



The walk around cab provides easy access to the bow of the boat. Note the amount of ribs making this a solid hull.



Under way the Formosa 550 Centre Cab cut through the small chop with ease providing a nice dry ride.

# Formosa 550 Centre Cab

**W**HILE driving down to the Gold Coast to test the Formosa 550 Centre Cab I had time to reflect on the other Formosa boats I had been in over the years.

Previous models I've tested have been predominantly centre consoles so I was eager to get into the centre cab version.

Formosa products have continually developed and since my first test there have been changes to the structural integrity of the hull, making them more solid and robust, and hence a better riding boat.

This time the main difference was only going to be cosmetic, with the adaptation of a centre cabin instead of a console.

However, changing the weight distribution by adding or removing certain things can alter a boat's performance, so I was keen to hit the water and put the 550 Centre Cab through its paces.

When I arrived at the ramp, Kieran, Managing Director of Coastal Power Boats had just launched the boat single-handedly and was pulling it up onto the adjoining beach.

After jumping aboard, the 140hp Suzuki was kicked into action and we were off.

The Suzuki looked well matched in size and colour to the boat, which was finished in a glistening black.

Optioning for a centre cab instead of a centre console in my opinion is a great idea.

A centre cab gives you so much more boat than an equivalent size centre console.

And while you do sacrifice a bit of fishing space you gain a lot more useable and functional space.

By this I mean you have a lot more dry storage, which is always a bonus, especially for a boat of this size.

There is also increased



Boat Test

by BEN COLLINS

helm area, which you can use for your electronics, plus you get two comfy seats to enjoy the ride.

So basically you have a bit more comfort all around, especially if the weather get a bit nasty, as it often does here on the east coast.

While the cab offers an area of protection, you are still easily able to walk around it and get to the anchor well.

There is also enough space to fish and it would be ideal for chasing tuna in the bay as you could move to the front of the boat to cast and be able to fight the fish 360 degrees.

This boat did not have clears fitted and although it is possible to hide below the windscreen I think having clears would improve the helm area.

The Formosa 550 Centre Cab has an underfloor fuel tank with 150 litre capacity.

This is a good size tank for this boat, which would give you exceptional range with the Suzuki 4-stroke 115hp.

With two people on board the boat pulled onto the plane with ease and settled at a good cruising speed around 4000rpm.

This speed would also be quite economical and you could easily cruise around the Broadwater.

Visibility from the helm was good and driving from either a seated position or standing was possible.

When driving in rougher conditions I prefer to stand and have one hand on the wheel and the other on the throttle, which is possible from this boat.

The test boat had a few additional options from the standard Deluxe Package, including the bait board

and rear lounge.

Both are good upgrades as they increase the functionality of the boat, whether fishing or just cruising.

Steering had also been upgraded to a hydraulic system, making driving and manoeuvring the boat easier, but this is a personal choice and whether or not it is needed might be determined more by budget than necessity.

The sounder on the test boat had been upgraded from the Deluxe Package and incorporated a GPS unit.

Once again, whether to upgrade the sounder would be a personal choice and the decision should be based on how you intend to use the boat.

If your main objective is to get offshore and chase reef species it is imperative to have a quality sounder and a GPS you can rely on.

However if you intend to use the boat as a weekend cruiser, with the possibility of chasing a few whiting or bream, there is no need to have the world's best sounder fitted.

Kieran emphasised that when buying a boat from Coastal Powerboats you have the ability to customise your boat as much or as little as you want.

This is a bonus for people who are first-timers to the boating arena, as they do not have to get every conceivable option and hence can stick to a budget.

It is also advantageous for customers who may have previously owned a boat and who already have accessories such as a GPS or sounder that they do not want included in the package.

Instead they can have their existing equipment installed into their new



The helm had good vision and plenty of room for electronics.



A rear lounge and bait board were an extra option on the test boat.



Even though it is a decent size the Formosa 550 Centre Cab can be handled by one person.

boat.

These are just a couple of reasons why having customised service to suit your needs makes getting on the water more enjoyable, and it can also make it a bit easier on the hip pocket.

If there is anything more you would like to know on the Formosa 550 Centre Cab or other boats in the range give the guys at Coastal Powerboats a call on 07 5526 0858 and see if they can customise a boat to suit your needs.

Alternatively check out their web page [www.coastalpowerboats.com.au](http://www.coastalpowerboats.com.au)

