bass and barra fishermen, but will be of equal appeal to enthusiast recreational anglers.

Quintrex's Millennium hull Hornet series has reigned supreme in the deluxe v-punt market during the last few years, but these new models from Stessl are likely to sway buyers back into the Stessl fold. The new 475 Tournament provides a serious

alternative to the Quintrex Hornets and some of the other good marques on the market; it is exceptionally well outfitted in standard form, and it handles, rides and performs very well

Design

Other than the sleeker new vee bow hull shape, the first thing you notice about the 475 Edge Tracker



The side console is compact, but there is enough space for standard engine instruments, a sounder and a radio. The test boat was fitted with a Minn Kota bow mount trolling motor - secured to the optional trolling motor plate on the port side of the bow. Note the trolling motor battery is housed under the forward locker.



instruments, a depth sounder and a radio.

The throttle box is mounted back from the console, secured to the side deck. When seated at the helm, the wheel and throttle are within comfortable reach, and you can tuck your legs under the console.

The helm seat and passenger seat (to port) are fitted directly to the top of the rear casting platform – rather than being mounted on pedestals. The seats are removable.

There are no other standard seats in the boat, but they are not really needed because you can sit quite comfortably on the trailing edge of the forward casting platform.

Up on the casting deck, a mount for a "lean" seat or pedestal chair is included in the standard inventory, but the extra chair or seat is optional.

Moving forward from the helm area, on the aft edge of the casting deck, two

hatches open out to reveal a superb live fish well. The well is plumbed and more than a metre in width. Cleverly, it also has a centre, removable grill or plate. With this plate in position, the tank is split into two halves. Remove it, and you're left with one big live well.

This is an excellent feature, and reflects the Stessl family's own experience fishing the competition bass circuit around South East Queensland.

In many of these tournaments, each competing boat is allowed to fish two anglers, and each angler's catch must be kept alive for weighing and subsequent release at the end of each fishing session. Having a live fish well with two separate compartments makes it possible to easily separate each angler's individual fish.

Forward of the live fish well is a series of storage lockers. The first gives access to a general storage area. I

would hesitate to call it a dry storage locker because it is open to the bottom of the boat. However, this locker will be ideal for tackle boxes, etc.

Beyond this locker is another general storage area, accessed by two hatches. This locker is intended as the mounting spot for a battery or batteries to run a bow mount electric trolling motor.

The trolling motor platform (optional extra) itself is located on the port side of the bow. You'll note that the design is such that when the trolling motor is folded back and away, that the shaft of the motor does not protrude over the fishing deck. Again, this is excellent design. Common sense maybe - but you would be surprised how many boats I have seen where the trolling motor folds back right over the middle of the casting deck - making it difficult to fish from the bow.

The final hatch in the bow, right in the forepeak, opens to reveal an